THE

CIRCASSIAN CHIEF.

VOL. II.
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A

ROMANCE OF RUSSIA.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
CIRCASSIAN CHIEF.

CHAPTER I.

Come! by whatever sacred name disguised,
Oppression, come! and in thy works rejoice!
See Nature's richest plains to putrid fens
Turn'd by thy fury.

THOMSON'S LIBERTY.

Thus far, Ivan had been successful in the accomplishment of his journey, though there still remained many difficulties to overcome. These, however, were lessened by the presence of mind and cleverness which Javis at all times displayed. He seemed too to be possessed of noble and generous sentiments, so that, notwithstanding their difference in rank, Ivan began to feel for him a sincere friendship, independently of the gratitude due to his assistance and attention.
A change, however, had come over him, for though active and intelligent as ever, he was no longer the gay light hearted being, he had at first appeared. It was in vain, that Ivan endeavoured to discover the cause: Javis would start at times, and walk on muttering to himself, as if some important subject occupied his thoughts: his laugh was hollow, and his smile forced and painful. Young Conrin often turned an inquiring glance towards him, but seemed also equally puzzled to account for the alteration. He too had won much upon Ivan's regard, by his gentle and unassuming behaviour, and by his evident desire to please his self-constituted masters. It was with much regret, therefore, on the morning of their departure, and while Javis had gone out to make some necessary purchases for their journey, that Ivan called the boy to him, to bid him farewell.

"We must now part, Conrin. Believe me that I do so with regret; but we return not to the place whence we came, while you must go back to your parents and friends. Here, take this small sum of money, it is all I can spare, but you may require it on your journey."

While he spoke, the tears fell fast from the
boy's eyes. "Alas! why are you so ready to dismiss me from your company, Sir?" he said, putting aside the money. "Have I done aught to offend you? I have no home—no friends to return to—I have quitted all, and for ever! Oh, let me accompany you then as your servant, and I will serve you faithfully and truly."

"But we go far from hence, boy," said Ivan; "and perchance, you might never again see your own native Russia."

"It matters not, Sir, to what part of the country, or to what part of the world you go. Whither you go, there I will follow you. But in pity, dismiss not an orphan child, who claims your protection."

Seeing that Ivan still seemed to hesitate, he added, "Think not that I am a serf, escaping from bondage: no, I am free-born, and free alone will I live; for no proud master shall ever claim me as his slave." The boy's eyes flashed with a look of proud independence as he spoke.

"But, young Conrin," answered Ivan, "I am as you see, but a poor old man, without the means of supporting you, or of giving you employment fit for your youth."

"I seek not the wages of a servant," an-
answer Conrin; "perchance too, I may find the opportunity of serving you. Try me, at least, and if I prove useless, you can but dismiss me at last."

"But suppose, that though we are old men, we may lead you into far and strange countries, where you may be exposed to hardships, under which your tender years may sink? You will then repent that you followed us," said Ivan.

"I fear no danger that you can lead me into," answered the boy; "and am too well accustomed to hardships to sink under them. Besides, I am older than I appear, and understand full well the task I undertake."

Ivan still hesitated to comply with young Conrin's extraordinary fancy, as it seemed, when Javis entered, and the boy instantly referred his cause to him. Javis, without hesitation, seconded his petition, when Ivan, at length, consented to his accompanying them.

"Oh, trust me, Sirs," he said, "that you will not find me wanting in aught that becomes a servant. You know not how my heart is lightened by your kindness."

The pleasure which beamed in the speaker's eyes attested the truth of his words; yet, it had
before occurred to Ivan, and now did so again, that the boy had seen through their disguise from the very first; and he was not without a suspicion, that the boy followed them thus pertinaciously, as a spy sent to betray them at the end of their journey, and in the very moment when they might have congratulated themselves on having effected their escape. Ivan knew how varied and constant are the devices made use of in Russia to entrap the unwary, and to shew that the power of that vast engine of despotism, the secret police, can extend to the very confines of the Empire.

At length, however, he dismissed the thought as contradicting the stamp which nature sets on the countenances of her children; and while looking at the boy's face, he felt convinced he was incapable of such treachery.

That Conrin was not deceived by the disguise the fugitives had assumed, Ivan felt convinced, as he at all times addressed him in a tone and manner of respect that he would scarcely have paid to a poor peasant pilgrim, although children are early taught in Russia to treat age with respect and attention. He never, also, attempted to intrude into their presence, keeping
aloof till called to approach nearer, though, several times, Ivan had discovered, as he thought, the boy's eyes fixed on him with an earnest and inquiring gaze, as if he wished to read his very thoughts. But again, he fancied that in that idea he must have been mistaken. He saw clearly, that at all events, there was something which the boy wished to conceal, and whatever was the cause of his attachment, he felt gratified in the knowledge that there was one more human being who could care for him, in the world.

We will not accompany the travellers each day in their long and tedious journey, in company with the returning pilgrims, of whom, in a short time, they became very weary, so much so, that Javis was of opinion they might now venture to travel on at a faster speed, by themselves. For this purpose, he left the party, as they encamped, in search of some of the numerous wandering bands of his people, whom he had heard were in the neighbourhood.

He returned the next morning before break of day, with the intelligence that he had procured a telga, which was in waiting a short distance in advance, to which he led Ivan and
their young companion, before the pilgrims had begun their march. These were, accordingly, soon left a long way behind. Our travellers were fortunate in procuring a constant change of horses and vehicles, from the friendly tribes of Zingani, or from peasants with whom they had communication, so that they rapidly approached the confines of the Empire, to cross which would prove another difficulty, and demand a change of disguise.

Since leaving the band of pilgrims, Ivan and his companions had kept a south-westerly course, as much as possible, by cross-roads and bye-paths, both to avoid observation, and because, in the more unfrequented parts of the country, Javis had a greater chance of encountering some of the wandering tribes of his people. Indeed, from information he had received, he expected to find a party of them encamped in the neighbourhood of the Pruth. The travellers were now approaching that river, where it divides the principality of Moldavia from the Russian province of Bessarabia, in which they now were; their greatest hazard being in passing the Russian posts on the frontier, though they had yet other dangers to
encounter, from the numerous spies sent out by the Imperial government, who exercise complete influence in the principality, to the very borders of the Turkish provinces.

As they journeyed on, they observed a figure before them, jumping and singing as he went, now and then stopping to look around him, and then again pursuing his extraordinary antics. When he saw the party approaching, instead of endeavouring to escape, by increasing his speed, he turned round to meet them. In this ragged, half-witted creature, fantastically dressed in coloured rags and tatters, Javis recognized one of his own race. A few words from Javis, in the Rommany language, brought the poor being directly to their side. He gave them to understand that an encampment of his people was not far off, adding that he would lead them to the spot.

As they came in sight of the encampment, several fierce-looking men of the Zingani, on seeing strangers approach, rushed out with threatening gestures; but when Javis called to them in their own language, they gave him a hearty, though a rude welcome, and forthwith ushered the strangers within the circle of their camp.
Here all the people of the tribe gathered round the travellers, telling them that they had been already informed of their approach, and were prepared to offer them assistance. Javis, in return, explained the wishes of his friend and himself, and the necessity of proceeding without delay. Several men at once volunteered to assist them in crossing the river at an unguarded spot, and to be answerable for their safety, on condition of their assuming the dress and character of their own people, as they were in the custom of communicating with others of their tribe in Moldavia. They also advised them to continue the same disguise till they had arrived in the Turkish provinces, as numerous tribes of their people were in the country, who would assist them. Such a dress would, moreover, exempt them from the attack of the numerous robbers who infested the land, but who would not deem such poor-looking wayfarers worth pillaging.

To this proposition Ivan gladly assented; and, after a plentiful supply of provisions had been placed before them, Javis set about arranging the necessary dresses; the Zingani treating Ivan and his youthful companion with the greatest respect.

While engaged in this employment, the brow of
Javis grew more clouded and uneasy than before. As he passed Ivan, he would turn a quick uncertain glance towards him, his countenance assuming an expression as if a sudden pang had tormented him, and then he would endeavour to look calm and composed as before.

Ivan, overcome with the fatigue of his journey, gladly accepted the offer made by the chief of the tribe to rest in his tent, where throwing himself on a heap of skins, he was soon wrapt in deep sleep, it yet wanting some time before it would be safe to venture across the Pruth.

The dark shades of evening were fast coming on, and the sky gave threatening warnings of a rough tempestuous night, when Javis, unperceived, as he thought, by any of the people, stole from the camp. He looked tremblingly behind him, but saw no one following, and again pursued his way. He hastened onwards at a fast rate, then stopped and hesitated; fear and doubt were working in his breast. At last he mustered all his courage, and again ran quickly on. His purpose he scarce dared utter to himself. Could he, the hitherto brave, the true, the most loved of all his tribe, be guilty of treachery?
The long-threatened storm now broke with sudden fury; the lightning flashed brightly, and the wind loudly howled. Javis kept up his speed. The Russian guard-house was in sight, when a flash brighter and more dazzling than before darted from the clouds. For a moment his eyes were blinded. He looked up, and fancied that a tall and majestic form rose before him. The attitude of this phantom of his brain was threatening; the countenance fierce and angry.

He beheld before him, as he believed, the spirit of his tribe, such as it had been described to him. He thought a voice, as if borne on the blast of the tempest, uttered these awful words:

"Cursed is he who shall hinder the friend of our tribe on his way; doubly cursed the betrayer of the confiding one, and thrice cursed the perjurer."

The youth's eyes rolled wildly; his heart throbbed with violent pulsation; his limbs trembled. He could not move. He fell prostrate to the earth, where he lay for some time—he knew not how long. A gentle touch on his shoulder recalled him to consciousness.
“Rise!” said a gentle voice, yet trembling as if with alarm; “rise! you could not do the vile deed. Thank the great spirit that you have been saved so cursed an act—an act so contrary to your nature. Think you thus to have won a maiden’s love? She would have doubly hated you. Rise, and return to the camp, and henceforward atone by fidelity, for your thoughts of treachery. Guard with your own life his you would have taken, and in time the curse, which hangs over you for your oath broken in thought, may be averted.”

The speaker turned, and flew towards the camp, when Javis arose, and threw himself on his knees on the ground.

“Great spirit,” he cried, “I will obey you! Take but this heavy curse from off me, and I will follow this stranger wheresoever he listeth to go. Never will I quit him until I see him in safety in his native land. Though my heart consume with hopeless love, yet will I endure all for his sake. Let this heavy trial gain me pardon.”

Javis arose, and fled back to the camp.

Ivan, unconscious of the danger and treachery he had escaped, awoke and came forth
from his tent; soon after which Javis, having thrown aside all marks of age, appeared in his proper character, and Ivan gladly followed his example. Returning again to the tent, he equipped himself as a young Gipsy, Conrin having also assumed the same character.

When all was prepared, the fugitives set forward with their Gipsy guides towards the banks of the river. The weather was still dark and stormy, and the wind whistled among the few straggling trees which grew on the shore. Here and there a star glimmered forth, as the dark masses of clouds were rapidly driven across the sky. The water rushed by in turbid eddies; and for a moment the wild scene was lit up by flashes of lightning, to be again left in total darkness.

Descending a steep bank, the guides launched a small boat which had been concealed among some thick underwood, and the travellers, taking their seats, pushed off into the stream. The Gipsies, however, well knew their course, and, as they believed that none of the Russian guards were likely, on such a night, to venture away from their posts, seemed free from apprehension.

It was thus, amid storm and tempest, that
Ivan bade farewell for ever to the inhospitable territories of Russia, leaving behind him few regrets, and looking forward to his future path with enthusiastic ardour and confidence.

The Gipsies pulled their slight bark boldly and safely across the boiling stream. While Ivan landed on the opposite shore, a vivid flash followed by a long continued roar of thunder, gave him the last glimpse of Russia, as he and his two companions stopped for an instant to gaze at it without speaking.

The guides now took a direction across the wild and uncultivated ground, which extends for a considerable distance along the shores of the Pruth. No rain had fallen to impede their progress, and with rapid strides they pursued their way, Javis assisting young Conrin, who could scarcely keep pace with the party. They hastened on thus, in hope of reaching some shelter, before the expected rain should fall, and having travelled some miles, the barking of dogs gave notice that they were approaching a human habitation. A loud whistle in return was given by the guides, when the fierce bark was changed into a cry of welcome, and the fugitives found themselves at the entrance of another Gipsy en-
campment. The chief came forward to meet them, and as soon as he had heard their story from Javis, he received them with a courteous welcome.

When the guides were about to return, Ivan offered them some remuneration for their trouble. "No;" said they, refusing it, "we take nothing from the friends of our people, and from one who is so highly esteemed by our brother near Moscow. It is from our enemies and from those who oppress us, that we exact tribute; and when they do not give we take. May a prosperous journey be your lot."

Saying which, they hastened away on their return across the river.

Contrary to the expectations of the travellers, they had no sooner reached the encampment than the sky grew clear, the stars shone out brightly, the wind subsided, and the summer storm had passed away. They were glad to find rest and shelter in the friendly tents of these wild people, whom, however dishonest they might be towards others, Ivan had found faithful and true to him. One of their small skin-covered tents were prepared for Ivan's accommodation, into which he was invited to enter, and
repose himself. Young Conrin, seating himself at the entrance, prepared to watch his master while he slept; the boy, however, over-rated his own powers, for while he fancied that he kept guard, a deep slumber stole on his weariness.

Ivan slept soundly for some hours, fatigued as he was with the exertions of the last few days and the anxiety of his escape. As he was first returning to consciousness, the curtains of his small tent being closed, and a gentle light streaming through them, he fancied, or it might have been a waking dream, that a strain of music fell on his ear. As he listened, he was lulled into that half-dreaming, half-waking state, so delightful after the heavy slumber induced by fatigue; yet the syllables sounded distinctly, and he feared to stir, lest the sweet tones should prove but a dreamy illusion of the ear.

The words were to the following effect, sung in a clear rich voice, which Ivan fancied that he could recognize as that of young Conrin.

Far as the waves can bear
O'er the deep sea;
Far as the breezes blow
O'er vale and lea;
In whate'er lands you roam,
Leaving my father's home,
I'll follow thee.

O'er the blue mountain's brow,
Joyous and free;
E'en where the desert plain
Bears not a tree,
And the dark simoon's breath,
Comes bearing sudden death,
I'll follow thee.

Where, in the forest, waves
Many a tree,
To those cold regions which
Day cannot see;
Over the arid sand
Of Afric's scorching land,
I'll follow thee.

To the proud battle-field
Bounding with glee,
Bearing thy banner high,
As the foes flee;
Or mid the raging strife,
Where fierce men seek thy life,
I'll follow thee.

In the dark prison hold
Near thee I'll be;
For thy lov'd service gives
Freedom to me:
Should grief or sickness come,
And when death is thy doom,
I'll follow thee.*

No sooner had the strain ceased, than Ivan awoke to perfect consciousness, and springing from his couch, went forth from the tent, where he found Javis and Conrin waiting his presence, and a blush stole on the boy's cheeks at having been detected in his musical performance.

"Ah, my young page!" said Ivan, "were you the good spirit which first aroused me from slumber with your sweet strains? I knew not of your vocal skill; but now that I have discovered it, I may often call upon you to soothe my spirit when oppressed."

"Ah! gladly would I sing to you the live long day, if I thought it would please you, Sir," answered the boy.

"Indeed, it does please me; but how came you possessed of this art, the most prized in the service of a page?" asked Ivan.

"I lived with those who gained their livelihood by it; but I could never sing for pay; my

* The above lines have been set to music by Miss L. Kingston, and published by D'Almaine & Co.
voice is dumb if my words flow not from the heart."

"Well, boy, I hope often to hear you; and now you see that I am not the decrepid old man I first seemed, still do you wish to follow my fortunes, knowing that they may be perilous ones? But I would not command you to leave me."

"Say you so, Sir? and I would not quit you for worlds," answered Conrin.

"Then, my good page, I hope we may not part for a long time; and I trust, moreover, that in my country you may find a home you will love more than the one you have left. But we must away on our road towards that loved land."

The hospitable chief of the tribe, as they are here called, Tzygani, undertook to pass the travellers on from camp to camp of the numerous gangs of his people, (who wander through Moldavia), till they could reach the Danube, where it passes the Turkish provinces.

Ivan and his two companions, much refreshed by their night's rest, after bidding farewell to the hospitable chief, set forward on the horses he had provided for them. They were accompanied
by a guide, to shew them the way across the country, until they should again fall in with another camp of their people. In this way, they quickly travelled through the principality.

Moldavia, which formed part of the ancient kingdom of Dacia, for a long time groaned under the iron rule of the Turks, until freed by the victorious arms of Russia, when the people began to rejoice at the prospect of the amelioration of the country, placed under the benign protection of a Christian power. Alas! they found to their cost, that they had only changed masters, and that their new protectors were determined to rivet still more firmly the chains which enslaved them, being yet more determinately opposed to liberal institutions, and all general improvement. The wretched peasants had no sooner been relieved from their Turkish masters, by whom they had been pillaged and exhausted, than they were reduced to a state of absolute starvation by the Russian army of occupation, which took up its position in the country. Already scarcely able to find food for themselves, their corn and meat were forcibly torn from their grasp to feed their rapacious guests, and to supply provisions for the army.
engaged in the war against the Turks. Even a supply of corn, sent them by the benevolent inhabitants of the neighbouring Austrian provinces, was seized by the Russian soldiers, after crossing the frontier, thus depriving the famishing peasants of their last resource. On no side could they turn for assistance or sympathy, while, sinking under their misfortune, thousands died from famine and disease, the rest of Europe being kept in utter ignorance of the foul and unwarranted tyranny exercised over them.

So brutalized, indeed, have the lower orders become by a long state of vassalage, and utter insecurity of property, as to be almost insensible to the hardships of their condition, while the upper classes are most lamentably demoralized.

In consequence of this state of things, the travellers found great parts of the country an almost entire wilderness, only slight patches of cultivation appearing here and there, though the soil seemed rich and productive. They passed but few miserable villages, and those far distant from each other.

The peasants have a wild and savage appearance, increased by their black hair streaming
loosely over their countenances, and by their sheepskin habits and caps, with sandals of goat skin fastened round the leg by a rope. The women are still more wretched and squalid. At each quiet and solitary farm house, at which our fugitives stopped, the poor people received them kindly, though they appeared to be in hourly alarm, from the fierce bands of robbers who were scouring the country in every direction, levying their lawless contributions alike on the peaceable villagers, and the unprotected travellers, and not unfrequently adding murder to robbery.

The paths traversed by Ivan and his companions scarcely deserved the name of roads, though the light low cart Javis had procured, carried them safely and quickly over them. Several rivers and streams interrupted their course. Some of the latter were nearly dry, and the first they passed in boats with small parties of gipsies, whom they fell in with, and who accompanied them on purpose. As they approached the broad Danube, they proceeded on foot across the country, by paths scarcely trodden, except by their wandering guides. It was with considerable difficulty they gained the
river, passing over a long distance of low marshy shore, which here forms its banks, and rousing from their rest the pelican and other wild fowl of this desert region.

On a calm and lovely night, they crossed the rapid, but smooth stream, in a boat, pulled by their friends, the Tzygani; and, in about an hour, landed in the Turkish province of Bulgaria. The spot at which they struck the Danube was considerably above the Walachian town of Galatz, near the Turkish Hirsova, situated on the summit of precipitous rocks close to the river. They did not venture to enter that now ruinous place, as most of the Turkish towns taken by the Russians in the late war, were still held by their troops.

The direct road of the travellers now lay along the southern bank of the Danube for a considerable distance, to Silistria, a wretched town with a fort, also destroyed by the Russians, who yet retained a garrison there. They therefore avoided it, keeping across the country to the left of the road.

The hamlets, through which they passed, consisted of about fifty houses, each formed of wicker work plastered over, and kept neat and
clean within. The men were clad in brown sheep-skin caps, jackets of undied brown wool, white cloth trowsers, and sandals of raw leather; while the women, who appeared without hesitation before the strangers, were handsome and neatly dressed, all wearing trinkets, the girls having their heads uncovered, and their hair braided and ornamented with different coins.

Most of the villages were inhabited by Turks, except the first at which they arrived. Here our fugitives were fortunate in finding that the greater number of the simple and industrious people were Christians, by whom they were kindly and hospitably received. The villagers seemed to vie with each other in shewing them attention, insisting on their resting, and taking such refreshment as they could produce, so that in a short time they were again ready to proceed on their road.

They here again laid aside the Gipsy dress and appearance, and assumed a costume more approaching the European, and which would procure them more respect than they could expect to receive in the other. They also obtained horses to finish the journey across the
Bulgarian Mountains, which form part of the great Hæmus chain, to Varna, the port of their destination, expecting there to find some vessel by which they could reach any other Turkish port in communication with Circassia.
CHAPTER II.

My language! heavens!—

* * * * *

Were I but where 'tis spoken.

SHAKESPEARE.

Notwithstanding the heat of the noontide sun, which shone forth with the unobscured splendour of a southern clime, our hero and his two followers, who had been travelling since the early morn, still kept the road, eager to reach the coast they were now approaching.

Mountain after mountain, hill after hill, had been left behind, which at a distance had appeared so steep and lofty as to be almost insurmountable. Thus, in the ordinary affairs of life, difficulties which threaten to impede our progress when viewed in long perspective, and from which the faint-hearted turn back in despair, when fairly encountered and grappled with, may
often be overcome with half the labour and pain we contemplated.

They had just gained the brow of a lofty hill, up which they had been toiling, when a long and glittering line of silvery brightness met their view.

"The sea! the sea!" exclaimed Ivan, as for a moment the party reined in their steeds, to gaze with interest and curiosity on that longed for sign of the near accomplishment of their weary journey. "Onward, my friends, onward!" he added, setting spurs to his horse, impatient to reach that liquid road which now alone separated him from his country.

As they rode quickly on, by degrees the line grew broader and broader, till a wide expanse of sea lay before them, heaving in gentle undulations, and shining like a sheet of polished silver.

Here and there, the tiny white sail of some light caique seemed like a sea bird floating calmly on the waters, and farther off, the loftier sails of larger vessels, seen through the haze caused by the heat, resembled thin and shifting pillars of white smoke. All nature seemed to slumber. Not a human being, nor a dumb animal was to be seen abroad. The sails sus-
pended in festoons from the yards of the few vessels floating in the bay, hung down without moving, nor were the crews stirring. Not a boat was visible. All were taking their rest, till the great heat of the day should have passed.

As the travellers entered the small sea port of Varna, the streets also were dull, and deserted; and it was only when they reached the neighbourhood of the few cafenehs, of which the place boasted, that some signs of life were perceived; and, even here, few of the inmates had as yet roused themselves from their mid-day sleep. At the barber's shop also, the loquacious and vivacious operator might be seen just awaking from his slumbers, to welcome his customers, as, one by one, they lazily strolled to his door, either to submit their heads to his care, or to converse with his friends, or with any strangers who could supply the place of newspapers.

Our travellers first proceeded to the caravan-serai, to which they had been directed, to leave their horses to be returned to their owners; and they then repaired to the principal cafeneh, to refresh themselves with food and rest.

As they entered, a few of the occupants roused
themselves to gaze at the strangers; and in a short time, the coffee-house was again filled with guests. Some, forming knots, filled their chibouques, and as they smoked the fragrant weed, discussed various subjects in a grave and solemn tone. Here a group of listeners formed a circle round one of those story tellers, to be found in every Turkish coffee-house, intently hearing the wonderful tales he narrated, and expressing their satisfaction by low exclamations of applause.

Ivan and his companions had not been long seated, when a smoking dish of pilau and other Turkish dainties were placed before them.

While he and his friends were discussing their meal, a party of men had clustered near them; the sound of whose language, as he listened to their voices, made his heart beat with feelings of the most intense interest and delight. He drew in his breath with eagerness as he listened attentively. He could not be mistaken, they spoke in that language heard by him before, only from the mouth of one ardently loved—his mother. Those sounds struck a new chord in his feelings. It was his own native tongue. What a tumult of sensations did the words, simple as they were, raise in his bosom! He
gasped, in his anxiety not to lose a syllable of the words which fell from the mouths of his newly found countrymen. He could not remain quiet. He rose, and approached them. He could not withdraw his eyes from them, as he scanned the countenances of each to read their different characters. He longed to address them, but hung back hesitatingly, in fear of not finding suitable expressions. He understood all they said, and their conversation had become deeply interesting to him; but as he attempted to speak, his lips refused to give utterance to what he sought to say.

He returned to his seat in despair, but soon again arose, determining to address them. Words now flowed rapidly from his mouth. The Circassians started, as they first heard one dressed in the Frank costume, speaking their own language; but a smile of satisfaction lighted up their countenances as he continued. He told them that he was a Circassian, that he sought to reach his native land, in which all his hopes were centered—that he had long lived away from it, and knew not even its customs—that he had undergone many dangers and difficulties in approaching to that point—but that
he had not further means to accomplish his purpose.

As he finished speaking, a rough weather-beaten man in the Turkish dress started up, exclaiming: "The way to get there is clear before you; for my vessel now rides in the bay, waiting only for a fair wind, or any wind at all, to sail direct for the coast. This good company is going with me, and by Allah! we will reach it safely, or never trust the Reis Mustapha, in spite of all the Russian fleets that may beset our course. May the Evil One possess them, and their mother's sons!"

Having thus delivered himself of his unusually long oration, he sat down; and a tall and venerable man, who appeared to be the chief of the party, rose to confirm his words.

"Whoever you may be, young stranger, who, though with a Frankish dress and appearance speak our language, and are as you say of our country, you shall be welcome to join our party; and if, with good intentions, you visit the land of the Attèghèi, I will protect you from all dangers which may beset you, to the utmost of my power."

The speaker was dressed in the Circassian
costume. He bore on his head a white turban. His long beard descended to his breast. He wore a flowing caftan of silk; and at his girdle, a cama or dagger, with a broad two-edged blade, and an ivory handle. His features were handsome, and his eyes sparkled with the fire and animation of youth as he spoke.

Ivan's heart bounded with joy and gratitude at his words; for one of the last, the greatest difficulties in the accomplishment of his undertaking, was overcome.

"Willingly do I embrace your valued offer," he said; "and I trust to be able to prove to you and all my countrymen that I go to Circassia for the purpose alone of aiding her cause. As yet, I am a man without a name, and without friends: but the time may come when I shall find both, and be able to show my gratitude for your generosity. Till then you must be content to remain in ignorance of my previous history. My first endeavour shall be, to gain a noble name by gallant deeds, and thus prove myself worthy of the race from whence I sprung. I will then seek a brave and honoured sire, who may not blush to own his son. Till I have accomplished my purpose, I have sworn
to conceal my name from all. Know me, then, alone as ‘The Stranger.’ I bring with me but my own willing arm, and two faithful followers.”

“It is enough,” replied the old man who had before spoken. “Nor has Hadji Guz Beg lived so few years in the world that he cannot read the countenances of men. To your’s, young stranger, I can fully trust. In it I can read truth and courage. Say no more. I seek not to pry into your motives or private history. I have confidence in the one, and sure I am there is no disgrace in the other. You shall join us.”

“I confidently put myself into your power,” said Ivan. “You will thus be able to test my truth. For that of my followers I will be answerable.”

Javis and young Conrin were now invited to join the party, with whom the former, in his usual manner, soon made himself acquainted.

It was arranged that, at dawn of the next morning, the Turkish Reis Mustapha should return to the cafeneh, to conduct Ivan and his followers aboard his vessel, when, if the wind proved favourable, they were to set sail imme-
diately. Ivan was surprised at his good fortune in finding a vessel at Varna, bound for the Circassian coast, as he fully expected to be obliged to touch at several Turkish ports before he was successful in his search; but it proved that she had been driven, on her passage from the Bosphorus, by a violent gale of wind, thus far to the north, when she had been obliged to anchor to save herself from going ashore. A calm had succeeded the gale, which, most fortunately for Ivan, had detained her there for several days.

The principal person among the passengers was the Hadji Guz Beg, a celebrated Circassian leader, now returning from a pilgrimage which he had undertaken to Mecca, during a short interval of peace, which the Russians had, for their own sakes, afforded his country. He spoke much of the lands he had visited, and the adventures he had encountered, particularly of a visit he had paid to Mahomet Ali in Egypt, when his brother hero received him with affection and respect, urging him to remain some time with him. But news of the war in the Caucasus having been renewed had caused him to hurry back to partake in its dangers and ex-
citement. None could look at the old warrior Hadji, without believing that he was possessed of the most indomitable spirit and heroic bravery. As we pursue our history, we shall have much more to say of him.

The party soon separated, to make the final preparations for their voyage. The indefatigable Javis set out to purchase dresses and other necessaries, nearly exhausting the remainder of their money. Ivan had determined to make his appearance on the Circassian shores in his native costume, throwing aside for ever all marks and remembrances of Russian thraldom. Conrin wished, also, to adopt the same style of dress, to which his master willingly acceded: while Javis, who claimed no nation as his own, preferred the Turkish habit, as being suited to the language he spoke.

Javis returned late in the evening, bringing with him a sword of highly tempered Damascus steel, which he had obtained with great difficulty; a rifle and dagger for Ivan, and a brace of pistols for himself. He had procured, moreover, a handsome Circassian coat of dark cloth trimmed with silver, and a red cap, trimmed with fur, with other parts of the dress for his master, and a light-
coloured tunic and vest, with a cloak for the page, for whom he also brought a sharp silver-mounted dagger and pistols.

It would be difficult to describe the feelings of satisfaction with which Ivan assumed the garb of his ancestors. In imagination, he fancied himself at the head of a faithful band of his tribe—if in reality he could claim the rank of leader—ready to rush down on the invaders of his paternal shores; he grasped his sword, gazing on it with a stern and determined eye, and internally vowing never to sheathe it, until they had been driven from the land, or to perish with it bravely in his hand. As he drew himself up to his full height, with eye dilated, thoughts abstracted from all present scenes, he looked in truth already the gallant and brave warrior he fancied himself.

So regardless was he of all around him, that he did not observe the glance with which his youthful follower, who had silently and unobserved entered the apartment, regarded him. The boy stood rivetted to the ground as he first caught sight of his master in his new costume; and had Ivan wished to know what effect he was likely to produce on others, he might have looked
into the countenance of his page, when his vanity would have been fully satisfied.

Neither spoke for some time; but when Ivan at last perceived the youth, "Ah! Conrin," he cried, "are you come to welcome your master in the free garb of the mountains? Rejoice with me, that I no longer feel myself a slave and an alien in a land of tyranny; henceforward you will follow the fortunes of one determined to rise above the frowns of fate. Are you still resolved, boy, to share all the dangers and hardships I must encounter, to receive alone the slender reward I may be able to offer? Will you now quit me?"

"Oh, speak not thus, Sir," replied the boy; "where you go I will willingly follow, through all dangers, all hardships, even to death: that I may be only near you, to warn you of any threatened harm I may discover, is the utmost reward I seek for my poor services. To nurse you when wounded, to cheer your couch when you might be left to the heartless care of strangers, will be my anxious task. To accompany you on your excursions—to follow you to the field—to fight by your side—to shield your life, will be my greatest happiness."
Carried away by his feelings, the boy clasped his hands with energy as he spoke; but in a moment he stopped in confusion, as if he had expressed more than he had intended.

Ivan looked at him with astonishment. "You are indeed a noble, gallant youth," said he, "though you claim not high birth or descent; I am happy in finding so faithful and true a friend. I could not, if I wished it now, send you back to your country, and much it would grieve my heart to part from you; but I will protect you while I live and have an arm to wield my sword. Wherever I go, you shall accompany me; but I fear that you will be exposed to many perils in my service; for, believe me, the enemies of my country will not be driven from their attempt, without a fierce and desperate struggle; and it may yet be many years before they are free."

"Oh, Sir, you know not the happiness your words cause in my breast," answered Conrin. "With you I shall laugh at all dangers and difficulties, and fear nothing that can happen to me."

"I know your regard, my good boy. Now, leave me to myself. I would be alone, to medi-
tate on my undertaking. A few days more will carry us to those shores whence I wish never to return."

As the page withdrew, he cast a glance of affection at his master, and Ivan sunk again into the train of thought from which he had been aroused.

At length he rose, and wandered forth by himself, not feeling inclined for the company even of his faithful attendants. He climbed to the summit of the half ruined citadel of the town, and looked forth anxiously on the broad expanse of ocean which lay calm and unruffled at his feet, longing eagerly for a breeze, to fill the sails of the bark which was to carry him and his fortunes to death or victory. But not a breath fanned his cheeks as he waited, long watching, till he saw the sun descend over the land of his destination, in a broad flame of glory, tinging the whole sea with a yellow glow.

On every side, the fortifications were in a state of ruin and dilapidation, owing to the severe and protracted siege the town had sustained from the Russians, till it was traitorously delivered into their hands by that execrable monster, Usef Pacha.*

* Vide Spenser.
Rousing himself, he returned to the cafeneh, where he found young Courin anxiously awaiting his arrival. The boy looked sad and melancholy, till he saw his master's countenance wearing a more serene expression than before, when his features were lit up with pleasure, and he followed him into the house, where they found the Hadji, the captain of the zebeque, and the rest of his passengers.

The Hadji, on first glancing towards Ivan, as he entered in his national costume, scarcely knew him, but no sooner did he recognize him, than he rushed forward with outstretched arms to embrace him.

"Ah, my son," he cried, "I now recognize in you a true scion of the noble race of the Attêqheï;* and welcome shall you be to join, with your youthful arm, in our struggle for independence. Bismillah! with a few hundred such youths as you at my back, I would take every cursed Russian fort on our coast, may the Evil One possess them! You, perchance, have no father; I will be to you as one, and you shall be to me as a son. I will protect you from all who shall dare to oppose you, so fear not."

"I would wish for no more valiant protector,

* The name the Circassians call themselves.
noble Hadji," replied Ivan, "and gladly, in all things, will I follow your advice, and profit by your experience. Under your guidance, I trust soon to gain that renown after which I thirst, and to shew myself no unworthy child of the Attèghèi."

"You speak well, young man," replied the Hadji; "I have grown too old not to boast a little; and you need have no fear of not gaining credit under my standard. Bismillah! the fana Moscov well know the sight of it. I will shew you what fighting is in a few days, with the blessing of Allah!"

With such like conversation, the time passed, till all the party sought repose.

At the first streak of dawn, Ivan started up from the carpet on which he had passed the night, at one end of the divan, summoning Javis and his page, who came the moment he heard his master's voice. The Hadji, and the rest of the party quickly followed his example, and were met at the door of the cafeneh by the Reis, who came in haste to inform them that a breeze, light, though favourable for their voyage, had sprung up.

They rowed off into the bay, where the light
zebeque lay at anchor, with her sails loosened, and were quickly on board. The anchor was tripped, her head gradually paid off from the wind, and calmly and slowly she glided from the shores of Turkey.

Far in the distance appeared the blue and indistinct ridges of the Balcan mountains; before them, the quiet sea; while around passed many of the primitive looking fishing boats, and small coasting vessels, skimming over the waters, their crews habited in picturesque dresses, and gaudy-coloured turbans. No sooner were they under weigh, than the devout Mahometans of the party knelt for the performance of morning prayer, while Ivan, following their example, offered up his thanks to Heaven for his escape from so many and imminent dangers.
CHAPTER III.

Fierce and more fierce the gathering tempest grew, South, and by west, the threatening demon blew; Auster's resistless force all air invades, And every rolling wave more ample spreads.

FALCONER.

For several days did the light zebeque, which bore our hero and his fortunes towards his native land, glide calmly and securely over the unruffled surface of the blue and shining waters, without encountering any of those violent, but short lived, tempests for which the Euxine is so noted; or, what was still more to be dreaded by the voyagers, without meeting any of the Russian cruisers. All on board were congratulating themselves on the calmness of the sea, and the favourable weather, which seemed to promise a prosperous termination to their voyage, when they were doomed to experience how uncertain and changeable are all things here below.
The wind, which had hitherto blown gently in their favour, now treacherously shifted round to the north-east, while dark lowering clouds appeared in the horizon ahead. The breeze came at first in fitful and strong gusts, so suddenly commencing, that it scarcely allowed time to the slow-moving Turkish seamen to take in their canvass, ere the light vessel heeled over to the strength of the blast, but as they clewed up the sails she again righted.

"Allah be praised!" exclaimed the sturdy captain of the zebeque, running here and there, encouraging and assisting the people in their exertions to shorten sail; "we shall yet weather such a summer storm as this. Bosh! this is nothing. Now, my brothers, my dear brothers, work with a good will, and by the blessings of the Prophet, no harm will happen to us. Keep her well before it, Osman," turning to the man at the helm. "We must run before it for a time till the wind moderates, since she will not look up to it. Square the yards, my men," as the people descended on deck, having close-reefed the lower sail, and taken in the upper ones. "Well done, good brothers, Allah is merciful, and we may laugh at the storm."
With such like exclamations of encouragement, the Reis cheered the men's spirits, instead of swearing at and abusing them, as the commanders of vessels of more civilized nations are apt to do.

As the vessel's head turned from the gale, she ran quickly before it, bounding over the low, but froth-covered, hissing and sparkling waves which the squall had raised. The breeze quickly abated, and her head being again brought to the wind in nearly her right course, she dashed bravely through the water, the spray breaking over her bows in showers, sparkling with the hues of the rainbow, and sorely disconcerting her passengers.

To our hero, who had never been before on the surface of the ocean, the scene was novel and highly exciting. The waters, so lately smiling in calm and unruffled beauty, were now crested with a white glistening foam; the waves madly danced and sported in confused ridges; the dark clouds chased each other across the sky, and quickly disappeared to leave it blue and clear. From the looks of his seafaring companions, he could have seen that no danger was to be apprehended, had he not been too much occupied with the contemplation of the
sudden, and to him, extraordinary change which the face of nature had undergone, to think even for a moment of peril or mishap.

The youthful page, standing near his master, kept his eye fixed on his countenance, giving an eager and an inquiring glance; but, reading in his tranquil looks that there was nothing to fear, he seemed perfectly satisfied. Javis, who, in his wandering life, had passed over many leagues of sea, saw there was no danger to dread in this summer squall, and with his usual activity was giving his assistance to the sailors. He had already become a great favourite with all the crew and passengers; and even the dignified but kind-hearted Hadji regarded him with an eye of favour, as one faithful to the friend to whom he considered himself as protector. Young Conrin alone kept aloof from the crew in solitude and silence, except when answering a few low words to Javis's attentive inquiries, or when Ivan addressed him. His countenance would then light up with pleasure and animation, as he poured out his soul in expressions of admiration at the vast changing scene of waters, seeming alike, and yet so different and variable.

As the sun sank down beneath the waves, a
vast, glowing ball of fire, seeming to throw a liquid flame over the sky to the very zenith, reflecting its burning hue on the dancing waters; the wind fell as suddenly as it had arisen; but in its stead a dense fog came on, so that by the time the shades of night had cast their gloom over the sea, it was scarcely possible to distinguish any object beyond the head of the vessel. Nevertheless, with a firm confidence in destiny, the Reis kept the zebeque on her course, trusting that she would not be run down by any larger craft in the dark, or meet with any other accident, and throwing himself on his mat spread on the deck, waited for day-light, in the hope of seeing by that time the Circassian coast, to which he calculated they were drawing near.

The night passed tranquilly; but it was yet scarcely day-light when the breeze, again freshening, partly dissipated the fog, blowing slight openings in some places, and in others wreathing it into thick columns, when the man at the mast head sung out that he saw a large and towering sail on the weather bow, close aboard them. As he gave the alarm on deck, the Reis sprung from his mat and rushed to the helm.
The look-out man indicated the direction of the stranger, who evidently did not yet see them, concealed as their low sails were by the fog. Nothing daunted, the sturdy captain put the helm up, ordering the yards to be squared, and keeping the vessel's head before the wind, hoping thereby to escape the vigilance of their much-dreaded foe, for there was not the slightest doubt the stranger must be a Russian, it being improbable that one of any other nation should be found in those waters.

For some anxious minutes it appeared that this manoeuvre had succeeded; and calling on Allah and his holy prophet to succour them, he prayed that the fog, again becoming dense, would favour their escape; but it was a narrow chance. Should the breeze freshen a little more, it might in a moment blow aside the thin veil which shrouded them, and expose them to their remorseless enemies.

Ivan, the Hadji, and the rest of the passengers, had assembled on deck, and on being informed of the threatened danger, the former, to whom it was the most critical, nerved himself to meet it with fortitude. To fall into the hands of the Russians, by whom he would pro-
bably be soon recognized, would be utter destruction, perpetual slavery or death.

The Hadji, forgetful partly of his newly assumed sacred character, drew his sword with one hand, while he commenced telling his beads with the other; and, addressing himself to prayers for their safety, at intervals he hurled abusive epithets at the foe, and uttered words of encouragement to his companions. The rest of the landsmen followed the more pious part of his example, except Ivan's two followers, who stood by their master's side, looking as if determined to sell their lives dearly, ere they would permit him to be captured by their hated enemies. The crew, much to their credit, kept at their posts, ready to obey any of the orders the Captain might find it necessary to give, in altering their course, or in taking in or making sail.

As much canvass had already been spread on the lower yards of the vessel as she could bear; the Reis being fearful of setting any more aloft, in case of thus exposing her to the sight of the enemy. The man from the mast-head gave the welcome intelligence, that the Russian ship was no where to be seen; but scarcely a minute had elapsed, when another violent
and sudden squall struck the zebeque, almost splitting her sails, but, fortunately being before the wind, she scudded on still quicker from the danger.

The hopes of all on board, at this chance of escape, were raised high, only to be as quickly and grievously disappointed; for at the same instant, the blast which had struck them cleared away the fog, and discovered a large Russian corvette, at some distance fortunately, and heeling over on her beam ends to the violence of the squall, it having caught her it appeared unawares, her people being busily employed in taking in her more lofty sails.

It was a moment of deep suspense to all on board the Turkish vessel; but a cry of despair arose from her crew, as they saw with their glasses the crew of the corvette descending from her rigging, the sails yet unfurled, the yards being squared as her head came quickly round in the direction they were sailing. Onward she proudly came, ploughing with her bow the now fast rising sea, all her sails swelling, as if they would burst from the ropes which confined them. It seemed that no power could stop her course, as throwing the foaming waters
aside, she spurned the waves on which she rode.

Many a cheek on board the Turk was blanched with anticipations of the worst, and many a heart trembled which had scarce before felt fear, as the crew looked on their overwhelming pursuer, now rapidly shortening her distance from them. Even on the sturdy Captain’s brow large drops of perspiration stood, as he grasped more firmly the helm, casting many an anxious, but momentary, glance behind him, and then again at his sails and masts to see that they stood the gale; for he knew that his vessel’s best point of sailing was before the wind, drawing as she did, so little water, and scarcely seeming to touch the waves as she bounded along before them. Dark and thick masses of clouds rose rapidly behind the enemy, causing her sails to appear of snowy whiteness, and making her seem still more alarmingly near than she really was. As yet, however, for fear of stopping her way, she had not fired her guns, being perfectly certain of quickly catching her tiny chase.

The turmoil of the foaming waves, now lashed into ungovernable fury, increased each moment, while the thick heavy clouds, clashing in their
hurried and disordered race, sent forth reiterated peels of thunder, and vivid and sharp flashes of forked lightning darted through the air. The rising sun had for a moment shed forth his beams on the scene of tumult, casting a bright glittering light on the madly leaping waves; but as if angry at the wild uproar, again concealed his glory behind the clouds, leaving a deep gloom on the disturbed waters.

The huge billows rolled along side of the little bark; and, following up astern, as if eager to grasp her beneath their vortex, threatened every moment to overwhelm her. Still, however, keeping before them, she seemed thrown from wave to wave; her head now dashed into the frothy, boiling cauldron, and now lifted high above the sea, while a dark abyss threatened below, and a towering billow seemed about to break over, and inundate her. At intervals also, the clouds, to add to the disorder, sent forth deluges of rain so thick, as almost to conceal their vast pursuer from view; but when again it subsided, she was seen approaching still nearer to them.

At length, the Russian, angry and weary of the long chase, yawed a little, and discharged his
bow chasers in hopes of crippling the Turk, and bringing him to; but the balls either plunged into the leaping waves, or flew high above his masts, as difficult it was to take any certain aim, while so high a sea was running.

When the missiles of destruction passed thus wide of their mark, a laugh of defiance, which sounded much like desperation, escaped the Reis, as he watched where they fell. The corvette continued firing, as fast as the people could load the guns, but without doing any damage to the chase; and of course, the manœuvre constantly repeated, made her fall further astern, till hopeless of hitting so small a mark at that distance, she desisted from firing; and continuing the pursuit, followed, according to the shiftings of the wind, the devious track of the zebeque.

The gale as if wearied by its own violence, seemed to have expended its fury, and to be passing over; first leaving the larger vessel astern, which was preparing to make more sail, when it shifted round suddenly to the west with redoubled fury.

Though the zebeque was thus placed to windward, it was certain destruction to attempt
bringing so crank and light a vessel as she was, broad-side on to that raging sea, which would, in an instant, have overwhelmed her; on a wind being her worst point of sailing. The only alternative of unavoidable and quick destruction, was to run still on before it, and thus to bring the vessel under the very bows of her gigantic opponent.

Few men, however brave, will rush with their eyes open on certain death, if it is to be avoided. Not a moment was to be lost in deliberation, and as the renewed fury of the gale struck her, the zebeque's head was again turned towards the east, rapidly approaching the enemy.

The respective positions of the vessels may be thus described. The corvette was to the north, with her head south-east, while the Turk was running due east; thus approaching each other on two sides of a triangle, of which the apex was towards the east.

Now was the most trying moment for all on board the Turkish vessel, yet still there was one remote chance of escape—a hazardous one unquestionably; and yet, in preference to captivity, it was worth while to risk destruction. They
might, by running down to the Russian, and pretending to submit, pass under her stern, and escape before the wind. Yet it was an experiment, the very mention of which might be derided as the proposition of madmen.

The moment the Russian perceived the change of course the chase had made, the corvette hauled her wind without stopping to take in sail, and recommenced firing her guns, to allow no chance to escape, should the wind again fail, of capturing her almost certain prey. The balls, as before, at first flew harmlessly through the air, or plunged into the deep, as, towering in her pride; on she came, heeling over to the furious blast, and casting the foaming waters high over her broad swelling lofty bow.

Yet the power, the majesty of man's greatest achievement, seemed as nought amid the strife and tumult of nature. The roar of the artillery was mocked to scorn by the far louder crash of heaven's thunder, and the wild tumult of the waves. The flashes of the guns were far outshone by the brightness of the vivid lightning; but none in either vessel seemed to regard the violent fury of the elements, too intent were they on their own desperate game.
During this awful and critical interval, Ivan stood firm and collected, though a sad fate seemed to await him. On one side, he saw imprisonment, degradation, and a hopeless exile: on the other, a certain death, should the Russians, as was but too probable, when there was no prospect of a prize of value, run down the vessel which had given them so much trouble; or if she refused to yield, sink her with their guns. Ivan earnestly prayed for the latter fate: for of what value would life be to him, with all its lofty aspirations overthrown, his hopes blasted? What but misery and hopeless slavery, chains and toil, could he expect, if he escaped with life? Javis had brought him his sword, which he held firmly in his grasp, yet somewhat mechanically, perhaps, as if it would be a satisfaction to die with that in his hand: while Javis, casting glances of scowling defiance towards the foe, stood ready to defend his master if it were possible.

And young Conrin, where was he during this time of tumult and danger? Calm and undismayed, he too stood by his master's side. His courage seemed to have risen with the imminence of the danger. It was not ignorance of
the peril of their situation which gave him that cool and intrepid air; for he marked it well, as with unflinching glance he gazed ever and anon at the coming foe, and then fixed his large flashing eye intently on his master's face. His brow and cheek were paler than usual, and his lips compressed: yet it seemed that, although an awful death was about to overwhelm all on board, his features wore an air of almost satisfaction and happiness; but he spoke not, nor moved from his post. It was strange that so young a boy should show such courage at so trying a moment, when hardy seamen quailed and turned pale with terror.

Well did the gallant old Hadji show that his heart was fearless, and that he was a warrior-leader of a brave people, whom no danger could daunt, as rousing himself from his prayers, he stood defying his enemies, and prepared for the worst. Of his followers and the crew, some took courage from his example, and bravely grasped their arms, in the futile hope of, at least, having one blow for life; while others, pallid and trembling with dismay, tried to shelter themselves behind the bulwarks of the vessel.
The Russians continued firing without inter-
mission, the shots every instant falling closer to
the mark, till one went through the Turk's
after-sail, and another followed, striking his
dock, ploughing up the wood, and throwing the
splinters on every side, ere it bounded over-
board. A few more fell harmlessly; but they
were now approaching frightfully near the Rus-
sian, and they could scarcely hope to escape
more of his shots. Another of these missiles
came on board tearing away part of the bul-
warks, striking one of the seamen, and carrying
his mangled body with it into the sea. At this
event, even the hardy captain's presence of mind
forsook him: his courage for a moment gave
way; and quitting his post, he wrung his hands
in despair, leaving the vessel to her fate.

At this critical juncture, Ivan sprang aft, seiz-
ing the captain by the arm, and forced him to
resume his place at the helm.

"For shame, Reis Mustapha!" he exclaimed.
"You, have hitherto behaved like a brave, good
seaman, continue to prove that you really are one.
Regard not the shots till they sink us. That
can but be our fate at the last, when all hope
has flown. While you live, use all means, all
exertions to escape, for Providence may yet rescue us from destruction."

"Ay, ay, my brother," interrupted the brave old Hadji. "Give not way to despair while a hope remains. Cowards alone do that. Think you that I have prayed to Allah and his Prophet for no purpose, that he should thus abandon his servants? Have I journeyed to his holy city, and kissed the sacred Kaaba for nought? Still hope that our time is not yet come."

"The noble Hadji speaks truly," added Ivan. "Take the helm, Reis, and guide us straight onward. We shall soon know the worst."

The Reis obeyed; taking the tiller from the hands of Javis, but with a look which plainly indicated that he was without hope.

By this time they were close to the corvette; but her guns were now more carelessly aimed, from the certainty the Russians felt of capturing the chase.

The awful, the dreaded moment approached, which would too probably consign every human being on board the zebeque to eternity, for their huge opponent seemed determined to run them down if their colours were not instantly lowered, and even then there was but little chance of their escaping that fate. Another moment and
the next vast surge would bring her upon them! A more tremendous blast than they had hitherto felt now struck them, hurling their tiny bark before it into the very jaws of the foe. Deluges of thick rain rushed down, while a loud roar thundered from the clouds, and a vivid flash of lightning darted through the air. A loud shriek of despair rose from the crew: their fate was sealed.

"Allah protect us!" cried the Hadji. "This is an awful time."

The bravest gasped for breath; the deck seemed to shake beneath their feet. The sea dashed over them, but the thick falling rain obscured all around from their sight.

The young page gazed more earnestly at his master, but his limbs trembled not, nor did a word escape his lips.

The dreaded shock came not; the vessel still floated on the waves; the thick rain ceased.

Again a cry arose from the Turkish crew, but it was no longer that of terror. "Where is the Giaour? where is the Russian ship?" was uttered by the voices of all. They had passed her.

There she lay, close on their quarter, with her head to the wind, her foremast shattered to the deck, the spars and rigging dashing against her
sides, her bulwarks stove in: the proud ship of Russia, was a wreck—she was on fire!

Even at that moment of confusion, some small guns were fired over her stern, with a determined feeling of animosity and revenge, in the hopes of doing some injury, but their shot fell impotently into the waves, and the crew were too much occupied with their own preservation, to pay any further attention to the hard-driven chase.

Loud prayers ascended from the deck of the Turk, for their narrow and providential escape; Ivan's heartbeat quicker with gratitude than it had with fear; while young Conrin clasped his hands with silent fervour, and seemed ready to fall at his master's feet with joy.

The Hadji, having concluded his brief prayer, exclaimed; "Did I not tell you, Reis, that Allah would protect us, that my prayers would not be in vain? Look, where the late impious Kaffir lies shattered and scathed by Heaven's rage, at the very moment he thought himself secure of his prey. Another time think not that it is your kismet* to die; that will come in Allah's.

* Kismet, fate.
good time; but strive on always to the last. Think you my countrymen could hold out against our mighty foe, if we thought that it was our kismet to be conquered? Bosh! kismet is a good thing, when it points to victory; but else it is nonsense. No, my brother, no; strive while you can, and yield to fate only when it overpowers you."

These principles the gallant Hadji not only preached, but with the rest of his countrymen, practised.

As the danger diminished, so did the courage of the terror-stricken crew return. They taunted with gestures their crippled and now impotent foe, as the light zebeque bounded away from her before the gale. "Why don't you come on now?" some cried. "See, Giaour; see, cowardly Kaffir, we are sailing away from you; why don't you follow us as before? Come on, then, come on. We cannot wait for you. We are in a hurry to pursue our voyage."

With such like expressions the crew shewed their delight at their escape, while rapidly scudding onward they soon run the corvette out of sight. As long as her movements could be distinguished, she remained with her head still
to the wind, dipping her bows under the waves which broke in deluges over her. Thick wreaths of smoke rose from that part of her deck where her foremast had stood, curling round her remaining masts as it was blown aft; but that in time decreased, and the fire was apparently got under. So little mercy had she shewn to the zebeque, that no commiseration was felt for her fate, whatever it might be.

Those only who have escaped from imminent peril, when either death or slavery has been about to overtake them, can fully enter into the feelings of gratitude and satisfaction which our hero experienced, as the last topmast sails of the Russian ship sank below the horizon; and those only who have seen a loved object rescued from a threatened danger, can feel as the young Conrin did; for few could love so well as that strangely enthusiastic and romantic boy loved his master.

They continued on their course, running all day before the wind, which drove them towards their destination, each moment dreading to fall in with another Russian cruiser; but not a sail appeared to alarm them. By night the wind,
still keeping favourable, subsided to a gentle breeze, while a sharp look out was kept from the mast-head for another enemy, or to discover the coast, which they knew they must be now nearing.
CHAPTER IV.

Chi va lontan dalla sua patria vede
Cose da quel che già creder lontane,
Che narrandole poi non se gli crede,
E stimato bugiardo ne rimane.

ORLANDO FURIOSO.

The territory of the Circassian tribes is bounded on the north by the River Kouban, which separates it from the lands now inhabited by the Tchernemorskoi Cossacks, whom the Russians—after utterly annihilating the former inhabitants, (not using the words in a figurative sense)—placed there as a rough and sturdy out-work to their empire. From the mouths of the Kouban it is bounded by the Black Sea, the coast trending from the north-west to the south-east as far as Iscuria, on the mouth of the Salamache River, which separates it on the south from the province of Mingrelia, now nominally subject to Russia. To the south-east is the former kingdom of Georgia, now
also brought under subjection to the same benign and far reaching power. To the north-east, the sources of the Kouban and some of its numerous mountain tributaries pass through its present borders, the plains beyond having been conquered by Russia. To the east, the boundaries are uncertain, depending on those natural fortifications, the inaccessible cliffs of the Caucasus; but the tribes even to the very shores of the Caspian, have set their invaders at defiance, and have joined the league of the patriot Circassians.

Circassia Proper is divided into Lower Abasia to the north, bordering on the Kouban, and Upper Abasia to the south; the inhabitants of the former being by far the most civilized and polished of the two, though both equally cordial in detestation of their invaders. These two divisions are again separated into provinces, those of Nottakhaotzi, Khapsoukhi, Bredoukha, and of the Demirghoi, in Lower Abasia, which is the part of the country to which we are about to introduce our readers. The tribes keep distinct from each other, though the members of each live scattered about in all parts of the country.
The whole of the independent part of Circassia is mountainous, that alone having been able to withstand the immensely superior force which the Russians brought against them; but the tribes of the plains equally hate their conquerors, and take every opportunity of escaping to join their still free countrymen. Indeed, the whole, or greater part, of some tribes have migrated to the mountains to be released from Russian oppression, leaving their homes, their fields, and their property, to ruin and destruction.

There are no cities or towns in Circassia; the inhabitants preferring the freedom and health of a mountain life to the trammels and formality of the city, and each chief choosing the most beautiful and romantic spot for his habitation, while his followers and dependents collect in hamlets in the neighbourhood.

The principal rivers falling into the Kouban are the Kara Kouban, the Ubin, the Aranos, the Laba, and the Urup; those which empty themselves into the Black Sea are the Sukhoi, the Mezi, near the Russian Fort Ghelendjik, the Toughe, the Soubachi, which divides Upper and Lower Abasia, the Kenehili, the Llhena, the Kodos, and the Salmache, which separates
the country from Mingrelia. Numerous other streams and rivulets meander through the whole country, and fertilize every vale.

At the time to which our story refers, the Russians had succeeded in erecting several forts in the boundaries of the country; those of Anapa and Ghelendjik on the coast, both built under the protection of a powerful army, aided by the guns from their ship. They have established also a line of fortified towns to the north of the Kouban, the principal of which are Ekatermodar, Labinskai, Stavrapol, Alexandrov, and Georgivesk, forming a road of communication from the Black Sea towards the Caspian, called the Valdi Caucasse. But even between these towns the Russians cannot move except with a strong escort, as otherwise they would run the greatest risk of being cut off by the mountaineers, who descending from their fastnesses, frequently make excursions far beyond them. There are also other forts of less importance, which will be mentioned in the course of our history.

The origin of the Circassians, like that of all nations who have tradition alone to hand down their history, is clouded in obscurity. They
themselves do not pretend to know from what race they are sprung, but it is certain that they are of very great antiquity, and have in all ages been celebrated for their bravery and other warlike qualities, their courtesy, and the surpassing beauty of their women. At one period they inhabited an extended tract of territory, comprising the Crimea, and all the country bordering on the Sea of Marmora and the Euxine; but the tribes dwelling in that country either became amalgamated with the Tartars, or were driven thence by the superior numbers of that people, as the pure stock is now only to be found among the mountains of the Caucasus, or in the plains immediately below them.

It seems probable, that the Circassians are of Median extraction, and were at one time as civilized as any of the surrounding nations, if not more so: but it must be confessed that they have not advanced, even with the same steps in the arts and sciences as their neighbours; though they retain in a greater degree the polished and courteous manners, and heroic virtues which formed the pride of the nations of antiquity. The tribes which boast of belonging to the purer race, unmixed with any foreign blood, distin-
guish themselves by the name of Attèghèi, and as in Great and Little Karbadia, their language is spoken with the greatest purity. Those provinces have most likely from time immemorial, been inhabited by the true Circassians, who thence scattered themselves over the surrounding districts, either by conquest, or by finding the land unoccupied.

The people to whom we give the general name of Circassians, call themselves Attèghèi; some writers mention them as Carbadians, from their former country of Carbadia, while the Turks and Russians call them without distinction, Abasians.

There are four classes of society among them, the first, that of the Pechees or Princes, who are the heads of the most powerful tribes; the Ouzdens or nobles, many of whom, at present, have no real power, but who disdain to intermix their blood with those below them; the Tocavs or Freemen, many of whom possess wealth, and are, except in blood, equal to the nobles; and lastly, the serfs, or slaves taken in war, who in time become incorporated into the tribes of their masters, and may gain their freedom. The power of the Princes has of late years much
declined, though they are treated with the strictest observances of respect, by those of inferior rank.

In some tribes, the chiefs are hereditary, while in others, a head is chosen among the principal nobles of their own tribe, for his life, except he should prove incapable, in which case he is deposed, and another elected in his stead. At times also, instead of the head of the tribe, a leader is chosen to conduct them to war, while the former acts in a civil capacity alone.

In no country is greater respect shewn by inferiors to those above them in rank or age; and in no country has the spirit of clanship been carried further, all being bound to revenge the death of one of their tribe on the slayer; and, should the offender not be given up, on the life of any member of his family; the Lex Talionis, being indeed the principal law of the land, as it must be in all countries, where there is no fixed government to dispense justice.

The government, indeed, such as it is, may be looked upon rather as a Republic, than as an Oligarchy; for those of all ranks may give their opinion, and vote at the public meetings, though
the princes and chiefs of clans have the most influence, and their sentiments are looked upon with the greatest respect. Perhaps, no country is more free, or governed with so much regularity and order.

Each man may if oppressed, leave his chief, and put himself under the protection of another; changing his lands at will to any spot he may find unoccupied, no one having the right of keeping lands he does not cultivate. Though, for many generations, they have remained under successive descendants of the same chief; they are bound by no other tie, than that of love and respect, while so carefully does each class guard its own privileges, that no chief has ever succeeded in uniting the whole under his own authority.

Their laws are few and simple, exactly suited to their state of society, and so strictly enforced, that they are comparatively rarely infringed; each tribe being answerable for the crimes of any individual member, who consequently offends equally against his own friends. All claims are settled by a jury, composed of six members from the respective tribes, and are generally arranged by payment of fines, two hundred head of oxen,
being the fine for manslaughter, and so on for theft, abduction, &c. Should the fine not be paid by the time agreed on, the sufferers carry off the cattle, and destroy the fences and fields of the offenders.

It must be understood, that these tribes of the Attèghèi are not distinct races, but merely families who have been, perhaps for ages, bound together by a solemn oath, to support each other in every way, forming a brotherhood, as it were, who consider themselves so nearly related, that they may not even intermarry with each other.

The religious faith of the people, is formed of a belief in one omnipotent Being, and in the immortality of the soul; but they have no established priests. The elders and most venerable chiefs, or those most noted for piety, together with their aged bards, perform the few and simple ceremonies of religion. Their place of worship is in some secluded grove of aged and lofty trees, held sacred for ages by their ancestors, whose tombs lie around them.

Let our readers ask themselves, if such worship is not more likely to be grateful to the Divine Being, than the gross superstition and
bigoted idolatry of the benighted Russian, who scarcely knows the name of his Maker.

There is not the slightest doubt, but that Christianity was at one time the prevailing religion of the country, as there are numerous crosses in all parts, still looked up to with veneration by the people; and there are the ruins also of several churches. It is said, that in some parts of the interior of the more remote districts of Upper Abasia, the people still profess Christianity unmixed with any Pagan observances.

The Circassians divide the week as among us, considering Sunday as the most sacred day. Easter is celebrated by them as a holy feast, with the utmost pomp, beginning with a strict fast. They have several saints or inferior deities, guardians, they say, of the air, water, the harvest, the summer, in whose honour they hold festivals at stated seasons, as in Catholic countries; particularly one, which they celebrate much in the same manner as the feast of St. John, in some parts of Germany, by deck ing a tree with flowers, lights, and other ornaments. Except on these particular days, they do not pay their presiding guardians any attention, nor even then,
do they pray to them, but offer up sacrifices by immolating victims on an altar, according to the old Pagan custom of Greece and Rome. They meet in the sacred groves to pray before going to battle, and after a victory.

No religious ceremonies take place at their marriages, the couple being alone betrothed in the presence of their friends, (as is now the lawful way of coupling people in civilized England) when a feast is given, and games take place.

The burial ceremonies, even of a chief or warrior, are simple, consisting of a funeral oration, pronounced over his grave, while hymns are sung by those who attend the procession to his last resting-place. The anniversary of his death is celebrated with feasts, and prayers over his tomb, decked with flowers.

Mahometism has of late years been introduced into the Caucasus by the Turks, and some mosques have been established, but it has not gained much ground; their ancient institutions being too deeply rooted in the affections of the people, though numbers now profess it, but conform to its customs, as far only as their inclination leads them.

The Circassians are, in general, a most abste-
mious people, living chiefly on a farinaceous diet, and though possessing spirituous liquors and wine, they use them in moderation, indulging in them, as well as in meat, only on their great feasts.

They are hospitable in an unbounded degree, their guest-houses ever standing open for the reception of visitors, but they have been taught, by the vilest treachery, too often practised against them by the instigation of the Russians, to be suspicious of strangers coming without a recommendation to them. Any one, however, who may visit their country under the protection of one of their chiefs, they are ready to protect to the utmost with their lives, each noble vieing with the other in paying their guest attention.

They have the deepest veneration for age, listening to the counsels of their elders, and obeying their commands.

To the female sex also, they pay the most chivalrous devotion. Their minstrel's highest theme, next to their warrior's deeds, is the praise of woman's charms, and the proudest noble treats the lowly maiden with every consideration and respect, nor thinks himself demeaned in aiding her in any occupation in which she may be engaged.
The lower orders are in the habit of sending their daughters to the Constantinopolitan matrimonial market, (for so it is to them,) receiving, however, some valuable consideration, to insure their safe arrival there. The Circassians also take every precaution to hear continually of the welfare of their daughters in Turkey; nor do they ever compel them to go against their will, or, as in the more civilized countries of Europe, drive them to contract a hateful marriage, or offer them the dreadful alternative of being immured for life in a convent. The nobles never allow their daughters to marry, except with one of their own rank, and when they send them to Stamboul, it is to become the chief sultana of some Pacha's harem, an arrangement the fair girls consider the happiest fate which could befall them, though exchanging the liberty of their mountains for riches, splendour, and a prison, but gaining what they never could at home, entire liberty, on the death of their lord, and frequently considerable wealth. The Circassian girls are much prized in the Turkish harems, beyond their beauty, for their various useful and ornamental accomplishments.

We have said that there are no towns, the
people living in villages, hamlets, or detached dwellings. The houses consist only of a ground floor, built of wood plastered over, and neatly thatched. The dwelling of a chief consists of several separate divisions: the anderoon, or women's apartments; that of the lord himself; and the guest house; besides the houses of the servants, the granaries, and stables for the horses and cattle.

It is curious to see the interior of what appears a humble cottage, filled with rich couches of silk, magnificent Turkey carpets, splendid armour and weapons, inlaid tables and other valuable articles.

Some of the villages are fortified, but in a manner to afford no protection against cannon. They are generally situated by the side of some limpid stream, and in the most picturesque situations.

They speak a language entirely different from any other known tongue; but Turkish and Arabic is understood by many of their chiefs, who have served in Turkey and Egypt. Several also have been in the Russian service; but have returned to their native country to defend her rights, in preference to indulging in luxury and ease under a despot.
They say that their fighting men amount to two hundred thousand; but every man amongst them is a warrior.

The arts are at a very low ebb among them, though they possess the greatest skill in forging their armour and weapons, which they emboss beautifully. They also work in gold and silver embroidery; but it must be confessed they are totally ignorant of science, nor have they even a written language, and very few among them can read Turkish, though they pay the greatest respect to the Koran, with which they administer their oaths.

They are very industrious, having brought their lands into the highest state of cultivation, thus enabling them within a small extent of country, aided by the fertility of the soil, to support a large population. The farms are kept with the greatest neatness, and surrounded with thriving orchards. They possess also large flocks and herds.

On all public occasions and when engaged in war, the chiefs wear complete suits of splendid armour, much like that of the ancient Persians, from whose country they sometimes procure it at the present day. On a foray, when activity
is most requisite, and they wish not to be distinguished from their followers, they have under their ordinary dress, light coats of chain armour of most exquisite workmanship, many of which are made in the country, and others come from Persia. They possess rifles and pistols, but many still use the long bow and arrow, with which they can take the most deadly aim. They have also long swords, and the broad two edged dagger, such as was used by the Romans of old, a most murderous weapon in their hands. They use also a sharp straight sabre without a guard to the hilt. The ordinary dress of all classes is elegant and picturesque.

There are numerous wild animals in Circassia, such as bears, wolves, jackals, and stags, which the people eagerly hunt. Their horses are celebrated for speed and strength, and they are perhaps the most expert horsemen in the world.

We will now sum up the character of the Circassians. No one, even their enemies, can deny that they possess the most heroic bravery and undaunted courage, the most devoted love of liberty, are hospitable to the utmost of their means, generous in the extreme, virtuous in
their lives, and abstemious in their habits; that they venerate age, are courteous and gentle to their women, polished in their manners to each other, more especially to strangers, humane to their prisoners, have a firm reliance on the goodness of the divinity, a deep sense of religion, and the strictest regard to an oath, which is inviolable among them; and yet, this being no highly coloured or overdrawn character, these are the people, whom the Russian stigmatize as untameable barbarians, whom it will be a benefit to the human race to sweep from the face of the earth.
CHAPTER V.

Silent and thoughtful and apart from all
Stands Madoc; now his noble enterprize
Proudly remembering, now in dreams of hope
Anon of bodings full of doubt and fear.

SOUTHEY.

The now calm, glass-like waters shone with a rich glow of orange tint reflected from the sky, as the sun rose in majestic glory from his ocean bed. The sails of the Turkish bark caught the radiance, as, impelled by a gentle air, she glided through the sea of molten gold.

As the deep glow gradually faded from the horizon, leaving a clear view of the ocean's margin, the man from the mast-head shouted in tones of delight, "Abasa! Abasa! land! land! the land of Circassia!" The effect was electrical. All on board turned their gaze towards the east. The Hadji and the devout
Mahometans ceased from their morning prayer; the seamen mounted the rigging; and, as a light gauze-like veil of mist was drawn up to the sky, the blue mountains of the lofty Caucasian range appeared just rising above the waters in the far distance.

Ivan's heart beat with enthusiastic delight as he gazed on the land of his birth, the land of all his most romantic aspirations. The accomplishment of his eager wishes—the fulfilment of his vow—would not much longer be deferred. His earnest gaze was fixed on the scene, as mountain after mountain, and hill after hill, rose to view.

As the zebeque glided swiftly towards land, the more minute details of the landscape could be distinguished; mountains of every fantastic form were seen piled one on another, clothed with verdure from the bright water's edge to the topmost peak, where they seemed lost in the pure blue sky. Trees of various foliage bent over precipitous and rugged cliffs, bounding a smiling valley, through which meandered a sparkling stream; by its banks grazed herds of cattle while numerous horses galloped in unrestrained freedom over the velvet lawn.
The zebeque had made the shore rather too far to the south of their destination, and as she coasted calmly along, Ivan gazed with enraptured and untiring eye on the lovely scene. Far as the eye could reach, up the sides of the steep sloping hills, numerous flocks of white sheep were seen quietly grazing, and from craig to craig, bounded nimbly with long and slender limbs the jet black goats.

He looked on the unostentatious abodes of his countrymen, their little cots built on the slopes of the gently swelling hills, amid fields of ripening corn, their farm yards surrounded by groves of trees covered with fruit, from among which the thin smoke from their domestic hearths curled upward in wreathy pillars. All around appeared the abodes of contentment and peace—how sadly deceitful and treacherous. In another day all might be laid waste, and a howling desert usurp its place.

The lately dignified Hadji, excited to the most enthusiastic delight, walked the deck with the activity of youth, pointing out to Ivan the names of the different little inlets, bays, valleys, and mountains as they coasted along.

They were saluted too, as they passed, by
many a band of warriors, hastening towards the scene of strife in the north, where their invaders had landed. Many a gallant chief, in his war array, his bright armour glittering in the sun, galloped by, waving his shining sword to salute them, attended by a band of followers, shouting defiance to their foes, and singing hymns of victory.

No one seemed to enter into Ivan's feelings so well as young Conrin, whose eyes brightened with delight unusual to him as he gazed ever and anon at his master's countenance: and then turned them towards the lovely scene, whose beauties he seemed to enjoy the more that they were seen by one he loved.

The spot where the Reis had appointed to land was near the Bay of Pchad, in sight of which they soon came. Here a dense forest covered, with thickest foliage, both the mountain side and the shore to the very water's edge, affording a secure shelter to the inhabitants, should any of their enemies attempt to land in order to destroy their vessels. The zebeque ran boldly on towards the smooth yellow sand, almost overshadowed by the trees; and as she neared the shore, a man, whose glit-
tering armour and helmet, decked with an eagle's plume, betokened him a chieftain, approached the water, mounted on a coal-black steed, and urging the noble animal up to his girths into the sea, he waved his sword, and courteously beckoned to the strangers to land. Having saluted them, he again slowly and with dignity retired from the shore.

As the vessel's keel almost touched the sand, her anchor was let go, her sails being quickly furled by her eager crew, delighted at thus having brought their hazardous adventure to a successful issue. In a moment, she was surrounded by boats from the shore, to lighten her of her cargo ere she was drawn up on the beach beneath the shelter of the trees.

Into the first the Hadji, our hero, and his two followers stepped; and as her bow touched the strand of Circassia, the natives flocked around, eager to welcome the strangers to their shores.

Ivan's heart leaped with joy as his foot touched his native land; and he would have knelt down in gratitude to heaven, and kissed the soil he had so eagerly longed to tread, but that the presence of the surrounding multitude
prevented his giving way to his feelings. For an instant, then, that sensation of blankness, of loneliness, that unsatisfied feeling, which sometimes comes over us, when we fancy that our desires are accomplished, seized him, and oppressed his spirits, as accompanied by his two retainers, he followed the Hadji towards the spot to which the chieftain had retired.

No sooner did the latter see the Hadji approaching, than he leaped from his steed, which his squire held while he hastened to meet him. The two aged men, for the noble warrior seemed far advanced in years, rushed forward; their dignity thrown aside, and falling on each other's necks, they embraced and almost wept for joy.

"My brother!" exclaimed the aged chief; "hast thou, indeed, again returned to me from thy long and perilous pilgrimage among strange people? Do I again see the noble pride of our race in life and strength? Allah be praised for all his mercies!"

"Yes, my brother!" rejoined the Hadji, "yes, Allah is merciful. I have escaped all dangers, and my heart rejoices to see you still able to bear arms against our foes; but say, my
brother, how fares my son Alp, my well-loved young son? Does the boy live? Does he still follow up the early promise of his youth?"

"Your son, my brother, is well worthy of your name. He still dwells with his Attalick; but being well skilled in all martial exercises, he is now able to follow you to the field, and has already gained some honour against the enemy. It will rejoice your heart to see him, and you will seem to live your youth over again as you recognise yourself in him."

"To Allah and his prophet be all praise," replied the Hadji, piously. "Then am I content. But say, my brother, does my wife still live to rejoice in the growing promise of our son?"

"Yes, yes, she still lives."

"Allah be praised!" again ejaculated the Hadji. "And say, does my sister still live; does she also rejoice in the noble deeds of your gallant sons? Are they yet numbered among the stern bulwarks of our country? Do their steeds yet carry them like thunder-bolts against the foe?"

The old warrior shook his head.

"Alas! my brother, the leaden death of the
hated Urus* have laid two in the graves of our fathers, where they sleep the sleep of the brave; but the rest yet remain to avenge their fate."

"God is great;" answered the Hadji, "and by his prophet's help we will yet take ample vengeance on their destroyers."

"Allah is merciful, and will give us blood for blood;" replied the other. "But think not that they died ere they had made their foes pay dearly for their death. No, hundreds of the slavish Urus fell before their conquering sabres; and in that thought, I cease to mourn, but yet what are the lives of a thousand Urus to one true son of the Attèghèi?"

"Bosh! as nothing. As chaff to corn, as dross to pure gold; but we will avenge them brother," said the Hadji, grasping his sword. "My heart will beat with joy, when I find myself once more among their ranks."

"That may soon be; for their ships, but a short time ago, landed a large force on the coast to the north, who are yet shut up in their fort.

* Urus, the name the Circassians give to the Russians.
But say, who are these strangers who accompany you? What do they here?"

"In the first joyful moment of meeting you I thought not of them, but will now attend to the duties of hospitality." And introducing Ivan, the Hadji added, "I bring with me, one who is our countryman, my adopted son, next to Alp in my love; regard him as such, for my sake."

"To me he will always be welcome," replied the chief, taking Ivan by the hand. "And I will believe that he is worthy to be a true son of the Attèghèi. But come, we will waste no further time here. He and his attendants shall accompany us, while some of my followers shall stay to bring up your goods from the vessel. We will at once repair to the dwelling of the noble Prince of Pchad, whither I was bound, when I saw your vessel approaching the land. He will welcome you with the arms of friendship. Away, my Deli Khans," he cried, addressing several young men who surrounded him. "Give notice to the noble Prince of our coming, and say, moreover, that some strangers accompany us."
The Chieftain, and his brother, the Hadji led the way from the sea shore, accompanied by Ivan, and followed by a numerous band of active young mountaineers, each completely armed, with a gun slung on his back, a sword by his side, and a dagger in his belt, to which several had added pistols. Their dress consisted of a coat, fitting close to the body, of dark cloth trimmed with silver, without a collar, and open at the neck, secured by loops in front, and having long hanging sleeves; the skirts reached completely round to the knees, wide trowsers of a darkish green colour, tightening at the calf, embroidered boots of dressed leather, and belts round their waists of the same. Their bonnets were of sheeps-skin or dark cloth. Altogether the costume was elegant and picturesque.

The party proceeded for a short distance through a thick grove, on a gentle slope, which soon terminated in rough cliffs rising abruptly from the lower ground, under the shelter of wide spreading beech trees of vast height, and of venerable oaks, extending their leafy boughs, almost to the water's edge. They soon arrived at the entrance of a beautiful valley, which extended in a winding course far inland. After
passing some way through it, they were entirely shut in by rocky cliffs, or steep, almost precipitous hills, yet clothed with the graceful linden, the dark leaved mulberry, the magnificent chestnut, the dark and silvery olive, and many other trees; and as they wound their way up the steep sides of the hills, they passed beneath natural arbours of the high creeping vine, and the graceful hop, which twined their slender tendrils from tree to tree, and from peak to peak.

The distant scenery was still hidden by the leafy shelter, when a successive discharge of fire arms was heard, and as they emerged from the thickets into an open space on the summit of the hill, a party of young cavaliers was seen galloping towards them at desperate speed, flourishing their swords, and firing off their pistols, and uttering shouts of congratulation and welcome; to which the old chief's party answered when the others rushing forward, joined their ranks.

A beautiful village of low cottages scattered among the trees now appeared. Apart from the rest, and having greater pretensions to architectural grandeur, stood a dwelling, surrounded
with several other buildings appertaining to it. From the principal gate-way in the fence, which enclosed it, was seen advancing towards the party, a personage, whose appearance struck Ivan with admiration. His long, flowing, and blanched beard, the deep lines which furrowed his expressive countenance, and his attenuated figure, bespoke him a man far advanced in the vale of years, though his eye still glowed with some of the fire of youth. He walked erect and firm, clothed in complete armour, with helmet on head, cuirass and cuisses of polished steel plates richly embossed, as with a noble and dignified air, he advanced to meet his guests, and to welcome them to his home.

He courteously pressed their hands. "Welcome, my noble friend;" he said, addressing the chief, "and you, oh venerable Hadji, who by the blessing of Allah, have returned from your travels, to bring wisdom and knowledge to our country. Welcome also to these strangers, who, under thy protection, I will receive as my sons and friends. My house, and all whom Mahmood commands, are at your orders—"

"Most noble Prince," replied the Hadji, as spokesman of the party, "not the least of my hap-
piness in returning again to my loved country, is to see you still alive, and ruling your people with wisdom and justice. Gladly will we partake of your well known hospitality."

Saying which, the Hadji led the way to the guest house, to which the Prince pointed, following himself in the rear of the party, who entering, took their seats on broad cushions or ottomans, which surrounded the room; their arms being hung up on the walls by attendants in waiting. The aged host would not take a seat, till the Hadji and his brother had earnestly pressed him to do so.

"Rest here awhile," he said, "till my women can prepare food to refresh you after your voyage. Do not imagine, that though daily threatened by a descent of our deadly enemy, I cannot, as in other days, prepare a banquet for a thousand or more of our gallant warriors, if they should honour me by a visit."

The conversation now became general. The Hadji had many inquiries to make, and much to relate; and as the time wore on, several nobles of lesser rank, and importance in the neighbourhood, and subject to the Prince of Pchad, entered, and took their seats on the
Divan. Ivan was silent, listening with interest to the conversation, while his two attendants stood respectfully among the others at the further end of the room.

The subject of discourse then turned entirely on the state of the country; the Uzden Achmet Beg, the Hadji's brother, giving him an account of the different military operations which had occurred since the commencement of the campaign.

"Bismillah!" exclaimed the old chief. "We have well beaten the cursed Urus, whenever we could catch them beyond the shelter of their fortresses, where we coop them up like so many sheep in their pens. They talk of occupying our country; why, they have in all but three or four forts in it, which they can only hold by means of their fleet; and which we could capture any day we liked. Except Anapa, which we care no more for, than a dog chained to his kennel, who barks without reaching us to bite, they have only Ghelendjik, and another small fort near the sea, and Aboon at the head of the Kouban, where we close them in, and have nearly starved them to death. But as they can do no harm there, we do not choose to risk losing many
valuable lives to take it. They once attempted to establish one of their colonies and forts at Soudjouk Kalie; but that time we were prepared for them. We rushed down upon them like a troop of wolves into a sheep fold, ere they could throw up their fortifications, and carried away one half of their people to till our own fields; while the rest we drove into the sea, where their ships picked them up. They found it was no use attempting to sow corn where they would never be allowed to reap, so they sailed away; and with the blessings of Allah, we will soon make them do the like from all parts of the country."

"Allah be praised, we will soon accomplish that work;" exclaimed the Hadji. "My heart yearns to be among them again, with my true sword in my hand, in the loving way I used to treat them. Bismillah! we must make a foray among them, just to take the rust off our weapons. What say you, my son?" turning to Ivan, "will you try the strength of your arm on the hard heads of the Urus, and strike your first blow for the liberty of your country?"

"Gladly will I accompany you, my noble friend," said Ivan. "I should not wish to serve
under a better leader, for you well know how ardently I long to prove myself worthy of the race from which I have sprung."

"Then, by the favour of Allah," replied the Hadji, "before long, I will lead the way among their ranks, and we will then see what stuff they are made of, by cutting them to pieces. They are slaves and curs. Their mothers and fathers are dogs."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several male and female slaves bearing a repast. The dishes were placed on small wooden tables, about a foot high, before each person, as they sat round the room on the ottoman. The host himself handed to every guest a cup of light mead, a ceremony preliminary to the repast. He would not be seated until he had performed this courtesy; nor would he join the meal, notwithstanding his advanced age, till repeatedly urged by the party to do so. The servants stood round to attend to the wants of each guest.

The repast consisted of mutton, dressed in a variety of ways; fat poultry, pastry, preserves, and fruit, commencing with a bowl of rich and savory soup, with spoons placed for every person
to help themselves; after which, each man drew a small knife from his girdle, to commence the attack.

Before the attendants had cleared away the tables, the aged Prince arose, and filling his cup with mead, drank to the health of all present in turns.

"By what name shall I address my young stranger guest?" he asked, turning to Ivan. "Though he speaks with the tongue of our people, and his eagle glance, and lofty stature, betoken him to be a noble, yet know I not his name. Say, under what appellation shall he dwell in the memory of Mahmood Indar?"

"Noble Prince," replied Ivan, rising from his seat, "you speak truly, though I am, I trust, of the pure race of the Attèghèi. Name have I none. I love not the one I have borne for many years, therefore, I give it not, and the noble name I long to bear, I give not, until I have done some deeds, to shew myself worthy of the race from which I deem myself sprung; that my kindred should not say, when I claim their love, that I am no true scion of their stock. This I have sworn by the bright heaven above us. My noble friend, the Hadji Guz Beg, has offered to shew the way among the ranks of our
foes, and I have sworn to follow him, even to the cannon's mouth."

All applauded this speech, the Hadji springing forward to embrace him. "I see, my second son, that you will prove a true Circassian;" he cried, "and by the blessing of Allah, by tomorrow's dawn, we will proceed in search of our foes: to-night, we will rest under the roof of our noble host."

"Happy am I to receive so gallant a warrior as you have proved yourself, oh! Hadji; and honoured am I in such guests as you and your friends," answered the Prince.

The repast being concluded, the party strolled out among rich and fertile meadows, sloping from the house down to a pure and glassy rivulet. An orchard of various fruit trees surrounded the dwelling, while, before it, grew some magnificent chestnut trees, under whose grateful shade the old noble loved to sit, surrounded by his youthful descendants, enjoying their gambols on the grass.

In the neighbourhood of the house were the farm yards and granaries, stored with all kinds of corn, the produce of the surrounding highly-cultivated fields. On the mountain's brow
grazed his numerous flocks, and in the rich meadows below his herds of fat cattle.

Our hero had parted from his companions, when the page sought his side; and as Ivan's eye fell on the boy, he exclaimed,

"Conrin, do you find yourself sad and solitary among so many strange people?"

"Ah, no!" answered the page, "I cannot be sad or solitary when in your presence."

"Do you then come to congratulate me on having, at length, arrived in the land of my hopes?" asked Ivan.

"Yes, Sir, yes; whatever gives you pleasure makes my heart beat with joy; and may your utmost hopes be now fulfilled!"

"Thanks, page; but still my heart is full of fears. I know not, nor dare I ask, if yet my father lives. Why do you sigh, boy? Does the name of father cause you thus to sigh?"

"Alas, Sir, I never knew one: the name sounds like mockery on my ear. The kind and noble friend, whom I thought my father, I found was not so; and yet I feared to ask who was."

"'Tis strange," said Ivan. "And your mother, boy?"
"Alas, Sir!" said the page, "the kind and gentle care of her, who was my mother, I never knew."

The boy's eyes filled with tears.

"I would I had not asked you, boy, about your parents, to make you weep thus: but dry your tears; I will supply the place of both your parents, as much as in my power lies; and you shall share my fortunes, which, I trust, will lead to happiness."

In a moment the boy's eyes brightened, as he gazed up into Ivan's face, with an inquiring and searching glance, yet radiating with smiles of joy.

"'Tis that alone I ask to do," he replied. "To follow your fortunes through good or evil, in happiness or misery. Still speak to me in words like those you just now uttered, and they will repay me all the hardships I may endure."

"I could not speak harsh words to one so unprotected as you are. Now tell me, what think you of my countrymen? Are they like the wild barbarians the Russians would have taught the world to think them? But, thank heaven! they yet may learn how true courage
can oppose its arms to tyranny, though backed by hosts of slaves."

"I did not think to find them as they are," replied the boy; "more courteous far, and hospitable, than the people of the land whence we came. True valour sits in the eye, even of the lowest of the multitude."

"You praise them well, good page, but justly," replied Ivan. "But see, the party move towards the house. We must go in. Keep by my side, as you see the pages of the nobles do."
CHAPTER VI.

At first, like thunder's distant tone,
The rattling din came rolling on,
Echoed Drumlanrig's woods around;
Louder and louder swelled the sound.

Hogg's "Queen's Wake."

As the sun of the first day, which Ivan had passed in his native land, sunk down beneath the waters of the ocean, shining bright and blue between an opening in the hills, the guests re-assembled in the hospitable mansion of the Prince Mahmood, where another repast was served, much in the style of the former; and as the party were seated at it, a new comer entered the guest-house. He was dressed in the high fur cap of Armenia, with a long-flowing, dark robe, bound by a belt round his waist, at which he carried an ink-horn, pen, and book.

A slave followed him, staggering under the
weight of large packages, which he had unloaded from two horses at the door.

He took his seat respectfully, at some distance from the chiefs, and humbly ate the viands which the Prince ordered to be placed before him.

"Whence come you?" demanded the host of the stranger, who seemed to be a pedlar or travelling merchant. "What goods do you bring for sale? Allah knows we have little need of any, except powder and lead in these times."

"I come from the City of the Sultan," replied the Armenian, "from the rich Stamboul; and I bring jewels and silks for your lovely wives and daughters, and gemmed daggers and swords for you, noble chiefs. But I am a man of peace, and thought not of the powder and lead."

"You will find but a bad market for such wares here," answered the Prince; "but in my house you are welcome. What news bring you from Stamboul? Do you hear what measures the great Padishah is taking in our cause? Or, forgetting the children of his holy creed, does he tamely submit to the audacious tyranny of the proud Moscov?"

"Alas! my father," replied the merchant, "though all men desire to aid your cause, and
many would eagerly hasten to your assistance, yet the power of Russia is great, and no movement can be made without coming to the ears of her minister in the capital of the Sultan, where a whole host of spies are ever on the watch to carry information to him. The Sultan—may Allah prosper him!—would of his own free will do much for you; but where is now his power, since the standard of the Osmanlis has sunk before the eagles of the Moscov? Alas! fallen is the greatness of the Turks, my father. Their old allies, the Inglis, have forsaken them, and joined the armies of their foes. What help have you, but to yield to the mighty power opposed to you?"

"What help have we!" vehemently exclaimed the Hadji. "You are a man of peace, and the guest of our host, or you should eat those words of dirt you speak. What help! We have the help of Allah in our rightful cause, and our own good swords to defend our homes; and with the will of heaven, we will show those cursed Urus that we know how to use our arms. Let them venture from their strongholds, and we will teach them a lesson they will not easily forget."
Go to their camps, merchant. Tell them to come on; we fear them not. But, man, you speak false. Bosh! it is nonsense. I, too, have come from Stamboul; and the Inglis are again the friends of the Sultan; and I know well they would aid our cause if the Urus did not cram their ears with lies. There are many noble spirits among them, ready to fly to our assistance. Go to, man, you speak of things long passed. You know not what you say."

The Armenian pedlar looked confused for a moment, but his assurance soon returned.

"If the noble Hadji has just arrived from Stamboul, I have no more to say. I have journeyed far by land since I left that city, so he, perchance, brings fresher news than I do."

"The Hadji is right," said the Prince. "For I too know that the Inglis are our friends, and if they would but send us powder and lead, we would be grateful, and be their friends for ever."

"The Inglis, say you, Prince?" answered the Armenian; "you are deceived in the Inglis. They are a nation of merchants like me, and aid not a cause where they cannot make gain; some
few are gallant warriors, and would shed their blood perhaps in your cause; but of what assistance would a few more swords be among a nation of warriors? No, Prince, I say, expect no help from them. Seek not to war against so powerful a nation as the Moscovite. I say not, be friends, but it is madness contending with them."

"Mashallah!" exclaimed the Hadji, furiously regarding the stranger, "I warned you, trader, not to speak of peace with our foes, and you have again done so. Beware how you utter those words again. The Inglis are a brave nation, and I know that they are good warriors, for I have met many of them; and all who come to this country shall be welcome. But what want we more than our own arms to defend our own mountains? Speak not again of peace. Bosh! such words I spit upon;—they are vile."

"I see, noble Hadji, your slave is wrong," cringingly returned the pedlar. "I thought of some other Franks; mine too is not a nation of warriors like your's, to hold out so long against an invader, and to endure, for so many years, all the miseries of war. I spoke but my
own feelings, therefore let not your anger be kindled against a poor merchant, who would do nothing to offend you."

The Hadji's anger was as quickly appeased as it was easily excited, and he regarded the Armenian more with feelings of the deepest contempt than with any hostile thoughts. The pedlar himself appeared to have discovered that the most discreet conduct he could follow, was to keep silence among the present company.

Appealing to the Prince, he craved leave to exhibit his goods to the ladies of the family.

"I have but little to give for aught you may possess, merchant; yet as the women love to look on fine silks and jewels, you may send in your packages to the anderoon, and see if they will select any. Go now, it is late, they will soon retire to rest."

As the Armenian left the apartment, the Hadji glanced at him with a look of disgust. "For what should that slave talk to us of treating with the Urus?" he cried; "one might think from his words that he was a friend of theirs; but he is a craven-hearted slave, and not worth further thought."

The principal part of the company now ad-
journeyed to the verandah in front of the house, where they passed an hour in smoking the much prized tchibouks.

Before they retired to rest, the pedlar returned, having disposed of some of his silks to the ladies of the family.

"Your slave," he said, humbly addressing the Hadji, "hears that you and some other noble chiefs are travelling towards the north to-morrow, and it would be a high honour as well as a great kindness, if you would allow him to accompany you."

"Do you fear, merchant, that your friends the Moscov would ease you of your goods, if you happen to go near their forts?" The pedlar started. "But what care I? you may go with us if your pack horses can keep pace with our steeds; but remember that we delay not for a few bales of silk."

"Thanks, noble chiefs," replied the pedlar, bowing before them; "much shall I prize your protection. But do not say that the Russians are my friends; I know them not, I hate them, I detest them, I spit upon them."

"You do well, man," replied the Hadji. "But remember another time, that if you talk of peace between the sons of the Attèghèi and the
Moscov, while they remain on our coasts, you may chance to take a leap from a higher rock than you would like."

"Your servant hears, and will follow your advice," replied the Armenian; then turning to the Prince, he presented to him a richly jewelled dagger. "Perchance, as the noble Prince Mahmood will not purchase, he will accept as a gift this dagger from his servant, to prove his love for the Attèghèi, and his hatred for the Moscov. He will honour his slave much by receiving it from his hands."

The Prince looked musingly at the dagger, which seemed of great value.

"Take back your gift, merchant," he said; "what Mahmood requires he can purchase, and beware how you make such gifts. They are too much like the bribes the Urus offer to tempt traitorous hearts to join them. Mahmood thanks you, but cannot accept your gift."

"Your slave would be more gratified if the Prince would take the trifling gift. He can repay it when he pleases."

"I thank you, merchant, but I have said I will not accept your gift;" replied the Prince. "Therefore take it back, and go in peace."

The Armenian, as desired, took the dagger,
concealing it beneath the folds of his dress, while the Prince whispered a few words into Achmet Beg's ear.

The night being already far advanced, the party prepared for rest. Slaves entered the guest-house, bringing cushions and coverlids of rich silk, and spreading them on the floor, to form beds for the guests, on which the voyagers gladly threw themselves to rest.

Seeing that every thing was arranged, their Princely host retired to a part of the dwelling appropriated to himself.

The walls of the room were adorned by tablets with passages of the Koran written on them, while the arms of the guests, with several suits of rich armour, hung suspended around. The internal ornaments afforded a strong contrast to the primitive simplicity of the mansion, and to the simple habits and customs of its inhabitants. The manners of the chiefs, however, were courteous and knightly, resembling all we hear of the chivalry of the middle ages, or perhaps still more like the heroes of ancient Greece.

The lower orders and serfs, also, are certainly less barbarous, and perhaps more intelligent than the Scottish highlanders of the same class
a century ago, if it is necessary indeed to go back so far.

The next morning, the Uzden Achmet Beg assembled his followers, who had been dispersed about the neighbouring hamlet for the night; and when it was rumoured that the celebrated Hadji Guz Beg had returned from his distant pilgrimage, and was about to take the field, with his hatred of the Urus unabated, numbers of young men volunteered to join his standard, leaving the old men and women to attend to their fields. Achmet Beg indeed, though the head of his tribe, and a much respected noble, had not gained that renown which his younger brother had acquired by a long series of hazardous and daring exploits. The latter, therefore, was always preferred as a leader by the young and bold spirits of their tribe, nor did the elder, who was of an unambitious, quiet character, feel the slightest jealousy at his brother's superior military abilities.

Ivan was overjoyed when he found with whom he had formed a friendship, little thinking while aboard ship, where he had scarcely spoken on the subject of war, that the sedate Hadji was the renowned warrior he on all sides was
acknowledged to be; and though he seemed somewhat to boast among his friends of past deeds, and of others to be accomplished, it was easy to see that it was not the vaunting of a pretender, by the attention paid to his words.

A gallant array of cavaliers now assembled before the house of Prince Mahmood; the chiefs in glittering suits of armour, some of highly polished plates of steel, and others of finely worked chain, their cloaks of varied colours, and swords girded to their sides, with richly embossed handles. The daggers in their belts were decorated in the same manner. Many carried pistols, and the greater number had also a long rifle slung at their backs, thus mingling the weapons of ancient and modern days.

Their retainers were armed, some with long guns, and others with long bows, and quivers full of arrows, wearing in their belts short double-edged swords, or rather daggers, and straight sabres by their sides.

As Ivan issued from the house, he found a high-mettled steed waiting at the door, held by Achmet Beg's squire. The Hadji advanced as
he appeared, and leading the horse forward, presented it to him, saying:

"Let me be the first, my son, to provide you with a charger of the true Attèghèï breed, who well knows his way among the ranks of the Moscov; and in case you do not like the gift, you can repay me when we have made a foray into their country, and have carried off a rich booty. Till then, accept him from a father who loves you. There are two others, which count as nothing, for the use of your squire and page, though perhaps not to be matched among the Cossacks of the plain."

Ivan, gratefully thanking him for his well-timed present, vaulted with alacrity into the light saddle, Javis holding his stirrup, and then following his example. Young Conrin also shewed himself no mean horseman, leaping lightly on his small, but well proportioned and active steed.

The whole party were prepared to set forth, when the aged prince himself appeared, tendering to each guest of noble rank a parting stirrup cup of mead; for such is the knightly custom, still adhered to in that primitive country.

"May the blessings of Allah attend you, my
sons!" said the aged chieftain; "may your arms be victorious over our enemies, and may death fly from your ranks. Would that I too had strength to lead my followers to the field; but while my gallant sons yet exist to take my place, I must remain to guard our lands from the foe. Should it be the will of Allah that they fall, then I too must gird on my sword, and yield my last breath amid the din of battle. Now Heaven protect you, my sons!"

The venerable Prince, grasping the hand of each chief as in turn they rode by, the cavalcade set forward. As they issued from the court-yard of their konag, the cry of "Ogmaff! ogmaff! farewell! farewell!" resounded on all sides from the assembled retainers and slaves of the chief; and loud shouts of "Vo-ri-va-ka," rent the air, as a parting salute to the warriors who were sallying forth to defend their country.

They set forward at a brisk pace, Ivan keeping by the side of the Hadji, who pointed out to him each scene of note as they advanced, explaining to him the Circassian style of fighting, and other subjects of interest and importance.

In the rear of their ranks, came the Armenian merchant and his pack horses, light active
animals, formed of bone and sinew alone, who continued to keep up with the high-mettled steeds of the warriors, though the ground was rough and hilly. Their route lay across a country, wild as if no other foot had trodden it save the beasts of the forest; now over the edge of dizzy precipices, then descending into savage glens and through dark and frightful defiles, amid gigantic rocks, bared, broken, and distorted into a thousand strange forms.

Then again they had to scale some lofty elevation, amid splendid forest trees, where a platform of rich ground would be found, highly cultivated, and far removed from the reach of their enemies. Occasionally they saw, amid the almost inaccessible recesses of the mountains, some Alpine cot, whose skin-clad inhabitant was tending his flocks of goats.

As they rode along, game of various sorts, such as wild turkeys, pheasants, hares, and deer, would start up in their path, to which some of the party gave chase, and either ran down or shot with their true-aimed arrows. As they were passing through a rocky defile, an immense wild boar started up in their path.

"A fortunate omen for our next expedition,"
shouted the Hadji. "Now, my Deli Khans, let us give chase to the huge monster as we would to the savage Urus."

Uttering these words, and with the spirit and agility of youth, spurring on his horse, followed by Ivan and the younger men of the party, he rode at the beast, who, gnashing his long tusks in defiance as he turned his head towards them, first endeavoured to escape among the rocks, when he saw the number of his foes. The Hadji was, however, too quick for him; and the boar, seeing escape from his active pursuers was hopeless, stood at bay. Grinning at them with his sharp teeth, and foaming with fury, he prepared to rush at the headmost of his opponents; but, nothing daunted, the aged, but active huntsman rode directly at him, and leaning from his saddle, plunged a short sword deep into the thick neck of the animal, who made a last desperate attempt to rip up the horse of his opponent; but the Hadji, making his steed spring on one side, the fierce beast rolled over, and expired without a struggle.

Shouts of applause, from those of his friends who had come up to the scene of action, followed this dexterous feat of the old warrior.
“Bosh! it is nothing,” he exclaimed. “I did it but to ascertain if my eye had lost its quickness, or my arm its nerve; but, praises be to Allah, neither of them is the worse for my long rest.”

The carcase of the boar was left to feed the beasts of the mountain, less scrupulous than the followers of Mahomet; though in truth, few of the Circassian mountaineers are very strict observers of the tenets of his religion, nor would object, if hard pressed, to a slice of the unclean animal.

“We will soon find more noble game than this,” said the Hadji, turning to Ivan, who had arrived as the boar received his death stroke; “and you will become both a good huntsman and a good warrior. But Inshallah! the first is only fit sport for boys or young men, when there are no enemies to be met with; and I did it but to stretch my sinews a little after my voyage.”

The whole party now proceeded through a deep and romantic glen, where scarcely a breath stirred the light festoons of creeping plants which hung from the rocks above. All seemed solemn and sad; when Achmet Beg’s followers struck into a low chaunting song, describing the
actions of some chief who had fallen lately, fighting against the Russians. The whole party joined in a rich and full chorus; the sounds of Ay-a-ri-ra swelling and dying away among the ravines and far distant glades of the mountain forest.

Ascending a lofty eminence, crowned by trees, they emerged from their shelter, when a view was obtained of the sea below them, and of the fort of Ghelendjik, far to the north, built on one side of a deep bay. Stretching far beyond it was a long line of white cliffs. As the party of warriors gazed on it, expressions of execration burst from their lips, and the Hadji looked anxiously down a steep path-way leading to the shore, by which he might have gained the outside of the fort; but feeling the uselessness of the wish, he merely contented himself with muttering,

"The piggish cowards! Let us but meet them beyond their walls and without their cannon, and we will soon teach them better manners than to pay us a visit without an invitation."

It struck the chiefs as singular, that they had met none of the sentinels, who watch every
height along the coast in the neighbourhood of an enemy.

"The men of Hyderbey were not wont to be sluggards at their posts!" exclaimed the Hadji to his brother. "How is it that they do not watch these heights?"

"Perhaps they have gone nearer to our foes," replied the chief, "to shoot any who may show their faces above the walls of their fort."

The scene below them seemed calm and quiet. A few white sails of Russian vessels, alone dotted the smooth bosom of the Euxine. In the fort all was so quiet, that it looked like a deserted mound of earth. The roofs of the buildings scarcely peered above the walls; and the proud standard of Russia was hardly distinguishable, as it hung listlessly round its staff.

Not a breath stirred the air, and deep silence reigned on the calm scene, when, in a moment, it was broken by the loud crash of artillery, followed by the continued reports of musketry, far above which rose the loud war shriek of the Attèghèï.

"Allah be praised, here is work for us, my friends, without delay!" exclaimed the gallant
Hadji, in a joyous tone, "Bismillah! we will be upon them when they little expect us, and aid our friends, whoever they are. Follow me, brave warriors."

So saying, he spurred on his charger, with his brother and Ivan by his side, followed by the rest of the band, and galloped, by an almost precipitous path, down the wooded sides of the hill. They passed many a rocky ravine, and dry bed of winter torrents, tearing their way with eager haste through the boughs and thick underwood. Nothing could stop their course.
CHAPTER VII.

She was a phantom of delight,
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

*Wordsworth.*

We have, in a previous chapter, attempted to describe the romantic and pastoral beauty of the coast of Circassia, as viewed from the sea. We must now transport our readers to a scene of even loftier grandeur, and more surpassing loveliness.

On the southern side of a high mountain, thickly clothed with the varied foliage of magnificent trees, some two or three hundred feet from the base, was a broad and extended plateau or
terrace, terminating on one side by a steep precipice, while on the other the mountain rose in majestic grandeur, from the side of which, amid the trees, projected rocky crags of fantastic shapes, partly covered with the slender tendrils of creeping plants. Down the mountain’s slope sparkled a bright cascade, leaping from rock to rock, here hidden from sight by some overhanging trees or jutting cliff, and there appearing more clear and joyous than before, till it fell in a spray-wreathed column into a basin, from which it meandered through the small plain of the plateau, fertilizing in its course several highly cultivated fields, till it again fell in a shower of foam over the sides of the precipice, into a beautifully green and broad valley below; there joining the pure waters of a rapid rivulet, which brawled over its rocky bed in its course towards the sea, through the winding gorge of the valley.

Towards the east, as far as the eye could reach, appeared hills and mountains of every form; some swelling in gentle undulations, and covered with fields of corn or green pastures, where grazed numerous flocks and herds; some clothed to their lofty summits with magnificent
forests, and others again rising in steep, rugged, and barren abruptness. Above all were seen blue ridges of mountains, rising one beyond the other; first clear and defined, and then growing more indistinct and faint, till lost in the azure tint of the sky. In the same direction, the terrace extended for some way, gradually narrowing till it merged in the steep sides of the mountain. Some well cultivated high ground of no great elevation, rose on the opposite side of the valley, which, in the direction of the sea, narrowed into a deep ravine, taking an abrupt turn, with precipitous and insurmountable sides. The sea face of the mountains which formed it, could be trodden by none but the light-footed goat, or the almost equally active and daring mountain-hunters.

It was, in truth, a situation well calculated to secure a retreat, and to form a fortification against any hostile invader, if protected by a few brave and resolute men; and on that account, it had been selected as a location by the gallant chief of a once numerous tribe, who had been driven by the Russians from his former hereditary possessions.
His residence stood just within sound of the refreshing cascade, whose pure waters flowed before his door. The house was surrounded by farm-yards, well-stocked with every species of domestic animal, and every kind of poultry. Well-planted orchards formed part of the homestead; and the trees in them were now loaded with fruit.

The dwelling consisted of several separate buildings, of the usual style of Circassian architecture; but one was arranged with more care and attention than the others. This was the anderoon, or house appropriated to the women; it was separated from the others by a paling, which, however, was not sufficiently high to obscure the prospect. The front looked down the lovely valley, over many a rocky hill and cliff, beyond which, in the distance, was the bright blue sea. Before it extended a verandah, round whose trellised supports many creeping plants had been trained; their slender tendrils bearing sweet-smelling flowers, which hung in graceful festoons from the top.

But it was in the interior that the brightest gem of the casket was to be found. On a
cushion of rich silk, was seated, gazing through
the open door, a young girl, lovely as one
of Eve's fairest daughters. Her eyes, of the
deepest blue and of dazzling lustre, shaded with
long dark silky eyelashes, were gazing upon the
picturesque view before her; her delicate carna-
tion lips were slightly parted, disclosing her
pearly teeth. Her features were perfectly re-

gular; and the fair complexion of her gently
rounded cheeks was almost imperceptibly tinged
with a roseate hue. Her raven hair fastened by
a silken band over her forehead, fell in a long
plait behind, and from her head a veil of white
gauze scarcely shrouded her graceful and slender
figure. The robe she wore was of blue silk,
trimmed with silver; her full white muslin
trousers were confined with a richly worked
girdle, which encircled her waist; and small
slippers of coloured leather, beautifully worked
in arabesque patterns with silver, completed
her attire.

By her side lay an embroidered belt, at
which she apparently had been working, as
the golden thread still hung, unconsciously,
in her slender fingers.
At a short distance from this lovely creature, sat a little girl, busily occupied in spinning; whose small, quick, piercing eyes, and dark irregular features, shewed her to be not of Circassian race; a slave taken, probably in some predatory excursion, from the Calmuck Tartars. As she pursued her occupation, she turned at times her quick glance towards her young mistress, as if with an endeavour to catch her eye, but without avail; and she seemed fearful of arousing her from her meditations, whatever might be their nature.

A tame kid of snowy whiteness was gambolling before the door; till, grown bold by impunity, it bounded into the room. But even the pretty animal's playful antics did not rouse her; and the little maiden diligently plied her work, despairing of recalling the thoughts of her lady, to the affairs of the present moment.

At length the sound of a distant footstep approaching the dwelling, caught her ear, she started from the reverie. "Run, Buda, run!" she cried, in tones of silvery sweetness, "haste, maiden! and see who approaches; but who-
ever they may be, stop them from coming here. Say I can see no one to day; I am ill at ease; I should weep to see strangers. Shew them to the guest room, but not here. Say I would see friends another day, but I cannot now. Go, child."

The little girl was flying to obey these mandates, when the young beauty stooped for a moment, in the attitude of listening. "Stay, Buda, stay; it is useless. My fears have made me fanciful. Those are my father's footsteps. Haste, Buda, to usher him to my apart-ment."

While she spoke, the subject of her meditations appeared at the entrance of the apartment, ushered in, according to etiquette, by the youthful slave. As he entered, he bowed low, his lofty plumed helmet touching the doorsill, and as his graceful daughter rose from her silken cushions to receive and welcome him, he folded her in a tender embrace.

He was a warrior of commanding and majestic stature, clothed in complete armour. His coat of mail richly inlaid with gold, shone brightly with steel of the highest polish. His
curling dark moustache and beard were yet untinted by any of the hues which betoken the approach of age, though his stern and fine features were marked with many furrows, indicating deep thought and numerous cares. He raised from his head his glittering helm, which his daughter respectfully took and placed by her side, as he seated himself on the ottoman and beckoned her to sit near him.

"It is long, my father," said the fair girl, "since I have rejoiced in the light of your presence; and oh, what pleasure do you bring to me when you come! I was before sad and thoughtful, and now I feel light and happy. Say, what has kept you so long away?"

"My own sweet Ina," answered the chief-tain, "in these times of war and of constant peril, I have many things to attend to; and it does not become a warrior to spare many moments from his duties, even though he spend them in soft intercourse with one so loved as you, my child. I have even but now returned from mustering the small remnant of the faithful followers whom his foes have left to Arslan Gtherrei; to see that they are
well supplied with arms, horses and food, for a campaign. But why, Ina, were you just now, so sad and thoughtful?"

"Oh do not ask me, my father! now that I am again happy," replied the daughter. "I did but for a moment feel somewhat ill, and feared that guests were coming whom I did not wish to receive. I am well again, my father, now that you are with me."

"I have matter of importance to communicate to you," said the chief, "you know Ina, that I so love you, that for all the riches of the mighty Padishah of the Osmanlis, I would not part from you; but yet, sweet one, the stern necessity of war compels me to leave you, and I must haste to join the hosts of my countrymen to repel our invaders. I may perchance fall, and leave you unprotected."

"Do not say so, my father," cried the lovely Ina. "Surely heaven will protect us, as it has done before. But why this sudden haste? Stay but some short time longer with me, and among your fields and retainers. Nothing can have happened to call you so quickly away."

"It may not be, dear daughter. Now listen
to my words. I have already told you that the valiant Khan, the noble Khoros Kaloret, has seen you—that he loves you. He is rich and brave; hundreds of retainers obey his commands and follow him to battle. He has numerous slaves who till his fields; rich pastures on which large herds of cattle graze; innumerable flocks wander over his mountains, while none can boast of finer horses or richer armour. What more can I say of him? He has sent his brother, who has just arrived, as an envoy to demand you in marriage, and I have spoken much to him. He says that he loves you, truly and deeply—that he would sacrifice half his possessions to gain you. Nay, tremble not, loved one. You know that horses, cattle, or the richest armour, are but as nought compared to you—that I would give all I have for your sake; but yet in this time of war, when any moment may lay me low, I would find some gallant protector who would shield you from danger; that when I am in the land of the blessed spirits, I may look down and see my child happy. Many there are who would be to me as a son, and would gladly accept your hand and succeed to my possessions; but none appear to win my
Ina's heart. Say, will my child become the bride of the Khan?

"Oh my father, indeed, indeed, I feel your kind and generous conduct," exclaimed Ina, with feeling and animation. "Where other fathers do not consult their daughters' wishes, you willingly yield to mine. I too have seen the Khan, but I would not be his bride; I cannot dream of love for one like him. For your sake, my father, I would wed whom you wished; but still he should be one whom you too could love, who would obey, and follow you as a son. Ah! that Allah had made me one, that I might follow you to the battle, and share your dangers and your victories. If I were to wed this Khan, I should see you no more; I should be carried far away to his mountain home, distant from the sounds of war and strife, when you would be left alone without a child to attend you, when sick or wounded; or should you return victorious, none would be in your home to offer you a joyous welcome. Oh, my father! let me still remain your daughter; let me remain to tend your household and your flocks, if you will not let me go with you. But oh! how much rather than become the wife of the richest noble, would
I follow you to the field, to cheer you in the camp, to dress your food, to be your page and attendant. This I can do."

"Alas! my daughter, I cannot leave you here, for I must take all the followers that I can muster to the field. I have now so few, that I cannot leave enough to guard our home; and should our invaders gain the entrance of this pass, my house and fields must fall a prey to them. Then, my Ina, would you not be more safe and happy as the wife of a powerful chief, with thousands of warriors to fight under his banner, than to be following me amid the toils of a campaign?"

"No, oh no," replied the daughter. "I do not, I cannot love the Khan; he is brave, but fierce, noble, and cruel; his followers obey him more through fear than love. His very features bespeak his character; he is no true son of the Attèghèi, and I would wed none but a scion of the true stock. Oh, tell the Khan’s brother, that you cannot part from me; that I am your only child, your successor; that I am not worthy of the Khan’s thoughts; that Circassia has many maidens far more prized than I.
Oh! say that you will do so, and restore happiness to your daughter's heart. It was the thought of this that made me sad and ill."

The Chieftain gazed at his daughter with a glance of deep affection; yet, for a moment, the customs of his country seemed contending with his love. Nature, however, triumphed over habit.

"I will do as you will, my Ina," he cried, clasping her in his arms. "I will send word to the proud Khan that even he cannot melt the icy heart of my child. Nay, do not weep, my daughter; you shall not leave me against your will for a stranger's care."

"Thanks, thanks, my father," exclaimed Ina, affectionately returning his embrace. "You have restored peace and joy to my heart, and gladly will I prepare to accompany you to the camp."

"That cannot be," replied the chief. "Your delicate frame is but ill prepared to share the hardships of a warrior's life; but your safety shall be better cared for, and I will bestow you with the family of my kinsman, the noble chief Aitek Tcherei. His lands are far removed from
danger, among the rocky fastnesses of the mountains; and yet, so near the camp, that a quick-footed messenger, may reach it on the second day. Thither will I conduct you, Ina, ere I seek the field; and there, with a companion of your own age, you will be safe and happy. Tomorrow after the sun has risen, prepare to accompany me, with your women and slaves; I must now away to the guest house, to give your message to the young Khan Besin Kaloret, who is eagerly expecting an answer; and were it not for his oath of peace, methinks the proud Tartar Khan would ill brook a refusal. And now, Ina, farewell, till to-morrow's morn, when I will meet you with my retainers to guard you on your way."

The Chieftain arose, again bestowing an affectionate embrace on his child, as she presented him with his casque. He replaced it on his head, and quitted the chamber, attended by his daughter to the door. She followed him with her eyes, till he reached the entrance of the guest house; when returning to her couch, she placed her hands before her face, and gave way to her overcharged feelings, in a flood of tears.
The little slave Buda gazed with astonishment, to see her mistress so overcome with distress; she approached her with concern.

"Oh, my dear mistress! why do you weep?" she cried.

Ina looked up at the little girl, with an affectionate and grateful eye. "I weep not through pain, Buda, but that I am a weak, foolish girl, unworthy, some would say, to be a maiden of Circassia, where all ought to be brave and bold. I weep, because I may not share my father's dangers, and that I may never again see him, or hear his voice. I weep too, for joy, that he so loves me, that he will not part from me. But I must not give way to thoughts like these, or my tears will not cease flowing. I must nerve my soul to bear all that may happen, with the courage of a daughter of the Attèghèi, if I have not the strength of her sons. Now haste, Buda, we have much to do, to prepare for our journey. Summon the women from the fields, tell them that we must leave our home; bid them hasten to prepare our goods and furniture for our journey. Go, good Buda, go."

As the little slave ran off to obey her mistress's behests, the pet-kid again gamboled within the
door of the room, and ran bleating to its fair guardian, looking up with its soft eyes full of affection, to her face. She bent down, and took it up in her arms. “Ah! my little plaything, and you too, I must see for the last time; perchance, no more shall I look upon your pretty gambols; no more will you come to be fed by my hand. When I am gone, you will wander wild among the mountains, with no roof to shelter you, and miss the care of your mistress, or a more sad fate, perhaps, be driven into the hands of those worse than wolves, our greedy invaders. Farewell, pretty one! give one more look with those soft eyes, and then go, forget me, and be happy among the wild flocks of your kind.”

The little animal, as if understanding her words, or the tone of her voice, ceased its frolicsome play, and seemed unwilling to quit her side.

The whole household was kept the rest of the day in a state of bustle and activity. The women were busily employed in making packages of all the light and easily moved valuables of the family; every one being too well prepared for the necessity of such a movement. Ina herself
attended, to see that the tasks were properly performed; for a Circassian maiden, even of the highest rank, does not consider it a degradation to attend to her household affairs, but rather an honour to be so employed.
Ma il barbaro signor, che sol misura
Quanto l’oro e ’l dominio oltre si stenda
E per se stima ogni virtute oscura,
Cui titolo regal chiara non renda,
Non può soffrir, che ’n ciò ch’egli procura,
Seco di merto il cavalier contenda;
E se ne crucciasi, ch’oltra ogni segno
Di ragione il trasporta ira e disdegno.

LA GERUSALEMME LIBERATA, CANTO V.

The chieftain, Arslan Gherrei, was one of the bravest of the nobles of Circassia. He was generous in his behaviour, courteous in his manners, and temperate in the extreme; but there was a melancholy in his countenance, almost approaching to sternness. He kept aloof from his countrymen, except in the council of war or the scene of strife, where his advice was respected, and his standard followed with
alacrity. At their banquets and scenes of conviviality and amusement, he was scarcely ever to be found, preferring rather his domestic hearth and the society of his daughter.

Such was the father of the beautiful Ina, the devoted patriot, the champion of Circassia; but as we shall have occasion to refer, at a future time, to the particulars of his history, we will now follow his steps to his guest-house, where the young noble, the brother of the Tartar Khan Khoros Kaloret, was anxiously waiting his return with Ina’s answer to his brother’s proposal of marriage; not dreaming that it was possible any maiden of Circassia could refuse so noble an offer.

The young Khan, who was seated on the divan at the further end of the apartment, attended by his squire, rose as the chieftain entered. He was a tall, hard-featured youth, of herculean frame, clothed from head to foot in chain armour, over which he wore a dark cloak of thick cloth; his head was guarded by a helmet, or rather cap, of iron, trimmed round the edge with a thick fur border, giving to his face rather a ferocious appearance, which his
over-hanging and scowling brow did not belie. By his side hung a ponderous two-edged sword, the handle richly embossed with gold and ornamented with jewels, as was the poniard at his belt. His other weapons, as well as those of his squire, hung against the wall over his head.

His squire was without armour of any sort; but his cap was of the same coloured fur as his master's; and his dress of dark cloth fitted closely to his figure. This man was of shorter stature than the Khan, and thick set, with the same disagreeable, forbidding cast of features. The Khan seemed eager for the chieftain's reply, though he tried to conceal his anxiety; but before either of them spoke, his host, motioning him to resume his seat, took a place on a cushion opposite to him, waiting for his guest to commence the conversation.

"Noble Uzden, what answer does the bright dawn of day send to my gallant brother? Will she be the queen of his anderoon, and the future mother of our noble race? When will she be prepared to meet my brother on her road to his home, and when shall I again come with a large company of our retainers, such as befits her rank and beauty, decked in bridal array
to bear her away to the longing arms of her spouse?"

"It cannot be," answered the chieftain, gravely, "I speak not with disdain of the noble Khan, your brother, but my daughter is to me as my son; and not even to him, for all the riches of Stamboul, will I part with her against her wish. Ina is still young, and loves me as a son would. Tell your noble brother that she will yet remain with her father; that she is the only bright jewel I cherish; that I value her more than the richest armour, or steeds of the purest race. There are other maidens of the Attèghèi, gladly willing to cheer your brother's home—willing to be the mother of his sons, brave and warlike as their father; may Allah send joy to his house! but my daughter cannot be his bride. It is enough, Khan, I have given my answer."

The brow of the young Besin Khan grew darker at these words. "Must I then go back to my brother with such an answer as this? Must I go tell the leader of a thousand brave warriors that a weak girl will not bow to his will? Why thus, oh Uzden! do you throw dirt in my face? Must I speak such words as
these in my brother's ear? Think you that he will listen to me? He will say that I am laughing at his beard. He will tell me to return and bring back his bride; you know not my brother, if you suppose that he will hear with calmness such words as these. He will not rest. He will send me back with another message, and will not receive me till I return with his bride. Say then, oh chieftain! that the sweet bird shall quit her bower, that she will come and sing in my brother's anderoon. She will soon be happy there, though at first she may mourn for her father's home; and she will become my brother's pride, his brightest jewel, his sweetest flower. He will send you, Uzden, a coat of armour through which no sword can cleave; four noble steeds of the purest race, fleet as the wind, a fine herd of fat cattle, and flocks of sheep. Do not despise these things."

"Have I not said, Khan, that my daughter is to me more than armour or steeds?" replied Arslan Gherrei; "why then, talk we like children? My word is spoken—my daughter cannot be the bride of the Khan. Be not foolish, but take my message to your brother;
and now Khan, speak no more on the subject. Refreshments are preparing for you ere you return, if you must needs use so much haste; but rather spend this night at my house, and by to-morrow's dawn you shall depart, for I lead forth my few remaining followers against the foe, and must take my daughter to place her in safety with the family of our kinsman Aitek Tcherei. Stay then, till to-morrow, when you shall go in peace; and perchance the next time we meet, it will be on the battle field against the Urus; for I have often been witness of your bravery, and many of your foes have I seen bite the dust."

"I cannot stay; I must away with haste; I want not food, if such is the only answer, oh chief! that you can send my brother," exclaimed the young noble with vehemence. "He will not brook such words as these. His soul will not tamely submit to this refusal. It is folly to think it. His offer was not made to be refused."

"You speak words of folly, Khan; your brother is no child, that he should be angered at a thing like this;" replied the chief, gravely. "Your feelings carry away your judgment; wait,
and you will think better on the subject to-
morrow."

"You little know my brother. He is now waiting, eager for the answer I must take, and I will not tarry to hear more of such words," exclaimed the young Khan, still more angry than before. "My horse, Kiru!" turning to his squire. "Reach me my arms. Bring forth my horse. Order my followers to mount, and away."

His squire, as desired, presented him with his gun and pistols, and hastened from the room to obey his orders, while the young Khan strode angrily and haughtily to the door, where he stood, foaming with rage, till his horse was brought forth. He then mounted, without offering the customary salute at parting to his noble host, who amazed, and vexed, at his want of knightly courtesy, and at his hot, irascible temper, re-entered his house.

Followed by his squire, and the retainers of his family, the enraged young noble galloped furiously along the flat terrace, till he reached the steep path on the mountain's side, down which he continued his way, and along the bottom of the valley in the direction of the sea, keeping his course towards the north, along the coast.
CHAPTER IX.

With pity for others his heart never yearned;
Their pain was his pleasure—their sorrow his mead.
His eye was the eagle's, the twilight his hue;
His stature like pine of the hills where he grew;
His soul was the neal-fire inhaled from his den,
And never knew fear, save for ghost of the glen.

Hogg's "Queen's Wake."

Among the beetling crags of the high, dark, and rugged mountains, which surround the still more gigantic and terrific Elborous, is a deep glen, more wild and fearful than the many other fissures into which the mountains have been rent by some awful convulsion of nature, forming the only accessible approach to a wide basin, round which precipitous cliffs arise on every side. Their lofty and pointed summits are insurmountable, even by the wild goat or active chamois.

It appeared as if nature had formed the spot expressly to serve as a fortification for outlaws,
as a dozen or twenty men could at all times defend the entrance from a host of foes. It was for this reason that the ancestors of the present occupier of the country had selected it as a spot on which to fix his abode, probably on account of his own lawless disposition, that he might sally forth from this strong hold, and commit forays on his neighbours, with a secure place to retire to with his booty, without fear of reprisal. Be that as it may, his descendants had followed constantly the same occupation; rushing down on the unguarded and unsuspecting villagers of the plains, carrying off their cattle, and seizing on themselves as slaves.

The first of the present race who inhabited this wild spot, was a Khan of high rank in Tartary; one of the many who escaped with the exiled King into the mountains of the Caucasus, when driven from his throne by the Russians under the grasping Catharine. There they were hospitably and joyfully received by the brave people from whose blood they had originally sprung; great numbers, therefore, settled in Abasia, and their followers adhering to them through good and evil, they thus formed powerful tribes in their new mountain homes.
From the marauding practices of the ancestor of Khoros Kaloret Khan, he was possessed of large herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, numerous slaves, and a breed of high-mettled steeds, from the stock which they had brought with them from Tartary. Thus possessed of abundance of wealth, he refrained from practices followed in more lawless times. He was at the head also of a numerous band of retainers, who obeyed him implicitly as their hereditary chief and master; so that besides his rank, he was a person of great consideration in the country, though perhaps more feared from his power to do evil, than loved for the benefits he conferred on his neighbours.

His temper, being uncontrolled, was fierce and violent, so that none of his retainers dared to disobey his slightest orders; yet they followed him willingly to battle, for he was, at the same time, a brave and skilful leader, and the Russians had often felt the power of his arm in his tremendous onsloughts. No sooner did they commence hostilities against the tribes of Caucasus, than his father, leading out his clansmen from their fastnesses, proved himself one of their most bitter and unceasing enemies. Deep and fierce
was his revenge for the wrongs which Crim Tartary had endured at their hands.

Sending once some of his people to throw themselves in their way, in order to act as guides to them, he drew a large body among the fastnesses of the mountains, where, having lain in ambush, he set upon them with his followers, and slaughtered several hundreds on the spot. The others, attempting to take refuge among the caverns and rocks, were hunted like wild beasts. For several days did the savage chase continue; every avenue for their escape was so guarded, that none returned to tell the tale of their disasters. Those who were not taken and put to the sword, died of starvation among the barren mountains.

The young Khan and his brother had imbibed from their father the same bitter hostility towards their foes; but revenge ruled their breasts more than love for their adopted country; and the ungovernable and fiery temper of the elder, often led him to commit excesses, even among his own followers, of which his father was not guilty.

Such was the suitor for the hand of the gentle Ina; and though Arslan Gherrei loved him not,
yet he was not fully acquainted with his real character; nor could he, without giving good reason, refuse his suit without a deadly insult, as he himself was descended, by his mother's side, from the same race, though of a royal line.

The house of the chief, near which was erected a high watch-tower, was built directly facing the rocky defile leading to the green circular plain or basin before described, thus commanding a view of all who approached.

The Khan was pacing under the verandah in front of his house, in a state of violent excitement.

"See you any one coming?" he shouted to a page stationed on the summit of the watch-tower. "Why tarries my brother thus? Why sends he not messengers to announce the coming of my bride? Surely he would not fail to send, and give me time to meet the beauteous girl, with due honour, on the way. He is not wont to disobey my orders. See you none coming, slave?" he again vociferated. "See you none coming?"

"On my head be it, Khan, I see not one speck moving in the whole of the glen," answered the page.
“Am I your Khan, that you hasten not?” he cried, to some attendants waiting at a little distance. “Do you, Zand, take the fleetest steed, and fly towards Ghelendjik for three hours, returning without delay; and see that you bring me tidings of my coming bride, or of my brother’s messengers.”

The man hastened to obey the order, the Khan continuing his irregular and agitated walk as before, every now and then turning his glance down the glen, then shouting to his watchman to learn if he had caught sight of any one approaching. The answer was as before. His impatience increased.

“Saddle me a steed, knaves—haste, fly. Am I not your Khan, that you make no better speed?”

A horse was quickly brought him; when, throwing himself into the saddle, he rode furiously down the dark ravine; but he soon returned, on the back of the panting animal, from the fruitless search.

His temper was not assuaged by his headlong and heating ride; as throwing the reins to a slave, who stood trembling to take his horse, he resumed his hurried walk in front of his dwelling.
Another hour passed, when the look-out man, on the watch-tower, gave notice that he saw a horseman coming up the glen. As he approached nearer, he proved to be only one of the messengers despatched in the morning, and he reported that he could gain no intelligence of any of the young Khan's escort.

The shades of evening were beginning to throw a deep gloom into the glen, when the look-out man again cried that he saw a party of horsemen approaching.

The Khan instantly threw himself on a gaily caparisoned steed, preceded by his banner-bearer. His squire and pages followed, with the principal of his retainers, and galloped down the glen to meet the expected bride. What was his rage and disappointment when he did not see his brother's towering form, or the white veil of the betrothed; but met, instead, the travel-worn and agitated band of retainers who had set out with him?

"Where is my brother, and where my bride?" he exclaimed, riding furiously towards them with his drawn scimitar uplifted. "Say, caitiffs, ere I slay you."

"As Allah is great, we dare not say, Khan,
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where your brother is. We know not—we cannot speak," answered the foremost of the party.
"The fair daughter of the Uzden Arslan Gherrei is with her father."

"What! does she not come with my brother? Speak, slaves; answer, I charge you," cried the Khan.

"This only we know, Khan. On my head be it that I say truth," replied the first speaker:

"The brother of the Khan parted from the Uzden Arslan Gherrei in anger, that he would not let his daughter come to be queen of our chief's anderoon. We then travelled towards the castle of the Urus at Ghelendjik, where Besin Khan, taking with him only Kiru, ordered us to proceed a day's journey, and then wait for him. For two days he came not. We waited a third, and we then went to search for him. We heard that there had been a bloody fight between some of the tribes on the coast and the Urus, and we thought our young Khan would not have been absent; but all, of whom we asked for news of him, turned aside, and would not answer. We then went to the shore, where the combat took place, and among heaps of the vile soldiers of the Urus, almost destroyed by the birds of prey.
and wild beasts, we found the sabre, which was our young master's, broken, and his iron cap and his corslet, with a deep dent on its centre."

As he spoke, the horsemen opened their ranks, and discovered between them, on a led horse, the shattered arms of Besin Khan.

"As Allah is great, Khan, this is all we know," added the man.

The rage of the chief seemed for a moment abated, by the shock he had experienced at the account of his brother's too probable death. But it as suddenly returned.

"What lies are those you speak, villains?" he exclaimed. "Is it the custom of the chiefs of Abbaseik to leave their companion warriors when slain on the field? Though he had not his own clansmen with him, think you the other nobles would not have brought off his body were he slain? No; those cannot be the arms of my brother. If you have lied, some of you shall suffer for this. Follow me to my house. We will see, when light is brought, if these are truly my brother's arms."

And turning his horse's head, he rode hastily homeward.
Throwing himself on a divan, in his principal apartment, followed by all the newly-arrived troop, he caused torches to be brought, and the arms to be placed before him. He examined them narrowly.

"Alas, my Khan!" said one of his attendants, "the hilt of this sabre I know it too well. Often have I seen it in your noble brother's hand."

"Peace, fool!" answered the Khan, furiously. "Think you that I know not my brother's sword? Yes, those are his arms, and I will make those pay dearly who have cast this indignity on my father's son. He would not, if living, have left his weapons on the field; and by Allah and his Prophet, I swear that I will have revenge. He may have fallen into the hands of the Urus; but no, Bezin Khan would not be taken alive. I will go to the chieftains of the Attèghèi, engaged in this combat, and make them pay dearly for thus deserting my brother, if he was slain. If he were near, and heard the sounds of strife, so assuredly would he have rushed into the thickest of the fight; and if he fell by those hated Urus, doubly will I wreak my vengeance on all of their cursed race who
fall into my hands. Yet what is the blood of a whole host of such as they are, to one drop of the blood of my noble brother? He would have died for me, and shall I rest while I live to avenge him? No; his spirit calls to me from the grave."

He rose, and walked in an excited manner through the chamber, shaking his clenched hand in the air.

"Perchance even yet, my brother, thou art not slain! Wherever thou art, at the hands of that proud Uzden Arslan Gherrei, I will demand thee. He must know where thou art. Why should he refuse me his daughter? Am not I as noble as he? Have I not more faithful followers, more flocks and herds? Then why does he refuse to let the maiden come to my anderoon?"

On the next morning, a fierce and warlike band were ready to follow the Khan, as, clothed in rich and glittering armour, with his banner borne before him, he left his mountain home, nor tarried on his road, but with furious speed galloped on, like some cataract descending from a lofty mountain to the plain.

The band of horsemen issued from the glen,
passing along the giddy edge of precipices, fearless of danger, down the steep sides of the rugged mountains, along the dry rocky bed of the winter torrent, never drawing rein.

The inhabitants of the villages and hamlets ran out on hearing the rattling hoofs of the steeds, as the fiery Khan and his followers galloped by; but none greeted him as he passed, and, like a whirlwind, vanished from their sight.

"Ai! ai!" cried the aged villagers. "Is the Khan again on a foray? Woe betide the hapless people of the plain he pounces on; or if he rides against the Urus, many will rue his coming, as he gallops over the slaughtered bodies of their countrymen."
CHAPTER X.

Look on this
And when thou hast view'd thy deed
Thy most accursed deed, be thine own judge,
And see (thy guilt consider'd) if thou canst
Persuade thyself, whom thou standst bound to hate,
To hope or plead for mercy.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

It has been seen, that young Khan Besin Kaloret had been deputed by his brother, the fierce Khan of the mountains, Khoros Kaloret, according to the custom of the country necessary to be observed on such occasions, to make his proposals to the Uzden Arslan Gherrei, for the hand of his lovely daughter; having several times seen her in his excursions to that part of the country, and being deeply captivated by her beauty, and reputed accomplishments.

The young envoy came, empowered to offer
rich presents, which his brother had prepared to her father, in the full confidence that his magnificent overtures would be accepted; for who could doubt that the suit of a powerful and youthful noble would be successful; one, whom a thousand brave warriors obeyed, and followed to war, who possessed large herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, fleet steeds, and rich armour.

Koros was, as we have said, a noble of a violent and revengeful disposition; so that his brother, though he loved him, and was himself equally brave, quailed beneath the fury of his overpowering anger; and well he knew that a defeat in this affair, would raise it to the utmost.

On leaving the Uzden his thoughts were bent on vengeance, or on accomplishing his object; and had it not been for the oath, which he, with many other nobles had entered into, to refrain from all broils amongst each other, on account of the impending danger of the country, he would probably have determined to return immediately with a strong body of his retainers, and carry off the unwilling girl by force. As it was, the tumult of his feelings took away all his judgment, nor knew he how to proceed; when
his wily squire divining his thoughts, laid a plan to which he had little doubt his master would accede. When the Khan first drew rein, he began cautiously to unfold a stratagem, which he had thought of, by which the wished for object might be obtained.

"Why does my young master thus give way to anger and despair, at the folly of a wilful pale-faced girl? Why does he think, that it is impossible to succeed in obeying the wishes of his noble brother? Are there not yet many ways left to attain his object?"

"What mean you, Kiru? speak!" exclaimed the Khan. "To what do these words you speak tend?"

"The chieftain Arslan Gherrei, and his fair daughter, with the few retainers he has left, travel this way to-morrow, and will pass near the Russian fort at Ghelendjik," answered the crafty counsellor. "Could not then my master instigate the Russians to sally forth, from their entrenchments, and capture the chieftain and his daughter, as they pass by? They will give the lovely maiden as a reward to my master, that he may take her to his brother, our chief, to make his home joyful with her presence."
“What are these words, I hear?” exclaimed the young noble in an angry tone, and frowning at the same time. “Would you have me turn traitor to my country? Would you have me break my oath by dealings with the cursed Urus. No, Kiru, no. Are they not my deadly foes? Have I not slain them, as the mower sweeps down the ripe corn with his sickle? No, Kiru, it cannot be.”

Setting spurs to his horse, he again galloped forward, to avoid the temptations of his attendant. He, however, pondered on the subject as he rode; and his imagination having been once excited by the instigation of his follower, he could not drive the idea from his mind, by the rapidity of his pace. Unfortunately for himself, he again stopped to hear what further arguments his squire might have to urge; who, like the arch instigator to evil, seeing the effect his proposition had already made, ventured to proceed.

“Does the Khan, my master, think that I would persuade him to form a friendship with the hated Urus? No! no! I love them not. My master mistakes my words. I would advise only that he should make use of their assistance
to gain his object, and then he may quit them without thanks. He may again bathe his sword in their blood, as if he had never spoken to them. What matters it, if a few men on either side be slain? It is a trifle compared to fulfilling his brother’s commands."

"That may be, Kiru; but will not men say, that I have stained the name of our family, by holding communication with our enemies?” said the young Khan.

"No one need ever know what you have done,” replied the tempter. "Leave that to the care of your faithful squire. Will not also many of the Urus be slain in the combat, and thus benefit our cause? for the chief Arslan Gherrei is too brave and powerful to let many escape to tell the tale; and while all are engaged, the Khan can rush down and carry off the fair girl, as if to rescue her from her enemies. Has not your servant well spoken, Khan?”

"Your plan is good, Kiru,” he replied, now almost determined to follow the crafty suggestions of his tempter. "Yet, how can I gain admittance to the fort of our enemies?”

"That is easy; for they are always glad to see those whom they may hope to gain over to
their side; and we may easily deceive them. Say, but the word, and I will go on, to prepare for your coming;” urged the evil counsellor.

“You persuade me much, Kiru; but yet are not the scouts of the Attèghèi constantly on the watch to mark the movements of the Urus; and will not they assemble a larger force of their people, the moment they see them leave their entrenchments?”

“That, too, shall be my care,” answered the squire. “I will deceive the scouts, and send them in different directions, so as to leave the road clear. On that account there is naught to fear.”

“Your persuasions are powerful, Kiru,” answered the Khan, now scarce hesitating, “and in no other way do I see that I can fulfil my brother’s wishes.”

“We have no time to lose then, Khan,” said the squire. “Let us hasten to put the plot in execution, and we will shew these foolish Russians, how well we can deceive them.”

The young Khan had now been fully persuaded to commit this act of treachery and folly. Waiting, therefore, till his followers came up, he despatched them on their way homeward;
while he and his squire proceeded towards the castle of Ghelendjik, keeping as much as possible under the shelter of the rocks and trees, that they might pass unobserved by the Circassian scouts, till, at the close of evening, they arrived under its walls.

The fort of Ghelendjik was built on the eastern side of a deep bay, the calm waters of which were sheltered from nearly all the winds which agitate the Black Sea. Lofty and precipitous hills rose around it, at some distance from the shore, leaving, on the side where the fort was erected, a broad expanse of sand and low ground, reaching beyond musket-range of the hills. Far to the north west, extended a high range of chalk cliffs; above which the mountains rose in broken ridges, or sunk in deep ravines to the very edge of the cliffs forming an impassable barrier to troops; while on the other side, the land stretched far into the sea in wooded promontories or capes, forming a series of beautiful bays or windings of the shore in the direction of Pchad.

The walls of the fort within which the Russians were cooped up by the vigilance of their foes, were built partly of stone and partly of
clay embankments, forming a high parapet, surmounted with palisades; and from the embrasures frowned the muzzles of their guns, in a long line of ordnance of the heaviest calibre, loaded at all times to the mouth with langridge and grape shot. On the outside a deep ditch had been dug, and redoubts thrown out. At intervals of a few yards between the rough hewn timbers forming palisades, bristled the bayonets of the numerous sentinels constantly on the watch, to prevent a surprise from their indefatigable and dreaded enemies. The storehouses and barracks were built of wood; many of them but wretched huts scarcely giving shelter to the miserable garrison, which now consisted of upwards of four thousand men. Even with this strong force, so vigilant and persevering were the Circassians, that the Russians could scarcely venture to shew themselves beyond their walls without being fired at; and their foraging parties to obtain wood and water were escorted by a troop of artillery, to guard them against the attacks of the natives. All the trees in the neighbourhood had been felled by the invaders to build their fort, and to prevent the mountaineers from finding shelter
behind them in their advances, in case they should attack it; so that the country for a short distance around, wore a desolate and barren aspect: a sad contrast to the smiling and rich scenery a little further off.

In a hut of better pretensions than the other buildings, within the fort, sat, on his camp sofa, the commander of the Russian castle. The deep frown on his dark brow, showed his mortification at the ill success of the Imperial arms, and he was meditating fierce and sanguinary revenge against the gallant mountaineers for their determined defence of their native land.

He was one with whom our readers are already acquainted; the reputed father of our hero, the Baron Galetzoff.

The governor was interrupted in his meditations by the entrance of an officer, who came to announce that a native chief, as his dress betokened him to be, had with a single attendant arrived at the fort, and seemed to have some communication of importance to make.

"Admit him," said the Baron. But let a company with fixed bayonets form round him at the entrance of the fort, and I will go forth to
meet him. I cannot trust these mountaineers; some treachery lurks beneath every action. Call my interpreter, and I will hear what this robber chief has to say, and order the troops under arms, that he may see our strength, and report it to his countrymen for he comes here but to act the spy."

As the Khan and his squire entered the fort, the moon slowly rose above the mountains, throwing her soft clear beams on the calm waters of the bay, and shining on the fixed bayonets of the troops, and on the swords of the officers, who stood grouped in knots around in rich and varied uniforms gazing on the proud and warlike-looking stranger, while the banner displaying Russia's dark eagle floated vauntingly above their heads.

A troop of Cossacks, in their wild and picturesque garb, were mounted on fleet horses with embroidered housings. Their arms were highly ornamented; and, as they galloped to the spot, they flourished aloft their long spears whose points glittered brightly. On either side the troops were drawn up in long and close lines; the bayonets seeming to form a sharp, pointed wall of bright steel tipped with burnished
silver. In different parts of the fort blazed the camp fires of the soldiers; and, in attendance on the governor, came a party of men with torches, throwing a red glare of light on all around. The miserable buildings, and dark irregular fortifications were thrown into shade, leaving only the gaudy and glittering panoply of war exposed to view, mocking the calm splendour of the moon, as she glided in her course through the deep blue sky, amid myriads of bright and shining stars.

As the Russian governor reached the gate of the fort, he perceived the commanding figure of the young Khan Besin Kaloret, and his squire standing close behind him with a cocked pistol in his hand. The mountain warrior stood fearless and unabashed amid the gorgeous and imposing array of the Russian troops forming round him.

"Who are you," began the Baron, "who have so audaciously ventured to approach my camp? Know you not, that I have the right and power to order you to be instantly shot for the many atrocities committed by you, and your barbarous countrymen? Speak, what brings you here?"
"I fear not your power," calmly answered the Khan; "nor should I die unrevenaged; but I come to you with thoughts of peace, I come to crave your assistance in an affair of import, but I cannot speak when so many are, near who may overhear my words."

The Russian General, conscious of his own evil intentions, looked at the pistol held by the attendant Kiru. The Khan saw his glance. "Put up your pistol, Kiru. We have nothing here to fear," he said; and, as his squire obeyed, the Baron ordered the soldiers to fall further back.

"Now tell me your errand," said the General, "and say who you are."

"It matters not who I am," replied the Khan, "but my errand is this; I would possess myself of a fair girl, the daughter of a chieftain, who, with a small band of followers travels this way to-morrow. Though they are brave, they may be easily overpowered if you will follow my suggestions. Now hear me, General of the Moscov. If you will send one hundred of your foot soldiers with me, I will lead them to a spot where they may remain in ambush, till the chief and his band pass that way. They may
then rush out and take them prisoners if you will, and as my reward I claim the chieftain's daughter."

"The plan might succeed," answered the Baron, doubtingly. "But how can I know that you mean no treachery? I cannot trust your countrymen."

"You might know that I would not play you false, by coming here among your troops in your camp. If you doubt me, slay me. I am in your power."

The unembarrassed manner in which the Khan spoke contributed to allay the Baron's suspicions, though he still hesitated to trust the stranger.

"Suppose I follow your advice," said the General, "how can it succeed? for, overlooked as we are by the enemy's scouts, none can leave the fort without being perceived."

"I have arranged that also," answered the Khan. "My squire, whom I can trust as myself, will go forth to lead the scouts astray with false reports, and none shall interrupt our proceedings. The spot too on which I have fixed is near at hand, so that you may send assistance if required. Will you do therefore as I wish?"
"How can I be assured of your fidelity?" again inquired the Baron. "I must have some hostage to prove that you are not deceiving me, you yourself must stay while you send some one to point out the spot; and when the girl you speak of is captured, you shall have your reward."

"That cannot be," replied the Khan, equally distrustful; "I must myself lead your fighting-men to the place of ambush; and must also be near at hand to carry off the daughter of the chief, that none may know I had aught to do with the surprise. The rest treat as you will; but you still distrust me. It is well. I will send out my squire before day-break to clear the country round of scouts, and when he returns he shall remain as a hostage to prove my truth. Is it not well?"

The Baron at length agreed to the proposed plan, congratulating himself in the hope, that, by the capture of a chieftain, with all his family and women, by retaining them as hostages, he should bring into subjection all his landsmen and followers; and finally, by detaining the young Khan as a prisoner for the same purpose, a justly severe retaliation would be inflicted on the
treachery of his countrymen. The Baron therefore ordered double the number of infantry asked for, with some light field-pieces, and a troop of Cossacks to attend, the Khan and to watch the proceedings with orders to kill him should he attempt to escape.

The conference being over, the young traitor was conducted to a hut prepared for him, where refreshments were offered, and every inducement held out, with promises of valuable presents should he quit the Circassian cause, and with his followers join the Russians. But his cupidity could not be excited. Revenge for the insult he considered his family to have received alone ruled his actions. He turned a deaf ear to their most tempting offers, though, to disarm suspicion, he pretended to be influenced by these propositions.

Not so, however, his squire, who hoped to partake of the rich presents and advantages which his master would acquire, if he accepted the Russian's offers; and he determined to use his utmost persuasions with the Khan for the purpose.

The next morning before the sun had risen, Kiru stealthily sallied forth from the fort, and fully succeeded in misleading the scouts of the
Circassians, who dreamed not of such treachery. But on his return, to his great surprise, he found himself detained a prisoner. What was the Khan's dismay, also, when he found how different were the arrangements made from what he had himself proposed, and that he was completely in the power of his enemies? But he had now advanced too far to retrace his steps, so that at all hazards he determined to attempt the seizure of Ina, hoping at all events to escape with her in the mêlée.

It was clear, however, that he did not at first intend to prove a complete traitor to his countrymen, nor, till driven to desperation by finding himself out-witted, would he have drawn his sword against them. If his countrymen saw him rescue Ina, she would become his fair prize, and he thought that most of her friends would escape by the fleetness of their horses.
CHAPTER XI.

Down they rush'd with headlong might,
Swifter than the panting wind;
All before them fear and flight!
Death and silence all behind!

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

The household of Arslan Gherrei were early astir on the following morning, to be in readiness to commence their journey, whenever their chief should give the order. Several household slaves, Calmucks, and even Russians, who had been taken prisoners, and one or two Poles, deserters from the enemy, but who had not yet proved their fidelity to the Circassians, by wielding their swords against their late masters, were employed in loading the sturdy ponies with the articles which the women had prepared. Lighter steeds were in readiness to carry the females; and one of fine proportions, with sleek skin, and long flowing mane and tail, as docile as a dog, was destined to bear the
graceful and slender form of the chieftain's daughter. The beautiful animal was decked with rich housings of scarlet cloth trimmed with gold; slender reins of leather entwined with a golden thread, and bunches of wild flowers in his head. And truly he seemed conscious of the care bestowed on him, and proud of the charge he was accustomed to carry.

After the frugal morning meal had been dispatched, the fair Ina, blooming in the fresh morning air, came forth from her dwelling, and the chieftain himself appeared, to conduct her to her steed. In addition to her other dress, she now wore a scarlet mantle worked with gold, and a hat, the rim turned up on one side, in which was placed a white plume fastened by a jewel of price; while a thicker veil hung in ample folds from her head to shroud her features, if she pleased, from the rays of the sun, or the too admiring gaze of strangers.

As soon as their young mistress had mounted, the women and the rest of the party followed her example, her father riding by her side, to guide her palfrey through the more difficult part of the road. The women servants and slaves followed next; the household attendants bring-
ing up the rear with the baggage horses. As the cavalcade proceeded along the plateau or terrace before described, and wound down the steep sides of the mountain, and along the valley towards the sea, it was joined by bands of horsemen, often to twenty at a time, arriving from different directions; so that, by the time they had reached the defile which opened on the sea-coast, the party amounted to nearly a hundred warriors.

Some of them were nobles of little consequence or wealth, who were glad to attach themselves to the standard of so gallant a leader as the brave Uzden Arslan Gherrei; and others were yeomen and freemen, who had been followers of his family for ages. Some wore entire suits of armour; others, only breast-plates and helmets; others, were without any defensive armour; but all were completely supplied with weapons: light guns slung at the back, scimiters attached to their sides, pistols in their belts behind, and the cama or dagger at their waists. The rest wore the tight-fitting Circassian coat, the cloth or fur cap, and a large cloak over the shoulder; so that the whole of the party had a bold, martial appearance; the horses curvetting
and careering, and the leader's banner borne at the head, fluttering in the wind.

It was, in truth, a noble and gallant looking little band, worthy to be led by such a chief. And Ina's eyes flashed with enthusiasm and animation, as she rode by her father's side, at their head, guarded on each side by a few of the most favoured and honoured.

In order to avoid the more rugged and difficult passage over the mountains, the chieftain had, for his daughter's sake, chosen a route along the sea-coast, affording a plain and even path for some distance towards the north, before it would be necessary for him to strike inland towards the place of their destination. After riding for some distance by the side of the clear stream, flowing through the valley, they passed the narrow gorge which formed its entrance, emerging from it into the open coast of the blue sea, whose waves rippled on the bright hard sand at their feet.

High on their right, rose lofty mountains, covered with shrubs of every varied form and hue. Sometimes they passed beneath the boughs of wide-spreading trees, whose grateful shade sheltered them from the heat of the sun,
now rising high in the heavens; and again where
the gentle breath of the sea-breeze came soft and
cooling to their cheeks.

The leader kept his small troop together,
except a few of the younger men, who galloped
about in every direction, both to ascertain
whether any enemies were lurking about, and to
amuse themselves by martial exercises; now
throwing the djereed with unerring aim, now
galloping their fiery steeds up the steep sides
of the mountain, amid rocks which appeared to
afford scarce footing even for the nimble goats;
then dashing amid the cooling waters of the
clear blue sea, and swimming their well-trained
steeds at some distance out in a line with the
shore. There some would join in mimic fight,
chasing after, or flying from each other along
the hard sandy margin of the ocean. Not a
few, indeed, were eager to exhibit their feats of
horsemanship before their chieftain's fair daugh-
ter, whose bright smile every now and then
offered rich reward for any superior display of
dexterity or courage.

They were now approaching the neighbour-
hood of Ghelendjik. Though little danger was
to be apprehended from their foes; who scarcely
left their entrenchments, and never without a strong force when driven out by famine to forage in the neighbouring country; yet as a good commander, Arslan Gherrei considered it necessary to lead his men more carefully along the Dehli Khans keeping a stricter watch in every direction.

To avoid the fort, it was necessary to leave the sea-shore, and to proceed over some rugged paths further into the interior. A rapid and deep stream, however, the Mezi, crossed their path, before they could reach a part of the mountains practicable for their horses and baggage. The nearest ford was close to the mouth of the stream; so that, to enable the women and their goods to pass over secure from wet, it was necessary to return again to the margin of the sea, which they had previously left for a short distance, in order to pass through a shady grove on level ground. The young men, however, at once dashed into the stream, quickly swimming their horses over, and galloped along on the bank of the side they had gained to meet the rest of the party, and assist them in crossing, which, with some difficulty, on account of the depth of the water, they accomplished.
The warlike little band, forming in order, turned again from the sea, to proceed along the bank of the stream, to the entrance of a vast gorge, through which its waters passed.

Few scenes could have more of wild grandeur than the one now before them. The foaming waters of the stream, dashing over its rocky bed, were lined, where the crevices of the rocks afforded root for them, with willow, elder, and other trees and shrubs. On each side of the gorge, were dark and lofty rocks, overhung with bending shrubs and creeping plants, which fell in thick festoons; while the sides of the mountains, rising high above the shore, and crowned to the summit with thick growing trees, were so precipitous, as to afford but a narrow, steep, and winding path, difficult even for the nimble horses of the Circassians.

Ina gazed up the steep sides of the mountain with doubt and hesitation, as to the possibility of crossing it; but finding her father about to proceed to the fort, she prepared to accompany him.

Some horsemen, who were sent in advance to clear a passage among the thick branches of trees and the underwood which impeded their
progress, were about to scale the side of the mountain, when a loud shout from the rest of the band, rending the sky, called them back. At the same moment, a terrific crash, and report of cannon, sending forth a death-dealing shower of grape, laid many of the foremost low. Arslan Gherrei turned in the direction from whence the iron shower came; and calling to some of his retainers to follow, galloped furiously up the glen, without a moment's hesitation, towards a mound rising slightly above the stream, on which now appeared a row of light field-pieces, guarded by a body of Russian troops, who had before been concealed by the ground they now occupied. At the same moment, the sides of the mountain, up which their intended route lay, glittered with hostile bayonets.

Half the Circassian band, raising their terrific war-cry, rushed with headlong speed, led by their gallant chief, against the guns. The heavy discharge of musketry which met their advance, did not check them; and, with irresistible force, they drove the gunners from their posts, causing the troops to recoil before them. The Russians, panic-stricken by their shouts, and the impetuosity of their onset, made slight resistance,
as the Circassians, seizing the guns, hurled them with several of their defenders into the torrent; and were about to follow up their success against the party of soldiers who guarded the glen, when they were recalled by a loud shout from their comrades. Turning, they perceived the opposite side of the stream lined by a strong body of troops, who, as they passed down, opened a heavy fire on them; while, from behind every tree which clothed the mountain, appeared more of their enemies. Turning their horse’s heads, they again galloped back, in spite of the bullets which assailed them, to answer the call of their friends.

The party whom they had left to protect their fair charge, seemed not to attract the hostility of their foes, for among that band none had fallen; but, at the moment they were again about to join, a strong troop of Cossacks were seen advancing at full gallop, with loud shouts, to attack them.

"There has been treachery at work, oh! men of Attèghèi! or we should never have been caught in this toil; but, my gallant friends, we must cut our way through them, or die, wreaking due vengeance on their heads. Let
us now remember that we fight for the fair ones we are bound to protect. On, my brave followers—on, men of Attèghèi, and shew our dastard foes that we fear not a host such as they. We will hew a way for ourselves through their crowded ranks, and pass the guns of their fort, leaving those who may survive our charge to follow if they will. On, gallant warriors, on!” shouted their noble leader.

Hearing these words, the band again raised their terrific war-cry, overpowering the rattling sound of the musketry, and rushed impetuously to meet the charge which the advancing troops of fierce Cossacks seemed about to make.

On both parties rushed, shrieking in their eagerness; their eyes starting from their sockets; their sabres clenched firmly in their hands; the hoofs of their steeds spurning the soil, and foam flying from their nostrils. The meeting crash of the hostile cavalry was terrific; but many of the first ranks of the Cossacks were overthrown by the superior agility of the Circassian warriors, their active steeds well seconding their riders, as their swords whirled rapidly round their heads, and descended with tremendous force on the unguarded bodies of their
foes, whose sabres were shivered against their steel breast-plates and helmets.

So fierce was the onslaught of the mountaineers, that the sturdy horsemen of the plain recoiled at first before their desperate charge. They might have succeeded in cutting their way through the ranks of their opponents, had they not been already weakened, and their numbers thinned by the deadly fire of the infantry, who continued to harass their rear from a distance; part only as yet having reached the spot to which the combat had been removed. These were kept at bay by a few horsemen who wheeled rapidly again and again when they ventured to approach; caring but little for the infantry, whom they despised now that their guns were destroyed; yet the force of the Cossacks was almost overpowering, so that nothing but the most determined and desperate bravery would have excited the Circassians to persist in the unequal combat.

Their movements too were impeded by the women. The young Ina, undaunted amid the scene of desperate strife, endeavoured to urge her palfrey to her father's side; and was almost surrounded by the enemy, when the chieftain hewed
his way towards her, and cleared a passage for her escape. Yet, notwithstanding the most heroic and desperate fighting, the Circassians were at length driven back towards the river, when nothing seemed to remain for them but to sell their lives dearly, or to yield themselves as prisoners to their detested foes. The courage of the chieftain, even then, quailed not before the danger; but he thought of his loved Ina, and what her fate might be should he fall.

Again shouting their war-cry, his clansmen rallied round him, having retreated a short space to renew the charge. On they rushed with a furious shock; but it was only to find the hopelessness of their attempt.

The attacks of the foes seemed principally directed against the chieftain Arslan Gherrei himself, as he was easily distinguished by his lofty plume, his jewelled poniard, his rich shining armour, his impetuous valour, and his noble bearing. The Cossacks pressed round him, though many of their comrades bit the dust beneath his horse's feet. A spell seemed thrown over himself and his charger, for the shot fell harmlessly around them. The noble animal was equally energetic in the combat, rushing onward, and trampling
down his foes, or seizing the advancing horses with his mouth, trying to overthrow them.*

Ina, amid the fierce slaughter and loud din of the combat, thought only of her father, following him with her eyes whenever the tide of battle carried him from her. Towards her, also, many desperate attacks were made by the enemy in the attempt apparently to possess themselves of so lovely a prize; but too many gallant hearts were yet beating with life, to allow her assailants to succeed while they could yet wield their weapons.

Among their opponents was one who frequently led the attack, charging impetuously towards Ina, whenever she was separated from her father; but it appeared that he, at all times, avoided meeting the chieftain hand to hand; and once, when he had almost reached Ina, Arslan Gherrei again returned to her side; and the Cossack officer, as he seemed, turned the tide of war in another direction. He was a person of great strength and height, dressed in the Cossack uniform, except that a cap shrouded his

* A well known fact. The Arab horses constantly fight in this way, with or without riders.
face; but in the skirmish, his vest flying open, discovered a coat of chain armour, and his cap at the same moment falling off, exhibited the fierce features of the young Khan Besin Kaloret. A shout of execration arose from the band of his adopted countrymen, as they discovered the traitor, and many an arm sought to cut him down; but, conscious of his shame, he seemed to avoid the strife. Seeing the effect that his conduct had on the Cossacks, and that he might, after all, lose his prize, he again desperately joined the combat, which had become fiercer than ever.

The children of the mountains were still undaunted. Placing the women in the centre, they determined to succeed in cutting their way, or to perish in the attempt. Their war-cry was answered from above their heads; and looking up, they perceived a band of warriors amid the trees on the mountain's brow, dashing furiously down with headlong speed to join them.

Scarcely had the Russian infantry, posted in the path, time to perceive their danger, when the fresh band of Circassian warriors were upon them, cutting down some with their sharp sabres, trampling over others, and hurling the
rest over the precipices, till none remained to impede their furious course.

As the gallant men reached the strand, they were met by a strong party of Russian infantry formed into a hollow square, bristling with bayonets. But, like a wild mountain torrent, broken loose from some Alpine lake, nothing could withstand their overwhelming fury. Concentrating their voices into one loud rending shout, of the most dreadful sound, they galloped with uplifted sabres at the steel formed wall.

The Russian front ranks trembled, wavered, and gave way before their desperate charge, which seemed more like a torrent of wild spirits, than of men, like themselves; unnerving their arms, and causing their blood to run cold. The fierce horsemen who rushed over their prostrate bodies, to succour their hard-pressed countrymen, were led on by a noble looking cavalier, without defensive armour of any sort, and in the simple costume of the country; but whose sword dealt dreadful havoc amid the foe, as he cut his way through their broken ranks.

Among this newly arrived troop of Circassians, were several chiefs in armour, some of whom joined the young leader, and others with their
retainers, turned to follow up their success over the infantry, and prevent their rallying.

Onward flew the young hero, like a flash of lightning, followed by his squire, and by a youthful page, who kept close to his side, with a gallant array of horsemen. They shouted loudly to give their countrymen notice of the succour close at hand, and dashed furiously against the Cossacks with so tremendous a shock, as to drive them bodily back for an instant, and to give Arslan Gherrei, and his followers, breathing time to recover from their exertions.

But the Cossacks, to revenge themselves for the check given to their nearly-won victory, soon recovering from the effects of the last charge, gathered in overwhelming numbers round the chieftain Arslan Gherrei, attacking his followers so furiously, as to separate him from them, and to hem him in completely. His gallant steed wheeled and pranced high, attentive to the rein, till receiving a wound in his neck, he became weak from loss of blood, and began to falter in his movements. Hard pressed by numbers, the chief was nearly overpowered, when the young leader we have spoken of, saw his peril, and galloped to his rescue.
At the same moment, Besin Khan, with a strong body of Cossacks, wheeling round, made a furious charge at the spot, where Ina had been forced by the press of the combatants to move, when separated from her father, with a few Circassians only around her. Seizing her horse's rein, after a desperate defence by her guards, he was on the point of carrying her off, when the young stranger leader, followed by a small party, rushed towards him, and cutting down all who opposed him, pressed the Khan so hard, that he was obliged to quit his hold, in order to defend himself. The lady Ina, thus restored to momentary safety among the women, and some of her father's retainers, again hastened to join the combatants.

The traitor Khan, who had recovered from his repulse, now seeing the stranger without armour, singled him out in hopes of making him fall an easy prey. Their swords met: a furious conflict ensued between them: one backed by his adherents, the other by the Cossacks. Victory seemed doubtful, but Besin Khan's strength prevailed, and the young hero's sword being beaten down, the weapon of his opponent was about to fall on his unguarded
head, when ere it could descend, a shot from the pistol of the youthful page struck the breast of the traitor. He reeled in his saddle. For a moment, he attempted to keep his seat, but in vain. His weapon dropped powerlessly by his side; his knees refused to press his horse's sides; and his eyes rolling wildly, he fell heavily to the ground, where his body lay trampled on by the prancing steeds of the combatants.

A piercing cry of joy escaped the boy's lips, as his master was saved; and Arslan Gherrei, at that moment joining him, the two leaders fought side by side, heading their followers in many desperate onslaughts, till the Cossacks, despairing of victory, endeavoured to save themselves by flight. As they galloped off, however, they loaded their short guns, and turned to discharge them at their eager pursuers.

The Chieftain loudly called on his clansmen to desist, for they had still many opponents. Those who heard him, obeyed; but others followed their foes to within range of the guns of fort Ghe lendjik.

To complete their victory, the Circassians had still a powerful force of infantry to conquer, who had kept up a galling fire on the horsemen, during the whole time of the combat.
The Circassian chiefs, collecting all their followers, again charged the enemy in a strong body, breaking through their ranks, cutting them down, driving them into the sea, and carrying away as prisoners many who threw down their arms and begged for quarter. A few of the leading ranks of the Russians succeeded in escaping; and those only by a strong force from the fort, with some artillery, sallying out to succour them.

Content with their victory, the Circassian leaders assembled their followers. Some were occupied in collecting their wounded and dead countrymen, and placing them on their horses; others, in collecting the Russian arms and ammunition, most valuable to them at that time; and others, in dragging away the prisoners whom they had captured.

Among the dead, was found the body of the traitor Besin Khan; and every warrior, as he passed, cast a stone at it, with a low, muttered curse, leaving it to rot among the carcases of the hated Urus, or to be devoured by the wild beasts of the forest, and the birds of the air; the greatest indignity they could shew it.

The Russian prisoners willingly followed their
new masters, glad to escape the confinement and danger of the camp, for the safety and free range of the country; preferring, to the iron tyranny of the Imperial army, a servitude under the kind-hearted Circassians.

No sooner was the fight over, than Arslan Gherrei hastened to the spot where Ina and her women had been stationed, anxious to learn if either she or her attendants had suffered from the fire of the retreating infantry. All were unhurt; and his lovely daughter, though still pale, had begun to recover from the terror into which his danger had thrown her. Great was her admiration and her gratitude, when she saw the gallant stranger rush so heroically to his aid; and she longed, with feminine eagerness, to express to him her deep thanks; but as she looked round to discover him, he was nowhere to be seen.

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed Ina, as the chieftain rode up, "Heaven be praised, that you have escaped unharmed from this dreadful combat; and that I again see you after the terrible perils to which you have been exposed! I thought never more to have been pressed in your arms!"

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"Allah, by the means of that noble young stranger, protected me, my child," replied the chieftain: "but we must stay no longer here; let us hasten from this scene of death."

"Gladly will I go," said Ina. "But first let us thank our gallant preserver; for know you, my father, that when you were separated from me, I was surrounded by those terrible Cossacks, when he came, like a protecting angel, with the speed of lightning, and saved me from the power of that traitorous Khan. Oh! my father, I have much to thank him for!"

"I will seek him, my Ina," replied the chieftain. "Oh! had heaven but spared me such a son as he, to delight my heart with his noble deeds, I should have been content: but the will of Allah be done—he is great!"

Ordering some of his band to escort Ina and her women up the mountain, he rode round to seek the chiefs of the party who had brought him such timely assistance. He first recognised the aged warrior, Uzden Achmet Beg, and, throwing himself from his horse, he hastened to thank him. The two chiefs warmly grasped each other's hands; a few manly words sufficing to show the gratitude of one whom the other
well knew would have acted in the same way towards him. As he turned, his eye fell on the Hadji Guz Beg, who was advancing to meet him, though he at first scarcely recognised him after his long absence, disfigured as he was with the dust and smoke of the conflict.

"Is it indeed you, my father, my friend?" he exclaimed. "Most welcome, are you to our native land, and well have you shown this day that, among the effeminate nations in whose lands you have journeyed, you have not forgotten the use of your sharp sword. Thanks, brave Hadji, for your timely succour."

"Oh! it is nothing," replied the Hadji, laughing; "I will soon show the Urus that I love them not better than of yore. And you, Uzden, glad I am to see you, and to have lost no time in wetting my blade in the blood of the cursed Urus for your sake."

"Thanks, many thanks, my father," answered the chief. "But where is that gallant young warrior, who rushed so bravely to my aid when hard pressed by the Cossacks?"

"He is my friend, my adopted son," replied the Hadji; "a true son of the Attèghèi, as he has this day shown himself to be; but he gives..."
not his name, nor know I even whence he comes. He will first do some deed to win a name for himself, and to show himself worthy of his father and his tribe; and happy will be the father who can own him.

"Happy will he be, indeed," replied Arslan Gherrei, sighing; "for he is well worthy to be the son of the bravest of our chiefs. Whither has he gone? Let me hasten to thank him."

"I saw him last," replied the Hadji, "closely pursuing the flying troops; I thought he had returned. Perhaps he and his followers have already gone up the mountain's side."

"Allah forbid that the brave youth should have been laid low by the fire of the enemy, or fallen into their cursed power; for little mercy would they show him."

Search was made in every direction for the gallant stranger, but he could nowhere be found; and the chieftains, at length summoning the remainder of their warriors, hastened to overtake the party who had preceded them.
CHAPTER XII.

Here to that pass the bands retire,
And safely braved Dumlarig's ire;
Rashly he tried, and tried in vain,
That steep, that fatal pass to gain:
Madly prolong'd th' unequal fray,
And lost his men, and lost the day.

_Hogg's Queen's Wake._

As our hero was attacking the retiring troops of the Russians, he observed a young officer endeavouring to form his men into squares, and to keep them in close order to repel the desperate charges of the wild mountain cavalry.

Again and again were they broken; and at one time, by a furious charge, Ivan succeeded in riding close up to the officer, in hope of taking him prisoner; when, to his sorrow, he recognised in his opponent his former friend, Thaddeus Stanisloff. Before he had time to
summon him to surrender, one of the Circassian horsemen was on the point of cutting him down, when, throwing himself forward, he interposed his own sword, and saved his friend from destruction. A shot directly after killed the Circassian; and Ivan, calling upon Thaddeus by name, entreated him to surrender. But at the moment the young Pole recognised him, the Russians rushed forward with desperation to rescue their officer, and Ivan was himself obliged to retreat with his followers. He had no further opportunity of getting near enough to Thaddeus to speak to him; for the retreat of the defeated infantry was soon after covered by the arrival of a strong body of troops from Ghelendjik; and the Circassian warriors were obliged to quit the pursuit of their prey.

Like the last heavy cloud of a thunder-storm, the mountaineers made a tremendous charge on the remnant of the retreating Russians, almost overwhelming them in their fury; and then, like a whirlwind, they swept by before the arrival of the fresh troops, and galloped off to overtake their companions.

As Ivan was passing the prisoners, he heard a voice calling to him by name. He started, and
turned to see whence it came; for he fancied he recognised the tone; and in a miserable object, his dress torn and covered with blood, he saw his former attendant, the faithful Karl, in the hands of a mountaineer, who, on a promise of a slight recompense, consented to give up his prize to his young leader.

As soon as poor Karl was liberated, he rushed to Ivan's side to express his gratitude. "My honest, my kind friend," said our hero, "it makes my heart beat quickly to see your old familiar face. Banish all fears, for no one here will ill-treat you. You shall be at liberty to go where you like, or to return to your countrymen in the castle of Ghelendjik."

"Oh, my dear master," replied Karl; "don't, for mercy's sake, talk of sending me back; for that is the very last place that I know of in the world, that I should wish to return to. Let me be your servant and slave as before, for I would not give a glass of quass for the freedom we gain, by becoming soldiers. Let me follow you wherever you go."

"Well, my good friend," replied Ivan; "you shall do as you wish; but we have no time to lose, or we may all fall again into the hands of
the Russians. Keep, therefore by my side, till we get beyond the reach of the enemy."

Saying which, Ivan rode on with his companions, Karl holding by his stirrup.

During the whole of the combat and skirmishing we have described, young Conrin and Javis were by Ivan's side, charging into the thickest of the enemy; and many a blow did the page ward off from his master, while the squire was as much occupied in protecting him, for he seemed scarcely to think of himself. The boy's eye burned with an almost unnatural lustre, and his lips were closely pressed, as with sword in hand, he rushed amid the fierce mêlée; but he seemed to bear a charmed life, for neither steel or bullet touched him.

While our hero was proceeding at a fast pace along the sea shore, followed by his two attendants, and a body of mountaineers, who had no little difficulty in dragging on some of their captives, and were besides, heavily laden with arms taken from the enemy, a loud shout made them turn their heads, when they perceived a large body of Cossacks fresh from the fort, coming at full gallop towards them. The horses of all the party were already fatigued with the fight and
pursuit; they had small chance of escape by flight, and they were too far outnumbered by the foe, to hope to gain the victory in a second engagement. Yet, what was to be done? It was better to die fighting bravely with their faces to the enemy, than to be cut down in an ignominious flight; and at all hazards, Ivan ordered his men to wheel round, and receive the charge of the coming cavalry, though the odds were dreadfully against them, when one of the Circassian horsemen, calling to his companions to follow, led the way through a steep narrow ravine, thickly overhung with trees.

Here, at all events, they could fight at an advantage, if the Cossacks attempted to follow; but most of the party had enough of fighting for the day. They eagerly followed their guide up the mountain, which appeared almost insurmountable for the animals. Karl, in greater haste than any of the party to escape from his late masters, scrambled up the rocks with the utmost agility, scarcely looking behind, to see if Ivan followed; who, finding the uselessness of further fighting, rode after the rest; and they had already gained a considerable height, when the Cossacks arrived at the base of the mountain.
Their horses, though fleet, were unable to compete with the goat-like nimbleness of the Circassian steeds; and, as they rode about seeking for a practicable way to follow, many of their number fell beneath the unerring aim of the mountaineers. Vainly returning the shots which told so fearfully among their ranks, they rode up the mountain in desperation; and at last, finding the pathway by which the Circassians had escaped, and attempting to ride up it, they were still more at the mercy of their enemy; till at length, despairing of overtaking them, and having lost many of their number, their officers called them off, and they galloped back to the fort, leaving our hero and his band to pursue their route unmolested.

From the spot they had now reached, it was much more easy to mount than to descend. Continuing, therefore, their upward course among broken crags and stumps of trees, leaping and climbing from rock to rock, after infinite labour, they at last reached the flat ground, which crowned the summit of the mountain; when, striking across the country, they perceived the bands of Arslan Gherrei, and the Hadji, with the chieftain's daughter and her women.
No sooner did Ivan and his small band appear at the summit of the hill, than the keen eye of the Hadji caught sight of him; and spurring on his steed, he came to meet him, almost lifting him from his horse, as he rode up to his side to embrace him; at the same time, exclaiming with accents of delight: "Welcome to my arms, my son! I feared one of the future heroes of the Attèghèi might have been slain by those rascal Cossacks, as you could nowhere be found after the fight. But my heart leaps with joy, to see you alive; for well have you fought this day, and full worthy are you to be called a son of the Attèghèi! My eye was on you, when you first charged the Cossack horse, and I was then confident you would prove no disgrace to your country; for bravely you fell upon them; and one of the noblest of our Uzdens says, that you gallantly came to his aid, when hard pressed by our foes. His fair daughter seeks to shew you her gratitude, for rescuing her from the hands of Besin Khan, that vile traitor. So, my son, you have lost no time in becoming known as a gallant warrior, and the praise of the chief, whom you rescued, is alone the proudest meed you could gain."
“Happy, indeed am I, to have won his praise then,” replied Ivan; “and not the less your’s, my kind friend. But I hope, with your guidance, ere long to win more laurels in my country’s cause.”

They waited till Arslan Gherrei and his band came up; when the chieftain, leaping from his horse, Ivan doing the same, advanced to meet him.

“My gallant young hero!” he exclaimed, embracing him, “though a stranger, as I hear, in our land, you have this day shewn yourself as valiant as the bravest of our chiefs; and a deep debt do I owe you, not only for saving my life, but in rescuing my only child from the hands of our enemy. Think not, that if I am wanting in the power of expressing my feelings, my heart thanks you the less. My child too longs to throw herself at your feet, to express her gratitude.”

“Speak not thus noble chieftain, for you owe me nothing,” cried Ivan. “I acted but the duty of a warrior, nor deserve thanks for so doing; and tell your fair daughter, that to have been of service to her, is my greatest happiness. The gratitude of all is, however, due to my
father, the Hadji Guz Beg; for he it was, who shewed us the way into action."

"Do not thank me, my friends," exclaimed the Hadji; "for I have not been so happy for years. Inshallah! we left not a few of our foes on the field. But we must not delay here, my friends; the day is far spent, and if we lose more time, we shall not reach our konag before dark."

Mounting their horses, therefore, they overtook the rest of the party, passing the Armenian pedlar and his pack horses. He had remained on the summit of the hill when the Hadji's band galloped down to join the fight—a distant hearer of the combat, though not venturing to approach near enough to the edge of the cliffs, to see what was going forward below.

"Ah, man of trade!" exclaimed the Hadji, laughingly, as he rode up; "you look fresh and well. As a spectator of our combat, you have managed to keep yourself cleaner than we have done. How think you, your friends the Russians like it? But you will make a rich harvest; for there are few of our followers who have not something to exchange for your goods."
Ina gazed earnestly at our hero, as he rode past her; for an unaccountable feeling of bashfulness prevented his addressing her, though, bending low to his saddle bow, he respectfully saluted her, and went on to take his place by the Hadji's side. Not so, however, his page the young Conrin, who gained a situation near her, earnestly stealing glances at her beautiful features, as her veil was occasionally blown aside; but they seemed not to give him that pleasure, which they so highly merited; for a slight frown and a look of dissatisfaction sat on the boy's countenance, though he seemed so fascinated that he could not withdraw his eyes from her.

The warlike party now gained another height, close above the bay of Ghelendjik, when the report of musketry was heard. Looking down upon the fort, a wreath of smoke ascended to the sky, and they observed a company of the Russian soldiers drawn up, and a man in the dress of the country fall beneath their fire. A feeling of rage and indignation agitated their breasts, as they fancied some friend might have been thus cruelly murdered; and brandishing their weapons they uttered a loud shout of defiance, and a promise of revenge. They were,
however, obliged to retreat behind shelter, for their appearance was a signal for the discharge of all the guns in the fort.

"Bismillah! I wish we had some of their powder and shot, if they can afford to expend it in this way upon the rocks and trees," exclaimed the Hadji. "But whom have the cowards dared thus to murder before our eyes?"

A young mountaineer, who had been stationed as a scout close to the fort, now made his appearance.

"Yonder died the traitor squire of Besin Khan, who this morning deceived us all by false reports," said the youth; "and now he has paid the penalty of his deceit, for the Russians have vented their rage at their own defeat on him."

It is well," exclaimed the Hadji. "They have saved us a task, for which they are more fitted."

As it was found impossible to reach the place at which they had originally intended to stop before night, a nearer konag was fixed upon, and a messenger sent forward to warn the host of their near approach.
The shades of evening were fast coming on, as they caught sight of a smiling village, sequestered in a dell amid the mountains, and shaded by lofty trees. The chimneys with their curling wreaths of smoke, and the shepherds driving home their flocks, afforded a scene of rural beauty and peace, in welcome contrast to that in which they had lately been engaged. As our wayfarers reached the dwelling of the chief of the hamlet, the moon rose above the mountains, throwing her pale golden hue on their summits, and shedding her rays in a silvery stream amid the forest glades, and deep into the recesses of the dale. Numerous domestic slaves ran out to take the horses of the chiefs, who were ushered into the guest-house, by the squire of the lord of the mansion; he himself being absent, mounting guard in the passes from Ghelendjik, above which they had lately passed. Ina and her attendants were delivered over to the care of the wife and daughters of the host.

As Ivan was dismounting, he observed the Armenian merchant regarding the Russian prisoners with an uneasy look, which was increased when he saw Karl in close attendance
on himself. Javis also regarded the pedlar with a scrutinizing glance.

"There is something in that man's look that I like not," said he, addressing Ivan. "I will watch him closely, for if I mistake not, he will be found no true friend to Circassia."

As the man, unsuspicious of what was said of him, moved onward with his pack-horses to take up his abode with one of the inhabitants of the village, of equal rank to himself, Karl came up to Ivan who was standing under the verandah of the guest-house admiring the scene of loveliness before him.

"Hist! sir, hist!" he said. "Did you observe yonder travelling merchant? Where did he come from? I am surprised to see him in such worshipful company; for if my eyes deceive me not, I saw him a few nights ago, as I was on guard near the Baron's quarters, pass by me twice, and each time a light fell upon his features, so that I think I cannot be mistaken. He remained closeted with the governor for an hour, and then took his way towards the mountains."

"Is it, indeed, so?" said Ivan. "The man must be closely watched; for it will not be
advisable to let a spy go at large. Here, Javis, I give it to your charge to watch the pedlar's movements. My friends seem to have no suspicion of him; but I will speak to the Hadji, and persuade him to send some shrewd person to assist you, and act as your guide if requisite."

As he spoke the Hadji himself appeared, and Ivan lost no time in mentioning the suspicions which had been raised about the Armenian's honesty.

"A spy do you think he is?" he replied; "I suspected the fellow was a knave when he tried to persuade the Prince of Pchad that there was no use in contending with Russia. No use, forsooth! We shewed them as much to-day. But this fellow shall be watched, and he shall pay dearly if he proves treacherous."

"You are silent, my son; of what are you thinking?"

"I am thinking of a dear friend I once had who is in the ranks of the enemy," replied Ivan. "He is a noble Pole, who, did he know the true state of this country, would, I feel confident, be ready to shed his best blood in our cause instead of against us. I saved his life to-day; and I
long to find means to see him and to bring him over to our party. Say, my father, how I can accomplish it?"

"I scarcely know," replied the Hadji. "We might send some one on some pretext into the fort; but these Russian rascals are grown suspicious of late, and our young men cannot now play them the tricks they were wont to do. It was a bad system; and our elders put a stop to it. It was at one time a common custom for the young men to go to the Urus, and pretend to be great friends, and then to carry off all the presents they could get, and laugh at their beards. You must now, however, bide your time, and perhaps something may happen, before long, to favour your wishes."

Their conversation was interrupted by the announcement that the evening meal was served, and at the same time their host arrived from his guard. Throwing off his large dark-coloured watch cloak as he entered, he offered his welcome to all his guests, and congratulations on the success of their recent exploit.
CHAPTER XIII.

As statues of dark bronze,
Stern and unmov'd the vet'ran warriors gazèd;
Their frowns the blood congealing answer made
Alone. The captive.

The rage and fury of the Baron Galetzoff was ungovernable when, instead of his troops returning with a number of prisoners, the Tchernemorsky Cossacks first arrived in disorder and dismay at the fort, giving news of the entire defeat of his well-laid plan to entrap the chief Arslan Gherrei and his followers, and of the dangerous situation in which the fugitives had left the infantry. He lost no time in ordering out fresh troops to cover their retreat, and he smiled with grim satisfaction when he heard that the instigator of the plan had fallen. He determined to wreak his vengeance on the
hostage who remained, as having forfeited his life by the failure of the enterprise.

The traitor Kiru, suspecting that something had gone wrong from the bustle and excitement around, made a desperate and nearly successful attempt to escape, when he was dragged back by the soldiers, manacled, and chained to a stake, with a strong guard placed over him. No sooner did the governor return from succouring his defeated troops than the prisoner was summoned before him.

"Traitor! you have deceived me!" he exclaimed. "Instead of capturing one of your chiefs, my troops have been defeated; and before another hour has passed you shall die."

The Tartar looked at him fearlessly.

"If I die," he said, "my master and my tribe will amply revenge me; you dare not slay me."

"Do you speak, barbarian, of your master?" said the governor. "Your traitorous master now is a rotting corpse among the bodies of my brave fellows whom he betrayed! Expect not help from him."

The traitor started at these words, and his courage seemed to give way. "Russian, speak you the words of truth? Has my master indeed fallen?" demanded the prisoner.
"I tell you the truth," replied the general. "Your master has received the reward of his treachery; and you shall soon follow his fate. I give you ten minutes to prepare; after that you die. Lead him away!" he cried to the guards who held the prisoner.

"Since my master has fallen, what have I more to do with life? I spit at you—I laugh at your threats. Do with me as you will, but I will yet be revenged." And with herculean strength, throwing aside the soldiers who held him, he had nearly reached the throat of the governor when he was felled to the ground. He was again manacled and led off, using every epithet of abuse, to shew his scorn of his executioners.

At the lapse of the specified time, he was led outside the ramparts of the fort, where he was again chained to a stake to prevent any chance of his escape. His shallow grave was dug beneath his feet. His courage was indeed worthy of a better fate and better cause, for he quailed not during the preparations.

A company of soldiers advanced; and as they presented their muskets he shook his manacled and clenched hands at them in an attitude of defiance, and uttering, with a dreadful shriek,
the war-cry of his tribe, his body was pierced with innumerable wounds. Ere the yet warm clay had ceased to vibrate with the pulse of life, the corpse was thrown into the shallow hole prepared for it, and instantly covered up; so that in a few minutes from the time a human being had stood there with all the energy and strength of life, he was for ever hidden from the sight of men, and a little new turned up earth alone marked the spot of the tragedy.

None can pity the fate of Kiru, which he so richly deserved, though not at the hands of his executioners. But it would be fortunate for the Russian name if it were not stained with atrocities of a much darker hue. The garrison of the fort remained all the rest of the day in a state of watchfulness and alarm, in expectation of an attack from the mountaineers, whom they thought their weakened state might tempt to come down upon them, if a sufficient force could be assembled in the neighbourhood; their fears however were groundless, for the day passed away without any further appearance of the enemy.

Some hours after dark, a figure was perceived by the outer picket stealing cautiously from beneath the shadow of the cliffs towards his post.
The person, on being challenged, gave the sign and countersign, and was allowed to pass to the gate of the fort, where, the like caution being employed, he was admitted, and conducted to the quarters of the governor. The Baron looked up on seeing him enter, with an expression of satisfaction.

"Ah! my faithful Armenian," he exclaimed, "I rejoice to see you return here in safety. What news do you bring me from the enemy's country? Do the barbarians think of attacking us?"

"I bring you some news which may please you, noble General, though not much of general importance," replied the seeming Armenian, in very good Russian.

"Let me hear it quickly then; for I require some good news to put me in spirits after the disaster of the morning:" said the governor. "And how came you not to give me warning that so large a body of Circassians were on the move?"

"I knew not of it myself till the moment I saw the troops engaged," answered the spy.

"Well, well, I believe you; but your news now," said the General.
"In the first place the barbarians are meditating some exploit—though I yet know not what, but will discover to-morrow—under the guidance of that old rebel Guz Beg, who has just returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca, and has lost no time in inciting his countrymen to fresh outrages against you, their rightful masters. He nearly cut my throat when he heard me trying to persuade old Mahmood, the Prince of Pchad, to send in his allegiance to the Emperor. I was obliged to hold my tongue to save my neck. The Hadji, as he is now called, touched at some place in the north of Turkey, Varna I believe, and there picked up a young Russian, as he seems, though he speaks the Circassian language, and two followers, who act as his squire and page. They at all events are Russian, for I heard them conversing together, and I have my strong suspicions that their master is an officer of the Emperor who has deserted, for I heard him speaking to one of the prisoners, whom he took to-day, as an old acquaintance, calling the man Karl."

"It is he!" almost shouted the General. "I guessed it from the moment you spoke of him. May curses rest on the traitor's head! One
whom I had adopted as my son! But I will punish him for his vile ingratitude. That knave, who was taken prisoner, or rather deserted, was once in attendance on him, and a slave of mine. Now mark me. I will give a handsome reward to any who delivers them into my power. Are you ready to gain it?"

"I would do any thing to please you, General, much more to gain a reward," answered the spy. "But I know not how to manage it."

"It must be done," said the Baron. "Entice him near the fort, when he may be taken prisoner, or watch his movements, and perchance he may be found sleeping in the neighbourhood, when I will send a strong body to capture him. But mark me, I must have him brought before me a prisoner, and my orders are not to be disobeyed. Follow what plan you will; I would rather have his head than that of a thousand Circassians."

"Your orders shall be obeyed, General," answered the spy. "And I will set my wits to work for the purpose."

"Remember your reward shall be great if you succeed. You may now return, or you may be missed by the barbarians, and fail not
to come to-morrow night with the report of your proceedings.”

“I will obey your orders, Baron, without fail,” replied the spy, as, bowing, he retired out of the fort, and returned to the village he had left, without the slightest suspicion that his movements had been observed.

We must now follow the steps of our hero’s faithful squire, Javis, who was keeping a strict watch on the house in which the Armenian merchant had taken up his abode, in company with an active, clever youth, whom the Hadji had sent to act as his guide. They had not long to wait before they saw the Armenian issue from the house, telling his host that he must, before night was over, pay a visit to the chief of the village, to settle about some goods he had sold him, as he might be obliged to start early on his way. To deceive his host he first took the path to the chief’s house of whom he had spoken; then, turning abruptly, he hastened in the direction of the fort of Ghelendjik. Following him at the same speed, over hill and dale, through brake and stream, Javis and his guide traced him till he arrived in the neighbourhood of the fort.
Fortunately for their design, the moon was now obscured by some dark clouds; and, leaving the lad under shelter of some rocks, the Gipsy crept cautiously forward, till he arrived close to the picquet, where he heard the pass-word given, and the Armenian, who addressed a few words to the guard in Russian, was instantly allowed to proceed. Remaining cautiously concealed, Javis waited till he again saw the spy pass from the fort, and heard the officer on guard give him the pass-word for the following night—"The Eagle of Russia"—when the man set off rapidly towards the interior. Dodging his steps, Javis traced him to the house he had left.

Outside the house of the chief, Javis found the Hadji and Ivan anxiously waiting his return, to whom he related what he had seen.

"Let the knave rest to-night," said the former, "to-morrow we will give him a surprise he little dreams of. He can do us but little harm now."

"I have thought of a plan," said Javis, "by which you can communicate with Lieutenant Stanisloff, without danger either to him or to yourself. I heard the pass-word given for to-morrow night, and I propose to personate the
treacherous Armenian, and gain admittance to the fort, where I will trust to my own wits to find out your friend, and give him your message, and to escape without seeing the governor, who would probably discover me. What say you, Sir, to my plan? Shall I attempt it?"

"Though I long to see my friend, I would not that you should run so great a risk; for were you discovered, your death would be certain," said Ivan.

"O fear not for me, Sir," replied Javis, "my life is of but little value to any one, and the danger is not so great as it appears; for those thick-headed Russians are not likely to distinguish me at night from the Armenian. I shall also, I have no doubt, be able to gain some further information from the man to-morrow."

The next morning the Armenian appeared with his packs on his horses' backs, as if prepared for a journey. He smilingly saluted the chiefs who were assembled in front of the guest-house; but alarm took the place of his smiles, when he observed the stern looks which met him on every side; and more so when he found himself surrounded by a number of their armed followers.
"Whither go you so fast, Armenian?" said the Hadji, sternly. "Are you hastening to visit your friends the Urus? What, do you turn pale? Drag the treacherous spy from his horse," he added, turning to his attendants, "and bring him along. We will judge his case; and if he prove guilty, he knows the punishment of spies."

The unfortunate pedlar trembled violently as he was dragged along to an open glade surrounded by trees, at a short distance from the village. Here the chiefs soon assembled, as well as several rich Tocavs or yeomen, and other influential men in the neighbourhood, who were summoned to give the criminal the fairest trial.

The judges seated themselves, with due formality and gravity, in a semi-circle, on a grassy bank, when the terror-stricken Armenian was brought before them. The witnesses against him, Javis and his guide, were also summoned into their presence. Javis first gave his evidence, which Ivan interpreted, as also did his guide.

"Said you not, Armenian, that you were a man of peace, and a friend to the Attèghèi?" demanded the chief of the village, who acted as president. "See that you have not spoken lies,
and proved that you are a friend of our enemies. Answer this one question: where went you last night?"

"Where went I?" tremulously echoed the Armenian. "I went forth from the house of my good konag, to cool my brow after the heat of the day. Surely I went no where beyond the hamlet."

"Oh thou son of the evil one! Think you to elude our vigilance? Answer truly, or you die on the spot. Why went you to the camp of our enemies?"

"Oh! spare my life, noble chiefs!" cried the Armenian, falling on his knees. "I am but a poor trader, and I went but to sell my goods. Oh slay me not, valiant nobles!"

"Do you not know that it is prohibited to have any dealings with the enemy?" said the president. "And of what use are such goods as you carry to the Urus? But you are full of lies. You went without your goods, secretly, and by night. You know the enemy's password. You were seen to enter their fort, and shortly after to return. Your own words condemn you. What say you, Uzdens?" turning to the other judges, "has the Armenian proved himself to be innocent, or is he guilty?"
The chiefs, all standing up, pronounced the solemn words of the wretch's doom,

"He is guilty: let him die the death of a spy."

The miserable being had not a word to plead in his own defence; but loudly crying for mercy, he lifted up his hands in an imploring attitude; for well he knew the dreadful fate prepared for him. The stern warriors relaxed not their features as they motioned to the attendants to lead him away. His crime was of the greatest magnitude, and no mercy could be granted him; not a voice spoke in his favour; not an eye turned with pity towards him.

At some distance from the hamlet was a lofty and perpendicular cliff, at whose base, over a rough rocky bed, roared a foaming and rapid torrent. The wretched Armenian, without any further delay, was dragged up a steep pathway to the summit of the cliff, where, by order of the Hadji, he was stripped of his high Astracan fur-cap, his dark robe, and the appurtenances of his trade, and then led, shrieking, forward, to the edge of the precipice. As he thus saw his dreadful fate approaching, he screamed loudly for mercy and pardon; but his cries fell on the ears of those whom a fierce exterminating war had rendered deaf to pity for their cruel foes.
As he stood, shivering with terror, on the very edge of the frightful chasm, in a last fit of desperation, he seized hold of those who stood near, endeavouring to drag them down with him; but his hands were torn from their hold; and two powerful slaves, appointed as his executioners, lifting him from the ground, hurled him, with tremendous exertion, far over the edge of the cliff. A last shriek of despairing agony alone escaped him, as he fell headlong into the dark abyss, grasping at the empty air, and seeking to find some hold to prolong life, even for a few moments. So deep was the chasm, that not a sound was heard, as he struck the shallow and rocky bed of the stream; and its waters whirled the mangled frame far out of sight.

"Thus, let all spies and traitors die!" exclaimed the multitude, as they retired from the scene of execution.
CHAPTER XIV.

Asc.—Fly then, Diocles, from this hated thraldom.

Dio.—Honour forbids where else my heart would lead.

THE CAPTIVE.

Reports were abroad in the neighbourhood of Ghelendjik, that the Russians intended to make some movement from their fortifications; so that, in the hopes of finding occupation for their swords, the Hadji and Achmet Beg determined to remain on the spot to assist their friends; and Ivan gladly availed himself of the opportunity of endeavouring to communicate with Thaddeus. Arslan Gherrei was also persuaded by the Hadji to remain, to lend his powerful aid in repelling their foes, and to give his daughter Ina a longer period to recover from her fatigue.

Ivan anxiously looked forward to the evening, when Javis was to make his attempt to enter
the fort, and he determined to accompany him near the walls, in the hope of meeting Thadeus.

Every body was eager for information respecting the movements of the Russians, some spending the day in anxiously watching the fort, while others were occupied in deep deliberation as to their future proceedings. The Dehli Khans, or young men, employed themselves in those warlike exercises which inure their bodies to fatigue, and make them hardy warriors.

By the Hadji's direction, the dress of the Armenian was given up to Javis. When the evening drew on, and he appeared habited in it, the bye-standers started with amazement, thinking that the pedlar had arisen from the dead, so completely had he disguised himself. As soon as it was dark, he set forward, led by his former guide, and accompanied by Ivan, whose anxiety for the safety of his follower, and desire to see his friend, made him wish to remain as near as possible until the adventure should be terminated.

As Javis arrived at the outer picquet, he gave the right answer to the sentry's challenge, and
was allowed to pass on, while Ivan remained concealed among the rocks.

"Who goes there?" cried the sentinel, at the gates of the fort.

"A friend to Russia," he answered. "The word, 'The Eagle of Russia.'"

The drawbridge was lowered. The pretended Armenian entered the fort. The officer of the guard, unsuspicious of any deceit, ordered a soldier to conduct the spy to the quarters of the governor.

As the adventurer and his guard got beyond hearing of the people at the gates,

"My friend," said the former, addressing the soldier in Russian, and slipping some coin into his hand, "I know my way to the governor's quarters well enough by this time; here, take this to carouse with. You have a hard life of it here, I suspect. Ah! you thought I could not speak in your own language. Why, man, I come from your part of the country, and would ask a favour of you. I am in no hurry to see the governor, so we will not hasten, as I am before the time appointed, and he loves not irregularity. Now say, how do you like the life you lead here?"
“Why, I do not like it at all,” answered the man; “for we have nothing but hard blows, and get no rest from those infernal mountaineers, as we cannot tell from one moment to another when they may be upon us. If we wander but a few yards beyond the fort, some of our men are certain to be picked off by their rifles. Then there is no booty to be gained, nor amusement of any sort.”

“You do not draw a very pleasant picture of your life here, my friend,” said Javis, “and I suppose that is the reason why so many of your men desert to the enemy, where they are sure to be well treated, and have little work to do. Sometimes, too, they marry the beautiful women of the country; and, as there are plenty of warriors in the land, they are not obliged to fight against their countrymen. For my part, I wonder the General can keep any of his soldiers around him; but I would not breathe such an idea in the camp. Now, my friend, do you know Lieutenant Stanisloff of the 76th regiment?”

“Do I know Lieutenant Stanisloff? Yes, surely,” answered the soldier, “I am his servant, and a kind master he is to me. This night it
is his turn for picquet duty, so that he will be
in his quarters, if he has not yet started."

"Will you then, my friend, hasten and call
him hither," said Javis, as they arrived near a
row of wretched huts appropriated to the junior
officers. "Whisper to him that some one has
something of importance to communicate. Re-
member to tell no one about the happy lives
the deserters lead among the Circassians. It
might be said that I was persuading you to go
over to them, and that would not be acting the
part of a friend to Russia."

Javis retired below the eaves of a storehouse,
where, in the dark shade, he could remain free
from observation, while in other parts of the fort
the scene was one of bustle and animation.
Groups of soldiers were seated round their fires,
cooking their suppers; others gambling on a
drum head for their scanty allowance of pay.
Numbers surrounded the sutlers' booths and
huts where spirits were sold, quaffing, as their
only resource from misery, huge bickers of quass
and glasses of vodka. Here parties were
marching and countermarching to relieve guard,
their firm regular tread heard above the din and
clatter of the camp.
In a few minutes Thaddeus appeared, wrapped in his cloak, prepared for his night guard. On seeing Javis he seemed annoyed, as with a tone of contempt he addressed him.

"What want you with me, Armenian? If you have any of your worthy communications to make, I should have thought that the governor was the fittest person to whom a spy should make his report."

"Hist, Sir," said Javis; "draw nearer—you mistake me. I bring a message from one who loves you, and who will not be happy till he has seen you again. Do you not remember the night you passed in the Gipsy's camp near Tver? There you last saw me."

"Do my senses deceive me?" exclaimed Thaddeus; "are you not the Armenian spy who has for so long brought us information from the enemy?"

"Outwardly you see that I am; but I would not that my soul should be where his now is. But to my message. Your friend, Ivan Galetzoff, is now waiting for you close to the fort. He has much to say to you. Shall I tell him that you will come; you can have no difficulty, as I can assure you that no attack will be made on the fort to-night."
Thaddeus scarcely hesitated a moment before he answered, "Yes, yes, say that I will go, at all hazards, to see him. Where shall I find him?"

"Do you remember a peculiar rock jutting out over the sands, its top overhung by a large tree? Close to that rock I will wait for you, and conduct you to him."

"Go then, my friend; I will trust to you. But how can you leave the fort? Are you not afraid the governor will discover you?" said Thaddeus.

"I have no fear, and may easily deceive him."

"Fortune favour your hazardous adventure, my friend! I must hasten to my post," said Thaddeus.

Directing his servant to accompany the pretended Armenian to the Baron's quarters, he hurried off, and Javis followed the soldier's steps.

It was a trying moment for Javis when he entered the Baron's presence; but his eye quailed not before his fierce imperious glance, as, imitating the Armenian's manner, he bowed before him.

"You have returned in good time, my faithful messenger," said the Baron. "Have the barr-
barians yet formed their plans to attack the fort?"

"They have given up all hopes of doing so with success, noble General," replied Javis undauntedly, "and have begun to disperse to their several homes."

"That is well," replied the General. "And tell me, what plan have you formed to entrap the young renegade who bears my name? I must have him in my power by to-morrow night, at furthest."

"I have thought of several plans, General, which I think may succeed; but I have a difficult game to play, as I fear that I am already suspected by the barbarians, and I should not have ventured to return to-night but that you seemed to wish it. I would not be away longer than possible, so by your leave, General, I will return at once."

"You may go, man," said the Baron: "and let me hear from you to-morrow."

"I will obey your orders without fail," answered Javis, bowing as he hastened from the hut, at the door of which he found his friend the soldier waiting to conduct him to the gates.

"If a Russian escapes from the fort to the
Circassians, you are certain that he is well treated by them?" asked the man.

"O yes, my friend, they receive him with open arms," answered Javis. "But you must not now speak to me. We may meet again soon:—farewell!"

The adventurer was allowed to go through the gates without question, and passing the picquets, he hastened to the spot he had indicated to Thaddeus, where, sheltered beneath an overhanging rock, he waited his coming for some time, till he began to fear that something might have occurred to prevent his leaving his post. At length his quick ear caught the sound of footsteps, and to his summons in a low voice, Thaddeus himself answered.

Javis then led the way up a small ravine overhung by trees, under the dark shade of which he had left his master. Ivan was anxiously waiting the coming of his friend, and as he caught sight of him he dashed forward, and the two friends were in each others arms.

"You knew not," said Ivan, "that I was a Circassian; but I am prouder to bear that name than to be the highest rank the Emperor of Russia can bestow. But, Thaddeus, my
tried, my earliest friend, it takes away from the happiness I feel at meeting you again, to see you in the garb of the enemies of my country, armed against her liberty and her rights."

"Oh do not taunt me thus, my friend," replied Thaddeus, "for, believe me, I do not now willingly follow the standard of your enemies. But how could I do otherwise? My father remains an hostage in their hands, and should I desert from their ranks, they would visit their vengeance upon him."

"But why draw your sword at all, when against the cause of liberty?" exclaimed Ivan. "Surely your father himself would rather see you follow any other pursuit."

"Can you speak thus, Ivan, who are a soldier as well as I am? Would you persuade me to lead a life of indolent peace?"

"Then, my dear Thaddeus, quit that hated standard, under which you now serve, and you will be welcomed, by the noble warriors of this country, with open arms," exclaimed Ivan. "They love the Poles, for they have heard of the wrongs of Poland, and feel for her children the affection of brothers."

"Ivan, my friend, you wring my heart,"
cried Thaddeus passionately. "I feel the justice of your cause; but I have become a soldier of the Emperor. And would you have me, like a traitor, desert my colours? I was wrong to enter his service; but I sought for military glory, regardless of the cause for which I fought. Doubly did I feel how wrong I had been, when yesterday I saw the desperate bravery of your countrymen driving thrice the numbers of the slavish soldiery of Russia before them. To you, Ivan, I owe my life; for had not your sword been raised to shield my head, I should at once have finished my career; and it was at that moment only I first recognised you. Yet do not think me ungrateful if I still remain on the side of your enemies."

"Speak not of gratitude, Thaddeus," answered Ivan; "but let me draw you from the ranks of my foes, and from certain destruction."

"No, Ivan; deeply as I mourn the fate which divides us, I cannot change it while the Emperor claims the services I once tendered to him. That I love you, my coming here stealthily and alone shews; for I have already been guilty of deserting my post; but I did so in the assurance
that no surprise would be attempted on the fort, and that I risked not the lives of my companions in arms. That a love of quiet does not prompt my refusal to join you, will be evident from the life we all lead in the fort; and I in particular am subject to every annoyance which the hatred and tyranny of Baron Galetzoff can inflict. But I refuse, Ivan, because, as a soldier, my duty will not allow me to quit my standard, till I am absolved from my oath of allegiance; and also because I would not expose my father to persecution on my account."

"Thaddeus, my friend, you have convinced me against my wish," exclaimed Ivan. "I see your just and disinterested reasons, and have but to mourn the hard fate which thus places us on opposing sides. Still let us be joined in heart, and endeavour to mitigate the horrors of this war."

"That I will do as far as lies in my power," said Thaddeus. "But now, my friend, I must hasten back to my post, or I may be missed. I have many enemies who would make the utmost of any departure from duty. The Count Erintoff, who has lately arrived here, and who knows I am your friend, is my colonel, and would gladly find an excuse for ruining me."
“Ah!” exclaimed Ivan, “I long to meet that man in the field, to punish him for his atrocities.”

“He well deserves punishment; but I must not speak of him; and now, farewell. I know not when we may meet again; but believe me, my friendship will ever remain unchanged.”

Saying which, Thaddeus warmly clasped his friend’s hand, and hastened back to resume the post he had quitted.

Javis and the guide, who had retired to a short distance during the conference, now approached; and on their way back to the village, Javis related to his master his adventures in the fort. As Ivan entered the guest-house, the Hadji started up from his couch, eager to hear an account of his adventures, laughing heartily at the success of Javis’s disguise, and of the defeat of the plan to entrap him.

“So the General of the Urus thinks we are prepared to attack him, does he?” he exclaimed. “Bismillah! we will make his fears come true. I shall not sleep all night for thinking of some plan to surprize him.”
CHAPTER XV.

Sancho's my name; I wear a soldier's sword. Would you, with treacherous acts, and deeds of shame, Taint such a calling, tarnish such a name?

LOPE DE VEGA—LORD HOLLAND'S TRANSL.

How often in our lives have we been obliged to quit some delightful abode, or some enchanting scene of pleasure, to visit places and persons we dislike, or to mix in the coarse bustle of the vulgar world! and thus must we once again lead our readers from the beautiful and romantic scenery of Circassia, and from its gallant inhabitants, to the detested castle of Ghelendjik, and into the presence of its fierce governor.

The Baron Galetzoff had just returned from riding round the fortifications, and was about to throw himself on his couch for the night, when his servant entered the room to announce Count Erintoff. Throwing his cloak around him, he angrily arose to receive his guest.
"You come at an unseasonable hour, Count," he said, with a harsh tone. "Am I to have no rest either from friends or foes? What brings you here?"

"I come with news which may interest you; but for your private ear, General," returned the Count, looking at the servant who remained.

"Why stay you here? Begone, sirrah," exclaimed the Baron to the man, who hastily disappeared. "Now, Count, your news," he continued, turning to his guest, and relaxing his features a little. "It is late, and I would try to seek some rest; so pray no delay."

"My news is not of much general importance," returned the Count; "but to you, Baron, it may afford some satisfaction. At length I have found that immaculate officer, Lieutenant Stanisloff, tripping, if indeed I do not succeed in proving him a traitor. As he was to mount one of the outer guards to-night, it occurred to me that he might perhaps communicate with that arch-traitor, your once adopted son, whom, as I told you, I recognized among the horde of the mountain barbarians we were engaged with yesterday. I, therefore, having gone my rounds, waited for some time, and returned to his post;
but when summoned, he did not answer: he was nowhere to be found. I, therefore, left my orderly to watch him, enjoining secrecy, and called others to witness that he was absent from his post, in the face of the enemy. My orderly has just come in to say, that after a long absence, he returned from the direction of the mountains. He is, therefore, entirely in your power; but I would not seize him without first consulting your wishes."

"Then haste, seize him, and bring him here at once," said the Baron. "To-morrow he shall die."

The Count hurried off to obey, and during his absence, which lasted some time, the Baron strode up and down the room in an angry mood.

At length the Count returned with Thaddeus Stanisloff, his prisoner, strongly guarded.

"So, Lieutenant Stanisloff," said the Baron, glaring fiercely at him, you have been absent from your post when before the enemy. You have held conversation with an arch-traitor to the Emperor, and you are suspected of an intention to desert your colours."

"Whoever accuses me," exclaimed Thaddeus, returning the Baron's look firmly, "speaks a
foul and slanderous falsehood, if he says that I am, or ever have been wanting, in my allegiance to the Emperor.”

“I accuse you,” cried the Count stepping forward. “I myself discovered that you were absent from your post.”

“I grant it,” replied Thaddeus firmly; “and I await my punishment; but, beyond that, whoever was your informer is a vile slanderer.”

“Know you not that even for what you acknowledge to have done, your punishment is death?” said the Baron. “Confess therefore where you went, or expect no mercy.”

“I expect no mercy at your hands,” answered Thaddeus. “If I deserve death, I am prepared to meet it.”

“Hear me, obstinate youth,” cried the Baron, “you have held some communication with my once reputed son. You may do so again, but in the company of some trusty guards; and if I can see him safe within the walls of this fort, not only shall you go free, and your crime be overlooked, but your rise shall be rapid in the army, and honours and distinctions shall await you.”

At these words the prisoner seemed to gasp
for breath. "Baron Galetzoff, I am in your power," he exclaimed, "or you should pay dear for such an insult as you have now offered me. Think you that a son of my unhappy and enslaved country can be sunk so low as to hear calmly such vile propositions? No! you have torn us from our homes, you have taken from us our lands, you have ravaged our fields, you have overthrown our kingdom, and ruined our once proud families; but you cannot take from us our honour. I have ever been faithful to your Emperor, our conquerer. I defy your malice. I will speak no more."

The Baron's own stern eye sunk before the noble indignation of the prisoner, as standing before him without trembling, he folded his arms on his breast. "Madman," cried the Baron furiously, "you bring your doom on your own head. No power in heaven or earth shall save you."

Thaddeus spoke not, but looking towards heaven seemed to implore its aid.

"Colonel Erintoff," continued the governor, "I commit this prisoner to your charge, and you will take measures that he does not escape."
"I will strictly obey your orders, General," said the Count with a significant and sinister look.

Closely guarded, Thaddeus was led out and placed in a miserable hut, built to serve the purpose of a prison for the fort.

He passed a wretched night, heavily ironed. Indignation at the Baron's base propositions at first smothered all thoughts of his own impending fate. He rejoiced that Ivan had escaped; but he longed to warn him of the danger he ran; and the impossibility of doing so added to the poignancy of his feelings. By degrees the conviction of his own miserable destiny crept on him.

"How dark! How wretched is all around me," he cried in the agony of his spirit. "Do thus end all my hopes of military glory? Must I die with my once proud name blackened and disgraced; my character as an officer maligned? My father's last few and sad days hastened by the foul history of his son's disgrace and untimely death? I cannot bear such thoughts! Oh that Ivan's unkind sword had rather cut me down on the field of battle, than saved me for this end! Little does he think that my anxiety
to see him has been the cause of this misery. No! there is no hope, no glimpse of light left me in the world. Let me prepare then to meet my inevitable fate like a man, and then my comrades in arms may at least say, that I died with courage and firmness. And, oh heaven! give me strength to bear my lot.”

He prayed, and ere the morning broke he slept calmly, even on the hard ground, in sweet forgetfulness of his doom.

He was awakened by the entrance of a soldier with an open letter, sent by his brutal gaoler, in hopes of adding to his misery. It was from his father’s kind friend announcing the death of his parent, his last words being blessings on his son. “Heaven be praised,” he cried, falling on his knees, “that misery has been spared me. The rest will be easy to bear.” And with a serene countenance he prepared to meet whatever might follow.

Count Erintoff soon after made his appearance; he was received by Thaddeus with the most haughty coldness. “I come to learn,” said the Count, “whether you have thought better of the Governor’s propositions, and are prepared to accede to them, or meet the fate you deserve.”
"Were I tied to the stake, I would spurn the vile offer, as I do now," replied the prisoner. "I have no more to say."

"If such is your answer, expect no mercy," replied the Count fiercely, and he quitted the prison, greatly to the occupant's relief.

Thaddeus was left for some hours to his meditations, when, his prison doors opening, a file of soldiers appeared to conduct him before the Court Martial assembled to try him.

"I fear that it will go hard with you, Stanisloff," said the officer in charge of the men, casting a look of pity on the prisoner. "You must be prepared for the worst."

"Fear not for me, my friend," answered Thaddeus; "but I trust that neither you nor my brother officers will judge me harshly, though I am fully convinced of the result of my trial."

"Think not that your character will suffer," answered the other. "We all feel a warm interest in your fate."

"That is already settled," said the prisoner. "I am ready to accompany you."

When placed before the principal officers of the garrison, his trial proceeded as was to be expected, when the Governor had determined on
his condemnation. He was clearly convicted of having left the post he had been placed to guard, by his own colonel as witness; but when there was some demur as to his having communicated with the enemy, two servants of Count Erintoff’s stepped forward, and swore positively to having seen him speaking to one of the chiefs of the Circassians, and having overheard him promise to give them timely notice of any movement among the Russians.

Though great doubt was thrown on the creditability of the men, who were known to be bad characters, yet as their own Colonel swore to their honesty, they were received as witnesses. Notwithstanding the preponderance of the influence against him there was a strong feeling in favour of the prisoner, both in the court and throughout the garrison. So great indeed had the ferment become, when it was reported that he was condemned to die, (most people being convinced that his sentence was unjust), that the Count expressed his fears to the Governor that a general outbreak would be the consequence, if measures were carried to extremities with the prisoner.

"We shall see," cried the Baron, furiously, "if my authority is not of more avail; however,
I will disappoint their hopes, if they think to save the prisoner."

After sentence of death had been passed on Thaddeus, he was led back to prison, there to await his execution, while the Governor summoned the Count to his private councils.

A fort had been lately erected between Anapa and Ghelendjik, during a time when the greater part of the patriot forces were engaged in another part of the country, some occupied in attending a religious festival, and others in agricultural pursuits, so that the few who remained to guard the coast, were unable to defeat the object of the Russians when first landing; and in a day or so, by the time others arrived to their assistance, the entrenchments had become too strong to attack. The garrison left in it had lately been much reduced by disease, and had also lost many men in a party foraging for wood and water, so that the Baron determined on sending re-inforcements thither, and also to despatch the Count there with the culprit, under the plea of inspecting the fortifications.

"He is there, a stranger," he added, with a hideous smile. "And while those here are left in doubt of his fate, you Count, can take the order for his execution."
"I shall obey your orders, General, and hope to return in a few days, with an account of their having been fulfilled," replied the Count, as he left the quarters of the Governor, to make arrangements for his voyage.

Thaddeus was fully prepared for his coming fate, expecting every moment to be dragged forth to execution; and was much astonished, therefore, to find himself at the close of the day, placed on board a brig of war, without any notice having been given him of his destination. For a moment, as he was being conducted down to the shore, his faithful servant found an opportunity of approaching him, for the purpose of uttering his farewell.

"Do not be down-hearted, Sir," he whispered. "You may be saved ere you expect it. I have discovered where you are going, and I will aid you, or die for it."

Thaddeus was then hurried on board with four companies of soldiers, under the orders of the Count, when the brig instantly made sail to the northward; but as the winds were light, she made no progress during the night. As she was standing close in shore the next morning, several shot from rifles pierced her sails, and a
party of horsemen were seen galloping along the edge of the cliffs. The brig's guns were instantly discharged, but the balls struck the hard rocks alone, the deep sound echoing along the shore. The horsemen had disappeared; but several other shot from various directions, hit the vessel; and the commander seeing how useless it would be to contend with his scattered and concealed foes, giving a parting salute, stood further out to sea.

Thaddeus all the time was kept below, in a state of the greatest suspense; no one being allowed to hold any communication with him. Very light and variable winds detained them on their voyage; so that it was not till the end of the day, that they reached their destination, though the distance was but short.

The fort, to which Thaddeus was conveyed, was built further from the sea, than that of Ghelendjik, nor could it be so well protected by the guns of a fleet, as that fortress; but, from the nature of its position, it was almost equally strong. There was, however, a securely fortified way from it to the sea, with which a communication could always be kept up, without fear of interruption from the Circassians.
The scenery round it was barren and savage; huge dark rocks rising on all sides from the sandy shore, broken into fantastic forms, appearing like castles towering above the plain. The fortress was built of dark stones quarried, from the neighbouring rocks, on a ledge rising gradually from the shore, and running far inland. It stood on the eastern, or furthest inland point of this ledge; a steep and almost perpendicular cliff protecting it on one side, while in front, there being a smooth green surface, and gradual descent on the plain, its defences depended on its guns, being so placed as to sweep the ground with showers of grape.

A sandy and barren ground extended for some way in front, and on one side, a succession of low rugged rocks formed a considerable protection. The site had been chosen on account of the shelter afforded to the ships of war by a bay in the neighbourhood.

On reaching the shore, the Count ordered Thaddeus to be conducted to a strong prison in the fort; while he himself went round to inspect the fortifications. The reinforcement he had brought with him was gladly welcomed by the commanding officer, who complained much of
the small garrison, which was left to protect the fort.

The Count then informed him, that the prisoner he had brought with him was to be shot the next morning at day-break, by command of the Governor of Ghelendjik; producing the Baron's written order, desiring him to acquaint Lieuten­ant Stanisloff of the fate which awaited him.

The Governor looked with pity on Thaddeus, as he gave the Count's message; but he himself received it unmoved, and thus addressed the officer:

"I ask you to defend my fame whenever you hear my name blackened; say then, that I died true to my colours, and to my oath. That is my only request."

"I will do my utmost to defend your character," said the officer.

"Farewell!" exclaimed Thaddeus, "till to­morrow's dawn. Delay the execution, if pos­sible, till the sun rises. I would look once more on that glorious luminary: his beams will aid my strength."

"It shall be as you wish, if I can possibly so arrange it," returned the officer, as he hastened from the prison, and left Thaddeus again to meditate in solitude on his impending fate.
The night had at first been serene and beautiful, but towards morning, sudden gusts of wind howled through the rocks and buildings of the fort. The thunder broke in loud peals over head, and flashes of lightning illuminated the gloom of his small and dark prison, through the bars of the only aperture to give light and air. The tumult of the tempest awoke Thaddeus from a slumber into which he had fallen. It seemed to him to rage with greater fury than at first, as he sat up, watching each bright flash. The wind had increased to a hurricane.

The tempest, however, quickly passed over, and all was again silent, except the low sullen roar of the ocean, as its waves dashed on the rocky and caverned shore, or the distant murmur of the passing blast among the trees of the neighbouring mountain.

The dawn was about to break. Thaddeus, whose spirits were exhausted by his mental sufferings, had thrown himself on the rough log, which formed the only seat and couch of his prison, and was falling into a quiet slumber, when he was startled by a fearful shriek, piercing to the inmost recesses of the fort. Again and again it arose from all sides, far louder than the
howling of the late tempest, drowning the shouts of the soldiers, as they rushed to their posts at the walls. Soon the roar of artillery, and the rattle of musketry seemed endeavouring to overpower the sound of that war cry; but it triumphed over all, and sounded nearer and nearer. Thaddeus felt that he could not be mistaken; he had heard that tremendous shout but a few days before, when attacked by the mountain cavalry.

The cannon had ceased its roar, when next arose the shouts of the Russian soldiery; succeeded by thrilling cries for mercy and agonized groans of despair, answered by the loud, overwhelming huzzas of "Allah! Allah!" from all sides. A momentary silence ensued; and then a tramping of feet, as of men engaged in desperate strife. Even he, from whom the fear of death had passed away, felt his heart beat quick, and his breath almost stopped. The cries passed close to him; the bullets rattled against his prison walls; and the flashes of the guns lighted up the gloom of the chamber. The strange unearthly noises grew more confused; the reports of the firing ceased, except a few straggling shots, and the shouts of the combatants passed on.
Knowing little of the localities of the fort, Thaddeus could not discover in what direction the combatants had gone, when he again heard the sound of the rapid steps of a body of men passing close to his prison. Presently, loud and quick reports of musketry were heard, and he concluded that a body of Russians, cut off from their retreat to the shore, had thrown themselves into some strong building, and were making a last desperate defence. They seemed to be successful, as the firing increased, when an awful pause ensued, a tremendous deafening explosion took place, as if an earthquake had rent the earth; the prison walls were shaken to their foundation; the door flew open, and the roof fell in, overwhelming the prisoner in its ruins.
CHAPTER XVI.

Silent shall be the march, nor drum, nor trump,
Nor clash of arms, shall to the watchful foe
Our near approach betray; silent and soft,
As the pard's velvet foot on Lybia's sands,
Slow stealing with crouch'd shoulders on his prey.

CONSTANTINE PALÆOLOGUS.—MISS BAILLIE.

We must now relate several circumstances, which had occurred while Thaddeus was being transported from Ghelendjik to the fort in which we left him. The words addressed to his servant by Javis, when he visited the fort in disguise, had sunk deep into the man's mind. His imagination had been excited by the picture placed before him of rural happiness, contrasted so greatly with the wretched life he led in the camp. Like his master, he too was a Pole; though not like him, impeded by any scruples from deserting. Having heard that his former friend was among the Circassians, he determined to fly
to him for protection, and to urge him to find some means of rescuing the prisoner; for it was well known in the fort whither Thaddeus was to be conveyed.

That night, being on the outer guard, he threw aside his musket and cloak, and hastily sought his way to the mountains, among which he was soon seized by some of the many watchful guards placed there.

The Hadji was seated in the guest house with Ivan, earnestly discussing various plans for driving their foes from their shores, when their host arrived with a prisoner. No sooner did the captive soldier hear Ivan speak to him, than he shouted with joy, and ran to throw himself at his feet.

"Oh, Sir," he cried, "it was to find you that I escaped from the fortress. My poor master, Lieutenant Stanisloff, has been seized, by the Governor's orders, because it is said he went out to meet you, and he is now going to be shot; but every body loved him so much in the camp, that the Governor is afraid to have him executed there, lest there should be a mutiny, for which many are fully ready; and he has consequently sent him to a fort a short distance to the north. It is said not to be a very strong place, so you
may probably rescue him, if you take it in time. I thought this would be the only chance of saving my poor master's life; and being very wretched at the fort myself, I ran off to tell you all about it."

"My friend, I am deeply indebted to you," answered Ivan; and he then explained the man's story to the assembled chiefs.

"Bismillah!" exclaimed the Hadji, jumping up. "The very thing for us! We will set forth without delay; and, by the blessing of Allah, we will take that cursed fort before the sun has risen in the heavens."

"Thanks, my noble father, for your promptitude," cried Ivan. "No other leader would I rather follow in rescuing my friend. I doubt not of success."

"Stay!" said the Hadji's more cautious brother, Achmet Beg. "We must consider the subject. We have scarce men enough for the enterprise, and look at the sky. The light wind that blows comes direct from the place: the vessel will take some time to reach it, and if we arrive before it, our object would be lost."

"True," answered Ivan; "you speak well. In my eagerness to rescue my friend, I overlooked that point."
"And I too!" added the Hadji. "Mashallah! when there's fighting in the case, I am as forgetful of everything else as the wildest Dehli Khan among them."

"Then," said Achmet Beg, "I propose that we send forward some trusty scouts to watch the vessel along the coast, and give notice when she arrives in the harbour. In the mean time, we will collect as many warriors as possible for the enterprise. What say you, Uzdens?"

"The advice is good," said Arslan Gherrei. "And I will gladly lead my few remaining followers to the assault."

"Well, then, that point is settled," cried the eager Hadji; and turning to their host: "Now, Uzden, will you send out some of your trusty followers to hasten along the coast to watch the vessel? And you, my brother, despatch some of yours to summon all the warriors they can collect in the neighbourhood. There is no time to be lost on an occasion of this sort."

The host hastened to fulfil his part of the arrangement, as did Achmet Beg also.

Far and near the messengers hastened, in every direction, on their fleet steeds, giving the word at every hamlet and mountain cot. The
news flew like lightning, that Hadji Guz Beg had returned from abroad, and had lost no time in keeping up his old reputation by leading an expedition against the enemy. Wherever the messengers passed, the young men seized their weapons, either rifles or bows, from the walls, girding their swords to their sides, filling their wallets with meal for their provision, and throwing their cloaks over their backs. Thus, fully equipped at a moment's notice, they hastened to the appointed rendezvous. None knew for what exact object the expedition was intended; but it was enough to know, that it was against the detested Urus, and that the renowned Guz Beg was to be the leader.

Those nearest to the spot repaired to one of the points of rendezvous fixed on in a deep valley, about two miles distant from the fort to be attacked.

Before the sun had attained its greatest height in the heavens, on the following morning, the Hadji found full six hundred fighting men assembled under his standard. Many were chiefs themselves of note, attracted by the prospect of renown to be gained under the well-known guidance of so brave a leader. They came
clothed in mail, and attended by a retinue of horsemen. Others were sturdy yeomen of good repute in arms, also on horseback, (with their serfs on foot) anxious to vie with the knights themselves in gallant deeds. Some were independent freemen, coming from their solitary mountain homes, acknowledging no specific leader, each man fighting for himself, as his inclinations prompted him: these were armed with rifle, sword and dagger. Whatever was their rank or calling, they were all animated with one feeling—the deepest hatred of the common foe.

While they were preparing to march, a loud shout among the multitude proclaimed a new arrival; and dashing among the trees, a noble young cavalier appeared, attended by a band of horsemen of his own age. The youth rode forward, as room was made for him; and leaping from his horse, he threw himself at the Hadji's feet.

"My son! my son! joy of my heart!" exclaimed the Hadji, folding the slight form of the youth in his gauntleted arms. "Welcome, thrice welcome, are you to me at this moment! Alp, my son, you have not disappointed my
hopes; and may you prove yourself as gallant a warrior as your appearance would promise!"

Then, as if ashamed of giving vent to his feelings before the assembled warriors, though still holding the young man's hand, and gazing fondly at him, he added,

"Alp, you have now become a warrior, and these are no times for rest. Prove, then, to your countrymen, that you are equal to the bravest."

"I have but to follow your steps, my father, and I fear not that I shall gain renown."

"Now, my friends," cried the Hadji, tearing himself from his son's side; "let all men on foot advance, under the guidance of the Uzden Achmet Beg. The cavaliers will quickly follow."

Under shelter of the trees, the maidens of the hamlet had assembled to witness the departure of the warriors, and to encourage them with their prayers. Among them was the lovely Ina; her bright eyes regarding not the youthful cavaliers who careered before her, to win her smiles, but following her father's lofty crest as he moved about the field.

As he caught sight of his daughter among
the women, Arslan Gherrei sought Ivan's side.

"Young warrior stranger," he said, "I have myself endeavoured to thank you for your timely rescue, when so hard set by our foes: "but my daughter would do so likewise."

Saying which, he conducted Ivan to the side of Ina; and while they were speaking, he himself stood for some time entranced, gazing on them earnestly.

"I would thank you, noble stranger," said Ina, in a faltering voice, "for the inestimable blessing you afforded me in saving my noble father from the hands of his foes. To your bravery, I owe also my own safety, when I was near falling into the power of our invaders. I can only repay you with prayers to heaven for your safety; these shall be offered up to Allah."

"Lady," answered Ivan, "prayers from those sweet lips will add courage to my heart; but I pray you, do not think any gratitude is due to me. I was but fulfilling a vow I have made to heaven, to strike our foes wherever I can meet them; and I am yet unworthy to be ranked among the warriors of Attèghëi."
"O yes, surely you are well worthy to be called one of the bravest," answered Ina; "for who could have fought more nobly than you did?"

"No, lady, I cannot yet claim that honour; but your prayers will nerve my arm to gain it," answered our hero. "I must now away; for, see, the knights are mounting their steeds. Lady, farewell!"

"Farewell!" answered Ina. "And may heaven prosper you and shield you from danger."

"And may Allah, too, protect my child," added her father, rousing himself from his trance. "I was thinking, my Ina, how great a blessing would be such a son as yonder gallant youth; but Allah's will be done! I, too, must hasten to lead my followers. Farewell, my child."

Leaping on his charger, the chieftain galloped to join the cavalcade, while his daughter gazed on him with a fond and anxious glance.

As Ivan hastened to mount his steed, Conrin, who had been watching him anxiously at a distance while conversing with Ina, came forward. A blush was on the boy's brow, as if he had
been discovered in a fault; and there was an uneasy look in his eye.

"Ah, my faithful Conrin," said Ivan, "I must leave you here for a time; you are too young to go on so hazardous an expedition. I must not again expose your life to the dangers of such fierce warfare."

"Oh! do not despise my services, Sir," said the boy, with an imploring look. "Have I been backward at any time in obeying you? Have I done anything to displease you, that you would now leave me among strangers while you are exposed to peril? Did I show fear when you attacked the Cossack cavalry?"

"No, boy, you did not indeed," answered Ivan, with energy. "That day I owed my life to you; and I should be ungrateful did I not endeavour to protect your's; for that reason, I would leave you in safety here."

"But I care not for my life when your's is perilled," answered Conrin. "Think you, Sir, that I would survive if you were slain?"

"You speak thus almost foolishly, boy," answered Ivan. "I am grateful for your attachment; but you would find all kind to you, and many to love and follow. I know that Javis..."
loves you, and would protect you with his own life, till you grow strong enough to protect yourself."

"Javis loves me!" said the boy, gloomily; "but what is his love to yours? Let me implore you to allow me to accompany you."

"It cannot be," returned Ivan, soothingly. "I doubt not your courage, and that you will some day become a gallant warrior; but your arm has not yet gained sufficient strength to compete with men. If I am wounded, Javis will attend me; and if I fall, Heaven will find you some other protector."

"If you fall, I shall not need Heaven's protection in this world," returned the page, with a despairing look.

"You speak strangely, boy," said Ivan. "I have thought of your welfare."

As he spoke, Arslan Gherrei rode up.

"Uzden," said Ivan, addressing him, (for, as it is customary to address a person by his title alone, Ivan had not yet learned the name of the chieftain), "I have a faithful page who has followed me from far lands, and I would not lead him to the dangers of warfare, though he is urgent in his prayers to be allowed to accompany me. I would bestow him in safety; and if I
fall, will you grant me a boon, and be his protector?"

"I would do all you ask me, my noble friend," answered the chief. "I will, if it is your pleasure, place him with my daughter."

"He could not have a fairer or kinder mistress," answered Ivan, who, desiring Conrin to follow, returned with the chieftain to the spot were the women were still standing.

"I have returned, lady," said Ivan, addressing Ina, "to bring you an attendant, who would fain be employed in more warlike services. He is a brave youth, and I owe him much. I leave him, therefore, by your father's permission, to your gentle care, and he will serve you as faithfully as he has done me."

"Gladly will I follow your wishes, noble stranger," replied Ina; "for he is a gallant boy, and I will treat him rather as a brother than as a servant."

"Thanks, lady, for your kindness," answered Ivan. "Here, Conrin," he added, calling to the boy, "I leave you, during my absence, to serve this lady; and you will find it a more pleasing task than following me to the field. Farewell! may you be as happy under her kind care as you deserve."

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Lynx. We will here leave our horses and our guns; and let us see if Circassian steel is not better than Russian lead."

Another shout proclaimed the approbation of the band to this proposal. The most renowned and most active were then divided into four parties, of about one hundred and fifty men each, who, throwing aside all incumbrances, retained only their swords and long broad daggers. The Hadji put himself at the head of one band, and his son Alp led the most daring and active of the Dehli Khans, who willingly followed him in consideration of his father's renown. Arslan Gherrei led a third party of the bravest warriors, with whom Ivan was about to volunteer, when he was unanimously elected to lead the fourth band. A few were destined for the less glorious, but necessary, service of guarding the horses and such arms as had been laid aside; and the remainder, under Achmet Beg, were to form a cordon round the fort, to cut off any stragglers of the enemy who should attempt to escape.

The scouts, who had been sent to watch the vessel, brought word that she had just arrived in the bay, and that troops had been landing from her; but this did not damp the ardour of the
mountaineers, though Ivan remained in a state of alarm, lest his friend might be ordered out for execution before they could attack the fort.

The night had been far spent before all the arrangements were made; and, at a signal given by their leader, the army advanced cautiously and in deep silence towards the fort. A storm with terrific fury now broke over their heads, when the Hadji proposed to delay no longer; but (their footsteps being unheard amid the tempest) to rush on at once to the assault. The plan was, however, over-ruled by the advice of Achmet Beg.

"Stay, my brother," he said; "though the foe hear not the sound of our footsteps, the flashes of lightning would betray our approach." And as they arrived at the skirts of the forest nearest the sea, with the fort below them, he added: "See the lightning plays round the bayonets of the sentinels at their posts. Wait, till they grow weary of the storm, and then perchance they may endeavour to seek shelter beneath their walls, and their eyes may not be turned this way."

"Your advice is good," answered the Hadji. "Let it be so."
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"Your advice is good," answered the Hadji. "Let it be so."
Attentive to their chief leader, all the bands therefore halted; watching, in eager expectation, for the order to advance again.

While our hero was waiting for the command to proceed, he fancied that he observed a small light figure, which now advanced, moving among the dark masses of human beings surrounding him. He looked earnestly through the obscurity to catch a glimpse of the object as the lightning flashed brightest. All was again obscure, when he heard a low sigh near him. He turned: his page Conrin stood by his side.

He spoke rather angrily. "How is this, boy? I left you under the Lady Ina's care. Do you thus so soon disobey my orders?"

A low sob was the answer. At length the boy found words to speak. "And do you thus so soon forget your promise, Sir? Did you not say that I might follow you through all dangers and hardships? and am I to be left at home in safety, while you are thus exposed to peril? Let me now accompany you, and no harm can happen to me. My life is charmed when near you."

Before Ivan had time to answer, the rain poured down in torrents from the dark clouds, and the lightning ceased.
"Now is our time to advance," cried the Hadji to the leaders assembled around him. "To you, my son Alp, with your fiery Dehli Khans, shall be given in charge to scale the steep rocks which form the side of the fort to the right. Do you, Uzden Arslan Gherrei, form your band on my left, and we will rush up the smooth ground in front. We have often fought side by side, and can best face danger together, while our armour will protect us in the most exposed situation. You, stranger, with your light-clad followers, must storm on the left, and as far round towards the sea as they can reach over the rough and rocky ground; while do you, my brother, be ready to strengthen any of us who may require aid. And now, chiefs, in the name of Allah! lead on your followers."

The leaders hastened to the head of their bands, and, amidst the loud roaring of the tempest, and the dashing of the rain, they stole in deep darkness close beneath the walls of the doomed fort.

The sentinels at their posts, with their heads muffled in their cloaks, did not suspect the danger that surrounded them; or, when they looked beyond the walls, were blinded by the rain, and
saw nothing besides the dark veil which shrouded them.

Our hero, with a guide, whom he kept close to him, reached the very trench of the fort, on the south-western angle, at the very moment that the other bands gained their destined posts. Then crouching down, they could scarcely have been distinguished from the rocks and coarse herbage which covered the ground, even had the clouds cleared off, and allowed the stars to give their light.

There the hardy mountaineers waited, scarcely daring to breathe, for the Hadji's preconcerted signal to commence the attack. Silent, as tenants of the grave, they watched, while not a human being within the fort perceived the thick clustering foe, or dreamed that danger was nigh.

The rain had ceased, and the tempest had passed away, when the pale cold light of dawn began, by imperceptible degrees, to appear; yet, before it had thrown a gleam of brightness on the scene, the deep sonorous voice of the Hadji, uttering the cry of "Allah! Allah!" broke the stillness of the air, and was taken up on all sides by the eager warriors, as they rushed impetuously to the assault. They had gained the
summit of the ramparts, before the sentinels could recover from their panic. Vain was the slight resistance they could offer, as they sunk beneath the powerful arms of their assailants.

Wherever the Russian soldiers turned, as they rushed in disordered affright from their huts, they found themselves surrounded by foes. Even on the side they considered impracticable, Alp Beg, with his youthful and active followers, assaulted them; while on the sea-side, Ivan and his band had sprung over the entrenchments, and had driven those who attempted to withstand him from the walls. A few of the most determined of the garrison made a desperate rush towards the guns, which vomited forth a shower of grape; but in a few minutes, the men who fired them were cut down by the mountaineers.

On every side arose those tremendous cries which quailed the stoutest hearts. Innumerable foes seemed to be hurled from out of the obscurity of the sky among the Russians, as the Circassians leaped over the trenches. Arslan Gherrei and the Hadji had met with the greatest opposition in front; but the latter, fighting his way, had joined his son Alp, on the right, while
the brave commander of the fortress, rallying a strong body of troops, met the former chieftain in his victorious course. The Russians opened a tremendous fire, beneath which many of their assailants fell, as encouraged by their officer's example, they advanced to meet them, the Circassians rushing to their very bayonets' points.

So bravely did the former fight, that many of the Circassians were for a time driven back; and Arslan Gherrei found himself surrounded by Russians. Many of the most daring advanced to seize him, but his sword kept them at bay; yet they seemed determined to overwhelm him: when our hero, on seeing so large a body of defenders still keeping together, led on some of his men, and fought his way towards the spot. There was just sufficient daylight to distinguish objects at no great distance; when, catching sight of the heroic Arslan Gherrei, hard pressed, and defending himself singly against a host of foes, he shouted loudly his name, and strained every nerve to reach him. He almost shrieked with eagerness, as he fell, like a tiger, on the intervening combatants, till he hewed a way to the rescue of the noble chieftain. And, once again, those two brave warriors fought side by side,
their foes giving way before them: none could withstand their arms. Then as their followers united, the enemy retreated to a building in their rear, into which some found entrance, and opened a heavy fire on the assailants, while the rest remained without, fighting with their backs to the walls.

The firing lasted but a few minutes; when a terrific explosion took place. The earth shook with violence; and the combatants, interrupted in their deadly strife, were covered with the falling ruins, and obscured by smoke and dust.

Ivan looked around. Arslan Gherrei stood unharmed near him. Around them, and amid the fallen building, lay strewn the bodies of their late opponents, and of many of their own party, killed by the descending ruins.

Wherever Ivan moved, the daring young page was by his side, fearless of the strife. Unharmed by the swords of the foe, and the falling ruins, he pursued his way, fighting as bravely as the boldest warrior, and regarding only his master's safety.

By the light of the burning rafters, which blazed furiously, Ivan eagerly hastened in search of his friend; and as the smoke and dust cleared
off, he caught sight of a human being, endeavouring to extricate himself from the ruins of a small building. He leaped over the smoking ruins, towards the spot, followed by some of his men. In a few minutes he had the happiness of lifting his friend Stanisloff in his arms, and seeing his fetters knocked off, while loud shouts proclaimed the satisfaction of his liberators.

In the mean time, the venerable Hadji and his gallant son had cleared the fort of all who opposed them. Young Alp drove the Russians to the water's edge, so that at the time the magazine blew up, all opposition had ceased. As the victors hurried through the fort, the sound of cannon from the ship of war in the harbour, proclaimed that some of their enemies had reached the shore, and were being protected in their embarkation. A party, therefore, hurried off to assist Alp in capturing the remainder of their defeated foes, or in utterly destroying them.

As the sun rose in majestic splendour over the mountains, what a scene of havoc and destruction it revealed! On every side were the bodies of the slaughtered Russians, ghastly with the terrific wounds of the broad bladed cama, which had pierced home to the breasts of the
victims, doing its work surely. Their countenances were livid, and their limbs distorted into every frightful attitude. Among them, near the walls, lay many bodies of the mountaineers, their sabres firmly clasped in their clenched hands, scarcely shewing the small death wound caused by the bullet. Some lay pierced by the bayonets of the defenders of the castle, as they leaped from the parapet among them.

Farther in the centre, amid their slain husbands and fathers, were the bodies of several women and children, who, rushing from their huts, at the first terrific sound of the onslaught, had been, in the darkness and confusion, overthrown, unknowingly slain, and trampled upon, by the fierce combatants of either side. Round the smoking ruins of the magazine which had exploded, were the blackened remains of the gallant commander of the fort, and of the few faithful soldiers who had taken refuge with him in the building attached to it; and, crushed amid the heaps of earth and stones, were the bodies of several of the fierce mountaineers who were attacking it.

Some of the store-houses and barracks had
likewise caught fire, and were blazing up furiously, to add to the destruction and confusion. Parties of the victors were hurrying over the fort, some ransacking the quarters of the officers, others piling the arms of the conquered, and others collecting the prisoners who had lain down their arms. The cannonading soon ceased, and the brig of war was seen standing out of the harbour, carrying away the poor remains of the garrison, who had first escaped to the shore, though the greater part had either been slain, or made prisoners.

None of the chiefs of note had fallen, they being well protected for this species of fighting, by the coats of chain armour they wore under their dress; but it was a dearly-bought victory to their followers, three score of whom had perished by the bullets of the Russians, and by the explosion of the magazine.

Achmet Beg, notwithstanding his advanced age, had not been able to restrain his ardour; but with somewhat of the fiery valour of his brother the Hadji, when the shouts of the combatants arose, had quitted his post outside, and, scaling the ramparts, with many of his followers, joined in the fray. Overcome with
fatigue he stood like the statue of an aged Mars, leaning on his sword reeking with the blood of his foes, and covered with the dust and smoke of the combat.

Alp Beg now returned from the pursuit of the enemy, whom he had almost cut to pieces before the remnant succeeded in escaping to the boats of the brig. Among the latter, was probably the Count Erintoff; as when Ivan and Thaddeus went in search of his corpse, it was no where to be found. The chieftains then assembled in the centre of the fort; when our hero led forth his rescued friend, who was received with warm and sincere congratulations by his gallant liberators. Few words passed between them; for there was still much to be done, and all were anxious to return to give assurance to their friends of their success.

By Ivan's side stood young Conrin, amid the fierce and bearded warriors; one bright and glowing spot alone remained on his otherwise pale cheek, and his eyes burned with the same unearthly lustre which they had shewn after the former combat. His lip at times quivered, and his arm still trembled with the exertion he had undergone, as his hand grasped a weapon
marked with many a red stain. Alas! that one so young, and seemingly of so gentle a nature, should engage in scenes of bloodshed like this! The boy gazed up in his master's face with a look expressive of such satisfaction and joy, that he had escaped the dangers of the attack, that Ivan relented from the displeasure he had felt at the youth's rashness, and, placing his hand on his shoulder, said:

"It was for your safety, my brave, but rash, Conrin, that I forbade you to accompany me on this expedition; and for my own sake also. For my grief would have been, indeed, great, and I should never have ceased blaming myself, had you fallen, or received any injury. Therefore, if you love me, venture not again into such danger."

The boy burst into tears. "It would be my greatest joy to die at your feet, if I thought you loved me as I would be loved!" exclaimed he passionately. "And I am amply rewarded for all the horrors of this scene, now that the moment has arrived in which I know that you are safe."

"Boy, you will wear that gallant young spirit out, if you thus exert it before its time. For
my sake, if not for your own, play me not thus false again," said Ivan. "And, now as a truant, I must return you to your mistress."

"Am I then forgiven, Sir?" asked the boy.

"Yes, Conrin, yes, you are forgiven; and gladly, as you have not suffered. But see, the chiefs are moving on, and I must join them."

The chiefs had been holding a consultation, in which it was agreed to destroy the fort completely. Achmet Beg volunteering to remain with a party of his followers, to superintend its entire demolition. The rest quitted the fort, the drawbridge being lowered for their exit. They were received with shouts of congratulation by the party outside the walls, each man laden with the arms and other booty which they had found in the fort, and carefully guarding the few prisoners they had taken.

A more mournful procession followed, conveying on quickly-formed biers, the bodies of their slain comrades, the bearers changing, at intervals, the triumphant songs of victory into cries of lamentation for their early fate. The victorious little army first repaired to the secluded vale where they had left their horses, their rifles, their cloaks, and provisions, and where the last
sad obsequies were to be performed to the slain. But it was a consolation to all the true believers in Mahomet, that, falling in defence of their country, their souls would find a quick passage to Paradise. Short, consequently, was the burial service of the brave warriors, though the grief of the survivors was not the less for the friends who had fallen.

The chieftains, therefore, leaving a party to commit the bodies to their last resting-place in that quiet spot, hastened back to defend the passes of Ghelendjik, lest the garrison, taking advantage of the absence of many of the inhabitants, should attempt to ravage the country.
CHAPTER XVII.

Diego.—It is! it is! Oh! pure unmixed delight,
My son.
Rod.—My father?
Diego.—Can I trust my joy?
Do I, indeed, embrace my gallant boy?
Bear with me: let me but compose my thought;
And draw my breath to praise you as I ought.
Oh! you have nobly prosper'd, nobly shewn
A soul in great achievements, like my own;
Nobly repaid what from these veins you drew;
Life you received from me, I more than life from you.

THE CID—LORD HOLLAND.

Scarce a whole day had passed since the band of gallant warriors had left the neighbourhood of Ghelendjik, when they returned crowned with victory. One of the detested forts of the foe was levelled to the ground, and thus one of the first links of the chain, the fana Muscov were striving to throw around the land was
burst asunder at a single blow. This showed them what they might still do; it raised their courage; it inflamed their ardour. Again and again they vowed never to yield while an arm remained to strike.

The noble Hadji was in high spirits at the success of this the first enterprise he had engaged in since his return to his native land; nor the less so at the gallantry which his son had displayed. He careered along, at the head of the party, gay as the most youthful warrior among them. The heroic Arslan Gherrei, on his magnificent black charger, his plume towering above the others, rode sedately near him, his features, except when excited amid the combat, ever wearing the same grave stern expression.

In each of the small secluded hamlets through which they passed, the women came forth to welcome them, throwing flowers in their path, and singing triumphant hymns of praise for their victory. Some made eager inquiries for husbands, and fathers, or brothers; and sad was the wail raised in lieu of songs of triumph, when the death of any loved one was announced to them.

By the side of our hero rode his friend
Thaddeus, for whom he had procured a horse, and who now related the events which had lately occurred to him, and the attempted revenge of the Count Erintoff.

"You are now then, my dear Thaddeus, surely absolved from all allegiance to the Emperor?" said Ivan. "And you may join, without scruple of conscience, the only cause for which a man is justified in fighting, when not for the protection of his own country, the defence of a gallant people's dearest liberties, their homes, their families, against the power of tyrants who would enslave them."

"True, my friend," answered Thaddeus, "such I now feel is a righteous cause, sanctified by Heaven; such the true cause in which the pure spirit of chivalry delights to engage; far different from the hireling service which would place a tyrant or an usurper on the throne, and aid him in oppressing a people whom it is his office to govern."

"I am rejoiced to hear you speak sentiments so like my own," exclaimed Ivan, "and of which you, of all men, have just reason to feel the truth."

"Since we parted, I have thought much on
the subject, even though death was hanging over me," returned the young Pole. "One of the causes, which then made me refuse to join your party, has been removed. My father is no more. The thraldom under which his noble spirit groaned, and grief for his country's overthrow, have at length brought his life to a close."

"Then, surely," said Ivan, "you can no longer, with reason, consider yourself bound to Russia."

"I do not; I consider myself justly absolved from my oath of service to the Emperor," answered Thaddeus. "But can you blame me, when I hesitate to turn my sword against my former brothers in arms, many bound to me by the ties of friendship?"

"That you need never do," answered Ivan; "and henceforth, I shall hail you as my brother in arms; for Circassia has foes enough without numbering the few you can claim as friends. The fierce and daring Cossacks shall be your opponents, and along the banks of the Kouban, they will afford you abundance of opportunities of gaining credit and renown among us."

"Press me not further on the subject, my
friend,” returned the Pole. “I have scarcely yet learned to consider myself as numbered among the living, so rapid and stunning has been my delivery from death. I have much to give me serious reflection.”

The two friends relapsed into silence for some time; for Ivan’s thoughts were also deeply occupied with conjectures, vague, uncertain, yet full of hope, as to who was the brave chieftain, whose name he had heard, and whose noble bearing, heroic valour, stern and melancholy, yet courteous deportment had inspired him with feelings of love and admiration, such as his heart was unaccustomed to accord to others; but he could not yet bring himself to address him.

As the party approached the beautiful village they had left the previous day, a group of bright and graceful forms was seen between the trees, waving garlands of flowers; their sweet voices singing songs of welcome and congratulation to the victorious warriors. The chiefs, throwing their reins to the squires, leaped from their steeds, as they reached the woodland glade, already mentioned as the romantic hall of assembly for the neighbourhood.

The maidens advanced to meet the warriors,
each anxious to welcome the most beloved of their gallant defenders; and still more lovely than all, came Ina, rushing with joy into the arms of her father. That one affectionate embrace of his child, was a full recompense to the heart of the noble hero, for all the risks and dangers of war. The wife and daughters of the chief of the hamlet came forward also to welcome him and his sons; and many a bashful maiden betrayed her hitherto concealed love for some gallant youth, in her joy at his safe return from battle.

It was a highly interesting scene. Diana-like forms of women, clothed in coloured and richly ornamented robes, with long white veils floating gracefully from their heads; the shining and embossed armour, jewelled weapons, and tall plumes of the noble chiefs; the groups of high mettled steeds, and bands of retainers, assembled on the verdant lawn, surrounded by the bright foliage of lofty trees and canopied by the blue vault of heaven; formed a picture, such as Titian or Rubens might have loved to paint. It reminded one of the romantic days of chivalry, now long since faded from all other lands but that of the heroic Attèghèi.

Near Ivan stood Thaddeus, enraptured by the
beautiful and noble scene; but, more than all, by the loveliness of Ina, as his glance first fell on her, clinging to her father's arm. His very soul became entranced as he gazed, nor could he withdraw his admiring eyes; never had he seen a being more lovely, more graceful. It was to him, as if, after arriving from the dark regions of death, he had entered a glorious paradise.

Scarcely were the first greetings over, when the Hadji advanced towards Ivan, and taking his hand, led him forward into the midst of the assembled chiefs, exclaiming, "To you, my noble friend Arslan Gherrei, and to you, chieftains all, I speak. I have this day a pleasing duty to perform. Here stands one whom I am proud to call my friend; with me he came to these, our native shores; but to this moment, I know not his name. He was under an oath, and none could disapprove it, not to tell his name or lineage, until he had gained for himself a warlike and noble title, and proved himself worthy to belong to the pure race of the Attèghèi. I call on you all, who have been spectators of his deeds of arms; who have seen his heroic bravery, when combating against the foes of our country; to bear witness, that he is worthy to be called..."
one of the noblest of the children of the Attèghèi; I call on you all, to declare, if you will welcome him as a brother, the bravest of the brave among us?"

"We do! we do!" was shouted from all sides; "he is a true son of the Attèghèi. We welcome him as a gallant brother in arms."

Uttering similar expressions, each chieftain advanced to grasp his hand, in token of approval. The heart of our hero beat quickly, as the blood tumultuously rushed through his veins, with a glow of noble pride, at the applause of his countrymen; but more than all, at the hope that the consummation of his most anxious wishes was about to draw near.

"I knew, my friends, that you could have but one opinion," said the Hadji. "But to you, Arslan Gherrei, I more particularly speak, for twice have you been witness of the bravery of the stranger warrior; twice has he rescued from peril, that life so prized by our country."

"Truly do I know how brave and noble he is," answered the chieftain advancing; "and gladly do I hail him as a son of the Attèghèi."

"Young warrior, you hear what has been spoken of you by some of the most gallant chiefs of Circassia. What more would you have to
absolve you from your oath?" exclaimed the Hadji with animation.

"I am overwhelmed with the proud feelings of my heart," cried our hero. "No greater praise can I ever hope to gain. I will keep my secret no longer. The name I bore at my birth was Selem Gherrei!"

"What! speak that name again," cried Arslan Gherrei, springing forward. Seizing his hand he held it in his grasp, while he gazed earnestly into his face.

"Noble youth, whence come you? can a blessed spirit rise from the dead? Speak, ere my heart burst with impatience; say who gave you that name?"

"My mother," answered our hero. "When a child, I was carried away with her by a Russian commander; she continued to watch over my youth till death tore her from me."

"It is enough; you are—you are my son, my long mourned son. I need no more to convince me," cried the chieftain, clasping the youth in his arms, while manly tears of joy burst from the long dried up fountains of his eagle eye.

"Am I! am I, noble chief, your son?" cried
the youth, no less overcome, and falling on his knees while returning his new-found father's embrace. "Has heaven, indeed, granted me so proud a blessing? See, I have borne this amulet from childhood, and have ever religiously guarded it. This may prove my birth."

"I need no mark to convince me that you are my son. Nature speaks loudly for you, though well do I remember that amulet," cried the chieftain. "You are, indeed, my son, and Allah be praised for his bounty. I felt it when first I saw you, like a guardian angel, fighting by my side, and rescuing me from death; I felt it when first I heard the rich manly tones of your voice inciting your followers to the fight. Yes, my heart beat with joy that another warrior should be added to the cause of the Attègeî; and now how proud and grateful I am, let Heaven witness. See, chiefs, I here present to you my son. Great Heaven has granted me the only boon I craved," he added, lifting up his son. "After the witness you have borne of his bravery you all must know how proud I am of him."

"Have I not a sister, too, my father? Let her also participate in our joy," cried his son, hastening to embrace Ina, who, trembling with
agitation, had advanced to the spot. "My sister, my sweet sister!"

"Oh, my brother! Allah be praised that I may pronounce that dear name. Now can my father's heart rejoice that he has found his long-wished-for son. Already does my heart give some of the love our father once claimed, to you, my brother," she said with a sweet smile beaming through her fast falling tears of joy.

The chieftains had courteously retired to some distance, so as not to restrain the indulgence of Arslan Gherrei's feelings of happiness; but they gazed with deep interest, as the once stern and gloomy champion of their country melted into softness, as he looked on his newly found gallant son.

The Hadji also was delighted. "I knew, my friend, he cried, "that none but a noble father could have owned a son brave as my young friend, Selem Gherrei. Say, warriors, are they not worthy of each other?"

"Yes, yes! may Allah grant a long and prosperous life to our gallant champion, Arslan Gherrei, and to his brave son, the young Selem," was shouted by the assembled warriors. "Long live Selem Gherrei!" was echoed through the grove, as they advanced in gallant and martial
array, each grasping Selem's hand as they passed him and his proud and happy father; nor could they refrain from giving an admiring but respectful glance at the fair Ina, as she stood clinging to her newly-found brother's arm.

Then arose the song of a wandering minstrel, who, attracted by the fast flying news of the storming of the fort, had repaired hither to commemorate the victory with his muse; and here was a theme well worthy of his martial strains. First tuning his lyre he broke forth into a loud triumphant hymn of victory; then, changing his theme, he described the fierce attack of the Russians, when the noble chief Arslan Gherrei was deprived of his wife and son; then it sunk into a low strain of grief, worked into rage against the ravishers. He next enumerated the many bloody combats in which the chief had fought to revenge himself on his foes, the coming of the youthful stranger, his fighting by his father's side and rescuing him and his sister from the enemy. Finally, as he pictured their surprise and joy at meeting, his notes were melting and pathetic, till, by degrees swelling high to triumphant strains of joy, he was joined by numerous other minstrels of scarcely less note, who had followed him to the scene.
A band of maidens then, taking the word from the bard, advanced, and surrounding the group with their wreaths of flowers, joining their sweet, rich voices to the melody as the cadence rose and fell with the subject.

Then the bard changed his theme to the rescue of the Polish stranger; and as he sang, all eyes were turned towards Thaddeus; and as Ina caught his gaze drinking in with enraptured delight the beauty of her form and features, she cast her look on the ground, blushing she knew not why; while he, the brave soldier, seemed seized with the same bashful feeling.

The bard had ceased his strains when a party of musicians struck up light and cheerful airs, and some of the youthful mountaineers, in spite of the fatigue of the fight and march, led forth the village maidens, nothing loath, to the dance; the nobles looked on to applaud, until messengers arrived from the house of the Tocav to say that a banquet was prepared to welcome the warriors.

Our hero, whom we must in future designate by his true name of Selem Gherrei, now took the hand of Thaddeus. "My sweet sister," he said, "I will lose no time in making known to you one, who has been my friend under various cir-
cumstances, and will, I trust, always continue so."

"My brother's friend is welcome to me," she answered in Turkish, a language Thaddeus was also slightly acquainted with. "But I cannot perform the courtesies you have been accustomed to in Frangistan. I have but few words to express my feelings in the tongue in which I now speak."

"Think not so meanly of yourself, Ina;" said Selem. "My friend is one of those noble Poles, whose country you have doubtless heard the Russians have treated as they would ours; and yet he hesitates to draw his sword against such foes. But I must leave him to your soft persuasions to supply him with excuses for joining us."

"I fear that I could scarce disobey your wishes, sweet lady," said Thaddeus; "then pray do not bid me act against my conscience."

"I would not do as you fear," answered Ina. "But among the sons of the Attèghèï the claims of friendship are paramount to every other. Surely you would not quit my brother's side in the battle field. His foes should be your foes, and his friends your friends."

"Cease, lady, cease," exclaimed Thaddeus
earnestly; "or you will gain too quick a victory. The sweet tones of your voice alone are too eloquent to be withstood."

"Silence, my friend," interrupted Selem, in Russian smiling. "You bring, indeed, the courtly style of St. Petersburg with you, when you commence by paying compliments. I must assert a brother's privilege to stop such language, or you may turn my gentle sister's head. Remember that she is unaccustomed to phrases of flattery."

"Her looks bespeak her to be far too sensible to be influenced by terms of compliment," answered Thaddeus.

"There breathes no woman of any clime, and but few of the nobler sex even, who are uninfluenced by flattery," returned Selem. Then speaking again in his own language, "Pardon me, my sister, for speaking in a language you understand not. I was but scolding my friend for paying the empty compliments which the fair ones of the cities of Frangistan receive as of sterling value."

"Your friend, my brother, would not surely use phrases unbecoming a mountain girl to hear. He looks too wise, too good," said Ina, blushing as she spoke.
Another messenger now approached to summon the hero of the day, the young Circassian Chief, and his Polish friend, to the feast, where the other chieftains were waiting their arrival. Great however was the disappointment of both, when they found that the chief ornaments would be wanting; for though the most chivalrous devotion is paid to the fair sex, such is the custom of the country, that no woman may be present at the festive board, except on private occasions when in attendance on their lords.

Most unwillingly, therefore, Selem was obliged to part from his newly found beautiful sister, and many an enraptured glance did the young Pole cast towards her as she retired with her women and the daughters of the host; while the two friends followed the gallant chief, Arslan Gherrei (his heart beating with happiness at the restoration of his son), as he led the way to the scene of festivity.

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