

# The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Circassian Chief: A Romance of Russia, by William Henry Giles Kingston

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

**Title:** The Circassian Chief: A Romance of Russia

**Author:** William Henry Giles Kingston

**Release Date:** November 29, 2010 [EBook #34485]

**Language:** English

**Credits:** Produced by Nick Hodson of London, England

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CIRCASSIAN CHIEF: A ROMANCE OF RUSSIA \*\*\*

W.H.G. Kingston

"The Circassian Chief"

---

## Volume One—Chapter One.

Between the ancient and modern capitals of Russia, a fine broad road now affords an easy communication, although, but a few years ago, the traveller who would journey from one city to the other, was compelled to proceed at a slow pace, along a wild track, over rough stony ground, through swamps, under dark forests, and across bleak and unsheltered plains.

The sun had already begun his downward course towards the more happy, and free lands of the far West, shedding forth his summer rays on the heads of two horsemen, who pursued their way in a southerly direction, along the yet unimproved part of the road, to which we have alluded. Their pace, as the nature of the ground over which they travelled required, was slow—their attention being chiefly occupied in guiding their steeds between the many deep ruts and cavities, which lay in their path.

The tone of their voices, their noble bearing, and general appearance, bespoke them at a glance, to belong to a station far above the common rank of life. They were dressed alike, in a half military uniform; their arms consisting solely of pistols, and heavy riding whips the latter even no despicable weapon when wielded by a strong arm.

The travellers might have been taken for brothers, but that the dark flashing eye, black hair, clear olive-complexion, and regular Grecian features of the one, offered too great a contrast to the laughing blue eye, light complexion and hair of the other, whose features, though inferior to those of his companion, were not deficient in manly beauty. There appeared to be scarcely any difference in their ages, both having emerged from boyhood, into that joyous time of life, when the man has completely shaken off what he then considers the irksome trammels of his childish days; happily, unconscious how soon in their stead, advancing years may too probably bring around him the many cares, and disappointments that flesh is doomed to bear, from manhood to the grave.

The last mentioned of the two wayfarers, was in reality, however, the elder; although the light laugh he occasionally indulged in, and his debonair manner, gave him a younger look, than his more serious companion. They were followed at a short distance by a most primitive looking, low, square vehicle, containing their baggage; drawn by a shaggy little pony, and driven by a man almost as rough looking and unpolished as the animal itself. A low crowned, broad-brimmed hat of felt, covered a head of sandy hair, while a huge long beard of the same hue hung down upon his breast: the twinkle of his light grey eye, and a smile on his lips, giving a good humoured expression to his flat, and otherwise unmeaning features.

His dress consisted of a long coat of coarse cloth, buckled round the waist by a leathern belt, and boots of the latter material, untanned, reaching just above his ankles. He urged on his little animal, as fast as it could travel, over the rugged road, whistling, as he lashed his whip, and whirled it round his head—his thoughts evidently not extending beyond his immediate occupation.

The scenery through which the road led, was probably as dreary and uninteresting as any to be found in Russia; a country, which can boast of but few natural beauties, throughout its widely extended territory. It ranged over a landscape, as far as the eye could reach, consisting of a dry uncultivated plain, with here and there, a few clumps of stunted trees struggling into existence upon the arid and ungrateful soil—fit emblems of the miserable, and enslaved peasantry of the country.

The travellers had continued on their course through scenery equally unpicturesque for some distance, when gradually it began to improve, exhibiting a greater number of trees, and a brighter verdure. A proposal was then made by one of them, to which the other readily assented; this was to urge forward the driver of their baggage-cart, with his charge to Tver, a town they purposed resting at for the night, while they followed at their leisure, through the forest they were approaching. The servant was summoned by the name of Karl, and ordered to proceed with as much

speed as his weary beast was capable of, in order to secure a lodging and to prepare supper, the materials for which he carried, together with their bedding for the night—a necessary precaution, the inns at the small towns in Russia, affording very miserable accommodation.

Karl signified his comprehension of the order and willingness to obey it, by a few guttural sounds, and several low bends of the neck; when flourishing his long whip, he bestowed a few additional lashes on the flanks of the pony, who reluctantly started into a trot, dragging the rude little vehicle over ruts and stones after a most uncomfortable fashion.

The cavaliers then followed quietly on, at the slow pace which the heat of a warm spring day made most agreeable, each occupied with his own thoughts; those of the younger of the two appearing to be rather of a sombre hue, as occasionally a shade of melancholy would pass across his expressive features; while, at other times, his bright eye would kindle with animation, and his lip would curl, as if some strong feelings were working within his bosom. His friend, however, endeavoured to amuse himself, and to enliven the journey with snatches of gay French songs, which he carolled forth in a rich, clear, and cheerful voice; and he now and then broke into a merry laugh. At length, weary apparently of his own thoughts, he exclaimed—

“Thank Heaven, Ivan, my friend, that we are for ever free from dull and laborious studies, and those odious college drills. Bah! I have so worn out my eyes and the small portion of brains I was ever endowed with, by reading, I will not look into a book for a year to come. We shall have no more of those sham fights, but henceforth may expect every day to be called upon to engage in the honour and glory of real warfare. What say you, Ivan, does not your pulse beat with quicker throbs in anticipation of the glorious scenes of battle and conquest, which we may soon find ourselves engaged in? What say you, shall we flesh our maiden swords in the carcasses of the turbaned infidels of Turkey? They are said to be no despicable enemies to contend with; or if perchance our regiment should be out of favour at headquarters, we may be sent to try our mettle against the mountain barbarians of the Caucasus. I hear that there is enough of hard fighting with them; more perhaps than is at all times agreeable. It is said, indeed, that the Emperor considers a campaign in the Caucasus an excellent field for the display of the military talents of those, whose ideas of that phantom called ‘Liberty’ do not exactly coincide with his own. If such be the case, I shall not be much surprised if we some day receive an intimation that our valuable services are required to strengthen his armies in that distant and savage part of the globe. What say you, Ivan, to this notion? Do you not eagerly long to be wielding your sword against the savage hordes of those unchristianised barbarians of Circassia?”

The brow of Ivan had contracted during these observations, which were uttered in a light, careless tone, and he had several times attempted to interrupt his friend; now, that the latter had concluded, he indignantly exclaimed:

“I thought you knew me better, Thaddeus, than to make a proposition of that nature to me. Never will I unsheathe my sword to aid the cause of tyranny and injustice—such vile work I leave to slaves and hirelings. Should Russia herself be assailed, most willingly would I shed my blood for her defence, as in such a glorious struggle as that when she so gallantly beat back the aspiring conqueror of Europe from her territories; but never will I lend my arm to assist in subjugating a free and independent people, over whom she has not even the shadow of a right to claim command. Rather would I break my weapon into fragments, and forswear all hope of advancement in the world.”

A smile was rising on the lips of Thaddeus at this sudden declaration of principles, so unusual in Russia; but it was quickly checked on his perceiving the stern expression of his friend’s countenance.

“Can you yourself, Thaddeus, not feel for the oppressed?” Ivan went on to say; “you, whose native land has so grievously suffered from the power of Russia; you, who have such deep cause to rue the tyranny of her iron sway! Then, as you love me, never again give utterance to the subject you have so thoughtlessly touched upon, for it is one on which I cannot trust my feelings.”

“I spoke but in jest,” answered the other, “and most sincerely do I applaud your sentiments; but alas! I fear the principles you profess, when put in practice, will answer but badly in this country, and are such as it is more prudent to suppress. For my own part, I confess that, though I have a high respect for the liberty of all men—especially for my own, I have such an innate love of fighting, that, provided an opportunity offer of exercising my propensity, I care little in what cause I draw my sword.”

“For shame, Thaddeus!” cried Ivan, indignantly. “I blush to hear one, whom I call my friend, and who I trusted was formed for nobler purposes, confess himself ready to become the willing tool of a despot; for to this does your declaration amount.”

Thaddeus laughed, and gave a shrug of his shoulders, as he replied—

“Your emancipation from college, my dear Ivan, has, in truth, wonderfully expanded the liberality of your sentiments; and it is indeed fortunate that the idea had not there occurred to you of giving lectures on the rights and independence of man; they would have wonderfully edified your hearers among the cadets, and made most admirable subjects and soldiers of them for the Emperor; but your exertions in the cause of liberty would not have gained you much credit in higher quarters.”

“Your foolish bantering,” answered the excited Ivan, “is but a poor apology for your want of liberal principles. Nor am I the madman you wish to make me appear. You well know how much I detested the thralldom in which we were kept at college, and that I pursued my studies with redoubled efforts and perseverance, in order to emancipate myself as soon as possible from that irksome and hated state. To you, as a tried and only friend, I have now opened my mind, trusting to have had a hearer who would cordially agree in my sentiments; but it appears that I have been grievously mistaken, and I have learned a bitter lesson—to trust in no living soul!”

The tones of the speaker’s voice shewed that his anger had risen to such a degree, that a reply in the former bantering strain would probably have caused a breach in the friendship of the two young men. Thaddeus, therefore,

wisely endeavoured to calm his friend's anger by acknowledging the justness of his sentiments, and by promising to adopt them himself if possible, when suddenly their attention was roused by a sound, which seemed like a human voice shrieking for help, as from a distance the breeze conveyed it faintly to their ears. They had now entered an extensive tract of open forest, the trees generally scattered over the ground at some distance from each other, yet in many places clustering together, surrounded by dense masses of thick and tangled underwood.

The young men seemed mutually to have banished the feelings raised by their late warm discussion, and instantly urged their horses at full speed in the direction whence they fancied the sound had proceeded, when a second faint cry, though appearing to come from a greater distance, assured them that they were following the right course.

Their horses were greatly impeded by the rough and uncertain nature of the ground, and often they were obliged to make them leap over the furze and straggling underwood, at the risk of descending into some unseen cavity, or of plunging into a morass. Notwithstanding the numerous obstacles, they hurried on at increased speed, eager to render their assistance; for they were confident that the piercing cry they had heard must have been uttered by a woman in distress. They were just emerging from a clump of trees among which they had been entangled, when again the cry was heard, loud and distinct, and at that instant they caught sight of two horsemen galloping among the trees, one of whom bore a female in his arms; these were followed by two men on foot running at full speed. It was the work of some few minutes before they could disengage themselves from the thickets and brushwood, a delay which afforded the party ahead of them an opportunity of increasing their distance; but, urging their horses with whip and spur over every obstacle, and gaining the more clear around, they ere long overtook the men on foot, who, seeing their rapid approach, shouted loudly to their companions to return to their support. The latter, however, in lieu of turning to render assistance, redoubled their speed, intent upon escape, and regardless of the loud cries of their overtaken followers. These, finding escape impossible, rushed forward to seize the bridles of their pursuers' horses, but were so effectually attacked by the heavy whips of the two cavaliers, that they were fain, not only to loose their hold, but were completely disabled from following.

Having thus got rid of these antagonists, the two friends set off in pursuit of the mounted ruffians, who were forcibly carrying away the female; her continued cries for assistance, indicating the track they had taken.

The scene had become highly exciting. Before them lay an open forest glade, and it was now a trial of speed. The noble animals urged to their utmost, dashed onwards, appearing to partake of the feelings which animated their riders.

The ravishers, on the near approach of their pursuers, turned on their saddles, each levelling a pistol at his selected man; these, fearful of wounding the female, would not venture to use their arms. The unencumbered horseman discharged his pistol at Thaddeus, as the latter approached; but, at the speed they rode, the aim was uncertain, and the ball flew wide of its mark; before the villain had time to use a second, the young Pole struck him on the head with the butt-end of his whip, with so powerful and well directed a blow, as to force him from the saddle, from which he fell heavily to the earth.

At the same moment, his companion, on Ivan's attempting to seize his horse's bridle, aimed a pistol at his breast; but that movement leaving his victim free, she quickly disengaged her arm from the folds of the cloak which shrouded her, and struck aside the barrel of the weapon levelled at her rescuer; the impulse, though feeble, was sufficient to divert its deadly aim; the ball nevertheless grazed Ivan's side. The latter succeeded, notwithstanding, in grasping the bridle of his antagonist's horse, and the same delicate hand which had but a moment previously, in all probability saved his life, promptly snatched the pistol yet remaining in the ruffian's belt, and cast it to the ground.

The man who had fired at Ivan, was now obliged to defend himself, and was accordingly compelled to relax his hold of the girl, who, when falling from the saddle, was fortunately caught by Thaddeus. The latter had thrown himself from his horse to prevent her sustaining any serious injury, which, closely engaged as Ivan was with his adversary, he had no power to avert.

Giddy from the pain of his wound, and loss of blood, Ivan loosened his grasp of the rein he had seized; this being perceived by his antagonist, he plunged his spurs into his horse's flanks, and dashed off at headlong speed into the depths of the forest, where pursuit was entirely useless.

The young men, left victors of the field, now turned their attention to the fair creature whom their gallantry had so opportunely rescued; and well did the extreme beauty of her form and features merit the looks of surprise and admiration with which they regarded her.

Her appearance was indeed unusual, and though they saw at once, that she was not one of the exalted and proud ones of the land, they internally confessed, that she was well worthy of that distinction. The agitation of the scene had caused the rich blood to mantle on her brow and beautifully oval cheeks, the complexion of which was of a clear, though slightly tinted olive, while her large sparkling black eyes, moist with tears, were now beaming with a look of gratitude, as bending on her knees, she attempted to kiss the hands of her deliverers, who prevented her from paying them this homage. Her glossy black locks, bound by a silver fillet on her high and polished brow, were uncovered, and hung down in long ringlets on her neck, nearly reaching to her slender waist. A light blue cloak thrown over her shoulders, and a vest and petticoat of red cloth trimmed with silver, completed her fantastic, but elegant and rich attire.

The character of her strange costume, and her dark expressive features, proclaimed her to be of that extraordinary race now wandering over the greater part of the old world, who profess to trace their origin from the aboriginal inhabitants of Egypt; retaining the same language and customs from age to age, and ever keeping distinct from the people in whose territories they pass their migratory lives.

The scene we have described, passed in the course of a few moments, during which time the young men had become

entire masters of the field; one villain, who by his dress and manners, appeared to be of a rank far above his companions, had fled; the other still remained senseless on the earth, from the stunning blow Thaddeus had dealt him; while the two men, whom they had first attacked, lay in a similar plight at a considerable distance.

Astonishment kept her deliverers silent, as they gazed with admiration on the Gipsy girl, for her delicate features and slight airy figure shewed her extreme youth; she was accordingly the first to speak, when she found herself prevented by them from expressing her feelings of gratitude in the way she wished.

"Though you may deem, gentle Sirs, that the thanks of a humble Gipsy girl can be but of little worth," she said, "oh! believe me, that from the depth of my heart, I am grateful to you, for having saved me from worse than death, for well do I know the vile nature of the man from whom you have rescued me. But let me entreat you, haste from hence, or the ruffian noble who has escaped, will return with a band of his followers trained to evil, and will thus not only render your generous and timely aid unavailing, by again getting me into his power, but his return may bring destruction on yourselves."

"Fear not for us;" cried Thaddeus, "for your sake, lovely maiden, we would face a hundred foes; and think not that such an arrant coward, as yonder villain has shewn himself to be, can make us hurry our departure. If he be even one of the most powerful of the land, we fear him not."

"He is wicked and powerful enough to commit his crimes with impunity," answered the Gipsy girl; "let me pray you earnestly, therefore, to complete the benefit you have rendered me, and to follow my advice by hastening from hence; for I feel confident, that he will endeavour to revenge himself on you, for your interference in my favour, and will return shortly with a greater number of men than you could possibly resist."

"You speak truly, I believe," said Ivan, "and we shall do well to follow your advice."

"You are always in the right, Ivan," answered Thaddeus, "so I suppose we may beat a retreat after our victory, without dishonour, when an overpowering force threatens us."

"Oh! yes!—yes!" exclaimed the liberated girl, "hasten from hence; and believe me, there is not a moment to be lost. Yet, grant me but the one favour more, of allowing my kindred and friends to return you those thanks which my words cannot fully convey."

"We will, at all events, see you in safety," answered Ivan, "and, at your desire, we will avoid the chance of meeting your enemies, however little we have reason to fear them."

They accordingly prepared to quit the scene of their encounter, and Ivan was about to offer to raise the fairy-like form of the Gipsy girl on his horse, when the slight exertion he made, caused the blood to flow more freely from his side, and she caught sight of the red stream trickling down, which he himself had not observed, for the pain was but slight, and the excitement of action had diverted his attention from it. The colour for an instant deserted her cheek, as taking a light scarf from under her cloak, she petitioned him to allow her to bind his wound. "You are hurt, Sir," she exclaimed, "and I am the unhappy cause of the injury. My tribe have some skill in surgery: even I myself have received instruction in the art from an aged woman learned in simples, and thus think me not bold in making the offer, but as the slightest mark of my gratitude, let me be allowed to heal the wound I have been the cause of your receiving."

Ivan thankfully accepted her aid, as with gentleness she quickly bound his side with the scarf, for the pain had now considerably increased. While thus engaged, they perceived the two villains whom they had left senseless on the earth, cautiously endeavouring to steal upon them, crouching as they advanced among the low thickets; and at the same time the man who had been felled from his horse, shewed signs of returning animation. Thaddeus humanely placed the body of the latter reclining against a tree, having wrested from him his weapons, which he cast, together with such as lay on the ground, to a distance, amongst the underwood. The Gipsy girl had just completed her task, when the horse belonging to their prostrate enemy, after ranging the glade in a wide circle, without however going out of sight, now approached the spot he had first left, as if in search of his master: with the rapidity of thought she sprung forward, and catching the animal's bridle, lightly vaulted on his back without any apparent effort, merely touching the saddle to steady herself in her perilous feat.

"Now, for the love of the God you worship," she exclaimed, "ride on, noble Sirs, nor care for me. We children of the Desert are early accustomed to far more difficult feats than this, and without danger, I can retain my seat on a more spirited steed than the one which now bears me."

The young men, following her example, had mounted their horses, and on her pointing out with her hand the road they were to take, the party set off at full speed, though the former were compelled to apply their spurs closely in order to keep pace with the less fatigued steed of their beautiful and extraordinary guide. She, avoiding the thick tangled part of the forest, which had before impeded them, conducted them by a more circuitous way, but over smooth open ground, and at a much greater speed than they had been able to attain when hurrying to her rescue, until they regained the high road, which they crossed, and plunged into the adjoining forest. Suddenly checking her horse, she then addressed them—

"Fear gave me the fleetness of the timid hare; but truly ungrateful must I appear, through my own weakness, in forgetting that one of my generous preservers is suffering severe pain. Oh, pardon me, for my fault, caused by the dread of a danger which you are now unable to understand."

Ivan assured her that his wound inconvenienced him so little, that he was able to continue at the same swift pace, if she thought it advisable; she again resumed the lead, though not quite so rapidly as before.

"Your horses are fatigued," she said, as they rode onwards, "and the day is so far spent, that it will be after nightfall

ere you can reach any shelter, and I fear that, before long, a storm will burst over our heads: yon black cloud is but the forerunner of others.”

As she spoke, she pointed to an opening among the trees, through which were seen dense masses of clouds fast gathering on the sky. “If you despise not the humble shelter of a gipsy tent, you will there be treated to the best of our means, for the people of my tribe, though rough and fierce in aspect, will vie with each other in shewing their attention and devotion to those who have rescued one of their daughters from peril.”

A determination not to leave the young Gipsy, until they had escorted her to a place of safety, added to a natural feeling of curiosity to learn something of the beautiful creature whom chance had introduced to them under such exciting circumstances, prompted both Ivan and Thaddeus to accept her offer of hospitality without hesitation.

Although but a few minutes previously, the sky over head had been bright and clear, the storm which their guide had predicted, now threatened to overtake them, as the heavens became overcast with a dark canopy of clouds.

Once more pressing their jaded horses, they galloped on for several miles, scarcely noticing the nature of the country through which they passed, until they arrived at a spot so thickly wooded as to render a passage impracticable. Their conductress, however, advancing a little to the right, led them along a path formed apparently by the hand of nature, through a narrow entrance, winding in various directions, and widening as they proceeded, till they suddenly emerged into a sylvan amphitheatre carpeted with soft green turf. In one part of the wood-encircled glade, arose a group of tents, surrounded by waggons; whilst horses and other cattle tethered hard by, were browsing on the luxuriant pasture.

The approach of the party was immediately announced by the loud barking of several large shaggy dogs, who rushed forward with open jaws, prepared to attack all intruders; but no sooner did the savage animals hear the silvery tone of the guide's voice, than their angry growl was changed into a cry of joy, as leaping up they fawned on her, and endeavoured to gain her caresses. They were quickly recalled by a man who issued from the shelter of the waggons, armed with a long gun; he, on recognising the Gipsy maiden advanced without any parley, to hold her horse's rein, as she dismounted, springing lightly on the turf. A shrill whistle from him brought out two rough looking little urchins, who, at his sign, ran quickly forward to perform the same office for the strangers.

After exchanging a few words with the attendant, in a language unintelligible to Ivan and Thaddeus, their guide led the way towards a tent, which, from its size appeared to be the principal in the encampment: like the rest it was formed of skins neatly sewn together, affording a secure shelter from the weather.

In front stood a tall well-built man, whose dark elf locks escaping from beneath a sheep-skin cap, gave him somewhat of a ferocious appearance, which, however, his full and sparkling black eye, and the laughing curl of his lips fully belied. His dress consisted of a cloth jacket confined at the waist by a leathern belt, and full trousers with leggings of untanned leather. He gazed with a look of astonishment at the intruders, then at their conductress, from whom he seemed to ask for an explanation, as she hastened to meet him with an air of affection. Folding her in his arms with a fond and gentle embrace, after exchanging a few words in a hurried and low tone of voice, he stepped up to where the strangers stood, and grasping their hands, pressed them to his heart.

“The preservers of my daughter,” he said, addressing them in Russian, “are thrice welcome to my humble tent, and it will be my aim, and that of all the tribe, of which I am the head, to show to the utmost our gratitude for the benefit conferred upon us. Think not, noble Sirs, that, though the world accuses us of many vices, ingratitude is one with which we can be justly charged. But see! while I thus detain you the storm is about to burst, and my tent will at least afford you shelter from its fury, though it be destitute of the luxuries to which you are accustomed.”

Heavy drops of rain had now commenced falling; the wind whistled mournfully through the boughs of the trees, which became wildly agitated by the sudden blast, while vivid flashes of lightning darted from the heavens, and played around their heads.

“Will you deign, noble Sirs, to enter the only abode I can call my own,” said the Gipsy chief, leading the way to his tent; “a very changeable one in truth; but wherever my tent is pitched, there shall my friends be welcome.”

Saying which, he arrived at the entrance of the principal tent, while his daughter, making a sign of respect to his guests, withdrew to a neighbouring one.

---

## **Volume One—Chapter Two.**

The travellers had full reason to congratulate themselves on escaping the torrents of rain now rushing down from the thick-gathered clouds, as they followed the Gipsy chief into his tent, the interior of which seemed to afford better accommodation than its outward appearance had promised. About midway, a curtain stretching the whole width of the tent, now drawn up, exposed the whole of the interior at one view; but on being unfolded, formed two distinct apartments. The furniture was of the most simple description, consisting merely of several large chests, on which were piled various rolls of skins and blankets, and a few stools and benches. At one end, suspended against the sides of the tent, hung a variety of kitchen utensils in the highest state of polish; at the other, fire-arms of different sizes and workmanship, powder-flasks, and shot-belts, and hunting-knives, picturesquely mingled with the produce of the chase. There were also several planks intended for tables, beds, or for seats. The ground was hidden from view by a warm and soft carpet of skins; the selection of the spot was judicious, for, being raised slightly above the surrounding land, it remained perfectly dry, notwithstanding the flood of rain outside.

The only inmate of the tent, when the party entered, was a handsome woman, whom the Gipsy introduced to the strangers as his wife. She was busily employed in some housewifery occupation, which she quitted to receive the

visitors, assuming an air which would not have disgraced a high-born lady, and then proceeded to prepare the evening repast.

A couple of chests were brought forward, upon which they laid a platform of boards, forming an excellent table: this was quickly covered with an abundance of cold provisions, fowls and game of various kinds, coarse but sweet bread, and a bottle of Quass, the common beverage of the country, manufactured from malt; nor were more potent spirits wanting to cheer the guests.

Their host requested the young men to be seated at the table, while he and his wife attended to their wants, nor would he be prevailed upon to join them in their repast. "It behoves us," he replied, "to wait on you, while our tent is honoured by your presence; and I pray you, Sirs, to excuse my daughter Azila's absence, she has retired among the other maidens of the tribe, to rest awhile after the fatigue her looks too clearly betray she has suffered. I confess I am still ignorant of the details of her adventure; it was sufficient at first for me to know that you had conferred a benefit on one so dear to me.

"Her protracted absence had, indeed, given me anxiety, as she had not told me of her intention to quit the camp; but at the same time I do not interfere with her movements, which are often unknown to any of the tribe, and she is accustomed to go and return unquestioned. Azila is indeed a strange girl, and few can match her in understanding, or resolution; I well know that she has always just reasons for her frequent excursions from the camp, and that her exertions are in the cause of justice and humanity, so I do not seek to inquire into more than what she herself thinks right to tell me; I know well that I can trust her."

Although their host's features and manner evidently exhibited his anxiety to learn all that had occurred, his hospitality would not permit his guests to speak of their adventure until the repast was finished; when they recounted the events which led to their liberation of his daughter. While they were speaking, the object of their conversation entered the tent, and approaching her father, reverently kissed his hand, then bowing to his guests, with arms crossed on her bosom she stood with downcast eyes by his side. The father gazed on her with looks of affection, while the young men could scarcely conceal their admiration.

"Can this retiring, modest creature," thought Ivan, "be the same who, so short a time since, proved herself endowed with so much courage and resolution?"

Neither of the two friends could, for some time, find words to address her, for they felt that terms of flattery and compliment would be despised by one so superior; her father, however, relieved them from their embarrassment.

"Now that our guests have tasted of our food, and drunk from our cup, I may ask of you, my child, an explanation of the circumstances that preceded your rescue. I burn to know who has dared to commit such an outrage on one of the children of the Zingani; whoever he be, he shall not escape the punishment due to his villainy."

A blush mantled on the cheek of the Gipsy girl as she answered, "Alas! my father, I fear that my enemy is too powerful and cautious, for you to be able to punish him, and there are circumstances which have lately occurred to me, I would fain have hidden even from you, had not he of whom I am about to speak, carried his persecution to so flagrant an extent. My story is a long one; but at your desire I will relate it, entreating my brave defenders will pardon a poor maiden for her hesitation in recounting events which have caused her much pain.

"During one of my last visits to Moscow, when our encampment was formed in its vicinity, I one day joined a party of the daughters of another tribe of our people, to one of whom I had matters to communicate. They were dancing and singing in the public gardens to crowds of admiring citizens, who were enjoying their evening's recreation after the toils of the day. As we moved from place to place, I observed a person intently observing me, who I fancied had, during the day, been watching and following me; and him I now distinguished from the crowd by his handsome dress, and the disdain with which he regarded all around him. As I moved on with my companions he still followed us, till at length weary, doubtless, of viewing the same dances, and hearing the same songs, he disappeared from the gardens, and I then concluded that I had been mistaken in my suspicions. The evening was far advanced when, having parted from my companions, I set out alone to return to the encampment, and in seeking to reach it by a shorter path, I found myself in a secluded walk. Hastening along, I was suddenly confronted by a stranger whom I immediately recognised as the same, who had previously watched my movements in the gardens. As I endeavoured to pass him unnoticed, he seized my arm with a rude grasp, and exclaimed:

"'Ah! have I at last found you, my fair damsel, for whom I have been searching so many long days? Often have I seen you, but until now never gained an opportunity of declaring my sentiments. I am the Count Erintoff! My carriage is waiting near, and will soon transport you beyond the reach of those who have interested motives in detaining you among them.'

"I cannot repeat all the arguments he used to persuade me to accompany him, or the terms of flattery and base offers he made. I treated them all with the disdain they deserved. When he pronounced his name, I recollected that I had heard he was notorious for many vices, even among those of his own rank, with whom virtue is too seldom practised, or prized.

"'Unhand me, Sir,' I exclaimed; 'I will no longer listen to you, but would pursue my way to my friends.'

"'Ah, my scornful beauty,' he answered with a laugh, 'not so fast I pray you; if prayers avail not, I must e'en use gentle force to compel you to accept advantages you would so foolishly reject; though not for the universe would I injure you. Here, knaves!' summoning to the spot by their various names, some of the vile assistants in his crimes.

"Seeing his servants hastily advancing, I struggled in his grasp, and managed by a sudden effort to break from his hold; when darting along the road, without once looking back, I reached the camp, panting and breathless. This outrage remained concealed within my own bosom, for I well knew that the least hint would cause many to take

more than ample revenge for the insult I had received. Having sustained no actual injury, and trusting that he would desist from any further persecution of me, I was unwilling to bring any of my tribe into danger, by interfering with so powerful an adversary.

"Alas! I was doomed to be too soon again exposed to his vile projects! This morning, I had gone forth from the camp with Aza, Lina, and other of our maidens, accompanied by many of the children, to enjoy our pastime in the woods, when in the midst of our sport, after chasing each other among the trees, I became separated from the rest. I heard the laughter of my companions as they retreated, but owing to the closeness of the trees, I could not distinguish their figures; at that moment, a cry was raised by the children, that they had seen a stranger in the wood. I hurried away as rapidly as possible to rejoin the party, when on a sudden, I was seized by two men, who had sprung from a neighbouring thicket. In an instant, before I could recover from the alarm of their assault, they threw a handkerchief over my head, to prevent me from crying for assistance. Notwithstanding my utmost resistance, they bore me roughly forward, until they reached another thicket; when the handkerchief being partly withdrawn from my eyes, I beheld a man on horseback, whose features were shrouded in his large cloak, attended by another holding the rein of a led horse. They endeavoured to persuade me to mount it, but I resolutely refused to stir from the spot; nothing they said could induce me, when the cloaked horseman losing patience at the delay, seized me round the waist, placed me on the saddle before him, and bidding one of his followers mount the led horse, bore me off at full speed. Catching a glimpse of my captor's countenance, to my horror I discovered that I was in the power of the Count Erintoff. The dreadful recollection now flashed across my mind, that we were in the neighbourhood of one of his estates; and I exerted my utmost strength to escape from his grasp, careless of falling to the ground in the attempt; but he held me firmly, protesting, that he loved me to distraction, and that nothing mortal should deliver me from him; while he threatened deadly vengeance against any who should dare to make the attempt.

"I could only vent my anger and terror in loud cries for assistance, having succeeded in withdrawing the bandage from my mouth, nor could he replace it, though the advantage offered me but slender hopes of my cries being heard.

"Thus was I forced away for a considerable distance, in utter despair of being liberated, when I was gallantly rescued by these noble gentlemen at the hazard of their lives. Oh, believe me, Sirs," she added, "that the Zingani maiden can never, while life endure, be unmindful of the great benefit you have bestowed on her."

At this recital, the eye of the Gipsy chief flashed with indignation; "The audacious barbarian," he exclaimed, "shall rue his vile attempt, though happily rendered abortive; nor shall his high rank protect him! Can he not be content to tyrannise over the hapless slaves already in his power, but that he must seek for fresh victims among our tribe? Does he mistake us for the wretched serfs who till his lands? He has yet to learn that the Zingani are not of their base caste. But, Azila, my child! what causes thy sudden agitation?"

"See, see, my father," she cried, pointing to Ivan, who overcome by fatigue and the pain of his wound, was falling to the ground, when the Gipsy sprang forward and caught him in his arms. "Alas," cried Azila, with an agitated voice, "how ungrateful indeed I have been, and neglectful of him who risked his life to save me, that I should forget he had been wounded! but I will haste and conduct Hagar hither, who will tend him with greater skill than I can, though not with more care." Azila had scarcely left the tent when Ivan returned to consciousness, as he reclined in his friend's arms, Thaddeus having relieved the Gipsy of his charge.

"He will soon be restored by the care of our venerable mother, Hagar," said the chief; "for there are few in this country so well acquainted as she is with the healing art." As he spoke, the person mentioned entered the tent, accompanied by Azila.

Her locks were blanched, and her form bowed down by the weight of many years; yet though her skin was wrinkled and tawny, the fire of her dark expressive eye seemed unquenched. "Mother," said Azila, "as you love your child, exercise your utmost skill in the healing art, by recovering this stranger, who has been wounded in my defence; by your help I know that he may be speedily restored to health."

"Child," replied the sybil, "the power of healing belongs alone to the great spirit who guards our tribe, and I am but his poor servant, ready to use the means he places in my hands; these will I gladly employ to cure this stranger, though by his looks, I judge that quiet and repose are the remedies most needful for him."

Such indeed was the case, and in compliance with the old woman's request, the Gipsy's wife busied herself in preparing the tent for the night. The curtain alluded to, as intended to separate it into two chambers, was lowered, while, a bundle of skins and blankets being unrolled, a couch was quickly spread on the planks and chests, which had previously composed the table. Thither Ivan was soon conveyed in the arms of his friend and their host, the rest of the family having quitted the tent, with the exception of Hagar, who proceeded to examine the wound; the Gipsy meanwhile preparing a second couch, which he begged Thaddeus would occupy. The old woman, having completed her inspection of the hurt, and desiring the sufferer to remain perfectly quiet until her return, left the tent to procure the curative simples necessary to dress it.

Placing a lamp on the ground in the centre of the tent, the Gipsy chief, ere he parted from his guests, thus addressed them:

"Rest in perfect security, noble Sirs. I am about to perform the rounds of the encampment, to place trusty men on the watch, in case the ruffians, who have this day attempted so vile an outrage on my daughter, should be excited by revenge at her liberation to attack us under cover of the night. I scarcely deem them possessed of sufficient courage to venture on so bold a project; but their leader is capable of any atrocity; and in this land, where the rich and powerful are above the law, he relies on escaping with impunity, however flagrant the injury committed against the poor and humble. The wandering life we lead teaches us caution; but on my well-trained dogs I can place most reliance in case of a sudden assault, for they never slumber on their posts." With a respectful salutation, he then quitted the tent.

Left alone with his friend, Thaddeus endeavoured to enter into conversation on the occurrences of the day; but Ivan, overcome by the pain of his wound, replied in so faint and languid a voice, as plainly shewed that he was in no state to answer his observations. He accordingly stepped noiselessly to the entrance of the tent, and gazed on the wild and unusual scene which lay before him. The storm had now passed away, leaving the dark blue sky in unobscured splendour, spangled with millions of glittering stars, which appeared to have derived a brighter lustre, as if burnished by the rolling of the dark clouds, or sparkling in triumph at the rapid flights of their sable adversaries.

A crescent moon threw a silvery light on the topmost boughs of the forest trees, whose giant shadows lay stretched in calm repose across the verdant glade.

At times he could perceive dark figures emerging from the shade, and flitting through the moon-light, again to be lost in the gloom, like uneasy spirits wandering in search of rest; but which he concluded were either parties returning to their tents, or the patrols on duty in the camp.

Thus he stood for some time wrapt in meditation, when suddenly he started at the apparition of a figure which, issuing noiselessly from the obscurity, was within a few paces of him ere it was observed. He instantly recognised Hagar, as she advanced, leaning on her staff, and bearing in her hand a small basket. Her white locks, hanging in disorder over her wrinkled and care-worn brow, caused her to resemble one of the weird sisters bent on midnight evil, rather than a minister of good, hastening to relieve a human being.

The young Pole might be excused if a tinge of superstitious distrust crossed his mind, and he hesitated to commit his wounded friend to the care of so strange a leech; but quickly banishing his doubts, he led the way into the tent. Kneeling by Ivan's couch the aged Hagar gently withdrew the scarf, which Azila had applied as a bandage, and washing the wound with a decoction of herbs contained in her basket, again swathed it in linen. During the operation, she had continued muttering to herself, regardless whether her patient or his friend were listening, in the following strain:

"Aye, aye, too clearly do I see how it will be, and thus it has ever been! Slight wounds oft pierce far deeper than mortal eyes can see; and young hearts fear not the weapon that destroys them, but bare their bosoms to the stroke! Aye, my child, my loved one! bound nearer to my heart than my own offspring, may thy generous and noble heart have no cause to rue the wound this stranger youth has this day received in thy cause! Would that I could so read thy fate, as to guard thee from evil! Yet when I gaze on the star of thy destiny, my eyes grow dim, my thoughts become confused, and it vanishes from my sight. This stranger—he will be led by a far different path to any that thou canst follow, my child; for in this world justice will never be done thee. He will pursue his course among the high and mighty, and forget the Gipsy maiden. Or if perchance she should recur to his memory, it will be but as a phantom of a waking dream. Alas! far different will it be for her! And thus much can I foresee, that his coming will work danger to my child. Alas! alas! though I see it impending, I know not how to prevent it. Full well I marked the earnest gaze she unthinkingly cast on this gallant youth. In that one look lay concentrated, feelings, deep, subtle, unknown even to herself, for her thoughts were alone of gratitude to her preservers. Though the fate of her I love, the pride of my bosom, and child of my tribe, is hid from my sight, no sooner did the bright stars illumine the Heavens, than I discovered and traced the destined course of this stranger. Like the brilliant meteor which darted across the firmament, unseen by any mortal eye but mine, as I gazed but now above, I read that his course will be rapid and brilliant, but boisterous and marked with blood, yet pure and unsullied by crime, and leading to a high destiny. As I contemplate these features, calm, and composed, I mark that he is incapable of those crimes which debase human nature. Yes, he is worthy of her love. May the mighty spirit who guards our tribe, watch over and protect the preserver of my child."

When the aged sybil had concluded these obscure predictions, uttered in a low tone of voice, as she performed her task, she poured out a cooling draught, which she tendered to Ivan, who gladly drank it off, and again composed himself to sleep.

Thaddeus had but a short time before thrown himself on his rude couch, and was fast wrapped in slumber, when Hagar took her seat by his friend's side. Commencing in a low soothing chaunt, she continued singing till she observed that his eyes were closely sealed in slumber.

The words she sang, or rather chaunted, were to the following effect; but being in the Zingani language, which is known to few beyond their own people, it is difficult to render their literal meaning; most of the predictions she uttered whilst dressing Ivan's wound, were in the same tongue, so that he remained perfectly ignorant of the fate she had prophesied for him.

Spirits, I summon ye;  
Spirits of air,  
Come round this stranger,  
Watch him with care.

Come, come ye misty shapes,  
Whence far ye stray,  
Shunning the glaring beams  
Of the bright day.

Come from dark Egypt's land,  
Spirits who dwell  
'Neath the vast pyramids'  
Deep hidden cell;

And who were worshipp'd in



Temples of old,  
When priests of stern Apis  
Men's fates foretold;

From whence in middle earth  
Fearless ye dwell,  
Through its fierce fires,  
List to my spell.

Come whence the northern blasts  
Furious blow,  
Fly on your whiten'd wings  
From frost and snow.

Ye, who 'neath ocean roam,  
Through coral caves,  
Or in the sparkling foam,  
Sport o'er the waves:

Ye, who on tempests ride,  
When the fierce blast,  
Driving the hapless bark,  
Rives the stout mast:

Ye whose loud shriek is heard  
'Mid ocean's roar,  
When the doom'd bark is hurl'd  
On the stern shore:

Come, come, attend my will,  
I summon all;  
Haste through the elements,  
Come at my call.

After a profound sleep of some hours, Ivan awoke with parched lips and a feverish thirst, which he sought to allay with more of the same refreshing beverage before presented to him. He begged for it, and on taking the cup, could not help fancying that the hand which offered it, was not that of the aged nurse who had previously tended him.

He spoke, to satisfy his doubts, but receiving no answer, and drowsiness again returning, he turned on his couch to recompose himself to sleep, when by the dim light which now issued from the lamp, he fancied that he saw a light airy figure gliding from the tent. Yet fully aware of his own feverish state, he attributed the idea to a delusion of the brain; nor had he much time to think on the subject ere he again sank into a sound and balmy slumber.

---

### Volume One—Chapter Three.

Daylight was streaming brightly through the opening of the tent, when Ivan was awakened by the cheerful voice of his host in conversation with his friend, who had already risen. To their inquiries, he declared himself well nigh, if not entirely recovered, since he was able to rise and dress without feeling any inconvenience from his wound; nor did he consider it necessary to call in again the assistance of Hagar, so efficacious had been her remedies. He was soon, therefore, on his feet, and accompanied Thaddeus and their host into the woods surrounding the encampment; the latter carrying his gun, his constant companion he informed them, in case any game should cross the path.

"So, my worthy host," said Thaddeus, "your camp has escaped an attack from our enemies."

"I little feared them," answered the Gipsy, "as I considered that the Count Erintoff, and his myrmidons lacked the courage to attack us, however powerful his inclination to possess himself of my daughter, for they knew that we should be prepared for them. Let them do their worst; we, the outcasts of society, and despised of men, fear them not. Thus it is, Sirs, in this unhappy country, where the haughty nobles trample on, and oppress the soulless, and therefore helpless people; but let them not suppose that we are of the same mould as those over whom they tyrannise! No, if we cannot oppose them by open force, we can summon to our aid our wit and stratagem.

"They have to learn also that a day of dreadful retribution is at hand; that it will come, when least they expect it. The people will soon be aware of their own strength, however ignorant they may now be of it, and will then no longer submit to bear the chains of servitude, to which they now patiently offer their necks. But your pardon, noble Sirs, you yourselves are of the privileged order, and it may not please you to hear your equals thus spoken of with disrespect; though I deem you both very different in nature from those I have described, and consequently know that I can trust in you, or I would not thus unburden my tongue."

Ivan was surprised to hear a man, whom he imagined to be a wild, unlettered Gipsy, give utterance to ideas so similar to those which had been passing through his own mind; but still unwilling to express his own sentiments to a stranger, he merely assured him that what he had said, gave no offence, either to his friend or to himself; and he strengthened the assurance by warmly wringing the Gipsy's hard hand as he spoke.

Thaddeus added, as he sauntered onwards, picking the wild flowers, that he considered it a grievous pity, that there were not a few more honest men like him in the world; as then there would be but little to complain of.

"Sir," answered the Gipsy, "thousands of bosoms beat with impulses similar to my own, and wait but for the time and opportunity to free themselves from bondage. It will be a dreadful crisis, for what power can place bounds to an infuriated and desperate populace, when once they have received the frenzied impulse. Let those, who have been the first cause of the insurrection, attempt to quell it; it would be as vain to hope to check the mighty torrent rushing from the before pent up glacier, when it has burst its icy bonds. But enough of this, Sirs. I warn you that even now, a storm is gathering which will ere long burst over this country; and may you be prepared to meet the danger when it shall come. More I may not, dare not say, and thus much gratitude, and the certainty that I may fully trust you, have impelled me to speak, that you may benefit by the warning."

As they retraced their steps in silence towards the camp, Ivan's thoughts reverted to the expressions which the Gipsy had let fall.

"And can there," he mused, "be a chance of the regeneration of this country; when slavery shall no longer exist; and all men shall have equal lights, and equal justice! Oh, how ardently do I wish that I could be instrumental in bringing about so happy a consummation!"

On their arrival, they found a repast laid out in front of the tent, consisting of wheat cakes, and bowls of milk. In the places assigned to the two visitors, were laid bunches of wild flowers; that of Ivan being distinguished by a wild rose, with the pure morning dew yet glistening on its delicate tinted leaves.

"These flowers," said the Gipsy, "are my daughter's gift to her guests, though she herself cannot appear before them."

They both expressed their thanks for the delicately marked attention, and on finishing their simple, but plentiful meal, they mentioned their wish to resume their journey to Tver.

The Gipsy chief endeavoured to prevail on them, in his rough, but open and manly way, to tarry another day at his camp; but they excused themselves on the plea of their servant being in waiting for them, and Ivan declared himself fully capable of undergoing the fatigues of the journey.

"If we may not then keep you longer with us," replied their hospitable friend, "we will, at least, accompany you on your way as far as the Volga; on the banks of which rapid stream, we are about to form our next encampment, for after the occurrence of yesterday, I have deemed it prudent to move at once."

The young men gladly accepted of his escort thus far on the road, and he accordingly gave orders to strike the tents without delay. The order was obeyed most expeditiously; men, women, and children moving about with the greatest alacrity in its execution. Some dismantled the tents, and rolled up their covers; others stowed their goods away in chests, each undertaking his task according to his strength. The different rude vehicles used to transport the baggage were thus quickly laden, and in the course of a few minutes, on the spot where lately the skin-covered village stood in tranquil repose, was to be seen a moving mass of noisy human beings; the black marks of their fires on the grass being the sole vestiges of their transitory abode. Two wild-looking boys, whose elf locks hung down on their shoulders in tangled masses, and whose eyes sparkled with intelligence, led forward the strangers' horses from a sheltered spot, where they had been picqueted and well taken care of, the chief of the tribe insisting himself on holding their stirrups, while his guests mounted, as he repelled the wild-looking creatures, who gathered round to perform the office.

Bestriding a strong built cob, which seemed fully able to perform a long day's journey, he gave the signal, and the whole caravan was set in motion, proceeding at as rapid a pace, as the horses could drag forward the well piled baggage-carts.

The horsemen led the van, while Azila, the chief's wife, and some of the more aged and feeble of the women, followed in a covered conveyance, of rather better construction than those which conveyed the baggage; the rest of the tribe proceeded on foot, assisting in guiding the carts and baggage horses.

The men were in general tall, strong limbed, and dark looking, their eyes sparkling with animation and intelligence while the wildness prevailing in their dress and manner, with the look of careless confidence in their countenances, shewed they were but little oppressed with care. The women were dressed in apparel of the most gaudy and fantastic colours, their free and independent gait and air, being very different from that of the inhabitants of crowded cities; their dark complexions set off by their flashing eyes, were handsome and expressive; and their light elastic laugh resounded through the woods, as jest succeeded jest amongst the party. Some beguiled the way by singing wild and plaintive melodies, with rich and harmonious voices, while others accompanied the singers on various instruments, which they touched with considerable taste and execution.

The Gipsies have indeed full scope for the exercise of their musical talents in the east of Europe, where they are invariably the chief musicians at all feasts and festivals; whenever a fair or merry-meeting takes place there, a number of them are to be found, and are always well treated by the people.

As Ivan and Thaddeus rode past the several groups, the latter testified the utmost respect for their leader's guests.

The party travelled on for several hours, halting only for a short time to rest, till the fast-flowing stream of the majestic Volga first met their view, rushing onward in its unimpeded course towards the east, until it empties its mighty volume of waters into the far distant Caspian. Here the order was given to encamp, and a fitting spot being selected at a short distance from the river, the whole party were soon actively engaged in unloading the waggons, and in erecting their frail tenements.

"My worthy friend," said Ivan, addressing their host, "time urges us to pursue our journey, and with many thanks for your hospitality, we must bid you farewell."

"Well, Sirs," he replied, "since it is your wish to depart from us, I must needs yield, though I would fain have persuaded you to remain longer among us, to have seen more of the independent wild life we lead; yet, ere you go, there is one here, who would again assure you of her gratitude for your timely assistance in her rescue; and, for my part, although it may seem presumptuous in me to make the offer, yet should you ever be in difficulty or danger, let me know of it, and I may be perhaps able to afford you more aid, than other friends in a higher station may be willing to effect."

Her father summoned Azila, when the maiden advanced with timid and bashful steps, followed at a short distance by the aged Hagar, who tottered in her walk as she came forward.

Already had the strangers paid their adieus to the Gipsy's wife, when turning round they perceived Azila standing near them, with her arms crossed on her bosom, and her eyes cast on the ground.

"Adieu, noble Sirs," she exclaimed in faltering tones, while tears glistened in her eyes, which shone more brightly than before, undimmed by those eloquent vouchers of her feelings, "the remembrance of your gallant bearing will ever dwell in the mind of the humble Gipsy girl, and though she may never be able to shew any other mark of her gratitude, receive all she has to give—her deep and sincere thanks."

She bowed her head to conceal her embarrassment and agitation, and the old Sibyl then advancing, thus addressed the strangers: "May the mighty spirit who watches over the people of the Zingani protect you from all dangers, for well do I foresee that you will require his all potent aid. The strong wind bloweth on a sudden, and none can tell whence it ariseth; so will dangers come thickly around you, nor can you foresee from what quarters they will spring, but like the bold mariner who steers his storm-driven bark amid rocks and quicksands to a safe port, be prepared to meet and escape them, and you have nought to fear. And thou, noble youth with the dark eye," she said, turning towards Ivan, "the cold suns of Russia shone not upon thy birth. Thou earnest from a far distant land, and thither thou must return, where a high and glorious destiny awaits thee; the way will be stormy and dangerous, but hesitate not to follow it; for last night did I read thy fate in the starry firmament above, and it leads to what thou most desirest. And thou, gallant Sir," she said, addressing Thaddeus, "with the joyous eye, and light laugh, the stars smiled when I read thy destiny, and it will be happy. Fare ye well! ye may never see the aged Hagar more, but remember her words. Farewell!"

While the Sibyl was uttering this prophetic rhapsody, with all the fervour of action and tone, which her supposed inspiration gave her, the tribe stood round in attentive and respectful silence; and even the young men were so struck by her impressive manner, that they could not resist paying more attention to her words than, perhaps, their judgment would have allowed them to bestow at other times.

"Thanks for your predictions, good mother, and may they prove true," exclaimed Thaddeus, who was always ready to give a light turn to anything which appeared more serious than suited his humour; "and now, our worthy host, we must in truth delay no longer, and bid our last adieu."

"Not yet, by your leave, Sirs," answered the Gipsy, "I will, at least, shew you the road which will lead you more directly, and in less time across the forest; which, without my aid, you would scarcely find."

"The longer we keep your company, the better shall we be pleased," replied Thaddeus; "and therefore we again most willingly accept of your offer."

Ivan had remained absorbed in thought, at the conclusion of the Sibyl's predictions; but suddenly rousing himself, he joined the Gipsy and his friend; and as the young travellers rode off, they received the parting salutations of the whole tribe, and paid their more marked adieus to Azila.

Ere they lost sight of the encampment, Ivan descried the maiden's light form, watching their departing steps, and, for many a day after, did her graceful figure, and lovely countenance dwell in his recollection.

---

## Volume One—Chapter Four.

tion, which the noble mind of the generous Russian could conceive, was lavished on his unfortunate prisoner, with the benevolent view of banishing the recollection that he was an exile and a captive.

Although he expressed his gratitude for these courtesies, they proved of little avail in overcoming his wretchedness; and, for some time, he refused to give his parole to his captor, that he would not attempt to escape. At length, the patriotic old noble ceased to entertain hopes that his beloved country could ever regain her liberty, after the final and complete discomfiture of her heroic sons under the walls of Warsaw. With a heavy heart, he gave the required promise; and bowed down with grief at his country's loss of freedom, he abandoned all wish of ever regaining his own. He thus lived on a hopeless exile from that land, where his forefathers had dwelt in honour and power for so many ages, and where all the affections of his heart were concentrated, save his love for his only son, now, the sole link which held the chain of his existence. On him he lavished all his care, and the boy returned his father's affection with all the ardour of youth.

Although the Russian noble had rescued his friend from the rigorous sentence of banishment to Siberia, the whole of his interest and influence could not save from confiscation the property of one who had taken so prominent a part in every attempt of his countrymen to throw off the Russian yoke; so that, with the exception of a small pittance allowed him, he was entirely dependant on his generous host.

The old Polish noble, broken-spirited, and humbled as he was, hoarded his slender means to the utmost, that, although dependant himself on his friend, his son Thaddeus might never owe aught to any one but himself. During his son's boyhood, he devoted his entire attention to his education, and it was a solace to the old man to find him so

well worthy of his care; and when he had attained a proper age, he sent him to the military college at St. Petersburg, where he gave him a sufficient allowance from his accumulated savings, to enable him to support that standing in society which he considered his birth demanded.

He would willingly indeed have sent him to any other country for his education, in preference to that of the oppressors of Poland; but he found, on application, that his son could not be allowed to quit Russia; and disdain- ing any other than a military life for him, he was compelled to take advantage of the best which the country afforded.

With a father's doting fondness, he hoped that his son might, with his talents and his sword, some day carve out a way to distinction; and perhaps, too, a latent hope existed in his breast that he might aid in the restoration of his native land.

From the time since Thaddeus resided under the roof of his father's Russian friend, he became a favourite with every member of the family; and when he mixed more in the world, his pleasing manners and generous disposition caused his society to be much sought after by all of his own age and rank. No one, however, appeared to have gained so much of his regard as the young Ivan Galetzoff, who had won his affection without the slightest effort; but there was something in the bold, independent, and almost haughty manners of Ivan, which made Thaddeus at first regard him with more interest than he bestowed on the rest of his companions who were younger than himself.

Ivan was nearly two years his junior, which, at that time of life, often makes a great difference in a youth's standing at school or college. From his first arrival at college, Ivan Galetzoff had appeared to keep aloof from the friendship of his companions, though he joined, and excelled in all athletic sports and exercises. He was courteous to all; but his cold and reserved behaviour prevented the greater number of his companions from making advances in his confidence or friendship. Thaddeus, by many trivial attentions to the solitary youth, was the first to overcome this reserve, and the latter seemed to feel grateful for his kindness. They had been as yet, however, but little in each other's society, until Thaddeus was seized with a severe illness, when Ivan attended on him with fraternal care, ministering to all his wants, and scarcely ever leaving his side.

From that period was to be dated their firm friendship, which, though warm and sincere, could not thaw the reserve with which Ivan always guarded the subject of his family and connexions; and when any sought to question him, he would turn away with a haughty and angry air, so that even Thaddeus remained nearly as ignorant as before of his friend's history. Every day, however, seemed more closely to cement the friendship of the two young men, until they were constantly together, supporting each other on every occasion of need. On one point, however, they were dissimilar in taste; while Thaddeus's love of gaiety caused him to seek society, Ivan, on all occasions, shunned it, devoting himself with so much perseverance and energy to his studies and military exercises, that he was qualified to quit college at the same period with his friend.

Ivan Galetzoff was generally supposed at college to be the son of the Baron Galetzoff; but as the young man never spoke of him as his father, and indeed avoided, as much as possible, mentioning his name, there were some doubts entertained on the subject; and his proud and retiring manners were, therefore, considered to result from the galling feelings caused by a supposed stigma on his birth. The château of the Baron Galetzoff lay a short distance from Moscow; and in the neighbourhood of that city was also the residence of the generous noble who had been the protector of Thaddeus's father; but there was no intercourse between the two families, the Baron living entirely secluded from the world.

The Baron Galetzoff was in truth, a fierce unpolished soldier, who had frequently distinguished himself in the wars of Russia against the Turks and the inhabitants of the Caucasus, as much by his unexampled cruelty, as by his bravery and military talents.

To his own soldiers he was overbearing and tyrannical, and he seemed to enjoy inflicting barbarities on the miserable foes who fell into his power; while to his dependants and the serfs on his estates, he was morose and hard-hearted; so that none could love, and all feared and hated him. His compeers disliked and shunned him, while he, on his part, seemed equally to disregard their censure or applause.

He had now retired for some time past from military command, and had since then immured himself in his own château, within which the stranger never obtained admittance.

When on several occasions Ivan had been tempted by Thaddeus to leave its sombre halls, and to mix in society, nothing could ever be gleaned from him respecting the internal arrangements of the family, notwithstanding all the attempts which were made to discover the secrets of the mansion.

Some of the more charitably disposed neighbours concluded that the Baron's temper had been soured by domestic affliction, as it was reported that he had lost by sudden death a beautiful wife, whom he tenderly loved, and her child, which had mysteriously disappeared; others however declared, that his brow had always been clouded by the same dark lines.

In spite of these various rumours, all concurred in the opinion, that the generous qualities of the young Ivan almost made amends for the Baron's defects; but they deplored his fate in being obliged to live with a person of so opposite a character. The serfs on the estate loved him almost to adoration, every one of whom was ready to lay down his life in his service.

Ivan had ever regarded the Baron more with fear and awe, than with those feelings of affection and respect, which a son owes to a parent.

There was however, one inmate of the château, on whom he lavished all the warmth and tenderness of a fond and affectionate heart. She was the one bright star pure and lustrous, towards which he gazed through the cloudy atmosphere of his existence. From his earliest days he had remembered that lovely countenance bending over him

with a soft and enraptured gaze. Those bright eyes which looked lustreless on others, on him always shed a benign and soothing light. He had long ceased to call her mother, for he had once done so in his childish days, when with a deep drawn sigh, and a gush of tears, she pressed him closer to her bosom, and bade him never again to use that name: the child could not however be taught to call her by any other, and he would therefore avoid all mention of her to any one.

She had moreover succeeded in teaching him to refrain from paying her any attention or notice when, by chance, they appeared together in the Baron's presence, and the lady's greatest care seemed to be to appear equally regardless of the child.

How delightful was it, as a reward for this apparent estrangement, to commune during the Baron's absence, with her, when he would listen to every word she uttered, and hear with delight the soft music of her voice. Then would she teach him a strange language, which none other around them spoke, and they would converse in it for hours together secure from interruption, until the child spoke it as fluently as Russian. He had never inquired, in what country the language he had learned was spoken, it was sufficient for him to know, that it was given to him by the being he most revered and loved, and he cherished his knowledge as a sacred gift which it would be profanation to impart to any other mortal. He always thought in that language, and in it he always poured forth his soul to the great Dispenser of good, for he looked upon it as the language of adoration; and as it had become his medium of communication with her he loved most on earth, he felt it as the most fit to adore Him who reigns in Heaven.

Upon her he looked as upon a being with an existence separate from and above all the rest of the world. In her presence, his thoughts became more holy, his aspirations loftier; his breast would swell proudly, as she oft described to him the noble deeds of gallant warriors fighting for the liberty of their country, until he ardently longed to emulate their actions; and thus were early implanted in his breast a sincere love of liberty, and a hatred of despotism, with a contempt of every danger which might beset him in the pursuit of the fame he thirsted after.

These sentiments had lain almost dormant within him, during the uneventful life which he had hitherto led, and it was only, when at college, he was witness to any tyrannical act of his own companions over their inferiors, that they burst forth; on such occasions he would always step forward in aid of the weakest and injured party.

He had so early been taught to conceal his feelings and opinions within his own bosom, that none of his companions were aware of their force or tendency, and had the officers of the college become acquainted with them, a decisive check would have been given to his advancement.

As far back as his memory could carry him, no event of importance had occurred to him: ere he was sent to college his education had been placed under the direction of a very worthy but most unintellectual priest, who did not attempt to give him more than the first general rudiments of knowledge; so that from an early age he was accustomed to depend much on his own powers to attain what he sought after.

At times the Baron seemed to take an interest in his welfare, and in the progress of his studies, but he was very uncertain and variable in his behaviour towards the boy; sometimes treating him with the greatest severity, at others, with indulgence; but never with that kindness or justice which wins the love and respect of youth.

He would frequently summon him to attend at the usual field sports of the country, in which he soon learnt to excel; but when the boy could make his escape, he would prefer wandering by himself in the woods with his gun, far more occupied with his own contemplations, than in the pursuit of game; or at other times he would urge his light skiff over the surface of a neighbouring lake, then resting on his oars, would sit gazing on the waters, his thoughts wandering to regions far away.

When safe from the Baron's detection, he would hasten to a rendezvous with his beautiful guardian and friend, and spend hours of delightful intercourse in her society.

Reclining at her feet, his recollection would revert faintly and indistinctly to scenes of a far distant, undefinable period, when he fancied he could recall to memory a picture of the bright and sunny mountains of a soft and genial clime—a cottage on the green hill's side, in front a clear and rapid stream, bounding from rock to rock, and sparkling joyously on its way to the blue distant sea beyond; the trees of varied foliage waving in the breeze, and gay-coloured flowers filling the air with sweet perfumes. Then would appear, before the vision of his mind, a figure of commanding stature, with noble features, clad in glittering armour, who oftentimes had carried him in his arms. He remembered the very shape of his shield, and the dazzling brightness of his sword, as it was wielded before his eyes in the rays of the sun. Then a confused tumult—the loud roar of cannon—the rattle of musketry—the clashing of swords—red blood flowing around—the wild shouts of men striving in deadly combat—the shrieks of terror-stricken women—the anguish-wrought groans of the wounded and dying—rushed across his recollection.

After those scenes, if such had ever been presented to his sight, the tablet of his memory, for a lapse of time, remained a complete blank, and his first clear remembrance was of the Chateau of the Baron Galetzoff, when he found himself loved and petted by its inmates, and even treated by its haughty Lord with as much kindness as his capricious nature would allow, and with much more than he seemed to bestow on any other human being.

Once only had Ivan mentioned the obscure recollection of his infant years to his fair protectress, but she had, in a passionate flood of tears, charged him, as he valued her love and happiness, never to allude to the subject again.

With advancing years, the visions faded gradually from his mind, or if he thought of them, he considered them but as a dream of childhood, and believed himself in reality to be the son of the tyrannical Baron Galetzoff.

We left the serf Karl urging on the weary animal which drew his master's baggage-cart towards Tver, and there he arrived without any other accident than a thorough drenching from the same storm which they had escaped under shelter of the Gipsy's tent. He proceeded straightway to the best inn the town possessed, which was kept by one of the despised race of Israel, who are the principal innkeepers throughout the country. The inn in question was very inferior to those houses of entertainment which most of the larger cities of Russia now afford; but rapid improvements in all the conveniences for travelling have lately taken place.

The lower floor of the house consisted of two divisions; the one appropriated to the horses and equipages of travellers, the other to the culinary department of the establishment, as also to the accommodation—at that precise moment—of a motley assemblage of human beings, soldiers, mechanics, carriers, wagoners, postillions, all talking at the same time in their guttural language; smoking, drinking, and hallowing to each other, with loud laughter and jokes; yet the ear was never shocked by the profane oath, or other evidences of the fierce quarrels, which too often occur amongst a mixture of people of similar degree in other countries.

The upper part of the building was laid out in rooms for the accommodation of the better order of travellers. One of larger dimensions than the rest formed the dining-room—this was completely impregnated with the fumes of tobacco; the rest consisted of sleeping apartments.

As Karl drove into the court-yard, he seemed to have roused himself to a sense of his own importance, and the responsibility with which he was entrusted, for he endeavoured to assume an air of authority. "Help, here! help!" he exclaimed as the wheels of his cart rattled over the stones, "help here, to carry the baggage of my noble masters upstairs! Does no one come? Help here, help, halloo!"

His calls for assistance were at last heeded by a being very similar to himself in dress and features. "Halloo, villain!" cried Karl, as the man approached, "can you not hear when a Christian calls? Here, help me to carry this baggage, will you?"

"Who art thou that speakest thus to me?" demanded the other; "art thou better than I am myself, knave? Art thou not a slave as well as I?"

"Ay, ay, truly," answered Karl, "but I serve a noble master, whilst thou art but the slave of a base-born Hebrew innkeeper!"

"There thou liest!" exclaimed the indignant ostler, for such was his office. "I serve the innkeeper truly, and if he did not oblige me to observe his fasts, as well as those of our own holy church, the service would not be so bad; but I am no slave of his. I am the born serf of the noble Baron Ogstrosty; he has let me out for hire, to the old Jew Levi, to pay off an old score, and when I have worked it out, I shall return to my own master."

"That alters the case," replied Karl, rubbing his forehead, that he might more clearly understand the knotty difference, "so now let us be friends, and lend me your aid."

"With all my heart, now that thou art civil," said the ostler.

Suiting the action to the word, after fastening the horse's bridle to a ring in the wall, he assisted in taking the luggage from the cart, and led the way up a rude flight of steps, on the landing of which they were met by the landlord Levi, who had been eagerly looking out, in the hope of making considerable gain by his new guests.

"My noble master, the son of the Baron Galetzoff, and my noble master's friend, sent me on before them to announce their coming, and to engage beds and supper. They will be here anon, so make ready for their reception: their baggage must be placed in their room that I may unpack it, for they will be rather wet, I fancy, when they arrive."

"Your noble masters shall be well served," answered Levi, bowing rather to the young nobles' portmanteaus, than to the bearer of them. "This way, this way!"

And he conducted Karl into a room, boasting of but little comfort. To him, however, it appeared a luxurious apartment, and he immediately commenced unpacking the luggage. That done, he locked the door, and descended with his fellow-serf to look after his horse, and to attend to his own creature comforts.

Seating himself at the long table in the common eating-room, among the strange variety of guests, he applied himself with unwearied energy to the business of mastication, washing down his food with deep draughts of quass; and so completely was he engaged in this, to him, most grateful occupation, that he paid but little attention to what was going on around him.

When his appetite was at length thoroughly satisfied, he pushed the empty dish from before him, with a sigh, and took another long and steady draught from the jug of quass. He then resigned himself to the enjoyment of his sensations of satisfaction, when his eye-lids began to fall; re-opening slightly, they closed again, his head nodded for a minute, when he shook it to rouse himself, but it soon again fell slowly down, and he dropped fast asleep, resting his arms and shoulders on the table.

Some time had elapsed, when he was aroused by the entrance of two men, who seated themselves close to him, one of them pushing rudely against him as he took his seat at the table. The movement made Karl raise his head, and seeing two serving men in the liveries apparently of a nobleman, he endeavoured, for the sake of good fellowship, to join in their conversation; but he found it impossible to sustain his head without the support of the table. He listened, however, for some time to what they were saying, till their words grew indistinct and meaningless to his comprehension, and Karl sunk again into sleep.

"Well," said one of the new-comers, "this is a pretty business we've been engaged in. First, the certainty of being knocked on the head by the Gypsies, had they caught us, of which there was every risk; then, the very clear reality of finding ourselves knocked down by two wild horsemen, who seemed to have risen out of the forest, for no other purpose than to interfere where they had no business; and then, because we could not prevent their getting up to the Count, when we did our best, to be rewarded with a thrashing and a load of abuse; and finally, to be sent, with our broken heads, scampering across the country to look after these gentlemen. And after all, what is the cause of all this fuss?—a woman—a girl—a piece of painted flesh! a baggage, no better than those who go singing about the streets of Moscow. So coy and modest too! Why the Count is mad to make such a disturbance about her. It makes me thirsty to think of it—hand the quass, Kruntz."

"You may well say that," answered his companion, "for I never saw our master in such a taking before. He swears he will have deadly vengeance against those who prevented him from carrying off the girl; and he says that he should know them again, whether he met them in this world or the next. I don't think he has much chance of meeting them in a better place, do you, Groff?"

"No, no," answered the first speaker; "our master has played too many odd tricks on earth for that. He may know them, perhaps, for he had time to see their faces; but it is too hard of him to expect that we should; for I could have sworn, when they came so suddenly upon us, that they were the wild horsemen of the woods."

"They may be devils themselves, and still not escape our master's vengeance," replied Kruntz; "and, as for the girl, he will entrap her before long, or he will not act like himself. If he cannot do it by open force, he has numerous secret means to bring about his ends."

"That I'll be sworn he has," said the other; "and so long as he pays me well, I am ready to serve him, though I do not much relish so hard a ride as he sent us, in a storm, on a fool's errand. Yet if I could find out who the two young gallants were, who gave us such confoundedly hard blows, I should like to see how they felt under like treatment. Some more vodka, Kruntz, that's the stuff; now for our pipes. Drown care first, and then smoke him dry, and he won't trouble you; that's the way for honest men like us to live."

These two worthies, after enjoying their tobacco, left the room. They will be easily recognised as the myrmidons of the Count Erintoff, sent forward in great haste by their master, to trace the horsemen, who had arrested him in his flight with the Gipsy maid—a circumstance the more embittering to his pride, after his success in securing her person. He had also dispatched others in an opposite direction, with the same orders.

Karl at length awoke to find that the shades of evening had already enveloped the town in obscurity; and he rushed out in great dismay, at having overslept himself, to endeavour to gain some tidings of his young master and his friend; but in vain—he could hear nothing of them. The honest fellow now became greatly alarmed, making inquiries of every body he met, till finding that his master had certainly not yet arrived in Tver, he lay down, to await his coming, on one of the wooden benches in the eating-room, when he very soon again fell into a sleep—not the less sound from his deep potations of quass—and did not awake till long after the morning had dawned, and the inmates of the hotel were astir. He started up, rubbing his eyes, and looking around to convince himself where he was; when recollecting the events of the previous day, he instantly set off to gain intelligence of his master. With eager agitation, he questioned all who came in his way, high and low; but most people pushed the lowly unshorn serf aside, without deigning to answer him; some ridiculed him, and bade him seek a new master, if he had lost his old one, for he would never find him again. Among those whom he had casually addressed, was one of the two individuals, whose conversation he had partly overheard when sitting by his side on the previous evening.

"You are inquiring for your master and his friend," asked Groff; "two young men, you say, whom you parted from about twenty versts off; as they rode by themselves through the forest." By thus interrogating the honest, but simple Karl, he learned every particular he sought to know respecting Ivan Galetzoff and his companion.

Poor Karl spent the long day in great tribulation, walking to and fro in front of the inn, inquiring of everybody who arrived from the direction of St. Petersburg, if they had overtaken his master and fellow traveller; but obtaining no intelligence, he proceeded along the road for some miles in the hope of meeting them; again unsuccessful, he returned in case they should have passed by some other way. Towards evening, when he perceived the lost cavaliers approaching, his joy knew no bounds.

Running to meet them, and ere they had time to dismount, he seized their hands and covered them with kisses. He gave their horses in charge to the ostler, and conducted them to their room, where they were glad to rest, after the excitement and fatigues of the preceding day.

Their arrival had been observed by others with equal satisfaction to that felt by honest Karl, though arising from very dissimilar motives. Groff and his companion concealed within a doorway, watched them as they dismounted, and being fully satisfied of their identity, both from Karl's description, and their own recollection of the wild horsemen, by whom they had been felled in the forest, they immediately mounted their horses to convey their information to the Count.

Ivan felt but little inconvenience from his wound; the aged Hagar having treated it so efficaciously. He was, therefore, enabled to continue on the journey to Moscow, early the next morning; notwithstanding the numerous eloquent reasons urged by their considerate landlord, to persuade them to delay it.

They crossed the magnificent Volga, by a bridge of boats. This mighty current rushing onward in its course, divides Europe from Asia; it is navigable well nigh to its very source—a distance of four thousand miles; and after bathing the walls of Astracan, finishes its career in the far distant Caspian. Its banks are peopled by the warlike tribes of Cossacks, who so unrelentingly harassed the skirts of the French army, during their disastrous retreat from Russia. On its noble waters were being transported rich cargoes of grain, the produce of its fertile banks, in boats of various

sizes, rigged with a single but lofty mast, supporting an immense sail, and a long rudder, projecting far beyond the stern, which is admirably adapted to guide them, when passing the rapids.

The villages through which the travellers' route lay, were forlorn and miserable; being generally the property of the Seigneurs, and occupied by their serfs. They consisted of a single long street, lined on either side with cottages built of rough logs: those of the more affluent being formed of the same materials, hewn and squared into more regular shape. Their gable ends projecting far into the street, discovered occasionally patches of rude carving; small holes perforated in the walls serving as windows.

In many spots along the road, were small chapels with pictures of the Panagia (the Russian appellation of the Virgin Mary,) or of some of the multitudinous saints in their calendar; these were the especial objects of Karl's devotion, as he bowed his head to them, and crossed himself all over with the greatest reverence. They overtook many teams of small carts, sometimes forty together; carrying tallow, hides, and hemp to the cities, to be exchanged for merchandise, with which they return to the interior: their drivers were generally lying asleep on their goods, one alone at the head of the train, conducting the team. As evening closed in, they halted, forming bivouacs by the way-side, and their cheering fires served as beacons for the wayfarer.

Although but a few years have glided by, since the period to which we allude, great changes have taken place on the highway between St. Petersburg and Moscow. Not only has the road been macadamised, and become one of the best in Europe, but elegant bridges have been thrown across the rivers and streams; handsome, well-conducted post-houses have been established on the road, and public conveyances traverse it regularly.

It was towards the evening of the second day of their departure from Tver, that they approached the Phoenix-like, the resuscitated, holy, and ancient city of Moscow.

The rays of the setting sun shed a glittering lustre on the innumerable gilded domes, steeples and spires, of its churches, shooting upwards from amid the dark masses of habitations, like trees of gold in a forest of enchantment. Each tower being surmounted by the emblem of Christian faith, resplendent with gold, and connected by golden chains, which shone more brightly as they waved in the breeze.

This gorgeous scene breaking suddenly on their sight, arrested their progress; the stately city, extending over a wide space of undulating ground, encompassed by woody and cultivated heights—the hundred-crested Kremlin rising majestically above all—the magnificent palaces, churches, and convents, with their cupolas and domes of blue, and white, and gold, giving it an aspect of oriental magnificence.

Karl, animated by a spirit of devotion, threw himself from the cart, and prostrated himself on the soil, in adoration, as he beheld the Jerusalem of Russia—the city sanctified in their hearts, and so beloved by every true Muscovite. Having completed the ceremony, with innumerable genuflexions and crossings, much to his own satisfaction, he drove on to regain his master and Thaddeus, who not being imbued with the same feeling of respect for the City of the Czars, and having often viewed the spectacle, had, after a slight pause at the grandeur of the scene, proceeded on their road.

After traversing many of the irregular, winding streets of the city, the moment arrived when they were to part, to hasten to their respective homes. Exchanging pledges to meet again as soon as circumstances would permit, they then started off in opposite directions.

---

## Volume One—Chapter Six.

Missing the society of his lively companion, a shade of gloom overspread the handsome features of Ivan; his mind being thus thrown back upon itself, the sombre scenery through which he passed, as he drew nigh to the end of his journey, on the day after he quitted his friend, contributed to augment the melancholy bias of his thoughts.

On either side of his path arose a thick and dark wood, without a single opening vista, or a green glade; every part seemed impenetrable to joy and gladness. The habitations of the miserable and oppressed serfs were closed; their inmates having early retired to rest, after the ill-requited toils of the day.

Occasionally, however, he fell in with labourers returning to their homes, who, as they recognised the son of their seigneur, saluted him with respect and a look of affection. In an instant, the cloud on his brow would be dissipated as he returned their greetings, and offered a kind word to each, either in inquiries after their families, or other good-natured remarks, by which the unsophisticated peasant's heart is so easily gained.

On approaching the chateau, even such signs of life as had previously appeared ceased to exist, and all around wore, if possible, a still more gloomy and dreary aspect.

He unconsciously shortened his rein; that action sufficed to betray that he could not regard the Baron in the light of a father. So far from having an anxious desire to hasten to receive his welcome, his languid pace proved his reluctance to enter sooner than necessary into the presence of the fierce lord of that dark domain. His heart was a blank as he drew up at the principal entrance.

No group of bustling and pleased domestics stood ready to receive him on his return, after a long absence; no fond mother or affectionate sisters, to rush forward with outstretched arms, to welcome him in a loving embrace, or to surround him as they gazed with eager and delighted eyes, their repeated inquiries lost amid the confusion of anxious tongues. All within was as silent as without, a solitary household serf alone presenting himself at Ivan's summons; while, after considerable delay, another of the same class appeared, to lead his horse to the stables; both, however, greeted him with welcome smiles.

His heart now beat with eagerness to hasten to the presence of the revered and much loved being so mysteriously



connected with him, for well he knew how anxiously she was awaiting his arrival. At the same time, a feeling of dread came over him, of misfortune having befallen her; she might be on her death-bed, perhaps—horrible thought!—extended a cold and lifeless corpse! Lost to him for ever, and her important secret known to none but her God!

This idea became almost insupportable. He dared not make any inquiries respecting her of the domestic. To visit her, ere he had appeared to the Baron, who he was informed had desired his presence immediately on his arrival, would have been attended by results equally injurious to her as to himself.

Without delay, therefore, he was ushered into the apartment where the Baron was sitting, who neither rose as the young man advanced to pay his respects, or relaxed the cold stern cast of his features.

The Baron Galetzoff seemed a man long past the prime of life, on whom age had laid its wintry marks, but still retaining the air and firm port of a soldier. His stature was rather under than above the middle height, and his figure full and unwieldy. His features might have been handsome in his youth, though now they were disfigured by an habitual scowl on his forehead, and a deep cut reaching from the left eye to the lower part of the ear; his cold grey sunken eyes retreating, as if from observation, under the shade of his coarse overhanging brows. His grizzled moustache was long and untrimmed; and this, when excited by passion—no uncommon occurrence, unfortunately for his dependants—or labouring under uncertainty as to the success of his projects, he was wont to twist and pluck at.

“So, Sir,” he exclaimed, in a tone of severity, as Ivan approached the table, “you have loitered on your way, methinks; else why this delay in your arrival? Your duty and obedience would have been better proved by a more rapid journey. How did it thus happen, Sir?”

Ivan explained that the delay arose from a violent storm, which had obliged him to take shelter under the tent of a Gipsy; but he did not choose to hazard a relation of the rest of his adventures.

The Baron’s brow lowered as he resumed—

“And is this, Sir, the bent of your disposition to herd with outcasts, and the vilest of the earth? A race I detest and abhor; and strong enough are my reasons. Rather would I have bared my head to the fiercest storm the heavens ever sent forth, than to have been beholden to such wretches for a dry crust, or the covering of their miserable tents.”

“The people you speak of, Sir,” answered Ivan, “I found as kind and hospitable in their humble way, as any of a higher rank; and I received much attention from them.”

The Baron here rose from his seat, and took several turns across the apartment; then suddenly addressing himself to Ivan, exclaimed—

“Talk not to me of receiving kindness at the hands of such ignominious beings as those cursed Gipsies. I loathe their very name! Is this the return you render me, degenerate youth, for the care and attention I have lavished on your infancy and education? Though how could I have expected ought else? Yet I thought you possessed more proper pride than to have thus demeaned yourself. Learn, however, henceforth to pay more respect to my honour and dignity, though you may be careless of your own; and remember, the name you bear must not, and shall not, be disgraced by associating with the base and worthless.”

Ivan remained mute during this tirade, for he saw that the Baron required an object to vent his spleen upon, and he willingly offered his own shoulders, to screen some victim less able to bear it.

The haughty noble had thus worked himself into a state of passionate excitement, as undignified as it was causeless, and continued pacing the floor with hasty steps, while the young man stood silently by, waiting its result, knowing that his withdrawal from the scene would but increase the Baron’s anger.

After the lapse of a few minutes, this fit of rage seemed to have subsided, as turning towards Ivan, he said—

“Young man, let me never hear again of so discreditable an occurrence. And now listen to the reasons which induced me to recall you. I have been appointed by our gracious Emperor to high command in his armies destined for foreign service; and I intend that you shall accompany me to learn the art of war by practical experience, as you have hitherto done in theory. Before you, now opens a path which will lead you to honour and renown; and it rests with yourself to enter it or not. If you follow it, and I find you worthy, it then will be my care to advance you rapidly. But mark me! I demand from you implicit obedience; that rendered, rank and fortune shall be yours—if not, beware!”

Ivan’s heart beat high at this information, though conveyed in harsh and uncourteous words; but he ardently sought to enter at once into the exciting scenes of active life, and his eye brightened as he expressed his readiness to comply with the Baron’s wishes, and thanked him for the solicitude he professed for his welfare.

“My intention,” continued the Baron, “is, that you should visit Moscow in a few days, to procure your military equipments, and to mix somewhat in society; for though, I myself detest its ceremonies and trivialities, I wish you to gain the advantages its lessons afford, ere you enter into the more active and stirring scenes of life. You may now retire to rest after your journey, and to-morrow, I will impart my other projects.”

His listener, having expressed the gratitude he really felt at the prospects held out to him, gladly retired from the presence of his capricious father.

The above conversation, so characteristic of the Baron’s usual deportment towards his son, was little calculated to win either his respect or his love: indeed, his conduct altogether seemed inexplicable; for while he had spared neither care, nor expense in his education, he had evidently no affection for him; and had on every occasion tried his utmost, to imbue him with his own fierce and savage disposition: in the latter, however, he had signally failed, through an

agency he little suspected. The young man, meanwhile, profited by the great advantages offered by a good education, and grew up endowed with extraordinary firmness and courage.

Ivan had retired to his chamber for the night, after endeavouring in vain to obtain some communication with the lady before alluded to, as a mysterious inmate of the château; when, as he was reclining in a chair, and gazing through the window on the dark groves which surrounded the building, he was startled by a knock at his door. Hastening to open it, a person presented himself, of unusual and remarkable appearance.

He was one of those extraordinary productions of nature, possessing a figure of just proportions, though in stature he was scarcely three feet high. His dress was arranged with extreme neatness and care, but of a fantastic cut; and the little man seemed to delight in the most gaudy colours. His feathered hat was placed with a rakish air on one side of his head, from which flowed a profusion of curling locks. His whiskers were also curled with the greatest care, while his long thin moustaches rose fiercely upward, in imitation of heroes of larger size.

It was difficult to define the expression of his diminutive, but very regular features, which would have been considered handsome in a larger mould. Age had spared him not, for already wrinkles furrowed his cheeks, which were of a shallow, parchment-like hue. His small grey eyes still bright and twinkling, expressed talent, and cunning; there was a restlessness too in his look and manner—each movement he made being quick, but uncertain. He would first cast a hurried glance at the person he was speaking to; next on the ground, then suddenly over his shoulder, as if he expected an attack from behind; and presently he would spin his little body round on one leg, ere he recommenced the subject he had abruptly discontinued. When he spoke, the tone of his voice was so shrill and loud, that those who heard it, could scarcely believe that the sound proceeded from so diminutive a creature.

As this lilliputian-like figure entered the room, he opened his arms to their full extent to embrace Ivan, who kindly stooped to the requisite level to meet him, for otherwise the little personage, who seemed unconscious of his own size, would have been unable to clasp more than one of his friend's knees.

"My friend, my dear boy!" exclaimed the dwarf, "my heart beats with pleasure to see you back again. You are grown, Ivan, since I saw you last, for we could then walk arm in arm; and now, I doubt if we could do so with perfect ease. I have been longing to have you here again, for I knew not what to do without you. I could neither ride, hunt, or shoot with any satisfaction during your absence; but now we will recommence our former amusements."

"I am truly glad to see you, my worthy friend Ladislau," answered Ivan, "and to find you as vivacious and active as ever; but there is one I would inquire after; my kind protectress—my most beloved friend—tell me, Ladislau, how is she? of no one else have I been able to learn, nor as you well know, dared I to seek the information, my heart yearned after, though my thoughts have been filled with sad forebodings."

"My young friend," replied Ladislau, "she is well, and is anxiously waiting to see you; but the mighty man, the great Baron, has been treating her more severely than ever, and will not allow her to proceed beyond the walls of the garden. One of these days his cruelty will meet with its due reward!"

"Alas!" said Ivan, "that I should not have the power to rescue that angelic being from his tyranny! She herself forbids me to interfere. Tell me, my dear Ladislau, when shall I find an opportunity of seeing her?"

"I cannot now say," answered the dwarf. "I will, however, contrive the matter for you, whilst the Baron is from home, and the meeting will contribute greatly to the lady's cure. Ha! ha! ha! I am laughing at the idea that those, whom the mighty tyrant despises, can so outwit him; aye, and revenge themselves too, in a way he little dreams of. The day will come, when he shall learn that the being he has kept to laugh and jeer at, has a soul with passions strong as his own, and who has known how to revenge himself for all the injuries and insults heaped on him for so many years. But away with such thoughts: now that you are returned, Ivan! pleasure must be our sole study, and I owe you my utmost services, for you were ever kind and attentive, while others scorned me, although they laughed at what they termed my antic tricks. I am grateful, Ivan, and I will prove it; for though I can be a bitter and implacable hater, I can also be a firm and true friend."

"In your love, I have always trusted, my good Ladislau, though what I may have done is not worthy of mention; and you amply repay me by your services, and constant readiness to follow my wishes."

"Well, well, we will not discuss that matter now;" said Ladislau, "but tell me, Ivan, how came it, that you did not arrive yesterday? I was looking out for you the whole day!"

Ivan gave him an account of his adventure, in rescuing the Gipsy maid Azila, and of his visit to the tents of her tribe, to which the dwarf listened attentively.

"You acted rightly," said he, as Ivan concluded; "and you may some future day be richly rewarded. Is she not beautiful, and endowed with talent, and far superior to the life she leads?"

"If you allude to Azila," replied Ivan, "she is both; but how happens it, that you are acquainted with these Gipsies?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" chuckled the dwarf, "that's a long story, my dear boy, and I cannot tell it you now, though I may some day. You have much to learn—many deep secrets—of which my bosom is the depository; ha! ha! those who despise me, little know the power I possess! There is one, who would give half he is worth, to know a secret which is safely locked up in my breast, and he would not scruple to tear it open, if he knew that it was there! Ha! ha! ha!" and the dwarf laughed shrilly, as he triumphed in this consciousness of his own power, and of the revenge he was taking on those by whom he considered himself injured.

"Now to you, Ivan," he continued, "who indulge in no idle curiosity, and treat me so kindly, I will some day, when the fit moment arrives, disclose the treasured secret."

"You are one of the first of the few persons I remember ever since my childhood," answered Ivan, "and I act towards you as I feel—with sincere regard. But tell me, Ladislau, what is there remarkable, or unusual, with respect to the Gipsy's daughter, besides her beauty, which I can judge of, and her talents which I suppose do not extend beyond her sweet singing, and a clever tact in turning her pretended knowledge of palmistry to account."

"Ah, you little see into her character, if you imagine that she practises any of the vulgar deceits of her tribe," answered the dwarf. "She is above every act of that kind. Her heart is with her people, and she delights in their wild life; yet she might, if it so pleased her, dwell in cities, and enjoy all the luxuries others value so highly. Her education has not been neglected, while her talents are of the highest order, her judgment superior, and her virtue unquestionable; these high endowments she employs for her noble ends. She might have been far different from what she is—enjoying rank, riches and power; but then too probably, alas! she might have been proud, vicious and ignorant. I love her much, but would not have her different to what she is, though on some future day, it may be said that I have injured her; but I know better. I am saying, perhaps, more than is prudent; I can, however, trust you, Ivan, and I beseech you, utter not a syllable of what you have heard, as you love me."

"Your confidence shall not be abused," answered Ivan.

"Fare thee well, fare thee well! I must now away, my young friend;" quickly cried the little man, as whisking round on one foot, waving his hand, and singing his adieus, he skipped out of the room.

As long back as Ivan could recollect, he had always been on terms of perfect friendship with the dwarf Ladislau; but never since his earliest infancy had he observed the slightest alteration in his appearance. At that early age, he used to romp and play with him; and as he grew older and stronger, with a consideration which few boys would have possessed, he never exerted his power and strength to his annoyance, so that the diminutive creature cherished a feeling of attachment for him, stronger than for any other human being; while Ivan, having but few to expend his affections upon, returned his regard with equal sincerity.

It is still the custom in many of the wealthy and noble families, both of Russia and Poland, to retain in their establishments, one of the race of dwarfs, to amuse their children and dependants, and as a butt for their own wit. As in former days, a jester, a fool, or a dwarf was considered a necessary appendage to the household of every noble throughout Europe, though that custom is now fortunately banished to the less civilised countries of the eastern part of the continent, where education has made but slow advances.

As soon as the dwarf had retired, Ivan threw himself on his couch; but it was long, ere the repose he sought, drew a veil over his confused and agitated thoughts.

---

## **Volume One—Chapter Seven.**

Ivan had obtained but few and brief opportunities of meeting the lady who resided at the chateau, and whose history was so totally unknown to the world. The Baron constantly required his attendance, and narrowly watched her actions.

Some days had elapsed since Ivan's arrival, during which time he had invariably accompanied the Baron in his hunting expeditions, the latter having determined to clear his forests of the wolves which infested them. On the next of these expeditions, he determined to find some expedient for absenting himself, so as to be able to obtain the long-sought interview with his mysterious friend.

Accordingly, whilst the followers were beating about for the lurking plunderers, and the woods echoed with their loud shouts, he feigned an excuse, and galloped back to the château, trusting that his brief absence would be overlooked. In the mean time, the dwarf, who had not been summoned to the chase by his lord, had willingly remained at home, and prepared every means to facilitate the meeting. The young man, with anxious haste, repaired to the appointed spot, where, beneath a bower covered with luxuriant dark foliage, and shaded by a group of venerable trees, he beheld the loved object of his search.

The lady had scarcely reached the meridian of life, still retaining every feature of matronly beauty. Her figure was tall; its every movement graceful; her face cast in the true Grecian mould, with a pure and translucent complexion; the long dark silken eyelash shading a clear grey eye, and giving a subdued softness of expression to her countenance. A casual observer on viewing the two persons, side by side, would have discovered a striking resemblance between them.

Her watchful ear caught the sound of his footstep, and rising, she rushed forward to meet him, folding him in a momentary embrace, as he endeavoured reverently to kiss her hand. A convulsive sob impeded her utterance as she attempted to speak; but her fast-falling tears, which bedewed his neck, expressed the fulness of her love. That agitating moment over, her composure returned; and retiring to a seat, Ivan placed himself by her side, his hand being fondly locked in hers.

"Loved one," she said, "is it thus alone we can meet, by stealth, and but for a brief space, after so long an absence, and when, too, you may be torn from me for ever? Oh, Ivan! much have I suffered for your sake, and gladly would I suffer more; yet a woman's weakness overpowers me, when I think of the dangers you may be exposed to. He has told me that you are about to accompany him on a distant military expedition wherein you may gain honour and renown, such as I know your noble heart will rejoice in; but dreadful forebodings haunt my mind, for I feel it will be full of peril; and I cannot trust him. I seek to discover the plans he is meditating for you, but they are beyond my comprehension. Whether affection, or any other motive influences him, I know not; yet though he promises to advance you rapidly, I doubt the sincerity of his words. But oh! Ivan, I am powerless, and commit you to the charge of the God of your fathers."

"For your sake," exclaimed the young man, "I would resign all my fond aspirations, and would gladly remain to protect you; but, alas! as a slave I must obey the Baron's will, or seek my own fortune in the world without his aid."

"Well do I know your love, my brave youth," replied the lady, "which would hazard all for my welfare; but that I ask not. No! go where glory and fame await you, and care not for me, for I feel that my course of life is well nigh run, and that the day of my freedom is at hand. Much more of anguish than you, Ivan, can possibly know, has my bosom borne; but the hour is not yet come when I may recount to you the tale of my woes."

"To what secret woes do your words allude?" exclaimed Ivan, in agitation. "Oh, my more than mother! my protectress! my guardian angel! am I then incapable of protecting you, or at least of comforting you? Oh despise me not by concealing your sufferings from me!"

"Alas! your interference," said the lady, despondingly, "would be of little avail; it might bring ruin on yourself, without improving my lot. No, no, loved one! I would not blight your happiness with my sorrow. You are on the eve of visiting Moscow; when there, mix in the world; seek all the enjoyment it can afford, though I fear me there is but little to be found. Yet I too was once blest with perfect happiness. You will return here, I learn, before you depart for the army, when I will relate all; till then, may your young heart be unseared by grief."

"Oh! disclose your griefs to me now, dearest lady. Let me endeavour to console them; and let my devotion in your service prove my love. Surely the Baron, though severe and unjust at times to me, cannot—dare not, be so barbarous as to injure one so lovely and gentle as yourself."

"I may not at present reveal to you my sad history," replied the lady; "prudence demands that the veil should not yet be withdrawn. You know not what the Baron is. Time will display his nature."

The lady and the youth were still indulging in their melancholy, yet interesting conversation, when they were suddenly interrupted by the appearance of Ladislau, looking like some woodland sprite, as, with alarm on his countenance, he rushed up to them through the mass of the shrubbery.

"Hist! hist!" he cried, but in a suppressed voice; "fly, Ivan, fly! off with you—begone! this is no place for you! Madam, pardon my intrusion. Fly, Ivan, fly! The Baron has returned; this moment I heard the tramp of his horse's hoofs in the court-yard, and his voice raised in anger; so I hastened to warn you. He stormed and raged as usual. Yes, his high mightiness was storming like a tornado."

The dwarf laughed in a shrill tone, and added, "He will undoubtedly come this way; and it would not calm his anger to find his son here instead of accompanying him in the chase of animals, less savage than himself. So fly, my friend, fly from hence; tarry not another moment. And I would recommend you too, Madam, to avoid him at present, if you wish not to bear the brunt of his fury, which has been excited by Ivan's absence."

Ivan respectfully raised the lady's hand to his lips, and was bidding her farewell, when the dwarf exclaimed, "Haste, haste, or you will be discovered—see, here he comes;" and at that instant, the Baron was seen at a short distance, walking rapidly towards them. Ivan quickly retreated by an opposite path, fortunately unperceived by his father, while the Baron advanced towards the lady and dwarf, with a dark frown on his brow.

"So, ho, Madam," he cried; "is it thus you abide by my injunctions not to move beyond your apartment? Be pleased forthwith to retire to your chamber, until I repair thither; I shall know how to correct this disobedience to my commands. Make no answer! go, Madam, at once!"

The lady spoke not, though her lip trembled with emotion, and there was a flush on her brow, as she turned to obey the Baron's command, and walked calmly towards the château.

"And you, imp! what business of state brought you to the lady?" said the Baron, turning to the dwarf. "Doubtless, you have been laying some mischievous plans together. Have you lately seen Ivan, sir manikin?"

"Yes, most noble and potent Seigneur," answered Ladislau; "I met him some time since, walking in solitary and meditative mood. I ventured not to interrupt the current of his thoughts. Can I be the bearer of any of your most gracious orders to him?"

"Yes, go find him, and say I desire his attendance," said the Baron. "No, stay—I myself will seek him. In which direction went he, do you say?"

"In yonder avenue," replied the dwarf, pointing to an opposite spot to the one he believed the youth was to be found in.

As the Baron walked quickly forward, he muttered to himself, "Can it be that she, whose stubborn soul would never bend to my will, should be captivated by this youth! By heavens! if I so find it, I will tear her limb from limb, and let the boy feast his eyes on the spectacle. Had the idea occurred to me before, he never should have returned here. He is capable of any deed; there is a bold, unruly spirit within him, which I must curb with a tight rein, or he will break loose even from me. He to be my rival, forsooth! here comes the audacious youth. By heavens! he has a right noble air, which may well win any woman's love. I would destroy him at once, to prevent any further mischief; but then I lose the cherished object for which I nurtured him—no, no, that were worse than folly. He shall live to become the fierce soldier I would make him, and when he gains more of the spirit of the tiger, which he now somewhat lacks, I shall be content. He comes of a race, whose blood is strongly imbued with it, and in his it must exist also."

By the time the Baron had arrived at the conclusion of this soliloquy, which vaguely hinted at his sinister schemes, his anger had been tempered, partly by the ideas of future triumph it awakened, partly by the cool perfumed breeze, which played within the shady walk. He had been unsuccessful that morning in the chase, which had raised his

cholera; and when he missed Ivan from his side, and ascertained on inquiry, that he had been seen riding in the direction of the château, his rage was greatly increased. On his return, he learned that his son had proceeded into the grounds, whither the lady had shortly before also been observed to go.

"I perceive, Sir," he said on confronting his son, "that you prefer luxurious ease in shady bowers, to the hardy and noble exercise of hunting, in disobedience moreover to my wishes; but let me tell you, young man, such is but a bad promise of your future conduct in a military career; and you need not expect my countenance or support, during the continuance of such frivolities, and opposition to my will. I expect henceforth to find you foremost in danger, and ever prompt to endure hardships without murmur. Thus it was that I fought my way up the ladder of fame, and thus must you follow, if you desire advancement, and value a high name."

"I trust, Sir, you will never find me remiss in my military duties," answered Ivan.

"I have found you already deficient in its most essential branch;" angrily rejoined the Baron, then assuming a calmer tone, he added "you had some motive, and not a trifling one, which induced you to act contrary to my will this day; ah, you start! Beware, young man, should my suspicions prove correct, your fate is sealed! Again, I say, beware! My nature is such as will not be trifled with; prepare for your departure to-morrow for Moscow; that is a favour I grant you; so answer me not; you now know my will."

Accustomed as he was to the authoritative tone of one who, in his mildest mood, never brooked a reply, Ivan's lips moved with emotion, yet they uttered no sound, as the Baron turned away, and walked towards the mansion.

The dark hints which his father had let fall fixed Ivan to the spot in deep meditation; yet he could not settle in his mind to what they could allude, dismissing at once, as too preposterous, the real cause. Finally he came to the resolution of implicitly following his orders, though he would fain have tarried a few days longer in the chateau, to hold further intercourse with his sorrowful protectress. Then retiring to his chamber, to make the requisite preparations, he was soon joined by the dwarf.

As soon as he was informed of his friend's banishment, tears fell from the little man's eyes.

"Oh, Ivan," he exclaimed, "my friend, my brother, my son—for you are each and all to me—I have experienced many cruel trials; but to part with you is severer than all combined. We may never meet again, for I fear the Baron will not allow you to return here; and I am growing so weary of this cruel world, that I expect not to remain much longer an inhabitant of it. Ivan, my dear boy, forget not Ladislau, for be assured his first and last daily thought will be of you."

Ivan succeeded in soothing his little friend's grief, by sincere assurances of his remembrance. He then requested him to take his earnest farewell to the lady, as he could not hope to see her again before his departure, promising that, at every risk, he would return ere he joined the army, while during the interval, he would regularly inform Ladislau of his proceedings.

After quitting his son in the grounds which encompassed the mansion, the Baron repaired forthwith to the chamber of the lady, who received him with a proud and dignified air, before which even he for a moment paused abashed.

"Your time, Madam, I have discovered, is not always passed in the dismal solitude of which you so repeatedly complain. Hear me! you would seduce the affections of my son! Ha. Madam, is it so? You turn pale and tremble! This moment I parted from the youth; and as I taxed him with my suspicions, his look of conscious guilt revealed the truth. He had not a word to urge in his own defence. Do you answer for him? Am I not correct? Speak, woman!"

The lady stood for a while in mute astonishment at the accusations so suddenly and violently brought against her. At length she uttered, in a voice, choking with emotion:

"Be Heaven my witness that I speak the truth, when I declare that I am guiltless of the crime you charge me with."

"Deceitful woman, thou liest!" cried the Baron, giving vent to a burst of uncontrollable anger; he gnashed his teeth, while his eyes rolled wildly; he lifted his arm, and struck the defenceless female. She uttered no cry; but every drop of blood quitted her cheek, and she would have fallen to the floor, had not the wall supported her. Rivetting her eye on her oppressor, and mustering all her energy, she proudly confronted him in scorn and contempt, branding him with the epithet of coward. The ruffian, in his turn, trembled, and quailed before the superior might—the majesty of a lovely woman, conscious of her unsullied virtue. He felt himself to be the despicable being she termed him; his honour had been for ever disgraced by this foul indelible stain. He felt that his name was for ever blotted from the rolls of chivalry; that every slave who crawled in chains on his land would be deemed more worthy to touch a lady's hand than he.

The haughty lord answered not: his tongue was tied—he was conquered. Without even daring to meet her glance of scorn, he turned away, and quitted the apartment. When left in solitude, the lady sunk on a couch, and pressed her brow within her hands.

"For what fate am I reserved?" she cried. "To perish by the hand of this dastard tyrant! No more to revisit my own sunny hills and smiling vales. Yet, for the sake of that loved one, I can and will bear all. Could I but feel assured of his happiness, I would yield to death contentedly. There is, however, one duty more due to him—then welcome death!"

---

## Volume One—Chapter Eight.

Ivan was fully equipped for his journey to Moscow, in pursuance of his father's orders, when he received a summons to attend him.

"I have desired your presence," said the Baron, as he entered, "to communicate my last orders. I will allow you an ample sum for your expenses, and a sojourn of six weeks in Moscow. Dedicate that period to amusement; at its expiration you will be attached to my staff; meanwhile have your uniforms prepared. You may now depart."

The young man withdrew, his parting salutation being scarcely noticed. He was met in the court-yard by his friend the dwarf, who shed tears as Ivan mounted his horse; while he himself felt sad in parting from one of the few friends he possessed in the world. He took a last look at the apartment occupied by the lady so deeply beloved by him. All was closed and mournful there. Then spurring his horse, he rode rapidly from the chateau.

A lively and bustling scene met his view as he entered Moscow. It was a day dedicated to one of the numerous saints in the calendar of the Greek church, and a holiday; so that all the world was abroad, taking recreation during their brief but beautiful spring.

The sumptuous equipages of the nobles were dashing by, with their four spirited horses, harnessed in long traces, and guided by a tiny postillion, while a portly, liveried coachman was seated more for state than service, on the richly ornamented coach-box. Officers, in various uniforms, and followed by wild and fierce-looking Calmuc Tartars, galloped in every direction. Countless were the gay vehicles in motion; conspicuous amongst these, was the light-formed drosky, drawn by a pair of horses, the animal in the shafts advancing at a finely paced trot, while his companion, now prancing and curvetting, now sidling in graceful bounds, attracted the spectators' admiring gaze. Costly were the dresses, and glittering the stars with which the proud nobles were arrayed, as they rode or drove past in rapid succession, offering a marked contrast to the humble and bearded citizens assembled on the occasion. Every human being, whatever his garb or condition, seemed happy; and the young visitor unconsciously caught the same feeling. Having given his friend Thaddeus notice of his intended coming, he was not surprised, though much pleased, to be welcomed by him on dismounting at his hotel.

"Most grave hermit," exclaimed his friend, "happy am I to find that you have been enticed away from your contemplations amid groves and lakes, and I trust soon to initiate your philosophy in the mysteries of a city existence."

"Thanks, my good Thaddeus, I have determined upon seeing what you term the world and its amusements, and resign myself entirely to your sage guidance."

It is unnecessary to follow the two friends through all the scenes of gaiety, into which they plunged with the ardour of youth; it is sufficient to say, that Ivan, in spite of his retiring disposition, soon found himself much sought after, among the highest circles of rank and tone in Moscow, formed as he was both in person, and mind to adorn society. He could not but feel gratified by the attentions he received, and amused by the various scenes of gaiety in which he moved; so that sombre reflections had no opportunity to creep in, and mar his pleasure. Many days had thus flown quickly by, without a single interruption to their light and joyous course; even the adventure with the Gipsies, on their journey from St. Petersburg, was forgotten; when one evening, at an entertainment given by the Prince Galitzin, they were startled on hearing announced the name of the Count Erintoff.

Shortly after, they saw him advancing with an acquaintance of theirs, in the direction where they were standing, apparently without his recognising them, and he would have passed by, had not Ivan's eye been fixed sternly upon him. A sudden start accompanied by a frown marked the recognition, when his companion turning round, and observing the two young men, stopped to present him to them. With a bland smile he advanced, and politely saluting them, began, without hesitation, a light and diverting conversation on the common topics of the day. His address was so unembarrassed, and his manner so cordial towards them, that they became doubtful whether he actually remembered them as his former opponents; a slight incident, however, took place later in the evening, which made them again feel certain, that he knew them. Ivan had engaged, as a partner in the dance, a beautiful girl, to whom the Count had been paying marked attention; and he was standing near to her, when Ivan advanced to claim her hand, which she offered with a smile.

The eyes of the Count turned upon him with a peculiarly dark and ominous expression, indicating his feelings of animosity more fully and directly than any words, that he could venture to utter in such an assembly; ere Ivan had time to scrutinise that glance, the Count's features had resumed their wonted bland expression; and he had turned with some witty repartee to the nearest lady.

"No matter," thought Ivan, "if he does recognise me, I may yet laugh at, and despise his vengeance."

On quitting the palace with Thaddeus, they fancied that their steps were dogged by some one, who appeared to be watching the course they took; but whoever it might be, he kept at so wary a distance, that they could not devise a plausible excuse for addressing him; and ere they had reached their hotel, the individual had disappeared.

The following day was also a festival of the church, and again were the promenades and public drives swarming with old and young; the gay noble, and sober tradesman.

Thaddeus engaged Ivan to accompany him in his drosky, to the favourite promenade of the citizens, called "L'Allée des Peuples," which is without the city barrier; and were the shopkeepers and inferior classes of society assemble to enjoy their favourite pastimes. On their way they observed in the distance the state prisons, where the unfortunate exiles are confined, previously to their departure for Siberia; collected together from all parts of the Empire, in gloomy despondency, they there await the day, which always falls on Monday, when it shall be their turn to set forth in a troop on their toilsome and dreary journey.

"Ah," thought Ivan, as he gazed on the long, low, but strongly guarded walls, "how many an innocent victim has there parted from all the sweet, and fond ties of life, to march bare-footed, and in chains over hundreds of long leagues, weak and bleeding; his companions dying by his side, day after day, as lying down to rest, they find an everlasting repose, happier than the survivors left to eke out, with hopeless toil, a miserable existence, in an

inhospitable clime.”

It must, however be observed, that though the fate of most of the exiles is forlorn and miserable in the extreme; others of higher rank, and banished for slight political offences, are allowed comparative freedom, on their arrival at their place of destination. Many reside in cities with their families, surrounded with most of the luxuries of Europe, though under the surveillance of the police. Yet what can compensate for a banishment from their native land without the remotest hope or power of returning thither?

The promenade of the people of which we have spoken, is a wide tract, ornamented with noble trees, and furnished with all the means necessary to promote the national amusements of the Russians. Thither had resorted the easily pleased citizens to amuse themselves, to the utmost, after their busy occupations. Surrounded by their families and friends, seated on the turf, they were enjoying their tea, which was served out of large urns, placed before them on the ground; the joke and the refreshments passing merrily round. Here, a large concourse of idlers formed a circle round a party of mountebanks and jugglers; each feat of dexterity receiving loud applause: there, a troop of Gipsy girls gained equal admiration, as, in the mazy figures of the dance, they exhibited their picturesque and graceful movements.

It mostly happens that those of a higher station do not deign to become spectators of these scenes, and restrict themselves to their own promenades; yet, there were a few whose curiosity, like of that our two friends, had led them to this spot.

Thaddeus was conversing with an acquaintance whom he accidentally met, while Ivan, standing a few paces from them, observed the approach of a band of dancing girls, and, among them, he recognised a face he could not easily forget, though the person was evidently not taking a part in the exhibition. He could not be deceived in Azila, the Gipsy maiden. She passed close to him, and a slight momentary blush tinged her cheek, as beckoning to him, she separated from her companions. He followed her, until she stopped beneath a thick cluster of trees, which screened them from observation.

“I fear you will think me bold, and forward in thus addressing you,” said she, “but I have urgent reasons for so doing. This day, I purposed seeking you out in another part of the city; when, having joined the band of dancers, with a view of meeting those whom I sought, without suspicion, I saw you enter the gardens. Think not,” and she blushed deeply; “that I would exhibit myself to the gaze of the miserable slaves assembled to witness the performances of my companions. You will shortly understand more clearly the reasons which induce me to appear among them; till then, judge not ill of me—but to my errand, for time presses. Danger threatens under many shapes; and one whom you know, the Count Erintoff, has sworn to revenge himself on you, for your generous defence of me. He seeks your life, and that of your friend; and though he is too great a coward to hazard his own, he may employ others to do his bidding. Be therefore constantly on your guard, yet without fear, for there are those who feel an earnest interest in your welfare, who will watch over your safety, and have marked each movement of yours, since you arrived in Moscow.”

“I thank you, fair one, for your warning,” answered Ivan; “but I fear not the Count, or any plans he may form against me or my friend.”

“You know not,” hastily rejoined Azila; “what means a man of his vindictive, and dastard disposition would stoop to, for the accomplishment of a vile purpose; and I entreat you to beware of him—but I have more to say. You are destined for nobler deeds than the life you now lead affords, where you are dissipating your time and talents in pursuits totally unworthy of you. My boldness of speech may surprise you, and appear unmaidenly; but I know that I may trust you in what I am about to impart. A great revolution in the affairs of this country is about to take place; yet you—so fit to lead your countrymen, and to aid in their regeneration, are ignorant of the project. Sure I am, that were you once summoned to join in the noble work, you would stake all on the glorious enterprise. One, on whom you may rely, will shortly communicate with you on the subject; oh! do not hesitate to follow his advice. The day of the regeneration of Russia is at hand! Thus much—but more I may not disclose; but think deeply on my words;—see, some one draws near, farewell for a time!”

Ere Ivan had time to make any answer to this extraordinary communication, the speaker had escaped, and following her with his eye, he traced her, until she rejoined the party of dancing girls, who shortly moved away from the spot.

On returning in search of Thaddeus, he pondered on what he had just heard. “Extraordinary being that she is,” thought he; “what secret motive can so deeply interest her in my actions, and how can she become acquainted with plots and conspiracies of such deep import?”

At first, he hesitated to mention the occurrence to his friend; but, on their return to the hotel, when he was rallied on account of his silent and meditative mood, he informed him of the warning he had received.

Thaddeus laughed loud, as he expressed his opinion; “Truly, indeed, this is an excellent excuse which the pretty Gipsy has discovered for renewing her acquaintance with you; why, Ivan, I see through it all. She has fallen desperately in love with you, and would have told you so, had you given her the slightest encouragement, and the time been more opportune.”

Ivan indignantly repelled the idea. “No, no!” he said, “her manner was too earnest—too respectful to bespeak any such inclination. She naturally feels gratitude for our aid in rescuing her from the power of that smiling faced ruffian, the Count Erintoff, and, in return, has warned us of the revenge he meditates for our interference, and which she has, by some means, discovered. With regard to the more important part of her disclosure, I confide in you with an equal trust to that she has reposed in me. I gather from her words that a plot is being laid to overthrow the whole mighty fabric of this despotic government, which now appears to stand on so immovable a foundation.”

A laugh again burst from his friend, who replied, “Your vivid imagination, my dear Ivan, carries you beyond the limits

of probability; though I sincerely wish it were so; but I rather think that the pretty messenger's sole view, was to excite your curiosity, in order to gain another interview."

"Time will shew, Thaddeus," replied the other, "I differ entirely from you, and, until then, I will not give up the opinion I have formed of Azila."

Immediately on quitting the public promenade of the citizens, and previously to their return to the hotel, Thaddeus drove to a far distant scene. The aristocratic promenade of Pedroski leads through a magnificent forest; the grounds encompassing the venerable chateau are laid out with perfect taste, and are ornamented with every variety of tree and shrub. Here they were among the votaries of rank and fashion; the élite of Moscow; vying with each other in the magnificence and style of their equipages. Elegantly dressed ladies, reclined in their carriages, and proud seigneurs covered with decorations, and followed by their attendants, galloped by with erect and haughty mien. Dashing young officers, in their brilliant uniforms, were displaying themselves and their mettled steeds to their own satisfaction—not to that of others.

Whilst they were in earnest conversation, on the subject of Azila's warning, a messenger arrived to summon Thaddeus home, on account of the illness of his father. He accordingly departed, leaving Ivan again alone. Left to his own thoughts, a heavy weight oppressed his spirits, for his mind dwelt forcibly on the mysterious import of Azila's words. At one moment, his calm reason warned him not to listen to the seductive arguments that might be used to induce him to join in an attempt, which would too probably lead to the utter destruction of all engaged in it; and, then again, his enthusiasm would be aroused, and he confessed the enterprise was well worthy of a severe struggle.

He was alone in the hotel on the following day, when a noble of some consideration, whom he had frequently met in society, was announced.

The visitor, as soon as the servant had retired, looked cautiously round the room, and approaching the door, secured it. "I would be private," he whispered, "and free from any chance of interruption, for I have a communication of deep importance to make:—are we safe from eaves-droppers?"

"I believe so," answered Ivan, wondering to what grave matter such cautious preliminaries would lead.

"Can I trust to the most inviolable secrecy in what I am about to say?" inquired the stranger guest; "but why do I ask, for I am satisfied that I may."

"Undoubtedly you may, Sir," proudly replied Ivan, "in anything not opposed to my honour."

"Far from it," hastily rejoined the other. "Think not for a moment that I would propose aught that would reflect disgrace on your name. I pledge you my own word of honour; that all I require, in return for my disclosure, is inviolable secrecy on your part; any step farther I leave to your own judgment."

"Speak on," answered Ivan, "whatever you may reveal, shall never pass my lips."

"My confidence is fully confirmed," replied the guest, "or I should not have visited you. You were last evening in the 'Allée des Peuples' with your friend, Stanisloff; you were there accosted by a Gipsy girl, whom you had previously known; she beckoned to you, and you followed her. You recollect the words she uttered—'The day of the regeneration of Russia is at hand.' Nay, start not, no one overheard you: she was but performing a commission for others of power and of influence—a task she gladly undertook. You have been marked by them as one fit to assist in the noble cause in which they are engaged. Azila, the Gipsy girl, is one of the chief means of communication with our friends in all parts of the country; she has guaranteed your honour and fidelity."

"What aid can I afford to the cause of freedom?" inquired Ivan, "when I am myself utterly powerless; opposed as you must know the Baron Galetzoff to be to any measures calculated to give liberty to the people."

"We well know that the son has far different opinions to those entertained by his father; we are also well aware that the Baron is a staunch upholder of despotism; but, need I ask—is it incumbent on the son to adhere to the despotic principles of his parent? No!—I feel confident that you at least, will not."

The stranger, as he spoke, had intently watched Ivan's countenance, and appearing to gather confidence, continued —

"That you will ultimately join us, I anticipate with satisfaction; meanwhile, however, come and hear our plans. These I dare not utter within these walls, for even they may have ears and a voice to carry the tale; but, would you know more, I will conduct you where all will be disclosed. Will you accompany me?"

"I must deeply consider the matter, ere I answer you; but tell me," said Ivan, "where I can meet you, should I consent."

"On the banks of the Moskowa, beneath the walls of the Kremlin, is a secluded walk, which is entered from the public gardens—you doubtless know it; there we may escape observation; our converse secure from the lurking spy. At dusk this evening—may I reckon upon your coming?"

A few minutes succeeded, during which Ivan appeared wrapped in thought. At length, he answered firmly—

"I will meet you at the spot and hour you name, and, though I do not engage to enter into your views, I swear that your confidence in me shall not be abused."

His visitor smiled, and replied: "With you, fear has doubtless little influence; but there are some who require that motive for secrecy; and imagine not that a thought of treachery can be harboured, without drawing down instant



retribution. At dusk we meet again, adieu!"

Ivan ushered the stranger to the door, the latter, passing out into the street, assumed the easy and careless air of the numerous loungers thronging around him.

How little can the passenger through the crowded streets tell of the varied thoughts, feelings, and passions, which fill the breasts of those who encounter him! The grief and agony; despair and hatred; the avarice, love, or beneficence, the joy, or careless indifference of the wayfarers; the man whose dearest tie has been torn from him; the ruined gamester; the assassin, advancing to his work of blood, the miser to his hoards; the father to his offspring; the lover to his mistress; the Samaritan, hastening to relieve the distressed; the long-absent traveller, to his home; the fop, the fool, or the wise man; every character is passed in succession each instant, unheeded and unknown.

---

## Volume One—Chapter Nine.

Ivan, once having resolved to follow the guidance of his new friend, looked forward with eagerness to the approach of evening; and, ere the time had arrived, throwing his cloak about him, he sauntered forth in the direction of the Kremlin.

This venerable pile, regarded by the inhabitants of Moscow as the heart—the sacred place—the tabernacle, as it were, of their city, was anciently a fortress of the rude and fierce Tartars; and indeed, at that period, the whole of the city was contained within its walls. It stands on a commanding site by the banks of the Moskwa, whose waters wash its base, surrounded by high and ancient walls of a triangular form, nearly two miles in extent. Its area encloses numerous cathedrals, gorgeous palaces, churches and monasteries; surmounted by towers, belfries, and steeples; displaying every variety of architecture, including the Tartar, Hindoo, Chinese, and Gothic. Above all this vast pile rises the lofty tower of Ivan Veliki, its golden ball now reflecting the rays of the setting sun with dazzling brilliancy; the whole forming a strange mixture of barbaric splendour, blended with the stately elegance of modern times.

There are no regular streets within the Kremlin, the buildings being raised around several open places or squares, to which the inhabitants resort for walking or driving.

The walls, which are surmounted by battlements and watch-towers, have five gates, the principal of which is the "Saviour's" or "Holy Gate." Through this awe-commanding portal no male, not even the Czar and Autocrat of all the Russias, may pass, save with uncovered head and bended body.

Through this gate, Ivan now proceeded bareheaded, and entered a noble esplanade, commanding one of the most interesting views of Moscow, having in front the range of the palaces of the Czars, with their varied and fanciful style of architecture. He paced its extent for some time, meditating on the important affairs which he was likely to be suddenly, and as he could not but admit to himself, rashly engaged in.

As the shades of evening began to close around him, he left the Kremlin by one of the less remarkable gates, and sought the appointed place of rendezvous.

After traversing the walk several times, he began to suspect that he must have mistaken the time and place, as no one appeared; or that his new friend had been prevented from keeping the appointment by some unforeseen circumstance. He accordingly determined to return to the hotel, when suddenly, as if springing from the earth, a dark figure stood before him, so closely muffled as to baffle recognition. Ivan recoiled a few paces, so unexpectedly did the figure come upon him; and, as his mind recurred to Azila's warnings respecting the secret revenge of the Count Erintoff, the idea of treachery presented itself, and his hand clutched the pistols concealed within his breast. Thus prepared, he confronted the stranger, friend or foe as he might prove to be.

"Why come you here?" demanded the figure, in a voice unknown to Ivan's ear.

"In search of him who appointed a meeting with me here," answered the young man. "Know you aught of him?"

"Behold him before you," said the visitor of the morning, stepping forward, and speaking in a tone which the other immediately knew.

"It is well," replied Ivan. "Your feigned voice at first deceived me. But how came you so suddenly upon me?"

"All, you were taken unawares," said the other. "You then did not observe my skiff, as I guided it noiselessly under the bank, and landed when you had turned the other way while I closely watched you. It behoves all of us, in these times, who seek success in bold enterprises, to be wary in our movements. But we have no time to lose; and now to the matter on which we have met."

"Speak on," said Ivan. "I am prepared to hear, and shall not forget my promise."

"Listen then," said the other. "Ivan Galetzoff, you are far better known than you are aware of. Since you came to Moscow you have been constantly followed, and your words marked. Many, of whom you are totally ignorant, know you, and admire your principles; and further, have selected you as fit to engage in noble and daring deeds."

"You surprise me!" exclaimed Ivan, yielding to flattery, so difficult for youth to resist when administered to the very points on which he probably prides himself; "I did not deem myself of sufficient importance to have notice taken of my words and actions."

"I speak but the truth respecting you," answered his companion. "Say, do you not abhor despotism and tyranny? Do you not cherish the love of freedom, and the happiness of your fellow-creatures?"

"I both detest tyranny and love freedom," answered Ivan; "but what service can my single arm afford, either to overthrow the one, or to defend the other?"

"Much," hastily responded the stranger. "You do not stand alone. Your principles are supported by thousands of spirits, noble as your own. The sacred cause of liberty must, and will be triumphant over all her base opponents."

"I fear that our chains are too securely rivetted, to be wrenched asunder," answered Ivan, "and too many are interested in forging fresh links to leave us hope of freeing ourselves, even at the sacrifice of our heart's blood."

"You labour under a false impression, my young friend," answered his companion; "for all classes join heart and soul in this glorious work. Indeed, the Despot has no greater enemies than many among the highest in the land, who feel their chains more galling than do the humble serfs; again I ask you, do you not wish success to their gallant spirits engaged in the noble attempt?"

"Most earnestly do I hope they may succeed," said Ivan.

"Enough," answered the conspirator, for such he declared himself, "I need test you no more; for I place implicit confidence in you. This evening, the advocates of Russian Liberty hold a meeting, and, as I anticipate that ere long you will join them with heart and hand, I will introduce you to them."

"Lead—and I will follow," replied Ivan, with enthusiasm; "my heart yearns to join any who advocate so noble a cause, and I trust I may not prove unworthy of it."

"No time must then be lost; e'en now they are assembled," rejoined his companion, "their place of council is at some distance, and speak not, till I give the word, for we shall be obliged to pass the police patrols, ever watchful and vigilant."

"Forward then," said Ivan, "and rely on my prudence."

The conspirator stealthily led the way down a path to the margin of the river, where they found a small skiff, capable of containing three persons—a rower resting on his oars being already seated, who, on a signal from the former, pulled rapidly down the stream. Continuing their course in silence for some time, the oarsman abruptly ceased rowing, and the little bark glided swiftly into a dark and narrow creek on the opposite bank of the river. Ivan followed his guide on shore, while the boat held her course again down the narrow stream.

As they advanced, lights were visible in the apartments of many handsome buildings, and Ivan found himself in a respectable part of the city, though one in which many vestiges still remained of the devastating conflagration which had reduced Moscow to ashes. His guide threaded in his way many lanes, and traversed wide streets, till suddenly retreating to the back of a handsome mansion, that had lately been raised from the ruins which surrounded it, he gave a low and peculiar knock at a wicket gate, opening apparently into a garden. The signal on being twice repeated, was answered by a decrepit old man, with a long beard and tattered dress, who unclosed the gate, but instantly relocked it, as the two visitors entered.

"Who is it," said he, "seeking to disturb the old serf Kersoff at this late hour?—If any wish to buy his garden produce, let them come by daylight, and not rouse him from his bed."

The guide whispered a word in the old man's ear, and he retired to his hut by the side of the gate.

The light afforded by the starry heavens enabled Ivan to distinguish the appearance of the place where he stood, which seemed to have been a large garden, now filled with ruins; apparently the remains of buildings of considerable extent.

Passing over heaps of rubbish, his guide stopped at what appeared to be a small summer house—also in a ruinous state; the same signal as before was given, and the door opening, admitted them into an apartment in total darkness.

Ivan for a moment hesitated to follow; the idea of some diabolical treachery—such as he had heard of too often—again rushing on his mind; yet, quickly determining to brave the worst, he prepared to go on. His guide spoke a few words to the person who had admitted them, and who yet remained concealed, and then offered his hand to Ivan to conduct him onwards.

"The neophyte must pass through darkness before he can reach the light," he whispered; "but fear not, it will soon burn brightly on you. Ah! I feel your pulse beats calm and regular, such are the nerves we require; do not speak now."

They descended a flight of steps, narrow and winding, till they were again stopped by another door, which was opened, on the like signal as before being given, without the porter being visible, and they found themselves in a small chamber, lighted by a single dim lamp suspended from the ceiling. The walls were hung with black; a chair, and a table, on which were placed a skull and cross bones, an hour glass, and writing materials, were the only furniture.

His guide again spoke. "This," said he, "is the chamber of meditation; if you doubt, you may draw back. Stir not from hence till I return, when I will lead you to undergo your ordeal, should you still nobly keep to your determination of engaging in our cause. I need not tell you not to fear, or to shrink from an ordeal which you will pass through with ease, though it may fright nerveless fools. I now go to prepare the friends of freedom for your coming; adieu!" Saying which, the conspirator disappeared through a door opposite to the one by which they had entered, and which closed with a loud noise behind him.

Ivan looked round, not a door was visible; he was a prisoner, he knew not where. Left to his own reflections, he half

repented the step he had taken.

"I like not this mummery," thought he. "How weak I have been to put such implicit trust in a man of whom I know so little. He may, after all, have deceived me; but it is now too late to retract, and if deceived, I must suffer for my folly, and will boldly carry through the adventure." He threw himself on the chair. "Emblem of mortality!" he exclaimed, looking at the skull, "to this must we all come, and to a brave man, what terrors canst thou bring? Death, what have we to fear in thee? Why, then, should I hesitate, when thou, happen what may, must be the victor at last! Thou art, at the same time, the mighty despot of all, and the only true dispenser of liberty! Thou canst conquer the proudest potentates, and make all men equal—and yet I fear not thee; then, why should I fear aught else? Time flies quickly; I learn this lesson, that one must not delay when work is to be done!" His eye caught sight of a sheet of paper, on which were inscribed several questions. He seized the pen, and wrote appropriate answers. He remained lost in thought. "Yes," he exclaimed, "the die is cast; I will plunge boldly in, nor dream of retracting."

He had just come to this conclusion, when suddenly, three dark figures stood before him enveloped in cloaks, and their features concealed by masks.

"You must consent to be for a time deprived of sight," said one, "ere the true light can shine on you. Are you ready to undergo your ordeal?"

"I am prepared for every ceremony necessary," answered Ivan; "do as you will!"

One of the dark figures advanced, a handkerchief was tightly bound over his eyes, and he felt his hand grasped by some one.

"Follow me," said a voice, "we have a long and toilsome road to take, full of difficulties and perils, such as you dream not of finding here; but true courage and perseverance will carry you through all dangers."

"Lead on then," said Ivan, "I am eager to undertake the journey."

Ivan felt that he was led from the chamber, when a sudden rush of cold air met him, almost stopping his breath. He then seemed to be climbing over rough rocks, from which he had to spring to others, following the guide's directions; then a torrent seemed to be rushing at his feet, into which he appeared every instant to be ready to fall, so slippery was the broken ground. He felt himself next led up a steep mountain, the ashes on its sides giving way under his feet as he climbed, till at length, he reached some harder ground, when, no sooner did he appear to have attained the summit, than he was as quickly obliged to descend, and to pass through some low and damp cavern. On a sudden, his guide bidding him spring forward, and dragging him at the same time, enabled him to evade an icy torrent, which broke overhead. On, on he went; but he neither hesitated nor trembled. A loud din now assailed his ears, of a strange variety of confused sounds, and in a moment he found himself near some immense furnace, into which he appeared to be about to plunge, when his guide drew him aside, as the fierce and forked flames rushed after him. Again he heard a loud noise, and this time it was intelligible. He could distinguish the clashing of swords, the shrieks of the wounded, the cries of the victors. He was in the midst of some fierce combat. On every side was heard the jarring sound of weapons; he felt them whirling round his head, as his guide protected him; their sharp edges seemed to pass close to his ears, the struggling combatants swept by him in their desperate strife, but he remained unharmed. On a sudden, the silence of death reigned around. He stood alone: some one presently approached, and a deep and solemn voice thus spoke—

"Ivan Galetzoff! you have shewn that you can go through the lesser dangers and difficulties of life without shrinking; but have you courage to face the worst, for what you have just undergone is as nothing to what you must suffer, before we can confide in you."

"I am prepared for the most terrific dangers, and fear nothing."

"Stay then," said the voice; "answer our questions. Wherefore did you come hither?"

"To meet those who are lovers of true freedom," answered Ivan.

"You speak well," said the voice; "are you ready to devote your talents, your fortune, and your life, to their sacred cause?"

"Most willingly would I do my utmost to win true Liberty for Russia," he answered.

"Are you willing to take the oaths which bind all the members of this association?"

"I would be equally bound to support others, as they are to support me, but I cannot pledge myself to measures of which I know not the aim."

"You speak sensibly," said the voice, "that we do not demand. Inviolable secrecy and fidelity are all that is required of you, but oaths must not be taken in the dark: from henceforth, may the light of liberty shine as bright and purely as this flame."

At that moment, the bandage fell from Ivan's eyes, and he was almost blinded by a dazzling and brilliant flame which burned before him. On recovering his sight, he found himself standing in the midst of a circle of persons, the points of whose swords radiated towards him.

"With these swords we swear to protect you! to gain true liberty for Russia, or to perish in the attempt, with them in our hands!—and with these swords we swear to destroy any, who, by word or deed, shall betray the trust reposed in him!—We swear!" uttered all the persons present.

"Our aims are these," added the first speaker: "to curb the despotic power of the autocrat; to abolish the exclusive privileges of the nobles; to place every subject of Russia on an equal footing of liberty; to liberate the serfs from the thralldom under which they groan; to have but one law in the land to govern all men."

"To these we have sworn," responded the conspirators.

"Ivan Galetzoff! are you ready to swear to do your utmost to aid in the accomplishment of these objects?"

"To all this I solemnly swear!" said Ivan, repeating the secret form of the oath.

No sooner had he uttered these words, than the conspirators dropped the points of their swords, which they had hitherto held up at his breast, and advanced towards him with extended hands, exclaiming—

"Welcome, our brother in the great work of the regeneration of Russia!"

"We will leave you now," said he who appeared to be the conductor of the ceremony, "till it be time to summon you to the assembly of members;" saying which, the conspirators disappeared by a number of separate doors, from the chamber, which was much larger than the one where he had been previously left, and Ivan again found himself alone.

The room was vaulted, and lighted by a number of lamps, shedding a bright glare on the various devices with which it was ornamented; but Ivan was too much occupied and confused by the strange adventures he had gone through to examine them. He had now banished all hesitation and doubt, having once made the step from which there was no retracting, and he stood with dilated eye, compressed lip, and determination on his brow, boldly prepared to redeem, to the utmost, the pledge he had given. He had not much time left for thought, when his friend, who had conducted him to the place, entered, summoning him to follow, and led the way down a flight of rude and broken steps, through a long passage, ascending to a door, through which proceeded the sound of many voices. He presently found himself in a rude, but large and vaulted apartment, in the centre of which was placed a long table, surrounded by a number of persons, who rose at his entrance, and he was desired to take a seat by his guide, near the head of the table. As he gazed around him, he recognised, to his astonishment, the faces of several nobles whom he had met in the first circles of the society of Moscow, though, with the greater number of persons present he was unacquainted.

The association comprised men of rank, fortune, and influence; military officers; grave citizens, distinguished from the rest by their beards and long coats; and even some who appeared to be lowly serfs. All present wore an air of anxiety and eagerness on their countenances, conversation being carried on in an undertone: meanwhile, several others entered, and took their seats at the board. When all were seated, the president of the meeting arose, and silence ensued. He was a man long passed the prime of life, of a tall and commanding figure, whose expansive forehead, piercing eye, and firm set lips, marked one fit to command.

"Countrymen! Fellow Russians!" he cried, "the sacred cause of liberty is advancing with rapid strides, and soon may we hope to see its standard unfurled, and floating proudly in the face of our panic-struck enemies. To those who have not yet had an opportunity of hearing our ultimate ends and aims discussed, I now address myself.

"We have not combined to overthrow religion, virtue, and honour, order, and wholesome government; no, my countrymen! our purpose is rather to confirm and strengthen them throughout the land. We war alone against vice and tyranny, unjust power and misrule. These shall crouch trembling before our triumphant standard. I ask you, is it right—is it just, that one man should rule millions, by the fiat of his will—that he should be the sole and undisputed master of their lives and properties? Are Russians worthy of the name of men, while they tamely submit to bow their necks to so despicable a yoke? Who amongst us is, for a moment, safe? The noble, the citizen, or the serf, by the single word of a tyrant, may be deprived of his liberty, his property, and his life; each amongst them is liable to be torn from his home and family—from all that is held dear and sacred, to be bound in chains, and sent to pass a life of exile amidst the dreary wilds of Siberia. Can we longer submit to be thus enslaved? No—justice, honour, manhood forbid it!

"We have, moreover, other enemies to contend with. We must attack the privileges of those vain and dastardly nobles, who, bending their necks to the yoke of the despot, aid and abet him in his tyranny; for without them, how could his power stand? Are not the rest of their countrymen equal to them in intellect, in talents, in virtue? Why then should they be allowed to hold in slavish subjection, creatures, human as themselves, with the same blood and sinews, with hearts beating to the same impulses, with thoughts as free, and sentiments as noble, as their own? There are many among us here of aristocratic birth, disinterestedly refusing to avail themselves of their privileges, and animated by a spirit of the most exalted philanthropy, who have arrayed their power under the banner of freedom."

The speaker paused; his eye proudly surveyed the assembly, and the countenances of all tacitly echoed his sentiments. He resumed:

"My brave, my loved countrymen! pardon me for speaking of myself; but I must do so to afford you an example. I was born of the privileged class. I once held high rank, noble possessions, unbounded wealth, and, as I thought, power. I was young, and vainly fancied myself happy and free. I dared to speak the thoughts of my heart, which were bold and free, under the impression that I was too far removed from the authority of the Emperor, to fear his anger. I dared to assert the right and just independence of man—to utter the word liberty. Yet how had I deceived myself in my dream of impunity; for a word spoken thoughtlessly, I was deprived of my rank, stripped of my wealth, dragged from my family, and banished from my rich possessions, to the barren soils of Siberia. I, who had been brought up in the most luxurious indulgence, was driven over hundreds of weary leagues, bare-footed, and in chains, exposed to the inclemency of the weather the lash of the brutal guards impelling my drooping, my exhausted steps. Each time that the sharp thong became crimsoned with my blood, I swore deeply that no human power should prevent me from returning, and straining every nerve to overthrow the tyranny which could allow such atrocious barbarities to be

perpetrated. I passed many years in banishment, forgotten, and unknown. At length, I escaped, to return to my native city; and here again I vow to accomplish that noble purpose, or to perish in the attempt. Russians, you know my history—many here will remember my name. The same fate may await any of you, when least expected; and thus you are all equally interested in rescuing our country from so abject a thralldom.

“Is it not preposterous—is it not shameful, that men who, with the light of education, have by their own exertions gained wealth, must still wear the vile mark of bondage; that they cannot without their masters’ will be free, and that their children must be brought up as slaves!

“To liberate the serfs from their state of galling vassalage, is, in itself, a great and noble work. No sooner shall the bright folds of the standard of liberty be displayed, than thousands, tens of thousands of that now debased class, arousing from their lethargy, will flock around it, and proclaim the regeneration of Russia! For this cause we are all ready to shed our blood; and again do I swear never to sheath my sword till our holy, our glorious object is accomplished.”

Every man simultaneously animated by the same spirit, stood up, and with one accord, drawing their weapons, exclaimed together “We swear to accomplish the regeneration of Russia, or to die in the attempt.”

The president was succeeded by several of the conspirators, who in their turn rose to address the meeting. Some were fierce and fiery characters, to whom mild measures were distasteful, and who would be satisfied with nothing short of the total overthrow of the Imperial family; the abrogation of all the privileges and titles of nobility; and the establishment of a republic, in which each member of the government should be elected by ballot. Ivan was at first carried away by the enthusiasm, and force of eloquence displayed by some, but he soon discovered, that many were actuated by motives far different from those which they professed; some by vindictive feelings; others by the anticipation of succeeding to offices and employments, from which the present occupiers would be thrust. Some, bankrupt in purse and character, hoped to reap a harvest amid the general confusion, which must ensue on a revolution, having themselves nothing to risk; but few of the whole number perhaps, were solely influenced by the exalted principles of liberty.

The meeting, after numerous speeches, and discussions, at length broke up; no plan of proceedings having yet been arranged. The conspirators departed a few at a time, each man as he reached the open air, shrouding himself in his cloak, and bending his steps in various directions across the mass of ruins, so that no two persons sought the same path at the same time.

As Ivan was about to depart, he was accosted by the friend who had brought him to the meeting.

“You have acted well, and nobly,” said he; “and I trust that you may never have reason to repent, that you have engaged in this just cause. Ere we go, I will explain to you the secrets of this place of meeting. This large vaulted chamber was a cellar belonging to a mansion, destroyed at the burning of the city, during the French occupation. The former inhabitants of the place have all died, or have left Moscow; and no one knows of this vault, save the owner of the new house, and he is one of the principal and most active members of the Association. He discovered the vault amid the ruins, and prepared it for our meetings: he himself never approaching it, except at night, and by the many secret exits, he has formed with indefatigable labour. In every avenue are trusty guards in various disguises, so that there is but little likelihood of a surprise; yet, should we by any chance be discovered, we are prepared to sell our lives dearly. I will now lead you forth; follow—but at a short distance behind me.” Threading several passages, they gained the open air, and passing from the garden by a different gate, to that by which they had entered, after a short walk, Ivan found himself in a part of the city, with which he was acquainted; his guide then bidding him farewell, he returned to his temporary home.

---

## Volume One—Chapter Ten.

It has been the constant aim of the Imperial Court to draw within its focus the noblesse from all quarters of the Empire, with a view to keep them more entirely under the eye of government, tempting them with ribbons, stars, and titles.

However well the plan has succeeded with the poorer nobles and many indeed of the more powerful, attracted by the pomp and magnificence of St. Petersburg, no lures have been found to decoy others equally rich and influential, who prefer the independence and freedom they enjoy in their palaces at Moscow, and country-seats, to the formality and tedious etiquette of the court. The Czar, therefore, naturally regards with a jealous eye, those who shun his presence,—as inimical to his rule, and none more so perhaps, than the proud and wealthy patricians of Moscow, known to possess the liberal principles so subversive of despotism: men who prefer to reside with their families among the ancient retainers of their house, and to enjoy the freedom, and surpassing beauty of their native city.

Not so, however, the Count Erintoff; he kept at a distance from the court, and the eye of authority, that he might enjoy greater license for his vices and profligacy. His palace stood in the environs of the city, and was furnished with all the magnificence and luxury for which his fortune gave ample means.

It was a stately mansion, and had been rebuilt after the conflagration by his father; a nobleman every way qualified to fill the high station he held; but who with culpable indulgence had not paid that attention to the education of his son, which would qualify him to be a worthy successor to himself. Magnificent mirrors and pictures adorned the walls; couches and hangings from the East; objects of vertu from Italy; of decoration, from France; and furniture and all the appurtenances of comfort from England, filled the rooms.

The Count was pacing through his spacious galleries with hasty steps, when a servant submissively approached him.

"How now knave! what want you here?" said the Count, angrily; without noticing the person of the intruder.

"I come to bring you the information you sent me to gain," answered the man. "I have been partly successful."

"Ah, Groff! is it you, faithful villain. I did not expect you so soon," said the noble. "What is the information you bring me? for if I recollect right, you had a variety of commissions to perform."

"Why, what I should think would please you most—about the Gipsy girl, who before slipped through our fingers," answered the man.

"What of her, knave?" said the Count, in an angry tone at his servant's freedom of speech; but the man seemed unmoved as he answered, "She is now in Moscow, I passed her just now on my way here, and I have formed a plan by which I think I can induce her to come here."

"Tell me not of your plans, knave!" answered the Count. "I require no suggestion but must have execution, and you shall then have the reward I promised. But say, when do you expect to succeed with this most notable plan you talk of? The girl is not to be entrapped so easily as you anticipate."

"By to-morrow at furthest, or perchance this very day, if my messenger can find the girl, though he may have some difficulty in falling in with her; but you may have changed your mind, Sir. Is it still your pleasure that she come here?"

"Yes, knave; and mark me, if you fail and disappoint me, you shall suffer!" said the Count. "Now, tell me quickly, how you hope to succeed; let me hear all you have to say."

"In the first place, fortune has favoured us, Sir," said Groff, "for while I was out concerning the affairs you sent me on, it appears that two Gipsy boys were singing and playing in front of the palace, to the idle porters and other servants, when a drosky, driven furiously by, knocked one of them down, and left him senseless on the ground. I know not how it was, but Kruntz and some of the other men, were seized with a fit of humanity, and brought the wounded boy within the palace, and when his companion was crying over him, some of them bathed his bruises and hurts. I arrived at that time, having just encountered the damsel of the same race where I told you. A thought struck me, that I might turn the accident to some account. I found that the boys did not know in whose palace they were; and after some talk with the one who was not wounded, I contrived to learn that he belonged to the same tribe as the girl you are in search of. I accordingly hinted to the boy, where she was likely to be found, and persuaded him to set off, in order to bring her to his brother, as she was better able to cure him than any doctor. I told him, therefore, that this was the palace of the Prince Raziminski, into which she will not fear to enter; and having directed him to mark it well so as not to forget it, sent him off to bring her here immediately. Have I done well, Sir?"

"I have no great expectation, that your ill-contrived scheme will succeed," answered the Count, stiffly; "I know she will not come! What else have you to communicate?"

"Somewhat with respect to the son of the Baron Galetzoff. I think Sir, you may soon have your revenge on him."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Count, looking deeply interested, "what of that youth? could I wreak my vengeance on him, and win the girl into the bargain, I should be contented. What have you to say of him?"

"Why, Sir," replied Groff, "I have discovered where he resides, and have dogged his steps constantly; once or twice I have been nearly discovered; but have hitherto eluded him successfully. I know all his haunts, his habits and his movements; and I find that he constantly passes a spot where a dagger might reach his bosom, without fear of the deed being discovered. You have thus a full opportunity of satisfying your vengeance."

"What, villain!" exclaimed the noble, indignantly, "do you think that I have become a common assassin, to strike my enemy in the dark? I would have revenge; but not such as your dull brain can invent. In what part of the city, do you say you have seen him?"

Groff mentioned a part of Moscow, near the spot where the conspirators held their meetings.

"And at what time did he usually pass by?"

"Soon after sun-set," answered Groff. "I marked him on his way from the hotel; but each time I lost sight of him, soon after he passed that spot: I have then waited for hours till his return; but before long, I hope to discover where he vanishes to, and he will be clever if he again escapes me. I have my suspicions, that he is not the only person who visits that part of the city by stealth; for I confess that I have twice made a mistake, and followed different people, when I was in search of him."

"That must be looked to," said the Count, "we may find that something is going forward worth discovering; beware, that you do not make a mistake. For myself, I would not imbue my hands with blood. It would be but slight satisfaction to feel my dagger entering his bosom, and his warm life-blood streaming from the wound: I leave those feelings to the passionate, fiery-blooded Italians. Yet, mark me Groff! I hate the young Galetzoff, and it would be enough for me to know that he had ceased to live. There are many dark lanes in Moscow, and the Istvostchiks are great villains, and often commit murder with no better object, than for the sake of the paltry sums a person may have about him; you understand me. I loathe the very sight of that youth. He faces me with the coolest indifference, as if he had not injured me to the utmost; and yet there is something in his eye, when he meets my gaze, by which I have strong suspicions that he knows me. I cannot rest till I am revenged on him. You will probably win one reward, and here take half for what you have already done, in earnest of the future."

The Count then tendered a purse which Groff weighed in his hand, as if to consider whether the bribe was high enough for the deed. "I will do my best to please you, Sir," he answered.

"Enough, I need now say no more then; ten times the sum you hold in your hand shall be yours, if, by chance, I hear of that youth's death. The police are not over vigilant in those matters, and I think the Baron will take no great pains to discover the author of his son's death, for he seems not to have much love for him. Now leave me, and think well on what I have said. Should the Gipsy girl fall into your snare, let me immediately know of her arrival; but take care that she does not see your face—that alone is enough to frighten her, and she would remember it. See that the wounded boy is well tended, that he may learn to speak well of the owner of the mansion; and let the girl remain some time with him, if possible, ere I go to her."

As soon as Groff had disappeared, the Count continued his walk through the corridor. "Fortune seems to favour me," he soliloquised; "as to young Galetzoff, I need trouble myself no more;—his fate is sealed! I saw that in the look that villain Groff gave, as I promised him the gold! His eyes glistened as he seemed eager to clutch it. He is a faithful ruffian, and well earns his reward. Such slaves as he, would sell their very souls for gold; and I, some would say, would sell mine; but oh! for what?—Not for gold; no;—for revenge—for love—for power—a worthy exchange too! What would life be worth, if one could not enjoy all three?"

"That Gipsy maiden has enchained me. I scarce know why, but, though lowly her lot, there is a fascination about her which I cannot withstand. I must win her at all hazards in some way. Either gold or flattery must gain her; she must be more than woman if she holds out against the two combined. And if she does, with that proud and haughty air she possesses, she is worthy to become the Countess Erintoff, though that is an alternative I would avoid. Bah! I cannot think I shall be brought so low as to sue at the feet of a Gipsy!"

While the Count was thus uttering his thoughts aloud, Groff returned.

"Success attends us, Sir," he exclaimed. "The maiden is at length safe within your palace, from whence she may have some difficulty in escaping, though she firmly believes that she is under the roof of the most grave and virtuous Prince Raziminski, and continues heaping blessings on his head, for his charity in protecting one of her tribe."

"Enough, knave! the reward shall be yours," said the Count. "In what part of the palace have they put the boy?"

"I will lead you to it, Sir," answered Groff, "for I doubt if alone you could find the room."

"Shew me to it then, and leave me," said the Count; "your presence would alarm the maiden!"

Saying which, he followed Groff down several flights of steps, and through long passages to a room in the lower part of the palace. He then waited at the half open door, through which he heard the sound of voices.

"I thought that few of the nobles of this city possessed charity sufficient to shelter a humble Gipsy boy; but I see that I am mistaken, and may blessings rest on the head of the good and kind Prince," said Azila.

"He is indeed, kind," said one of the boys, "for he has sent us abundance of good things to eat, and his servants told us we should have more, and that he would send us away with plenty of money in our pockets."

"He will not go unrewarded. See, Conrin! I have bound up your brother's arm, and he will now do well, and if the kind Prince will let you remain, you must take charge of him, for I have matters of importance to attend to, and must away!"

Hearing this, the Count moved from the door, and went in search of a servant.

"Go quickly," said he, "to the chamber where the wounded boy and the Gipsy girl are, and say that the Prince—mark you, the Prince, your master, desires to see her, ere she departs, to inquire how her brother fares; then conduct her to the state apartment. Guard her well, and see that she escapes not, by any chance."

The Count repaired immediately to the magnificent room he had mentioned, to await the coming of Azila. The floor was covered with rich Turkey carpets; superb pictures, and mirrors, reaching from the ground to the highly embossed ceiling, ornamented the walls, the latter reflecting the luxurious and handsome furniture which filled the room, while from the windows was seen an extensive view of the beautiful city of Moscow.

"Though other means have failed," he said, "I will try if she is not to be tempted by this display of magnificence and luxury to become the mistress here. Surely a girl, brought up beneath a skin-covered tent, cannot resist such a temptation; and if so, my conquest is easy."

He stood partly concealed by the thick drapery of the curtains; a light step approached; Azila entered the apartment, and the door was closed behind her. She was dressed in the same graceful costume as when Ivan and Thaddeus had first seen her, except that a cloak, worn over her dress, almost concealed her form. She advanced to the centre of the apartment, ere she had perceived the Count, when he turned towards her. She started slightly as she saw him, but betrayed no other sign of trepidation or fear.

"I must have been deceived," she said. "I came to thank the noble Prince Raziminski for his kindness and charity to a wounded boy of my tribe; but it seems that to you is due the credit of that charitable deed. I will send some of our people to take away the child, and beg to offer you our grateful thanks for your charity in taking care of him. With your leave I will now depart."

She was turning to go, when the Count advanced somewhat nearer towards her.

"Lovely girl," he said, with an impassioned air, "I took advantage of the boy's accident, and used an excusable artifice to draw you here. I sought but to see you, to convince you of the ardour—the truth of my affection. Believe me, that I regret the violence I before used, which your coldness—your cruelty compelled me to resort to. Let me hear my pardon from those lips, beautiful maiden! 'tis all I ask for!"

"For the favour you have done to one of my tribe, I would endeavour to forget any injury you would have caused me. Beyond this, I have nothing to forgive: I bear you no malice, noble Lord! and all I now ask is leave to depart," said Azila.

"Still haughty and cold! why this indifference? you know not the love—the passion—with which your charms have inspired my bosom. Surely it cannot be in your nature to be thus so cruel to me, who love you to desperation, who would do ought to please you. Behold this spacious palace! these magnificent chambers! Are they not superior to your skin-covered tents? Remain, and you shall be mistress of all; numberless servants will obey you; sumptuous fare shall be served to you; boundless wealth shall be at your command. Every luxury and indulgence which love can invent shall surround you, if you will but consent to accept them at my hands. Whatever you may desire—any thing—every thing shall be granted to you?"

"I make but one simple demand," answered the maiden. "It is to be allowed to depart, free as I came;—more I cannot say."

"Have you no other answer to make than that, cruel, inexorable maiden? Hear me!" exclaimed the Count, throwing himself at her feet, and seizing her hand, which she vainly endeavoured to disengage. "Hear me! I love, I adore you to desperation; your very coldness has inflamed my passion! the bright glance of your eyes consumes me; the sweet tones of your voice thrill through my frame, and drive me to madness at the thought of losing you! I cannot exist without you. Hear me once again! I offer you wealth, power, unbounded luxury! I offer you more—my name—my rank—for well could you, as the Countess Erintoff, grace that station. Speak, ere I die at your feet, for I rise not till you give me hopes of life and happiness with you."

Azila for an instant seemed moved, and turned aside her head, to avoid his fixed gaze; but there was no answering softness in the expression of her full bright eye.

She spoke at length: "Rise, noble Lord! rise, you but demean yourself by thus bending before one humble as myself! I am grateful for your generous offers, but I cannot accept them. A captive can make no just conditions with his jailor, and I still ask but one favour; to depart as I came."

The Count started from the ground, astonishment and rising fury blending in his look.

"Can that heart," he exclaimed, "be so frozen by the frosts of winter, that it is callous to the voice of love? But no, it would be contrary to the law of nature, it is impossible! Maiden, you love another! I know it—answer me—is it not the truth? By heavens! I cannot brook a rival in your love, and he shall deeply rue it!"

As the Count spoke, a blush did now for the first time rise on her cheeks and brow, and as he went on threatening his vengeance, with furious action against his rival, the colour again forsook her face, and left her as she then stood in an unintentionally commanding attitude; like some lovely statue of a goddess uttering her commands to mortals.

"If my love is given to another, why ask me for what I no longer possess? but I say not, that it is so. Again I ask to depart; for in no way, while an unwilling prisoner, could I make any engagements with my captor."

The Count advanced furiously again to seize her hand, but she started back a step from him.

"Girl," he cried, "think you I can tamely submit to be thus despised, to have my love—my devotion trampled on. Again I ask you, consent to return here—to become my Countess! to accept my love, and you are free to depart; my carriage shall then convey you where you will."

"It cannot be," answered Azila, firmly, "I have but to repeat my former words."

"Rash girl, your obduracy has driven me to madness, and the blame must rest on your own head!" exclaimed the Count, again springing forward to seize her; but she calmly retreated, placing her hand beneath her vest.

"Proud noble, forbear! I fear you not, for I venture not abroad without the means of defending myself, since you first taught me the necessity of so doing. Advance another step, and you either destroy me or yourself." The Count seemed again about to spring forward, when she drew a dagger from beneath her vest, and pointed it to her bosom.

"See," she said, "my weapon is of so fine a tempered steel, that even my feeble arm will suffice to protect me."

The Count stood astounded; he seemed fearful of advancing, and unable to speak, as she continued:

"Now let me depart, lead the way and I will follow you. See! I hold my firmest protector to my bosom, so attempt not to stop me, or the first hand that is laid on me will be the signal of my death. I fear not to die, so think not to detain me; with full confidence I leave the boys of my tribe under your care."

The Count exclaimed, "Inexplicable girl! you have conquered for a time; I now obey you! but you have kindled an inextinguishable flame within my bosom, which will consume us both. We must soon meet again. I will lead the way as you desire."

Uttering these words, the Count led the way from the apartment towards the hall of entrance, where the domestics stood with amazed looks, as their haughty lord passed, followed by the humble Gipsy girl. The portal stood open as Azila passed out, bowing coldly to the Count, when he stepped aside to allow her to pass; she did not cast a glance at the others who were present. She seemed more like some distinguished guest respectfully attended to the entrance of the mansion by her host, than one of a despised and lowly race, escaping from the toils of a proud and libertine noble.

The Count retreated to the upper apartments of his sumptuous palace, moody, and furious at his defeat. The ruffian



Groff was then summoned to attend him.

"Hear me, villain," he exclaimed, "the youth I spoke of must die! I will have no doubt or hesitation on your part. The sum I promised you, when I hear of his death, shall be doubled; although you have enough to revenge for your own sake, without requiring any other stimulant. Mark me! he has again crossed my path, so let there be no delay, for I cannot longer endure the thought that he should triumph over me."

"Your orders are sufficiently clear," Sir, answered Groff, "and they shall be obeyed without fear of the consequences. I am not a man to hesitate in my duty to so generous a master; and perhaps you will recollect that my first plan succeeded as far as it was in my power; the ultimate failure will be no fault of mine."

"I understand you, knave, you would receive your wages as you proceed; here, take this purse, it contains a trifle in comparison with the sum you will be soon possessed of, if I do not mistake. Now begone! and let me not see your face till you can bring me the news I wish to hear."

Groff departed, and the Count continued pacing the floor with feelings, of which few would envy him the possession.

---

## Volume One—Chapter Eleven.

It was a dark and stormy night. The wind blew in violent and fitful gusts through the ill-lighted and irregular streets, now and then entirely extinguishing some of the few straggling lamps, while the remainder gave but a feeble and uncertain light, as the rain rushed down in torrents, making the road and pathway slippery with slime and mud.

The night had just closed in; yet, notwithstanding the inclemency and boisterousness of the weather, and the difficulties of the road, persons were still wandering abroad on various avocations, when a figure closely muffled in a large cloak, (apparently to shield himself from the tempest), issued from a side door of the palace of the Count Erintoff. He walked hastily along, keeping on the darker sides of the streets, as if to avoid recognition, and paused not till he reached the hotel where Ivan had taken up his abode. He remained concealed beneath the shelter of a porch, on the opposite side of the street, into which no gleam of light penetrated; though a lamp, burning in the doorway of the hotel, enabled him to command a distinct view of all who might enter, or depart. Thrusting his hand in his bosom, he thus muttered to himself:

"Ah! most trusty weapon, thou art not likely to fail me, if my arm proves true. Far better is the silent and sharp dagger to do such a deed, than the noisy and treacherous pistol, which has often failed a better man than myself, on a like occasion; yet, I did well to bring my noisy friend, in case, by any chance, the first should fail to strike home.— Ah! some one approaches."

Groff, for it was he, drew farther back into the shade, to prevent himself from being seen by the stranger who was about to pass. At that moment, a person with a light and active step, completely shielded from the weather, walked quickly by, so that Groff could catch a glance of his features. He had not long to remain after this on his watch, when a figure appeared at the door of the hotel, whom he guessed must be his intended victim; for having cast a look at the dark and clouded sky, the person issued forth in the direction Groff expected him to take. The ruffian accordingly emerged from his hiding-place, and stealthily followed, at a short distance, the steps of his hoped for prey.

It was impossible to distinguish the figures of anybody, on such a night, wrapped up as all were who ventured abroad; but Groff felt that he could not be mistaken, both from seeing his intended victim issue from the hotel in which Ivan resided, and from the direction he was taking.

The person walked rapidly along, threading the intricate and obscure streets, without hesitation; every now and then, however, drawing his cloak closer around him, and casting a hurried look behind, as if to observe if he was followed. On these occasions, Groff contrived to shrink under the shade of some buttress, or projecting wall. Owing to his being perfectly well acquainted with the streets, and knowing each turning the person would probably take, he was enabled, successfully to dodge his footsteps, till he had arrived in the neighbourhood of the mansion previously described, in the garden of which the meetings of the conspirators were held. The man there stopped, and looked cautiously around, retracing his steps for a short distance, as if to assure himself that he had not been followed; throwing a scrutinising glance, as he lifted his hand to shade his eyes, down two or three narrow lanes, which there turned off from that along which he had passed. He seemed, however, satisfied, and was about to pass on.

"Now is my time," thought Groff, who had hidden beneath a dark arch way, "I will now rush forward, and strike him, to make sure, and save myself a long and disagreeable watch; but he looks as if prepared for danger, and I may find a warmer reception than I wish, or he may cry out and give the alarm, before I have time to escape."

While Groff was thus debating with himself, the person again walked on, unconscious of the danger he had so narrowly just escaped; and the assassin, fearful of being discovered after his evident wariness, if he pursued him further, concealed himself carefully under an arch, let into a wall, which had at one time served as an entrance to the garden behind it; but, for some reason, the inner part was now blocked up with stones, leaving, however, a recess sufficiently deep for a person to hide within it.

"Here I will await his return," muttered Groff; "he has never yet failed to pass this way, and I have well marked his figure, so that I should know him if there was but a glimpse of light. I wish I had followed him to find out where he goes to, for there may be some secret worth knowing in that. It is an odd place for a person to come to so constantly, and I should make a fine thing of it, if I discovered any hidden plot, which the Count could reveal to the Emperor; it would bring him into high favour, and I, his follower, would benefit by it. I might easily manage to get rid of the youth in some other place, and if I slay him now, I lose my opportunity. But no! one scheme is but a chance, while his death will give me a certainty of reward."

Having thus made up his mind, Groff remained in concealment for two or three hours, till he began almost to fear that his victim had escaped, by passing some other way. He watched with breathless expectation—anxiously looking forth from his place of shelter. The rain still fell in torrents, and flashes of lightning now and then darted from the heavens. One flash, brighter than the others, almost blinded him, as he grasped his dagger firmly in his hand; but he was no coward, though but a common ruffian, and he did not tremble. He again drew back, and listened attentively. Footsteps approached, he could not be mistaken; he heard the light and quick step advancing—nearer and nearer it came—he feared to breathe lest the sound might reach his victim's ears—he more firmly clutched his dagger. With one foot advanced—his arm raised ready to strike, he stood pressing his body against the wall; he could distinguish the very breathing of him who was approaching. The figure filled the archway—the assassin sprang from his lair, his dagger's point towards the breast of his victim. The lightning flashed brightly in forked streaks from the sky and played round the blue steel, but it failed to bring heaven's vengeance, as it glanced before the eyes of the doomed one. He started back, but, alas, too late! the sharp point pierced his bosom. Too firmly was the assassin's arm nerved; deep—deep, he drove his murderous weapon home; his whole force was in the thrust. Loud rolling peals of thunder reverberated through the heavens, as the work of blood was doing, and drowned the dying groan of the murdered man. Heavily he fell, struck down by the force of the blow. No sigh escaped his breast; but the foul midnight murderer was not content; drawing the reeking steel from the wound, his teeth grinding with fury, his eyes starting from his head, he plunged it again, and again, to the very hilt, into the bosom of the fallen man, the warm blood spouting from each fresh wound, and dyeing his hands. He stooped down, tearing aside the cloak and vest, seeking with eager haste, to feel the bosom of him whom he had slain, to find if perchance it yet palpitated with life; but well and truly had he done his work; a deep deadly wound had pierced that heart, which, but a few moments before, had beat with confidence—true patriotism—high hopes and aspirations; inflicted by his foul hand.

For a moment, a gleam of satisfaction passed through the murderer's bosom that his work was accomplished, and his reward gained; but an instant afterwards, and oh! for ten thousand worlds would none have exchanged the most wretched poverty for the feelings which possessed him. It was his first cold, deliberate, mercenary shedding of blood; he felt himself to be an accursed wretch on the earth.

He could not fly, a fascination chained him to the spot; his fingers were clammy with blood, thick clotted to his dagger's handle. He sought for a pool that he had stepped in near the spot; he tried to wash away the damning stains, but he knew that to be impossible.

In the exciting moment of the murder, he had been thoughtless of the blood which flowed over him, but he now observed that he was covered with it. The rain again fell in torrents, he stood exposed to its fury, to let it wash away the stain. It revived him; his thoughts again returned to their accustomed channel. The recollection of the money, for which he had done the deed, recurred to him; avarice seized his heart, and he remembered that, perchance, the murdered man might have gold about him.

He now neither trembled nor hesitated, as he felt about the body of his victim. With joy he clutched a purse, by the size and weight of which he knew it must contain gold; he felt in the breast, he drew from thence a packet of letters; a thought struck him that they might be of use to his master; he also possessed himself of watch and jewels. He was satisfied: no regret, no compunction for the deed oppressed him. His callous indifference had returned; an idea then occurred to him—horrid—diabolical. He searched around, to find some large stones, and with all his force he dashed one on the head of the murdered man; he seized another, and another, and hurled them with fury on the head of his victim, till he knew that every feature must be obliterated.

Again the lightning flashed brightly, and shewed him his work. He gazed on the ghastly spectacle; the thunder rolled terrifically, and seemed about to cast its bolts on his head. Even the assassin, callous and hardy as he was, now trembled, he could stand no more, and fled hastily from his cursed work. On—on—he went, nor dared to look behind him, for he felt himself pursued by some phantom of tremendous, of horrid aspect. There was a weight at his breast, his brain burned; he longed to shriek, to give vent to his feelings; but his voice seemed choked, he could utter no sound. He felt a longing desire to rush into fierce strife, to find more and more to slay, more to destroy. He was like the tiger who has once tasted of blood; nothing could slake his thirst; blood—blood he longed for, and still he fled away from that he had first spilled; but he thought he could blot out, with fresh blood, the remembrance of that dreadful deed.

He was flying on, a sort of brute instinct guiding his way, when he was called to his senses, by the loud challenge of a sentry from some government building. In a moment, he was again himself, the bold, careless ruffian; he answered calmly to the challenge, and was allowed to proceed onward; he drew his cloak closely around him, and walked towards the palace of his master, with a steady step; but it still required some exertion over his nerves, to prevent himself from rushing onward at his former pace.

At length he reached the palace, and knocked at a side door, where Kruntz was in waiting for him. His fellow ruffian started, as holding up a light, he caught sight of his pale, haggard cheek, his starting eye, and the dark red stains with which, as his cloak fell off, his dress was besmeared.

“What work hast thou been about now, Groff?” asked the man, “thou look'st like some wandering ghost.”

“A butcher's!” answered Groff, in a thick husky voice; “but ask me no questions. Where is our lord? I must see him directly; I have matters of importance to communicate.”

“Would'st go to him in that pretty guise, friend?” said Kruntz; “truly it would please him much to see thee thus. Look at thyself in a glass, man, and thou would'st not much admire thine own countenance; if thou didst look always thus, thou would'st have but poor chance with the fair damsels thou seekest to captivate, and even men would be apt to shun thy company. I, for one, should not much like to be as near thee always as I now am. Get thee in, man, and change thy dragged garments.”

"Aye, I forgot me," answered Groff. "Say not a word, Kruntz, nor rouse the other knaves. I'll go change these wet garments, and then present me to our Lord; here, give me thy lamp."

Thus saying, Groff seized the lamp from Kruntz's hand, and turned the light away from himself. "Go, tell the Count, that I have returned and will give my news, when I am fit to appear before him."

While Kruntz went to report the return of Groff, the assassin hastened to throw off his blood-stained garments, which he carefully tied up in a bundle, and hid them away together with his dagger; then having washed all stains from his cheeks and hands, he presented himself before the Count Erintoff.

He entered the room abruptly. "The deed is done which you required," he said; "to-morrow morning the whole city will ring with it, and I may then claim my reward. I made sure work, and the youth will never more stand in your way."

"Good," answered the Count, "you shall have your reward. Come to-morrow to claim it."

"It is well and hardly earned, let me say; and here is something that I found in the breast of the youth; these papers may give you some information," said Groff.

"Let me have them," said the Count. "Is this all you found upon him, knave, eh?"

"Nothing farther; I stayed not to search him," answered the ruffian.

"Well, well, it matters not," said the Count; "leave me, I will examine these papers."

The murderer gladly withdrew from the presence of his instigator to crime, to join his companion, and to drown his conscience with wine; first examining and then carefully hiding the spoils he had taken from his victim.

The Count, when left alone, eagerly tore open the papers he had received, though he shuddered as on the outer packet, he caught sight of the stains of blood; the blood of the youth he had so heartlessly, so revengefully consigned to an early death; but all thoughts of remorse for the deed were forgotten, as he glanced his eye over the documents. Some were in cypher, but others he perused with the deepest interest. As he read, he exclaimed aloud: "Ah, this is a fortunate discovery! How many do I now hold in my power! Ah, and you too! The man I hate! I shall be amply revenged on him! My fortune is on the ascendant! By Heavens! this information is worth a principedom to me! Ay, and I will gain it too! I would have sacrificed a thousand lives to have gained it! My revenge satisfied, now for love! Ah, beautiful but haughty girl, your lover dead, you will now become mine; you will soon willingly come to my arms. Fortunately, that villain cannot read, nor has he even looked at these papers; I must not let him guess at their contents, or he may make higher demands on me. I trust he has not kept back any other papers; but no, he has given these as my share, and has kept the youth's gold, if he had any, to himself—he is welcome to it. But if I give information of this affair, may I not be suspected of the murder? However, that matters nothing; the government will be too well pleased to gain the information, to inquire very minutely how I came by it, or, if they should, I may easily invent a tale to account for it. I must see to this."

---

## Volume One—Chapter Twelve.

We must now turn our view to a chamber in the chateau of the Baron Galetzoff. It was furnished with heavy and old fashioned hangings which gave it a solemn and sombre air, increased by the windows being closed to exclude the glare of day; one stream of light alone entering through the curtains, and throwing a still darker shade into the rest of the room. Two female attendants stood by the side of a couch, on which reclined, now wan and emaciated, that unhappy and mysterious lady, whom Ivan had so short a time before left in health, and all the majesty of beauty.

Her eye fixed and regardless of all around, her thoughts seemed to be far away, wandering perchance amid the scenes of her youth, with the loved beings of other days, whom she had long, long ago lost, but soon hoped again to meet in other and happier realms. As she gazed, their airy forms flitted before her eyes, and the well remembered lineaments became clear, and distinct, beckoning her to follow. She moved not, she spoke not, and as the attendants looked on her, they thought her spirit had departed.

A slow and gentle step approached: it was that of a venerable grey-headed man in the robes of a priest, whose clear, calm eye, and placid countenance, betokened an amiable and tender heart. He seated himself quietly by the side of the couch, but the movement roused the lady from her seeming trance, and she turned her eyes towards him.

"Daughter," he said, "I could not rest away from your side, and as soon as I had performed the duties which called me hence, I returned to afford you all the consolation of which religion has so great a store."

"Father!" she answered in a low voice, "to your instructions do I owe the great, the inestimable benefits which I may now partake of; else had I remained like the beast that perishes, without that faith and hope which now sustain me."

"Daughter! those are the sentiments which should possess the bosoms of all who are about to leave this vale of tears," continued the holy man; "clear your thoughts of all things appertaining to this world, and fix them on the next."

"I would do so, Father, but I cannot!" answered the lady. "I must, ere I die, see one, the dearest to me on earth; till then I cannot tear my thoughts from him. Has he arrived? Oh! that I could see him, ere my spirit wings its flight from hence. Oh! let there be no delay when he comes, for each instant I feel the throbbing of my heart grow weaker."

"There shall be no delay, my daughter! a faithful messenger has been sent to summon him; but, when I just now

entered the house, he had not arrived," said the priest. Scarcely had he uttered the words, when the lady exclaimed, "Ah, I now hear his horse's steps approaching; oh! haste, Father, and bid him come hither."

"You are mistaken, daughter, I heard no sound, and he could scarcely arrive by this hour," answered the priest.

"Ah, no! Father, I mistake not, even now I hear his footstep in the hall. He approaches. Oh, my heart! cease not to beat, till I have seen him once again," she exclaimed, nor had her sense of hearing deceived her; rendered still more acute, as her other faculties were fast failing.

In a few moments, a gentle knock was heard, and the dwarf entered. "I know that he is come," said the lady, "oh! let me see him without delay; and holy Father, I would be alone with him." The priest rose to obey her wishes, and withdrew with the attendants, as Ivan entered.

As she saw him, her faded eye brightened; and she stretched out her arms to receive him, as throwing himself on his knees by the side of the couch, he shaded his face with his hands, and a convulsive sob escaped his bosom.

"Do I find you thus?" he exclaimed after a moment's pause, "my friend—my kind protectress? why was I not before apprised of your illness? why was I not here to solace and comfort you?"

"I knew not that death was making such rapid strides towards me," answered the lady; "but think not that I am unhappy. Now that I have you with me, loved one! I am content to bear my lot; but I must not waste these precious moments, for I have much to say and my time on earth will quickly end. Listen to me," and she spoke in that language which she had taught Ivan in his youth, and in which they loved to commune together.

"Can you remember the early days of your youth, and those scenes of which I once forbade you to speak?" she said.

"Yes—yes—vividly can I now recall several to my mind," answered Ivan. "I remember a strange land, and scenes far different to this country; and also your kindness, your love from my earliest days."

"Think you that the affection and fond solicitude with which I tended your youth, could ever have been felt by any but a mother! None but a mother could feel the undying love which I bear for you. My boy! my child! come to my arms, and let me hold thee there, before I die. You are—you are my son, and though in life, I dared not, for your sake, acknowledge it, I rejoice to die, that now I may declare the truth before all the world."

"My heart always told me so," exclaimed the young man, fondly embracing her, as she held out her arms to receive him. "O my loved mother! would that I might thus have called you before! but say who is my father? Is it not the Baron?"

"Thank great Heaven! no, my loved son—no! Your father was noble, generous, and brave; methinks, I now see his noble countenance reflected in my boy; but my strength fails me, my voice grows weak. Listen, ere it be too late, to my story.

"It was in our own loved and beautiful land, amid the magnificent mountains, the green and fertile glens of Circassia, that your father was distinguished as one of the noblest and bravest chieftains. Five thousand daring horsemen assembled at his command, ready to follow wherever he should lead. Many of the neighbouring chiefs were subject to him; all honoured or feared him. He kept free from the feuds which distracted and weakened the other tribes, and all sought to be in amity with him. He had numerous flocks and herds, which fed on the richest pastures; he had abundance of wealth; fleet and hardy steeds; rich armour and apparel; faithful and devoted servants.

"I was the daughter of a neighbouring prince; your noble father sought and won me in marriage. We had two children, you my loved son, and a fair young daughter; how my heart has bled as I have thought of that lovely cherub, whom I have been destined to see no more, and whose fate I tremble to think of! But our happiness, which seemed as full as mortals could enjoy, was destined to be fleeting and transitory; we were awoke, suddenly and without preparation, from our short-lived dream of bliss.

"Our territories, which extended over many of the rocky and precipitous mountains bordering on the sea, had hitherto, on account of their lofty situation, almost inaccessible to attack, escaped the devastating visits of the invaders of our country. Our home was near, the coast, and your father, confiding in the security of our situation, had gone with the greater part of his followers to repel a distant inroad of the enemy, leaving only a few to protect our herds, when a fleet of the lofty ships of the Russians, made a sudden descent on our coast. Their troops landed in numbers, and stormed the passes leading to our dwellings, destroying the fields of corn on their road, and carrying off, or killing all the cattle they could seize; the few of our men remaining in the neighbourhood assembled in haste, and disputed each spot of ground practicable of defence, with all the energy and bravery of despair; even the women seized arms and joined the men, aiding them to their utmost; some hurling down stones on the heads of the invaders, as they defiled through each narrow gorge. But what could a handful of men do, taken almost by surprise, against a host of well-equipped and ferocious enemies? Frantic with our hopeless efforts, we fought till our men were all slain, for none would yield, while they had strength to use their weapons.

"My heart sickens even now at the wanton and cruel butcheries which the ruthless barbarians committed. The children were torn from their mothers' arms and slaughtered in their sight; some few of the women however escaped with the infants under their charge, among whom was your young sister, and gained the mountains, beyond the reach of their pursuers.

"A ruffian was about to destroy you, my boy, when you were rescued from his grasp by a more humane comrade, who, as I afterwards found, was a servant belonging to the leader of the enemy's forces. From a height overlooking the pass, I beheld you borne away in the arms of the soldier, and I sought to throw myself down, to tear you from the robber's grasp, or to share your captivity. I was, however, forcibly prevented by my attendants, who deaf to my

entreaties and disobedient to my commands, when I ordered them to release me, compelled me to remain concealed in a cavern from the sight of our enemies. The Russians had retired from the defiles and passes in the mountains and encamped near the seashore, under protection of the guns of their ships; we, the wretched and melancholy few who remained, watched from the neighbouring heights, there passing the live-long night, for we had no homes to return to; our once smiling dwellings were burnt to the ground, our streams choked with the dead, and tinged with their blood, our cattle carried off, and desolation reigned around.

“We were aroused from our lamentations over the fallen brave, by the arrival of a band of horsemen, who had been sent back by your father; they proposed to delay making any attack on the foe till their numbers could be increased from the neighbouring villages; but I thought of you, my boy—you a prisoner in the hands of our enemies, and I dreaded lest they should set sail, and bear you far away without a hope of recovering you. With lamentations and entreaties, with tears and commands, I urged on our men to the attack. I shewed them the ignominy, the disgrace, which would cover them, should they allow an enemy, who had devastated their lands, slain their kinsmen, and carried away captive their wives and children, to escape, without attempting to revenge their loss. I pointed out to them that the son of their beloved chieftain was in the power of their enemies, and that should they discover the value of their prize, they would endeavour to bring us to terms, disgraceful and injurious to our country, for the sake of recovering him. I excited their valour—I fired their souls with my eloquence, wrought to the highest pitch by a mother’s anxiety—I offered to lead them, putting myself at their head, and swore never to return unsuccessful.

“We sent out messengers in all directions around, summoning all who could be collected to join our forces. None hesitated to obey our summons, for the same detestation of our invaders animated the breasts of all. Before the morning broke, we had assembled from all quarters an irregular, but heroic band, eager to be led against the common foe. From the thick wooded heights, which overhung the coast, we rushed down upon the unprepared camp, like some mountain torrent, suddenly swelled by the thunder cloud, sweeping over the plain, bearing all before it. I felt not like a weak, timid woman, but as the enraged lioness, whose young has been torn from her by the hands of the huntsmen. I sprung to rescue you; by word and action, I encouraged our men to the assault, and heeded not the overwhelming numbers opposed to us.

“The Russians roused from their sleep, ere the out-posts could give the alarm, rushed to their arms; many, owing to the confusion and darkness, missed their weapons. In an instant we were upon them; and as corn before the sickle we hewed them down, none crying for mercy; they knew they deserved it not, we shewed none. But ere our work was done, the morning broke, and exhibited our scanty force to the enemy, who rallied at the sight, and retreated fighting in order. But I had not recovered my child, and it was for that object alone that I fought. Suddenly, I caught sight of you at a distance, with other prisoners amid the ranks of the foe. I strained every nerve to reach you—I saw not the blows aimed at me—I encouraged my followers, and on—on, we rushed, fearless of the danger, and ignorant of the vast power of the mighty engines of destruction which their huge ships bore. Fighting step by step, we repelled the Russians, till they gained the very margin of the sea, and then, just as we thought victory secure—their ships opened upon us suddenly the hot shower of their artillery, which no valour could withstand; my brave companions fell fast around me while fighting, and still hotly pursuing the foe, till death arrested their course.

“Scarcely any remained by my side, when it seemed that a sickness came over me, and I fell to the ground, and knew not what further happened.

“When I awoke to consciousness, I found myself on board of one of the Russian ships, borne far from my native land. I endeavoured to recall my scattered senses: a fever raged through my brain, as I was conducted into the presence of the chief who had led the attack on our territory—he was the Baron Galetzoff!”

Ivan’s brow grew dark, and an exclamation of anger rose to his lips; but he restrained his passion.

“He eyed me with a glance which pierced me through my soul, as I stood with my head bowed before him, nor could words find utterance through my parched lips. He spoke, but I was deaf to the sound. Strange people were around me; an uncouth language was spoken, whose meaning I could not understand: entreaty, resistance, complaint, were alike unavailing. I had none to appeal to from whom I could hope for assistance. I knew myself to be utterly helpless; none around me could understand my words. I was led back, unresistingly, to my solitary cabin. I yielded to my fate, for all thoughts of escape were hopeless. I thought of death as a refuge for my wretchedness; but one idea, one hope still sustained me, and bade me cling to life. I might, should you have escaped destruction, still have a chance, though a remote one, of meeting with you. The very thought restored me. I determined to live to devote my energies to find you; for I knew not of the difficulties in my way. The ship in which I was borne captive from Circassia, reached the shores of Russia; and I was transported to this mansion in some strange conveyance, which I had never before seen. I was here treated with every care and attention, having female attendants to wait on me, and to supply all my wants. From them I learned gradually the strange language they spoke, being inspired with the hope that it might be of service to me in my search after you; and sustained by this deep feeling, I became partially reconciled to my fate. I had not seen or heard of my captor since I left the ship, except that, as far as I could understand, he was still absent from his domain.

“My sole delight and employment was in wandering through the woods, while thinking of you, and in forming many different projects to discover to what part of the country you had been conveyed. On one of these excursions I had gone further than usual from home, and had for an instant lost sight of my attendant, when a child’s cry caught my ear. I rushed forward eagerly at the sound, for the notes vibrated through my heart like some beloved and well-known voice. I was not to be deceived. Oh! joy of joys! blessing unspeakable! it was you, my own loved boy—far off, I knew you. I sprang forward—I pressed you to my bosom—I covered you with kisses—I placed you on the ground: again and again I snatched you in my arms. I wept—I felt mad with joy; all my sorrows, all my miseries were, for the moment, forgotten; all the happiness I had lost, in an instant, appeared restored tenfold. I know not if you recognised me; but I thought you did; for you returned my embrace, looking up smilingly in my face.

“A rough, but honest-faced looking man, broke through the woods in search of you, and looked surprised and

alarmed on finding you in my arms. He made signs that he must take you from me; and though I sought to prevent it, you returned willingly to him. With my spirit broken, I could not dare to oppose him; and I guessed, too, from his manners and countenance, that he might prove a friend. This honest serf was the father of Karl; and from him I learned that you had been carried off by his brother, who had saved your life from the hands of some of his comrades; that the Baron had seen you, and for some unknown reason, had taken a fancy to you, and ordered you to be committed to his charge; and also, that you had been conveyed to the estate at the very time that I was, while I had been pining in despair for your loss. Every day I frequented the same spot, which was near the serf's hut, in hopes of seeing you and clasping you to my bosom; when the honest fellow at length, taking compassion on me, used to bring you forth to meet me. Oh! the happiness, the bliss of those moments, almost repaid me the misery I had suffered. I was not acquainted with the Baron's disposition; but an idea occurred to me, though I scarcely know how it originated, that, should he discover you to be my son, he might, by threatening to tear you from my sight, endeavour to gain more control over me. Every time that this thought recurred to me, it gave fresh strength to my opinion, and I resolved, at all hazard, to profess utter carelessness on your account; and thankful I have ever since been, that I adopted that course; for no sooner did the Baron arrive, than my trials commenced. I, at first, with the most abject entreaties, prayed to be restored to my own country, hoping to take you with me; but he laughed at my petition; and when I pressed my demand, with some haughtiness of manner, he sternly refused.

"All hopes of escape were as vain as the prayers addressed to my captor had been unsuccessful, for I knew not even to what part of the country I had been conveyed. I thought of the beloved husband to whom I was lost—of my sweet daughter—of friends and home; and I felt that I could not survive their loss: but your voice, though at a distance, struck on my ear, and for your sake I resolved to live on.

"When you were brought to the chateau, your playful manners, and light prattle, seemed to win on the affections of the Baron, as much as his rough and savage nature would permit; but I kept to my prudent resolution, and pretended not to recognise you. At first you would oftentimes throw your arms round my neck, and call me by the endearing name of mother, in your native tongue; but I taught you not to utter that name, though it almost broke my heart to do so; and my artifice succeeded; for you were constantly allowed to be with me, and the Baron seemed to have no idea of our relationship.

"The Baron's conduct towards you was always inexplicable, for it appeared entirely contrary to his fierce and cruel disposition, to treat you as he has done. I have lately suspected that he has some secret motive for thus acting, for to me he has always been harsh and tyrannical.

"There was one person in the Baron's establishment who soon became entirely devoted to me—it was the dwarf Ladislau. I pitied his weakness and helplessness, treating him always with kindness, for which he has shewn his gratitude by every means in his power. From him I learned that the Baron had, some time before, married a lady of great beauty, who, his servants and dependants fancied, was a native of some foreign country, though they knew not from what part of the world she came. Ladislau added that he himself perfectly knew, and that she was of the Zingani race, and had been induced to marry the Baron, more for his rank and wealth, than for any great love she bore him. This he soon discovered, and in revenge treated her so barbarously, that she was preparing to fly from his mansion, but was prevented. Soon after the unfortunate lady died, after giving birth to a child; but, previously to that event, she had called the dwarf to her, and given some injunctions, which he had sworn most solemnly to fulfil, and even to keep secret within his own bosom.

"The Baron at first seemed repentant of his jealousy and tyranny, and grieved for his loss, seeking to make amends by his kindness to the child, for his cruelty to the mother; but, during his absence from home for a time, the child had mysteriously disappeared, and all his attempts at discovering it, had proved fruitless. Methought the dwarf gave a sinister look, as he told me the tale. He said that the Baron had raged and stormed at the loss of his child, but had at length given up all hopes of ever discovering the perpetrators of the deed; rather believing that it had come to some violent end, and perhaps, when he first saw you, the smiling cherub that you then were, he thought of supplying the place of his own lost one.

"From the dwarf I learned, that the Baron bore a deadly hatred to my country, for the reverses he had so constantly met with there; and he had sworn utterly to subdue, and reduce its inhabitants to the most abject slavery. He knew little of the noble spirit which animated their bosoms, while indulging in hopes of success against them. Ladislau added, when the Baron found that you, a Circassian child, had been saved by one of his soldiers, he, with a refinement of cruelty, had determined to bring you up, and teach you to feel the most deadly hatred against your own countrymen, if by chance they were not subdued before that time. I thanked heaven that I was at hand to counteract his evil intentions, and the aim of my life has been, to inspire you with a love of freedom, and a hatred of all tyranny and injustice. The Baron would be less than human had he not one redeeming quality; having been a father himself, he seemed, when you were a child, to have some sparks of affection for you, beyond the object for which he has educated you. He has even now adopted you, and would leave you all his wealth, would you comply with his requests. But oh! my loved son, be not seduced by the glittering baits he will offer—to turn traitor to your native land! Else shall my life, and all my sufferings have been in vain. Oh no! even I, to whom you are dearer than all else, counsel you to hazard death or captivity, rather than shed the blood of your countrymen, by the side of their foes. Let me beseech you to fulfil the lofty purpose for which I consented to live in this hated place; and when I am no more, as I soon shall be, then fly from hence, and endeavour to reach your native land. That amulet, which you carry round your neck, has always been worn by the eldest son of the chieftain of your tribe. No sooner shall your father's followers see it, than they will acknowledge you, if unhappily your noble father no longer lives. Seek the spot which was once your home, then proclaim yourself, and relate my unhappy story, when all with joy will own you; and should my loved husband still exist, give him my parting sighs."

Her voice, during this recital, frequently faltered through weakness; and as she fell back exhausted at its close, a thrill of horror shot through her son's frame, as for an instant he thought that, in truth, her spirit had fled to the realms of bliss; but to his great joy, she again opened her eyes, to gaze on him she loved so deeply, as he held her sinking form in his arms. He was overwhelmed with the interest of the story he had heard; and though he had loved

her before he knew she was his mother, how deep and earnest was his gratitude now for her devoted, her heroic affection for him?

“Mother!” he cried, “I swear to obey your commands. Already have I engaged in the accomplishment of a great work, after the issue of which I will haste to that land, which oft have I visited in my dreams.”

“Enough, my son, sure I am that heaven will protect you on your way; but I have yet more to add. When you reach your native land, oh! endeavour to instil into your countrymen that mild and pure religion, which the good priest, who educated you, first taught me to know. It was once the religion of our forefathers, and the cross—the emblem of that faith—is still to be seen in the land. Oh! reclaim them to the true and ancient worship of their country. My loved son! let me gaze on thee once more, ere my sight fail me. May heaven guard thy life, and make thee the deliverer of thy country! Then shalt thou be known by thy true name, and well wilt thou prove worthy of thy gallant father. I cannot longer see thee, my son; but kiss me once more, and receive my last sigh:—when thou bearest it to thy father, say that I loved him to the last.”

She ceased to speak, Ivan felt her form recline more heavily in his arms; no pulse answered to his touch. She looked lovely still, but her eye had lost that mysterious expression of the mind, when the living soul yet animates the frame. Her spirit had fled!

In that bleak land died the lovely exile, far distant from her own sunny clime: but she was happy at the last, when folded in the arms of that son for whose sake she had so nobly endured long and weary captivity.

The young man uttered no loud complaint; but laid her form calmly on the couch, and with reverent awe closed her eyes; then gazing earnestly on her features, he threw himself on his knees by her side. The attendants entered, and found him in this posture when he was aroused by the entreaties of his faithful friend Ladislau, who led him unresistingly to his chamber; and the kind-hearted dwarf then lavished his attentions upon the bereaved Ivan.

The stern Lord of the mansion had been for some days absent, unaware of his captive’s approaching liberation from her misery and thralldom; Ivan was thereby enabled to indulge his grief without interruption.

---

## Volume One—Chapter Thirteen.

The female attendants and wives of the nearest serfs assembled to utter their lamentations over the body of the deceased, which was laid out on a couch, with the hands crossed on the breast, dressed in a crimson robe, and a rich coif placed on the head. The venerable priest who had attended her when living, came to sprinkle incense over her body; and while thus engaged, he chaunted psalms in a low and solemn voice.

On the third day from her death, the remains of the lady were placed in a coffin covered with crimson cloth, and surrounded with torches; from thence it was conveyed to the neighbouring church. At a distance, followed Ivan unknown and unnoticed, enveloped in his cloak; and as the priest concluded the short funeral service, he drew near, and kneeling by the coffin, kissed that cold and inanimate hand: on that spot he again swore to fulfil her commands, and to devote himself to the cause of his native country. With a tearless eye, but bursting heart; he saw all that he loved committed to the earth, and lingered long near the spot, until he was urged to depart by Ladislau.

The day after the sad ceremony had been performed, the Baron returned to the château, but made no allusion to the melancholy event, nor did it appear to affect him in any way. Summoning Ivan to his presence soon after his arrival:

“My plans are arranged,” said he; “our gracious Emperor has appointed me to the command of a strong force, to quell the rebellious Circassians; and, in a short time, I hope to bring them under lawful subjection. This has ever been the height of my ambition. I own that the difficulties are great; but if I fall, in you, Ivan, I hope to leave a worthy successor. In this parchment, you are made heir to all my possessions; and our noble Czar, in consideration of my services, and as the only favour that I have asked, will permit you to assume the same rank I bear.”

Ivan, for a time, remained silent after this announcement. A momentous period to him had arrived, and he almost dreaded the effects of what he was resolved to say, in reply.

“What, young man!” exclaimed the Baron, impatiently, “are you not overpowered with gratitude? What mean you by this silence—that fixed gaze—those clenched hands? Do you hesitate to accept my offer? Speak, boy! thwart not my will, or you will deeply repent your folly!”

While the fierce old Baron raved like a wounded lion, lashing himself into fury, before him stood the young Circassian, calm, but determined, like some courageous hunter, who has been unexpectedly allured into the lair of the beast. After a still further protracted silence, he at length addressed the Baron:

“I might once have accepted the noble offer you make me, Sir; but that time is passed. I now know who I am: and rather would I toil as the meanest serf on your domain, than bear arms against that country—my own, my native land. Yes, Sir, I am a Circassian; and prouder am I to belong to that heroic race, than to the highest rank the autocrat of all the Russias can confer.”

“What words are these I hear?” cried the Baron, furiously. “Disobedience to my orders: rebellion against the Emperor! Is it for this I have brought you up—have educated you; and would have made you wealthy and noble? I have treated you as my own son, and never wished you to know that I was not your father. Who has dared to fill your mind with such dreams? They shall richly repent their interference and folly.”

“She, who has escaped from the reach of your power,” answered Ivan: “she, Sir, who devoted her life to me, who was my only friend—my mother!”

"What! have I been deceived, then, by the wit of a frail woman; and have I been nourishing a young viper, for years past, within my bosom, that now rises to sting me. I recall the offer I made to you. Begone, leave my presence! and henceforth, let me see your face no more. From this moment I discard you—I throw you off for ever; and beware, lest you suffer as a traitor and rebel to the Emperor. Even now you should be seized: you have uttered treason and sedition, which merit full punishment. Before long, Siberia shall be your destination, where you may proclaim such fantastic nonsense without fear of injuring any. But with such pestiferous notions you shall no longer abide under my roof. Begone, quit my presence, or I will send my slaves to drive you hence. Am I to be thus bearded by a boy?—my offers despised?—no gratitude shown for my paternal care and liberality! Begone! Again I say, I will hear no reply."

Overwhelmed by so many various and contending emotions, Ivan could with difficulty collect his thoughts, sufficiently, to determine how to act. He felt that the Baron had, indeed, afforded him many advantages, and had but just now made him what, at all events, appeared to be a generous offer; although he had, at the same time, treated his mother with cruelty and injustice, which might counterbalance all kindness shewn to himself. His better feelings, however, conquered; and as he slowly quitted the apartment, he turned, and was about to express them, when he encountered the fierce look of the Baron, and saw that further discourse would but increase his anger.

When left alone, the Baron, with furious gestures, paced the apartment.

"I would yet tame," he muttered to himself, "that proud and haughty spirit, which, otherwise directed, might have fully answered to my wishes. No, no, I will let him range at large; his means will soon be exhausted, and I shall then find him returning to crouch at my feet. Ah! that will satisfy my vengeance; and I may then do with him as I list. He shall no longer remain here, nor return, until he comes a suppliant before me."

Summoning his attendants, he exclaimed, "Let a horse be given to the rebellious youth who has just left me, and you, Karl! take whatever belongs to him from hence, and bear it wherever he lists. Henceforth he returns here no more. Do you hear me, slaves? Depart, and obey my orders!"

The frightened servants hurried out to obey their fierce Lord's commands, and the dwarf Ladislau, who had stolen in unperceived among them, no sooner heard the order given, than he hastened to report it to Ivan.

"My best—my only true friend!" said Ladislau, in tears, "alas! you are banished for ever from hence, for I know that the Baron will not relent! nor shall I be allowed to see you again. I know not what course you mean to pursue; but this I know, my dear Ivan, that wherever you go, you will require money. Now I have no need of any myself, and therefore, if you have any regard for me, if you would not break my heart before its time, accept this purse. You will find in it enough to supply your wants for some time to come, and I shall never feel the loss of it."

Ivan was affected to tears by this mark of affection from his diminutive friend, but at the same time he hesitated in depriving him of his means of existence, should he, like himself, be turned out into the world; but the excitable Ladislau broke out into a violent flood of tears, as he at first refused the gift, and swore that he himself would never touch it, if Ivan did not make use of it. So that at last, much against his inclination, he was obliged to accept a small portion, sufficient he trusted to carry him to the shores of Circassia.

After waiting some time, in the hope that the Baron's anger would cool, he sent a message requesting permission to see him again before his departure; but a stern refusal was the answer, and an order that he should quit the house without further delay. His proud spirit thus irritated, he no longer hesitated to obey the stern command, after taking an affectionate leave of Ladislau, who refused to be comforted.

With heavy heart, and agitated feelings, he sallied forth for the last time from the gates of the chateau, amid looks of sadness and regret depicted on the faces of the servants, who dared in no other way to express their sentiments; and as he passed through the domain, many an affectionate regard was uttered by the serfs whom he met, grateful for his many acts of kindness to them; he then pursued his journey towards Moscow. On his arrival he repaired to the same hotel where he had before resided; he now had to undergo the pain of parting from the honest serf Karl, when he felt how few there were who cared for him; and this man having been his particular attendant from his childhood, he could not but feel grieved at the separation. The poor fellow, who would willingly and gladly have followed his fortunes, shed many tears as he embraced his master's knees; but it was useless for him to repine, the stern law of the land forbade him. He was a slave chained to the soil, and obliged to obey the owner whoever he might be; and the Baron had ordered him to return to the chateau without delay.

It was long before he could tear himself away from the youth, whom he had attended from his boyhood, and for whom he felt a faithful attachment; but at length, bathed in tears, he rushed from him, mounted his horse and returned to his place of bondage, mourning over his own abject state, which should thus prevent him from following where his inclinations led. He had never before thought or dreamed of quitting the domain where he was born and bred; but now the wish to be free seized him, to throw off the yoke which could thus enchain his movements. He returned discontented and unhappy to his father's hut, determining to seize the first opportunity to emancipate himself from bondage.

Ivan immediately despatched a messenger to acquaint his friend Thaddeus with the circumstances which had occurred; summoning him to his aid and counsel. He had now entered a new era in his existence; henceforth he felt that he must entirely depend on his own judgment and courage, to conduct him through the difficult and perilous way of life he had chosen, in preference to the one the Baron had offered.

His thoughts reverted to the days of his light-hearted boyhood, and he felt himself to be a man, indeed, with all the cares and anxieties almost inseparable from that stage of life; but he also felt that it was not a time for needless meditation—action, decided and instant action, was now become necessary.

He had devoted himself to assist in forwarding a great cause, the freedom of Russia; but then again, he felt that his own country had a prior claim to his services. He hesitated in deciding which plan it was most incumbent on him to



pursue. Whether, at once to carry his sword to the aid of Circassia, or to fulfil the first engagements he had entered into, when he thought himself a Russian, and to assist in the liberation of Russia from despotism.

It occurred to him, at the same time, that by following the latter plan, he might be more effectually aiding his own country, for should freedom once be established among the Russians, he supposed it but natural that that people would desist from their unjust endeavours to deprive Circassia of her liberty.

Ivan determined, therefore, to wait a short time, at least, the course of events before he set off on his expedition in search of all which could now be dear to him. Country—home—father—and relations. He had to begin a new life: to throw off many of his old habits; to make new friends; and to consider those as enemies whom he had hitherto looked upon as countrymen. While these ideas were rapidly passing through his mind, he recollected that that evening had been fixed upon for a general meeting of the conspirators; and as soon as night arrived, he sallied forth amid the bustling crowds who hurried by, heedless of him and his intentions.

But there was one who anxiously had been waiting to observe his movements. As he left the house, that person, who was no other than his intended murderer, Groff, followed his steps, cautiously threading his way among the crowd, or retiring, when requisite, from observation to recommence his trail.

As Ivan walked quickly onwards, it struck him that he was followed, as he had been on a former occasion, and he prepared himself for any sudden encounter. Without any impediment, however, he reached the place of meeting, where he found the greater number of the chief conspirators assembled, and several new recruits among them.

On his entrance, all turned their faces towards him, and started from their seats.

“What! is it Ivan Galetzoff we see before us?” exclaimed one, advancing towards him with surprise on his countenance. “Is it possible that you stand before us alive and well?”

“Indeed,” answered Ivan, “I know it to be perfectly possible, although I do not understand the drift of your observations. Are you inclined to be merry? Yet I should suppose our affairs were too important to furnish matter for jesting!”

“Here’s some extraordinary mistake,” said the conspirator, “and glad are we to find you alive, when we thought you had been foully murdered.”

“Murdered!” exclaimed Ivan, “what gave rise to such an idea?”

“On the morning succeeding the last night you were here, a person was found, not far from this spot, murdered, with several wounds in his breast, and his features so disfigured that it was impossible to recognise him; it was also said that there was nothing found about his person, by which he could be known. Rumour proclaimed you to be the unfortunate individual, and from your not again appearing among us, we concluded that you had indeed been the victim.”

“It is clear that we have been mistaken,” said another conspirator, adding as he turned to Ivan, “Know you not that you have broken through the laws of our society, by absenting yourself without giving reason for so doing; it is for the safety of all, that the movements of every member of our association should be known to the committee of direction. Remember, that the sword of vengeance hangs over the head of him who shall turn traitor to our cause: secret, and sure will be the punishment, from which the guilty cannot escape, sheltered even in the palace of the autocrat.”

“Gentlemen!” said Ivan, rising, “ready should I be to suffer a traitor’s death, were I so base as to betray the sacred—the noble cause in which I am engaged. No time was allowed me to apprise you of my departure, when I was called away to attend a parent’s death-bed. If such be considered a crime, I am ready to suffer; but rather let my actions convince you how true and earnest I am in the cause of liberty. You see one before you now, ruined to all worldly prospects, and eager to assist in the work we have proposed. Let there be no further delay; we are already strong in the numbers and resources of our friends. Let us at once raise the standard of revolt against tyranny, and proclaim liberty to Russia, for sure I am that at the signal of deliverance, thousands will hasten joyfully to join our ranks, and that ere long the Russians, having thrown off the yoke of slavery, may lift up their heads among the free people of the earth.” These sentiments were received with loud acclamations by the majority of his hearers.

“The youth speaks well,” said one of the conspirators, rising; a violent and turbulent character, and a strong advocate for extreme measures; “but before we take the field openly, one great object must be accomplished, without which all our future efforts will be vain. Will you, who have so bravely spoken, undertake to perform that great, that sacred work? It is no slight deed—it is full of peril; but if success attends your aim, it will cover your name for ever with a wreath of glory. It is this: let me not hesitate to declare it; and let yours be the high honour of ridding the country of its greatest oppressor; let yours be the daring hand to stab the unsuspecting tyrant to the heart while revelling in the fancied security of his power; for until that first step be taken, naught else we can do will avail us!”

Ivan rose astounded, and indignant at the vile proposition; his feelings were responded to by the greater number of the most influential conspirators, at the same time that they were unwilling to damp the mad enthusiasm of others, who hesitated not in proposing violent measures; such men being but necessary tools to work out their own more moderate views.

“I came here,” he said, with deep emotion, “to offer my sword to the sacred cause of liberty, and not to act the abhorred part of a midnight assassin; and cursed will be the cause which requires such means to ensure its success. If such be the only resources by which liberty can be gained for Russia, I here demand back my pledge; my oath forbids me to denounce any to the Emperor; but I will never associate with men, who can even allow such a proposition to be made among them.”

He spoke proudly and dauntlessly, and, having uttered these sentiments, was about to quit the assembly, when several of the conspirators gathered round him, endeavouring to calm his agitation and anger; while others regarded him with stern and lowering glances, ready to sacrifice him to their vengeance, should he shew the least sign of betraying them.

Though some manifested a slight opposition to his leaving the meeting, he was nevertheless allowed to depart, by his more intimate acquaintance undertaking to answer for his fidelity.

Hot and eager discussions then arose, and many loudly stigmatised the vile proposition which had been made; though some still adhered to their opinion, that they were justified in any deed that would forward the great end. The debate had increased in warmth, until the conspirators formed themselves into distinct parties, when a person rushed into the assembly, consternation and dismay marked on his countenance.

“My friends,” he cried, “I have just made a discovery which places us all in imminent danger; for instead of Ivan Galetzoff, who was supposed to have been murdered, I find that it was the young Count Flatoff, who fell a victim to the dagger of an assassin, having in his possession the important dispatches for St. Petersburg, which he had undertaken to convey thither. Nothing was found about his person, when his corpse was discovered, so that there is every probability that the murderer has possessed himself of the documents. Some of the Count’s friends here have been making inquiries for him, on finding that he had not set off, and it was thus I first suspected that he was the person found murdered. We are, therefore, completely in the power of whoever possesses those papers, for even the assassin himself would obtain pardon for the deed from the government, in return for the valuable information he can give.”

This announcement caused deep alarm among the conspirators, who immediately broke off their debate, to prepare for departure and separation. But what was their dismay, when on emerging from the garden, they found every avenue occupied by officers of police, and one by one as the foremost appeared, were made prisoners. The rest, seeing the fate of their friends, formed into a body, and made a desperate effort to cut their way through the guards; some succeeding; but by far the greater number fell into the hands of their enemies. Those who got off fled in all directions, pursued by the police, but very few escaped.

---

## Volume One—Chapter Fourteen.

The young Pole, Thaddeus Stanisloff, had been appointed to a regiment, destined to proceed with many others to join the army in the Caucasus, now quartered in Moscow on its way to the south. On the same day, that Ivan had been driven from the chateau of the Baron Galetzoff, he left his home to join his regiment; taking a farewell, which he felt might too probably be the last, of his broken-hearted father, now rapidly drawing towards his end, worn out by grief and sickness. He received also the warm and cordial adieu of his generous and high-minded host.

Thaddeus, naturally light-hearted and gay, by the time he reached Moscow, had forgotten the sorrow of parting, and was looking forward to the pleasure of again meeting his friend Ivan, as, soon after dusk, he rode through the streets towards the hotel where he expected to find him; but was disappointed on hearing that he had already gone out. He immediately set forth on foot by himself, in hopes of finding him at some of their usual places of resort, when, soon after leaving the hotel, the light of a torch falling strongly on his features, a small and feminine figure, who was about to pass on, stopped to look attentively at his face, and then addressed him in a timid and agitated manner. As she looked up to speak, the veil which had before concealed her face dropt on one side, and discovered the features of the Gipsy girl Azila.

“I meet you most fortunately,” she said, “for you may be able to give assistance, where it will be much required. Are you ready to meet a great danger to assist a friend?”

“I should be unworthy to be called a friend, by any whom I should hesitate to aid, whatever the risk to myself,” answered Thaddeus. “But of whom do you speak?”

“Of your friend, Ivan Galetzoff! I have this moment been to his hotel, in the hope of warning him of an impending danger, with which I have but just become acquainted. I could not trust any other with such a communication to him; he has already gone out, and although I am too late to prevent him from encountering danger, I may yet be able to rescue him with your assistance.”

“That, I will gladly give at every risk,” answered Thaddeus. “But how am I to find him? Where is he, that I may hasten to his aid?”

“That, I may not tell you,” answered Azila; “but trust wholly in me, and I will place you where you may be ready to lend your assistance, if required.”

“I will trust entirely to your guidance,” said Thaddeus.

“I knew that you were too noble to hesitate,” rejoined Azila, in a deep tone of gratitude. “Let us then waste no more time here.”

“Lead the way, fair lady, and I will follow,” said Thaddeus.

“Have you your weapons?” she asked, “for they may be needed.”

“Yes, I carry my sword under my cloak.”

“That is well,” said Azila; “and now, Sir, follow me closely, and promptly, or we may be too late.”

Azila, looking back for an instant, to see that Thaddeus followed, then advanced at so rapid a pace, threading her way through the intricate streets, that he could scarcely keep up without running. She crossed the river by one of the bridges, and passed through several desolate streets, where many of the houses had not yet been raised from their ashes, hurrying on, till she arrived beneath the dark shadow of a broad archway, and then paused.

Here she spoke to her companion, in a low earnest whisper: "I cannot lead you further, but you must consent to remain here patiently, till your assistance be called for, or until I return; as I now must hasten to summon one of my tribe, who are in the neighbourhood, to aid in your friend's escape. Wrap yourself closely in your cloak, and remain concealed within this arch; keep your sword drawn for a sudden rescue, for I have reason to suppose that your friend will be set upon by assassins, as he passes near this spot. At all events, be cautious and on the alert."

Gliding away noiselessly from the spot, she then left Thaddeus, who forthwith retired into the darkest corner, effectually concealed from any passer by, beneath the buttresses of the arch. He did not exactly comprehend by what means his friend had exposed himself to the danger, but it was sufficient for him to know that his aid was required, no matter at what risk to himself; and he determined to abide the result, whatever it might be.

He was doomed to keep a long watch; straining his eyes in endeavouring to pierce through the gloom, and intently listening, to catch the sound of any approaching footstep; when suddenly he heard the sound of voices in muttered conference, apparently approaching the spot where he stood concealed.

The arch, in which Azila had placed Thaddeus, was not the same in which Groff had concealed himself, ere he perpetrated the murder of the young Count Flatoff, but at a short distance from it. The former would not have answered the assassin's purpose, being too far removed from the lane Ivan usually passed by. This will account for Thaddeus now remaining undisturbed in his concealment.

"Halt here, Kruntz," said one voice; "this is the spot, I know it well, where I have seen this cursed youth pass so often, and I recommended our noble master to wait here for him. Something has enraged the Count more than ever against him, and he vows that he will not be content, until he has passed his own sword through him. He'll make sure of him, I warrant."

"More sure work than you did the other night, Groff," said Kruntz.

"What mean you?" replied Groff; "what work do you speak of?"

"What mean I! why the murder of Count Flatoff! Tush, tush! comrade, think not to hide that from me, or fear that I would betray you. I suspected that you had been about some dirty work, when you came in, and I was not long in discovering the truth."

"If you know it, what's the use of speaking about it," hoarsely muttered Groff. "I'll not make a mistake again, trust me. We will have our revenge this time, and gain a reward. A pretty work the youth has given us, what with watching and hunting him about so long."

"We ought to know each other by this time, Groff, and need keep no little secrets of this sort from one another: so, no fear of my betraying you. But say, how did you manage to find out that young Galetzoff is likely to pass this way?"

"Why, the Count set me to watch all his haunts; and several times I followed him in this direction, when I suddenly lost sight of him among the garden walls; but after waiting here, I found that he again passed by, and each night he has done the same. I felt certain that it was he, when I made the mistake the other night; but I will not fail a second time, trust me; and I know that he will come, for I am sure it was he, we saw pass at dusk. Ah! what is that object on the ground, Kruntz? see, it moves! It is too horrid to look at!" cried Groff, in a hollow, husky voice. "I see its mangled features. Do you believe in ghosts, Kruntz?"

"Ghosts—no!" answered Kruntz, jeeringly; "I never saw one yet. Why, what's the matter, man? you are not wont to tremble. Rouse yourself, Groff: be a man. Why, what is there to care for, if you did put a wrong man out of the way; you are not the first who has done so."

"It is well for you to laugh, Kruntz, who have no feelings; but if you had seen the horrible sight that appeared to me just now, you would have trembled."

"Nonsense, man," said his companion, "it was all your fancy; and now get rid of such ideas, for here comes some one. Be prepared!"

Thaddeus heard nearly every word of this conversation; and becoming much alarmed for the safety of his friend, stood ready to rush out to his assistance, for he fancied that through the gloom he saw him approaching.

As the footsteps drew near, the voice of the Count Erintoff was heard: "Hist, hist! what, knaves, are you there? Kruntz, Groff, answer!"

The men who had been concealed by the arch, stepped forward as they heard their master's voice.

"Has the person I told you to watch for appeared, or have you again let him escape you, villains?"

"No, Count," answered Kruntz: "no fear of that. I owe him a broken head, and I don't forget my debts. I should like to catch his friend, the other young fellow; I would pay him off all old scores."

"Hush, knaves!" said the Count. "Listen, some one approaches: be prepared to rush out. It is he!"

A footstep was heard. Thaddeus grasped his sword more firmly—his heart beat high, as he stood ready to spring from

his hiding-place. The person had reached the spot. It was Ivan; for the Count and his servants sprung out upon him, and attacked him furiously.

"Yield; you are my prisoner!" exclaimed the Count, making a pass with his sword at Ivan's breast, though, fortunately, not so rapidly but that he had time to spring aside, and draw his own weapon, with which he had provided himself since Azila's warning; this enabled him to parry a second thrust made at him.

"Rescue! Ivan! here's rescue, my friend!" cried Thaddeus, darting forward, most unexpectedly, and beating down the swords of the two servants, who attempted to oppose him. "What means this assassin-like attack?"

He was met by Groff and Kruntz, who had recovered from their surprise in a moment, and now turned upon him with their whole united strength, while their master pressed Ivan hard.

"Yield!" again exclaimed the Count, "you are a traitor to Russia, and have joined in a dark conspiracy against her laws."

These words urged Ivan to defend himself with greater determination; and returning the Count's attack with the utmost vigour, the latter would have fallen a victim to his own nefarious plot, had he not called Kruntz to his aid.

Left to engage Thaddeus single-handed, Groff now attacked him with such blind fury, that he left his own person exposed; while his opponent, anxious to lend his aid to Ivan, who was now so unequally beset, did his utmost to disarm him. Failing in this attempt, he made a lunge to terminate the contest, and his sword passed through the body of his adversary, who fell, with scarcely a groan, to the earth. In the meantime, Ivan had defended himself successfully from his determined assailants; but just as his friend turned to his aid, his foot slipped, and the Count observing the movement, passed his sword through his side. Thaddeus soon succeeded in disarming Kruntz, whirling his sword, by superior fence, out of his hand, and over the adjoining wall, when the ruffian, instead of assisting his master, turned and fled. Before the latter had time to follow up his advantage, by a second and more effectual wound on Ivan, he was vigorously assailed by Thaddeus, who, pressing him back to relieve his friend, disarmed him likewise; but, retreating behind a projecting buttress, the Count baffled his pursuing adversary, and being well acquainted with the different intricate windings, he succeeded in effecting his escape.

Retracing his steps, Thaddeus rejoined his friend, at the moment when the latter, returning to consciousness from the effects of his hurt, attempted to raise himself from the earth. Bending down by his side, he proceeded to bind up his wound, and as Ivan recognised him, he exclaimed:

"Fly, Thaddeus, fly! for treachery and danger surround us: there is not a moment for explanations; but I beseech you to fly instantly, or you will be involved in my ruin."

"Never could I leave you thus," replied Thaddeus. "Lean on me for support, and perhaps we may yet have time to escape."

"Thanks for your generous aid," said Ivan; "but I fear escape is impossible; I feel too much hurt to walk, and you would inevitably be overtaken: for be assured, that the Count has but retreated to call the police, without whose aid he first trusted to satiate his revenge. I know too well, by the words he uttered, that I am completely in his power, through secret information he has gained."

At that moment, a light footstep was heard approaching, and a female form appeared, whom Thaddeus recognised as Azila.

A cry escaped her as she beheld Ivan hurt and on the ground; when, throwing herself beside him, she assisted Thaddeus in supporting his wounded friend.

"Alas!" she cried, "unhappy I am that I should have arrived too late to prevent this calamity; but I have friends on their way who may still be of service."

"Thanks, fair girl," said Ivan, raising himself with their assistance, "I will exert myself; but first, persuade my friend to save himself by flight, for his stay here can but subject him to great peril, without affording me further aid."

"He speaks but too truly," said Azila, turning to Thaddeus. "It were, indeed, madness to remain, and so offer another sacrifice to the Count's revenge; for believe me, your friend has been betrayed by that dastard, Count Erintoff, and has incurred the rigour of the most tyrannical laws. Fly, therefore, while you have time, before the police are upon us, when your uniform alone would betray you; fear not for your friend, his safety will be cared for."

Thaddeus still refused to desert his friend, in spite of the latter's persuasions; when, as she spoke, lights were seen to glimmer in the distance.

"Fly, fly, Thaddeus! my dear friend!" cried Ivan: "see, the police are approaching, and you will but involve yourself in my misfortunes. And you, lady, leave me to my fate; your safety is also perilled if you are discovered."

"I will not quit you, Sir; I have nothing to fear," answered Azila. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "the Great Spirit is merciful!" as, at that moment, two dark forms emerged from the opposite direction to that in which the lights had appeared, and towards which she had constantly been directing an inquiring glance. "These are my friends, and may yet be in time to save you."

Two men then approached, to whom she spoke in her own language, and instantly they raised Ivan gently from the ground, and bore him rapidly in the direction whence they had come.

Azila led the way in silence. Thaddeus followed, and he was happy to find that their distance, from the lights carried

by the police, evidently increased.

The fugitives continued their way for some time, along the dark and narrow lanes, amid the ruined buildings we have already described, and with which Azila seemed perfectly acquainted; never for a moment hesitating which path to take, among the numerous turnings. They at length paused in front of a huge pile of buildings equally dilapidated, looming still larger and darker in the gloom through which they were seen. Their guide passing beneath a low covered way, followed by the rest of the party, struck a sharp blow on a small door, scarcely distinguishable from the masonry which surrounded it. It was opened without a moment's delay; the party entered, and after descending a few steps, Thaddeus found himself in a small vaulted chamber.

The door was carefully closed behind them, and a decrepit old man made his appearance, bearing a lamp in his hand, with which he scrutinised each individual on entering. The two athletic gipsies now placed their wounded burthen on a low pallet which stood at one end of the vault, when Azila thus addressed the old man:

"Father! I am come to entreat your succour for one in distress, who has escaped from the police now in full search of him. While here, he would, you know, be in safety."

"Daughter," answered the old man, "I would refuse you nothing. I will do my utmost for the youth's safety; but who is this other? An officer too! what does he here?"

"He is a friend of the Wounded man, and would not quit him, though at great danger to himself," answered Azila. "Ere the morn dawns, he must be from hence. But now that you have granted us your hospitality, father, we must attend to your wounded guest."

It was indeed time, as from the exertion Ivan had undergone, his wound bled afresh; the old man, however, produced salves and linen to apply to it; but his hands trembled with the feebleness of age as he performed the operation, assisted by Thaddeus.

"Ay, ay, I have bound up many wounds in my day, and thought to have long ago departed for that place where there will be none to cure. God's will be done!"

Ivan had just strength to express his thanks, and fell back exhausted. In the mean time, Azila had dispatched the two men to watch the direction taken by the police, and to bring back word, as soon as it would be safe for Thaddeus to venture on his return to the city. She then took her seat by the side of Ivan's humble couch, watching each movement of his pallid face, while Thaddeus was seated opposite, and their old host busied himself in producing various articles of refreshment, including a flask of wine; a small quantity of which considerably revived Ivan. The old man kept moving about, and muttering to himself, but bestowing few words on the strangers.

After a considerable time, the scouts came back to report that the road was clear; the police having returned to their posts in despair that their prey had escaped.

"It is now time for you to depart, Sir," said Azila, addressing Thaddeus, "for longer delay here would be hazardous, while your friend, trust me, will be carefully attended to. One of these men will be your guide, till you reach a part of the city known to you."

As at these words Thaddeus rose to depart, Ivan exclaimed:

"Adieu, my generous friend! I know not when we may next meet, for all around me looks dark, and lowering; but something within tells me, that I shall yet surmount all difficulties. Our courses, I fear, however, must be widely different; yours is clear before you, though I sincerely wish that you would follow mine. You shake your head. Well, well, I cannot now urge you to do as I wish; but I will take care to apprise you of my movements, and perchance we may some day again meet in happier circumstances."

After expressing his thanks to Azila, Thaddeus followed one of the Gipsies, who conducted him at a rapid pace, till they arrived at a part of the city with which he was familiar; when the man pointing to the direction he was to take, disappeared without waiting for an answer; and the young Pole soon after reached his lodgings in safety.

---

## Volume One—Chapter Fifteen.

A gentle and refreshing slumber stole over Ivan's senses, banishing from his mind all remembrance of the cares and dangers surrounding him, as he lay on his couch, watched over by the vigilant care of Azila.

He had been undisturbed in his place of refuge for several hours, when he suddenly started in his sleep, aroused by a singular and hurried knocking at the door. Azila hastened towards it, as the old man, slowly rising from his seat, had begun, with muttered grumblings, to undo the fastenings.

"In mercy, father, let him not in," said Azila, "whoever it may be! He may bring ruin on your guest. Oh! bid him seek shelter, or whatever he may want, elsewhere."

"Ay, that I would, with a pestilence on mankind, who are for ever worrying me," muttered the old man; "but my oath—my oath compels me. I may refuse admittance to none who make the sign."

Again the knocking was repeated, as the old man, having finished his task of unbarring, opened the door, and a man pale as death, his dress torn and disordered, sword in hand, rushed into the vault.

"Hide me—hide me, father!" he exclaimed. "All is lost; many are taken, some slain, and all dispersed; and even now

the police are in pursuit of me.”

The old man peered into the face of the new comer to identify him, and as if to ask for an explanation of what had happened; while the stranger, on his part, looked with surprise at seeing Azila and Ivan already occupants of the vault. He was, however, recognised as one of the conspirators, as he threw himself exhausted on a stone bench.

“What means this agitation?” said Ivan, as the person recognised him; “what means this alarm? for I scarcely heard the words you spoke as you entered.”

“Alas!” answered the conspirator, “our noble enterprise has been discovered before all was fully prepared, and is now utterly and for ever overthrown. No sooner had the meeting broke up, than, as we were separating, we found the police gathering in strong force round all the entrances to the garden. No time was to be lost, many of our friends had already been seized, when I, with others, made a desperate rush through one of the avenues, less strongly guarded than the others; some of us escaping, favoured by the darkness, and our knowledge of the situation; and fear giving swiftness to my feet, I distanced all pursuers, and hastened hither. Yet, at one time, I heard my enemies following close behind me; but they lost sight of me among the lanes which lead to this spot. Had the assembly broken up sooner, we should have escaped for this night, as the police had but just begun to arrive at the place, to which some of the party must have been traced by spies, or some foul treachery has been at work. I had a narrow escape; but I had no fear when once I got outside, for I knew that you, father, would shelter me.”

“Ay, ay,” muttered the old man, “at the risk of suffering the knout again, and being sent back in chains to Siberia, if they discovered who I was. I have had enough of that already; but fear not, I will not betray you, and it will be long before the knaves find out my den; or should the worst happen, here is a place they would find it difficult to discover:—therefore, should the police come here, you must conceal yourself within.”

At those words, he removed what appeared a large ill-shapen slab, or rather block of stone, in the wall, but which turned on well-made hinges, and disclosed within, a recess or small chamber ventilated by an aperture in the roof. It had evidently been formed with great labour and perseverance for the purpose it was now to be put to, and was capable of containing three or more persons without inconvenience.

“If the police discover us here, your wounded friend must also take refuge within this place; and they will have more wit than I give them credit for, if they espy him. Hark! I hear footsteps; surely none can have betrayed me. If so, all is lost.”

Scarcely were the words uttered, than a thundering attack of blows was heard at the door, and a voice loudly demanding admittance in the name of the Emperor. The conspirator turned pale with terror, and rushed towards the entrance of the concealed chamber.

“Stay,” said Azila, “would you leave your wounded comrade to perish, while you secure your own retreat? First place him in safety, and all will be well; fear not, for I will soon manage to get rid of our unwelcome visitors.”

Ivan thanked her with a look of gratitude, as the conspirator, following her directions, with the feeble aid of the old man, lifted him through the narrow aperture, and laid him on some straw hastily thrown together; when Azila, carefully closing the entrance, prepared to receive the emissaries of justice. She threw a cloak over her head and shoulders, so as completely to cover her form and features, busying herself over the fire, as if watching some culinary operation, while the old man employed himself in slowing unbarring the door, muttering and growling as if just aroused from sleep.

A second and more impatient summons made him hasten to withdraw the bolts, when the door flew open, almost knocking him down, and a party of the police rushed into the vault, but started back confounded, on beholding who were its sole occupants.

Azila’s watchful eye marked the servant of Count Erintoff—the ruffian Kruntz, among the party.

“Well, I could have sworn,” said the man; “that I saw some person enter here not a quarter of an hour ago; and I know that he could not have again escaped without my seeing him.”

“This is strange,” said the leader of the police, “we must question the old man, if he has sense enough to understand us. Here, old man! has any one lately left this mansion of yours?”

“Few come to visit one overcome with age and infirmities, who dwells in a dark vault where the light of day scarcely enters,” said the hermit; “no, no! they leave me alone to die in peace and quiet, it is all I require. What is it that you desire of me, gentlemen? can I do aught to serve you? I have, indeed, little to offer!”

“Cease your prating, old man!” said the officer, “and listen to what I say. A foul plot has just been discovered, and some of the conspirators have taken refuge in this neighbourhood. Now harken! I am not to be trifled with: you, old man, know somewhat of them.”

“Woe is the day, that such things should be!” cried the old man. “Look around—see! none are here; there must be some mistake.”

“We shall prove it,” exclaimed the police officer, who, exasperated at the chance of his prey escaping him, produced a thick leathern thong, with which he struck the aged hermit a violent blow across the shoulders; “this will refresh your wits and ideas perchance. Say! can’st thou now remember, old knave; or must another blow yet revive you?”

“I cannot speak more than the truth,” said the old man, meekly, and bowing before the petty tyrant, too well accustomed to such deeds. “Your stripes can draw no more than the truth from me, I know not of whom you speak.”

"Is it so!" cried the officer, now growing furious at his disappointment, and having strong suspicions that he had, in some way, been deceived. "We shall see what efficacy there is in leather to draw the truth from you," aiming at the same time several more blows at the old man, which made him shrink down cowering before the barbarian, though he uttered no words of complaint, nor could the slightest information be elicited from him.

Since the entrance of the myrmidons of police, Azila had kept her seat apparently unnoticed, bending down her head before the fire, her cloak concealing her features so effectually that none could know them; at the same time keeping a watchful eye on those whose presence caused such risk to Ivan's safety; hoping that a woman's wit, in case of necessity, would lead them astray. She now, however, could no longer contain her indignation at the cowardly assault by the police officer on the defenceless and decrepit old man, for, suddenly rising from her seat, she boldly confronted the tyrant.

Drawing herself up to her full height, and assuming a look of proud disdain, she thus addressed the brutal ruffian:

"Dastardly tyrant, can you not find some nobler object to vent your unjust rage upon, and to display your power, than yonder decrepit old man? Perchance you may deem a weak and helpless woman a fitter subject for the exercise of your proud prerogative, if so—strike! fear not! I can bear as much as that infirm old man—perchance more. What! are you afraid? Then order some of your myrmidons to begin the attack; do they also lack courage? Oh! most brave and noble band to fear an old man, and young woman! Go your way then, if you have no better errand—or search here first, for what you want!"

The rough natures of the men were awed by the majestic air, and authoritative manner of Azila, for they drew back to the entrance of the cavern; while their leader foamed with rage at finding himself baffled by a young girl; but he meditated revenge.

Azila had shewn much tact in drawing off the officer's anger from the old man to herself, and then working him into a fury, and increasing it so as to confuse his faculties, and prevent him from making a stricter search, when the retreat of the two conspirators might by chance have been discovered. Her plan had well nigh succeeded, and the officer was preparing to depart, when something seemed to strike him as left undone, and turning to the old man, he seized him roughly by the shoulder demanding his name; the latter hesitating to give this at once, brought upon himself a fresh shower of blows.

"Stay—stay your hand!" cried he, "do you demand my name? alas! my memory is so bad that I can scarcely remember it; but I am called Orenoff, and I live here on the charity which a few people, whose hearts are not yet turned to stone, bestow on me. My heart has undergone a like fate, else I could not bear your treatment."

While the old man was babbling away in this strain, the officer made notes on paper, and presently turning to Azila, said:

"Now, Madam, you must give me some account of yourself, or else prepare to follow me. What do you here?"

"I answer your questions," replied Azila, "because forsooth, it pleases me to do so. I came then to attend yonder weak, sick old man, and to bring him food and medicine, for he has none other to attend him."

"Whence do you come, then?" demanded the officer.

"From a noble and charitable lady," said Azila; "and perchance it may occur to your wisdom, that it was my cloak, which was seen entering the vault, and which your spies took for one of the conspirators!"

"If you can give no better account of yourself than this, you must accompany me forthwith," said the officer.

"But, should it not be my pleasure to leave, you may experience some difficulty in compelling me," replied Azila.

The officer smiled grimly, and was stepping forward to seize her slight figure, which could indeed have offered but a slight resistance to his grasp, when she exclaimed:

"Stand aside, and touch me at your peril!" producing at the same time a paper from her bosom. "Know you that signature?" she said. "Go your way, and leave this old man to rest, who is too ill and infirm to move hence, and learn in future to exercise your bravery on objects capable of self-defence."

The police officer, with an abashed and scowling look, now prepared to depart; still however shewing some hesitation, as if doubtful of acting wisely; but a significant wave of Azila's hand, decided him to order his men to withdraw, when they, glad to escape, soon made their exit through the narrow doorway of the vault, followed by their leader.

As their footsteps were heard receding, the old man hastened to close the door, but was checked by Azila.

"No, father," she said, "let them not suppose that we have aught to conceal, by manifesting haste to shut them out, or they may perhaps return and renew their search, although I think their brutal leader would rather not attempt it." Some minutes accordingly elapsed, ere the door was again closed and barred.

While this scene was taking place, Ivan's feelings may be better conceived than described, as he lay concealed with his companion in their narrow cell; first, on hearing the entrance of the police, and their treatment of the old man, and again when their leader threatened to seize Azila. At first he felt inclined to rush out, and at all risks to arrest the barbarian, but the pain of his wound recalled him to timely reason, and he reflected that the act would not only sacrifice his companion and himself, but also indeed doubly commit his aged host and Azila. The maiden appeared at the entrance of the cell, soon after the police had withdrawn, and addressing its inmates, said:

"For the present, I trust you are safe, but I cannot answer for how long a time you may remain so, as the police will yet keep a watch on this place. I should advise, you, Sir, who are strong and able to seek safety elsewhere, to retire from hence as soon as I can ascertain that the road be clear; I am even confident, that they will return here again before long. Are you ready to depart?"

"Yes, yes," replied the conspirator, "I would rather trust myself to the dangers of the open streets, than run the risk of being taken here, like a fox in his hole; but it will be a perilous undertaking to run the gauntlet through the bands of the lynx-eyed police. Can I serve my friend, Galetzoff? and shall I not leave him in greater danger?"

"Fear not for him, leave him to my charge," answered Azila, "and now, be ready to fly hence on my return. I will learn from those on the watch if all be safe."

The maiden departed, the old man closing the door with the utmost caution, while the conspirator pressed Ivan's hand, bidding him farewell, and stood ready to sally forth on her return. She soon came back, assuring him that none of the police were to be seen in the neighbourhood; with hurried and anxious look, he then rushed forth to reach a safer refuge.

The door was now again secured with bar and bolt. Assuming the same bashful and retiring manner as before, when in Ivan's presence, so different from her usual free and independent bearing, when in discourse with others, Azila addressed the wounded youth—

"I must now leave you for a while," she said, "for I go to seek means to enable you to escape hence, in safety, to the tents of my people, where your wound will be quickly healed, and you may dwell until you gain strength to fly from the country. Until my return, I confide you to the care of an old and tried friend, and a trusty guard watches outside, who will give immediate notice of the slightest danger." Then making her usual oriental obeisance, she withdrew towards the door, lingering to cast one look on her patient; and before he had time to express his thanks, she had quitted the vault.

Ivan was left in the recess, the entrance being open, while his aged host prepared himself for slumber on a pallet in a corner of the vault; he followed the latter's example, although every passing sound aroused him.

The remainder of the night waned, no fresh event occurring to disturb the occupants of the dreary vault. No sooner had a few streaks of morning found ingress through the crevices of the walls, than the old man arose from his uneasy couch, and after tendering his services to Ivan, proceeded to prepare a morning meal. This considerably revived his wounded guest, though the pain he suffered had not diminished. Still the very recollection of his narrow escape gave him hopes for the future, and he looked forward with eagerness to the time when his present confinement would cease, and he should again breathe the pure air of Heaven in unrestrained liberty. Occupied with these thoughts, he passed the remainder of the day, anxiously awaiting Azila's return.

---

## **Volume One—Chapter Sixteen.**

The principal place of resort of that singular race of people, the Zingani, or Gipsies, or as they universally call themselves the Rommany; of whom there are several thousands in and about Moscow; is the Marina Rochte, lying about two versts distant from the city.

Most of these people obtain their livelihood in Moscow, either by keeping taverns, or by dealing in horses and by various other like kinds of traffic, bearing in general but an indifferently good character. The class, however, to which we now allude, are of the lowest order; whose females sing at the taverns and different public gardens in the neighbourhood, and are not of the best repute, as to modesty of behaviour. Here they congregate in great numbers, their countenances resembling those of their race who are to be met with in England; of brown complexions, and for the most part having beautiful and regular features; their eyes fiery and intelligent; their hair, somewhat coarse, of coal black hue; and all having the same free and independent bearing.

There is, however, another class of Zingani, whose very existence will surprise those who have been accustomed to consider these people as mere wandering barbarians, incapable of civilisation, and unable to appreciate the blessings of a quiet and settled life; for many of them inhabit large and handsome houses in Moscow, appear abroad in elegant equipages, and are scarcely to be distinguished from the upper classes of the Russians, unless, indeed by possessing superior personal advantages and mental accomplishments. Of this singular social phenomenon at Moscow, the female Gipsies are the principal cause, having from time immemorial cultivated their vocal powers, with such effect, that although in the heart of a country in which the vocal art has arrived at a greater perfection than perhaps in any other part of the world, the principal gipsy choirs in that city are, by universal consent, allowed to be unrivalled.

The sums obtained by these singers, are very large, enabling them to live in luxury of every description, and to maintain their husbands in almost princely magnificence. Many are married to Russian gentlemen of consideration. The lovely, talented, and domestic wife of a Count, well-known in the highest, circles of Moscow, is by birth a Gipsy, and was formerly the chief pride of a Rommany choir at Moscow, as she is now one of the principal ornaments of refined society.

In no other part of the world do the gipsies flourish as they do in Russia, affording a great contrast to the wretched hordes steeped in penury and vice, who infest the Peninsula; and to the low thieving trampers of England and Scotland, existing by petty pillage; such bands often being indeed but a collection of the lowest vagabonds of every description intermingled with the original race.

There are many opinions as to the land from whence the Zingani have sprung; it is generally supposed, that they originally came from Hindostan, being of the lowest class of Indians, called Suders, or those who have lost caste; that



they migrated from thence in great numbers in 1409, when Timour Beg ravaged India, to spread with fire and sword the tenets of the Mahomedan religion. It seems probable that in their way towards Egypt, where we first hear of them, that they resided for a time in the country called Zinganen, at the mouth of the Indus, from whence they may perhaps have gained the name of Zingani. By what route they reached Egypt from thence, is not known, but they had fixed themselves there in great numbers in 1517, when Sultan Selim conquered the country. They revolted from his rule, under a leader who has assumed the name of Zinganeus, probably from being chosen chief of that people; but were completely worsted, being again compelled to seek safety in flight, and made their appearance in Europe in large bands about the year 1520. Some of their leaders, who with their followers found their way to the northern parts of Europe, called themselves dukes and lords of Lower Egypt, endeavouring to impose on the people, among whom they came, with pretensions of rank and dignity; in this, however, they were not very successful, soon sinking into a class considered no better than rogues and vagabonds.

In Russia, on the contrary, among an ignorant and barbarous population, their various talents and acuteness enabled them to sustain a superior station; nor have they, at any time, been there subject to the persecutions and indignities which they have had to endure in other countries of Europe. Though some, as we have said, have taken up their abode in cities, others still retain their primitive and wandering habits, living in tents; and roving from place to place, as may suit their fancy; or as they find it convenient to carry on the pursuits by which they exist.

The tribe or family to which Azila belonged, was under the guidance of a sagacious leader, and was compelled by him to refrain from all marauding habits. Though the Zingani chief was possessed of considerable wealth, he was of too free and independent a disposition to confine himself to the trammels and restraint of the social life of a city, preferring the more varied and roving existence enjoyed in a camp. He had, however, numerous connexions of every rank in the city; among the most superior of whom, his daughter Azila, had in truth been educated, and when her own inclinations led her to return to her father's camp, she was still regarded by them with the greatest affection; and it was by their aid, assisted by her own talent and penetration, that she was able to collect the varied information, which as we have seen, was of so much importance to the conspirators.

It is towards the close of one of the few bright and balmy days which cheer the hearts of the Russians in their short-lived summer, that we must again introduce our readers to the camp of our friend, the Zingani chief. It had lately been pitched on the confines of a wood, at a short distance from Marina Rochte; and it was evident, from fewer people than usual being seen about the encampments, that many had joined their brethren in the village, to enjoy their constant amusements of dancing, singing, and other sports.

At a short distance from the tented circle, the Zingani chief was slowly pacing the grass, with his arms crossed on his bosom, and lost in thought. At length he soliloquised aloud:

“This is the baneful effect of departing from our ancient laws and customs, by taking part in the affairs of the people with whom we dwell; losing our freedom and independence, by becoming subject to their cruel and unjust laws. Ought not I to have prevented that loved girl from trammelling herself with the affairs of others, who would show but little gratitude for her exertions, even if successful; and now too, probably, she herself may be in danger: and if so, what resource have I but to declare her parentage. That would save her: but the so doing would bring ruin on one who still lives. If she falls into the power of the tyrannical dispensers of the law, her fate would be dreadful. Should I not then save her? Yes, I must, even at the expense of the oath I so thoughtlessly took. It provided not for such an emergency. It must be done; and even thus, it would well nigh break my heart to part from her; to see her subject to all the deceit and treachery to which her station would expose her—to see her free-born spirit oppressed by the strict rules and absurd etiquette of society; to see her governed by one who could not appreciate her qualities, and shrinking before his stern and savage glance; confined too within walls, and no longer allowed to wander in free and unrestrained liberty. And yet, some will say that I am acting wrongly; that I am depriving her of the enjoyment of luxuries and of wealth, which are her due. Fools—fools! who value worthless gold, outward pomp, and idle, debilitating effeminacy, to health, and the free air of heaven.”

As he again turned, he saw the object of his thoughts approaching, at a quick pace, from the direction of the city. Azila appeared hurried and eager in manner; and after holding a short conference with her father, they entered together within the circle of tents. The gipsy chief then summoned round him the men who yet remained in the encampment—persons in whom he could place the utmost reliance in cases of emergency.

“Men of Rommany!” he said, addressing them in that style of language which they most love to hear, “there is an arduous and dangerous task to be performed, which will require the utmost sagacity and care. I have, therefore, summoned you around me, to select one who will swear to undertake it; but whoever offers himself, must know, that he risks his liberty, and perhaps his life.”

As he finished speaking, a youth stepped forward from the circle of his companions, exclaiming:

“I am ready to undertake whatever you propose, if it be within the power of man!”

The keen, lustrous, dark eye; handsome and intelligent countenance; and well-knit limbs of the youth, were powerful recommendations in his favour; and the chief, without hesitation, selected him.

“I well know that I can trust you,” said the chief; “the task will require all your sagacity and courage. Its main object is to ensure the freedom of the young stranger. But remember, Javis, that if your attempt be discovered, chains, imprisonment, and banishment, will infallibly be your lot: and for your reward, if you succeed, the utmost I can give, are my own and Azila's grateful thanks. More she cannot give,” he added, as a blush rose, for a moment, on the youth's dark cheek.

“I ask not for reward,” answered the youth. “It is but a debt of gratitude each man of the tribe owes to the young stranger; and I should be base if I were not ready to pay it: I will save him, or perish in the attempt.”

"I trust you fully, Javis," said the chief; "and now we will call Azila to our conference."

He beckoned his daughter to approach; and for a considerable time they held an earnest consultation together.

As they finished speaking, a boy ran in, to inform the chief that a stranger was approaching the encampment.

"I will speak with him," said the chief.

In a few minutes the boy returned, accompanied by a peasant, whose weary and sorrowful appearance seemed to demand compassion.

"Who are you?" said the chief, eyeing him narrowly, and apparently satisfied with his scrutiny. "Who are you, who come uninvited among the people of Rommany? What do you seek with us?"

"If you are the person I take you to be, you shall presently know," answered the peasant; "tell me, are you not that kind, honest Gipsy, who was once very civil to my master; my poor young master, whom I have been seeking all over the city, and can hear nothing of. Alas! alas! I fear that he is in great peril."

"Who is your master?" asked the Gipsy; "when I know that, I may perhaps answer some of your questions."

"My poor young master," replied the peasant, who proved to be our old friend Karl, "is the son of Baron Galetzoff. Well, I was sent to Moscow to-day, and venturing to pay a visit to my young Lord, I heard that he had disappeared, nobody knows where. I have been seeking for him all day, in every place I could think of, and have now come to ask you, if you know any thing of him?"

"It is not my custom to answer the questions of those whom I do not know," said the Gipsy. "Tell me, how came you to suppose, that I could tell you any thing of your master?"

"Why, for this reason," said Karl; "I once heard my poor young master, and his friend Thaddeus Stanisloff, speak of a Zingani chief, who had promised to assist them, if they got into any difficulties. Well, as I was wandering about, and looking in search of my master, I saw some of the Rommany people; and I bethought me that I would come out here, and learn if their chief was in the neighbourhood, and if he knew any thing of my dear master."

"Well, my good friend," said the Gipsy, who was pleased with poor Karl's simplicity and sincerity, "go back now to the city, and say not a word more of your master; but return here to-morrow, at day-break, and be careful that you are unobserved, and perhaps you may then see him."

"Thanks, most kind and worthy Sir," answered Karl, "you have made my heart light and happy again."

He then took his leave, as desired, and returned to Moscow; where, as he was wandering about, looking into various shops, to pass the time, he met an acquaintance, to whom he could not resist giving the gratifying intelligence, that he had heard of his young master, the son of the Baron Galetzoff, as he still persisted in calling Ivan. He did not observe that a stranger was standing within ear-shot, at the time; but he soon found, to his cost, the effects of his thoughtless communication; for, within, an hour, he was seized by some of the police, and dragged immediately before a magistrate.

He was at first mildly interrogated respecting Ivan, in the hope of extracting some voluntary information from him. The magistrate then pressed him more severely, but discovered that the prisoner was a most difficult subject to exert his authority upon, and when sternly ordered to confess all he knew, he stoutly denied ever having received any information of the person in question.

Unfortunately, however, for poor Karl, his perseverance was of no avail to himself, for his acquaintance, who had confessed all he knew, was confronted with him. Another person was found, who proved that he was a serf of the Baron Galetzoff, and consequently must have known the son of that noble. His denial was therefore of no further service to him, and the next day, he was ordered before a criminal court then sitting, where for his contumacy in refusing to answer any questions, he was condemned forthwith to receive the punishment of the knout.

Poor Karl turned pale when he heard his sentence pronounced, but his courage did not forsake him, and he determined to undergo any torture, rather than betray his young master. He was dragged off, therefore, to receive his punishment, with two other criminals convicted of heinous crimes, and whose pallid countenances and trembling limbs, betokened their dread of the coming torture.

The place of execution and punishment is in an open space, outside one of the barriers of the city; and there a mob of skin-clad labourers and peasants had collected, as they saw the prisoners approach, conducted by their guards and the officers, whose duty it was to see that punishment was duly inflicted.

Even in Russia, the executioner or Palatch, as he is called, is looked upon with the same opprobrium and dislike as in most other countries, and he is always some criminal, still considered as a prisoner, but lodges by himself in a solitary house outside the gates of the city. Instances have occurred of criminals actually refusing the odious office, preferring, rather than undertake its cruel duties, the weary and toilsome journey to Siberia, with all the miseries and wretchedness incident to it, and an eternal banishment from their country.

The Palatch, on the present occasion, was a criminal sentenced for life to hard labour in the Siberian mines for murder. The mere appearance of this man, bespoke that savage disposition, which could find gratification in the exercise of his horrid occupation. Underneath his red tangled locks, a scowling forehead protruded, exhibiting beneath his rough eye-brows, a pair of bleared eyes; a flattish, turned up nose, was the only other feature to be seen on his face, his mouth being concealed by a mass of grizzly red hair, which covered the lower part of his face. Even the yoke-necked, slavish multitude, set up a shout of disgust, as the hated inflictor of cruelty appeared; but he

seemed callous to their feelings, commencing the preparations for his loathsome office, with cool indifference.

The two real criminals were to suffer first, all three being stationed ready for punishment, in a conspicuous place. The first culprit was placed before an upright board, shaped like an inverted cone; in the upper or broad end of which are hollowed out three notches, the middle one being contrived to receive the neck of the culprit, and the other two the arms, which are securely bound; the legs being fastened to the bottom of the board. The upper part of the body is then stripped quite bare. These preparations being completed, the brutal executioner flourishes the knout round his head, and with tremendous force it descends on the back of the victim, horribly lacerating the flesh. The handle of the knout, is a thick stick eighteen inches long, to the end of which is fastened a twisted thong of leather, twice the length of the stick; and to the end of the thong again, there is a copper ring, through which is passed, with a slip knot, a double strap of leather, an inch broad near the ring, and tapering to a point near the running end; the straps being boiled in milk, to swell and harden them.

Poor Karl looked at this formidable weapon, in the hands of the executioner, with feelings of the most intense hatred; but even the shrieks of his precursors in suffering, as the lash descended on their backs, did not make him waver in his constancy. He was doomed to a still greater trial; for just before it became his turn to suffer, he heard a voice, calling out his name, proceeding apparently from a telga, which, with some others, had just left the gates of the city, and was quickly passing by. He turned round for an instant; and a glance of pleasure lit up his countenance, as he fancied that he recognised the voice: but instantly recollecting himself, he again hung down his head, and appeared to observe nothing around him, till the telga had driven rapidly away.

At length he was also lashed up for punishment; but he uttered not a groan, until nature almost gave way before the executioner had finished his hideous work, which he seemed to go through with greater zest, from the practice he had already had; as the wild beast, which has once tasted human blood, feels insatiate until he has gorged himself with it. Karl knew that at one moment he might have saved himself the torture inflicted upon him; but he willingly suffered without a complaint—a true specimen of the Russian national character, displaying sturdy fidelity and passive endurance, without an expectation or hope of reward.

As yet, he had not half expiated the crime he was charged with, and justice still retained him in her clutches. He was carried back to prison till his wounds were healed, at which period he was compelled to serve the Emperor as a soldier. The constant draft, which an unhealthy climate and the Circassian sabres made in the army of the Caucasus, necessitated the frequent incorporation of criminals in its ranks. With manacles on his hands and feet, he was marched off with others, formed into large bands, containing many volunteers, who were, however, treated in the same way, to prevent their escaping, lest they should change their minds.

Karl knew that it was useless to complain; and as he was of a contented and happy disposition, not much addicted to thinking, he determined to make the best of his lot. Fortunately for themselves, his companions also were blind to the hardships and miseries they would probably be compelled to undergo; although thus loaded like culprits with heavy chains, they passed their time in singing and laughter. As they marched on, their shouts of merriment rose to the skies, amid the clank of their chains, as if to mock the cruelty of their oppressors: the poor wretches being entirely ignorant of the blessings of freedom, and incapable of feeling their degradation, perhaps even incapacitated for thought! Such are now the only people in Europe who can securely be governed by despotism; and such are the senseless tools with which the mighty Czar of Russia works out his imperial will. What care they how many freemen they bring to a like state of bondage as their own? The yoke has so long pressed on their necks, that they heed not its galling weight; but like the patient oxen, they are content to be goaded on to their work, at their master's will. This vast, soulless engine, is indeed of tremendous force; and has but too often been used to crush and overwhelm freedom, and to plant the banner of tyranny amid lands, where the flag of liberty has hitherto waved bright and unsullied.

---

## **Volume One—Chapter Seventeen.**

It was towards the close of the day, when a young and active peasant, who, contrary to the usual character of his class, was rather intelligent-looking, was slowly driving a small telga or wagon, filled apparently with hides and merchandise, at the end of a bye-way or narrow lane, at a point where it joined one of the principal roads leading from the south towards Moscow. Observing a cloud of dust rising in the distance, in a southerly direction, he drew up his telga, anxious to ascertain the cause of it. He presently found it to proceed from a long train of wagons, about twenty in number, mostly drawn by oxen, but others, of the same description as the vehicle he himself drove, drawn by horses. The drivers of the wagons were short, ugly-looking fellows, with sandy moustaches and beards, black woolly caps, sheep-skin jackets, the woolly side next the skin. Many of them were half asleep on the tops of their vehicles, trusting to the sagacity of their beasts; but it was now time to rouse themselves into activity, for they were approaching the end of their journey, on which perhaps they had come several hundred miles. Moscow, their bourne, was at hand.

The young peasant joined in the line of the caravan, driving between the carts as if apparently he belonged to their party.

Laughter and joking soon arose among the easily pleased wagoners, caused by his jests and stories; and, searching, under the hides which covered his cart, he produced a case of vodka, and a glass, which he filled with the much-prized liquor, handing it about to the people nearest to him. By this means, and from time to time also singing a song, he soon won all their hearts; the Russian peasants being as passionately fond of music, as they are addicted to vodka.

“Jump up, my friend,” said he to one of the men trudging along-side, “you will find a better seat here than in your own wagon.”

The man readily complied, and the young peasant began to ply him with a number of questions. In this way he learned that they were to remain only one day to rest their cattle, and to start on the following morning for the south. The information seemed to give him much satisfaction; and he intimated to his new friends, that he should wish to enter the city as one of their party, and to return at the same time with them, reminding them that he should not forget to fill his can of vodka.

The lofty towers, and polished domes of Moscow now appeared in sight; and being allowed to pass the gates without hindrance, the caravan proceeded to the part of the city where that class of people chiefly congregate: the young peasant acting in every way like the rest of the party.

After dark, however, giving his telga in charge to one of the wagoners, whom he had more particularly made his friend, he sallied forth into the still crowded and bustling streets, meeting parties of pleasure returning from the gardens in the neighbourhood. Rich nobles driving from one gay scene of dissipation to another; the military returning from relieving guard; drunken men of all classes, reeling home, attempting to support each other as they tottered against the door-posts; none of them, however, joining in bacchanalian songs, as in England and other countries; for the Russian, though a careless, light-hearted being, when sober, becomes when overpowered with liquor, a surly, morose animal, with all his worst passions aroused, and having no pretensions to enjoyment. This is too common a scene in Russia; but we should rather pity than blame such slavish beings, sunk so low in apathetic ignorance, and who are never taught to respect themselves.

The peasant seemed well acquainted with the city; for without once deviating from his course, he quickly threaded its intricate streets. Whatever was his business, he soon performed it; and on his return, again joined the most convivial of his new friends, treating them from his can of vodka, and singing songs to them till late at night. The whole of the next day was spent by the carters in distributing the contents of their vehicles to their different destinations, and in reloading them with goods to convey to the south. The stranger peasant having likewise apparently disposed of his cargo, returned with a very light one, saying that he had a friend with a broken limb, whom he was anxious to convey to his home in the country.

In the evening, he again unloaded his cart, leaving his goods under charge of his friend the carter, and drove away in the direction he had formerly taken; saying, before he went, that he should return with his maimed companion. He drove his light cart quickly along the streets, till he reached that part of the city before mentioned, as the neighbourhood of the place in which the conspirators held their meetings; when on his giving a low whistle, a lad sprang out from behind a wall, and taking the place of the peasant, drove slowly on, the other hastening to the door of the vault, in which Ivan had been so long concealed.

"Is all safe?" he asked of the lad, who took his place. "Have you seen none of the cursed police in the neighbourhood?"

"There is nothing to fear, and no one could pass near here, without my seeing or hearing them," answered the boy.

The peasant gave the peculiar knock at the door of the vault, which being opened by the old man, he immediately entered. No one appeared in sight, as the telga drove up to the nearest spot, by which the door could be approached; and without allowing it scarcely time to stop, the peasant and a gipsy were seen, bearing the body of a man, wrapped up in the folds of a peasant's dress, his head bandaged so as completely to conceal his features. No sooner was he placed in the cart, reclining his whole length at the bottom, than the young peasant, again taking the reins, drove rapidly away. The old man was again left to his solitude, and the two gipsies hastened off in an opposite direction.

The peasant proceeded quickly through the narrow and winding streets of the city; once or twice the police seeming inclined to stop him, but as he put on a careless air, whistling and singing as he drove along, they did not think it necessary to interrupt his progress. At length, however, an officer of police, in search of some of the conspirators, who had as yet escaped detection, ordered him in an authoritative tone to stop his telga. He instantly obeyed, uncovering the face of its occupant, and displaying a profusion of red shaggy locks, and large untrimmed beard; a cloth being bound round the head of the wounded man.

The peasant's volubility and frankness, seemed to convince the officer that there was no cause for suspicion, and he bid the former drive on, an order most promptly obeyed; until at length the peasant escaping all further impediments, reached the caravan party in safety.

He was warmly welcomed by his friends, who were making merry over cans of their beloved quass and vodka; and having attended carefully to the comforts of his charge, whom he covered up in his wagon, he joined his comrades, and remained with them, until they stole off to rest in their carts, the young peasant rolling himself up beneath the shelter of his own telga.

The next morning they were all astir; but it was some time before they were ready to begin their journey towards the south. The wounded man was able to sit up among the merchandise, with which the telga of the peasant was now loaded, the owner walking by its side; and as they passed the gates of the city, he had a joke for each of the guards, who after looking into each vehicle, allowed the caravan to pass on.

At a short distance, outside the gates of the city, they observed a concourse of people assembled, when the wounded man inquired the cause of the crowd. "It is only because a few people are going to be knouted," answered one of the drivers, taking it as a thing of course.

As they passed close to the place of execution, the wounded man observed one of the unfortunate culprits standing in a conspicuous situation, just about to receive punishment. He uttered an exclamation, and seemed as if he would rush forward to the rescue of the criminal; but his weakness reminded him of his incapability even to walk, as with a look of indignant regret, he sank back on his seat. The young peasant, observing the movement, leaped quickly into

the telga, urging on his horse at a faster speed.

“Hist, Sir! hist! Would you spoil all, by want of caution?” he said, “nothing can save the poor fellow, and I know he would rather die than bring you into danger. The knowledge that you are safe will fully repay him.”

The caravan had now proceeded on some way, clouds of dust obscuring the hateful scene from their eyes, and perchance, even among that servile band of drovers, many a breast might have heaved, indignant at the cruelty they had witnessed; for to their sorrow they knew, that the innocent too often suffered punishment, due alone to the guilty, yet none of them dared to utter their thoughts, even to their comrades. It was some time before the young peasant could resume his gaiety, as he returned to his post by the side of his telga; however, he at length began to talk and laugh as before, his light-hearted companions quickly dismissing all recollection of the scene they had witnessed.

Some versts further on, after charging his comrades not to mention his having been with them, and receiving their cordial farewell, he drove away rapidly along the bye road which there presented itself.

He was long remembered by that kind-hearted and simple race, in whose breasts enmity retains a slighter hold than gratitude and affection.

The caravan had proceeded for about the space of an hour, along the road, when an alarm was given, that a party of mounted police were galloping after them. The emissaries of justice were soon among the wagoners, calling loudly to them to stop, striking at them with their thick whips, and demanding a culprit, who had escaped their vigilance. Though the sturdy carters could easily have overpowered their brutal assailants, not one attempted to make any resistance; but the young peasant reaped the reward of his address and wit, in conciliating them, for they one and all denied any knowledge of the person described, nor could additional blows gain any further information from them. The police, after bestowing a few parting stripes, returned the way they came; many a muttered curse followed them, the honest carters rejoicing that their friend had escaped, and piously crossing themselves, offered up many a hearty prayer for his ultimate escape.

The peasant drove on, till he caught sight of the Gipsy encampment of our former friends, between whose tented walls he forthwith entered, and was received with a shout of congratulation by its swarthy inhabitants. The Zingani chief went forward to welcome the new-comers; a cry of pleasure escaping Azila, who timidly followed her father, as the wounded man was lifted from his conveyance; and he with the seeming peasant, throwing off their disguises, discovered to their assembled friends, Ivan and the young Gipsy Javis.

The chief warmly welcomed Ivan, and congratulated Javis on the successful commencement of his undertaking, to which Azila added her own thanks. Ivan was then conducted to the principal tent, where the old crone Hagar, took the wounded man again under her surgical care, and from the effects of her healing remedies, he soon experienced relief.

The chief took a seat by his side. “My daughter,” said he, “could not venture again into the city, to aid your escape as she wished, having as we have reason to know, been already suspected by the police of being concerned in the late conspiracy; and as you well know, suspicion is sufficient to condemn a person in this country, of a political crime.”

“I trust, my friend, to be soon able to relieve you from the danger you run in sheltering me,” said Ivan.

“Not until you are sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey, will we allow you to depart,” answered the Gipsy, “and then I have hopes, that by the talents and ingenuity of Javis, you will entirely escape from the power of your enemies.”

While this conversation was going forward, a man who had been sent out as a scout, hastened into the tent, to say that he had seen a party of the police, galloping on the high road towards the south, in the direction the caravan had taken which Javis had just left.

“Ah!” said the chief, “you have had a narrow escape, Sir, but I have my hopes that the police will lose their scent, and I trust that we are not yet suspected. We will, however, move our camp as quickly as possible towards the south, where we may be more secure from their interference.”

---

## **Volume One—Chapter Eighteen.**

We must now refer back for a short period, to the morning on which the Count Erintoff learned, from public rumour, that a dreadful murder had been committed, on some one who could not be recognised, owing to the mangled state of his features, and to the absence of any papers or valuables upon the body by which it could be known.

The Count congratulated himself that he had at length got rid of one, whom he most deeply hated; looking upon him as his rival in Azila’s love; and he now therefore anticipated an easy conquest of the beautiful Gipsy girl. He was however, not aware that she had been made fully acquainted, not only with his views towards herself, but with his intention of causing Ivan’s assassination.

It will be remembered that there were two Gipsy boys, whom Groff had kept in the palace for the purpose of enticing Azila thither; these lads were, by the Count’s orders, afterwards allowed to remain, in the hope of again attracting her there. None of their tribe, however, seemed to take any notice of them; the wounded boy remaining in bed, and the other who appeared to be dull and heavy was suffered to wander about the house, at will. The Count little thinking at the time, that he was an active, intelligent spy, whom Azila, profiting by the accident which had introduced them to the palace, had purposely left there to discover and report all the Count’s movements.

The Count being convinced of Ivan's death, when Groff presented himself to claim the wages of blood, gladly paid the money, and then bethought himself of some plan, to make the most advantageous use of the papers he had become possessed of. They clearly proved the existence of some conspiracy, but of what nature or extent he could not tell; and he began to consider whether or no, he had not better make further discoveries, before he communicated it to the government. He ordered Groff, therefore, to watch the neighbourhood of the place, to learn if others assembled there; an office the wretch was very unwilling to perform; a horror seizing him as he approached the spot, where he had committed the murder, and driving him away, so that he brought back word to his master that he had seen no one.

The Count's rage and disappointment was excessive, when on the morning of Ivan's return to Moscow, he heard, by chance, that it was suspected the Count Flatoff was the person murdered, and on making particular inquiries at Ivan's hotel, he was informed that on the night of the murder, he suddenly departed for the country. This, it will be remembered, was the very time when he was summoned to attend the death-bed of his mother, owing to which he escaped the fate intended for him.

He therefore stationed Groff to watch for his return, to bring him instant information, determining this time to glut his vengeance with his own hands. Groff had not long to wait before Ivan returned, when he hastened with the intelligence to his master.

The Count ordered him to arm himself with a sword, and to return to watch Ivan's movements, in case he should visit the place of meeting; then taking Kruntz with him, also well armed, he himself repaired to the neighbourhood. He then informed the chief officer of police, that he suspected some plot was on foot, desiring that some of the subordinates might accompany him, in case his suspicions proved correct. His plan was, to attack Ivan under the pretext of arresting him, and to kill him when he attempted to defend himself, as he had no doubt he would do. This purpose, he communicated to his two worthy followers, but it was fortunately overheard by the young Gipsy spy, who had concealed himself in the apartment, and as soon as the lad was able to make his escape, he communicated the information to Azila, who was waiting for him.

The Count's arrangements occupied some time, so that Ivan had left the place of meeting before the police had arrived, and the Count was but just in time to encounter him. His fury and disappointment were doubly increased at finding himself again foiled in his purpose; his only satisfaction being in the death of Groff, who was in possession of some rather dangerous secrets. How much greater was his rage, when on returning with the police, he found that his prey had escaped him altogether. He eagerly joined in the search, urging on the police to their work, but to no purpose, until baffled and enraged, he returned to his palace, resolving not to rest until he had discovered his rival, and obtained possession of Azila. In order to accomplish the first of these objects, he instituted inquiries in every direction, sending out spies with promises of rewards, if they should discover the traitor, he himself again joining in the search. On inquiring for the Gipsy boys, in order to ascertain where Azila was to be found, he learned that they had both escaped, no one could tell how or when. Of Azila, he could not hear anything, as she had not again appeared in the city.

At all points, he seemed doomed to be disappointed in his vile purposes, when early one day, he heard that a telga had been seen on the previous evening, coming from the direction of the place where the conspirators had held their meetings; and taking the hint, he repaired thither with some of the police. They went directly to the vault of the old man, who had been previously suspected. The wretched inmate was dragged from his abode, and on refusing to answer the questions put to him, which might betray his late guest, he was sentenced to receive the punishment of the knout. The sentence was carried into execution. The old man sunk under it; he died unknown, and unmourned.

The police, however, traced the telga to the place where Jarvis had passed the night, and finding that a caravan had set out that morning, some of their mounted comrades were sent in pursuit. As we have before stated, they arrived after Jarvis had driven away, and were again at fault, not knowing what course to pursue; for they were now persuaded that they had been led on a wrong scent.

Count Erintoff at length almost despaired of wreaking his vengeance on Ivan, until, in his inquiries for Azila, he learned that she had been implicated in the conspiracy, and it then occurred to him, that she might have been the companion of his flight. He learned also, that the very tribe of gipsies, to which he knew Azila belonged, had lately been in the neighbourhood of Moscow, though the police were not aware of the fact, and that they had moved towards the south soon after the conspiracy had been discovered. Connecting all these circumstances together, his hopes of gaining possession of Azila, and of punishing his enemy, were again raised. On his giving, therefore, the information he had gained to the police, a party of that force was ordered to attend him. He now felt certain that they could no longer escape; indulging his mind with the thoughts of vengeance, and the success of his passion. He easily traced the route the Gipsies had taken, following up each of their day's journeys, which he was enabled to accomplish in a much shorter time than they had done. With savage delight at his expected triumph, he caught sight of the tents of the Gipsy encampment; when ordering some of the police to watch well that none escaped, he with the rest, confiding in the power and terror of the legal authority they possessed, rushed into the centre of the encampment. The gipsies appeared to be completely taken by surprise, the women crowding together in alarm, and the men starting on their feet, and advancing to meet the intruders.

The chief came out of his tent, as if just aroused from sleep.

"On what account," he demanded, "is the quiet and order of my camp thus suddenly broken into by the police? Who is it you seek here?"

"The traitor Ivan Galetzoff, and a Gipsy female called Azila," said the Count; "and if they are not delivered into our hands, you shall suffer."

"Ah!" exclaimed the chief, starting and eyeing the Count narrowly, "I have no one here among my people, of that

name.”

“You refuse then to deliver up those we are in search of,” said the Count. “Examine the tents,” he exclaimed to his followers; who immediately commenced pulling them down, strewing the contents in all directions on the ground. The Gipsies looked on at the work of destruction with sullen indifference; neither interfering, or offering any resistance to prevent the injury committed; for the police wantonly cut the ropes of the tents, broke open the chests, turned the animals adrift, as they examined the vehicles; so that in a few minutes from the time they entered the encampment, where the quiet circle of tents then stood, there was now a scene of confusion and disorder. Yet it was of no effect, for their intended prisoners could no where be found.

“You have set at defiance the Emperor’s authority,” said the Count, addressing the Zingani chief, “and must take the consequences. I arrest you in the name of the Czar.”

“What, has the noble Count Erintoff turned police officer, as well as assassin?” exclaimed the chief. “I fear you not, Count. Either let me go free, or take the consequences. The murderer of the Count Flatoff is known,” he added, stepping closer up to him. “I well know your motives, Count; but will not interfere, while you attempt not to injure me or mine. I am your prisoner if you wish.”

The Count turned pale with rage and fear. He felt that he was entirely in the power of the bold Gipsy, should he not succeed in destroying him at once, and that he could not hope to do in the midst of his people, when no resistance was offered. The only alternative was to make him his friend, for he saw that terror was not likely to influence him. The Count, therefore, pretended to be satisfied that the people he sought were not among the Gipsies; hoping, by throwing them off their guard, to pounce upon them when unprepared, and intending to take the first opportunity of crushing: one who had a secret of such importance to him in his possession. He feared too, that the accusation would lead to further inquiries as to the means by which he became possessed of the papers, and how he gained his information of the conspiracy, for he knew there were already some causes of suspicion existing against him. Secretly vowing vengeance therefore, he ordered the police to remount, and accompany him in a further search he meditated making, being convinced that the fugitives were at no great distance.

The Gipsies saw their enemies depart, with bitter feelings of vengeance towards them, as they set about repairing the wanton damage they had sustained, while the latter rode on their way; the Count being resolved to accuse the Gipsy of having, like his daughter, given his assistance to the late conspiracy, hoping thus to crush him, without danger to himself, knowing that the first accusation has always the greatest weight. How he succeeded will be seen hereafter.

The Count did not gain the reward he expected for the discovery of the conspiracy; it being strongly suspected, that he would have kept it concealed completely, had he not been instigated by some motive advantageous to himself. Instead therefore of receiving some lucrative office, or of being raised to a higher dignity in rank, the Emperor fully appreciated his motives, and giving him the credit of believing that if it had been to his interest, he would have joined the conspiracy without scruple, appointed him to the command of a regiment in the army of the Caucasus, hoping thus to get rid of a troublesome and suspected subject. As the Count had a short time before reached the rank of Colonel; this order could not appear singular; and although he well understood the reasons of his appointment, he had no alternative but to obey.

The regiment which the Count Erintoff commanded, was one of those forming a brigade under the orders of the Baron Galetzoff, destined for the army of the Caucasus, now marching towards the south, to embark for the opposite coast. Levies had been raised in all directions, the recruits as soon as collected being marched off to the depots in the south, to join an army with which the Emperor had determined to overwhelm and crush his mountain opponents of Circassia; and no one exulted more in the prospect of carrying fire and sword into the country of his detested enemies, than the Baron Galetzoff, as he reviewed his well-equipped though mostly newly raised troops.

Under his standard were collected the short hardy natives of the north, Cossacks from the banks of the Don, and Volga; regiments of enslaved Poles, now fighting by the side of their conquerors; some few cavalry, whom the Russians called Circassians, but who were, in truth, men collected from the confines of the Caucasus; Georgians, Immeritians, Mingrelians; but not one who could boast of true Circassian descent.

With these troops was also the regiment to which Thaddeus Stanisloff was attached, he being obliged to leave Moscow ignorant of the fate of his friend; and many a long day passed, without his receiving any tidings of him. Absence did not however diminish his friendship, or his regret at their separation. Though under the orders of the Baron Galetzoff, it was long before he came in contact with him; he heard it reported, that there was no one so bitter against the defection of his supposed son, or more eager in endeavouring to apprehend him, vowing that he should be punished as a traitor and renegade, if he fell into his power.

---

## **Volume One—Chapter Nineteen.**

It was now the beautiful, balmy, and genial month of a Russian June, all nature rejoicing, clothed in one entire bright livery of green, fresh from the new bursting buds, yet unseared by the burning heats of summer, like the beautiful maiden just ripened into perfect womanhood, surrounded with a halo of freshness and purity, ere the blasts and scorching atmosphere of the cruel world have had time to obscure the one or sully the other.

A few days had been passed by Ivan in the Gipsy camp, with but slow progress; each day, however, contributing to his strength. At length he declared himself sufficiently recovered to undertake the more difficult and dangerous part of his journey on foot; so eagerly burning was he with the desire of reaching the place of his destination, to fulfil the vow he had taken at the death-bed of his mother.

Azila had been his constant attendant, enlivening him with her conversation, and soothing him with her attentions; but so completely were his thoughts occupied with the events which had occurred, and especially with those to which he was looking forward, that no other sentiment entered his heart. That lovely being, day by day, sat by his side, watching anxiously each look, listening eagerly to each word he uttered, yet he loved not. He felt sincere gratitude to her as the preserver of his life, he would have again risked his own to aid her; but no other feeling excited his bosom. And she—so proud, so indifferent as she had shewn herself to be, towards the Count Erintoff, could she give her love to one from whom she could scarce hope for a return. The hearts of women are uncertain, incomprehensible, inscrutable, and we will not venture to pronounce by what special agency Azila's was influenced.

Ivan was much indebted to old Hagar for his rapid recovery, though it was some time before she would give her consent to his eager wish to quit her care.

On the last day's journey, as he was riding among the Gipsies, dressed in the costume of the rest of the party, the chief unfolded the plan he had formed to enable him to make his further escape from the empire.

"At this time of the year," said the Zingani chief, "thousands of pilgrims flock from all parts of the empire, to what they superstitiously call their holy city of Chioff, and I propose that you should first repair thither with Jarvis, who is intimately acquainted with every part of the country, as your guide, both of you disguised as peasants performing the pilgrimage, for which I have provided every thing necessary. Should you, by any chance, be again followed, among the vast crowds who are now assembling at Chioff, you will find more facilities for preventing all clue of your route being discovered. After you have passed through the city, you and your guide may assume the character of pilgrims, returning from thence, towards their habitations on the confines of the country. I have sent forward a messenger to some friends of our people, who are now near the place where you will find the least danger in crossing the frontiers into Moldavia, to which Jarvis will lead you; and our people there, will afford you assistance should you require it. I must now ride forward to select a spot for our encampment; I wish to keep as much as possible concealed from all passers by, for we know not who may prove an enemy among them." Saying which, the Gipsy chief rode on.

We must observe that the Zingani party had been travelling as much as practicable across the country, keeping all the bye roads and lanes, and avoiding all communications with the villages, near which they were at times obliged to pass.

As they journeyed on, Ivan rode up to the side of Azila, for the maiden seemed sad and dispirited. After some other conversation—

"You go, Sir," said she, "amid scenes of excitement and of wild strife, where all your thoughts and hopes are centered, and where you will soon forget those you leave behind, those who would have died to serve you; but believe me, there is one who will never forget your aid, nor your bravery in her defence; who—"

"Neither can I ever forget one to whom I owe my life and liberty," he exclaimed; "nay, much more: who will have enabled me to fulfil, I hope, a deep sworn vow, the accomplishment of which I have so rashly hazarded."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the return of the Zingani chief, who rode to Ivan's side.

Early the following day, Ivan and his guide sallied from a tent, so completely changed in appearance, that no one could possibly have recognised in the two old peasants, they now seemed to be, the dark featured, handsome young men they really were. Their very skin had been tinged of a reddish hue, with wrinkles on their brows and cheeks; while red shaggy locks sprinkled with white, covered their own dark hair, and long full beards of the same colour fell over their breasts to the waist, large low hats still more concealing their countenances. They wore long dark coloured gowns, and sheep-skin coats: rough boots of untanned leather protected their feet, and by their side hung wallets to contain their food. In their hands they bore thick sticks, ostensibly to support their tottering steps, but really to serve as a means of defence, in case of necessity.

Thus equipped, when ready to depart, the Zingani chief embraced them both, bestowing on them the peculiar blessings of his people, and charging Jarvis with many injunctions for the guidance of his conduct on their journey. The whole tribe assembled to bid them farewell, the old crone Hagar calling down curses on all who should impede them in their progress, and blessings on the heads of all who favoured them.

Azila alone was no where to be seen; and feelings which Ivan could scarcely acknowledge, even to himself, prevented him from asking for her, till the last moment. The chief, on missing Azila, sent in all directions to discover her, his alarm becoming considerable when she was not to be found. The travellers delayed their departure, in the hopes of gaining intelligence of her before they went; for fears began to be entertained, that by some means or other she had been entrapped either by the Count Erintoff or by the police, who might have feared to seize her by open force, among so large a band of defenders.

While the whole camp was thus thrown into a state of alarm, one of the scouts, who were at all times kept on the watch, to give timely notice in case they might be pursued, came running hastily among them, to say that he had descried, at a distance, a party whom he took to be police, riding rapidly towards the camp. Without a moment's delay, Jarvis seized Ivan's hand, hurrying him away at perhaps a faster rate, than their apparent age would have warranted; but they were only just in time to escape, for before they lost sight of the encampment, they perceived the police ride into it. The delay which there occurred, as we have already seen, enabled them to make good their distance, though they were in momentary expectation of being pursued: no signs, however, of their enemies appearing, they continued their journey at a more moderate speed.

On the second day, as they were about to repose by the road-side, the heat of the sun becoming oppressive, they heard the clattering of horses' hoofs behind them, and perceived, on turning their heads, a party of the police galloping along the road, before they had time to attempt concealing themselves. Jarvis, however, with perfect presence of mind, begged Ivan to imitate his style of walking, when the police coming up, merely cast a glance at



them, and rode on; but the travellers saw them stop at a short distance ahead, to interrogate a young peasant lad, whom they had just before observed. The lad appeared in no way disconcerted, pointing in answer to their questions, to a road across the country, which they followed at the same rapid speed.

Quickening their own pace, they soon overtook the boy, who saluted them as they passed, in respect for their seeming age. They did not think it prudent to rest, until the evening was far advanced, when Javis led Ivan to a hut, with the inhabitants of which he exchanged a few words, and was instantly admitted.

It is not necessary to give here a detail of each day's journey, their adventures possessing but little interest, merely observing, that on some nights they rested in the cottages of the peasants, and at other times they found shelter beneath the shade of the thick leaved trees, or reposed during the heat of the day, and travelled at night while the moon shone brightly. Several times, Ivan felt almost confident, that he had caught sight of the same peasant lad they had passed on their second day's journey, who seemed to be dogging their steps; but Javis declared that he had not seen him, so that he concluded he must have again been mistaken. Ivan had now perfectly recovered not only his strength, but his spirits, for trusting that his hopes might be realised of reaching the land of his birth, where all his thoughts and aspirations centered, he felt that nothing could press him down, or prevent him from accomplishing his much desired object.

One day, towards the evening, a violent storm overtook them, obliging them to stop at a wretched hostelry on the road-side, the only house of public entertainment to be found for a considerable distance. The fierceness of the tempest made it impossible for them to proceed; in spite therefore, of the slight danger they perhaps ran in entering a house where a spy might already be, they agreed to remain there, till a clear sky should again allow them to prosecute their journey.

While they were seated at the wretched repast the house was able alone to afford, in an apartment serving the purpose of kitchen and receiving room for the guests, for whose accommodation tables and benches were placed at one end of it, a boy entered, who started at seeing them, turning back as if he would retreat, when Ivan recognised in him the lad whom he had suspected of following their steps. He entered the house, throwing himself on a bench near the fire, and while he endeavoured to dry his wet garments, he seemed lost in a reverie, gazing at the burning embers on the hearth, speaking to no one, nor turning his head to look at the other guests.

Ivan at length taking compassion on the youth's disconsolate manner, forgetful of his suspicions about him, in his assumed character of an old man, approached to invite him to share their humble fare.

The boy started as Ivan spoke, a blush mantling on his cheek, and he hesitated to accept the proffered offer, till Javis came to add his persuasions. At length, he yielded and took his seat at their table, when Ivan asked him, if he had not before seen him on the road. The boy acknowledged that they had passed him.

"Are you then going to Chioff, boy, to worship at the shrines of the holy saints?" asked Ivan.

"Yes, I go thither for that purpose," answered the boy.

"You are but a youthful pilgrim to attempt so long a journey alone and unprotected," said Ivan. "It surprises me that your parents put you not under the care of older people travelling the same road, who might have guarded your youth from the dangers your inexperience may lead you into. Had you no friends from your neighbourhood, making the pilgrimage?"

"Alas, I have no parents who are able to protect me, and few friends who love me; but for protection I need it not, I can protect myself."

"Do not say that you have no friends, boy," interrupted Javis, "when perchance, there are some, who most likely, would be ready to shield you from the slightest harm."

The boy answered not, but hung down his head, nor did he venture to look towards Ivan, while he was speaking.

Ivan, in compassion for the boy's timidity, spoke to him a few kind words of encouragement, when Javis addressed him. "You are travelling the same road we go, boy, and may, perchance, require protection. You shall, if you wish, accompany us, and you shall have all that two old men can bestow. Will you accept our offer?"

The boy again seemed to hesitate, until Ivan pressed him to accept their protection, when he gladly assented. "You seem, poor boy, weighed down by some secret sorrow; tell it to us, that we may, if possible, afford you all the consolation in our power."

"Not for worlds," answered the boy, sadly; "it would but increase my sorrow to name it, nor would you have power to heal it."

"But tell me, boy," said Ivan, "by what name shall we call you?"

The boy hesitated for a moment, before he spoke. "They call me, Conrin, Sir."

"Forsooth, boy, the name is a pretty one," said Ivan, "and Conrin will we call you. You seem fatigued and weary; and now that you have satisfied your hunger, lie down and rest, for you have yet many a weary mile to travel, ere you can reach the shrines of the holy saints."

The boy indeed seemed unwilling to enter into conversation, listening however with earnest attention to the words which fell from the seeming old men's lips, and as they ceased speaking, he retired to a corner of the room, where throwing himself on a bench, and wrapping his cloak close around him, he placed his head on a bundle he carried, and composed himself to sleep. The poor boy was evidently weary, and unaccustomed to the fatigues he had

undergone on his journey, and though dressed as a common peasant, there was much greater neatness and care displayed than usual, the cloak also being a luxury few of his class possessed.

The storm continued raging furiously as before, and as there were no beds in the house, nor any thing like such a comfort, the two travellers were fain to repose as best they might, on the hard benches placed against the wall.

On the next morning by break of day, their new companion was already on foot, prepared to start, when the storm having passed away, the whole party set forward on their journey. They had not proceeded many miles, when Jarvis informed his companions, that there was a cottage in the neighbourhood, from whence he could procure a conveyance to carry them on at a faster rate; and begging them to rest for a while, he went in search of it, and soon returned, driving a small vehicle capable of containing all the three. In this carriage they travelled till the end of the next day, when Jarvis again found a fresh horse, so that by thus frequently changing both horse and carriage, in a few days they reached the neighbourhood of their destination.

A distance now remained, which would take them two days to perform on foot, it being necessary to travel thus in their assumed characters of pilgrims, for already had they overtaken large crowds, all hastening to the same destination.

The pilgrims travelled in bands of one or two hundred, of both sexes, and of all ages; the hoary headed grandsire and the athletic youth, aged women and laughing maidens, the old supporting their weary limbs on their staves, while by their side ran young children of all ages. The troop headed by a white bearded monk, leaning on a long staff, clothed in sackcloth and bare-footed, chaunting forth songs of encouragement to the weary, and praise to heaven.

Thousands were at that moment on their way, to visit the catacombs of Chioff, from every part of the immense Empire of Russia; from the bleak and freezing Kamstchatka, from the vast and far distant regions of Siberia, from the confines of Tartary, and from the scattered provinces of the south; performing with unabated perseverance the whole distance on foot, seldom sleeping under a roof, and living on the precarious charity of the miserable peasants on their road. Our friends therefore joined one of the numerous companies, uninvited, yet cheerfully welcomed.

All day the band travelled on, assembling at night in a grove of a few lofty wide-spreading trees near the road-side, through which the pale moon shone brightly on the heads of the numerous groups, here and there seen amid the darker shades. A fire was lighted to cook their scanty meal, after partaking of which, they assembled reverentially round an aged monk; who arose, commencing a slow and solemn chaunt, in which by degrees, the whole concourse joined. Far off, amid the silence of the night, were heard the hymns of adoration of those simple people, and for many hours of the night, did those songs of praise continue, ere throwing themselves on the bare ground, their bed, the heavens their only covering, they composed themselves to sleep.

The boy found shelter close to the trees, amid some groups, apparently of about his own age, the bright moonbeams streaming like rays of glory on the youthful heads of the sleeping pilgrims.

The road they had been hitherto travelling, had led over the flat and uninteresting steppe. The country, however, as they approached Chioff or Kiov, as it is also called, now became slightly undulating; but it was not until towards the evening, that they came in sight of the Holy City.

As that unique and strikingly beautiful city first struck their view, standing in a commanding position, on a hill, the golden cupolas and domes, with which it is crowned, reflecting the rays of the sun with dazzling brightness, the pilgrims simultaneously raised a hymn of joy and praise. Every one of the vast crowd kneeling down, devoutly crossed himself, rending the air with songs of thanksgiving. After some minutes spent in prayer, again they all arose, and headed by the reverend monk, they descended the hill, to cross by a bridge the river Dnieper, whose waters wash the walls of the city. Some, in eager haste, without stopping to rest their weary limbs, rushed towards the Cathedral of the Ascension, or the Church of the Catacombs, which stands a little removed from the city on the banks of the Dnieper. Others, among whom were Ivan and his companions, sought rest and food, ere on the next morning, they should commence paying their adorations at the numerous shrines, they had vowed to visit. So well had Ivan and Jarvis sustained their characters, that not one of the credulous people, among whom they had freely mixed, suspected that they were otherwise than as what they appeared.

Next morning Ivan and his companions set forward, to go through the usual routine of visiting the shrines. It is said, that in some years, more than fifty thousand pilgrims have visited the catacombs, and even now the whole city was filled with them, many too encamping outside on the unsheltered ground, thinking to gain more credit with heaven, by thus enduring greater hardship on earth. By early dawn, the whole of that vast concourse of strangers were on foot, hastening to the different places of worship.

The Church of the Catacombs is adorned with seven golden domes, and seven golden spires, which are connected with gilt chains, now glittering with the first bright rays of the rising sun, seeming to shed a blaze of glory over the holy edifice, as the orisons of the morning worshippers rose towards heaven. Upwards of five hundred feet above the river, rises the dome of the belfry, adorned with Ionic columns and Corinthian pilasters, to which all Russians accord the greatest admiration and praise.

As the doors of the church were thrown open, the eager pilgrims rushed in to throw themselves before the shrines of their favourite saints, whose pictures hung over their altars; though the least devout among them would have been scandalised had an image or figure stood there instead.

As the first deep and solemn tones of the sacred harmony in the service rose towards heaven, Ivan and his companions entered the cathedral, and following the example of the multitude, knelt before one of the altars; but there was an almost imperceptible curl of contempt on the lip of Jarvis as they did so, even the boy seemed scarcely so devout as the long pilgrimage he had undertaken would have led one to suppose he should be.

When the service was concluded, the pilgrims bought tapers at the porch of the church, and forming a procession in a long line, descended a wooden stair-case of many steps to the mouth of the catacombs, down each side of which were arranged an uninterrupted line of kneeling devotees, of the most wretched appearance. The procession halted, as the first part reached the entrance of the excavated passages of the catacombs, the priest preceding them; they then slowly and reverently entered the subterraneous vaults, the roof blackened with the smoke of thousands, and tens of thousands of the candles of the faithful, which had burnt there on previous years.

On each side, in niches in the walls, were placed in open coffins, the bodies of those, who dying in the odour of sanctity, have been canonised for their pious acts and thoughts. There unburied they remain, enveloped in wrappers of cloth, and silk, highly ornamented with gold and silver embroidery, that their fellow mortals who come to them for intercession, seeing their honours after death, may study to imitate them in the purity of their lives; while their spirits, having ascended into heaven, are devoutly believed to exercise an influence with the Father and Son. Their names are written on their breasts, and many have also a history of their virtuous actions, while their stiffened hands placed before them in the attitude of prayer, receive the kisses of the pilgrims, though few perchance could decypher even the names of those they worshipped.

Further on, they reached a passage in which was a range of small windows, where men had, with their own hands, built themselves in with stones against the wall, leaving open only a small hole to receive their food; dying with the insane thought, that they were doing their Maker a good service. Before each of the windows of those fanatics' last dwelling, now their tomb, knelt some bigoted and devoted worshipper, firmly believing that their self-immolation and unnatural death, had purchased for them everlasting life, and place, and power, among the spirits of the blessed.

Though it may seem incredible, yet so it was, that perchance not even one of that vast crowd had any just or clear notions of the tenets of the very religion they professed; for so ignorant are the Russian peasants, that the most absurd and superstitious legends find fall credit in their minds. Of the attributes of the Supreme Being, the majority have but the slightest conception, regarding him in the light of one inferior to their Emperor, and neither respecting nor fearing him so much. So completely does the despotic influence of the Czar extend over the greater mass of the people, that they have been taught to look upon him as one sent with divine authority, to rule over their lives and property, against whom it would be the most dreadful impiety to rebel; and for this end has their religion, and every feeling, and sentiment of their minds, been made subservient. Yet these are the people, whose rulers profess to extend the benign light of Christianity, and the blessings of civilisation, among the nations of the East!

Leaving the church, as they walked through the crowds, Javis adroitly made inquiries among the peasant pilgrims, as to when a party was likely to start for the west confines of the Empire and gladly found that a band was about to return towards the frontier of Bessarabia the very next morning. With his usual tact and cleverness, he soon discovered where the party was lodging, introducing himself among the peasants, and gaining their good will. They therefore gladly received him and his friends among their company.

The rest of the day was of necessity spent, in their character of pilgrims, in visiting the churches and most interesting sights of that gorgeous city, though gladly did they prepare to accompany the party of self-satisfied pilgrims, who were returning the same way they wished to pursue.

---

### **End of Volume One.**

---

## **Volume Two—Chapter One.**

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," answered 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 Jarvis entered, and the boy instantly referred his cause to him. Jarvis, 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 Jarvis 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, Jarvis 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, Jarvis recognised one of his own race. A few words from Jarvis, 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 Jarvis 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. Jarvis, 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, Jarvis 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 encampment. The chief came forward to meet them, and as soon as he had heard their story from Jarvis, 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 recognise 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.

(See Note)

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 Jarvis 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 sendee of a page?" asked Ivan.

"I lived with those who gained their livelihood by it; but I could never sing for pay; my 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 decrepit 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 brutalised, 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 demoralised.

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 Jarvis 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 sheepskin caps, jackets of undyed brown wool, white cloth trousers, 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 Haemus 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.

---

Note. The above lines have been set to music by Miss L. Kingston, and published by D'Almaine and Co.

---

## **Volume Two—Chapter Two.**

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 suspended 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 caravanserai, 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 immediately. 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 excitement. 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 thralldom. Conrin wished, also, to adopt the same style of dress, to which his master willingly needed: 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 sendee; 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 meditate 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 Conrin 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 recognise him, than he rushed forward with outstretched arms to embrace him.

"Ah, my son," he cried, "I now recognise in you a true scion of the noble race of the *Attèghèi*; (the name the Circassians call themselves) 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, 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.

---

### **Volume Two—Chapter Three.**

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 civilised 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 daylight, 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 daylight 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 lookout 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 probably be soon recognised, 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 manoeuvre 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, broadside 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? Jarvis 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 Jarvis, 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 intermission, the shots every instant falling closer to the mark, till one went through the Turk's after-sail, and another followed, striking his deck, ploughing up the wood, and throwing the splinters on every side, ere it bounded overboard. A few more fell harmlessly; but they were now approaching frightfully near the Russian, and they could scarcely hope to escape more of his shots. Another of these missiles came on board tearing away part of the bulwarks, 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, seizing 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 (fate) to die; that will come in Allah's 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 lookout was kept from the mast-head for another enemy, or to discover the coast, which they knew they must be now nearing.

---

## Volume Two—Chapter Four.

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 outwork 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 civilised 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 fertilise 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, Alexandrof, 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 civilised 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, distinguish 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 Karbadia, while the Turks and Russians call them without distinction, Abasians.

There are four classes of society among them, the first, that of the Pchees 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, etc. 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 decking 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 civilised 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 abstemious 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 civilised 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 stigmatise as untameable barbarians, whom it will be a benefit to the human race to sweep from the face of the earth.

---

## **Volume Two—Chapter Five.**

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 glittering 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 (the name the Circassians give to the Russians) 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. 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 sheepskin 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 happiness 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 savoury 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 to-morrow'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.”

---

## Volume Two—Chapter Six.

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 Moscow?”

“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 adjourned 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 Attèghèi 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 pathway 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 Attèghèi.



"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.

---

## Volume Two—Chapter Seven.

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 bason, from which it meandered through the small plain of the plateau, fertilising 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 carnation lips were slightly parted, disclosing her pearly teeth. Her features were perfectly regular; 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 whoever 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 apartment."

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 door-sill, 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 untinged 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 chieftain, "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 Gherrei; 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. To-morrow 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 gambolled 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.

---

## Volume Two—Chapter Eight.

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 overhanging 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.

---

## Volume Two—Chapter Nine.

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 bason, 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 onslaughts. 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 bason 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, 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, Besin 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."

## Volume Two—Chapter Ten.

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 store-houses 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 unrevenged; 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 ought 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.

---

## **Volume Two—Chapter Eleven.**

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 bringing 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, of ten 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, scimitars 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 daughter, whose bright smile every now and then offered rich reward for any superior display of dexterity or courage.

They were now approaching the neighbourhood 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. (A well-known fact. The Arab horses constantly fight in this way, with or without riders.)

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 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 Ghelendjik.

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 carcasses 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!”

“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.

---

## **Volume Two—Chapter Twelve.**

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 Jarvis 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 scrutinising 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, unsuspecting 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.

---

## **Volume Two—Chapter Thirteen.**

The rage and fury of the Baron Galetzoff was ungovernable when, instead of his troops returning with a number of prisoners, the Tchernemorskoi 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 Kim, 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, Jarvis, 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 chiefs 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, Jarvis 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 password given, and the Armenian, who addressed a few words to the guard in Russian, was instantly allowed to proceed.

Remaining cautiously concealed, Jarvis waited till he again saw the spy pass from the fort, and heard the officer on guard give him the password for the following night—"The Eagle of Russia"—when the man set off rapidly towards the interior. Dodging his steps, Jarvis traced him to the house he had left.

Outside the house of the chief, Jarvis 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 Jarvis, "by which you can communicate with Lieutenant Stanisloff, without danger either to him or to yourself. I heard the password 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 Jarvis, "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, Jarvis and his guide, were also summoned into their presence. Jarvis 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?" tremblingly 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.

---

## Volume Two—Chapter Fourteen.

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 Thaddeus.

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 Delhi 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 bystanders 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, unsuspecting 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. Remember 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 barbarians 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 surprise him."

---

## **Volume Two—Chapter Fifteen.**

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 recognised 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 conqueror. 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 credibility 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 reinforcements 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 to-morrow'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 agonised 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.

---

## **Volume Two—Chapter Sixteen.**

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 every thing 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, Uzden?"

"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 fasten 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 Attèghèi."

"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 Jarvis loves you, and would protect you with his own life, till you grow strong enough to protect yourself."

"Jarvis 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, Jarvis 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 where 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.”

Two pages missing from the scan

“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 Delhi 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.”

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 strewed 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.

---

## Volume Two—Chapter Seventeen.

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 Moscov 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 thralldom 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 Attèghèi; 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 circumstances, 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 Attèghèi 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.

---

## End of Volume Two.

---

### Volume Three—Chapter One.

A romantic and chivalrous scene was presented to the eye, as a cavalcade of warriors wound their way along the richly clad mountains of Ghelendjik.

The fresh dews of the night still moistened the green herbage; the crystal drops sprinkling the grass, shone in the early sun-beams like the precious diamonds of Golconda; while the air which played round their heads, came laden with the fragrance of the mountain herbs and sweet scented flowers. The pure and elastic atmosphere seemed to sparkle with life and light: all nature, rejoicing in the bright new-born day, breathed an air of contentment and happiness; how sadly belied by the scenes of devastation and misery the country was doomed to suffer!

The chiefs were clad in rich and polished armour; their spear-points and swords glittering in the sun-beams, and their gay banners fluttering in the breeze. At their head, on his noble black charger, rode Arslan Gherrei and the gallant Hadji Guz Beg, followed by many chiefs of note and consequence. In the centre came Ina, more fresh and lovely than the bright morn itself, followed by her damsels, and tended with the utmost care; on one side, by her brother Selem, who guided her palfrey over the uneven ground, while Thaddeus guarded her on the other, as she listened earnestly to the description of his own loved land, comparing it to the one in which he now was destined to live. Every now and then she would turn her eyes from her brother, stealing a glance at him, which was as quickly withdrawn.

Young Alp Beg, and other gallant youths, dressed in their gayest attire, on high mettled steeds, curvetted in every direction, in hopes of catching a glance from her bright eyes, or of hearing the sweet tones of her voice. Close to them followed the young page Conrin, and, though rejoicing in his master's happiness, every now and then a deep shade of melancholy would steal across his features; nor would he, on these occasions, listen to the words of consolation which Javis vainly endeavoured to offer. The squires of the knights, their pages, and other attendants followed, bringing up the cortège.

As they rode on, they were shrouded by the thick autumnal-tinted foliage of the lofty trees; and the mountain's side, covered with flowering heaths, when trampled on by their horses' hoofs, gave out a sweet odour. In the vale below, flowed a blue sparkling stream, between rich pastures, bounded by sloping banks; while on the opposite side, rose jagged and fantastic cliffs, and in the extreme distance, a sea of azure-tinted and swelling hills.

Messengers had arrived on the previous evening from the warriors already encamped on the banks of the Ubin, a rapid stream falling into the Kouban; summoning the chiefs from all parts of Circassia to meet them there without delay. Some grand object was in contemplation, either to attack the Russians before they should retire into their winter quarters, or to prevent them in their turn from making any inroad among their own mountain-homes. The Hadji was all fire and eagerness to set forward, in the hopes of some engagement taking place; in which, under his guidance, his darling son might gain victorious laurels, he looked on the storming of the fort as an action of no note to try his mettle. Arslan Gherrei had also determined to proceed onward to the same destination, leaving Ina—who was now fully able to undertake the journey—with the family of a noble kinsman, the Chief of the Demorghoi, the venerable Prince Aitek Tcherei.

Their host, Shamiz Bey, with most of the warlike inhabitants of the neighbourhood, was compelled to remain to guard that part of the country threatened by the garrison of Ghelendjik, it being considered a point of honour for every district to protect itself against the foe, except from an overwhelming force.

A large body of horsemen were, however, collected, many chiefs having come to greet the renowned Hadji on his return from his pilgrimage, to congratulate Arslan Gherrei on the recovery of his long lost son, and to welcome Selem to his native land.

Their journey was like a triumphant procession. From every hamlet through which they passed, the inhabitants rushed out to congratulate the warriors on their victory; the fame of their exploit having already preceded them. The villagers made their admiring comments, not less on the dignified and noble Arslan Gherrei and his son, than on his lovely daughter; and the stranger Pole was hailed as another champion added to their country's cause. The minstrels struck their harps to strains of triumph, joined by the voices of the maidens. The wild youths, galloping on before, fired off salvos from their rifles, which were answered by others from the hamlets discharging theirs in return, as they threw themselves on their ready-saddled steeds, and flew to join the festive cortège. The green banks, sloping down from the villages, were covered with old men, women, and children, joining their voices to the general shout which welcomed the party, wherever they appeared. The Hadji's name sounding above all.

Sometimes the cavalcade would halt to salute some aged chieftain, unable longer to join in the hardships of war, who had caused himself to be carried out to meet them, and to hear from their own mouths, an account of their late exploit. The eye of the now decrepit warrior would kindle, and his cheek burn with enthusiasm, as he listened to the tale; or his voice would tremble, and a tear of regret roll down his furrowed cheek, that he was no longer capable of participating in the glories and dangers of war. So often had they to stop, and so many questions had they to answer, that it was late in the day before they could reach their resting-place for the night; and happy was the chief, whom they had chosen as their Tocav, to receive such distinguished guests.

Their route on the next day's journey, lay along the base of the far-extended line of the black mountains; when towering high above his brethren, appeared the lofty Elborous, dark, rugged, and precipitous. The cavalcade traversed a savage glen, overhung by beetling cliffs, seeming ready to fall on their heads. The light was subdued and

gloomy; and the air was moist and heavy from the water which trickled down over the moss-covered rocks. An oppressive feeling overcame all the party—a foreboding of coming evil. Dangers in unknown shapes seemed to threaten them. Even the Hadji's joyful tone was quelled; a chill fell on his spirits. He cast a fond and anxious glance at his son Alp, as, for a moment, the dangers to which he was about to expose him, crossed his mind.

"Why are you so silent, my sister?" said Selem, as he rode by Ina's side; "why does that shade of sadness steal over a face, but now so bright with smiles?"

"I scarce know, Selem, why I am sad," returned the fair girl; "but I thought of the dangers our noble father is constantly exposed to; that you, my newly found brother, may again be torn from me; that you must live a life of constant hardship and warfare. I thought of the miseries of our country—our homes and fields burned, our fathers and brothers slain, and that Allah should have created men wicked enough to do these things. Tell me, my brother, why do the Urus attack our country? why do they try to possess themselves of our humble cots and rocky mountains, when they have abundance of land covered with mighty cities?"

"The lust of power, of conquest, such as you can have no conception of," replied Selem. "They care little to possess our mountain-homes, and nothing for the noble hearts, whose blood they spill. What, to their deaf ears, are the cries of the orphan, the moans of the bereaved widow? There are rich and fair lands beyond our's, in which they would set their grasp, could they reach them, to add to their already vast territories, peopled by slaves. But they fear to advance, leaving behind them one spot of unconquered ground, such as our own land, lest we might impede them on their return home, laden with booty. We are like a castle in a plain, overrun with marauders, which, as long as provisions last, may withstand a host of such foes; so shall we, as long as true and brave hearts beat in Circassia. But now, Ina, banish such sad thoughts; see, we have gained a bright and joyous scene."

As Selem spoke, they emerged from the dark ravine, into a broad and extensive valley; so broad, indeed, as almost to be called a plain. It was surrounded by mountains, rising gradually in slopes or bosomy swells, to form the sides of the vast amphitheatre. Green pastures and corn fields, interspersed with clumps of fine trees, enriched its surface, which was further adorned by cottages, surrounded by orchards, farm-yards, paddocks, and granaries.

"See, Ina," exclaimed her brother, enthusiastically; "let not your spirits sink with forebodings, for we have passed in safety through that savage glen: and now what a lovely scene has opened to our view! So may it be with our country. We yet may see bright and glorious days shine on Circassia, when freed from the dark wing of the Russian eagle."

The country through which they were passing, had the appearance of a magnificent park, or the estate of some rich noble of Frangistan; the fields were separated by high well clipped hedge-rows, and irrigated by canals filled from a stream, meandering through the centre. The hill sides were covered with flocks of sheep; and fine cattle fed in the fertile pastures.

Leaving the valley, the cavalcade mounted the sides of one of the hills, by which it is entirely encompassed, traversing the summit of a narrow ridge, looking down on each side into a deep ravine. Wherever the eye could reach, appeared a country impracticable to any foes, when guarded by even a handful of brave inhabitants.

The cavalcade did not keep in the same order as described in the commencement of the journey; sometimes, the chieftain Arslan Gherrei would ride to his daughter's side, and address words of affection and encouragement to her; then he would enter into converse with his son, on subjects of deep interest and importance. But there was one who never left Ina's side. Each moment that Thaddeus passed in her company, he became more and more enchained, without being conscious of it.

As the mighty Elborous appeared in view, with numerous other wild and rugged mountains at its base, "Know you," said the Hadji to Selem, "that the brother of that traitor Besin Kaloret Khan has his dwelling among yonder rugged mountains, though they prove not so wild and barren, as at this distance they appear? He is rich in flocks, herds and noble horses, and many fierce followers are at his beck. I think he will prove a dire foe to you and your's, if he discovers that his traitor brother fell by your hand; or worse still, by that of your youthful page. But, Mashallah! fear him not. He knows himself in the wrong, and will dread to take vengeance."

Ina turned pale, as she heard this account. "Does, indeed, that dreadful Khan dwell so near us?" said she. "I always feared to look on him: he seems so fierce, so cruel, so unlike our father or you. Oh, avoid him, for his presence can bring nothing but harm."

"Fear him not, fear him not, maiden," exclaimed the Hadji. "What harm can he do? His followers cannot compete with us. Till he washes out the stain of his brother's dishonour in the blood of our foes, he cannot again appear in the company of the chiefs of Abasia."

"I fear not for myself," answered Ina; "but I fear him for the evil he may work to my father and brother: I know that to meet him in open fight they would have nought to dread; but he is subtle as well as fierce, and may seek secret means to injure them."

"Do not let such thoughts alarm you for our father or for me, dear Ina," said her brother. "The Khan could not harm us, if he wished."

"Mashallah! if he were as cunning as the fox," exclaimed the Hadji, "we would rout him out of his den, should he attempt any revenge for that young traitor's just punishment."

The travellers were now approaching the residence of the venerable Prince Aitek Tcherei, the kinsman of Arslan Gherrei, with whom Ina was to remain during his and her brother's absence. The whole party, also, were invited to sojourn there that day, ere they proceeded to the camp of the allied princes and chiefs on the Ubin.

The party were descending a hill bounding another beautiful and romantic vale, on the side of which stood the residence of the aged chief, and had just arrived in sight of a grove of lofty trees surrounding the house, when being perceived from the watch-tower in the neighbourhood, a band of gaily caparisoned youths on horseback, galloped out to meet the chiefs, uttering loud shouts of welcome, and firing off their rifles and pistols as they came on at full speed. Halting at the moment they arrived abreast of the leaders of the party, they respectfully saluted them, exchanging greetings with their younger friends as they passed, and then joined the rear of the cortège.

Along avenue of fine trees led up to the gate of the house, where the aged Prince, clothed in a long robe and turban, (the garb of peace), was standing to receive them, attended by his squire, armed more for state than protection, and by his dependants and household serfs, who hastened to take the horses of the chieftains, as they dismounted.

Folding Arslan Gherrei in his arms, "My noble kinsman," he said, "welcome are you to my home, for gladly do my old eyes once more look on you; and how did my heart beat with joy when I heard that you had recovered your long lost son. Allah is great, who has shielded him from so many perils in the land of the Giaour, to restore him once more to your bosom. Is yonder noble youth he? Worthy he seems to be a Circassian chief. Let me embrace him," he added, as Selem, dismounting from his horse, advanced towards the old man.

"Come hither, my son, and let your father's oldest friend embrace you. Ah! I see in his eye and bearing that he is worthy of you, Uzden. And your other child? your daughter? Come hither, Ina; let my old eyes gaze on thee, too. My own Zara will rejoice to see you. Go to her, Ina; she longs to embrace you, but she fears to quit her anderoon before so many strangers. Ah! my gallant friend, Hadji Guz Beg! rejoiced am I to see the Lion of the Attèghèi returned from his pilgrimage, to spread terror among the hearts of the Urus. And you, Achmet Beg, and you, Alp, who will one day be a hero like your father; and you, chieftains, welcome all."

Thus he addressed them, as each chief advanced to pay his respects to the old man. "My heart," exclaimed he, "has not beat so joyfully since the cursed Urus slew the last prop of my age, my only son. Chieftains, I have ordered a banquet to be prepared to do honour to your coming, and it will soon be the hour for feasting."

Saying which, the venerable noble led the way to a grove of lofty trees in the neighbourhood of the house, under which a fresh green arbour had been erected by his retainers, forming a grateful shade from the yet burning rays of the sun. Divans and carpets had been spread under the leafy bower, the front of which opened on a gentle slope, falling to, a green plot of turf, surrounded by groups of trees. Thither the chiefs were ushered, and when all were seated, according to their rank, their venerable host took his place among them.

Many of the neighbouring nobles had assembled to do honour to the guests of their chief, their numerous attendants forming groups with the villagers and retainers of the host collected before the arbour. The Delhi Khans, or young men, amusing themselves in the mean time, in various athletic sports.

Troops of servants soon appeared hastening to the arbour, bearing tables laden with various dishes of richly dressed meats and fruits, which might well vie in taste with the sumptuous fare of less primitive countries. Bowls of mead and boza were handed round to the guests; for even those professing the Mahomedan faith did not hesitate to drink of the former delicious beverage, nor were spirits and wine wanting, to add to the conviviality of those whose scruples did not prevent their indulging in them.

Minstrels, also, came from far and near to add to the festivity of the occasion; for what feast would be complete without the masters of song? The aged Hassein Shahin, the famed bard of the Attèghèi, he who sang of a hundred fights, which he had himself witnessed, and in some of which he had been engaged, now turned his lyre to a high and martial strain. All voices were silent, every ear intent to catch his words which were as follows:

From Liberty's harp are the strains you now hear;  
Men of Attèghèi rise at the call;  
Hark! hark! to its sounds, for the foemen are near,  
It summons us warriors all  
To fight for the land of our ancestors' graves,  
Who died that their children might never be slaves.

The Russ marches onward with chains in his hand,  
To bind our free arms will he try.  
His banner's dark eagle o'ershadows our land,  
But we've sworn or to conquer or die,  
For we fight o'er the sod of our ancestors' graves,  
Whose valiant hearts ne'er would have yielded to slaves.

'Tis Poland's enslaver with foul bloody hand,  
Remember her story of woe!  
Her brave sons are captives, or fled their lov'd land,  
Beware, or her fate we may know!  
Let us swear on the earth of our forefathers' graves,  
That we ne'er will be conquered or yield to those slaves.

Remember we fight for our mountains so green,  
For our vales, for our streams' sparkling tide,  
For those fields which our father's for ages have been,  
And where, ever unconquer'd, they died.  
Then let not their bones be disturbed in their graves,  
By the tread of a Muscovite army of slaves.

See the glorious banner of freedom unfurl'd.  
It waves o'er our lov'd native land.  
Muster round it, and valiantly prove to the world,  
That *alone* we are able to stand.  
As our fathers who lie in their warrior graves,  
Fighting died, that their children might never be slaves.

Then curs'd be the traitors who yield to the foe,  
And curs'd be the cowards who fly!  
May they ne'er while they live, peace or happiness know,  
And hated, and scorn'd, may they die!  
In lands far away may they rot in their graves,  
And their children bear ever the foul mark of slaves!

Now sharpen our spears, well prove each tough bow,  
And the swords of our forefathers wield.  
Don the armour so often they wore 'gainst the foe,  
Seize each rifle and glittering shield,  
And their shadows yet hovering over their graves,  
Will guard us from foes who would make us their slaves.

Then to arms, then to arms, and this harp shall proclaim  
The proud deeds that your valour has done;  
And the world shall resound with the praise of your name,  
To be handed from sire to son;  
And tell of the heroes who lie in their graves,  
Who died that the Attèghèi ne'er should be slaves.

The warriors grasped their swords, their eyes kindled, their breasts heaved at the minstrel's tones, the effect was such as would be difficult to understand from the above meagre translation, without the accompaniment of the bard's rich and animated voice, and the high loud tones of his instrument.

Several other *baras* succeeded, taking various themes for their song. When describing the heroic deeds of their warriors, their tones were lofty and inspiring. When singing of their untimely deaths, cut off by the foe, their voices would sink to a low and plaintive wail. When picturing the beauty of some maiden more lovely still than her companions, the air would be soft, sweet, and melting.

When the banquet was concluded, the gallant Hadji and his brother, Achmet Beg, rose to depart, for their home was at no great distance, and the Hadji's wife was anxiously expecting the return of her lord, though the old warrior dreamed not of giving himself a day's rest, but had engaged to be ready on the following morning, to accompany the other chiefs to the banks of the Ubin.

When search was made for young Alp, he was nowhere to be found, for he had early stolen from the feast.

"Your gallant son has been a constant visitor here, of late," said the venerable host to the Hadji. "The youth loves to listen to my tales of our wars with the Urus. He will follow closely in your steps, noble Hadji, and I love him much. I know not if it is so; but I sometimes think he casts an eye of affection towards my Zara; and if it please you, my friend, he may have her."

"It is no time for the youth to take to himself a wife, when his thoughts ought to be alone of war," answered the Hadji; "but Mashallah! he would be happy to possess so sweet a partner."

The aged chieftain's suspicion was correct, for Alp was at last discovered, coming from the direction of the anderoon; and he set off with his father to their home.

The next morning a large band of warriors, amounting almost to a small army, assembled in the valley, prepared to set off for the camp on the Ubin. Headed by the aged chief, they repaired to a sacred grove in the neighbourhood, in which stood an ancient stone cross, a relic of the former religion of the country, round which the chieftains and their followers knelt, while supplications were addressed to the One all-powerful being, to aid their arms in driving the Urus from their country. Each warrior bore a chaplet in his hand, which he hung up as a votive offering to the Divinity—a heathen custom handed down from the remotest times.

This ceremony being performed, the chiefs mounted their war-steeds, and commenced their journey; the aged chief raising his hands towards Heaven, bestowing blessings on them as they passed.

Selem had much difficulty in compelling young Conrin to remain behind; but at last he succeeded in drawing a reluctant promise from the boy that he would not quit the valley without permission, but would remain as the page of Ina, and obey her behests. He did not attempt to persuade Thaddeus to accompany him, and the young Pole had found attractions, stronger even than those of friendship, to detain him in the valley. It would also have been against the usual custom to allow one, who had so lately quitted the enemy, to appear in arms on the side of the patriots; a degree of suspicion existing among the chiefs against all strangers, until their fidelity to the cause had been proved. He therefore remained, with Karl as his attendant—a life the honest serf seemed wonderfully to enjoy.

Deep was the grief of Ina when she saw her beloved father and brother depart for the scene of conflict, nor could her heart refrain from sad forebodings when she thought of the dangers to which they must be exposed. Too often had she been witness to the misery and heart-rending wailing of her countrywomen, when anxiously expecting a father, a husband, or a brother, as they met in lieu the mangled remains of the loved one brought home on a bloody bier by his comrades. Such grief she herself had never known; but she felt too clearly that horrors like those might be in store, too, for her; nor could the fierce blast of war, which raged round the land, steel her heart.

Zara did all in her power to tranquillise and cheer her friend under her affliction; but too well could she also enter into and share her fears, for she had seen her gallant father brought home stiff and cold on his shield, slaughtered by the foe in repelling an inroad into his country. That father was the last prop of her grandsire's declining years; and hopelessly for him had the old man mourned, for he had now no warrior descendant to succeed to his name and possessions, and none to guard his child from danger. At his death the disposal of Zara in marriage would devolve on the eldest of his tribe, and they would not inquire if her heart could be given with her person. Her destiny, therefore, might be a cruel one. A new chief would be chosen to lead the clan to battle, and, in peace, to preside at their councils, and poor Zara might be neglected.

Such was the fair girl's account of herself; and thus the two friends, by pouring their griefs into each other's bosom, found mutual consolation. She confessed, indeed, that there was one whom she hoped might win her, and whom she thought loved her; but he had no wealth, and as yet had little renown in arms. Yet she whispered to her friend's ear, that she fondly loved the gallant young Alp, though she had enjoyed but few opportunities of meeting him.

The aged Prince, Aitek Tcherei, having warmly embraced the tenets of Mahomet, the two maidens were more strictly secluded than Ina had been accustomed to; the old Ana, or nurse, who presided over the domestic arrangements of the anderoon, keeping a constant and vigilant watch upon them. Though the custom of the country would not allow of their being limited to the same strict seclusion as in a Turkish harem, the nurse was, nevertheless, horrified at the idea of Ina's appealing in public without her face being entirely shrouded by a thick veil, nor did she at all approve of her propensity to ramble through the groves, or amid the shadowy cliffs.

The old Kahija's ideas of female happiness did not extend beyond the acquisition of a new veil or robe, or, more than all, the enjoyment of a gossip. What pleasure could the girls find in scrambling over the dirty mountains and damp grass? or why should they dance or sing, except to please their lords and masters, when other persons are paid to dance and sing to them?

Her parents had sold her, when young and promising great beauty, to a Turkish slave-merchant; and it was with unalloyed pleasure, in anticipation of the novelty and magnificence of the great Stamboul, that she leaped on board the vessel which was to convey her from her friends and country. At first she herself felt the irksomeness of constraint; but soon became reconciled to her self-chosen lot, and learned to approve of all the regulations of the harem to which she was consigned. Her notions, therefore, on her return, at the death of her master, to her own country, were much scandalised at the freedom and what she considered the levity of her young countrywomen; and she loved to expatiate on the superior manners and customs of the fair captives in the seclusions of Stamboul. Like other dames, who find that their charms can no longer captivate, her temper at times became rather cross and crabbed, though she always tried to treat her young motherless charge with kindness.

Such was the old Ana, Kahija, who, wrapped in her feridji, now entered the anderoon to interrupt with her gossip the conversation of the two maidens. She delighted in gossiping—what old nurse does not? particularly a Turkish one. She now came out of breath, with her exertion of walking from a neighbouring cottage, to say with great eagerness, that the chief shepherd had just come in from the distant mountains, where he had seen the dark mountain khan, Khoros Kaloret, whose brother had turned traitor, and been killed by the young chief Selem, galloping by with a long train of savage followers, who were riding furiously in the direction of the Ubin.

"Oh, Allah, grant that he meet not my father or Selem there!" exclaimed Ina, in accents of terror.

"I know not what may happen, child," said the old nurse. "They say he is a fierce chief. I hear, too, that he sought your hand. Mashallah! but you might have been proud to wed so rich a Khan; and yet, Bosh! what is he even to a merchant of Stamboul?"

"Why could you not love him?" asked Zara; "they say he is of gallant appearance."

"Ah, Zara! love him? you know not what love is, to ask such a question. Love him! No! I could only fear him, he looks so stern and fierce; so unlike the calm and grave features of my father," said Ina.

"What is all this stuff the girls are talking about love?" chimed in the old nurse. "Bosh! what nonsense is this? Love! What is love? it is nothing; it is worse than nothing; it is folly—it is Bosh! What should maidens know about love? Let them be married, and then it is time to love their lords and masters."

Ina and Zara were in despair; for it was hopeless to carry on any interesting conversation on their own feelings, with the constant observations and interruptions of old Kahija; who could be very entertaining at times, when she had the whole of the conversation to herself, with her wonderful stories about Turkey and Stamboul. They were relieved, however, from the dulness their constrained silence threw over them, by the entrance of Conrin, with a small packet from his master to Ina.

We have said that Arslan Gherrei had been educated in Turkey, and held a high post in the army of the Sultan, where he acquired many accomplishments very unusual to the generality of his countrymen. In the calm retreat of his daughter's anderoon, when no strangers were by to witness his occupation, he had endeavoured to cultivate her youthful mind by the aid of the few books he had brought with him; and he had taught her not only to speak, but to read and write Turkish, accomplishments possessed probably by no other maiden in Circassia; for few were blessed with fathers equally heroic in war, and capable of enjoying the blessings of peace.

Zara, ignorant of her friend's accomplishments, looked with mute surprise when Ina, taking the note from the page's hand, hastily broke the thread which tied it, and read an account of the safety of her father and brother, as far as they had as yet proceeded in their warlike operations. The page was equally eager.

"Tell me, lady, tell me is my dear master in safety?" he said.

"Yes he is. Allah be praised! he and my father are well; and he tells me not to forget my care of you, Conrin."

"Heaven be praised that he is safe. That he remembers me, brings joy to my heart!" exclaimed the youth, clasping his hands.

The venerable Prince was kind and courteous in the extreme to his Polish guest; yet Thaddeus found, to his great disappointment, that the anderoon was, to him, forbidden ground; and instead of the constant communication he had delighted in the prospect of enjoying with Ina, he could never approach her, except to offer a few words of courtesy when she was taking the air. Those short sentences were understood by Kahija, who was scandalised that the young lady should be addressed, even in the ordinary terms of greeting; and more so on perceiving that Ina tolerated them. All his attempts at any further conversation were fruitless, owing to the constant vigilance of the old woman; and Ina's native modesty forbade her making any advances herself, however she might have received them on his part.

At last he bethought him of gaining the confidence of young Conrin; but the boy constantly avoided him, though he would now and then stop to listen if he began to speak of his master, and to make any observations in his praise. He thus felt the time hang heavily during the absence of his friend; for he had few to converse with, except the old Prince, who spoke Turkish, and some of the Polish prisoners, or rather deserters, from the Russian army; his only satisfaction being the occasional glimpses he caught of Ina, and the delight of hearing the musical tones of her voice as she returned his salutations.

His great resource was the chase. With a light rifle in his hand, and attended by Karl and his former Polish servant, who enjoyed their life of freedom and independence, so different from the abject servitude to which they had hitherto been accustomed, he roamed the woods and mountains. In these excursions he was also accompanied by several of the youths of the valley, too young to go to war, who guided his steps along the precipices, and shewed him where game abounded. At other times he would mount a steed, appropriated to his use, galloping along the green valleys, and up the mountain's sides, and vieing with the young mountaineers in their equestrian exercises, till he became as expert a horseman as they. He would often, with his rifle, bring down a bird on the wing which they could not hit; thus winning their hearts by his proficiency in what they most admired.

He, however, began to regret not having accompanied his friend to the camp; and accused himself of want of friendship towards him.

We have said that Ina longed to breathe the free air of the mountains, unrestrained in her liberty by the slow-moving steps of old Kahija. Though she could not persuade the timid Zara to accompany her, she frequently asserted her independence by sallying forth attended only by her page. On her return, she listened, with composure, to the severe lectures she received for these transgressions of decorum; and still determined to renew them at every opportunity. How delighted she felt as, bounding like a young fawn, whose fleetness she rivalled, she flew through the shady groves. Then she would climb the mountain's brow, inhaling the fresh pure air, and almost forgetting, as she gazed over the fair land of mountain, vale, and stream, the miseries which threatened it.

Towards the end of one lovely day, she left the confines of the anderoon, attended by her page, who had now learned to love her, not more from his affection for her brother than for her own endearing qualities; looking around from the open wicket and seeing none to impede her progress, she took her way through the grove towards a valley she had long wished to explore, at some distance from the house. It was a lovely place, originally formed from a fissure in the mountains, increased by the constant wear of winter floods. Under the summer heat, the torrent had dwindled into a tiny and clear rivulet, in one part leaping in a bright cascade, then flowing in a gentle current, and next rushing over a ledge of rocks, and falling into the larger valley, where it expanded into a tiny lake.

The lady and her attendant walked on by its side over the soft velvet herbage which the receding waters had left, and began to climb the rocky sides of the glen, the summits of which were now blooming with various sweet scented shrubs and herbs. A soft and mellow sky cast a soothing influence over the scene, and the air was laden with fragrant odours. Thoughtless of the difficulties they had passed, and fearless of the steep and rocky paths, they clambered on, leaping lightly from ledge to ledge, and holding by the shrubs and plants to aid their steps, till at length they reached a platform, where they rested to view the broad and beautiful valley into which the little ravine opened.

Below them was the smiling village amid its groves of stately trees, its farm-yards, granaries, orchards, and cattle-pens. At a little distance, at the side of the stream, was the rustic and unpretending Mosque, from the platform of whose primitive minaret the Muezzin was calling all true believers to the evening prayer. Here were shepherds driving their flocks from the mountain's side to their pens, to shelter them from the wild beasts. The kine were lowing on their way to their sheds, while the village maidens carolled gaily as they milked their cows. The birds were singing from every rock and spray; and all living nature seemed calm and contented—

The page roused Ina from her contemplation of the scene.

"Lady," said he, "we ought ere this to have sought our homeward way: the path is steep and difficult, and the shades of evening will overtake us, ere we can reach the valley."

"Fear not, Conrin. There are no dangers we need dread," returned Ina. "Old Kahija's scolding is the worst that can happen to us. We mountain maids are sure of foot, and fearless as you seem, on the edge of the steepest precipice. But, as you say, it is full time we should return home; for, as it is, we shall be missed from the anderoon, and old Kahija will think that we have fled for ever from her grave rule."

But as they looked round, doubtful on what part of the steep cliff to begin their descent, they found that to return was not so easy an achievement as Ina had pronounced it to be; for so many turnings had they taken, that they could not discover the path by which they had attained the spot where they stood.

It was difficult to say how they could have reached their present position, as in vain they searched for the path. At length, Conrin hazarded a spring to a lower ledge, from which it appeared that practicable footing was to be found, when he was startled by a scream from above; and, gazing upward, he beheld the Lady Ina in the grasp of a ferocious, wild-looking man, who was endeavouring to drag her up the steep cliff, while she resisted with all her power, calling her page to her assistance. Conrin fruitlessly attempted to reach the upper ledge, for the slender shrubs and herbage gave way in his hands as he clutched them. Trembling with agitation, he fell back to the spot from which he was strenuously trying to climb.

The man's appearance was, in truth, ferocious. Of gigantic height, his face was almost covered with tangled dark locks hanging down from his head, on which he wore a cap of undyed brown and white goat-skin, the long hair of which, falling in front over his neck, added to the wildness of his features. His body was clothed in a tunic of the same material, and a long black cloak of goat's hair fell from his shoulders. Rough sandals of bark were on his feet, fastened to his ankles by thongs of leather. At his back hung a bow and quiver, and in one hand he grasped a thick spear or club and a round black shield of bull's hide; while in the other he held the slender form of Ina.

"Set me at freedom! How dare you thus insult me?" she cried. "I would seek my way homeward."

"Not so, fair maiden," answered the man with rough harsh tones, in a strange dialect, though Ina could comprehend it sufficiently to understand the tenor of his words. "Not so; you are a prize of too much value to be allowed to escape so easily."

"Begone, barbarian, and loose your hold," cried Ina, though fearful and trembling in his rude grasp, yet retaining her native dignity. "Think you to escape the vengeance of my tribe, if you should wrong me?"

"Vengeance! say you?" exclaimed the man scornfully. "Think you I fear the vengeance of any?"

"You will have cause to fear it, if you do not release me," she answered. "Know you not what chieftain's child I am?"

"I know full well," said the savage. "You are the daughter of the chief who wronged my master; who slew my master's brother; and you are the timid maid who would not be his bride. But now you'll not again refuse to obey his will."

"I know not of whom you speak," cried Ina. "My father never slew a chief of Attèghèi."

"I know your father well," answered the ruffian. "He is the Chieftain Arslan Gherrei, and you refused to be the bride of the brave Khan, my master, Khoros Kaloret."

"Your master Kaloret Khan?" cried Ina, still more terrified than before, at the sound of that name. "Yet he would never dare to rob a noble Uzden of his daughter. Release me, ruffian!"

"My master fears not any chief of Attèghèi," answered the man, fiercely. "I'll waste no more speech; so cease your cries, and come willingly. My noble master waits your coming."

Ina shrieked with fear. "Oh, Allah, protect me!" she cried, as the savage endeavoured to drag her away. "Barbarian, release me, I pray you, let me go."

"No, no, girl, your prayers are useless," answered the man. "Let my master hear them. On me, they are thrown away."

"Haste, haste, Conrin," she cried, in Turkish; "fly to our home. Send messengers to Selem, to my father, and rouse the villagers."

As the barbarian saw the page hastening to obey, he said to Ina: "Stay that boy, till we are out of sight. If he moves hence, I'll send an arrow through his breast."

Conrin, who understood not his words—Ina being too terrified to interpret them—was hurrying from rock to rock, fearless of the peril which a single false step might cause, or of the cruel death which threatened him; when the barbarian prepared to put his threat into execution. For an instant, he loosened his hold of Ina, unslinging his bow from his back, and drawing a shaft to its head, with a hand which never missed its aim. In vain, Ina shrieked to Conrin to stop, and implored the monster to hold his hand. Neither of them heard her voice.

The last moment of the poor boy's life seemed to have arrived, as the arrow flew from the string; but ere the hand which drew it reached the ear, it was struck by a violent blow, and the shaft wavering in its aim, flew high above the page's head. The fierce mountaineer, taking a second arrow, turned to his aggressor, when he found his arm held by a powerful and firm grasp.

Ina shrieked with fear for her preserver's life—for in him she beheld the stranger Thaddeus—as the follower of the Khan attempted to seize his heavy spear, and to fell him to the ground. But the young Pole, grappling with him, prevented his raising it high enough to strike. Though Thaddeus was strong and active, his fierce opponent was heavier and more powerful. Releasing his arm with a sudden exertion, he sought his dagger in his girdle; but the Pole throwing himself upon him with his whole force, the two combatants fell to the ground.

"Fear not for me, dearest Ina," cried he; "save yourself. Hasten down the cliffs, and fly homewards. I will hold this robber, until you are safe."

Ina scarcely heard his words, or, if she did, thought not of following his advice; but trembling for his life, she watched the combat, so as, if possible, to lend her aid. For an instant, Thaddeus was uppermost; but endeavouring to grasp his opponent's throat, he was obliged to release one arm; when, drawing his dagger from his belt, the mountaineer, by a violent effort, threw himself round, grasping the fatal weapon in his hand, and bringing the unfortunate youth below him. He was about to stab the young Pole, when another, though a feeble hand, directed its aim, and it struck deeply into the earth, in a cleft of the rock.

Thaddeus seized the dagger; when his opponent, with tremendous exertion, arose and attempted to hurl him over the cliff; but as the mountaineer approached the edge, his foot slipped. Seizing the fortunate moment, and mustering all his strength, Thaddeus struck the dagger deep into his breast. The huge barbarian fell heavily, still clasping Thaddeus in his arms, who, nevertheless, forced him to the edge of the platform, when the body rolled over to a jutting craig, some feet below where they stood.

Recovering himself, Thaddeus turned to Ina, "Lady," he said, "I owe my life to your courage: your timely aid saved me."

"Oh, no," she cried; "it was you who saved my life, and more than life, for which you bravely risked your own. Allah be praised, who guarded yours, and brought you to my rescue! You also saved poor Conrin's life. But let us not stay here. The comrades of the man may come and revenge his death on you. Oh, let us hasten home."

"I will bear you safely down these steep cliffs, lady," said Thaddeus; "you are weak, and scarce able to walk from terror."

Lifting her gently (and Ina thought not of resisting his offer), with firm and fearless steps, he sought a path amid the crags; and as he bore her slight form in his arms, he felt her hand unconsciously press his. Her bright beaming eyes betrayed the ardent gratitude, which her lips feared to utter. She looked anxiously into his face, to learn if he felt oppressed by fatigue; but there she read alone his love and pride, at having saved her; nor could she bring herself to entreat him to set her down, till they reached in safety the bottom of the glen.

"I am stronger now, and will fatigue your arms no longer, noble Sir," she said. Thaddeus at last, unwillingly obeyed her repeated requests, though she still consented to lean on his arm, as he accompanied her homeward.

"Whence came that robber, who so terrified you?" asked Thaddeus.

"Oh he was no robber," answered Ina. "But a follower of the fierce Khan, whose brother the young Conrin slew and who seeks to wed me."

"Wed you, lady? Can such as he be worthy of you?" exclaimed the young Pole with enthusiasm.

"I know not; but I never loved him," answered Ina; "and now I doubly fear his vengeance for your sake. When he hears that you have slain his follower, he will not rest till he has had satisfaction for his blood. I would that you were safe beyond his reach!"

"I do not dread any injury he can do me," cried Thaddeus. "To have saved you from danger is so great a joy that I would die to gain it."

Ina felt her heart beat quickly as he spoke; for the tone of his voice said more even than the words themselves.

It was a moment of delight—of pure bliss to both those young beings; notwithstanding the wildness of the scene, the danger they had passed through and which might be still pursuing them. They knew that they mutually loved. They attempted not to speak; for they felt that words would not adequately convey their love. They looked into each other's eyes, and there they read all each could wish to know. Ina thought of her preserver, and the danger he was yet in; and, as she hastened through the glen, she cast many an anxious glance to see if any followed. She thought that she heard a footstep; it was but the rushing of the stream across a rock; she tried to increase her speed; again she turned with fear—it was but the echo of their tread among the cliffs.

Thaddeus endeavoured to tranquillise her alarms; and partially succeeded, by assuring her that he had himself descended the ravine, and had encountered no one. As they emerged from the narrow gorge, loud shouts saluted their ears, and they met a band of villagers led on by Conrin, who, overcome by his exertions, sunk down at his mistress's feet on seeing she was safe. Ina stooped over the poor boy with deep solicitude, endeavouring to unloose his vest; but he strenuously resisted her offers, declaring that he was fast recovering.

The party, composed of old and young, armed with weapons, shouted loudly for joy when they saw Ina in safety; she thanked them for their promptitude in coming to her rescue, and presented Thaddeus as her preserver. The villagers complimented him on his bravery and success, as with shouts and songs, they followed her homeward. The aged chief had left his house to encourage the people in their pursuit of the ravisher; but, when he saw his young kinswoman in safety, he felt a strong inclination to scold her for wandering. As, however, she appeared overcome with fatigue, he forbore, and left her to the lectures he knew she would be certain to receive from the old Kahija.

Thaddeus would not quit her side until he had conducted her to the gate of the anderoon, to commit her to the gentle care of Zara who was anxiously awaiting her.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Three.**

The Circassian chieftains had chosen for the encampment of their irregular but numerous army, a picturesque spot, of which the beauty was much increased by the wild and warlike bands now filling it. It was in a rich and verdant



valley watered by the streams of the Aphibs and the Ubin.

By the banks of the latter river the greater part of the tents were pitched beneath the lofty trees; some growing in clumps and others scattered over the meadows as in a highly cultivated park. The ground rose in gentle grassy undulations from the banks of the river, swelling into round hills covered with the richest verdure, on which fed numerous flocks and herds; while, further off, men, women, and children were employed in the agricultural labour of the fields, unimpeded by the presence of the warriors. In the far distance were seen the lofty pinnacles of the Black Mountains.

Each chief had selected some spot on which to pitch his tent, as his taste dictated, while their respective clansmen and followers were stationed around them.

Here some stalwart chief reposed on the turf in front of his tent, smoking the long chibouque, while looking at his followers engaged in every description of warlike exercise. Some selected a mark on a tree, and, retreating to a distance, fixed their hatchets in it with unerring aim; others hurled the heavy javelin; some the light dart; while numbers, with their bows in hand, were taking sure aim at a greater distance. Some, too, were practising wrestling and running.

In one place, the sound of the smith's anvil and hammer was heard repairing fire-arms for the coming fight. In the river the young men were engaged in teaching their horses to swim across rivers so as to be ready for any sudden excursion into the enemy's country. Here a troop of gallant young nobles, on their long-tailed swift steeds, were seen scouring along the valleys, and up the sides of the hills. The many coloured and richly-silvered trappings of their horses, and their own jewelled weapons and armour, shone brightly as they appeared amid the trees. It was, in truth, a brilliant, warlike, and exciting scene.

The chiefs and nobles were dressed in their complete war array; some in superbly embossed and ornamented armour, of polished steel; others in beautifully wrought chain armour fitting closely to the body, and being pliable to every movement, shewed off their graceful figures to advantage. The lofty plumes of their helmets towered far above the heads of their followers, as they moved through the crowd; their jewelled poniards (the insignia of their rank) were placed in girdles richly worked in gold; and all their other arms were also highly ornamented. Some of the venerable elders appeared in turbans and long robes, the garb of peace; and a few nobles wore the simple and elegant tight-fitting coat, richly trimmed with silver lace, and embroidered belts to hold their arms.

The army was composed of people of many different tribes and races from all parts of the Caucasus, speaking various languages, having many different customs, with great variations in costume. First, in numbers and bravery, were the tribes of the Attèghèi, consisting of the Abzeki, Khapsoukhi, Nothakhaitze, the Demirghoi, and many others. Bands of the disciplined Lesghians had come from the far off plains bordering on the Caspian, to war with the oppressors of their own country, with whom they there could not venture to compete. There were bands, also, of the nomadic tribes, the short broad-faced Calmuck and the Nogai Tartars. Many warriors, also, had come from Georgia, Mingrelia, and Immeritia, which countries have succumbed to the Russian power, but still bear her the most deadly hatred. Some bands had descended from the wild Alpine retreats of the snowy mountains, wild as the regions they inhabited or the beasts they rode, a small, uncouth, though hardy and active race. These were dark-visaged men, with projecting jaws, and black shaggy beards, mostly clothed in skins, with fur caps, and garments of the roughest materials. Though addicted to roving and predatory habits, they were now animated with the common feeling of hatred to the Urus.

There were the tribes of the Tubi and the Ubick; who fought on foot, owing to the inaccessible nature of their mountain-homes, where no horse can find a safe footing, and none can venture but the nimble-footed inhabitants, and the active goats and chamois. They are mostly of gigantic height, with handsome countenances, but fierce in appearance even to wildness, which was not a little increased by their sheep skin turbans, the long white wool of which curled over their face and shoulders. They wore the tight-fitting tunic of the Circassians, over which was thrown a black mantle of goat and sheep skin hair, platted together; while their sandals were formed of the bark of the linden tree. Each man was armed with a hatchet and poniard in his belt, a light gun on his shoulder, while in his hand he carried a weighty and knotted club, furnished at the end with a long steel barb to assist him in crossing streams, or springing from cliff to cliff. It served also as a rest to his gun to take more deadly aim, and as a weapon in the chase, or in his hours of amusement as a toy, to hurl with fearful exactness at a mark.

Besides these, came another tribe of foot warriors, of ferocious appearance, from the upper regions of the Black Mountains, bearing large, black, round shields made of wood, strengthened with bands of iron or yew, covered with the hide of the buffalo. These people were armed chiefly with the primitive bow and arrow, with which they can take the most certain aim.

There were also some of the fierce Tartar tribes, the most deadly foes to Russia, owing to her usurpation of their country. When driven as exiles and wanderers from their native land, they settled in the before uninhabited and almost inaccessible regions of the Caucasian range. They also wore jackets of skins and fur turbans, adding to the natural ferocity of their countenances. Their arms were broad curving scymitars, and long heavy Greek guns, with pistols and hatchets stuck in their belts, and embroidered with silver.

Even Europe furnished many warriors from ill-fated and ruined Poland, who had found refuge and sympathy among the generous mountaineers, to try their swords against the hated Moscov.

Among the infantry, the only bands which had any pretension to regular discipline were the Lesghians, who manoeuvre in compact bodies on their own plains, though their style of fighting is not well adapted to the mountain warfare of the Circassians.

The followers of the princes and nobles of the Attèghèi were habited much alike, in the tight-fitting elegant tunic,

without collar to confine the neck, which was left bare; large trowsers, ornamented girdles, embroidered slippers, or low boots of coloured leather, and the broad-crowned low cap, either of hair, or cloth, or leather, trimmed with fur. All had sabres by their sides and the cama in their belts; but many carried the bow and arrow without fire-arms. The greater number were provided with horses, which they had decked with all the ornaments they could collect.

The elders and judges, who had repaired to the camp to give their advice and counsel, wore large white turbans and long vests, and might be seen sedately seated beneath the shade of wide spreading trees, in circles, holding grave debates, their white beards flowing over their breasts, and giving them a grave and venerable appearance. Many of them, who had served in Turkey, retained the costume of that country; adding to the picturesque variety of dress to be found among this congregation of brave warriors.

No regular arrangement had been preserved in the formation of the camp; the different bands pitching their tents, or building their leafy shelters where they pleased. Many of the warriors had been followed to the camp by their wives, to attend to their tents and to dress their food: their tall and graceful forms were dressed in flowing robes of varied tints, embroidered with gold and silver, and long white veils falling from their heads as they were seen gliding among the trees.

The camp was unfortified; but though a short distance only from the Russian posts, there was no chance of a surprise, as scouts and advanced parties were constantly watching their foes, who could not make the slightest movement without due notice being given. This was the principal camp of the Abasians; but there were others under experienced leaders, along their frontiers towards Anapa, watching the enemy's castles in that direction.

Such was the magnificent spectacle which greeted Selem's eyes as, in company with his father and Hadji Guz Beg, they descended from a mountain-ridge into the valley of the Ubin, the refulgence of the evening sun throwing a lustre over the animated and exciting scene. As their squires discharged their rifles, numerous chiefs hastened forth from their tents, or from among the thickets and trees, mounting their chargers and galloping to meet their brothers in arms. While they rode on, others came from all directions, greeting with warm congratulations the arrival of the Hadji and Arslan Gherrei; nor were the younger nobles less pleased to see young Alp, who was a favourite with all.

The chiefs cast inquiring looks at Selem, and when Arslan Gherrei proudly introduced him as his son, relating his romantic history and recent exploits, loud shouts hailed him as a chief of Circassia. His heart beat with pride at having acquired that glorious appellation, as his brother warriors came forward to grasp his hand in welcome.

Their followers assembled under a grove of lofty trees near the river; a few minutes only elapsed since their arrival at the spot, before their tents were erected and every arrangement made for their accommodation.

Selem then accompanied his father through the encampment, to learn the proceedings and intentions of the leaders. Various plans of operations had been discussed; but, unfortunately, unanimity did not reign in their councils as to the best mode of proceeding.—The most sagacious were, however, for preventing the large Russian army, which threatened them, from advancing into the interior, without expending their strength in minor exploits: but others were for making excursions into the country of the Cossacks at unguarded posts, while the enemy were elsewhere engaged, and some were for at once storming the Russian forts. Selem saw with grief and pain the sad want of organisation in an army capable, if well directed, of driving back their foes to their own bleak steppes. But they were destitute of artillery and ammunition; and he saw too clearly that no great object could be attained beyond the strict defence of their native mountains. Yet, without some object in view, that vast multitude, unaccustomed to any combined movement, would soon be weary of restraint, and might, in a few hours, melt away like snow before the rays of the sun, and return to their own homes. They required some chief of superior talents, whom all would acknowledge as their commander, to lead them to war; and they would then become invincible. This want their invaders well knew, and reckoned on accordingly.

The next morning the sun rose with unclouded splendour over the beautiful valley of the Ubin, cheering the hearts of the assembled warriors with an omen of success. It was the day appointed for a solemn ceremony to take place, namely, the administering an oath, which all the princes, nobles, and leaders of Circassia had agreed to take, never to sheathe their swords, or make terms with the enemy, till he had retired from the neighbourhood of their country; and to sink in oblivion all ancient feuds and animosities among themselves. Many chiefs had already bound themselves by this agreement; but the majority had hitherto kept aloof from taking the oath, as it not only forbade them ever making terms with their foes, but involved the necessity of restoring all property unjustly retained from their countrymen.

Contiguous to the camp was a quiet and sequestered dell, with green hills rising close around it, and filled by a grove of lofty and venerable trees: a spot looked upon as sacred from time immemorial. In an open glade, in the centre of the grove, stood the mouldering remains of a stone cross, near which, where the lofty trees threw their cool shadows, now assembled hundreds of noble warrior chiefs. One sentiment, one soul, animated the breasts of all—the most deadly hatred to their foes, and a determination to resist to the very last gasp. Every one of the various tribes and bands, which composed the patriot army, here sent a representative to swear in their name, and to confer on measures for the general advantage.

As the princes, nobles, and leaders arrived, they took their seats on the green turf, when, all being assembled, a chief arose from the circle, and advanced towards the centre. His white turban, his long robes, his hoary locks and flowing beard, bespoke his sacred character. In his hands he held a book, which he raised aloft, as he knelt before the cross, and offered up to the all-potent and all-omniscient Being, whom every one present worshipped—whatever their other differences of creed might be—a prayer for the success of the sacred cause of liberty, and for the confusion of their tyrannical foes. Every warrior, bowing his head, reverently responded "Amen!" as the venerable sage ceased his prayer. Still holding the book before him, he rose, and, with a voice, yet deep and sonorous, though at times trembling with age, he exclaimed:—

"Noble warriors, chiefs of Circassia—we have this day assembled for a great, for a righteous purpose. It is to bind ourselves, by a solemn compact, to exert all the energies of our souls and bodies to drive hence the fell invaders of our country. Never to sheathe our swords while a foe to Circassia exists near her borders; to sink all private feelings of animosity, and to offer the hand of love and fellowship to all who will join us in this sacred cause. I call on all present to come forward, and to swear on the sacred book I hold, to conquer or die for our country, and to shew the world, what a brave band of brothers, though few in numbers compared to the vast hordes of our opponents, can do for the cause of liberty."

As he finished his address, one of the most influential of the Princes of the Attèghèi advanced, and, reverently kneeling, kissed the book, and took the required oath. His example was followed by others, till the enthusiasm became general, and all rushed eagerly forward to sign the compact. As they took the oath, they formed in circles, grasping each other's hands, in token of their brotherhood. Those who had never before met, except with their hands on the hilts of their swords, now joined them in the pressure of love and fellowship; and the ardent wish of all, was to be led at once against the common foe.

Many, who had arrived too late for the opening of the ceremony, hastened forward from all directions to swear eternal enmity to the Russians. The aged judge again knelt, when all had subscribed the oath, to return thanks to heaven for the concord which reigned throughout the band of patriots; and, as the sacred ceremony concluded, loud shouts rent the air, from the vast concourse of warriors who covered the sides of the hills, and every woodland glade. Had any Russian spy been present, he might have warned his countrymen of the hopelessness of success, in their nefarious attempt to subjugate so resolute a people.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Four.**

Our hero and his friends had spent two days at the camp of the patriot army on the Ubin, without devising any plan of operation, or without any movement taking place among the Russians, when three horsemen were seen riding at headlong speed down the sides of the mountains, towards the camp. The energies of the horses seemed taxed beyond their power. One noble animal fell, throwing his rider stunned before him. The horse of the second came down with tremendous force, after giving three or four bounds, and making fruitless efforts to continue his course; but the third, not stopping to see what had become of his companions, rode furiously on to the camp, whence many chieftains and warriors rushed out to hear the news he brought.

The messenger leaped from his steed as he came among them, the gallant beast trembling in every limb, and scarcely able to continue on his legs as he panted with exertion.

"Noble chieftains!" cried the messenger, "I bring you dire news from Ghelendjik. Three days ago, a numerous fleet of Russian ships was seen to approach our coasts, from which a mighty army disembarked. It is hoped they will remain some days within their fort to rest from their voyage; but, after that, there can be no doubt they will advance to ravage the country, if a stronger force than is there collected, is not opposed to them. The men of Ghelendjik will do their utmost to stop the invaders; but what can they hope to do against an overpowering force? Our Seraskier, therefore, sent us here with haste to summon some of his friends to join his army."

Among the foremost of the chiefs, who had hastened to meet the messenger, was the gallant Hadji. "Bismillah! not a moment is to be lost then," he cried, seizing his standard from before his tent, waving it aloft, and again plunging the staff into the ground. "I will hasten with joy to your chieftain's aid, and we will stop these Urus on their march. Gallant nobles and warriors, whoever among you will bear me company to the aid of our hard-pressed countrymen, let them assemble round this banner within three minutes, and we will away; for, perhaps, before this the Russians may have begun their march. Let those who will, follow."

Saying which, the brave old chief hastened to don his helmet, his squire leading forth his steed; and in less time than he had indicated, he was on horseback by the side of his banner. Alp soon galloped up, followed by Selem, who directly volunteered to accompany his venerable friend, after taking leave of his father, who was obliged to remain. Before the time for starting had arrived, numerous warriors came up from all directions; the news, that an expedition was on foot, having flown like lightning through the camp; so that, within five minutes of the arrival of the messenger, several hundred horsemen had assembled, fully equipped, to follow the Hadji. Again seizing his standard, the Hadji waved it aloft as a signal to march; when giving a loud shout, the band of warriors set off at a quick speed, many others promising to follow.

The Hadji led on his followers as fast as they could proceed without exhausting their horses, stopping only at night to rest for a few hours; and before sun-rise they were again in their saddles. Their anxiety to hear some news of the enemy was extreme, for they were now approaching the neighbourhood of the Russian fort; though it was impossible to say in what part of the country they might sally out to commit their depredations.

They drew rein on the summit of a mountain, from which they obtained a far-off view of the sea, in the direction of Ghelendjik, and of the intervening hills and valleys, from which, with their glasses, they could perceive wreaths of smoke curling upwards to the clear sky in every direction. Alas! they told a sad tale of destruction going forward! As the Hadji gazed with an anxious eye to discover the cause—

"Curses on the fell Giaour!" he exclaimed. "Yonder flames and smoke are their hellish work! See how the burning cottages, and farms, and ripe corn fields of our countrymen, mark the course of our foes. See, they take the passes towards Anapa. Ha! we may yet be in time to stop them before they reach that castle. They will no doubt attempt the passage of the valley of the Zemes; and there the brave Seraskier Manjour Bey will be found in waiting for them. Onward, my friends, we will see what these Moscov are about."

Saying which, the whole party urged their horses down the dizzy mountain's side, crossing valleys, streams, rocks

and hills, in their eagerness to arrive at the scene of action. It was nearly sun-set when they came within hearing of distant and straggling shots; and, surmounting a hill, they perceived in the broad valley below them, the vast Russian force winding its way by the side of a clear stream, which protected one flank.

The long and close columns advanced in regular and steady order; their colours waving above their heads, their bands playing animating and lively airs, and their artillery guarding their van and rear. Trains of baggage and ammunition waggons were in the centre, furnished with all the "materiel" for war; while troops of Cossacks scoured the fields on each side, to protect their flanks, and to guard them from a surprise. Here and there might be seen hovering around them, parties of the patriot horsemen, every now and then charging the Cossacks, grappling with their opponents, bearing them off, or cutting them down, ere the Russians could point their howitzers at the assailants.

A messenger now arrived who had been sent in search of the Hadji's party from the Seraskier, then commanding the main body of the Circassians assembled to impede the Russian's progress. He informed them that this chief had determined to hazard no engagement till the enemy had entered the valley of the Zemes, which they would probably do on the following morning; calling in all stragglers to form an ambuscade, except a few scouts to watch the movements of the foe. The Hadji and his party directly determined to obey the wishes of the General, as did most of the parties who had been engaged in harassing the enemy's advance; though a few still continued hovering on his flanks.

The Hadji and his followers, therefore, turned their horses' heads in the direction of the spot where their friends were assembled; riding over the summit of the hills, which bounded the valley, till they arrived at the edge of the lofty cliffs forming the sides of the pass or glen of the Zemes. The Seraskier Manjour Bey came forward to welcome the friends who had so opportunely arrived; and led them round to the places where he had posted his men, who were to sleep that night on their arms ready for any sudden movement of the enemy, should they attempt to pass through the gorge under cover of the night; the Hadji placing his followers in other advantageous positions. Behind every rock and bush, on every projecting craig where footing was to be found, were to be seen the athletic forms of the highland warriors, their rifles and bows ready for action, and their ears intent to catch the first notes of the Russian horns in their advance. Many also, in places to which they could lead their horses, were crouching down by the side of the well-trained animals, hidden by the thick brushwood and broken rocks.

It was but a small body of mountaineers whom the Hadji and Selem found assembled; they were entirely destitute of artillery, and there was a scarcity of ammunition. They could, therefore, depend alone on their sharp broad swords to contend with the well-trained bands of Europe supplied with all the "materiel" of war. The Hadji was deeply disappointed when he discovered the hopelessness of entirely annihilating the Russian army, as he at first expected; but he determined to gall them, as much as possible, in their march.

Here the brave patriot band continued the live-long night in eager expectation; not a word above a whisper being uttered to disturb the dead silence which reigned around. Young Alp remained by his father's side, as did Selem, for they well knew that where the fight was thickest, there would the gallant old warrior be found. Seated on the soft heather, on a bank rising but a little way above the bottom of the glen, they passed the night, listening to his long tales of war, and his adventures. Our hero, unaccustomed as yet to the night watch, and the bivouac, was worked up to the highest pitch of excitement and expectation; the night seemed interminably protracted; but to the other hardy warriors it was an affair of constant occurrence, though they were, perhaps, no less eager for the issue of the approaching combat, which might be of such vital importance to the liberty of the province of Khapsoukhi.

At length, as reclined on the turf, he gazed up into the pure calm sky, dotted with myriads of stars, they seemed to grow fainter and fainter, until he could scarcely distinguish them, amid the blue void. He sprung to his feet; not a sound was heard; the first faint streaks of dawn appeared in the east, yet no one moved from the leafy shelter. The sun rose, a vast globe of living fire, glowing as if in anger at the scene of blood on which his beams were so soon to shine; now throwing a glowing red flame on the dew-besprinkled trees above their heads, soon to be followed by one of still deeper hue.

So calm and quiet was the scene, that a traveller might have passed through the glen, unconscious that he was surrounded by hundreds of warriors and their steeds. All were on the tiptoe of expectation; for every moment might bring up the Russian army; when the interest was increased tenfold as the scouts, breaking through the brushwood, spurred their horses up the sides of the glen.

"The Urus are advancing! The Urus are advancing!" they cried, as they passed to make their report to the Seraskier, and to take their station within the shelter of the thickets. All things wore again the silence of the grave; then the cheering sounds of drums and fifes came faintly on the breeze, through the windings of the valley; next, the firm tread of the approaching host might be heard; and then appeared the advance guard of the Russian army. Onward they came, regardless of danger. Each of the highland warriors held his breath with eagerness, and more firmly grasped his sword to spring forward on the foe; or kept his finger on the lock of his rifle, or drew his arrow to his ear, prepared for the word of command to commence the work of death.

Not a leaf moved, not a whisper was heard, when the advancing column of the Russian force appeared in sight. The leading file came directly below the ambuscade. At this moment, a terrific cry arose from the sides of the glen, reverberating from rock to rock, from craig to craig, down the whole extent of the savage pass.

"Come, my sons, now is the moment; we'll up and be at them. Follow, those who will. Wa Allah! Allah! Allah!" cried the gallant Hadji, springing to his horse. His example was followed by Alp, Selem, and about twenty other warriors, who drew their scymitars as they rushed from the leafy cover; shrieking, rather than shouting their war cry, and dashing among the foremost ranks of the Russians, giving them not a moment to defend themselves.

It is necessary to go back a little in our narrative, and explain the cause of this sudden incursion on the part of the

Russians. When the brig of war returned to Ghelendjik, bringing the remnant of the garrison, and an account of the loss of the fort, the rage of Baron Galetzoff knew no bounds; especially when he heard that our hero had been one of the most daring leaders, and that Lieutenant Stanisloff had escaped. Again, and again, he renewed his vows of wreaking vengeance on the Circassians, and expressed his determination to capture the two friends at all hazards. Count Erintoff confessed that he had, at first, the intention of putting the Baron's warrant into execution himself, and dispatching Thaddeus in prison, with his own hands; but the surprise of the mountaineers had been so sudden, that he had barely time to escape with his life. Some time after these events, a fleet arrived with fresh troops to garrison Ghelendjik; and the Baron received orders from the general-in-chief to proceed with a large body of troops by land, to Anapa, through the defiles of the Zemes, from thence to take up his position, and erect a new fort near the Kouban, at no great distance from the spot where the Ubin falls into that river.

The Baron marched out of the fort with four or five thousand men under his command, well supplied with all the munitions of war, and was allowed to proceed unmolested through the broader valleys, where his cannon had range enough to play, leaving, as he advanced through the smiling vales, dotted with hamlets, and spread with verdant fields, a long track of ruin and desolation behind him. So suddenly, indeed, had the Russian army sallied out, that the inhabitants had scarce time to drive off their flocks and herds, and remove their valuables, as from a distance they mournfully beheld, but with a keen hope of vengeance, their habitations wantonly committed to the flames. The Russians continued to advance through the open valleys, and through the first part of the defiles of the Zemes, without meeting a foe; the country throughout appealing to be some land of enchantment, so calm and beautiful did it look. They began to congratulate themselves on having awed the natives into peace, and on the hope of being allowed to perform their march without molestation. Towards the evening, indeed, a few Circassians appeared, attacking their flanks, at intervals, like hornets on some huge animal, and flying off, before there was time to send any of their own cavalry to pursue them. The General had ordered the Cossacks to scour the sides of the hills, to prevent the main body from being taken by surprise—a most hazardous service; for, one by one, those who took the outer range disappeared, and their comrades, who went in search of them, shared the same fate; but there was no time to make inquiries.

That night the army slept on their arms; before the sun arose on the following morning, they were again on their march. They advanced cautiously through many serpentine windings of a deep gorge; at their feet rushed the surge of a mountain torrent, in whose bright waters the soldiers eagerly slaked their thirst. Not a foe had been seen as onward they marched, the cool morning air refreshing their cheeks, and a deep and solemn silence reigning through the glen.

In a moment that scene of quiet and repose was changed into one of carnage and confusion. The foremost ranks fell back, trembling at the sound of the war shout of the mountaineers, as from behind every craig, shrub, and tree, a destructive shower of bullets and arrows fell thick among them. At that instant, a troop of fierce horsemen leaped from amid the rocks, hewing down all who crossed their path; and, ere the cannon could be brought to bear, vanishing on the opposite side.

It was the daring band of Guz Beg.

“Ya Allah! well done, my sons!” cried the veteran. “My brave Alp, you will not disgrace your father. You cut down those vile Urus as a mower cuts corn with his sickle. Ask what you will of me, my son, and it shall be granted for that one charge. What say you, my friends, shall we be at them again?”

Saying which, before there was time to think of the great danger they ran, the Hadji's band were once more upon the amazed and confused ranks of the foe, scarce recovered from their first panic. They were not this time so fortunate; one of their number fell by the fire which the Russians now opened upon them; and Selem was nearly suffering the same fate, for, as he swept by, he perceived the Count Erintoff in the advance, who spurred on his horse to meet him; but too many men intervened for them to exchange blows; and Selem was obliged to follow his friends, being the last Circassian horseman who reached the covert of the wood.

“That will do for the present,” said the Hadji. “But, mashallah! I should like to be among them again. A few charges like that would annihilate their army.”

Selem, however, urged him not to attempt the manoeuvre, which involved too great a risk, without advantage, to his valuable life. However, the Hadji and Selem were every where to be seen dashing at the foe, then galloping up the steep sides of the glen.

The Russians, stunned with the terrific cries knew not which way to turn. Where they least expected an attack, they found themselves grappled by the active mountaineers, who seemed to leap from the cliffs above their heads, dealing death around them with their sharp broad daggers, then rapidly disappearing among the rocks, leaping from craig to craig, where none could follow. Hundreds were shot down by the silent arrows of their invisible foe; nor, as they gazed with fear around, could they tell whence the shafts proceeded. The soldiers saw their comrades next to them sink down, struck by those winged messengers of death. Their ranks were thinning fast, nor could they defend themselves, nor attack their aggressors; but in these trying moments, the stern discipline, even of slaves, triumphed over their fears, and rescued them from the hands of the most daring and courageous warriors. The officers shewed courage worthy of a nobler and better cause: exerting themselves to the utmost, with calm voices, keeping up the men's spirits, closing their ranks, and leading them on in order.

But could it have been real courage which enabled the men to endure this terrific storm? It was rather a dull and heartless apathy. They saw their fellows fall; and knew that they were released from a life of privation and tyrannical suffering; and cared not if it should be their fate to be the next victims. It mattered but little whether death should come by famine, the sword, or by pestilence; too certainly would they fall by one or the other.

The army, with thinned ranks, continued to advance, protected, as they defiled into more open ground, by their light

howitzers carried on the backs of horses; every now and then keeping the slender force of their daring assailants at a distance, as they could bring their guns to bear on them. They marched as fast as they were capable of doing; but they were not yet secure; for the Seraskier of the Circassians, a brave, but a sagacious and cautious leader; though he would not allow his followers to attempt competing with the Russians on the plain; attacked their rear and flank incessantly, until, when near Anapa, he was joined by another larger body of the patriots.

The whole army of the enemy might now have been destroyed, had the mountaineers possessed artillery. As it was, they escaped destruction solely through the garrison of Anapa making a sortie to their rescue, with artillery and a strong body of Cossacks. The harassed remnant at length reached that fortress.

“Mashallah!” cried the old warrior, as he looked angrily towards their retiring columns when they entered the fort; “We’ve repaid them for the surprise they attempted to give your noble father. They will not forget this day’s work, for a long time to come. Allah! if we had some of their light guns, they would not have escaped as they have done. But fear not, my sons, we will meet them again before long.”

There seemed every probability that the campaign in this part of the Caucasus would be soon finished for that year. The Hadji, therefore, with his followers, returned to the camp on the Ubin to wait further events.

The preceding is a faithful account of the style of warfare the Russians have to engage in with the mountaineers of the Caucasus, in which thousands of their soldiers annually fall victims. But what matters such a loss to the government of St. Petersburg? They have millions of slaves to replace those who fall; and they have resolved to subdue the barbarians in spite of the rivers of innocent blood which may flow. May Heaven grant that the bravery and patriotism of the high-minded and gallant Circassians may be completely triumphant over all the efforts of their slavish and despotic oppressors!

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Five.**

Thaddeus Stanisloff was now perfectly happy. No longer did he hesitate to approach the anderoon, and no longer did Ina fear to meet him; her ear was ever intent to catch his approaching footstep, when, in spite of old Kahija’s frowns, she would start up, and hasten to the gate of the enclosure, for within those sacred precincts, no man dares venture to approach.

She did not, however, stop to analyse very clearly her own feelings; but they were so novel, so delightful, so pure, she could not help indulging in them. Thaddeus loved Ina, with the most ardent, tender attachment; and often did he anticipate a life of happiness, passed in her society, amidst the vales and mountains of Circassian when he would teach her the love, religion, and the customs of civilised Europe, and eagerly did she listen to these discourses of her gallant preserver.

Still they had not yet talked of love; yet, much did he long to speak in the language of confidence, unrestrained by the presence of the gentle Zara, or the young Conrin.

Early one morning, he met his mistress at the gate of the anderoon, fortunately before old Kahija had made her appearance; seizing the opportunity—

“Ina,” said he, “I have much of deep and earnest import to communicate; and I would not, that other ears than yours, should listen. Will you deign to meet me then, and hear my words, for here I cannot speak them? Ere the sun has set this evening, will you meet me, Ina, in the sacred grove, near the ruins, over whose shattered fragments the Cross still rears its head triumphant?”

“Stranger,” answered Ina, “you are my brother’s trusted friend. I know too from your brave and generous nature, that you would not seek aught from me, that is unbecoming a maiden’s modesty.”

“Believe me, you will do no wrong in trusting me. I’ll wait until you can steal from old Kahija’s vigilance. Your page can see you safe, and watch the while we speak, that none intrude. Do you consent, lady?”

“I will meet you, noble stranger,” answered Ina, with timidity, and blushing as she spoke. “I know that you will guard me from danger.”

“Thanks, Ina, thanks, for your confidence; my life shall answer for your safety!”

Thaddeus might, perhaps, at that time have found an opportunity of letting Ina fully understand his devoted love for her; when they were interrupted by the coming of the discreet old Kahija, who considered that the conversation had already endured beyond the bounds of decorum. He was most unwillingly, therefore, obliged to retire, and to pass away the hours in thinking of his mistress; until the old nurse should have gone to the Mosque for evening prayer, when Ina would meet him.

The spot Thaddeus had selected, was a beautiful grove situated a little way up the mountain side, which, from time immemorial, had been looked on with veneration, by the inhabitants; because there, according to tradition, their ancestors had formerly worshipped the Great Spirit, and his Son who once visited earth. In his wanderings, Thaddeus had discovered the ruins he mentioned, which were those of a church of considerable size, as appeared by the fragments, still remaining scattered here and there, among the herbage; but many years must have passed since it was reduced to its present state, from the large trees growing amidst the stones.

The foot of the cross itself, formed from two large blocks, had been deeply imbedded in a rock, projecting from the mountain’s side. Over the sacred emblem, the trees had formed a sheltering arbour, its existence there being a fit symbol of the Christian religion, standing on the rock amid the ruin and decay even of its own temples and rites.

To this spot resorted those, who would ask some special favour of the mighty spirit they worshipped; but, ignorant of him who had chosen it as his emblem, they would fall down in adoration before it; many believing that the spirit himself dwelt within it, and that the stone retained hidden virtues. It was also considered as a sanctuary, which none would dare to violate. Any one followed by his most deadly enemy, who could reach it, might cling to its support and there be safe from vengeance. Even those professing Islamism still held it in veneration. Chaplets of flowers, the votive offerings of the worshippers, were hung on the surrounding trees until they withered away.

Thaddeus eagerly hastened to the spot, long ere the time he might expect the coming of his mistress; but he wished to be alone in that sacred place to commune with himself, to dwell upon the anticipation of his bliss should his hopes of her answer be fulfilled. He wandered round the ruins of the once sacred pile; sometimes he feared she could not really love him, and a moment afterwards he felt confident of winning her. Then he threw himself beneath the shade of some tree, and anxiously watched the lengthening shadows; and next he would rise and hasten through the grove, towards the direction whence his mistress should come; but he saw her not. The sun had not yet sunk low enough in the heavens, and he regretted that he had not persuaded her to come at an earlier hour. He again returned, lest, perhaps, she might have passed some other way.

Inspired by the solemnity of the spot, he threw himself down before the cross, and offered up his thanksgiving to heaven for his own preservation, and his prayers for future blessings. Deeply absorbed in his devotions, he thought not of the lapse of time; and, as he rose and gazed eagerly around to see if Ina was near, the sun had reached the edge of the mountain, tinging its sides with a saffron hue, and throwing a deep shade at its base. The minutes now passed like hours; he feared something might have prevented her coming; some accident might have befallen her; he thought of the revenge of the Khan and trembled for her safety.

As despair was about taking possession of him, at length, his heart bounded as he caught sight of her, moving amid the trees like some benign spirit of the groves. At a little distance from her, followed Conrin, slowly and mournfully; who, on seeing Thaddeus, turned aside.

The young lover hastened forward to meet his mistress; he gently took her hand, which she did not withdraw, as he led her to a seat, formed of a broken architrave, beneath the cross. For some minutes neither spoke, as they sat gazing on the rich and smiling valley below them, which was clothed with a soft mellow light; a serene and solemn silence reigned over the whole scene. The lovers felt perfect happiness; they feared to speak, lest a word might break the soft enchantment.

Thaddeus turned to Ina, and, gazing on her eyes, so liquid and tender, yet so lustrous, he saw an expression there which gave him courage to speak. "Ina," he said, "I came to this land a stranger among your people. All my hopes in life were blighted. I had been an imprisoned felon, condemned to death, every instant expecting to die by the hands of my comrades, but was rescued by your brother's bravery. To him I owe all I now possess: I owe him my life, and—more far more than life—the happiness of seeing you. From the moment I saw you, I loved you; from that moment your image has never been absent from my thoughts. In the ardour of the chase, in the solitude of the night, I have thought alone of you; and oh! the rapture, when I found you were saved from the ruffian who would have torn you from me! Sweetest Ina, I love you!"

Ina gazed at him. A sweet smile irradiated her features; her eyes sparkled with animation.

"Is it possible?" she said, with an inquiring look. "That you, Thaddeus, accustomed to the magnificence of the cities, and the accomplished beauties of Frangistan, can think of a mountain maid like me, who has never passed her native shores? Perhaps, you spoke but in sport; but no, you would not tamper thus with my heart."

"Ina, could words alone convince you how ardently I love you, I would speak them," answered Thaddeus; "but no language has fitting words to express my feelings. I would die to save you from harm. Dearest Ina, can you love me?"

"Love you? Blessed joy! oh yes! Perhaps, I do not love you as I ought; still I would not that any arm but yours should have saved me from him that would have torn me from you. Do you think I love you now?"

"Yes, dearest," said her lover, folding her in his arms as her head sank upon his neck. "Yes, Ina, by yonder cross I swear to guard you with my life; to love no other but you."

"Indeed 'tis bliss to hear you speak such words," answered the maid. "A short time ago I thought I loved but one—my honoured father; and then, my brother coming, shared my love; but now I feel my heart too small to hold the love I bear for you. The feelings which I bear for those dear ones I would tell to all the world; but what I feel for you is a treasured secret I would tell to none but you."

"Ina, you are my own," exclaimed Thaddeus. "Oh never deem that I could share my love for you with any other: the very thought were sacrilege. How ardently have I longed before to say this to you—to learn from your own sweet lips, if you could feel the same for me! But still I feared that I could not be worthy of such love as yours."

We must no longer attempt to describe the words with which the young Pole told the deep feelings of his heart to the pure and gentle Ina. Side by side they sat, nor thought how fast the hours sped. The sun had long gone down, the stars came out glittering in the dark clear blue sky, and the moon arose in pure and tranquil majesty to witness their guiltless love, throwing her silvery beams through the dark trees of the grove. Yet still they lingered, pouring into each other's ears the words of soft endearment.

At length they rose from the spot hallowed for ever in their memory, when a gentle step approached, and young Conrin stood before them. Ina thought she heard a sob. He spoke at last in low and hurried tones—

"I came to warn you that night approaches," he said. "You'll be sought for anxiously in the hamlet, and great alarm will be felt when you are missed."

"Ah, is it indeed so late?" said Ina. "I thought we had passed but a few minutes here. We will hasten home."

"I will guard you to your home, dear Ina!" said Thaddeus, as he supported her steps.

Though both knew that they ought to hasten, yet neither felt any inclination to quicken their pace, as they passed through the sacred grove, and chose, they knew it not, the longest road to the village. They had yet much to say, when they found themselves at the gate of the anderoon. Young Conrin followed slowly, and again they heard that half-stifled sob; but he sought to avoid their observation.

They stopped at the gate to whisper many more endearing words; and perhaps they might have spent another hour, fancying it but a minute, had they not been startled by the harsh sounds of Kahija's voice, who had bustled out in no sweet temper at the long absence of her young charge.

"Truly, these are pretty doings for a maiden, to be staying from home at this late hour. What would have been said, had any of the inmates of old Mustapha's harem, at Stamboul, taken it into their silly heads to wander about in this way? They would soon have found themselves at the bottom of the Bosphorus, I warrant. That is the way young ladies are treated, who misbehave themselves in the only civilised country in the world—and a very proper way too. A pretty example you set my young lady, Zara. I suppose that she, who has always been so correct—thanks to my instructions—will take it into her head next, to go gadding about in the same way. But, I'll take care she does no such thing I'll promise her. I hope to see the free manners of the girls, of this country, reformed before I die. It's quite dreadful, scandalous, to see them wandering about in this independent manner, with their veils thrown off their faces to let everybody stare at them who likes. Come, Sir," she said, turning to Thaddeus; "I wonder you stay here. I thought you knew that the anderoon was forbidden ground to any man but my lord. I should think you had enough of my lady's company already."

But Thaddeus felt no inclination to move without speaking a word more of farewell; and old Kahija, having vented some of her wrath; and not being, in reality, ill-natured; saw it was useless opposing an affair, which was, indeed, no business of hers. She therefore turned away for a few minutes, during which time Thaddeus snatched a parting embrace from his mistress, drawing a promise from her to meet him again on the next day.

When the old nurse returned, the intruder, much to her satisfaction, was gone. Ina then entered the anderoon, when Zara, throwing aside the embroidery she was engaged on, sprang forward to meet her.

"Dear Ina," she exclaimed, "I feared some other danger had befallen you, that you returned not before."

"No danger could happen to me where I went," answered Ina; "I was safe from every harm. So lovely an evening to wander out!" she added, with a little pardonable deceit. "I wonder you can bear to be so shut up."

"I, too, should like to wander out to breathe the air of evening," answered Zara; "but old Kahija will not hear of it."

"What is that you say?" said the old nurse entering. "What! are you trying to teach Zara to follow your own wild customs? But you will not succeed; she is too good a girl to wish to do any thing of the sort. When she marries young Alp Beg, she may do what she can; but she will be shut up close enough then; and so will you, Ina, if you marry a true believer, instead of one of these heathen countrymen of ours."

Happy were the slumbers of Ina that night as she laid her face upon her pillow. She dreamed that again she trod the sacred grove with him she loved—that again she heard his voice speaking those magic words which changed her very being—she felt the pressure of his hand in hers—and she saw the moon rise amidst the trees, the witness of their love.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Six.**

Perfect tranquillity reigned in the valley of Abran Bashi, far removed from the loud tocsin of war which hung round the borders, though news occasionally arrived of skirmishes with the Moscov, and sometimes a wounded warrior would come to be recovered by the care of his family.

At times, too, wailing and weeping was heard, when a family received intelligence of some dear relation having fallen in the fight; or a sad train would pass through the valley, accompanying the corpse of some noble, borne on his war-steed, who had lost his life in one of the many useless attacks which were at that time made on the Russian lines; more for bravado, and for the sake of exhibiting bravery and fearlessness of consequences—the characteristic of the Circassian warrior—than for any advantage to be gained.

Notwithstanding the predictions of the old chief, Thaddeus began to hope that the Khan, Khoros Kaloret, had foregone all farther attempts to carry off Ina; and, being ignorant by what hand his clansman had fallen, he would be unable to fix his revenge on any one. Thus all dread of evil consequences left his mind; and even Ina no longer feared to renew her rambles under his protection beyond even her former limits, though sure of receiving a severe lecture from old Kahija after each transgression.

We have as yet given but a slight sketch of her beautiful friend, the young Zara: she was like a sweet rose-bud, fresh and blooming, ere the first rays of the morning sun have dissipated the crystal dew; a complete child of nature. Brought up in that secluded valley, she knew nought of the world beyond the lofty mountains that surrounded it. Within that spot all her thoughts and hopes had been concentrated; she loved her pure streams, her verdant fields, and her shady groves, and grateful to the kind nature who placed her there; she was happy and contented, and would have felt miserable at the idea of leaving them, undazzled even by old Kahija's descriptions of the gorgeous Stamboul. Her character was pure as her own sweet face; she seemed formed for love and tenderness alone, unfit to buffet with the cares and troubles of the world. Like a delicate plant, requiring some strong tree round which to



entwine its slender tendrils, to gain strength and support from it. Her temper was sweet and amiable to all; and even old Kahija's lectures failed to ruffle her. Dutiful and obedient to her only remaining parent, she tended him in sickness with the most gentle and unremitting care; and dearly in return did the old chief love his little Zara.

Her features were soft and feminine as her character; she was beautifully fair; her delicate auburn locks hung over her swan-like neck in rich profusion, her large eyes of purest blue were shaded by dark lashes, adding to their tender and languishing glance, while a smile playing round her ruby lips, betokened a happy and contented heart. Her figure, though equally graceful, was shorter and fuller than her friend's; but none could deem it otherwise than perfect.

Such seemed the fair young being who had bestowed all her pure and warm affections on the gallant and youthful warrior, Alp Beg, and truly did he prize the treasured girl he had won.

He had been loved from his childhood by her grandfather for his courage and activity in all manly sports, and now gladly did the old chief accord his sanction to their union, which he had arranged with the Hadji before his departure for the camp. As yet the fair girl knew not that her hopes were to be fulfilled, for though Alp had found time to whisper his love, neither knew that their parents would give their sanction to their marriage; and often would sad forebodings for the future cross her otherwise tranquil mind, fears that their union might be forbid, or that he might be snatched from her by the cruel Urus.

The two fair girls were seated on an ottoman in the anderoon, while Ina worked a belt with golden thread, her first gift to Thaddeus. Zara struck the cords of her lute.

How sweet and thrilling was her voice, as she sang the following simple ballad:—

The sun shone like glittering gold on the lake,  
While softly the breeze through the green forest play'd;  
The birds sang their gay notes from rock and from brake,  
And sweet odours sprung from each flowery glade;  
There was heard too a fountain's light murmuring voice,  
And nature in smiles seemed with glee to rejoice.

Though nature was smiling, yet sorrow was nigh,  
For near a pure stream, 'neath a green willow's shade,  
With her quick panting bosom, a bright weeping eye,  
There stood, trembling with fear, a fair Attèghèi maid,  
As a gallant youth, pressing her form in his arms,  
Sought, with love's parting kisses, to calm her alarms.

Mid the clustering forest his charger stood near.  
And, his streaming mane tossing, was stamping the ground;  
His squire was holding his buckler and spear,  
While from far off came booming the cannon's deep sound.  
One more agonised pang, and he tore him away,  
And mounted his war-steed to join the affray,

But as slowly he rode through the green leafy wood,  
With a lingering pace he oft turned his fond gaze,  
To cast one more glance where his lov'd maiden stood,  
Till soon she was hid by the thick forest maze;  
Then, spurring his charger with speed o'er the lee,  
Soon with fear did the foemen his dancing crest see.

Like the willow which gracefully bent o'er the stream.  
The maiden stood tremb'ling and drooping with grief,  
Like the dew of the morn did those precious drops seem,  
When the bright sun-beams play on the spark'ling green leaf.  
Ah! cruel the war that could make her thus mourn!  
Ah! sad 'twas to leave that sweet maiden forlorn!

Then rising, she clomb o'er the mountain so high,  
And she look'd o'er the hill and she look'd down the vale;  
Saw joyous in fancy his gay banner fly,  
When her ear caught the sound of a funeral wail.  
Through the glen, as advancing with mournful slow tread,  
A train bore the bier of a warrior dead.

Then fearful and fleet as the chas'd deer she flew,  
Down the steep mountain's side, over chasm and brake.  
For well the bright arms of her hero she knew;  
Not the whirlwind's swift course could her flight overtake.  
Then she threw herself down her slain lover beside;  
She sigh'd not, she wept not, but heart-broken died.

As she finished, tears stood in her eyes, and her voice trembled at the last lines.

"Why sing you that mournful ditty, dear Zara?" said her friend. "It is too sad for one, whose eye sorrow has not dimmed, to sing."

"I know not why I sing it," answered Zara; "but I could not help it, the words came flowing to my lips."

"Who taught you so sad an air?" asked Ina.

"A venerable bard who travelled once this way. His steps were feeble, and his locks were blanched with years, and, as he rested at our house he sang this air, gazing sorrowfully at my face, and made me learn these words, I know not why. He went his way, nor ever have I seen him since: but still, at times, a sadness comes upon me, and I sing this song."

A deep-drawn sob was heard from the corner of the apartment where the young Conrin had thrown himself on a divan.

"Come hither, Conrin," said Ina, in tones of kindness. He had been weeping; for his eyes were red and his features wore an air of sadness.

"Why do you weep, dear Conrin? What makes you thus sorrowful?"

"Sad thoughts and feelings," answered the page. "I have much to make me weep: but it was that song overcame me. I wept for the sad forebodings that it brought upon my soul, for myself I care not, but for those I have learned to love."

"What causes have you for grief, dear boy?" said Ina. "Are you not happy here, where all so love you?"

"I cannot tell you, lady," answered the page.

"Why not tell me your grief? Perchance, confiding it to me, I may aid to mitigate it," said Ina.

"Oh no, it is impossible; my grief is too deep for consolation; it is a secret I shall never tell," answered the page.

"But, I may find a means to soothe it," urged Ina.

"Lady, pray deem me not ungrateful; but again, I beseech you, let me leave you," exclaimed Conrin. "I love you much; but yet, I love your noble brother more. The only balm you can give to soothe me is to let me go to him."

"But, why would you leave this calm retreat to hasten amidst scenes of war and bloodshed?" said Ina.

"I would go to my master, wherever he may be, lady," answered Conrin. "I fear some danger threatens him; I know not what, but dark forebodings steal across my soul. I cannot look upon the future as I used to do, hoping for days of brightness and joy; my heart no longer bounds as it was wont, with thoughts of happiness. Oh let me seek my master, that I may guard him from the threatened harm, if still I may! I would too, gaze upon his loved features once again before I die, for too surely do I feel the troubled inward spirit preparing for its flight to quit this world. I feel that nothing can avert my death, come how it may."

"Boy, you speak of strange, mysterious things," exclaimed Ina, in an alarmed tone. "Why think you danger threatens my dear brother? and why these sad forebodings of your own fate?"

"Lady, I come of a race who oft see things hidden from duller eyes; and once, it is said, our ancestors could foretell either the death of mortals, or their destiny; but the power has passed away, as we have mixed our blood with other tribes. Yet, even now, we often see the shadow of a coming evil; and it is a curse upon our race, that we cannot guard against it when it threatens ourselves. For others yet we may, and thus I would attempt to guard my master."

"Conrin, you persuade me strongly to let you go; and for my dear brother's sake I will, though I should be loath to part from you. Oh, shield him, if you can, from danger, and may Allah bless you!"

"Thanks, lady, thanks! Even now my spirits lighten of their load," exclaimed Conrin. "I would set off this day; another may be too late."

"You cannot journey alone, on that road, dear page," said Ina; "you shall accompany the first band of warriors who set forward for the camp."

"Oh, I would find my way alone, through every obstacle, to meet your noble brother," said the boy, eagerly.

"Conrin, that cannot be; you know not half the dangers which would beset you on the road. To-morrow, perhaps, some warriors may go forth. You said you had a secret that you would not tell; but let me hear it; for much do I love you, for the affection which you bear my brother; and much it pains my heart to think that yours must bleed without a sympathising friend, to soothe your pain. Ah! how blind I have been! a thought has opened now my eyes. Come hither; let me whisper to your ear."

The gentle Ina bent over her page's head. A deep blush suffused the boy's cheeks; his eyes filled with tears.

"Ah! it is so? Let me weep with you," she cried. "But, be of good hope, all may yet be well. Such love as yours cannot go unrequited."

Old Kahija was certain to intrude when she was least wanted; and at that instant she made her appearance, hobbling in, for she was somewhat unwieldy in her gait. Her cheeks almost burst with impatience to communicate some important information.

"Here's news for you, young ladies, from the camp," she exclaimed. "Ah, Zara, my pretty maid, you'll not have to sigh much longer, I am thinking, for the young Alp. Now, girls, what would you give to have the information? Your best earrings, I warrant; but I am not cruel, and will keep you no longer in suspense," she added, as eager to communicate the news, as the fair inmates of the harem were to hear it. "Know then, my pretty Zara, that our noble chief, your grandfather, has given his sanction for your marriage with young Alp Beg, and in a short time, he will be here to bear you from us."

"Speak you the words of truth, Kahija?" exclaimed Zara, blushing, but looking perfectly happy, as she threw herself upon Ina's neck. "Oh, say when he will come?"

"He has sent some one to deliver a message to you; therefore wrap your features closely in a veil, and go out to the gate of the anderoon. And that reminds me there is some one to see you, Conrin, from your master."

"Ah!" exclaimed the page, hastening to the door. "What joy to hear of him."

"A messenger from my brother!" cried Ina. "I too, must learn what news he brings."

At the gates of the anderoon, Conrin found Jarvis waiting his coming.

"I bring news from our master, for his sister," said the squire. "In a few days he will be here, and then I must quit his service, if I can return to Russia. I have fulfilled my oath, I have obeyed your wish; no mortal, with a spirit that could feel, would do more."

"Jarvis, I owe you much;" exclaimed the page. "I would repay you with my life; but the only reward you prize, alas! I cannot give."

"I ask for no reward," answered Jarvis; "the only one I prize, alas! I cannot gain; and after that, death will be the most welcome. But I would see my people first, and breathe my spirit out amongst them. I have done your bidding. I vowed to do what you wished, nor stipulated for reward. I rescued the young chief from the power of the Russians; I have striven to wash away my thought of crime almost perpetrated; I saw him safely landed on his native shores; I have seen him take his place among his people, as a chieftain of Circassia: I even learned to love him for himself, but more I cannot do. I could not bear to see him again at your side; I must go even from you."

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Ina and Zara.

"Say, when will my brother come?" exclaimed Ina. "Oh, 'twill be joy to see him."

"In three days hence, if the Russians move not from their encampments," answered Jarvis.

"Bring you any message for me?" said Zara, timidly addressing a young warrior, who respectfully saluted her at her approach.

"Yes, lady, I bear a message from my friend, the gallant Alp Beg. Before two days have passed, and ere the shade of yonder lofty tree has reached the stream which flows a short distance from its base, he will be here."

"You bring me grateful news, indeed. Oh, many thanks!" returned Zara. "Say, is your friend well?"

"Yes, lady, he is well; and bears himself bravely against the foe," answered the messenger.

"Come, come, maidens," exclaimed Kahija, bustling up. "It is very incorrect to stop chattering longer than is necessary at the gate of the anderoon. If you have received your messages, come into the house, and let the young men go their way."

Having no further excuse for remaining, the fair girls were obliged to do as desired, though they would fain have heard more of those so dear to them.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Seven.**

We must return again to take a glance at the patriot camp on the Ubin. Except the slight skirmishes already described, nothing of importance had been effected, and as the winter was now fast approaching, the Russians appeared to contemplate no further movement.

A council of war was one day held in a grove, away from the din and bustle of the camp, at which were present, among many of the Princes and nobles of Circassia; Arslan Gherrei, his son and the Hadji, when shots were heard announcing the arrival of some other chief, and presently a band of wild horsemen were seen approaching, dressed in skins and furs, of some of the mountain Tartar tribes.

At their head, rode the Khan Khoros Kaloret; who, after dismounting, singly approached the council ring. The chiefs stood up as he stepped boldly amongst them. His looks were fierce and angry, as his glance passed round on the assembled nobles, who could ill brook his haughty mien. At length, one of the most ancient addressed him—

"Why come you here, Khan, to interrupt our conference? Have you any tidings of importance to communicate?"

"Why come I here?" echoed the Khan, furiously. "Think you, I come for idle sport? No, I come to claim my brother's blood at your hands. Say, where he is, or I may not continue to be a friend to any here. Say, where is my brother?"

"We know not of your brother, Khan; we have spoken our answer."

"Does my brother, live? I ask you," said the Khan.

"We know not of your brother," answered the former speaker.

"To you then, Uzden Arslan Gherrei, I appeal," said the Khan. "I sent him to you, to bring back your daughter as my bride; and since he left your house, none of my clansmen know aught of him. At your hands, I require him."

"Your brother, Khan, quitted my house free to go where he willed. I cannot tell you of him more," answered the chieftain—

The Khan glanced fiercely around him for a few seconds, without speaking; during which, the members of the council moved to a farther distance, and resumed their seats; leaving the enraged Khan, standing alone; a customary and sufficient signal, that his presence was not required. The Khan stood irresolute for a few minutes; then, against all rules of established ceremony, again approached them.

"Chieftain," he cried, addressing Arslan Gherrei; "again, I ask you, where is my brother? If dead, say who slew him, that I may know my enemy; or, if he fell before the foe, why brought you not away his corpse, and arms?"

"Khan," answered the chief; "is it not enough to say, that I cannot tell you of your brother? then ask me no more."

Saying which, the whole body returned to their former position, leaving the Khan alone. He again followed them, when the council slowly rising, the aged chief, who had before spoken, again addressed him:

"Twice have we warned you, Khan, not to question us of your brother. Now learn his fate; he died a traitor's death—fighting in our foemen's ranks, he fell, attempting treachery. He lies now amongst a heap of cursed Urus; his name disgraced and blotted from our memories. Now go, and ask no more of him. His name is foul."

"Chieftain, whoever says my brother died a traitor's death, lies black as Eblis. Back in his mouth, I'll throw the calumny," cried the Khan. "My brother was ever a foe to Russia, and deeply will I avenge his slandered honour."

At these words, the chiefs half drew their swords; but, recollecting that he stood one among many, and having compassion upon him for his grief, and his brother's crime and death, they returned them to their scabbards, and spoke not.

"Uzden Arslan Gherrei, from henceforth know me as your deadly foe," cried the Khan; "whatever death my brother died, 'twas you that caused it, and I will have revenge, if I die to gain it."

Uttering which, with a fierce tone and aspect, he strode from the spot, mounting his war horse, rode furiously from the camp, followed by the troop of his wild clansmen, without waiting to salute any of the chiefs he met.

We must leave the Khan to pursue his headlong course, while we follow the movements of the Baron Galetzoff, and the small army under his command. After marching from Anapa, they proceeded to the newly erected fort, we have described on the south side of the Kouban, which was built on slightly elevated ground, at no great distance; though beyond gun shot of the range of mountains, which girt the territories to which the tribes of the Attèghèi are now confined. On the other side extended a broad plain, formed of the marshes of the Kouban, from which the heats of summer draw forth the noxious miasma, so prejudicial to the health of the soldiers; but the flat marshy nature of the country, added to the security of the position, lessens the chance of a surprise, and gives full scope for the deadly fire of grape and rockets.

The fort had been commenced under the protection of a large force; and the Baron was now employed in forming fresh entrenchments, and taking every means to strengthen his position; waiting in hopes of some opportunity occurring to revenge himself for the losses he had sustained. No houses had as yet been built; the troops living in wretched huts hastily constructed of mud and boughs, and the officers in their tents.

Towards the close of the day, the Baron was seated in his tent, when his aide-de-camp announced to him that one of the chiefs of the enemy, with a flag of truce, desired an audience immediately.

"Let him be admitted," said the General. "We may at length have awed some of these barbarians into subjection."

The Baron rose to receive his guest as the officer returned, ushering in a tall ferocious looking warrior, his heavy sword clashing against his armour, as with a fearless step he entered the tent. The General started when he saw him; for he thought of the young Khan to whose death he had been instrumental, and of his squire whom he had unjustly shot, as gazing earnestly at the stranger, he almost fancied the dead stood before him. For a few moments neither spoke, as the civilised European commander confronted the wild warrior of the mountains, who returned his glance with a haughty and seemingly contemptuous stare. At length, banishing his superstitious fears, he spoke.

"Who are you, chief, that thus venture into the camp of the Russians?"

"I am Kaloret Khan," answered the chief in a fierce tone.

At the sound of that name the Baron started, laying his hand upon his sword to prepare himself for the expected attack.

"Fear not," said the Khan in a contemptuous tone, "I come not to do you harm. Did I wish to kill you, I could have done so ere this. See!" he added, pointing to the opening of the tent, before which one of his wild clansmen was holding his war horse. "I could have struck you dead, and mounted my fleet steed, leaping your paltry

entrenchments, before one of your slow-moving soldiers could have stopped me. No, Russian, I come not to harm you."

"For what purpose do you come here? What ask you?" said the General.

"I come," answered the Khan, frowning darkly, and clenching his gauntleted hand, "I come to seek revenge."

"A goodly feeling, and one that should be encouraged by all brave men," answered the Baron. "And on whom do you seek it?"

"On those who have injured me. On a chieftain, Arslan Gherrei, who refused to let his daughter be my wife; and shall I tamely brook such an insult? I would bear the girl away, in spite of her refusal; I would revenge myself upon him for my brother's death; who is said to have come to ask your aid to carry off the chieftain's daughter, when he died by the hand of Selem, his newly found son."

"You have heard truly, Khan," answered the General. "Say, how can I assist you in your wishes, and I will gladly hold the hand of friendship forth to you."

"I would bring hither the daughter of the chieftain, for I must quit my mountain home, my flocks and herds, and come to join you with my followers."

"You speak wisely, Khan," said the Baron. "You shall be received with open arms; but you must also bring this son of Arslan Gherrei, and his youthful page, and also a Russian officer, who lately escaped when under sentence of death. I will, in return, promise you lands, flocks, and herds to supply those you have left."

"You speak of Selem Gherrei, Russian," exclaimed the Khan. "It were easier far to entrap the savage boar, and bring him willingly along, than to bring alive before you any of the chiefs of the Attèghèi. But I will try; and, if I fail, it shall not be for want of hatred and revenge to prompt me."

"Bring him alive, if possible; if not, bring me his corpse, and you will be welcome. There are others I would secure—his squire, and a slow, heavy slave, who is probably about his person."

"I have already said I will do my best to please you," said the Khan haughtily, "and now I must depart."

"Farewell, until you return with your prisoners," rejoined the Russian.

"Chieftain of Russia," responded the Khan, "you will see me soon again. I tarry not in my revenge."

Saying which Khoros Kaloret strode from the tent with the same haughty air with which he had entered, and, mounting his horse, galloped off.

"There goes a traitor," said the Baron, following him with his eye as he rode off; "and if there were a few more like him, we might soon rightly call the fair lands of Circassia our own. I think I can trust that barbarian, with revenge for his motive of action; and if he brings Arslan Gherrei's daughter, I shall have a hold upon him he cannot easily break through."

He then summoned Count Erintoff to his presence.

"Ah! Colonel," he said, as the Count entered, "I have at length a hope of punishing those who have hitherto escaped my vengeance."

"I am rejoiced to hear it, General," said the Count. "We owe it as a duty to our country to punish those vile deserters, not to mention the indulgence of a little private revenge. But how is it that you hope to succeed?"

"Why it appears that the fierce Khan, Khoros Khaloret, has taken umbrage that the Chief Arslan Gherrei refuses him his daughter—the same of whom we heard so much, and who so narrowly escaped us at the fords of the Mezi, when the Khan's brother led you into that desperate scrape. He now wishes to run off with the lady, and take refuge with us: so I have made it a condition of his being; well received, that he brings off those deserters, Ivan Galetzoff, his page, Lieutenant Stanisloff, and others. I fear he may not succeed in capturing Ivan Galetzoff, who, now I hear, bears the name of Selem Gherrei; indeed, I have no doubt he is the son of Arslan Gherrei, as I captured the boy myself, and well remember that was the name of the chief whose village I attacked and burned. I carried off his wife with this boy, who I knew not was her own son, little thinking what a viper I was cherishing. I intended him to prove a bitter enemy to this rebellious country, but I find this woman counteracted all my intentions, by instilling into his bosom an absurd love of country and liberty. I would give worlds to get him into my power; and though the Khan may not succeed in entrapping him, he may secure his page, whom he brought with him from Russia, and to whom it seems he is much attached. I propose to work upon the boy, either by kindness or threats of his life, to induce him to assist in some plot to betray his master. At all events I have hopes that this young Gherrei, when he finds we have possession of his sister and page, will attempt to rescue them. We will be on the watch to ensure his capture, and I will promise a reward to whoever makes him a prisoner. What say you, Count, to my plans?"

"It is an excellent plot, and cannot fail," said his worthy officer; "but we must also endeavour to re-capture Lieutenant Stanisloff. I have a little private grudge against him, which I would fain indulge."

"Oh! there is but little chance of missing him," answered his superior; "he will probably accompany Selem Gherrei into the field, and fall into the same toil as his friend. You, Colonel, shall have the lady as your share."

"I cannot refuse so generous an offer," said the Count. "I suppose she must be beautiful, or she would not have inflamed the heart of the savage Khan. I require some fair mistress to drive the Gipsy Azila out of my head; for I could

never gain any further trace of her after it was discovered that she was implicated in that miserable conspiracy.”

“A great disappointment, Colonel; but I dare say this wild mountain beauty will recompense you for her loss,” said the Baron.

“Perchance she may,” answered the Count, “for it is said these Circassian beauties may vie with the most lovely in the world. But we must be cautious. If we deprive the fiery Khan of the lady, he may give us some trouble. He does not appear a person who would quietly submit to have his mistress taken from him, after the risk and danger he must undergo to win her.”

“That matters little,” answered the Baron; “he will give us but slight trouble, for we must put him out of the way on the first convenient opportunity. I never contemplated allowing him to remain alive. I love not these intractable mountaineers; and can never trust them. We can let him fall into the hands of his countrymen, and they will take good care to ease us of any further thought concerning him.”

“A very good idea, General,” answered the Count. “I agree with you that these barbarians are equally troublesome whether as friends or enemies; and I confess I did not like the scowl he cast on me and all around, as he passed, bearing himself as proudly as if he were some conqueror riding amidst his slaves.”

“They are a detested race,” exclaimed the General, grinning through his thick-mustachioed lips; “but we will soon humble their pride, and drag them in chains to St. Petersburg, where they shall be exhibited as a specimen of the knights of old and we may then build our chateau, and lay out our parks amidst these green hills and fertile valleys, without the fear of being molested.”

“You are facetious, General, at the expense of the savages,” said the Count. “But, according to my taste, this is rather too far from the capital to build a country house. I should like, however, to transfer a few of their fair beauties from these wilds to people my domain near Moscow; and as for the men who have given us so much trouble, I would shoot them all as traitors, or send them to work in the mines of Siberia. They are too fierce to be tamed; for, like hyaenas, they would never be at rest, and would spring upon us when we least expected it. But, badinage aside, what do you, Baron, intend to do with the prisoners the Khan is to bring us? They deserve severe punishment.”

“Shoot them as flagrant deserters taken in arms against the Emperor,” answered the Baron, clenching his hand, and frowning darkly. “It is too mild a punishment for them.”

“This page of Ivan Galetzoff, or Selem Gherrei, or whatever name he now goes by, deserves punishment richly for that affair of the Mezi,” said the Count. “I saw him fighting as furiously as the oldest hands among them. The fiery young villain shot the Khan’s brother and one of our own Cossacks, who was about to cut down his master. I fear we shall not succeed in getting much service out of him.”

“Then he must die. We must make an example of all deserters,” said the General, “or we shall find our ranks completely empty before long. What with the desertion of these rascally slaves we have sent there as soldiers, these cursed fevers which sweep off so many, and the atrocious daring of these barbarous mountaineers, we have lost more men already than we can spare. Had I my own way, I would overwhelm these Circassians at one fell swoop, and exterminate them from the face of the earth.”

“I agree with you, General, this is the only way to treat them,” answered the Count.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Eight.**

With light and bounding heart, young Alp urged on his steed towards the smiling valley of Abran Bashi, as from the summit of the last mountain he espied amid the trees the habitation of his young and beloved Zara. He wore a Persian suit of the finest chain armour, a gift from his uncle, Achmet Beg, over which was thrown a cloak of blue cloth, trimmed with gold. A belt of Turkish leather, richly embroidered in gold, (the prized gift of his mistress, worked by her own fair hand), bound his waist, holding his jewelled dagger; and at his side hung a well tempered Damascus blade. Boots also of Turkish leather, and worked by the same loved one, covered his feet. On his head, instead of the warlike helmet, he wore a cap of cloth, trimmed with a narrow border of dark fur, overshadowed by a plume of white feathers. He looked indeed a noble bridegroom, worthy of the love of Circassia’s lovely daughters, the pride of his gallant old father.

By his side rode his tried and sworn friend, the son of the brave and sturdy chief, Ali Beg, his companion in many a wild and daring adventure, when they were boys together; and lately, in the sterner and sanguinary scenes of warfare. He too was in his most gallant array, his arms furbished to their utmost polish, his coat and steel almost concealed by a gay-coloured vest, and by the cloak which hung from his shoulders. He had been selected by his friend for the honourable and important post of bridesman, to escort the bride to the house of her destined lord.

In the meantime, young Zara was counting the hours, as they seemed to crawl by, ere he came; and in spite of all old Kahija’s notions of propriety, stole often and furtively to the wicket of the enclosure surrounding the anderoon, to throw many a searching glance up the valley to the summit of the hill, over which she knew her knight must pass. Then she would run back again, and pretend to be busily engaged in her work, her ear anxiously intent to catch the sounds of his horse’s hoofs, as her eye was to search for his graceful figure. Then she would persuade herself and her friend that she had a head-ache, and that a little more fresh air would wonderfully benefit her; and she would seize Ina’s arm, and hurry off. Her friend fully comprehended the reasons of her constant visits to the gate.

“Why comes he not, Ina?” at length she said. “What think you could have delayed him on the road? He said he would come ere the shadows of yonder tree had reached the waters of the rivulet, and see it already touches the edge of the bank. Oh, Allah! can any harm have befallen him? I never think of those dreadful Urus without shuddering, and

Alp is always on some hazardous expedition against them; their very name frightens me.”

“Nay,” said Ina, “let not your thoughts dwell on such fears. See the shadow has not yet reached the water, and ere it does, perhaps Alp will be here.”

“Tell me, Ina, how is it that some women of our country can be so courageous as to rush into battle, fearing not the Urus, and bear themselves as bravely as the men? For my part, I tremble at the report only of a rifle, and could not fire a pistol to defend my life,” said Zara.

“Because, dearest,” answered her friend, “you have been removed from the scenes of havoc and bloodshed, which steel their hearts from all feelings of compassion for our foes, and which nerve their arms, and inspire them with courage to avenge their wrongs.”

“It is dreadful to think of it,” exclaimed Zara, shuddering. “I would rather die at once than look on blood. The foe might kill me, but I could not fight.”

“Oh, let us pray, Allah, that the dread foe may never come near this valley, and then you need have no cause to fear them,” answered her friend.

“I almost wish that Alp was not so great a warrior; but yet I love to hear of his brave deeds. They say he will be equal to his father, and he is one of the bravest heroes of Attèghèi. Ina, I will tell you a secret. I have loved Alp for a very long time—ever since I first saw him—when he once came home, bringing two Russian prisoners. Hearing every body praise so much, I ventured to look at him, and then I saw what a gallant and noble youth he was. Then he danced with me at the marriage of one of my grandfather’s followers. Oh, how my heart leaped as he pressed my hand, and led me out on the green. I did not care for all old Kahija’s frowns. And then the soft and sweet things he said to me! I never heard words like them, and when I looked at him again, I thought him one of the handsomest of all the youths of the Attèghèi—not in the least like his father, as people said he was. I was always happy when he came, and used to play so many tricks to avoid old Kahija, who makes me so obedient at other times, though I never ventured away so far from the house as you do. Then, when he told me how much he loved me, and that he would die, or win me, I was so happy! I did not think he would have to die.”

“Yes, dear Zara, Alp is indeed a noble youth, well worthy a lady’s love,” answered Ina.

“Ah!” said Zara, clasping her friend’s arm tighter, “see, Ina, see, he comes! I see his glittering armour. I see his white plume. Ah, he hastens onward—he looks this way, to catch a glimpse of me. Now he looks at the shadow of the tall tree, to see if he have kept his promised time. See the shadow scarcely yet touches the water! He flies faster than the sun. He will be here in a few minutes. Oh, Ina, how my heart beats! I must run away—I must hide. He will think I have been looking for him. I ought not to stay here. What will Kahija say?”

Whatever Zara ought to have done, she showed not the slightest inclination to move, but continued waiting the approach of Alp, who certainly proved himself to be no dilatory lover, by the rate he galloped on. So fast indeed did he approach, that she had not time to retire if she would, before, leaping from his horse, he clasped her in his arms, spite of her blushes, and the presence of Ina, whom he seemed to have quite overlooked. He, however, now made his courtesies to her in proper form.

“See, Zara,” he said, “I sent word I would come ere the shadow of yon tall tree had reached the stream, and it but now touches the wet grass on its borders. I come, sweet one;” and he whispered a few magic words in her ear which made the roses glow more brightly in her cheeks.

“My father gives me but a few days ere he will call me back to the camp, so that we have but a short time. He will arrange all things with your grandfather, and to-morrow my home will await your coming.”

We will not dwell any longer on the interview of the lovers; nor need we describe their words of tender endearment; for love, we believe, to be much the same in all parts of the globe, influencing in the same way the thoughts and feelings of all those, whose young hearts have not been blighted and seared by the world, which too soon works a woeful change in all that is tender, pure, and lovely. These mountain lovers might not perhaps have used the courtly phrases of the cities of Frangistan; but they spoke a language which both perfectly understood, and, looking into each other’s eyes, they found words unnecessary.

They did not even perceive that Ina had long left them; and were somewhat startled in finding old Kahija standing in her place, after an interval whose duration they had not calculated. Her appearance drove many things, they were about to communicate to each other, out of their heads; and so pertinaciously did the nurse keep her ground, that Alp, who had never fled before the Russian fire, was now obliged to beat a most unwilling retreat.

From far and near came guests to grace the bridal festival of the fair young Zara and the gallant Alp. From the mountain villages, and neighbouring dells, all assembled whom war had not called from their homes, and all ranks and classes were equally welcomed by the venerable and hospitable old chief. Parties of youths and maidens came in their gayest attire, streaming over the hills and down the valleys; their embroidered cloaks fluttering in the breeze, and glittering with silver fringe, singing, as they wended their way, songs in praise of the young couple. Here some noble gallant might be seen on his gaily caparisoned charger, scouring along the valley to join the throng; others came in attendance on their fair partners for the coming dance; their gallantry more sincere, and scarcely less refined than in the civilised countries of Europe.

The vests of the maidens were ornamented in front with silver studs, and closed by clasps of the same metal; while a jewelled brooch confined the bands which bound their slender waists. White veils or scarfs, nearly reaching the ground, fell from amid their braided tresses, confined at the ends by a silver cord. They wore muslin trousers, fastened round their ankles; their petticoats reaching to the knee, and embroidered slippers encased their small feet.

The lower ranks were dressed in less elegant attire, though of much the same fashion; but all had done their utmost to deck their persons to the best advantage, to add to the brilliancy of the scene.

The feast was held in the grove close to the habitation of the Prince, where arbours had been erected for the fairer portion of the guests. In the principal one Zara, with Ina and old Kahija, were stationed to receive them. Numerous bands of slaves were in attendance, bearing tables to the green glade, from which, through an opening in the trees, was seen the lower part of the valley; and here the old chief stood with Alp and his friends, to receive the male guests as they quickly assembled. The tables were spread in long rows on the grassy lawn; the chiefs, and those of higher rank, being seated round their venerable host, while those not of noble birth and the freemen, were placed at the other end.

In the neighbouring thicket were numerous fires, at each of which was suspended a nobly charged spit, or a kettle tended by female slaves busily employed in preparing viands for the large party assembled. At a distance stood in eager and hungry expectation, the serfs and those not of rank sufficiently high to enjoy the privilege of sitting at table; but to whom the remainder of the banquet was to be served when the nobles had finished. There were minstrels also to chaunt forth the praise of the bridegroom and his fair Zara, one taking up the strain from the other, and each endeavouring to outdo the first in praise and delicacy of compliment.

In the meantime, Zara and her fair companions were entertained in the arbours, whence their light ringing laughter reached the spot where the nobles were seated. Though many of the party were Mahometans, the cup of sparkling wine often passed round to the sound of music; but they remained not long seated, for eager were the youths to join the dance, when they saw the troops of lovely maidens tripping gaily along the verdant glade, entwining round their graceful forms wreaths of bright flowers. The youths spiling quickly from the tables in pursuit of their fair partners; and vain were their laughing efforts to escape from the quick footed, active mountaineers, who soon overtook them, leading them back no unwilling prisoners to the smoothest and most level spot for dancing.

Then did the musicians strike up their gayest airs; the dancers moving first to slow and measured time, in circles alternately of youths and maids, now lifting their arms in graceful undulations aloft and now joining their hands in the centre. Then, as the music quickened, pursuing each other round and round; the maids wreathing their flowers and circling the heads of the youth as they knelt at their feet. Then springing up, they pursued their giddy course.

Alp led forth his bride elect, the last time he could thus appear with her in public; Thaddeus, following his example with Ina; and many a closely veiled and hooded matron of high rank conducted to the dance their daughters to receive the hands of partners. Gracefully they moved through the forest glades. The minstrels exerted their talents to the utmost, and were joined, at times, by the sweet voices of the fair dancers; while, occasionally, laughter resounded on all sides. The elders and matrons, seated on divans and carpets in the arbours or beneath the shade of the trees, looked on with approbation, applauding the graceful movements and activity of their children.

The time was now approaching when Zara must leave the gay scene to be attired in her thick veil in preparation for her journey, old Ivahija being in waiting to carry her off to the house.

All present seemed full of happiness, except the young page, Conrin. The joyousness of the scene grated on his feelings; and forsaking the throng, he sought to calm his troubled thoughts at a distance in solitude and quiet. He earnestly longed to see his master again; he was disappointed at Selem's not arriving as he expected, and feared that the danger he fancied was approaching, might already have overtaken him. Jarvis, on perceiving his departure from the feast, followed at a distance, in hopes of offering consolation; but Conrin seemed to avoid him. At length, Jarvis came up with him.

"Have I done aught to offend you?" he said, "know you not, that I would die an hundred deaths for your sake? Then, why do you thus shun me?"

"Oh, speak not thus," answered Conrin. "Yes, you are good, you are kind, you are brave; and grateful, deeply grateful, am I, for all that you have done for me; but I can give you no reward."

"I seek for no reward, but would comfort you," said Jarvis.

"You cannot comfort me. I have brought my misery upon myself; and on you, my kind friend, I have brought danger and hardship; nor know I how you may escape from them. For myself, I care not; my grief has no cure."

"Quit this vain hope. You still may have happiness with one, who loves you truly," answered Jarvis.

"While my life endures, never will I quit the country that holds the young chief Selem. Think you, I would leave him when a career of glory is opening out before him? I love to gaze upon his noble form, to hear his words, though spoken to others. If he fall, I shall not survive him. Now leave me, kind Jarvis, and forget the wrong I've done you. Hark, what loud shout is that?"

The revelry still continued with unabated ardour. The green was covered with gay and happy dancers. Alp was to lead the last round with his sweet Zara, and then they must part, though soon to meet again. The song, the laugh, and the cheerful sounds of the musician's strains, filling the forest glade, gladdened the hearts of all; when a shriek arose from the women, and a terrific yell like the cry of demons resounded through the woods. Before the youths could draw their swords, a fierce band of savage horsemen were upon them. Some of the affrighted maidens fled, shrieking through the groves; others stood paralysed with fear, clinging to the arms of their protectors. The banqueting tables were overturned, as the pursued and the pursuers rushed across the glade; the bright sparkling wine flowed on the grass, mingled with the red blood of the combatants, as the young warriors bravely rallied to withstand the overpowering attack of the fierce followers of the Khan Khoros Kaloret; for he it was who led the band of marauders.



His eye had singled out one fair object for his prey, as he fought his way to the spot; she was struggling to escape from the grasp of one of his followers, who had seized her round the waist, to lift her on his horse; when Thaddeus, escaping from those who had attacked him, rushed forward, cleaving the savage's shoulder to the arm. He had scarcely time to save his mistress from being crushed by the weight of the falling body, ere the Khan fiercely set on him, endeavouring to regain possession of his prize.

Alp had thrown himself before Zara, at the first onset of the foe, repelling all who attacked him. He bore her in safety towards a party of their friends, assembled round the aged chief, who were keeping the horsemen at a distance to protect the women. Leaving his bride under protection, he collected a few men, and hastened to assist a small party fiercely beset by the Tartars, on whom he set with such energy, that they were compelled to fly; but only to return with fresh fury to the attack.

In the mean time, the Khan, finding Ina snatched from his very grasp, threw himself on Thaddeus, with his whole force, hoping to bear him to the ground. Thaddeus eluded his first onset, placing Ina on his left side, and parrying with the greatest difficulty, the repeated and furious strokes aimed at him by the Khan. He retreated fighting, as he bore his mistress to a place of safety; when a heavy blow from the Khan's sword brought him on his knee to the ground, though he saved his head by a timely guard. A second stroke from his opponent's sabre would have cut him down; but Ina threw herself before him, arresting the Khan's arm, ere his sword descended, giving Thaddeus time to recover his feet.

"Foolish maiden, you shall not save your lover a second time," exclaimed the Khan, attempting to seize her, though the movement was nearly fatal to himself; for so furious a blow did Thaddeus make at him, that he was obliged to relinquish his hold, to parry it.

"Fly, Ina, fly! now that you are safe," exclaimed her lover. "I will keep the savage chief at bay."

But Ina moved not from his side. At that moment, a fresh troop of Tartars galloped to their chief's assistance. Thaddeus began to fear that his defence had been futile; when Alp, with a few other youths, bravely threw themselves in their way.

In a different division of the grove, many of the festive party had been overthrown at the first surprise; but others, drawing their weapons, and placing themselves back to back, fought so bravely, that they gave time to their fair partners to escape; and so well did they hold their ground, that they fully occupied the greater part of the Khan's followers; thus preventing them from going to their chiefs assistance; pursuing them so actively whenever they attempted to answer his reiterated summons, that the Tartars were again obliged to turn and defend themselves.

Yet the youths, however brave, wearing only a light gala costume, and having no weapon of defence but their short swords, could scarcely withstand the furious attacks of their fully equipped enemies, for whom victory, at first wavering, was now about to declare, when the war shout of the Attèghèi was heard; and a small body of fully-armed warriors broke through the grove, led on by Selem, who fiercely attacked the first body of Tartars he met, and drove them before him. His arrival turned the fortune of the day. Several of the young men flew to the house to seize their arms, and to mount their steeds tethered in the neighbouring thickets.

Selem, fighting his way up to the spot where Thaddeus was still defending Ina, compelled the Khan to retreat, foaming with rage.

The events we have here described took place in a few minutes, ere the revellers, scattered in all directions, could assemble; when the old chief, having collected them, as also his serfs, and other retainers who panted with indignation at the audacious outrage committed on his territories, and at being unable to reach the perpetrators, led them against the enemy in so determined an array, that he compelled the Tartars to desist from the attack, and to seek their own safety in flight. At the same moment, a party of the young warriors returned on horseback, to fight on more equal terms; when the Khan, seeing that any further attempt to gain possession of those he hoped to capture was hopeless, called to his followers to retreat, leaving several of his band dead on the field; for so flagrant was this attack, that, as any fell, they were cut down without mercy by the Circassians.

The defeated Tartars, furious with their disappointment and disgrace, hastily retreated, hotly pursued by the active Circassian youths on foot, and by Selem and a few others, who were mounted; but it was hopeless for the pedestrians to overtake them, and the horsemen were too few in number to be able to retaliate with success. The horses of Selem and his followers were fatigued; he, therefore, with Alp, urged their friends to return to arm completely, and mounting fresh steeds, to follow after the daring Khan, and take ample vengeance for the outrage he had committed.

A few, already mounted on fleet horses, now set off to follow at a distance, tracking his course to bring back word what route he had taken. When at a little distance, the scouts saw the Khan's party rein in their steeds for an instant, and seize two persons on foot, and carry them away. They were traced towards the Kouban, in the direction of the newly erected Russian fort; one of the scouts returning to give the information. The young warriors hastened to their homes to arm, and to follow Kaloret Khan. Alp, who was one of the first prepared, took a tender farewell of the weeping Zara, and instead of then making her his bride, was compelled to pursue the foe.

When Selem called for Jarvis, he was nowhere to be found; and as he passed Ina, now with the other women assembled together, and recovering from their terror, he also missed Conrin. No one had seen the boy. He called for him through the grove. He answered not.

"Oh my brother!" cried Ina, "Allah forbid that he has fallen among the slaughtered ones! For worlds I would not that poor boy should be slain."

They searched among the dead throughout the wood, expecting every moment to see his pallid features; but he was

not to be found. There was wailing and weeping through the grove, which had late resounded with the sounds of merriment and song. The soft green turf, where the feet of the young and beautiful had a short time previously so joyously trodden in the dance, was now defiled with dark red pools of blood. Several youths had fallen, cut down by the Tartars on their first onset; and their female friends and relations were mourning with loud cries and lamentations over the loved ones so barbarously murdered by those whom they had ever looked upon as countrymen.

As Selem and Thaddeus were prepared to start, one of the scouts returned and reported what he had seen.

"It must have been Conrin then," cried Ina. "His sad forebodings have been fulfilled, and both he and Jarvis have been carried off by the Khan. Oh haste, Selem, haste, my brother! Follow that cruel chief, for he bears away one who loves you more than life itself, who has sacrificed all for you. I may not say more; but for your own sake recover poor Conrin at all risks."

"Fear not, dear Ina. We will overtake the Khan, and wreak our vengeance on him," answered Selem.

Several other horsemen now coming up, he and Thaddeus took a fond, but hasty, farewell of Ina, and set off in pursuit of the Khan. Though some of their horses were of good blood and speed, yet every one of the Khan's were picked from the fleetest he possessed, having fully calculated on the necessity of a rapid flight; so that he kept a head of his pursuers. None of the villagers of the hamlets, through which he passed, were prepared to offer him any impediment, ignorant also of his errand. Furiously and desperately he rode along, for he well knew that he had not the remotest hope of mercy should any party of the Circassians, outnumbering his own, succeed in overtaking him, and with equal eagerness was he pursued.

Nothing stopped his savage band in their course; they swam their horses across the most rapid streams, leaped terrific chasms, galloped down the steepest hills, and urged their steeds up almost precipitous rocks. All the remainder of that day, did they continue their headlong course. The night stopped them not; for a few minutes, they sought repose for their horses; but the sound of their pursuer's feet struck their ears: Again they urged on their almost falling steeds; blood streamed from their flanks; foam covered their mouths; their eye balls started wildly; but still on they went. It was death to tarry.

Their pursuers caught sight of them—it was a race for life and death, captivity, perhaps death; or freedom for the poor page. They gained the forest which clothed the mountain, looking down upon the Russian fort; they dashed through it, they flew along the plain; and, as Selem and his friends gained the brow of the hill, they saw the traitor and his band enter the gates, at which they were received as friends.

"Alas, my poor page and faithful follower," exclaimed Selem; "captivity or death, will be your lot, if we cannot rescue you; but that we will do, or perish in the attempt. What say you, Thaddeus? Will yonder Russians attempt to inflict any injury on my two followers? They cannot be such barbarians."

"I fear they will," answered Thaddeus. "Remember the fate I so narrowly escaped; I know well the Baron seeks to make some terrible example of all whom he can claim as deserters."

"But he cannot surely call those youths, deserters, who have never born arms for Russia," answered Selem.

"He will call them whatever he pleases, now that they are in his power," said Thaddeus.

"We must, at all hazards, endeavour to recover them," exclaimed Selem. "I know not scarcely how, but that young boy has so entwined himself round my heart, that I would not lose him for worlds. He is a truly noble youth, full of warm and ardent feelings. Should his strength of body prove equal to his spirit, he will one day shew himself capable of great deeds; but one will wear out the other, I fear. The subtle essence will overcome the grosser matter."

Anxiously did the small band of warriors look down upon the Russian fort, but it would have been worse than madness to attack it with their fatigued party. Keeping, therefore, within shelter of the trees, they watched until the lights twinkled in the camp, and the watch-fires blazed around. Some proposed making an attack, endeavouring to take the enemy by surprise, and so to carry off the prisoners in the confusion; but, though Alp was eager to lead it, even Selem opposed the plan as too rash. The only feasible scheme seemed to be to hasten to the camp on the Ubin, and there raise a sufficient force to attack the fort with some chance of success.

Without waiting to consult further, the young warriors turned the heads of their weary horses towards the Ubin, where, on their arrival, they excited the indignation of the assembled chiefs at the atrocious outrage committed by the Khan. The Hadji, on seeing his son, embraced him.

"What, my brave Alp, have you left your pretty Zara, ere you made her your bride to assist your friends, and for the chance of a little fighting? Mashallah! you are well worthy of her, and she will love you all the better for it. I am proud of you, my boy."

The old warrior was himself delighted at an excuse for attacking the enemy, as he had begun to fear that there would be no more fighting that year; and he eagerly exerted himself in gaining volunteers for the enterprise. Arslan Gherrei, for his son's sake, persuaded many knights to join him, besides his own immediate followers. Nor was Alp idle in collecting his friends among the wild sons of the chiefs, always ready for any daring exploit; so that, in a few hours, more than two thousand horsemen were ready to depart. Selem strongly urged that no delay should take place, for fear of the cruelty which the Russian general might inflict on his prisoners.

Procuring fresh horses, therefore, the band of gallant cavaliers set out for their exploit; one that it would have been madness to attempt, except for the known incomplete state of the fortifications, which gave them hope, by a sudden onset, of leaping the unfinished trenches, and taking the garrison by surprise.

## Volume Three—Chapter Nine.

Three days had passed since the Baron Galetzoff had received the visit from the treacherous Khan Khoros Kaloret; and he was now eagerly expecting his return, with his clansmen and prisoners, when he began to suspect that the chief had played him falsely. As each successive hour passed by without his coming, his anger proportionably arose. He was also under constant dread of an attack from the mountaineers, though, as yet, he had seen few signs of them.

The troops were busily employed in digging trenches, throwing up embankments, and finishing the fortifications. Oxen were dragging in cartloads of provisions, or fodder for their horses. Officers were riding about, and superintending the men. A strong detachment were sent out, flanked with cannon, and a body of Cossacks to cut down timber for the palisades. Others also were employed in cutting grass, and bringing in wood for fuel. Sentinels were posted in every direction, advanced guards were sent out, and the soldiers worked at all times with their arms by their sides, for they knew not at what moment the dreaded mountaineers might break through the covert of the wooded height, and, with a cloud of cavalry, might come sweeping by them like a whirlwind, ere they had time to form their ranks. Their heavy artillery, loaded to the muzzles with grape shot, were pointed in every direction; and many an anxious eye was cast towards the mountains, in expectation of seeing the glittering arms of the foes about to rush down upon them.

Towards the close of the day, as the sun was sinking low on the marshes of the Kouban, throwing a bright warm gleam of light on the rich brown-tinted foliage of the trees, the outer guards rushed in with the intelligence, that the enemy were upon them. The drums beat, the bugles sounded, and the whole force flew to arms, as the sun-beams glittered on the armour and swords of a band of mountaineers, who were seen issuing from the woods, and galloping at full speed towards them. They were about to receive the new comers with a shower of grape, when Count Erintoff stopped them, as the band seemed to consist of but a small number.

"They are friends," he cried; "harm them not." And as he saw the Khan, he galloped out to meet him. Before him on his horse, the Khan bore a light form, wrapped in a cloak; when the Count, eagerly expecting to behold the beautiful features of the Circassian maid, was much disappointed, and enraged to find only the young page, Conrin.

"How comes this, Khan?" he exclaimed; "why, you have left your chief prize behind! Where are the other prisoners you promised to bring with you? The General will have but little cause to thank you for your zeal."

"I could bring only these," answered the Khan fiercely. "I have been baffled and defeated in all my attempts, but I will yet have my revenge. Take these two prisoners; they are Giaours, by their looks. Kill them if you will, but ask me no questions."

"We must be content then with the prize you bring us; and may soon find more occupation for you," replied the Count. "But how did you not succeed in bringing off the lady?"

"I have before said, ask me no questions," replied the Khan, angrily. "Take these prisoners, and kill them if you will."

"We are not likely to disappoint you, Khan, for if we do not get their master by their means into our power, they will be shot to-morrow;" said the Count.

"I care not. Their friends have given me trouble enough; and had not your General insisted on having them, I should have killed them myself, as I did many others," replied the Khan.

The Baron being informed of the Khan's arrival, was expecting him in his tent. The barbarian was therefore at once conducted thither by the Count.

"Where are the prisoners you promised to bring?" said the Baron, looking sternly at him.

"I have brought but two, who are in the hands of my followers;" answered the Khan.

"Who are they?" asked the Baron, eagerly.

"The page, and a Frank follower of Selem Gherrei," answered the Khan.

"Ah, I must see them immediately," exclaimed the General. "Khan, you have not fulfilled my expectations; but you shall be welcome. You and your followers shall be cared for here at present, until I can assign you lands in whatever part of the neighbouring country you may choose."

With a haughty salutation, and a discontented look, the Khan left the tent.

"Let that proud chief be well watched," continued the Baron, as he departed. "See, that none of his followers quit the camp. I do not trust him, even now. Had he brought off the chieftain's daughter, we should have had a hold upon him; but he may now again escape us. Colonel Erintoff, you have lost your mistress."

"I owe the barbarian a grudge for the disappointment," answered the Count.

"You may soon have an opportunity of revenging yourself on him," said the Baron. "But, now to business. Let the prisoners be brought in, and I will see what I can make of them. Stay, and assist me."

In a few minutes, a file of soldiers conducted Jarvis and the young Conrin to the door of the tent, with their arms bound. The Baron ordered them to be brought in, when the soldiers retired. Jarvis looked round him with a firm and determined air, fearless of the presence in which he stood.

The poor page was wearied, and bruised with his rapid journey, and attempts at escape; but a fire glowed in his eyes, as he gazed at the Baron and the Count Erintoff, while a smile of scorn and defiance played round his lips.

“Stand forward, boy,” said the Baron, addressing him sternly. “What induced you to leave your native land, and join the hordes of these barbarians?”

“My own good pleasure,” answered Conrin.

“Know you not, mad boy, that, by so doing you have broken your allegiance to the Emperor, and are guilty of treason?” said the Baron.

“I owe allegiance to no man,” returned Conrin, firmly and proudly. “I have full right to go where I will.”

“You are a subject of the Emperor, boy; and as such, I find you living among his enemies,” said the Baron. “Know you not, that I have power to treat you as a traitor?”

“I am a subject of no ruler under Heaven,” answered the page; “but full well do I know your power.”

“You speak foolishly; but I pity your youth, and would be lenient with you,” answered the Baron.

“If you would be merciful, then,” said Conrin, still with a curl on his lip, and in a slight tone of irony, “let me go free. I am but a youth, and what harm can I do to the mighty power of Russia?”

“What say you, Count, shall I let this innocent boy go free?” said the Baron, sneeringly. “Well you seem to agree with me! Now, listen, boy; you shall be at liberty to go where you will, even to return to the mountains, if you wish; but on one condition. You follow a master, it seems, who led you among those barbarous hordes of savages, for which you need owe him but little gratitude, as he has been the means of placing you in your present danger. I will not conceal from you, that your master is an arch-villain and traitor to Russia; and that I am anxious to get him into my power. Now, boy, you may be instrumental in forwarding my views; and if you will undertake to obey my orders, you yourself shall not only be pardoned, but shall be richly rewarded. What say you to my proposition? Do you consent?”

It was difficult at first to determine what emotions filled the boy’s heart, at hearing this proposition. The brightness of his eyes increased, and a bitter smile played over his features. For a minute he stood confronting the General, and appearing to seek for words to give expression to his feelings.

“Man,” said he, “Commander of thousands! go seek, among the slaves who obey you, one who has betrayed his master, and send him to me, that I may learn a lesson from him, and know, in future, how to mark the features of a villain. Compare his with mine, and see if they are alike; and then say if I am likely to accept your noble offer, if such is to be the price of my liberty. It is useless speaking more.”

“Boy, you are foolish,” said the Baron, endeavouring to soften his rough voice to a tone of kindness, and to bend his features into a look of benignity. “What I ask of you, hundreds in like position would be found to do for slight reward. It is not a difficult task that I wish you to perform; and if you do it not, others will be found who will, and your master cannot escape me. All I desire of you is to entice this young Selem Gherrei near the fort, where I will place an ambush to capture him. Think you I would injure him? No!—it will be but for his own benefit, as it will rescue him from those barbarians, and restore him to civilised life. And for yourself, I promise you a rich reward. You may stay and join the army, or I will find you a safe conveyance to your own country and home. Think well upon the offer which I make you.”

Young Conrin threw a look of scorn at the General, turning his eyes slowly towards the Count, and with almost a laugh of derision, he answered—

“A noble offer, truly; could you but read my heart, you would see how great is the chance that I should accept it. Think you that to gain wealth, all people would become villains? that all men have a price, to be bought and sold? I pity the wretch with such philosophy. None but those with bad hearts could think so. No, no; such base offers are thrown away if made to me. Give me but liberty, and I shall be grateful.”

“Once again, boy, I make an offer such as is not my wont,” said the Baron. “I know not how it is, but I feel compassion for your youth, and would not harm you if you would obey my wishes. You shall go free, free as the air we breathe; on this condition, you must persuade your master to come, and I will promise you he shall receive no harm; for, in spite of all his offences, I would wean him from the cause he advocates, and bring him over to the side of Russia.”

“No!” answered the page firmly. “Were you to offer boundless riches, honours—such honours as you can bestow—were it even to place him on a throne propped up by tyranny, I would not draw him from the path of glory he follows now, fighting for his country’s cause, though his home is but a humble cot on the mountain’s side.”

“But suppose, boy, I offer to gain for him rank and fortune, and to restore him to a civilised life far from these scenes of war and bloodshed. Will not that promise tempt you?”

The page seemed to penetrate to the inmost recess of the Baron’s mind, so piercing a glance did he cast at him, as with scorn, still dwelling on his lip, he answered, “No; I have said before, my master values such things less, far less than honour. Did I think he would accept your offer—and well I know he will not—I could not trust you, General! You would impose upon my youth and innocence; but you are mistaken.”

The Baron’s brow grew dark as night; his voice almost trembled with rage as he became convinced that his attempts to persuade the youth to obey his wishes would be fruitless. “Hear me, mad boy!” he exclaimed. “You ask for liberty. Do you hope to gain it? Never! Obey my orders, or death and torture alone await you. You talk of leading a peaceful

life; Count Erintoff, before whom you stand, observed you at the Mezi, following your master in the strife. Twice were you seen to slay the Emperor's soldiers; you fought in the ranks of the rebels. That is enough alone to condemn you to death as a traitor to Russia. Think not to escape by a specious tale of innocence, nor hope for pardon on account of your youth. You were old enough to wield your weapons well. You will be condemned to die to-morrow."

"I have said before that I would not do the deed you ask; no, not for all the riches of the East," answered Conrin firmly. "And for my life, I do not value that so much but that I can laugh your threats to scorn. Then do your worst upon me; I am prepared to meet your vengeance."

"Mad obstinate boy!" cried the Baron furiously, "your doom is sealed. I will examine the other prisoner. Remove the youth."

At these words Javis, who had stood with a stern glance regarding the Baron, sprang forward in spite of his fettered hands. "Stay, General," he cried earnestly; "you know not what you do. Be not thus cruel. This seeming page is—"

"Javis!" exclaimed Conrin, "speak not a word of me, I charge you. Swear to me that you will not, for I can soon escape their tyranny. I would die unknown to all, but to you, my true and faithful friend. As I have lived, I am prepared to die. Swear that you will not betray me to mortal soul;" he hesitated. "I command you swear, or, even now, as you well know, I have the means; you shall see me this moment die at your feet."

"I swear to obey your wishes; but oh, save yourself. A word would do it," cried Javis.

"Never! I fear not death half, half as much as life within the power of these men," exclaimed Conrin.

"Boy, I give you still another chance. Let not sleep o'ercome you till you have weighed the offer I have made, or it may prove your last," said the Baron, as Conrin was led off.

As may be supposed, the General could not elicit a word of information from Javis, who evaded every question which was asked of him, until the Baron grew furious. The same tempting offers were made to him as to Conrin, but he repelled them indignantly.

"I will not turn a traitor to my master," he said; "but I will serve you faithfully if you will save that boy's life; or if you will take mine, I will give it joyfully for his. You know not whom you kill."

"If you will obey my wishes," said the Baron, "not only will I pardon the boy, but I will load you with wealth, such as you never thought before to have."

"Oh mighty spirit of my fathers, guard my heart!" ejaculated Javis. "No, it cannot be; not all the offers that you make me can cause my purpose to alter. Yet you cannot be so base, so cruel a tyrant, as to slay that young and harmless boy."

"Slave, do you speak thus to me?" exclaimed the Baron. "Think you that you have any hopes of escaping death? If so, you are deceived. You, too, shall die. Think well upon my words, and mark me. The boy dies first while you are standing by. To the last moment, his life shall be in your hands. If you would save him, consent to obey my wishes. Ere mid-day comes to-morrow he shall die, and your death shall follow. Think well on what I say. Obey me, or never hope again to see the sun go down. Lead him away," he cried to the guards without, "and keep him separate from the other prisoner. Well, Count," he said, turning to that officer, "how think you I have managed with these traitors?"

"Admirably, Baron," answered Count Erintoff. "Yet I never saw so much obstinacy displayed. I think you have worked upon them to comply with your wishes; and, by their aid, I still have hopes of capturing young Selem Gherrei."

"I know not," said the Baron; "there was a fierce stubborn look in that boy's eye I scarce could have expected from one so young; but perhaps the Gipsy, who seems to have a most romantic affection for him, may, for the sake of saving him, obey my wishes. But if he does not, I swear no power shall save them. To-morrow morning early, they must be tried: we know the verdict. Go, Count, and make arrangements for their trial. I would be alone."

We must hope, for the sake of human nature, that the General would, in his cooler moments, have altered the determination he had expressed; though the atrocious barbarities which that man was guilty of towards his Circassian prisoners, when any, faint or senseless from their wounds, fell into his hands, would repress any charitable construction of his motives, and ensure only our hatred.

Conrin was removed to a rough small hut of logs, which had lately been erected to serve the purpose of a prison; but it had, as yet, no occupants, owing to the constant employment of the soldiers which kept them from committing any faults. The ground was unbeaten, ends of branches projecting from the sides, and a log being left at one end to serve the purpose of a couch or seat for the prisoners; but as yet it was not even hewn smooth. Conrin was thrust in by his guards, and then left to his solitary meditations, with some black bread and almost stagnant water; not worse fare, perhaps, than the soldiers themselves were obliged to submit to. He threw himself on the rough log, deep sobs breaking at times from his breast; while, with hands clasped in agony, he turned his eyes towards Heaven, as if imploring aid.

"No! no! hopeless is my lot! I am forsaken by the mighty Spirit! and thus to die without the slightest chance of one fond look on him for whom I have sacrificed all on earth! Then the bitter anguish to feel he knows me not; or, if he knew, perchance would spurn my love. Death—annihilation would be better far. No, he shall never learn the truth. And yet I would that he should know how true and firm a heart mine was; and then, when I am reduced to the ashes from whence I sprung, perchance he would cast some fond regret upon my memory. Oh! did I think that he would love me, the very joy would make me laugh at death. But thus to die!" The sobs of the supposed page were renewed. He started, and strove to suppress his agitation, for he heard steps approaching.

It was now midnight—that time when the feelings are the acutest, the nerves most easily excited; when the thoughts strive to wander o'er the regions of boundless space to search out things mysterious and inscrutable; when the spirit often seems to quit the bonds of this our living mortal frame, to visit ideal regions. It is not the spirits of the dead, which long have flown to other realms we wot not of, which mortals fancy oft they see, but their own yet earthly souls are worked into fever by some potent and subtle influence when the vivifying power of the sun has been withdrawn.

Conrin listened earnestly.

"Ah! well I know that foot-fall! Oh! mine enemy, hast thou found me? Even now I feel his baneful influence, like that dark spirit who roves about to seek for prey. The bigot fools need not have decked him with other attributes than those of mortal man, when foul passions gain the mastery over him."

"Who goes there?" shouted the sentry at the door of the hut.

"Your Colonel," answered the deep tones of Count Erintoff's voice. "Stand there, and turn not till I call you."

After which words, Conrin heard the door of his prison open, and, by the light which faintly streamed in, he beheld the tall form of the Count, who, closing the door, placed a lanthorn he carried in his hand on the ground, so as to throw its rays on the features of the prisoner. The page rose not, spoke not, but remained in the attitude in which he had been sitting, with his hands clasped together, and his head bent down.

The visitor surveyed him earnestly ere he addressed him, meditating apparently on what he should say.

"I am come to give you liberty and life, instead of the death you so madly seem to seek. Think you I know you not? When yon dull sottish bear, the General, was questioning you, I knew you by the glance of those expressive features, that haughty brow, that lip curling in proud disdain. Think you a boy would have stood undaunted before the furious rage of yonder overbearing Baron, or would have returned him word for word and glance for glance? You played your part but ill just now, whatever you may have done before to deceive (if so you have) the youth you followed to Circassia. Can he be so dull, so hard of heart, as not to recognise the maid who loves him? By Heavens, I do believe his wits so dull, his heart so careless of those charms which drove me near distracted at their loss, that he has not yet discovered you; and loves you not, basking, as you humbly look on in the senile character of a page, in the bright smiles of some of those mountain beauties."

With an hysterical cry, the girl, finding further disguise was useless, exclaimed—

"Begone, base villain. What demon prompts you to come hither to torment me?"

"Nay, nay, my pretty page," said the Count, approaching her, "I would not wound your feelings for the universe. I merely spoke what I know to be most true. I ask you why, for one who loves you not, you would sacrifice your life, and throw away all the bright offers that I have made you, and which I would fulfil? Oh! it would be a cruel thing to let those charms, which have enchained my heart, mingle with the dust, to leave this bright and joyous world so full of pleasures, (to those who have the sense to find them) to go you know not where. I do not ask you to betray the man you loved. I am not fool enough to think you would do so, until you should be convinced that he despises you; though I believe that haughty rebel, young Selem Gherrei, as he is called, cares not for you. But fly hence with me, and I can easily deceive this brutish General. I offer you wealth and happiness, a bright and glorious future, where such charms as yours will far eclipse the proudest beauties of the capital. Believe me, I am not so dull a fool as not to appreciate that bright and soaring spirit—that proud undaunted soul—which raises you above your sex. I am not scrupulous as fools would be. I love you more myself, now that I know your heart is capable of so much feeling; and I would make it all my own. Then come, loved girl. This instant you shall be free. A few days more will see you on your road to Russia, where wealth, luxury, and happiness, await you."

The Count approached yet nearer, and attempted to take the girl's hand.

"Man!" she exclaimed—"if you are not rather the incarnation of the evil one, begone. Come not to torment my heart, already almost broken. Know, then, that luxury and wealth are things I despise almost as much as him who offers them; and as for happiness, I never in this world shall know it again, nor have you the power to give it me. Begone, and leave me to myself. You stir not. Then if you will not obey my commands, but still have a soul that can be influenced by prayer, oh! hear my earnest supplication, and leave me to myself."

"What madness makes you utter words like these?" said the Count. "Think well of what you throw away, and of the dark fate which awaits you. The Baron vows—and well I know he keeps his oaths when prompted by cruelty and revenge—that you must die to-morrow; and no mortal power but mine can save you. A word from me would rescue you. Fly with me. Ah! if you refuse, think not the man you love will benefit by your sacrifice; for here I swear that I will pursue him with the utmost rancour to avenge your death, of which he has been the cause. He has crossed my path before, and ere long I trust to see him in my power."

"You move me not by fear of any harm you can do him," answered the girl calmly. "He is above your malice, and would despise your vows of vengeance."

"If not for his sake then, save yourself for your own," exclaimed the Count. "Think how you will die, disgraced, unknown till after you have ceased to breathe; and then you will be a thing for savage soldiers to pass their brutal jest upon. Oh, why this madness? Let me save you from yourself, and fly with me."

The proud Count knelt at her feet, and again endeavoured to take her hand. "See," he exclaimed, "I kneel to you to beseech that you will let me save you from cruel death and contumely."

The girl then shrinking back, "Begone, I say, again," she cried. "Believe me, I despise you far too much even to seek

your pity.”

The Count sprang to his feet. “Know then, wilful girl,” he exclaimed, “that nothing shall save you. Your cruelty will change my love to hate; and though I still might save your life, I shall not rest until I see you die. None shall know that Count Erintoff has humbled himself in vain. There are yet some hours to dawn. Think on my vows, and promise to obey my wishes. A word of yours would win my love again; else, before the sun mounts highest in the sky, you will have become a cold and senseless clod. I leave you now.”

The girl answered not, but looked disdainfully on the Count as he retired. Then, sinking on the hard log, she placed her hands before her eyes—to shut out something dreadful from her sight. A terrific struggle seemed to take place in that tender, that loving, bosom, as if the agitated spirit were about to burst its tabernacle; but it passed, and she was calm—so calm that it seemed she slept.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Ten.**

The morning came, the glorious sun rose undimmed by clouds, and nature wore a face of gladness; the birds sung sweetly from their leafy coverts, the refreshing dew which sprinkled the herbage, and the autumnal-tinted leaves, sparkled brightly. A light mist, rising from the lowlands, faded away, and left the landscape more clear and lovely from the contrast.

The prisoners were led forth from their places of confinement. Their trial commenced. Undauntedly they stood before all the highest officers of the garrison.

Several soldiers declared that they had seen them fighting on the side of the enemy. Neither of the prisoners would answer a word to the interrogations made to them. Their sentence was passed. Death was recorded. Their guilt was clear, nor did they deign to sue for pardon. As their sentence was pronounced, Jarvis sprang forward with an imploring look towards the president, and was again about to utter some exclamation; but a glance from the supposed page stopped him, and, dejectedly he stepped back, turning a troubled and anxious eye towards his companion, though he seemed perfectly resigned to his own fate. The Baron hurried over the proceedings with brutal haste; and the prisoners were ordered forthwith to be led from the camp and shot as traitors to Russia.

They were conducted from the tent where the court martial was held, between a file of soldiers, walking as firmly and composed as if they had forgotten that a few minutes more were to be their last.

The fort, as we have before said, was erected on some elevated ground, at a short distance from the mountains, rising like an island from the plains and marshes of the Kouban. The intervening space between the fort and the mountain, was one uninterrupted meadow, unbroken by rocks or inclosures. The spot selected for the cruel execution, was on a green slope reaching from the entrenchments to the plain facing the mountains; and here a body of the troops were now drawn up while the remainder continued at their labours digging the entrenchments, and erecting the requisite buildings for barracks and store houses, in preparation for the coming winter.

At a short distance from the fort, a foraging party in compact order, accompanied by artillery and cavalry were seen marching along the plain, from the direction of the Kouban, unaware of the execution about to take place.

The Baron had sternly commanded the Count Erintoff to lead the troops destined for the execution, though it seemed that he would willingly have escaped the office; but he was compelled to obey: and he now stood at the head of his regiment, drawn up in line on the green slope we have described, the firing party a little in advance of the other troops. The General himself stood at some distance on the newly raised embankments of the fort, pacing to and fro, with a dark frown on his brow, and his eyes glancing restlessly around. As the young prisoners were led out from the fort, they passed the spot where he stood. He commanded the party who guarded them to halt, and bring them before him.

The disguised page wore the same stern look as on the previous day; but a brighter almost supernatural foe burned in her eye as she met that of the General. Jarvis advanced boldly with a firm tread and perfect composure; but as he turned his looks towards his companion, his features would become convulsed as if some pang of agony passed through his frame.

“Prisoners,” said the Baron, “you have but a few short moments to live; but, even now, I give you a chance of escape. Obey my orders, and I promise to pardon you. To you, boy, I speak first. Will you do as I wish?”

“Never!” answered the page in a deep firm voice. “I am prepared to die.”

“Then lead him on,” cried the Baron furiously. “You, perchance, may have more wisdom,” he continued, addressing Jarvis, “than yonder obstinate boy, who brings his own fate on himself. Will you save, not only your own life, but his?”

“I would save his life on any terms,” exclaimed Jarvis; “but he would be the first to blame me. For my own, I value it not. But, Oh! spare him, General, spare him for his youth alone. Ask him not to do that to which he cannot consent. You know not what you do in slaying him. Spare him, as you hope for mercy!”

“Lead off the audacious rebel,” cried the Baron furiously. “Let the boy be shot first,” he added, addressing an officer who waited his commands. “I can gain nought from him; and let his companion witness his fate: perchance it will bring him to reason.”

There was not an officer in the camp who would not, if he could, have saved the lives of those youths at this moment; but none dared speak; even the dull soldiers felt tears spring to their eyes. The wild Khan, who was on horseback in company with a troop of cavalry, looked on with astonishment; and, as he witnessed the noble bearing and bravery

of the prisoners, even he repented that he had brought this untimely fate upon them, until he remembered that it was by the hand of one of them that his brother fell. But of all the party the Count Erintoff seemed the most affected. His countenance was as pale as death; he dared not turn his eye towards the prisoners. He felt himself to be a wretch cursed by heaven; a cold-blooded murderer, instigated by the basest, the blackest revenge. The prisoners had reached the fatal spot, and the youngest was placed upon the ground, while Jarvis was led aside: they exchanged glances, but neither spoke. The supposed page heaved a deep-drawn sigh as she saw the glance of agony which the faithful Jarvis—of whose death she was too truly the cause—cast towards her.

A soldier advanced to bind her eyes.

“No,” she cried, putting the handkerchief aside. “I would look my last upon the bright blue heavens, to which my spirit so soon must fly. I can face death as fearlessly as the oldest-soldier present. Let my eyes at least be at liberty, to the last.”

The soldier looked towards his officer, who ordered him to follow the prisoner’s wishes, and he returned to the ranks.

All was prepared. The girl stood undaunted; but her eyes wandered towards the mountains with an anxious glance. What does she see there? Is it the sun which sparkles on the shining leaves of the forest? She stands entranced, regardless of her executioners; for a band of steel-clad warriors, their swords flashing in the sun like a foaming torrent, sweep downward from the mountain’s brow. The wood is full of them. On every side they pour forth from amid the trees. At their head rides one urging on his steed at its utmost speed, and waving aloft his sabre. The eye of love distinguishes him from afar, before the Russians, intent on the scene of execution, have perceived their danger. The prisoner uttered a cry of joy. “Thank thee, Great Spirit, that I see that loved one ere I die!” she exclaimed. “Yes! yes! I’ll join you, in spite of these tyrants!”

Forgetful of her situation, forgetful of all but that he whom she loved was approaching to her rescue, she lifted up her arms to rush to meet him. It was the signal of her death; and Jarvis, breaking from his guards, sprang forward and threw himself before her.

At that moment the foraging party reached the fort, when a soldier rushed forward from the ranks to where the Baron stood.

“Hold! hold!” he cried with fierce excitement. “Stay the execution. Barbarous chief! you know not what you do! Stay, or you will murder your own daughter, who was carried off from you by the dwarf Ladislau; she was placed in my hands for her mother’s sake, a daughter of my tribe. Know me as the Gipsy Conrad.”

The Baron seemed as one who heard him not; he was astounded, and gazed wildly at the speaker. His faculties were paralysed; his limbs trembled. The precious moments flew by. He lifted his arm.

“Stay the execution!” he shrieked. But ere the words were uttered, the rattle of musketry was heard. The smoke hung like a funeral pall over the spot, as, rushing towards it, the fierce Baron fell senseless near the slaughtered form of his daughter, the Gipsy girl, Azila; and by her side lay the body of her humble, devoted, and despised lover, Jarvis.

The alarm was given that the enemy were upon them. There was no time to retreat to their entrenchments. Fast and furious came the mountain horsemen. The drums beat to arms, the soldiers rushed to man the guns, and to seize their weapons. The troops drawn up outside wheeled to receive the shock from the furious charge of the foe, the cavalry advanced to meet them; but they were like reeds bent beneath the tiger’s spring. Men and horses trembled at the wild war shriek. None could withstand that desperate onset; and the first, the foremost who fell, was the traitor Khan, cut down by the sword of Thaddeus.

“A well-timed blow, brave Pole,” cried the Hadji, as he swept by to charge the Russians. “Thus die all traitors to Circassia!”

Close to him was Selem, encountering the sword of Count Erintoff, who shouted, “Ah! we have met at length? Traitor to Russia, yield!”

“Heaven defend the right!” cried Selem, parrying his blow. Their swords flashed quickly round, and in a moment the Count fell mortally wounded from his horse.

The Hadji, Alp, and many other chiefs, and their followers rushed on the bayonets of the infantry. “Ah! Allah!” shouted the old warrior, “we’ll cut through that wall of steel. Onward, men of Attèghèi!” So terrific was the onset that the two foremost ranks of the Russians trembled, wavered, and fell back on the rear, as the dauntless warriors approached them, driving the others in hopeless confusion, cut down by the Circassian sabres, and trampled under foot by their war-steeds.

“Ah! Allah!” again shouted the Hadji. “Follow me, my son, and we shall soon be within their trenches!” and attacking those who alone stood their ground, followed by a dense cloud of horsemen, sweeping over their prostrate foes.

The remnant of the Russian cavalry had turned, and fled towards the entrance of their fort; but none succeeded in reaching it: the drawbridge was drawn up, the gates were closed.

Why does Selem stay in his career of victory, his cheek blanched even amid the excitement of the combat? On the ground weltering in blood, he sees the slaughtered form of his faithful, loving page; he bends low from his horse, and lifts it in his arms.

Onward, onward rushed the mountaineers towards their hoped for prize; but as they mingled among the confused mass of flying infantry close to the trenches, a tremendous discharge of cannon saluted them. On friend and foe fell



alike the crashing showers of deadly grape; and the ramparts were lined with bristling rows of bayonets. Many of the gallant patriots fell beneath the devastating fire in their career of victory.

"Turn, turn, my noble friends!" cried the brave Chief Arslan Gherrei. "It is madness to be exposed to this iron storm. We can never take the fort on horseback."

At the word, the dense troop swept round. A horseman, in the uniform of Russia, seized Selem's rein, and urged on his horse, while Thaddeus, on the other side, joined the retreating Circassians. Before the guns could be reloaded, they were beyond their range.

The mountaineers halted in the confines of the forest. Selem sprang to the ground, endeavouring to staunch the blood which flowed from many wounds in the breast of his page. He tore open his vest; his heart turned sick with horror and grief as he discovered a woman's form. He leant over it with deep grief. The veil which so long had obscured them was torn from his eyes. He knew the features of Azila. In a moment he read the history of her deep unswerving love, constant to the last through trials, hardships, and neglect. He felt her heart to discover if it yet beat. He tried to persuade himself that her yet warm breath fanned his cheeks; but it was in vain. A faint smile still lingered on her features; but no throb answered to his touch. The dark blood flowed slowly from the wounds; her heroic, her loving, spirit had fled; Azila was dead!

None of the chiefs, not even Selem's father, approached him. They had witnessed the scene, and read the sad story at a glance. Long did he bend, in deep agony, over that inanimate form.

He was aroused by the Russian deserter.

"Think you not, young chief, that I, too, have cause for grief? Remember you not how I loved that fair and noble girl? Do you not know me?"

"Yes, yes, I know you now, my friend," answered Selem, recognising in the stranger the Gipsy chief who had aided his escape from Russia, the reputed father of Azila. "You have, indeed, deep cause to grieve for your daughter."

"Except that she sprung from my race, she is not my daughter, though I loved her more than one. See, two of my race I have lost today most cruelly murdered;" and he pointed to the body of Jarvis, which he had also brought off on the horse of one of the slain troopers. "She, too, murdered by her own father, though he knew it not till too late, when madness seized his brain; and you poor youth, he also deserves our pity, for I know his deep, yet hopeless, love for Azila, for whose sake he followed you."

"What say you, my old friend?" said Selem, rising from the ground whereon he had been kneeling. "By what strange fortune came you to learn so horrid a tale? and what wonderful chance conducted you hither at this moment?"

"It may seem extraordinary that I am here; and yet such was the decree of fate, when first we met beneath my tent in Russia. You were the unconscious instrument of bringing me hither; and yet, from the remotest period of time, this event was destined. The latest cause was this: It was discovered that I had aided in your escape from Russia, when I and all my tribe, who could be found, were seized and condemned to serve in the ranks of the Russian army of the Caucasus. Azila's history, I alone, with the dwarf Ladislau, have known from her birth. He was another cause of these events. As you remember well, the Baron always made him his butt, treating him with contumely, little thinking what deep feelings of hatred and revenge rankled in the bosom of the diminutive being. A lovely girl of our race, whose sweet voice enraptured the proudest nobles of Moscow, won the haughty Baron's heart; and, dazzled by his rank and wealth, she consented, at an unhappy moment, to exchange her liberty to become the slavish wife of a tyrannical master. She soon pined for her freedom, regretting the miserable lot she had madly chosen; and, as her husband's admiration of her charms wore away, he treated her with cruelty and neglect. Yet jealous feelings, at the same time, possessed the tyrant's breast; and he began to look with an eye of suspicion on an innocent daughter she had just borne him.

"The broken-hearted wife of the Baron died; and Ladislau, to revenge himself on his tyrant, brought away his child, and delivered her to me, making me swear never to reveal her history till his death, and that I heard of ere I left Russia. To rescue her from a life of thralldom and neglect, I determined to keep her as my own daughter, bringing her up with all the accomplishments I could well find means to bestow. She became all I could wish in mind and person, wreathing herself round my heart as much as any child of my own could do; and when she once visited my tents, she seemed so to enjoy the wild freedom of our lives, that I could not again part from her, intending, however, on Ladislau's death, to make her father recognise her, and restore her to her proper rank and fortune. When you came to my tents, knowing that you were not her brother, I hoped in some way, through your means, to accomplish my purpose; little thinking how deep was the love which had sprung up in the sweet girl's bosom for you."

"Blind and dull have I been!" exclaimed Selem in a tone of anguish, "not to have seen through her disguise before; for now, when lost to me for ever, I feel how fondly I could have returned her love."

He knelt again over her, and took her cold lifeless hand:—"My true Azila, faithful to death! A hundred fold has your murder added to the debt of retribution I owe our tyrannical invaders. Yes, sweet one, I again swear to avenge your death on every one of that cursed race who sets foot on the shores of Circassia. Bear witness, my friend, I sign my vow before as fair an image as nature ever formed! Let this be the token! Where the battle is thickest, there will I bear this silken lock."

He kissed her pallid brow, and severed with his dagger one of her long black tresses, which he entwined through the links of his chain armour. He knelt over the bleeding form for some moments more in silence: he then rose, and extended his hand to the Gipsy chief.

"Welcome, my friend, to the land I call my own. I may now hope to repay your hospitality."

"If my services will be accepted, I have come to offer my hand and heart to the cause of the patriots. I should have remained a good subject of Russia, if she had allowed me; but she will now find me and my tribe her mortal enemies; for I doubt not that all my people will take the first opportunity of escaping, when they hear that I am on the side of the Circassians; and heartily will they all join in avenging that poor girl's death."

"It was a barbarous deed," cried Selem, casting an agonised glance on the pale features of Azila, beautiful, even in death.

Arslan Gherrei now approached his son; "Let not sorrow take possession of your soul, my son, for the loss of that faithful girl. I, I too well can share your feelings; but shew yourself stern as a warrior among our countrymen. Think not of grief, while we have swords in our hands to avenge our friends. That poor maiden shall have a befitting funeral, she shall be consigned to the care of Ina, who, with her friends, will mourn over their lost sister."

"You speak truly, my father," exclaimed Selem, "no one henceforth shall see me shed a tear of joy or grief, till every hallowed spot of our loved country shall be freed from the defiling tread of the Russian foot, or till the death-wound comes to send me to a warrior's grave."

"My son, your words make your father's heart beat proudly," said the chieftain; "and worthy are you of our royal race. See, is not yonder sight enough to rejoice the breast of every foe to Russia?"

Selem turned his eyes in the direction his father indicated, where the ground, in front of the Russian entrenchments, was strewn with the slain; so rapidly and surely had the Circassian sabres done their work among the panic-stricken ranks. Few, if any, had reached the gates of the fort; for of those who escaped the first fierce onset, most had been mowed down by the showers of grape and rockets fired by their own countrymen. Many of the Circassians had fallen; but not one had been left on the field; every horseman seizing his comrade as he was wounded or slain, and bearing him on his steed from the ground.

The band of warriors, assembled in the forest overlooking the fort, kept the garrison in a constant state of alarm; their swords and armour being seen amid the trees, when any of them approached the skirts of the wood.

A council of war was now held. The Hadji proposed attacking the fort again at once, rushing from their concealments, without a moment's warning to the enemy, and leaping the trenches on their chargers, in spite of the shower of grape they might expect.

"Mashallah!" he cried, "they should soon learn how little use their big guns would be, when we got at their tails, for they cannot kick as well as bite."

Even Selem, generally cautious, as well as bold, eagerly seconded his old friend's proposition; and Alp was employed in persuading most of his companions to accompany him. But the proposition was overruled by Arslan Gherrei, and the more prudent leaders, who considered the attempt would be madness; as, to their cost, they had already found the fort so strongly guarded with cannon; not one of their warriors having fallen, except by the destructive fire from the guns. It was at last agreed to storm the fort at a future day, when the garrison would be unprepared to receive them.

Selem, rousing himself from his grief, introduced the Gipsy chief as the foster father of the slaughtered maiden, explaining to them his history. As there was now no further cause for delay, the band of warriors prepared to leave the scene of their exploit; the Dehli Khans rushing forward, and waving their swords as a parting salute of defiance to their foes.

Selem stood by the side of Azila's corpse. The Gipsy approached him.

"Let me take the office of bearing those remains," he said; "to you it would be too severe a task."

Selem offered no resistance, as the Gipsy enveloped the body in his horseman's cloak, and placed it before him on his saddle. A follower of Arslan Gherrei carried the body of Javis, in like manner; while Thaddeus rode by Selem's side, offering vain consolation to a heart so deeply wounded.

After riding some distance, the party separated; some to return to the camp, and a few, among whom was Alp, to accompany Selem to the valley of Abran Bashi.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Eleven.**

It was a sad and mournful train which returned to the valley of Abran Bashi, the scene but a few days before of the bridal festival and of joy. Selem had sent to announce his return to his sister, with an account of the sad catastrophe which had occurred. As the cortège approached the house of the chief, she, her woman, and the other females of the hamlet, came out to meet them; and into their hands the remains of the slaughtered Azila were committed.

The Gipsy approached Selem, who, after embracing his sister, had sauntered through the grove to indulge in his grief unseen.

"Young chief," he said, "where shall my poor child be buried?"

How sadly, how harshly did those words grate on Selem's ears! How many unutterable thoughts of anguish and regret do they summon to the mind of all! The closing for ever of some loved object from our view—the sad reality of death, before only looked on as a remote object!

"Would she not wish to lie in some secluded spot, where her spirit, that had been sorely troubled in this life, might be at rest?"

"My friend," answered Selem, "there is near here a grove sacred to the one Great Spirit we all adore, whatever may be our religious creeds. None approach that spot with irreverent or light feelings, and there shall Azila rest."

"Such would have been the spot she would have chosen," answered the Gipsy. "And by her side we will place poor Jarvis. He well deserves to be near her, for he might yet be alive, had he not thrown himself before her to receive the shot."

"He was truly faithful to the last," said Selem. "And yet it was a happier fate for him to die. But, my friend, speak no more on the subject. We must soon again haste to the exciting scenes of war, which, as men, befit us most. Know you where the people of your tribe are stationed, that we may endeavour to assist them in escaping from the foe? They will be received by my countrymen with open arms, and you may resume your former habits of independence, and your free mode of life. You will find here no tyrannical laws to restrict you, if you conform to the simple habits and customs of my people; and you may again become the chief of your tribe."

"That can never be," answered the Gipsy. "My tribe are broken and dispersed; though the few who may escape from Russian thralldom, will obey me as of yore. But where are our women and children? Where our cattle and our tents? I and my people will serve under you. Where you go, we will go; and we will be faithful and true to you, until death."

"I could not wish for a more faithful follower than poor Jarvis proved," answered Selem. "And I fear not but you will be equally true to me. Thus, gladly do I agree to the compact you propose."

After walking some way, side by side, a low and plaintive melody, wafted through the grove, reached their ears, and, returning, they found a group of veiled maidens standing round an open bier, on which lay, as if reposing in a calm sleep, the body of Azila. Once more, ere the earth closed over her for ever, she was clothed in the garments of her sex. A white veil was fastened to her hair, and lay on each side of her pale face that looked like some beautiful piece of sculptured marble. Her hands were joined on her breast, on which a rose was placed; a white robe enveloped her form, while flowers, fresh picked from the groves and meadows, strewed the bier.

The maidens, with Ina weeping at their head, bore the body along, singing, in plaintive tones, a low dirge; while an aged minstrel, who preceded the train, chaunted, at intervals, to the sound of his wild harp, an account of her death. A band of young men followed, carrying the body of Jarvis, wrapped in his winding-sheet, on an open bier; and at the end of each verse, they joined their voices in chorus to those of the females. Next followed Selem, Thaddeus, and many others of the youths and maidens of the village, who had the day before been performing the same sad office to those who had fallen in the conflict with the Khan.

When the mourning train reached the sacred grove, where the graves had been already dug, they found the most venerable elder of the valley waiting their arrival; and, as the bodies of the two young beings were placed in their last resting-place, he offered up prayers to the Great Spirit for a quick translation of their souls to the realms of bliss, and a happy immortality; in which pious supplication the assembly all reverently joined.

The graves of the deceased were placed side by side beneath the shelter of an overhanging rock that projected from the steep slope of the mountain. Two trees bent over the spot, entwining their boughs above. A small slab of stone was placed at the head of each grave; and on the trees the maidens hung chaplets of wild flowers.

The stranger girl sleeps calmly in her early and bloody grave; nor has her name departed from the memory of the mountaineers. Her romantic history and sad fate are recorded in their songs, and chaunted among their many wild and melancholy ballads, for which, alas! they have but too many subjects.

Those who came to perform the funeral ceremony were gone, and our hero remained. He thought alone, by the grave-side of her who had so deeply adored him, and whom he, too late, had learned to love. He heard a gentle sob; he looked up, his sister was beside him; he took her hand, but did not speak. The last time he had attended a funeral was when their mother was buried; and her dying injunctions recurred to him more forcibly now that his heart was softened with sorrow.

Selem hitherto had felt that he was wanting in one of the great requisites, enthusiasm in the cause of religion. He had never indeed thought deeply on the subject; and how could he, when engaged in a bloody and revengeful war, be a follower of a creed which indicated peace and good-will towards all men? Had he not sworn never to sheathe his sword while a Russian remained in arms near them? How could he indeed hold up to the example of his countrymen a religion professed by foes, who were engaged in openly breaking every precept it commanded, by the unjust and exterminating war on the liberties of their country? He knew that they would laugh his lessons to scorn, when he had no better reasons to give them than those he could advance; and that they would despise him for his infatuation in proposing a creed which allowed its professors to act as their enemies did towards them.

He felt, however, that his sister would not be swayed by these considerations, when she heard that it was the faith in which their mother died; and that it had been the last wish of her heart, that her daughter should adopt it; so that he had strong hopes, with such a foundation, of convincing her of its truth and beauty. He knew not, indeed, how powerful an advocate of his cause he had in Thaddeus. His only hope, with regard to his countrymen at large, rested on the fact that Christianity had been at some period, however remote, the faith of their forefathers; that its emblem still remained venerated by them in the land, and that they were imbued universally with a strong feeling of respect for their ancient customs. Its great opponent, Islamism, had gained but a weak footing in their minds; and they were more likely to adopt a faith which they would consider better founded, if they could be convinced that it was the belief of their ancestors, and that its very symbols still existed among them.

Selem took Ina's hand, and walked some way in silence. At length he said—

"I have much to communicate to you, and may have but a short time for the purpose; for I know not how soon I may be called upon to offer up my blood as a sacrifice to the liberties of our country; and gladly would I suffer death if one so dear as you were to be benefited by it."

"Oh! talk not of death, dear Selem; the very thought breaks my heart," cried Ina. "Have I but just found you to lose you? The noble spirit of our father would sink beneath so great a blow."

"Do not grieve, dear sister! Thoughts of death will not bring the dreaded tyrant nearer; nor, if we persuade ourselves that he cannot reach us, will the vain hope shield us more securely from his unfailing dart. I spoke but as every warrior must feel, when he sees each day his friends cut down at his side; but it makes him not the less brave or daring, though he knows that it may be his turn to fall the next. But I wish not to die; and for your sake, my sister, may Heaven grant me a long life, and reserve my humble efforts for our country's cause! But, Ina, the subject on which I would speak to you is not of death, but of life. I bring you a message from our lost mother, which I have too long delayed delivering. You, her unknown babe, whom she confided to my care, if I could succeed in discovering you, were in her thoughts to the last."

They had reached the cross before described, in the grove towards which Selem now pointed.

"Know you, Ina, why, and by whom, yon cross was placed there?"

"I have scarce thought why," she answered. "Perchance by our fathers, before Allah and his prophet were known in our land."

"Yes, it was placed there by our fathers, doubtlessly," answered Selem; "but as a symbol of a pure and holy faith, from which their children have widely departed. It is the symbol of a faith in which our mother died, in which I was nurtured, and in which she charged me to instruct you."

"What!" cried Ina. "Are there more faiths than that which, a short time ago, all in the land believed and the faith of Mahomet—by which I thought we could alone gain Paradise?"

"Indeed, Ina, there are many strange creeds in the world," answered Selem; "but one only is pure and true. It was established long before Mahomet promulgated his doctrines; and far, far different are its tenets from his. He, indeed, took truth for the foundation of his religion, acknowledging the great, the immutable, all-powerful, all-seeing Being, whom our countrymen also worship with a belief in a hereafter. But on that foundation, he built up a superstructure, composed of falsehoods as gross as they were improbable, forming his tenets to please the wild hordes over whom he sought to gain power. His aim was conquest. He promised a quick translation to the realms of bliss, to those who fell fighting for him; and his Paradise he pictured as the utmost enjoyment of sensual pleasures, such as his followers most prized on earth, awarding to you, the fairer portion of the human race, the same place of abject subjection which he would make you submit to in this world. To forward his great aim, personal aggrandisement, he preached extermination to all who would not embrace his faith, or, in other words, obey his rule. He found that women did not assist him in his aims; and he, therefore, pretended that they were formed to be the abject slaves of man's will.

"This, dear sister, is the religion which the Turks have sought to introduce into our country; and already have its baneful effects been felt. Now mark the difference of the religion of the cross. It inculcates peace and love to all men. It pictures a heaven of bliss, unutterable, free from all the base and sensual passions of this life, pure, eternal. It makes woman man's helpmate, his companion, his adviser, his equal. It gives birth to all the nobler feelings of our nature. It purifies love, it sanctifies marriage, it exalts courage, and it produces friendship unselfish and firm."

"All! what a beautiful religion must that be, my brother!" cried Ina, her eyes beaming with fervour, and the colour of her cheeks heightening with animation. "I have often wondered that a Great Spirit, whom men call just and good, should have formed one half of his people to be the slaves of the other; but now I see that it is not that He is unjust, but that man has become usurping and bad. Oh! I can never again believe that Mahomet was a true prophet!"

"Ina, your words delight me," cried her brother. "I find my task almost accomplished when you speak thus. Man is, indeed, wicked; and the Great Spirit, seeing this, sent one from heaven to teach him a pure and holy code of morals. Christ so loved mankind, and grieved for their sins, that, notwithstanding his power, he allowed himself to be slain on the cross, by those whose wicked customs he came to overthrow. His worshippers have, therefore, made use of that sign to remind them of Him who died for their sake; and in this very grove, on the spot on which we now stand, have our fathers bowed the knee in adoration of that benignant Being."

"Oh, my brother," said Ina. "How I love to hear you speak thus, for I feel and know that your words are those of truth!"

"I believe them," answered Selem. "And much I wish that not only you, but that all our countrymen, would adopt the same creed. It would prove a surer and more trusty bulwark against our foes than all foreign aid. Knowing our cause to be just, they would have a firmer trust in the God of justice. It would make them cease from inflicting injuries on each other; for it teaches us to treat others as we would ourselves be treated. It will enlighten and add firmness to their minds, for it will banish superstition or dread of evil omens. It will give combination and strength to their councils, for they will have confidence in each other, being bound together in one brotherhood as they would be. It will enable them to bear reverses with fortitude; for they will consider them as inflictions kindly sent from above as a punishment for their sins; and it will temper victory with moderation, as a boon granted from heaven to be received with thanksgivings and praise to the great Giver."

Ina was thoughtful for a few minutes. "But tell me, Selem," she said at length, "how is it that the cruel Urus, from whom you have learnt this religion, act as they do? How is it that they attack our country, murdering and destroying those who have never done them any harm?"

"You have urged an objection, which I anticipated," replied Selem; "but it does not follow that a religion is false, because its *mere* professors do not act according to its injunctions. It has a far, very far, different influence on its true believers. The religion of the cross is not the less true, because men, calling themselves its followers, are wicked. Among the Russians it has been so debased and altered, so overwhelmed with superstition and priestcraft, that it has sunk into a contemptible and absurd idolatry. The gospel inculcates a simple, pure, and moral rule of life, easy to be understood and followed. Such, Ina, is the religion I would teach you, and in which I was myself instructed by a good and enlightened man, who had kept his own mind free from the gross errors and superstition of those who surrounded him. The injustice of this war, which the Russians are waging against us, is indeed no argument against the religion I speak of; for it has too frequently happened, that men in power act in direct opposition to its tenets. They send armies to ravage countries, destroy cities, and commit atrocities of every kind, without the slightest compunction; nor think themselves at all the worse worshippers of a mild and forgiving faith; each individual holding himself irresponsible for the acts of the whole. Thus a people, who consider themselves the most civilised and religious in the world, may be guilty of crimes to be equalled only by those perpetrated by the wildest hordes of barbarism when their interests or passions are excited."

In that calm retreat did the young Circassian Chief unfold to his fair sister the truths of his religion; and, as her artless mind began to comprehend them, she clasped her hands with gratitude, that so beautiful an institution had been formed for the benefit of the human race.

"Oh my brother," she exclaimed, "little did I think, when my heart beat with joy at your return, that you would also bring me so precious a gift. What a new, what an extended view of happiness, you have opened to my thoughts! Oh, do not leave me, Selem, till you have taught me all I can learn, as I would not, for worlds, now lose that religion. It seems like some valued jewel of price, which, till secured to me, I should every moment be in fear of having snatched from my grasp. And does Thaddeus, does your friend also believe in this religion?"

"Indeed, I trust he does, dearest," answered Selem. "But it is long since I have spoken to him on the subject. Ah! here he comes to answer for himself, I see him wandering through the grove, lost in meditation."

The growing darkness prevented the speaker from seeing the deep blush which this announcement called up on his sister's cheek. Thaddeus started with pleasure, as he beheld his friend approaching, and saw by whom he was accompanied. "Here, my friend," said Selem to him, "I have begun a task, in which I trust you will aid me (avoiding all the intricate and foolishly disputed points) by teaching our faith to my sister."

"Gladly I accept the office, and deeply interested I am in the success of my instruction," replied Thaddeus. "But, my friend, I have been longing to unbosom myself to you of a secret, lest you should accuse me of deceit or treachery."

Ina felt her heart beat quickly, from guessing the words which would follow.

"Speak, Thaddeus, what is it you would say," said Selem, taking his sister's hand.

"Selem, my friend," replied Thaddeus, "to you I owe my life and all I now possess; but, though deeply grateful, I would ask still more of you. I have your sister's leave to speak." Selem felt Ina's hand press his. "From the first moment I saw her, I felt I would die rather than cease to love, or learn that she no longer loves me. Will you sanction and aid us in our hopes? or, if not, deliver me again into the hands of the Russians, from whom you rescued me."

"My friend! my brother! your words give me joy indeed," exclaimed Selem, "Believe me, that I will aid to the utmost the wishes of the two beings most dear to me on earth. But, remember, we have a father to consult; though he, I doubt not, will give his daughter to one, without whose aid he would have lost her entirely."

"Oh, I know he will," cried Ina. "For he dearly loves me."

"Our father, Ina, is as good as he is brave; and it shall be my grateful charge to plead your cause with him. I will tell him, that my friend is of a noble and princely race, who were chiefs in their own country before Russian swords overwhelmed them. As for wealth, we want it not here. We have abundance for all."

Thus conversing, those three young beings sat beneath the trees of the sacred grove, till the rising moon warned them to return home.

In the fervid climes of the East, smiles and laughter succeed tears and grief, as rapidly as sunshine follows the showers of spring. Life is more full of excitement and danger; the pulse beats quicker; the passions are more easily aroused, whether of sorrow or pleasure. There is, perhaps, more to enjoy in life; but it is held by even a more frail tenure than in the colder regions of the north.

On the following morning the inhabitants of the anderoon were in a state of great agitation, while old Kahija bustled about to array Zara in her bridal vestments; for her betrothed was anxiously waiting her arrival at his father's house. The old nurse, with tears streaming from her eyes, was busily employed in enveloping her in a long white robe, fastened at her head; which, when drawn round, completely concealed her figure.

"My dear Ina," said the blushing girl, "Alp yesterday evening was persuading me to leave you. He says that he must soon return to that horrid warfare, and that his mother is anxiously waiting me at his home. He will be alarmed if I do not come; he used many other arguments, till I consented at last, in spite of all my kind nurse's persuasions to the contrary."

"It will make me sad to lose you, dear one; but it would be wrong to disappoint your brave Alp's mother," said Ina, smiling and kissing her cheek. "So you must yield to your fate: a dreadful one, indeed, to become the wife of so wild and handsome a youth as Alp!"

"I wonder when young Ali Bey will be here. Alp said that he would come early; but I dread that terrible gallop to his home."

"We will go to the gate and see if he is coming," said Ina. "Are you ready, dear one?"

Zara signified that she was prepared for the worst that could happen; so the two maidens sallied forth followed by old Kahija. They had not long to wait when the young bridegroom galloped up, attired in his bravest suit, followed by a gay and gallant train. They reined in their steeds at a short distance; when, all dismounting, he alone respectfully advanced, and courteously saluted the two fair girls, drawing his sword as he knelt at Zara's feet, and swearing solemnly to protect her, for his friend's sake, with his life. Then, after she had bestowed an affectionate kiss on Ina and on old Kahija, he lifted her, with the tenderest care, before him on his steed, and galloped off towards the domain of Hadji Guz Beg.

"Ah me! she is a sweet flower," sighed old Kahija; "I shall long mourn her loss. But what makes me most sad is the thought of the interruption to the marriage feast. It is a bad omen, and I like it not. Ah me! ah me! I never knew good come of such things. And so melancholy a funeral but yesterday! And then the brave youths who were killed at the wedding feast by the fierce Khan and his followers! Mark me, there is something more dreadful coming still;" and she retired into the anderoon to indulge in a flood of tears.

Perhaps Ina might have followed her, had she not promised to meet Thaddeus and her brother, about that time, and she trusted soon to enjoy the same happiness which she hoped would be Zara's lot.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Twelve.**

The vast concourse, which we have described as assembled on the banks of the Ubin, had long since dispersed to their homes, disappointed at having performed no great exploit, though they had made several daring attacks on the Russian troops, with severe loss on both sides.

The short, but rigorous, winter had now thrown its hoary mantle over the northern provinces of Abasia: the plains of the Kouban appeared one vast sheet of dazzling whiteness, here and there dotted, in the far distance, by the dark forts of the Russians. The trees, so lately covered with the rich and varied leaves of autumn, now seemed like some fabled grove of silver, in a scene of enchantment, decked with strange and fantastic splendour, crystallised by the frost. A deep and solemn silence reigned on the wooded heights which overlooked the plain. Not a bird was heard to sing in the groves. Here and there might be seen the footmarks of some beasts of prey, as they crossed the mountains to seek for food in the marshes. The Kouban, whose waters in summer afforded the chief defence of the Russians against the well-provoked aggressions of the mountaineers, had now become an even and clear sheet of ice, every day, gaining consistency and strength.

The invading army, suffering from the inclemency of the weather, had retired into their winter quarters; and the Circassians, trusting also to the imprisonment of their enemies by the cold, had withdrawn the greater number of their guards and scouts. They had determined not to be the aggressors, but to endeavour to convince their enemies that they fought only for liberty and peace. A general calm seemed to pervade the whole country, which had so lately been startled by the fierce storm of war. The warriors enjoyed their short repose till the returning spring should again let loose the swarms of their now pent-up foes. They passed their time among their families, in tending their farms, or in the invigorating sports of the chase.

Selem was enjoying some days of relaxation from the toils of war, at the house of his aged kinsman, in company with Thaddeus and his sister. He was delighted more and more with the unsophisticated, but quick and varied powers of her pure mind, which every day was enlightened by the conversation of her lover. How delightful was the task to the young Pole, to instruct the fair creature he soon hoped to call his own!

Many of the inhabitants of the valley, indeed, wondered that two such gallant and daring warriors as Selem and his friend had proved themselves, could find pleasure in passing their time with a mere girl. "Allah!" they exclaimed, "what odd customs they must have learned among the Giaours!"

They were interrupted from their studies by the entrance of the little slave, Buda, announcing the arrival of the Hadji Guz Beg. Hastening to the guest-room, they found the old warrior, clothed in complete warlike costume, and attended by his son Alp, who had torn himself from the arms of Zara, to accompany his father—

"Rouse up, my son," he cried. "Gird on your sword, and let your heart rejoice, for we have in hand work that may be worthy of us. Those cursed Urus are not content with our remaining quiet, but they must enter the country, and burn and destroy our villages. Mashallah! we will repay them with a vengeance. I have messengers from many chiefs, who are assembling their followers, and now that the ice affords us a bridge, which the enemy cannot easily destroy, we will make a foray into their territories, which will give them a lesson to respect ours."

"Wherever you lead, my friend, I am ready to follow," answered Selem.

"Mashallah! I doubted you not," cried the Hadji; "for see, we have no child's work on hand now. There will be no drawing back this time."

"What do you propose doing, then?" asked Selem.

"No less than an attack on the town of Kislavosk," rubbing his hands with the glee of a youth at the thought of a foray. "These Russians, we hear, have collected whole herds of cattle in the neighbourhood, for provisioning their fortresses along the Valdi Caucasse, and think that they have them secure enough; but we will deprive them of their dinners, if I mistake not."

"I would rather have some more noble work than merely carrying off a few head of cattle," said our hero.

"Ah, when you have lived longer among us, you will not despise such work," cried the Hadji. "What do armies in general fight for? To get gold and silver! Are not cattle, to hungry people, of much more value, and more difficult to carry off? Men are too fond of making absurd distinctions where none exist. The Russians call us robbers, because we take a gallop into the country they have usurped, and carry off all we can meet; and they affirm that they themselves are engaged in lawful warfare when they burn and destroy our villages and fields, because they possess a regular army, with cannon and ammunition, while we have only our good steeds and sharp swords. Such ideas are absurd. The Giaours will some day become more enlightened and civilised. We shall, however, have fighting enough to please you, my young friend, for think not that these Urus will lose their food quietly. No, no, they will fight hard enough for that; but we will be too quick for them. And, my friends, we have no time to expend in talking."

"I will soon be ready to attend you," answered Selem, taking his arms from the walls, and ordering Karl to prepare his horse for the expedition. Thaddeus followed his example, though much loath to leave his mistress; but he had so completely leagued himself with his Circassian friends, that he had no further excuse for holding back. He himself was also excited by the prospect of gaining the further applause and confidence of those, in the success of whose cause he had become so deeply interested.

Alp was in the most extravagant spirits, notwithstanding his regret at leaving Zara at the thoughts of a foray, on a more extended scale than any in which he had hitherto been engaged. The prospect of the renown he should acquire under his father, and also the hope of gaining wealth for his fair bride, were further incitements.

"Mashallah!" cried the Hadji; "we shall carry off cattle enough to supply the whole of Abasia for a year to come."

Ina trembled with alarm when she heard that her brother and her lover were to leave her, on so hazardous an expedition; having cherished the fond hope that they would remain in safety all the winter. But she remembered that she was a Circassian maiden; and, recommending them to the care of Heaven, she parted from them with a tearful smile, and a prayer for their speedy and victorious return. They repaired, before they set out, to pay their adieus to their old host, who had, for some time, been confined to his couch through age and infirmities.

"Farewell, my son," he said, addressing Selem. "Before you return, I may be gathered to my fathers; for I feel that I have not long to remain among my people, though I had hoped to have seen my country restored to peace ere I died. But I commend to your guidance a body of my choicest youths, whom I have ordered to be ready to attend you. I am now alone the last chief of my race; my sons have offered up their spirits as martyrs to their country's cause. I, too, would have thanked Allah for the glorious privilege of dying on the field of battle as becomes a warrior-chieftain; but that blessing I can now never hope for. When I am gone, you, my son Alp, will be chosen by the elders of my people, as the husband of my only child, to succeed me as their leader; that is, when you have gained sufficient age and experience. Till then, the noble chief, Arslan Gherrei, will lead them to battle; and you, Selem, as a son of our race, I charge to watch over and guard their interests; for on you, next to Alp, would have devolved my possessions. Rule them justly and firmly, and they will faithfully obey you."

The young men promised religiously to obey the old chief's injunctions.

"Farewell, my sons," he said; "I feel that you will not betray the trust. And now my only hope is, that I may live long enough to see you return victorious from this expedition; and may Allah guard you in it!"

As the chief had promised, our hero found, on leaving the house, a gallant troop of fifty young and hardy horsemen, fully equipped, ready to obey his commands. Every man carried provisions at his saddle-bow, sufficient for several days, considering their abstemious habits when engaged in warfare. They were clothed in coats and caps of skin, wearing over their shoulders thick large cloaks, impenetrable to wet or cold. Their rifles and pistols were well protected from the rain at their back, and they had daggers and long sabres at the waist. Both the Hadji and Alp were clothed much in the same manner over their chain armour, and with Selem and Thaddeus, who were also arrayed in their winter gear, they set forward at the head of the troop.

The appointed place of meeting was in a valley within the last ridge of mountains before the Caucasian range descends into the plains, near where the Kara River, rushing through a narrow and rocky defile, finds its way into the Kouban. In that direction they turned their horses' heads, proceeding steadily and slowly forward, so as not to fatigue their steeds, and to keep them in the finest possible condition for the exploit. At the end of each day's journey, they received a warm and cordial welcome at the house of some chief. Through every village and hamlet they passed, their band was increased by numerous volunteers, all eager to share the promised spoils of the foe.

On reaching the heights, commanding the valley appointed for their place of rendezvous, a warlike spectacle broke on their sight. From every quarter, bands of warriors were seen emerging from the forests, troop after troop following each other in gallant array, winding in long lines, amid the rocks and trees, down the steep sides of the mountain, and uniting in the valley in a close body. Their banners gaily fluttered in the breeze; their weapons shone brilliantly in the rays of the sun, and increased in lustre as they were reflected in the snow; their loud and joyous shouts resounded through the air.

As the Hadji and his party rode to the ground, he was received with loud acclamations of welcome, and his standard was planted as one of the chief leaders. Other bands, during the remainder of the day, continued to pour in on all sides; and soon after, Arslan Gherrei, at the head of a fine and warlike troop, arrived in the valley, and Selem hastened to greet his father. As the champion rode up, mounted on a superb and powerful black charger, he was welcomed on all sides by enthusiastic acclamations, most of the independent bands arraying themselves under his especial banner.

The Hadji seldom aspired to the entire command of an army; preferring his own desultory and impetuous style of fighting to the responsible and arduous duties of a general. He prided himself most as a leader of bands engaged in a

kind of guerilla warfare.

The Seraskier, or Commander-in-Chief, who had been chosen as the leader of this republican army, was a chieftain far advanced in years, though still retaining all the vigour and activity of youth. Of renowned courage and sagacious conduct, and trained to arms in Egypt from his boyhood, he had, since the commencement of hostilities, been engaged in constant warfare with the enemy, by whom he was much dreaded. He was of commanding height and sinewy frame nerved by violent and unremitting exercise; his features were bronzed by exposure on the burning sands of Africa, his white locks escaped from beneath his plumed helm. He rode in the midst of a group of chieftains, who eagerly gathered round him for instruction and advice. It was with a glance of proud satisfaction, that the veteran leader looked round on the bands of warriors drawn up in the valley, who had so promptly obeyed his summons, issued only a few days previously, and thus so nobly answered. It was, in truth, a fine sight, as the aged hero reined up his steed, waving his hand to request silence. Surrounded by all the chiefs and leaders of this little army, he thus addressed them—

“My noble friends, chieftains of the Attèghèi, we have this day again assembled in arms, roused by the reiterated, and unprovoked attacks of the Urus. Seeking alone to enjoy peace and the undisturbed possession of our country and of our liberties, we have refrained from acting as the aggressors on those territories claimed by our foes, though unjustly wrenched from our hands. Who, among us here, has not suffered innumerable wrongs and unbearable injuries at their hands, since their dark eagles first hovered over the confines of our lands? They have burned our hamlets—they have cut down our corn—they have trampled over our rich pastures—they have carried off our cattle; and yet those are injuries which may be replaced. But how many of our bravest warriors have fallen in defence of our country and our liberty! Who, among us here assembled, but has lost a father, a brother, or a son? Still do the cries of our women ring in our ears for their loss. Where can we replace them? Can our enemies restore the lost ones? How often have those among us, whose homes are in the neighbouring lands, been aroused in the darkness of night by the roar of their cannon, and, with scarcely time to save their lives, and those still dearer to them, have been driven to the mountain fastnesses, whence they have seen their habitations and their goods committed to the flames! What redress have we but deep, deep revenge? Are we slaves, are we Armenian Kaffirs, to submit to these insults? No, my countrymen, we are gallant warriors, descended from a long line of Princes, and of nobles; who have never bowed their necks to the yoke of slavery, who were chiefs and conquerors long ere the wolf-like flocks of the Urus broke through the regions of the north, to seize the rich and smiling lands which surround us. Shall we then allow them for a moment to suppose, that weary with our protracted struggle, we also are prepared to swell their list of conquests? Shall we act like the weak and effeminate Georgians, and tamely submit to be dragged in chains to the foot-stool of their Czar? Shall we consent to see our children led to slaughter, among the slavish ranks of their army? Shall we see our wives and daughters carried off as worse than slaves? Shall castles and towers be built on every mountain's brow, throughout the country, to awe the people into subjection; for thus only could they hold the lands of the Attèghèi? We have set them lately an example of moderation, but they would not profit by it. Let us now give them a lesson, that may not easily escape their memory. Let us remind them that we have not forgotten how to offer a severe retaliation for injuries; and let us shew them that we are a nation of warriors, who fear not their force, mighty as it might be, and that we despise their innumerable hosts of slaves. Then onward, my countrymen, onward men of Attèghèi, and may Allah prosper our arms!”

This oration of their veteran leader was received with sincere expressions of approbation by the chiefs, and with acclamations of applause by the dense mass of their followers who formed an outer circle round the orator.

“Remember, my countrymen,” he resumed; “that the Urus call us uncivilised barbarians and robbers. Let us shew them that we have more humanity than they; that we know ‘the native rights man claims from man;’ and that never will we defile our arms with cruelty. Let us treat their women, as hitherto, with courtesy and kindness, to shew them that we war not against them. Let us not stop to plunder the defenceless inhabitants of their stores except their cattle which we will drive away to deprive them of the means of remaining in our neighbourhood. Let us confine our further efforts to capturing their cannon, their arms, and ammunition; for it is those we alone require to make our country impregnable to their attacks. Follow these rules, strictly obey your commanders, and victory will be ours. I have done. By to-morrow's dawn, we will begin our march; and before the Russians awake from their slumbers, we will be beyond their forts.”

Again repeated shouts arose, and all promised to obey his injunctions.

The Seraskier then explained to the chiefs his proposed plan of operations. First, that the infantry who were composed chiefly of the peasants of the hamlets, nearest the Kouban—sturdy fellows inured to border warfare—should be left on the further bank of that river to cover their retreat, if hard-pressed, and to secure the herds of cattle they might capture. That they should advance as far as the town of Kislavosk, take it by surprise, with the greater number of the cavalry; or, at all events, endeavour to give full occupation to the Russian troops, while the rest might drive off the cattle from the neighbouring country; and then, if victorious, and not pursued on their return, make a wide extended sweep, clearing everything before them.

The sagacious General himself, as well as Arslan Gherrei, and a few others, would have preferred confining their efforts entirely to taking the Russian forts, and endeavouring to carry off their cannon and powder; but they knew too well, that many of their followers would not exert themselves to the utmost without their holding out some prospect of a rich booty; and we must remember, that every man in the host fought without pay of any sort, finding his own arms, ammunition, and food; so that it was but natural they should wish for some recompense for leaving their occupations and farms at that inclement season of the year, besides the mere satisfaction of annoying the enemy. They all understood the necessity of defending their own territories when attacked; but to make a forage into the enemy's country without carrying off booty was in their ideas a folly: with the prospect of booty, all were ready to fight.

Upwards of six thousand horsemen were now collected, chiefly from one province alone; but among that vast concourse of wild warriors, at this exciting moment, the utmost order and decorum prevailed, owing to the courtesy



of the chiefs, and the habitual sedateness of the men; though there was an entire absence of discipline and subordination throughout the whole host.

Having received the directions and advice of the Seraskier, the chiefs separated to put themselves at the head of their respective followers; to advance towards the Kouban; and, bivouacking close to its banks, to give time to other fresh reinforcements of cavalry from the further points to assemble; while the infantry were to advance at once to the station they were to occupy, and be in readiness to assist the cavalry in the morning.

At a given signal, the whole body then advanced a few miles towards the place they had agreed on for a bivouac; entirely dispensing with tents or covering of any sort, except their thick cloaks. As each troop arrived, they piquetted their horses to the low shrubs which grew about the plain, lighting their watch-fires, which blazed up in the darkness of night. For a long time fresh bands continued to arrive every instant, increasing the widely extended circle of flames, until the plain seemed dotted with fires as from some volcanic ground. The hardy warriors, wrapt in their cloaks, assembled round them listening to the songs of their minstrels, who never on such occasions failed to join their bands, and cheer their spirits.

Round one fire, wrapped in thick horse-cloaks, sat the champion, Arslan Gherrei, with Selem, Thaddeus, the Hadji, and several other chiefs.

“Now, my son,” said the old warrior, Hadji, “to-morrow you will have a field worthy of your bravery, and honour your father by your deeds. Where the thickest of the fight is, there let your sword be waving amid the ranks of the foe. By example alone, can we expect our followers to be brave; and those nations quickly become slaves to their neighbours, whose chiefs hang back in the combat. It is only by being ready to sacrifice our own lives, that we can secure the liberty of our country; and how much better is it to be sent to the realms of paradise, than to eke out a few more years of existence, with the galling chains of the slave! But I fear not for you, my son.”

Alp rose and took his father’s hand. The act was unpremeditated, and scarce consciously performed; he knelt by his side. “Father your son shall not disgrace you.”

The words were simple, but there was a deep tone of feeling, which showed that he would keep his word. He took no oath, nor called the gods to witness his words; and his father was satisfied.

At length, one by one, the party sought a few hours’ repose, wrapped in their cloaks with their feet towards the fire, and their heads pillowed on their saddles. The clear sky was densely spangled with myriads of brilliant stars. Ere Selem slept he looked round on the scene. Far as the eye could reach, the wide heath was covered with the recumbent figures of the warriors; yet a moment would call them all into fierce activity, should the Russians draw nigh. Yet though they seemed so calm to the eye, who could know the fiery thoughts and passions working in the brain of the sleeping thousands? Even now, many in imagination were engaging in the onslaught of the morrow.

Oft did the image of Ina return to Thaddeus, as he slept. His thoughts then flew to his far distant home, the abode of his childhood, the proud castle of his fathers, now laid low by the hands of his country’s oppressors. He saw the Eagle of Russia hovering over the slaughtered bodies of his countrymen, while captives knelt in chains, bound to the staff of her standard. In the midst of them appeared a warrior of majestic front and noble bearing, one who had never bent the knee to despotism. As he waved his sword, the chains fell from the captives’ necks, the dead arose, and the Eagles fled shrieking from the land before the resuscitated band. Again the scene changed. He stood once more before his paternal castle, with Ina by his side. His faithful dependants welcomed him with shouts of joy. He brought them glorious news. Russia had been stopped in her headlong career of victory. She had retreated before the gallantry of a mountain nation. Poland might again be free!

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Thirteen.**

“To horse! to horse!” was shouted about two hours before dawn, and, in the course of a few minutes, all the warriors of that little army were in their saddles, formed in close array under their respective leaders, and advancing steadily forward. The ground over which they rode was broken and rough, offering many impediments to their progress; as in darkness and silence they crossed the Kouban.

“Onward, men of Attèghèi,” cried the Seraskier, waving his sword; and at the signal the whole band dashed down the steep, passing a broad belt of lofty reeds ere they emerged on the now smooth and hard surface of the stream. The infantry, who were already posted on the other side among the thick cover of reeds, reported that none of the enemy had appeared, or seemed at all prepared for their approach. The cavalry, in condensed bodies, then rode boldly forward at a quick trot, encountering for a long distance merely a few peasants with their cattle, who were quickly sent to the rear, some light bodies being thrown out on each side to see that none escaped and to give notice of their approach to the enemy.

The hearts of all beat high, and their eyes flashed with excitement and pleasure, as the walls and houses of Kislavosk, seen by the pale light of dawn, met their view. A cry of joy escaped them, as they urged on their steeds at full gallop towards the devoted town. The outer picquets had no time to give the alarm, ere they were cut down; and onward dashed the band through the streets, the guards at the entrance making but a feeble resistance to their furious onset. The inhabitants, roused from their slumbers, looked amazed and trembling at the wild horsemen. On all sides the Russian troops were called to arms; but before they could assemble in sufficient numbers to repel the assault, the cattle, which the Circassians found assembled in great numbers, were driven off, and a magazine of powder and arms was stormed and ransacked. Then, like a whirlwind, the whole force again swept through the town. The inhabitants were spared; but little mercy was shewn to the soldiers who attempted to form their ranks.

The town, which a few minutes before was wrapped in fancied security, was now a scene of tumult and bloodshed, as

the mountaineers fought their way through the broad streets, affording slight shelter to the Russians, who, ere they could bring their guns to bear, found their assailants beyond their reach; though they saluted them with a heavy fire from the fortifications.

As the Circassian rear-guard were emerging from the town, the Russian infantry formed and charged them in line; but the horsemen, wheeling on a sudden, rushed on them, sabre in hand, with such fury that they were glad to retreat, losing many of their number on the field. The Circassians, also, lost several men; but, as they were struck, they were lifted on their comrades' horses and carried away.

The town might have been theirs, but they knew that they could not keep it for any length of time; and all the lower ranks of the Circassian army were eager to advance for greater booty, notwithstanding the counsel of the coolest and most sagacious chiefs. However, they encountered no cavalry in the town from whom to fear pursuit; and they had nothing to dread from the infantry. Onward pushed the band of mountaineers, passing through several villages, and sweeping all before them.

Their Seraskier then urged them to return; as now, that the Russians were alarmed, they might collect an almost overwhelming force from the neighbouring fortified towns to impede their progress; for, carried away with the ardour of the foray, the greater number thought of nothing less than pillaging every Russian settlement on the borders. Very unwillingly, therefore, they wheeled to make a circuit towards that part of the Kouban they had already passed.

Alp Beg had, during the day, constantly accompanied our hero and his friend, at the head of his troop, making, with them, several desperate charges on the Russian lines as they had formed, and never failing in breaking them with his furious onset. At their return, as the main body, with whom at the time were Selem and Alp, were passing at some little distance from Kislavosk, the Hadji, who brought up the rear to the left nearer the town, heard from some peasants that they had missed securing several head of cattle, which were still at a short distance outside the walls.

"Mashallah! what say you, my friends?" cried the old warrior. "Shall we let the Giaours still have any beef for their dinners? Let us shew them that they must not cheat us in this way. What say you, my friends; shall we pay them another visit? It will take us but few minutes."

The proposition was too much to the taste of all parties not to be warmly seconded. Sending, therefore, to the Seraskier to intimate his purpose, and being followed by about five hundred horse, he made a headlong dash at the place the peasants indicated. The Russians saluted them as they advanced with showers of shot and grape, while the troops sallied out to meet them; but nothing could stop the impetuosity of their onset, and they quickly liberated the cattle, driving them off at a greater speed than the animals had ever before accomplished.

"Well done, my friends," cried the Hadji. "I told you we would spoil these unbelievers' dinners; and now, Bismillah! let us charge them again," he added, as a large body of infantry met them.

Uttering loud cries, they charged the Russians, driving the cattle among their ranks. The troops gave way, when they were again saluted with a tremendous flanking fire of grape; and, ere they had got clear from the range of the guns, a large body of Cossack horse, who had that moment arrived from the neighbouring towns, met them at full charge. Already had many of their number fallen under the fire from the town; but the old warrior Hadji, undaunted by the overwhelming force of their new opponents, shouting his war cry, called to his followers to charge them.

Tremendous was the shock of the two fierce bodies of hostile cavalry, animated with the most bitter hatred, and excited by the fiercest rage; but the superior skill, agility, and courage of the Circassians compensated partly for their inferiority in numbers. The Cossacks were arrested in their course; while the mountaineers literally hewed themselves a road through their ranks. They discovered, however, when too late, that they had committed a dreadful error in so doing; for a fresh body of Cossacks arriving from the same direction, they found themselves completely surrounded. The ground they fought on was a broad open heath, in front of the town, which gave full scope for the larger body of their assailants to bring their whole force against them.

The main body of the Circassians, with whom was Alp and Selem, on receiving the Hadji's message, and on hearing the firing, wheeled to support him. The first of the band was the brave young Alp, eager to join the affray, and assist his father.

The Hadji, with scarcely three hundred followers, was bravely defending himself against several thousand Cossacks, shouting his war cry, cheering on his men to the attack, who wheeled and charged in every direction, keeping a complete circle in the midst of their foes, and placing their horses back to back in such close order that few of the enemy could get within the brave troop; or if they did, they were cut down by the inner ranks. At length, however, the Cossacks seemed ashamed at being held at bay by so small a body, and charged them with renewed vigour, hoping to destroy them before the main body came up. Great numbers of the Circassians fell beneath this fresh attack; though the remainder fought on with yet undaunted courage. But even their gallant old leader looked out anxiously for the succour of their friends. They made many fresh, desperate, but unavailing, attempts to cut their way through, still the Hadji fought on, shouting to his brave companions, and never for a moment thinking of yielding.

"Ah! Allah! well done, my sons!" he cried. "Well done, men of Attèghèi! See, the vile Cossacks are thinning fast around us. We shall soon have a hill of their bodies to ride over. Fight on, my men! our friends will be here anon; and then we shall see how fast these Giaours can fly. Charge, my sons! charge! Ah! Allah! here comes my noble son, my own Alp. I knew that he would be the first to rescue his father."

While shouting these cries, the old warrior had made such desperate charges with one or two followers, that the Cossacks, partly opening their ranks, again closed before the rest could get up to them, thus completely hemming him in. His enemies, who recognised him as one of the most daring chiefs, pressed hard upon him, endeavouring either to make him prisoner, or to cut him down on the spot; when Alp, the foremost of the advanced guard of the main body of the Circassians, beheld his father's imminent danger.

Not waiting even to see who followed, the young warrior shouted his war cry, and dashed boldly at the foe, the foremost of whom gave way as they saw the gallant youth approaching. But a young Cossack officer, seeing him advance unsupported, spurred on his charger, and fired his light rifle at the same time. For this movement Alp was prepared; and throwing himself on his horse's side, the ball passed over him. In a moment his own gun was in his hand; he fired, but the Cossack imitating his manoeuvre, escaped his aim. Urging on their steeds their swords met, fast whirling round their heads as they were wheeling: and backing their horses. Alp, seeing an opportunity, threw up the Cossack's guard, endeavouring to seize him and plunge his dagger in his heart; but ere he could effect his purpose, a ball from his antagonist's pistol entered his horse's neck, and the noble animal fell mortally wounded to the ground. But Alp was not overcome; disengaging himself from his horse in a moment, he sprung like a tiger on his opponent; and, striking him with his dagger, hurled him to the ground. Then springing on his steed's back, and waving his sword, he stayed not an instant to cast a parting glance at his conquered foe, but led on his friends who had just come up.

The father and son recognised each other amid the turmoil of the fight; when, again shouting loudly his war cry, Alp urged on his steed amidst the thickest of the foe, followed by the few who owned the fastest horses, and fought his way up to his father's side, shielding him from the many blows aimed at him, and regardless of those he himself received. Desperately did he strive to keep his foes at bay until his friends could come to his relief.

The old chief was saved; but at what a sacrifice! The blood flowed from Alp's side; his eyes grew dim; his head giddy; he could not see longer to guard off the blows of his enemies.

Selem, at the head of his brave troop, as he saw the predicament of his friends, charged the foe furiously, cutting down all who opposed him, or drove them off till he reached the Hadji, who shouted his thanks as the last Cossack disappeared between him and his rescuers. But why does Alp not advance? Oh! Allah! where is he? Alas! behold him now weltering in his blood beneath his horse's hoofs. Gasping out his last breath, he thanks Allah that he has saved his father. He pronounced, too, his loved Zara's name. He is lifted on his horse; but his pulse has ceased to beat. The young warrior is no more. The old Hadji seems like some aged oak scathed by lightning. He hears not the shouts of the combatants. His own voice is stilled. He knows not where they lead him. One thing alone he sees—his noble, gallant boy a corpse by his side. He mourns that he yet lives while the young and the brave have fallen.

The main body of the Circassians, now arriving, set furiously on the Cossacks, whom they drove before them; but, pursuing them too eagerly, they again found themselves exposed to the deadly fire from the town, showers of grape falling among them, and cutting through their ranks with deadly effect. Thus once more they were compelled to retreat. The Russian infantry then marched out to support the cavalry, now again following the Circassians, who, whenever the Russians approached near enough, would suddenly wheel and charge them, thinning their ranks, and driving them to a distance.

In this hazardous style of fighting, Thaddeus had much distinguished himself, as well as in the principal charge, which he had made by the side of Selem to the rescue of the Hadji. As they approached the Kouban, their own infantry coming up, the Cossacks took to flight, and were pursued with considerable slaughter; but though it had been a day of victory, it had been a disastrous and dearly bought one to the Circassians; many of their chiefs, and a great number of their followers having fallen by the destructive fire of grape, which had played on them from the batteries; though, in comparison, they had lost but few men in their encounter with the Cossacks; so superior are they in horsemanship and the use of their arms.

Arslan Gherrei rode up to the side of his brother chieftain and old friend, to endeavour to offer some consolation.

"Nay, nay, my friend," said the veteran warrior, "I mourn not for my son. Allah is merciful, and has sent him to Paradise in the midst of victory. And what nobler fate could I wish for him? I would that I too had died with him! For what was he born? For what have I bred him up a warrior, but to die for his country? There will be weeping and wailing enough among the women when he is brought home. Alas! for his bride! her heart will break. And his mother! It is a sad day for them. But I!—no, I cannot mourn! My heart's feelings have long since been dried up. I grieve not for his loss."

The low husky voice, the contracted brow, and expanded, but tearless eye of the old chief, sadly belied his words. He spoke no more as he rode on, except to issue some short orders to those of his followers who remained alive. His thoughts were hidden in his own breast; but there was an expression of concentrated agony in his stern features, which shewed too well that a father's feelings were working strongly within him. Near him rode his squire, guiding the horse which bore the young warrior's body and arms; and every now and then the father would cast a glance full of deep meaning towards it.

The army encamped that night on the same spot they had occupied on the previous one; stationing, however, picquets to give timely warning in case their enemies should attempt to follow. The Russians, however, had received that day a sufficient lesson to learn that the Circassians were foes not to be trifled with.

That night, no minstrels tuned their harps round the watch-fires; nor did the warriors indulge in tales of their exploits; but, as soon as the horses were sheltered and fed, and they had partaken of their own frugal fare, wrapping themselves in their cloaks, they snatched a few hours' repose after the fatigues of the day.

As Selem, who took his place at the fire near which the Hadji had thrown himself on the ground, watched the old warrior, he saw many a convulsive throb pass over his frame. Then he would start up, and sit gazing on the burning embers, his thoughts doubtlessly resting on his slaughtered son, his white hair streaming over his stern and wrinkled brow, with mouth firmly set, and his hands clutching his snowy and flowing beard. He might have been compared to some aged oak, whose trunk had been scorched and riven by the lightning's forked flash, yet refusing to bend beneath the tempest's power. A true patriot's motto is, "I may break, but bend not."

---

## Volume Three—Chapter Fourteen.

The next morning, as soon as the first streaks of light appeared in the east, the whole assemblage were on foot, all anxious to return to their homes. The division of the booty, an important affair, was first adjusted; the leaders of the different bands shared according to the number of their followers, among whom it was again to be divided; and, as the cattle were driven off by those to whom they were awarded, by degrees the whole of the force melted away.

A curious spectacle was presented, as the different bands wended their way in warlike guise in every direction along the valleys, and up the mountain's sides, driving the untractable cattle before them.

To some, also, were awarded arms and powder, according to their necessities. The various other objects of booty, (and among them, a few Cossack prisoners, who were destined for slaves), had been thrown into the common stock, to be equally distributed.

The Seraskier, though still treated with the deepest respect by all, was now left without an army, except of his own immediate followers, every man who had composed it considering himself perfectly at liberty to take his departure when he wished, though equally ready to return, for any fresh expedition.

The chiefs parted from their leader with a respectful and affectionate farewell; he returning to his cottage and his farm, like another Cincinnatus, to till his land with his own hands.

A considerable share of the spoils was awarded to Thaddeus, much to his surprise and satisfaction; and the partition being arranged, he, with Selem, and Arslan Gherrei, prepared to accompany the Hadji in his mournful procession towards his home. Their sad journey was, of necessity, as rapid as possible, waiting only at night, to snatch a few hours' repose, and borrowing fresh horses to proceed. The Hadji's nature seemed changed by the blow he had sustained; before lively, and full of anecdote and conversation, he now spoke not, nor smiled, and seemed to be dreading the burst of grief and agony, which his arrival with the dead body of his son, would cause among those most dear to him.

As they approached his grounds, the body was taken from the horse, and laid out on a bier, formed of branches cut from the neighbouring trees, over which a cloak was thrown, and the arms of the deceased placed by his side. No sooner did the cavalcade appear at a distance, slowly winding their way down the valley, than the women rushed out to meet and welcome them on their return from victory. Among the foremost came Zara, eager to clasp her young hero to her arms. The chaplet she had woven to crown him fell from her hands; a sad foreboding seized her, and as she saw at a distance, that they bore a bier, her eye wandered anxiously round for Alp. She missed him from among the horsemen. She sprang wildly forward.

"Where is he?" she cried. "Where is my Alp? Why comes he not with you, warriors?" She caught sight of the bier. "Do you bear him there wounded? Oh, speak! Tell me, is he there?"

"Daughter," said the Hadji, "Allah has taken my son."

She seemed to hear him not, as she rushed forward. She lifted the cloak from the face, before any one could prevent her. She shrieked not; she did not swoon; but, with a fixed gaze of despair, she stood like a monumental statue, bending over the corpse of her slaughtered husband, as cold and inanimate as he.

At length, she seized a hand; it fell heavily down. She pressed her lips to those cold and lifeless ones, as if to find that breath still animated them. She seemed scarcely conscious what death was. It was long ere she was convinced of the reality; yet no tear escaped her eye, no sob, her heart. Her soft and gentle nature was fearfully changing.

"Who did this?" she cried. "The savage Urus! well I know their work! Alp, you shall be avenged!" Again she stood silently over the corpse, rigid and immovable. None could find it in their hearts to disturb her, until the mother of the slain youth arrived to bewail, with frantic grief, her loss, joined by the other women of their household. Their cries and shrieks rent the air.

"My son! my son!" cried the distracted mother, "why hast thou been torn from me? Could not some more aged warrior have satisfied our foes? Why hast thou been cut off in the prime of thy youth? Wai! wai! wai! Was it for this that thou wast reared, the boldest, the bravest, the most beautiful? No more shall I hear thy joyous laugh resounding through the groves, or see thy graceful form bounding on thy steed, across the green meadows. My son! my son! Curses on the foes who have slain thee! May they, like me, be made childless! Can they give me another son like thee? Bear him along," she cried to the attendants, "bear my son to our home, that I may mourn over him. Wai! wai!"

The followers of the Hadji carried the bier of their young lord as ordered; the women leading Zara, who seemed like one in a trance, her eye resting alone on the bier; yet she faltered not in her steps, nor did a word escape her. Her grief was too deep for words or cries. Her heart was not broken; gentle and soft, as she seemed, it was of too tough a texture for that; though none, not even she herself, would have deemed it so.

We know not of what nature we are, until we are tried. She would have thought that she could not have borne the sight of blood, or the slightest misery, without sinking beneath the blow: but now, alas! she knew herself. Her heart, in a moment, was seared and blighted, as by the breath of the dark simoon, in an instant, the traveller is overwhelmed and scorched. Her breast was now hardened to feelings of pity, and burnt with vengeance against those who had deprived her of her loved one.

Such are the cursed effects of war. Let the victorious conqueror look around beyond the dazzling scene, and the gorgeous pageant which attends his triumph, and he would shudder, were he to see the agony, the hopeless despair, of one alone out of the thousands, of whose misery he is the cause. The heaps of slain are as nothing; the eye soon grows accustomed to gaze on them: the feelings become familiarised with the sight of blood, which first sickened at

the thought. The slain have played their game of life, and are at rest; but it is those who watch anxiously for their return, who suffer: the fond parents, the doting wife, or mistress, the affectionate sister—it is their loving hearts which are wrung with anguish—it is their curses which blast the laurel-crowned brow of ambition!

The Hadji accompanied his son's body to the door of his home, where he saw it committed to the charge of the youth's weeping mother; ushering his friends into the guest-house, he insisted on performing the duties of hospitality. After these had been accomplished, he called for his horse, and rode hastily away into the neighbouring forest. There, unseen by the eye of any, he gave way to the grief and torment of his breast. "The boy died for me! Oh! Allah! that I might have been in his place!" he cried, in a burst of agony.

Selem with his father and several other chiefs remained to pay the last sad respects to the gallant young hero. The funeral cry sounded through the woods with a deep and thrilling solemnity; all the women of the neighbouring hamlet assembling to increase the melancholy wail.

In about two hours before the sun sunk low, the Hadji returned; the body of Alp was then brought out from the house, round which a large concourse of people had assembled, to accompany it to its last resting-place.

The cemetery was on a terrace, on the side of the hill; a beautiful spot, where grew the Cyprus and the plane-tree, shading the tombs of the brave warriors who there lay at rest. A venerable bard, with sightless orbs, was led up by his attendants, at the moment the bier, borne by six youths, the companions of the deceased, was brought out. He took his station at the head of the procession. His mother and other women followed weeping; and Zara, in a trance-like state, neither weeping nor speaking, walked on mechanically; her eye not for an instant withdrawn from the body of her betrothed. The Hadji next followed, with a firm step and erect posture; a slight movement of the mouth, and a contracted brow, alone betokening his mental agony. Arslan Gherrei and the other chiefs supported him on either side, followed by the inhabitants of the hamlet.

As the procession moved slowly on, the aged minstrel tuned his lyre to a low and plaintive strain, his voice trembling as he sung: at the end of each verse, the mourners joining in chorus with a melancholy cadence. As they approached the place of sepulture the words were to the following effect, continuing to be chaunted as the mourners stood round the grave:—

Mourn, children of Attèghèi, mourn for the brave,  
Whose heart with true glory beat high.  
Weep, weep, as ye lower him into his grave,  
No more to the charge will he cry.  
His father to rescue, amid the thick foe,  
He flew as they hemmed him around;  
When a treacherous shot from afar laid him low,  
And bleeding he fell to the ground.

Weep, weep, for the hero, the pride of our land,  
Who ne'er from the foemen would fly,  
As he fought 'mid a host who outnumber'd his band,  
His falchion was waving on high.  
And his battle cry raising, he charged them so well,  
As the dastardly foe pressed around.  
His sword drank their blood, and e'er bravely he fell,  
Full many had bitten the ground.

Lay the hero to rest who so bravely hath died.  
'Mid the clust'ring ranks of the foe,  
"And his glittering falchion part not from his side,  
As calmly he slumbers below."  
He was found where he fell, 'mid the heaps of the slain,  
His weapon still grasp'd in his hand,  
Which faithfully serv'd him, and there shall remain,  
For who is more worthy that brand?

Weep, weep, for the hero who rests in his grave,  
And ever be sacred the ground,  
Nor let it be trod by the foot of a slave,  
While his spirit still wanders around.  
And fondly shall ever be cherished his name,  
As his deeds by our minstrels are sung,  
With the martyrs who won the bright chaplet of fame,  
O'er his fate shall a halo be flung.

The warrior maidens of Attèghèi mourn.  
Ah sad was the grief of his bride!  
When home on his war-steed from fight he was borne,  
As fainting she fell by his side.  
Wreath fair chaplets of flowers to hang round his tomb,  
Weep, weep, for the youth's early fate,  
And when to bewail him, as yearly you come,  
The deeds of the hero relate.

There was a deep and solemn silence as all that remained of the young, the brave, and the truly-loving Alp was lowered into the narrow grave yawning to receive him. As the body reached its final resting-place, this silence was broken by the sobs which burst from his mother's breast and from the women who accompanied her. Even hardy warriors, who never thought or dreamed of fear, and seemed steeled to all the softer sympathies of our nature, were moved to tears. As the first handful of earth was thrown on the uncoffined body, all present knelt down circling the grave; and the aged bard, his hands raised on high, offered up prayers for the soul of the deceased young warrior. Then, joining their voices, the assembly petitioned heaven for its quick passage to the realms of bliss. The venerable sire now arose from his knees, and in a deep and solemn tone thus addressed the company:

"Men of Attèghèi, another victim has been offered up to the enmity of our hated foes; a sacrifice well worthy of the altars of Liberty; for who more brave, who more noble than he? Gentle as a lamb in peace, daring as a lion in war, loved by his friends, dreaded by his foe, who is here that loved him not? Who would not have been ready to shelter his life with his own? Why then was he taken from us, cut off in the flower of his youth? Why, my countrymen? Because the most noble altar demands the noblest sacrifice; and what altar is more noble than that of Liberty, and where a fitter victim than he for whom we mourn?"

"His fate is glorious and happy. Even now his spirit is ascending to the realms of bliss, while we, still loaded with our mortal chains, mourn his loss. Yet still, many, many more sacrifices must be made, before our country can be free from our detested foes; but think not that our warriors will die in vain. Even now I see dimly and indistinctly, an era approaching, when our enemies shall be driven from the confines of our territories, far back to the barren lands whence they came; and our country, freed from oppression, shall rise above her former state and take her place among the nations of the earth."

The oration being concluded, again they knelt in prayer, while the earth hid the heroic Alp for ever from the sight of those who loved him. A slab of stone was placed on his grave, over which was erected a light building of wood, sufficiently large to shelter those who would come on the anniversary of his death to offer up prayers, and to commemorate the gallant actions of the young warrior.

The bereaved Zara was led to her home; and, for many live-long days, she sat, motionless, regardless of all around her. Stunned and bewildered by her grief, she constantly brooded over her loss.

The Hadji appeared to have recovered from the shock sooner than the rest of his family: but many observed that the elastic spirits of the old man had flown for ever. A change had come over him. His whole thoughts and attention were given to forming plans for defeating the Russians, and defending the country against their attacks in the coming spring.

So different is man's grief, for a loved lost object, to that of a woman! He has resources whereupon to employ his mind and his energies. The fierce excitement of war, the ardour of the chase, the banquet, the council, and a hundred other objects offer opportunities to distract his thoughts; while she has alone the remembrance of her loss. If she applies herself to her domestic duties, still the thought of her bereavement will intrude; and oft will she stop amid her occupations, a convulsive sob bursting from her heart, as the image of the lost one appears to her mind, and she thinks of that which was, but which now no longer exists.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Fifteen.**

Our life is full of sunshine and clouds, smiles and tears; and it is as foolish to expect at all times to possess the one, as it is to repine that our lot in life must be sprinkled with the other. Thus, how great a contrast did the reception awaiting the warriors in the valley of Abran Bashi form to that which they had experienced in the vale of Gazlan; when Ina, blooming as the roses of Gul, flew across the lawn, as she caught sight of her father's gallant train winding down the vale. She was now followed by all the wives and maidens of the hamlet, eager to welcome the return of their husbands, their fathers, and brothers, and to recompense them for the toils of war, and the dangers they had incurred for their sakes.

Throwing himself from his horse, Arslan Gherrei folded his daughter in his arms, as she flew to meet him; tears, how precious, of pure joy filling her bright eyes, that he was again restored to her in safety. We will not attempt to describe the meeting of Thaddeus and his fair mistress; but well did he feel himself recompensed for having espoused the cause of her country.

Death had not been idle in the valley since their absence. The forebodings of the venerable Prince, Aitek Tcherei, had been fulfilled; full of years and honour, he had been gathered to his fathers the day after their departure. He had been buried with all the ceremonies prescribed by custom; and his clansmen were now about to select one as a successor worthy to lead them to war, or to preside at their councils in time of peace. By the aged chieftain's dying will, delivered to the elders of his tribe, Alp was to succeed to his possessions; or, failing him, they were to descend to Selem, so that, by the sad death of his friend, our hero found himself possessed of considerable wealth.

The elders and principal men of the tribe assembled to discuss the important subject, when the eyes of all were turned on Selem. His bravery in the field and his courteous manners had won even their hearts; and by choosing him, they would not only have a gallant and sagacious chief to command them, but it would prevent any of those jealous feelings which would too probably spring up, should they elect any one of those actually living among them. Without a dissentient voice, therefore, Selem Gherrei was elected to command their brave and numerous tribe. Our hero was now, in every sense of the word, a Circassian Chief; and a truly brave and noble one did he prove himself.

We must now draw rapidly to the conclusion of our story.

The trees once again put forth their leaves; the fields were enamelled with flowers; the birds sang in the groves; and all nature wore an air of renewed life and activity. The winter had passed away. The Circassian husbandmen on the borders, girded on their swords, and slung their rifles on their backs, as they toiled in their fields—prepared at a moment's notice to resist any inroad of their foes—to sow corn, although 'twas doubtful whether they might ever reap the harvest. Bands of warriors were moving; towards the frontiers, to be in readiness to repulse the Russians, at whatever quarter they should make their first attack: and in every direction, messengers were galloping across the country, to carry information from one chief to another of their own plans, or of the enemy's movements. Great stir had been observed among the troops on the Kouban, and the number of all the Russian garrisons was increased; but it was impossible to say what were their intentions.

The early spring also saw the happiness of Ina and Thaddeus completed; the chieftain no longer withholding his consent, on Selem's making over to his friend sufficient property to maintain his bride as became her rank. A Polish priest also was found to perform the ceremony, according to the rules of the Christian church; this exile with many of his countrymen had lately made their way to Circassia, where they were certain of a friendly welcome from those who could so well appreciate their wrongs and sufferings.

Selem therefore had the satisfaction of seeing his sister married according to the forms he considered essential, when he committed her into the hands of his friend. The religion of Arslan Gherrei was too tolerant to object to his daughter embracing that of her husband, particularly when Selem undertook to explain to him the sacred bonds it enforced, and in how superior a state it placed her, than would have been her lot had she become the wife of one of the native chiefs. The chieftain much admired this in theory, though he confessed it was what his countrymen in general would not approve; for it gave far too much power into the hands of those whom they looked upon in the light of property, and which their lords and masters would lose, should the fair sex once learn to consider themselves as having equal liberty and rights.

The youthful couple enjoyed, for a short time, the utmost felicity which is allowed to the most fortunate on earth. They were truly happy in themselves, and their present lot; for they did not—they would not—think of what change the future might bring forth. Each day they thought that they had discovered some new charm in each other, something more to love. On their marriage, they had returned to the house near the sea, where we first introduced Ina to our readers; and often would they wander together down the valley, to the very edge of the deep blue main, which lay calm and lovely at their feet. As they gazed on its translucent wave, they little thought that its treacherous surface might bring whole hordes of their foes upon them.

Selem, whenever he could tear himself away from his important occupations, came to be witness of their happiness; but he was mostly occupied in accompanying his father in excursions through every part of the country to rouse the lagging, to animate the weak-hearted, and to induce all to take the oath of amity to the patriots, and eternal enmity to their foes. Where ever they moved, they were accompanied by other influential chiefs and elders, and were received with respect by all.

Those, who formerly thought themselves free from the danger of attacks by the Russians, were roused to join their country men in more exposed districts; and others, who might have been induced by despair to sue for peace with their overwhelming foes, were excited to renewed exertions, to defend their country to the last. Many made voluntary promises to muster under the standard of Arslan Gherrei, the moment it should be raised for whatever expedition he should think advisable.

Hadji Guz Beg constantly accompanied his friends in these expeditions; his enthusiastic exhortations adding considerably to the excitement of the people. At his own home, he scarcely ever remained, for he could not bear to hear the loud and constant repinings of his wife for her lost son; nor to look on the grief stricken Zara.

She, poor girl, continued incapable of exertion, and unexcited by aught around her; her thoughts dwelling alone on her lost Alp. It was at length thought, that change of scene, the novelty of the sea, near which she had never been, and the affectionate embraces of her early friend, might arouse her from her stupor. Ina received the youthful widow with an affectionate greeting, but could not refrain from tears as she contrasted the time they parted, when she was borne away from her a joyous bride, with the melancholy of the present; her young hopes blighted, and he, whom she loved, lying in his early and ensanguined grave.

The tender endeavours of Ina, could scarcely rouse her from her apathetic indifference to all terrestrial affairs; Zara could only return her kindness with a faint smile of thanks.

Arslan Gherrei was now less reluctant to be absent from home, knowing that he left his daughter with one able to protect her; and, at this time, Selem had just arrived to pay his sister and friend a visit, before they moved to a habitation further inland; for, as the spring advanced, it was feared the Russians might attempt a landing on the coast. The numerical strength of the tribe beneath the sway of Arslan Gherrei had been dreadfully reduced by war and plague, so that when he led forth his warriors to battle, scarcely enough remained to protect his territory; on which account, the preceding year, he had removed his daughter to the house of his kinsman, the late Prince Aitek Tcherei.

---

### **Volume Three—Chapter Sixteen.**

A lovely and bright spring morning had induced Selem and his friend to seize their guns and sally forth at dawn of day, in search of game. They had wandered long over the sweet scented heathery hills, fresh and pure with the sparkling dew; when they heard loud shouts behind them, and saw Karl running to overtake them.

With a face of consternation, he said that he had just seen from the highest mountain in the neighbourhood, where he had been to cut wood, a large fleet standing, towards the coast, which his fears told him, must be that of his much

dreaded countrymen.

"It will be a day of fighting, my friends," exclaimed Selem, as with Thaddeus he flew rapidly towards the house. "We must die, rather than let our foes set foot upon our strand, where, if they once get footing, it will cost us dear to drive them off."

They did not even venture to enter the anderoon; but, seizing their arms, and summoning as many warriors as they could collect on the moment, they rushed to the shore, thoughtless of the overwhelming force of the foe, and determined to defend it to the last gasp. As they emerged from the valley to the sands, a sight met their view, sufficient to appal the stoutest heart among the brave mountaineers. As far as the eye could reach, the smooth sparkling sea appeared covered with the lofty and wide spreading canvas of the Russian ships of war and transports, advancing slowly and proudly towards the devoted coast.

The Circassians gazed with deep anxiety at the hostile flotilla, feeling how small was their chance of successfully opposing the landing of their foes with the small force they had collected. Selem, however, sword in hand, flew amongst the small band, encouraging and urging them boldly to withstand their enemies.

"My countrymen, my brave friends," he cried, "if we allow our foes to land, our destruction, and that of all those dear to us, will be certain. Let us, then, heap our dead bodies, to impede their progress, until our countrymen can assemble to fill our places; and let us rejoice that we can make an offering of our blood for the liberty of Circassia."

"We will follow you to the death, noble chief. Wherever you go we will go. Allah will protect the right!" was exclaimed on all sides by men, who, as they drew their sabres, swore never to yield.

The fleet approached in a crescent form. The smaller vessels, leading and running in, anchored as close to the land as the depth of the water would allow, presenting the frowning battery of their broadsides to shore. The largest ships followed, while the transports formed in line outside; and, no sooner were the sails furled, than hundreds of boats issued from among them, advancing steadily forward in close line.

Even the heroic Selem felt that it was an act almost of madness to oppose so overwhelming a force; and, for a moment, he hesitated to sacrifice his people's lives in so hopeless an attempt. But his resolution returned, and he determined to risk all, rather than fly.

At that instant shouts were heard in the woods above them; and a band of chiefs—on their journey to the north, at the head of whom came the Hadji and his brother—were seen galloping towards them. There was scarcely time to exchange the warriors' brief greeting with their welcome friends—the number of the whole amounting to a few hundreds only, while the approaching boats contained several thousands—ere the fierce combat commenced.

The band of Circassians, mostly chiefs and renowned warriors, remained sheltered behind the trees, until the boats came near enough to enable them to take certain aim, when they opened a rapid and deadly fire from their rifles, taking the Russians by surprise, and throwing them into some disorder; but, notwithstanding numbers fell wounded in the boats, they soon rallied and again advanced. As the keel of the headmost boat grated on the beach, Selem and the Hadji, calling to their comrades, drew their sabres, and, with a furious onset, rushed towards the enemy. Before the first Russian had time to set his foot on dry land, he was hurled bleeding into the sea.

As each of the headmost boats came on, they were received with the same desperate valour; and as, with their lifeless crews, they were thrown on shore, they served as ramparts to the defenders to shelter themselves from the fire of the aftermost ones. Still the enemy advanced in constant succession, like wave upon wave, towards the beach; but with such heroic bravery did Selem and his friends meet them, that the first part of the detachment was completely destroyed, the rest keeping off until more boats should arrive from the ships.

For the Circassians, however, it was a fearful struggle, to oppose their small band to so overwhelming a force; and more so, when those on board the ships of war, seeing the powerful opposition offered, commenced firing on friends and foes alike. Yet, though several of the patriots had fallen, they fought on undaunted. In a short time, however, all the boats came up, extending their line, when a body of troops effected a landing before they could be opposed.

As the Hadji caught sight of them, "Allah! Allah!" he cried, "down with the foes of Circassia. None such may place foot here. Allah! Allah!" And, calling to several of his companions, he furiously charged them; but, notwithstanding his utmost bravery, he and his followers were again driven back to the chief scene of conflict, closely pressed by the enemy. In the mean time also, on the other side, another body of troops had landed. The Circassians found themselves almost hemmed in; but they did not give much time for their enemies to form; for a party attacked them with almost despairing fury, and kept them from approaching to aid the disembarkation of the other boats.

The patriot band was thinning fast; the most determined spirits among them, hoping only to sell their lives dearly; the strand was already strewn with their bodies; a dark red line of human gore fringing the pure ocean. Still in desperation they fought on. They thought of their wives, and of their children, and they strove not to die unavenged.

The image of his young wife presented itself to Thaddeus; and, commending her to the care of heaven, he bravely fought with renewed courage by the side of her brother. Yet now all hope had fled, when a shout was heard from the mountains rising high above the rattle of the musketry, the roar of cannon, and the clash of steel. Issuing from the grove, a numerous party was seen rushing with speed to the spot, headed by a female, brandishing in her hand a glittering sabre. It was the widowed Zara leading on her band of peasants against the Russians, who retreated before the fury of the onset, her followers hewing down their foes on all sides. Her life seemed charmed; for she guarded not herself, as she rushed into the thickest of the desperate fight, shouting to her followers, and with her slender arm dealing death-bearing blows around her.

For a considerable distance along the coast, many separate engagements took place where-ever any boats



attempted to throw the troops on shore; those who were left, while the boats returned for reinforcements, were cut to pieces; for the defenders were too few to attempt making prisoners. Seeing that affairs were in this desperate state, the Russians sent every boat they could launch from their ships of war and transports, filled with troops, to the assistance of those already engaged; the brigs at the same time running so close in, that their keels touched the ground. These vessels opened a galling fire, aiming over the heads of their own people, at the defenders of the soil. But the Circassians were by far too eager to allow the manoeuvre to be of much avail. Closing and grappling with their enemies the moment they came on, and fighting up to their waists in the sea, as they rushed forward to meet them, the shot from the ships, made equal havoc among both parties.

The Russians now saw that it would have been better policy to wait, until all their foes had collected on the beach, before they commenced firing; when, after playing on the crowds of Circassians, they might under cover of their guns, have sent in their boats without molestation. As it was they had been dreadfully cut up without making good their landing. They now attempted to repair their error at the sacrifice of their own people; but that signified nothing if they could ultimately be successful.

Selem, the moment he could turn his eyes to see what was going forward, after defeating those directly opposed to him, observed Zara amid the thickest of the fight, encouraging, and leading on her followers to the attack; he hastened towards her, fearful for her safety, and endeavoured to withdraw her from the bloody scene.

“Think you that the life of my husband does not require some sacrifice at my hands?” she cried. “The blood of all these base slaves would not repay one drop of that which flowed in his veins. Who is more bound to avenge his death, than his wife? I have nothing to fear. Hinder me not from the holy work.”

Breaking from him, she rushed again towards the enemy. Karl, however, who had followed her, and who did not like to fight against his own countrymen, remained by her side, merely warding off the blows aimed at her; till at length, his choler rising, he returned the blows himself, with interest. Selem saw that it was hopeless to hinder her; and the utmost energies of all were now required to repel the fresh attack. As the boats pulled rapidly towards the shore, the enemy’s soldiers, urged to desperation by the fate of their comrades, and by the instigation of their officers, threw themselves into the water with bayonets ready fixed, and charged the Circassians. But, as before, the active mountaineers grappled with them, leaping between their bayonets, and stabbing them with their short swords.

The termination of the contest, however, still remained doubtful, for at one spot, less obstinately defended, several boats made a dash at once, and succeeded in throwing their troops on shore, where, forming, they charged the Circassians on their flank with so much courage, that Selem began to fear their heroic defence would have been of no avail. At this critical moment, a loud shout was again raised behind them; and, turning, Selem beheld his father, at the head of a band of warriors, breaking through the wood, and galloping over the sand. A fresh and desperate charge was now made against the Russians, who were driven with great loss, to their boats.

The boats that were already afloat pulled off, the most desperate fighting now ensuing; the Russians, attempting to shove off their boats, while the Circassians, surrounding them, hauled their crews into the water, cutting down the soldiers who offered further resistance; but the foemen, at length when they found themselves left to their fate, ceased fighting, and sued for mercy.

A great number of prisoners were taken, the Russians losing more than half the number of troops they attempted to land. Many of their boats were also left wrecked on the shore. No sooner did those from the ships see that their troops were completely defeated, than they again commenced a tremendous cannonade on the Circassians, who, collecting their dead and wounded, retired within shelter of the woods, where they could watch the enemy with less exposure of their lives.

Selem looked round anxiously for Zara. She had escaped unscathed. Her sword—it had been Alp’s—was grasped in her hands, yet reeking with the blood of the enemy, as slowly she retired, unheeding the shot then falling thick around and laying many low in the hour of victory.

The patriots watched their enemies with lynx eyed vigilance, lest they might make a second attempt at landing. A constant firing was kept up from the wood, in all directions, at the retiring boats, and on the vessels, which they could reach with their rifles, making them glad to get beyond their deadly aim. The enemy had learned a sufficient lesson. In a short time, the boats were hoisted in, and that vast flotilla, which seemed capable of overwhelming the Circassian territories, stood out to sea, defeated and discomfited, by a mere handful of determined mountaineers. So truly will patriotic courage withstand tyranny and injustice!

Loud shouts arose from the gallant victors as the dark eagles were seen flying far out to sea; and all that part of the country was, for the present, relieved from the baneful shadow of their wings. But, like the destroying angel of the Egyptians, wherever they had passed, they left grief and mourning in their track, for many of the brave patriots had fallen.

Selem, with a party of the most humane, as soon as the ships had got under weigh, repaired to the beach, where he found, mingled with the wounded Circassians, several of his late opponents still lingering. Deep was the gratitude of the poor fellows, when they heard themselves addressed in their own tongue; and when he ordered them to be conveyed to the hamlet, and tended with care.

None of our friends among the chiefs had fallen; but Thaddeus had received a wound sufficiently severe to require the whole of Ina’s attention and fond care. Many months elapsed before he could again take the field; and Ina might be excused if she scarcely regretted his confinement. He has since proved himself a true champion of his adopted country; and we trust that his gallant sons may, in a few years, follow his noble example.

No sooner had the tumult of the fight ceased, than Zara’s excitement also vanished; and, overcome by the unnatural exertion she had undergone, she sank to the ground, her hand relaxing the grasp of her weapon, which she would

not before quit. In this state she was borne to the house of Arslan Gherrei. She recovered; and sank no more into her apathetic state. But her nature, her very appearance had changed; though her eye was even brighter than ever. A hectic flush—one crimson spot—grew on her thin and wan cheek: her lip was pale, and her voice lost its soft, sweet melody. Like the warlike brides of her ancestors, wherever the foe approached, there was the bereaved young widow to be seen amid the thickest of the fight, her heroic courage animating her countrymen, and spreading terror among the ranks of the Urus. Where the carnage has been most dreadful, blood flowing like water from the pent-up fountains of winter when let loose by the warmth of spring, there has oft the young Amazon been seen rushing on amid the slain unscathed, unhurt; bearing, it seems, a charmed life; and, if she would forget her griefs in death, she cannot; the leaden showers fall thick, the sharp steel flashes around her in vain.

Many follow her as an inspired being sent from heaven to lead them to victory; and the foes, as they hear the war shout of her followers, and see her approaching, fly, terror-stricken before her. The fire of revenge for her slaughtered love still burns unquenched within her bosom. Death—death alone can ever extinguish its consuming flame.

That noble champion of his country, Arslan Gherrei, still leads his followers to war; and may he be spared to enjoy the blessings of peace, which he so well deserves, and the happiness of his country, for which his heart so yearns.

Even now also is the war shout of the fierce Hadji heard in the thickest of the battle; and though his tread has lost its elasticity, his arm somewhat of its nerve, still well does he deal his blows amid the enemies of his country. May just Heaven shield the good and brave old man from the weapons of an invading enemy!

And Selem, our hero—yet does the image of the loving, the murdered Azila, dwell within his bosom. He has not forgotten his vow. Terribly does he fulfil it. But the end is not yet accomplished. His only bride, his earthly love, is his country; and what more exalted or holy feeling could possess his breast? Still does he energetically strive for Circassia's welfare; and never for a moment, does he regret that he exchanged wealth, rank, and heartless dissipation, gilding the chains of despotism, for his humble cot, and liberty!

May every philanthropist join us in earnest hope and prayer, that Circassia may not share the fate of Poland.

---

### The End.

---

[| Volume 1 Chapter 1](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 2](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 3](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 4](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 5](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 6](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 7](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 8](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 9](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 10](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 11](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 12](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 13](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 14](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 15](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 16](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 17](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 18](#) | [| Volume 1 Chapter 19](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 1](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 2](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 3](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 4](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 5](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 6](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 7](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 8](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 9](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 10](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 11](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 12](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 13](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 14](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 15](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 16](#) | [| Volume 2 Chapter 17](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 1](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 2](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 3](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 4](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 5](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 6](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 7](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 8](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 9](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 10](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 11](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 12](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 13](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 14](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 15](#) | [| Volume 3 Chapter 16](#) |

---

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CIRCASSIAN CHIEF: A ROMANCE OF RUSSIA \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

### START: FULL LICENSE

#### THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

### Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund

from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state’s laws.

The Foundation’s business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email

contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

#### **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

#### **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.