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Mór Jókai

SPECIAL AUTHORISED EDITION

IN LOVE WITH THE CZARINA AND OTHER STORIES

**BY
MAURICE JÓKAI**

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL HUNGARIAN
WITH THE AUTHOR'S SPECIAL PERMISSION
BY

LOUIS FELBERMANN
AUTHOR OF "HUNGARY AND ITS PEOPLE"
ETC.



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	9
IN LOVE WITH THE CZARINA	17
TAMERLAN THE TARTAR	57
VALDIVIA	111
BIZEBAN	141
THE MOONLIGHT SOMNAMBULIST	151

DEDICATED TO
HUNGARY'S GREATEST WRITER
MAURICE JÓKAI
BY LOUIS FELBERMANN

"From him I took it; to him I give it"
EASTERN PROVERB

London 1894

INTRODUCTION

[Pg 9]

The entire Hungarian nation—king and people—have recently been celebrating the jubilee of Hungary's greatest writer, Maurice Jókai, whose pen, during half a century of literary activity, has given no less than 250 volumes to the world. Admired and beloved by his patriotic fellow-countrymen, Jókai has displayed that kind of genius which fascinates the learned and unlearned alike, the old and the young. He enchants the children of Hungary by his fairy-tales, and as they grow up into men and women he implants within them a passion for their native land and a knowledge of its splendid history such as only his poetic and dramatic pen could engrave upon their memory. His versatility of talent—for, besides being the Hungarian poet-laureate, he is a novelist, playwright, historian, and orator—enables the Hungarians to see in him their Heine, their Byron, their Walter Scott, and their Victor Hugo.

Jókai began his career at a period when Hungary aspired to political freedom, and his powerful pen, in combination with that of his familiar friend, Alexander Petőfi, Hungary's greatest lyric poet, was mainly instrumental in rousing the nation to arms. In 1849, when the Hungarian nation had sustained a cruel defeat, it was Jókai who cheered the flagging spirits of the Magyars, and by the potency and skill of his extraordinary pen influenced that reconciliation between Sovereign and people which was ultimately accomplished by Hungary's greatest statesman, Francis Deák.

[Pg 10]

The Hungarian language is one of the richest of Turanian tongues, and particularly lends itself to the didactic and romantic styles. So far back as the beginning of the thirteenth century we find traces of Hungarian literature, and, if it had been permitted to develop, Hungary might now have possessed a literature second to none in the modern world. But in consequence of political

struggles the Hungarian language and literature had to give way, at times, either to the Latin or German races, so much so that as late as 1849 all scientific subjects had to be taught either in German or in Latin. It was then that a few patriotic Magyars took the matter acutely to heart, and strove to restore the language and literature of their country, with the happy result that Hungary now, in proportion to its population, comes immediately after Germany in the number of its universities, colleges, and scientific institutions, where all subjects are taught in the *Hungarian language only*.

[Pg 11]

Maurice Jókai is not only one of those who restored Hungarian literature, but is the creator of a particular style of romance, which stamps his works as unique, and has caused them to be eagerly read, and translated into almost every modern language. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Hungarians, who are a cultured race, should delight in showing all honour and respect to the veteran author, who has given to the world over a hundred splendid works on all subjects, comprising 250 volumes.

Jókai is descended from a middle-class family, a fact which he is always proud to own, and has no ambition to rise in higher spheres of society, although the greatest people in the land, including the Empress-Queen herself, favour him with their personal friendship.

He is a tall, fine-looking man, and carries himself well. He generally dresses in a black-braided costume, which is the favourite national Hungarian uniform of those patriots who belong to the forty-eight period, which marks such an epoch in the history of Hungary. In his younger days his beard was dark and silky, but now he is quite grey. He occupies a modest house, and leads a very simple life.

To give the full history of such a great writer as Maurice Jókai, the titles of whose works fill nine pages of the British Museum catalogue, would be a task of considerable research, and would itself extend to volumes. I therefore only propose to touch upon a few of the salient points of his career.

[Pg 12]

Jókai was born on February 19, 1825, at Komárom, which city, by-the-by, is known as the "Virgin Fortress of Hungary."

He received his education partly in his native town and at Pozsony, the ancient capital of Hungary, Pápa and Kecskemét; and in 1846 he passed an examination as an advocate, though he did not follow the profession afterwards.

In the same year he took up his abode at Budapest, where in the following year he assumed the editorship of a paper called *Életképek* (Pictures of Life).

In 1848 he played an important part in the revolution, both in inciting the people by his literary writings and as a soldier. In 1849 he married Rose Laborfalvi, the famous actress. In the same year he followed the National Hungarian Government, which removed its seat to Debreczen, and became the editor of the *Esti Lapok* (Evening News). From that time activity characterised his literary and general career.

In the political movements of 1861 he was to the front both as member of parliament and as newspaper editor. In 1860 he was elected member of the Kisfaludy Society, and in 1861 he became a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, of which institute he is now a member of the executive committee. He is also the president of the Petőfi Society.

[Pg 13]

His first novel was "A Hétköznapi" (Days of the Week), which appeared in 1846, and since then hardly a year elapsed without the issue of several volumes from his pen.

Amongst his novels the most celebrated are:

"Egy Magyar Nábob" (The Hungarian Nabob).

"Kárpáthy Zoltán."

"A Kőszívű Ember Fiai" (The Sons of the Stonehearted Man).

"Szerelem Bolondjai" (Love's Puppet).

"Névtelen Vár" (The Nameless Fortress).

"Erdély Aranykora" (The Golden Period of Transylvania).

"Bálványosvár" (Idol Fortunes).

"Fekete Gyémántok" (Black Diamonds).

"A Jövő Század Regénye" (The Romance of the Future Century).

"Az Új Földesúr" (The New Landlord).

"Nincsen Ördög" (There is no Devil).

"Az Arany Ember" (The Gold Man).

"A Szép Mikhál" (Pretty Michael).

[Pg 14]

Of his recent novels the most famous is the one published in 1892, in which Monk Gregory is the hero.

The short stories that we are presenting in this volume belong to his earliest writings.

Jókai's novels—in which his own strong personality everywhere reveals itself—are characterised by great imaginative power and by a light, humorous style which fascinates the reader. It may be said, without much exaggeration, that in point of wit and humour few living writers can compare

with him. His subjects are principally drawn from history; but many of his works are remarkable for their vivid descriptions of Hungarian life, both past and present. In one word it might justly be said that in reading Jókai's novels one reads the history of Europe, and in reading Jókai's history one reads a novel drawn from actual life.

As a poet he occupies a unique position, and stands altogether alone: for his lyrics, ballads, and heroic verse are even sung by the schoolchildren throughout Hungary. As a dramatist his fame is extensive; and his "Könyves Kálmán" (Koloman, King of Hungary, surnamed the Book King), "Dózsa György, The Martyr of Szigetvár," "Az Arany Ember" (The Golden Man), and "Fekete Gyémántok" (Black Diamonds), have been incessantly performed with the greatest success.

[Pg 15]

As a politician he has made a considerable mark, and no one who has had the privilege of hearing him deliver an oration will forget the music and sonority of his fine voice. What is less generally known is that he is an enthusiastic botanical student and an admirable painter.

These are a few outlines of the life of Hungary's greatest writer, and in the interest of literature let it be hoped that his life may be long spared, and that his remaining years may be spent in the utmost happiness. Such is the fervent wish of all his admirers, who are drawn, not only from this country, but from all civilised peoples, nations, and languages.

LOUIS FELBERMANN
(*Author of "Hungary and its People"*).

IN LOVE WITH THE CZARINA

[Pg 17]

In the time of the Czar Peter III. a secret society existed at St. Petersburg which bore the title of "The Nameless." Its members used to assemble in the house of a Russian nobleman, Jelagin by name, who alone knew the personality of each visitor, they being, for the most part, unknown to one another. Distinguished men, princes, ladies of the Court, officers of the Guard, Cossack soldiers, young commercial men, musicians, street-singers, actors and actresses, scientific men, clergymen and statesmen, used to meet here. Beauty and talent were alone qualifications for entry into the Society, the members of which were selected by Jelagin. Everyone addressed the other as "thee" and "thou," and they only made use of Christian names such as Anne, Alexandra, Katharine, Olga, Peter, Alexis, and Ivan. And for what purpose did they assemble here? To amuse themselves at their ease. Those who, by the prejudices of caste and rank, were utterly severed, and who occupied the mutual position of master and slave, tore the chains of their barriers asunder, and all met here. It is quite possible that he with whom the grenadier-private is now playing chess is the very same General who might order him a hundred lashes to-morrow, should he take a step on parade without his command! And now he contends with him to make a queen out of a pawn!

[Pg 18]

It is also probable that the pretty woman who is singing sportive French songs to the accompaniment of the instrument she strikes with her left hand, is one of the Court ladies of the Czarina, who, as a rule, throws half-roubles out of her carriage to the street-musicians! Perhaps she is a Princess? possibly the wife of the Lord Chamberlain? or even higher in grade than this? Russian society, both high and low, flower and root, met in Jelagin's castle, and while there enjoyed equality in the widest sense of the word. Strange phenomenon! That this should take place in Russia, where so much is thought of aristocratic rank, official garb, and exterior pomp; where an inferior is bound to dismount from his horse upon meeting a superior, where sub-officers take off their coats in token of salute when they meet those of higher rank, and where generals kiss the priests' hands and the highest aristocrats fall on their faces before the Czar! Here they sing and dance and joke together, make fun of the Government, and tell anecdotes of the High Priests, utterly fearless, and dispensing with salutations!

Can this be done for love of novelty? The existence of this secret society was repeatedly divulged to the police, and these cannot be reproached for not having taken the necessary steps to denounce it; but proceedings, once begun, usually evaporated into thin air, and led to no results. The investigating officer either never discovered suspicious facts, or, if he did, matters were adjourned. Those who were arrested in connection with the affair were in some way set at liberty in peace and quietness; every document relating to the matter was either burnt or vanished, and whole sealed cases of writings were turned into plain white paper. When an influential officer took energetically in hand the prosecution of "The Nameless," he was generally sent to a foreign country on an important mission, from which he did not return for a considerable period. "The Nameless Society" must have had very powerful protectors. At the conclusion of one of these free and easy entertainments, a young Cossack hetman remained behind the crowd of departing guests, and when quite alone with the host he said to him:

[Pg 19]

"Jelagin, did you see the pretty woman with whom I danced the mazurka to-night?"

"Yes, I saw her. Are you smitten with her, as others have been?"

"That woman I must make my wife."

Jelagin gave the Cossack a blow on the shoulder and looked into his eyes.

"That you will not do! You will not take her as your wife, friend Jemeljan."

"I shall marry her—I have resolved to do so."

"You will not marry her, for she will not go to you."

"If she does not come I will carry her off against her will."

[Pg 20]

"You can't marry her, because she has a husband."

"If she has a husband I will carry her off in company with him!"

"You can't carry her off, for she lives in a palace—she is guarded by many soldiers, and accompanied in her carriage by many outriders."

"I will take her away with her palace, her soldiers, and her carriage. I swear it by St. Gregory!"

Jelagin laughed mockingly.

"Good Jemeljan, go home and sleep out your love—that pretty woman is the Czarina!"

The hetman became pale for a moment, his breath stopped; but the next instant, with sparkling eyes, he said to Jelagin:

"In spite of this, what I have said I have said."

Jelagin showed the door to his guest. But, improbable as it may seem, Jemeljan was really not intoxicated, unless it were with the eyes of the pretty woman.

A few years elapsed. The Society of "The Nameless" was dissolved, or changed into one of another form. Katharine had her husband, the Czar, killed, and wore the crown herself. Many people said she had him killed, others took her part. It was urged that she knew what was going to happen, but could not prevent it—that she was compelled to act as she did, and to affect, after a great struggle with her generous heart, complete ignorance of poison being administered to her husband. It was said that she had acted rightly, and that the Czar's fate was a just one, for he was a wicked man; and finally, it was asserted that the whole statement was untrue, and that no one had killed Czar Peter, who died from intense inflammation of the stomach. He drank too much brandy. The immortal Voltaire is responsible for this last assertion. Whatever may have happened, Czar Peter was buried, and the Czarina Katharine now saw that her late husband belonged to those dead who do not sleep quietly. They rise—rise from their graves—stretch out their hands from their shrouds, and touch with them those who have forgotten them. They turn over in their last resting-place, and the whole earth seems to tremble under the feet of those who walk above them!

[Pg 21]

Amongst the numerous contradictory stories told, one, difficult to believe, but which the people gladly credited, and which caused much bloodshed before it was wiped out of their memory, was this—that Czar Peter died neither by his own hand, nor by the hands of others, but that he still lived. It was said that a common soldier, with pock-marked face resembling the Czar, was shown in his stead to the public on the death-couch at St. Petersburg, and that the Czar himself had escaped from prison in soldier's clothes, and would return to retake his throne, to vanquish his wife, and behead his enemies! Five Czar pretenders rose one after the other in the wastes of the Russian domains. One followed the other with the motto, "Revenge on the faithless!" The usurpers conquered sometimes a northern, sometimes a southern province, collected forces, captured towns, drove out all officials, and put new ones in their places, so that it was necessary to send forces against them. If one was subjugated and driven away into the ice deserts, or captured and hung on the next tree, another Czar Peter would rise up in his place and cause rebellion, alarming the Court circle whilst they were enjoying themselves; and so things went on continually and continually. The murdered husband remained unburied, for to-day he might be put in the earth and to-morrow he would rise again one hundred miles off, and exclaim, "I still live!" He might be killed there, but would pop out his head again from the earth, saying, "Still I live." He had a hundred lives! When five of these Peter pretenders went the way of the real Czar a sixth rose, and this one was the most dreaded and most daring of all, whose name will perpetually be inscribed in the chronicles of the Russian people as a dreadful example to all who will not be taught wisdom, and his name is Jemeljan Pugasceff! He was born as an ordinary Cossack in the Don province, and took part in the Prussian campaign, at first as a paid soldier of Prussia, later as an adherent of the Czar. At the bombardment of Bender he had become a Cossack hetman. His extraordinary physical strength, his natural common sense and inventive power, had distinguished him even at this time, but the peace which was concluded barred before him the gate of progress. He was sent with many discharged officers back to the Don. Let them go again and look after their field labours! Pugasceff's head, however, was full of other ideas than that of again commencing cheese-making, from which occupation he had been called ten years before. He hated the Czarina, and adored her! He hated the proud woman who had no right to tread upon the neck of the Russians, and he adored the beautiful woman who possessed the right to tread upon every Russian's heart! He became possessed with the mad idea that he would tear down that woman from her throne, and take her afterwards into his arms. He had his plans prepared for this. He went along the Volga, where the Roskolniks live—they who oppose the Russian religion, and who were the adherents of the persecuted fanatics whose fathers and grandfathers had been continually extirpated by means of hanging, either on trees or scaffolds, and this only for the sole reason that they crossed themselves downwards, and not upwards, as they do in Moscow!

[Pg 22]

[Pg 23]

The Roskolniks were always ready to plot if they had any pretence and could get a leader. Pugasceff wanted to commence his scheme with these, but he was soon betrayed, and fell into the hands of the police and was carried into a Kasan prison and put into chains. He might thus go on dreaming! Pugasceff dreamt one night that he burst the iron chains from his legs, cut through the wall of the prison, jumped down from the enclosure, swam through the surrounding trench whose depth was filled with sharp spikes, and that he made his way towards the uninhabited plains of the Ural Sorodok, without a crust of bread or a decent stitch of clothing! The Jakics Cossacks are the only inhabitants of the plains of Uralszk—the most dreaded tribe in Russia—living in one of those border countries only painted in outline on the map, and a people with whom no other on the plains form acquaintanceship. They change locality from year to year. One winter a Cossack band will pay a visit to the land of the Kirghese, and burn down their wooden huts; next year a Kirgizian band will render the same service to the Cossacks! Fighting is pleasanter work in the winter. In the summer everyone lives under the sky, and there are no houses to be destroyed! This people belong to the Roskolnik sect. Just a little while previously they had amused themselves by slaughtering the Russian Commissioner-General Traubenberg, with his suite, who came there to regulate how far they might be allowed to fish in the river Jaik, and with this act they thought they had clearly proved that the Government had nothing to do with their pike! Pugasceff had just taken refuge amongst them at the time when they were dividing the arms of the Russian soldiers, and were scheming as to what they should further do. One lovely autumn night the escaped convict, after a great deal of wandering in the miserable valley of Jeremina Kuriza, situated in the wildest part of the Ural Mountains, and in its yet more miserable town, Jaiczkoi, knocked at the door of the first Cossack habitation he saw and said that he was a refugee. He was received with an open heart, and got plenty of kind words and a little bread. The house-owner was himself poor; the Kirgizians had driven away his sheep. One of his sons, a priest of the Roskolnik persuasion, had been carried away from him into a lead-mine; the second had been taken to serve as a soldier, and had died; the third was hung because he had been involved in a revolt. Old Kocsenikoff remained at home without sons or family. Pugasceff listened to the grievances of his host, and said:

[Pg 24]

"These can be remedied."

"Who can raise for me my dead sons?" said the old man bitterly.

"The one who rose himself in order to kill."

"Who can that be?"

"The Czar."

"The murdered Czar?" asked the old soldier, with astonishment.

"He has been killed six times, and yet he lives. On my way here, whenever I met with people, they all asked me, 'Is it true that the Czar is not dead yet, and that he has escaped from prison?' I replied to them, 'It is true. He has found his way here, and ere long he will make his appearance before you.'"

"You say this, but how can the Czar get here?"

"He is already here."

"Where is he?"

"I am he!"

"Very well—very well," replied the old Roskolnik. "I understand what you want with me. I shall be on the spot if you wish it. All is the same to me as long as I have anyone to lead me. But who will believe that you are the Czar? Hundreds and hundreds have seen him face to face. Everybody knows that the visage of the Czar was dreadfully pockmarked, whilst yours is smooth."

[Pg 26]

"We can remedy that. Has not someone lately died of black-pox in this district?"

"Every day this happens. Two days ago my last labourer died."

"Well, I shall lay in his bed, and I shall rise from it like Czar Peter."

He did what he said. He lay in the infected bed. Two days later he got the black-pox, and six weeks afterwards he rose with the same wan face as one had seen on the unfortunate Czar.

Kocsenikoff saw that a man who could play so recklessly with his life did not come here to idle away his time. This is a country where out of ten men nine have stored away some revenge of their own for a future time. Amongst the first ten people to whom Kocsenikoff communicated his scheme, he found nine who were ready to assist in the daring undertaking, even at the cost of their lives; but the tenth was a traitor. He disclosed the desperate plot to Colonel Simonoff, the commander of Jaiczkoi, and the commander immediately arrested Kocsenikoff; but Pugasceff escaped on the horse which had been sent out with the Cossack who came to arrest him, and he even carried off the Cossack himself! He jumped into the saddle, patted and spurred the horse, and made his way into the forest.

History records for the benefit of future generations the name of the Cossack whom Pugasceff carried away with his horse: Csika was the name of this timid individual! This happened on September 15. Two days afterwards Pugasceff came back from the forest to the outskirts of the

[Pg 27]

town Jaiczkoï. Then he had his horse, a scarlet fur-trimmed jacket, and three hundred brave horsemen. As he approached the town he had trumpets blown, and demanded that Colonel Simonoff should surrender and should come and kiss the hand of his rightful master, Czar Peter III. Simonoff came with 5000 horsemen and 800 Russian regular troops against the rebels, and Pugasceff was in one moment surrounded. At this instant he took a loosely sealed letter from his breast and read out his proclamation in a ringing voice to the opposing troops, in which he appealed to the faithful Cossacks of Peter III. to help him to regain his throne and to aid him to drive away usurpers, threatening with death those traitors who should oppose his command. On hearing this the Cossack troops appeared startled, and the exclamation went from mouth to mouth, "The Czar lives! This is the Czar!" The officers tried to quiet the soldiers, but in vain. They commenced to fight amongst themselves, and the uproar lasted till late at night, with the result that it was not Simonoff who captured Pugasceff, but the latter who captured eleven of his officers; and when he retreated from the field his three hundred men had increased to eight hundred. It was a matter of great difficulty to the Colonel to lead back the rest into the town.

[Pg 28]

Pugasceff set up his camp outside in the garden of a Russian nobleman, and on his trees he hung up the eleven officers. His opponent was so much alarmed that he did not dare to attack him, but lay wait for him in the trenches, at the mouth of the cannon. Our daring friend was not quite such a lunatic as to go and meet him. He required greater success, more decisive battles, and more guns. He started against the small towns which the Government had built along the Jaik. The Roskolniks received the pseudo-Czar with wild enthusiasm. They believed that he had risen from the dead to humiliate the power of the Moscow priests, and that he intended to adopt, instead of the Court religion, that which had been persecuted. On the third day 1500 men accompanied him to battle. The stronghold of Ileccka was the first halting-place he made. It is situated about seventy versts from Jaiczkoï. He was welcomed with open gates and with acclamation, and the guard of the place went over to his side. Here he found guns and powder, and with these he was able to continue his campaign. Next followed the stronghold of Kazizna. This did not surrender of its own accord, but commenced heroically to defend itself, and Pugasceff was compelled to bombard it. In the heat of the siege the rebel Cossacks shouted out to those in the fort, and they actually turned their guns upon their own patrols. All who opposed them were strung up, and the Colonel was taken a prisoner to Pugasceff, who showed no mercy to anyone who wore his hair long, which was the fashion at the time amongst the Russian officers, and for this reason the pseudo-Czar hung every officer who fell into his hands. Now, provided with guns, he made his way towards the fort of Nisnàja Osfernàja, which he also captured after a short attack. Those whom he did not kill joined him. Now he led 4000 men, and therefore he could dare attack the stronghold of Talitseva, which was defended by two heroes, Bilof and Jelagin. The Russian authorities took up a firm position in face of the fanatical rebels, and they would have repulsed Pugasceff, if the hay stores in the fort had not been burnt down. This fire gave assistance to the rebels. Bilof and Jelagin were driven out of the fort-gates, and were forced out into the plains, where they were slaughtered. When the pseudo-Czar captured the fort of Nisnàja Osfernàja, a marvellously beautiful woman came to him in the market-place and threw herself at his feet. "Mercy, my master!" The woman was very lovely, and was quite in the power of the conqueror. Her tears and excitement made her still more enchanting.

[Pg 29]

"For whom do you want pardon?"

"For my husband, who is wounded in fighting against you."

"What is the name of your husband?"

"Captain Chalof, who commanded this fort."

A noble-hearted hero no doubt would have set at liberty both husband and wife, let them be happy, and love one another. A base man would have hung the husband and kept the wife. Pugasceff killed them both! He knew very well that there were still many living who remembered that Czar Peter III. was not a man who found pleasure in women's love, and he remained true to his adopted character even in its worst extremes.

[Pg 30]

The rebels appeared to have wings. After the capture of Talitseva followed that of Csernojecszkaja, where the commander took flight on the approach of the rebel leader, and entrusted the defence of the fort to Captain Nilsajeff, who surrendered without firing a shot. Pugasceff, without saying "Thank you," had him hanged. He did not believe in officers who went over to the enemy. He only kept the common soldiers, and he had their hair cut short, so that in the event of their escaping he should know them again! Next morning the last stronghold in the country, Precsisztenszka, situated in the vicinity of the capital, Orenburg, surrendered to the rebels, and in the evening the mock Czar stood before the walls of Orenburg with thirty cannon and a well-equipped army! All this happened in fifteen days.

Since the moment when he carried off the Cossack who had been sent to capture him, and met Kocsenikoff, he had occupied six forts, entirely annihilated a regiment, and created another, with which he now besieged the capital of the province.

The towns of the Russian Empire are divided by great distances, and before things were decided at St. Petersburg, Marquis Pugasceff might almost have occupied half the country. It was Katharine herself who nicknamed Pugasceff Marquis, and she laughed very heartily and often in the Court circles about her extraordinary husband, who was preparing to reconquer his wife, the Czarina. The nuptial bed awaited him—it was the scaffold!

[Pg 31]

On the news of Pugasceff's approach, Reinsburg, the Governor of Orenburg, sent, under the

command of Colonel Bilof, a portion of his troops to attack the rebel. Bilof started on the chase, but he shared the fate of many lion-hunters. The pursued animal ate him up, and of his entire force not one man returned to Orenburg. Instead of this, Pugasceff's forces appeared before its gates.

Reinsburg did not wish to await the bombardment, and he sent his most trusted regiment, under the command of Major Naumoff, to attack the rebels. The mock-Czar allowed it to approach the slopes of the mountains outside Orenburg, and there, with masked guns, he opened such a disastrous fire upon them that the Russians were compelled to retire to their fort utterly demoralised. Pugasceff then descended into the plains and pitched his camp before the town. The two opponents both began with the idea of tiring each other out by waiting. Pugasceff was encamped on the snow-fields. The plains of Russia are no longer green in October, and instead of tents he had huts made of branches of oak. The one force was attacked by frost—the other by starvation. Finally starvation proved the more powerful. Naumoff sallied from the fort, and turned his attention towards occupying those heights whence his forces had been fired upon a short time previously. He succeeded in making an onslaught with his infantry upon the rebel lines, but Pugasceff, all of a sudden, changed his plan of battle, and attacked with his Cossacks the cavalry of his opponent, who took to flight. The victory fell from the grasp of Naumoff, and he was compelled to fly with his cannon, breaking his way, sword in hand, through the lines of the Cossacks. Then Pugasceff attacked in his turn. He had forty-eight guns, with which he commenced a fierce bombardment of the walls, which continued until November 9th, when he ordered his troops to storm the town. The onslaught did not succeed, for the Russians bravely defended themselves. Pugasceff, therefore, had to make up his mind to starve out his opponents. The broad plains and valleys were white with snow, the forests sparkled with icicles, as though made of silver, and during the long nights the cold reflection of the moon alone brightened the desolate wastes where the audacious dream of a daring man kept awake the spirits of his men. The dream was this: That he should be the husband of the Czarina of All the Russias.

[Pg 32]

Katharine II. was passionately fond of playing tarok, and she particularly liked that variety of the game which was later on named, after a celebrated Russian general, "Paskewics," and required four players. In addition to the Czarina, Princess Daskoff, Prince Orloff, and General Karr sat at her table. The latter was a distinguished leader of troops—*in petto*—and as a tarok-player without equal. He rose from the table *semper victor!* No one ever saw him pay, and for this reason he was a particular favourite with the Czarina. She said if she could only once succeed in winning a rouble from Karr she would have a ring welded to it and wear it suspended from her neck. It is very likely that the mistakes of his opponents aided General Karr's continual success. The two noble ladies were too much occupied with Orloff's fine eyes to be able to fix their attention wholly upon the game, whilst Orloff was so lucky in love that it would have been the greatest injustice on earth if he had been equally successful at play. Once, whilst shuffling the cards, some one casually remarked that it was a scandalous shame that an escaped Cossack like Pugasceff should be in a position to conquer a fourth of Russia in Europe, to disgrace the Russian troops time after time, to condemn the finest Russian officers to a degrading death, and now even to bombard Orenburg like a real potentate.

[Pg 33]

"I know the dandy, I know him very well," said Karr. "During the life of His Majesty I used to play cards with him at Oranienbaum. He is a stupid youngster. Whenever I called *carreau*, he used to give *cœur*."

"It appears that he plays even worse now," said the Czarina; "now he throws *pique* after *cœur*!"

It was the fashion at this time at the Russian Court to throw in every now and then a French word, and *cœur* in French means heart, and *piquer* means to sting and prick.

[Pg 34]

"Yes, because our commanders have been inactive. Were I only there!"

"Won't you have the kindness to go there?" asked Orloff mockingly.

"If Her Majesty commands me, I am ready."

"Ah! this tarok-party would suffer a too great loss in you," said Katharine, jokingly.

"Well, your Majesty might have hunting-parties at Peterhof," he said, consolingly, to the Czarina.

This was a pleasant suggestion to Katharine, for at Peterhof she had spent her brightest days, and there she had made the acquaintance of Orloff. With a smile full of grace, she nodded to General Karr.

"I don't mind, then; but in two weeks you must be back."

"Ah! what is two weeks?" returned Karr; "if your Majesty commands it, I will seat myself this very hour upon a sledge, and in three days and nights I shall be in Bugulminszka. On the fourth day I shall arrange my cards, and on the fifth I shall send word to this dandy that I am the challenger. On the sixth day I shall give '*Volat*'^[1] to the rascal, and the seventh and eighth days I shall have him as *Pagato ultimo*,^[2] bound in chains, and bring him to your Majesty's feet!"

[1] "*Volat*" is an expression used in tarok to denote that no tricks have been made by an opponent.

[2] This is another term in the game, when the player announces beforehand that he will

The Czarina burst out laughing at the funny technical expressions used by the General, and entrusted Orloff to provide the celebrated *Pagato*-catching General with every necessity. The matter was taken seriously, and Orloff promulgated the imperial *ukase*, according to which Karr was entrusted with the control of the South Russian troops, and at the same time he announced to him what forces he would have at his command. At Bugulminszka was General Freymann with 20,000 infantry, 2000 cavalry, and thirty-two guns, and he would be reinforced by Colonel Csernicseff, the Governor of Szinbirszk, who had at his command 15,000 horsemen, and twelve guns; while on his way he would meet Colonel Naumann with two detachments of the Body Guard. He was in particular to attach the latter to him, for they were the very flower of the army. Karr left that night. His chief tactics in campaigning consisted in speediness, but it seems that he studied this point badly, for his great predecessors, Alexander the Great, Frederick the Great, Hannibal, &c., also travelled quickly, but in company with an army, whilst Karr thought it quite sufficient if he went alone. He judged it impossible to travel faster than he did, sleighing merrily along to Bugulminszka; but it was possible. A Cossack horseman who started the same time as he did from St. Petersburg, arrived thirty-six hours before him, informed Pugasceff of the coming of General Karr, and acquainted him as to the position of his troops. Pugasceff despatched about 2000 Cossacks to fall upon the rear of the General, and prevent his junction with the Body Guard.

[Pg 35]

[Pg 36]

Karr did not consult any one at Bugulminszka. He pushed aside his colleague Freymann in order to be left alone to settle the affair. He said it was not a question of fighting but of chasing. He must be caught alive—this wild animal. Csernicseff was already on the way with 1200 horsemen and twelve guns, as he had received instructions from Karr to cross the river Szakmara and prevent Pugasceff from retreating, while he himself should, with the pick of the regiment, attack him in front and thus catch him between two fires. Csernicseff thought he had to do with clever superiors, and as an ordinary divisional leader he did not dare to think his General to be so ignorant as to allow him to be attacked by the magnificent force of his opponent, nor did he think that Pugasceff would possess such want of tactics as, whilst he saw before him a strong force, to turn with all his troops to annihilate a small detachment. Both these things happened. Pugasceff quietly allowed his opponents to cross over the frozen river. Then he rushed upon them from both sides. He had the ice broken in their rear, and thus destroyed the entire force, capturing twelve guns. Csernicseff himself, with thirty-five officers, was taken prisoner, and Pugasceff had them all hanged on the trees along the roadway. Then, drunk with victory, he moved with his entire forces against Karr. He, too, was approaching hurriedly, and, thirty-six miles from Bugulminszka, the two forces met in a Cossack village. General Karr was quite astonished to find, instead of an

[Pg 37]

imagined mob, a disciplined army divided into proper detachments, and provided with guns. Freymann advised him, as he had sent away the trusted squadron of Csernicseff, not to commence operations now with the cavalry, to take the village as the basis of his operations, and to use his infantry against the rebels. A series of surprises then befell Karr. He saw the despised rowdy crowd approaching with drawn sabres, he saw the coolness with which they came on in the face of the fiercest musketry fire. He saw the headlong desperation with which they rushed upon his secure position. He recognised that he had found here heroes, instead of thieves. But what annoyed him most was that this rabble knew so well how to handle their cannon; for in St. Petersburg, out of precaution, Cossacks are not enlisted in the artillery, in order that no one should teach them how to serve guns. And here this ignorant people handled the guns, stolen but yesterday, as though accustomed to them all their lifetime, and their shells had already set fire to villages in many different places. The General ordered his entire line to advance with a rush, while with the reserve he sharply attacked the enemy in flank, totally defeating them. His cavalry started with drawn swords towards the fire-spurting space. Amongst the 1500 horsemen there were only 300 Cossacks, and in the heat of battle these deserted to the enemy. Immediately General Karr saw this, he became so alarmed that he set his soldiers the example of flight. All discipline at an end, they abandoned their comrades in front, and escaped as best they could.

[Pg 38]

Pugasceff's Cossacks pursued the Russians for a distance of thirty miles, but did not succeed in overtaking the General. Fear lent him wings. Arrived at Bugulminszka, he learnt that Csernicseff's horsemen had been destroyed, that the Body Guard in his own rear had been taken prisoners, and that twenty-one guns had fallen into the hands of the rebels. Upon hearing this bad news he was seized with such a bad attack of the *grippe* that they wrapped him up in pillows and sent him home by sledge to St. Petersburg, where the four-handed card-party awaited him, and that very night he had the misfortune to lose his XXI.^[3]; upon which the Czarina made the *bon mot* that Karr allowed himself twice to lose his XXI. (referring to twenty-one guns), which *bon mot* caused great merriment at the Russian Court.

[3] The card next to the highest in tarok.

After this victory, Pugasceff's star (if a demon may be said to possess one) attained its meridian. Perhaps it might have risen yet higher had he remained faithful to his gigantic missions, and had he not forgotten the two passions which had led him on with such astonishing rapidity—the one being to make the Czarina his wife, the other, to crush the Russian aristocracy. Which of these two ideas was the boldest? He was only separated from their realisation by a transparent film.

After Karr's defeat he had an open road to Moscow, where his appearance was awaited by 100,000 serfs burning to shake off the yoke of the aristocracy, and form a new Russian empire. Forty million helots awaited their liberator in the rebel leader. Then, of a sudden, he cast away from him the common sense he had possessed until now—for the sake of a pair of beautiful eyes!

[Pg 39]

After the victory of Bugulminszka a large number of *envoyés* from the leaders of the Baskirs appeared before him, and brought him, together with their allegiance, a pretty girl to be his wife.

The name of the maiden was Ulijanka, and she stole the heart of Pugasceff from the Czarina. At that time the adventurer believed so fully in his star that he did not behave with his usual severity. Ulijanka became his favourite, and the adventurous chief appointed Salavatké, her father, to be the ruling Prince of Baskirk. Then he commenced to surround himself with Counts and Princes. Out of the booty of plundered castles he clothed himself in magnificent Court costumes, and loaded his companions with decorations taken from the heroic Russian officers. He nominated them Generals, Colonels, Counts, and Princes. The Cossack, Csika, his first soldier, was appointed *Generalissimus*, and to him he entrusted half his army. He also issued roubles with his portrait under the name of Czar Peter III., and sent out a circular note with the words, "*Redevivus et ultor*." As he had no silver mines, he struck the roubles out of copper, of which there was plenty about. This good example was also followed by the Russians, who issued roubles to the amount of millions and millions, and made payments with them generously. Pugasceff now turned the romance of the insurrection into the parody of a reign. Instead of advancing against the unprotected cities of the Russian Empire, he attacked the defended strongholds, and, in the place of pursuing the fairy picture of his dreams which had led him thus far, he laid himself down in the mud by the side of a common woman!

[Pg 40]

Generalissimus Csika was instructed to occupy the fort Ufa, with the troops who were entrusted to his care. The time was January, 1774, and it was so terribly cold that nothing like it had been recorded in Russian chronicles. The trees of the forest split with a noise as though a battle were proceeding, and the wild fowl fell to the ground along the roads.

To carry on a siege under such circumstances was impossible. The hardened earth would not permit the digging of trenches, and it was impossible to camp on the frozen ground.

The two rebel chiefs occupied the neighbouring towns, and so cut off all supplies from the neighbouring forests. In Orenburg they had already eaten up the horses belonging to the garrison, and a certain Kicskoff, the commissary, invented the idea of boiling the skins of the slaughtered animals, cutting them into small slices and mixing them with paste, which food was distributed amongst the soldiers, and gave rise to the breaking out of a scorbutic disease in the fort which rendered half the garrison incapable of work. On January the 13th, Colonel Vallenstierna tried to break his way through the rebel lines with 2500 men, but he returned with hardly seventy. The remainder, about 2000 men, remained on the field. At any rate, they no longer asked for food! A few hundred hussars, however, cut their way through and carried to St. Petersburg the news of what Czar Peter III. (who had now risen for the seventh time from his grave) was doing! The Czarina commenced to get tired of her adorer's conquests, so she called together her faithful generals, and asked which of them thought it possible to undertake a campaign in the depth of the Russian winter into the interior of the Russian snow deserts. This did not mean playing at war, nor a triumphal procession. It meant a battle with a furious people who, in forty years' time, would trample upon the most powerful European troops. There were four who replied that in Russia everything was possible which ought to be done. The names of these four gentlemen were: Prince Galiczin, General Bibikoff, Colonel Larionoff, and Michelson, a Swedish officer. Their number, however, was soon reduced to two at the very commencement. Larionoff returned home after the first battle of Bozal, where the rebels proved victorious, whilst Bibikoff died from the hardships of the winter campaign.

[Pg 41]

Galiczin and Michelson alone remained. The Swede had already gained fame in the Turkish campaign from his swift and daring deeds, and when he started from the Fort of Bozal against the rebels his sole troops consisted of 400 hussars and 600 infantry, with four guns. With this small force he started to the relief of the Fort of Ufa. Quickly as he proceeded, Csika's spies were quicker still, and the rebel leader was informed of the approach of the small body of the enemy. As he expected that they only intended to reinforce the garrison of Ufa, he merely sent against them 3000 men, with nine guns, to occupy the mountain passes through which they would march on their way to Ufa. But Michelson did not go to Ufa as was expected. He seated his men on sledges, and flew along the plains to Csika's splendid camp. So unexpected, so daring, so little to be credited was this move of his, that when he fell on Csika's vanguard at one o'clock one morning nobody opposed him. The alarmed rebels hurried headlong to the camp, and left two guns in the hands of Michelson. The Swedish hero knew well enough that the 3000 men of the enemy who occupied the mountain pass would at once appear in answer to the sound of the guns, and that he would thus be caught between two fires; so he hastily directed his men to entrench themselves beneath their sledges in the road, and left two hundred infantry with two guns to defend them, whilst with the remaining troops he made his way towards the town of Csernakuka, whither Csika's troops had fled. Michelson saw that he had no time to lose. He placed himself at the head of his hussars, sounded the charge, and attacked the bulk of his opponents. For this they were not prepared. The bold attack caused confusion amongst them, and in a few moments the centre of the camp was cut through, and the first battery captured. He then immediately turned his attention to the two wings of the camp. After this, flight became general, and Csika's troops were dispersed like a cloud of mosquitos, leaving behind them forty-eight cannon and eight small guns. The victor now returned with his small body of troops to the sledges they had left behind, and he then entirely surrounded the 3000 rebels. Those who were not slaughtered were captured. The victorious hero sent word to the commander of the Ufa garrison that the road was clear, and that the cannon taken from his opponents should be drawn thither. A hundred and twenty versts from Ufa he reached the flying Csika. The Generalissimus then had only forty-two

[Pg 42]

[Pg 43]

officers, whilst his privates had disappeared in every direction of the wind. Michelson got hold of them all, and if he did not hang them it was only because on the six days' desert march not a single tree was to be found. In the meantime, Prince Galiczin, whose troops consisted of 6000 men, went in pursuit of Pugasceff. On this miserable route he did not encounter the mock Czar until the beginning of March. Pugasceff waited for his opponent in the forest of Taticseva. This so-called stronghold had only wooden walls, a kind of ancient fencing. It was good enough to protect the sheep from the pillaging Baskirs, but it was not suitable for war. The genius of the rebel leader did not desert him, and he was well able to look after himself. Round the fences he dug trenches, where he piled up the snow, on which he poured water. This, after being frozen, turned almost into stone, and was, at the same time, so slippery that no one could climb over it. Here he awaited Galiczin with a portion of his troops, while the remainder occupied Orenburg. The Russian general approached the hiding-place of the mock Czar cautiously. The thick fog was of service to him, and the two opponents only perceived one another when they were standing at firing distance. A furious hand-to-hand fight ensued. The best of the rebel troops were there. Pugasceff was always in the front and where the danger was greatest, but finally the Russians climbed the ice-bulwarks, captured his guns, and drove him out of the forest. This victory cost the life of 1000 heroic Russians, but it was a complete one! Pugasceff abandoned the field with 4000 men and seven guns; but what was a greater loss still than his army and his guns, was that of the superstitious glamour which had surrounded him until now. The belief in his incapability of defeat, that was lost too! The revengeful Czar who had but yesterday commenced his campaign, now had to fly to the desert, which promised him no refuge. It was only then that the real horrors of the campaign commenced. It was a war such as can be imagined in Russia only, where in the thousands and thousands of square miles of borderless desert scantily distributed hordes wander about, all hating Russian supremacy, and all born gun in hand. Pugasceff took refuge amongst these people. Once again he turned on Galiczin at Kargozki. He was again defeated, and lost his last gun. His sweetheart, Ulijanka, was also taken captive—that is, if she did not betray him! From here he escaped precipitately with his cavalry across the river Mjaes.

[Pg 44]

Here Siberia commences, and here Russia has no longer villages, but only military settlements which are divided from each other by a day's march, across plains and the ancient forests, along the ranges of the Ural Mountains—the so-called factories.

[Pg 45]

The Wozkrezenszki factory, situated one day's walk into the desert, is divided by uncut forests from the Szimszki factory, in both of which cinnamon and tin paints are made, and here are to be seen the powder factory of Usiska and the bomb factory of Szatkin, where the exiled Russian convicts work. At the meeting of the rivers are the small towns of Stepnàja, Troiczka Uszt, Magitnàja, Petroluskàja, Kojelga, guarded by native Cossacks, whilst others are garrisoned by disgraced battalions. Hither came Pugasceff with the remnants of his army. Galiczin pursued him for some time, but finally came to the conclusion that in this uninhabited country, where the solitary road is only indicated by snow-covered trenches, he could not, with his regular troops, reach an opponent whose tactics were to run away, as far and as fast as possible.

Pugasceff rallied to him all the tribes along the Ural district, who deserted their homesteads and followed him.

The winter suddenly disappeared, and those mild, short April days commenced which one can only realise in Siberia, when at night the water freezes, while in the daytime the melting snow covers the expanse of waste, every mountain stream becomes a torrent, and the traveller finds in the place of every brook a vast sea. The runaway might still proceed by sledge, but the pursuer would only find before him fathomless morasses. Only one leader had the courage to pursue Pugasceff even into this land—this was Michelson. Just as the Siberian wolf who has tasted the blood of the wild boar does not swerve from the track, but pursues him even amongst reeds and morasses, so the daring leader chased his opponent from plain to plain. He never had more than 1000 men, cavalry, artillery, and gunners all told. Every one had to carry provisions for two weeks, and 100 cartridges. The cavalry had guns as well as sabres, so that they might also fight on foot, and the artillery were supplied with axes, so that, if necessary, they might serve as carpenters, and all prepared to swim should the necessity arise. With this small force Michelson followed Pugasceff amid the horde of insurrectionary tribes, surrounded on every side by people upon whose mercy he could not count, whose language he did not understand, and whose motto was death. Yet he went amongst them in cold blood, as the sailor braves the terrors of the ocean. On the 7th of May he was attacked by the father of the pretty Ulijanka, near the Szimszki factory, with 2000 Baskirs, who were about to join Pugasceff. Michelson dispersed them, captured their guns, and discovered from the Baskir captives that Beloborodoff, one of the dukes created by Pugasceff, was approaching with a large force of renegade Russian soldiers. Michelson caught up with them near the Jeresen stream, and drove them into the Szatkin factory. Riding all by himself, so close to them that his voice could be heard, he commenced by admonishing them to rejoin the standard of the Czarina. He was fired at more than 2000 times from the windows of the factory, but when they saw that he was invulnerable they suddenly threw open the gates and joined his forces. From them he discovered the whereabouts of the mock Czar, who had at the time once more recovered himself, had captured three strongholds, Magitnàja, Stepnàja, and Petroluskàja, and was just then besieging Troiczka. This place he took before the arrival of Michelson, who found in lieu of a stronghold nothing but ruins, dead bodies, and Russian officers hanging from the trees. Pugasceff heard of the approach of his opponent, and, with savage cunning, laid a snare to capture the daring pursuer. He dressed his soldiers in the uniforms of the dead Russian soldiers, and sent messengers to Michelson in the name of Colonel Colon that he should join him beyond Varlamora. Michelson only perceived the trick when his vanguard was

[Pg 46]

[Pg 47]

attacked and two of his guns captured.

Although surrounded, he immediately fell upon the flower of Pugasceff's guard, and cut his way through just where the enemy was strongest. The net was torn asunder. It was not strong enough. Pugasceff fled before Michelson, and, with a few hundred followers, escaped into the interior of Siberia, near the lake of Arga. All of a sudden Michelson found Szalavatka at his rear with Baskir troops who had already captured the Szatkin factory, and put to the sword men, women, and children. Michelson turned back suddenly, and found the Baskir camp strongly intrenched near the river Aj. The enemy had destroyed the bridges over the river, and confidently awaited the Imperial troops. At daybreak Michelson ordered up forty horsemen and placed a rifleman behind the saddle of each, telling them to swim the river and defend themselves until the remainder of the troops joined them. His commands were carried out to the letter amidst the most furious firing of the enemy, and the Russians gained the other side of the river without a bridge, drawing with them their cannon bound to trees. The Baskirs were dispersed and fled, but whilst Michelson was pursuing them with his cavalry he received news that his artillery was attacked by a fresh force, and he had to return to their aid. Pugasceff himself, who again was the aggressor, stood with a regular army on the plains. The battle lasted till late at night in the forest. Finally the rebels retreated, and Michelson discovered that his opponents meant to take by surprise the Fort of Ufa. He speedily cut his way through the forest, and when Pugasceff thought himself a day's distance from his opponent, he found him face to face outside the Fort of Ufa. Michelson proved again victorious, but by this time his soldiers had not a decent piece of clothing left, nor a wearable shoe, and each man had not more than two charges. He therefore had to retreat to Ufa for fresh ammunition. It appears that Michelson was just such a dreaded opponent to Pugasceff as the man not born of a woman was to Macbeth. Immediately he disappeared from the horizon, he arose anew, and at each encounter with the pretender beat him right and left. When Michelson drove him away from Ufa, Pugasceff totally defeated the Russian leaders approaching from other directions, London, Melgunoff, Duve, and Jacobovics were swept away before him, and he burnt before their very eyes the town of Birszk. With drawn sword he occupied the stronghold of Ossa, where he acquired guns, and, advancing with lightning rapidity, he stood before Kazan, which is one of the most noted towns of the province; it is the seat of an Archbishop, and there is kept the crown which the Russian Czars use at their coronation. This crown was required by the mock Czar. If he could get hold of it, and the Archbishop of Kazan would place it on his head, who could deny that he was the anointed Czar? Generals Brand and Banner had but 1500 musketry for the defence of Kazan, but the citizens of the town took also to the guns to defend themselves from within their ancient walls. The day before the bombardment, General Potemkin, accompanied by General Larionoff, arrived at Kazan. The Imperialists had as many generals and colonels in their camp as Pugasceff had corporals who had deserted their colours, yet the horde led by the rebel stormed the stronghold of the generals. Pugasceff was the first to scale the wall, standard in hand, upon which the generals took refuge in the citadel. Larionoff fled, and on his flight to Nijni Novgorod did not once look back.

[Pg 48]

[Pg 49]

[Pg 50]

Pugasceff captured the town of Kazan, and gave it up to pillage. The Archbishop of Kazan received him before the cathedral, bestowed upon him gold to the value of half-a-million roubles, and promised that he would place the crown on his head immediately he procured it; it being in the citadel. Pugasceff set fire to the town in all directions, as he wanted to effect the surrender of the citadel garrison by that means. Just at this moment Michelson was on his way. The heroic General hardly allowed his troops time for rest, but again started in pursuit of Pugasceff. No news of him was heard, his footsteps alone could be traced. At Burnova he was attacked by a gang of rebels, whom he dispersed, but they were not the troops of Pugasceff. At Brajevana he came upon a detachment, but this also was not the one he was looking for. He then turned towards the Fort of Ossa, where he found a group of Baskir horsemen, whom he dispersed, capturing many others, from whom he learnt that Pugasceff had crossed the river Kuma; and he knew that he would find the rebel at Kazan. He hastened after him, meeting right and left with camps and troops belonging to his adventurous opponent. He found no boats on the river Kuma, so he swam it. Two other rivers lay in his way, but neither of these prevented his progress, and when he arrived at Arksz he heard firing in the direction of Kazan. Allowing but one hour's repose to his troops, he marched through the night, and at daybreak the thick dark smoke on the horizon told him that Kazan was in flames. Pugasceff's patrols communicated to their leader that Michelson was again at hand. The mock Czar cursed upon hearing the news. Was it a devil who was again at his heels, when he believed him 300 miles off? He decided that this must not be known to the garrison, who had been forced into the citadel. He collected from his troops those whom he could spare, and stationed them in the town of Taziczin, seven miles from Kazan, to prevent the advance of the dreaded enemy. Just as he was proclaiming himself Czar Peter III. in the market-place of Taziczin, a miserable-looking woman rushed in, and fell at his feet, embracing him, and covering him with kisses. This woman was Pugasceff's wife, who thought her husband lost long ago. They had been married very young, and Pugasceff himself believed her no longer living, but the poor woman recognised him by his voice. Pugasceff did not lose his presence of mind, but, gently lifting the woman up, he said to his officers:—"Look after this woman; her husband was a great friend of mine and I owe him much." But every one knew that the sham-Czar was no other than the husband of Marianka, and no doubt the appearance of the peasant woman told on the spirits of the insurgent troops. The most bitter and decisive battle of the insurrection awaited them. The night divided the two armies, and it was only in the morning that Michelson could force his way into the town, whence he sent word to the people of Kazan to come to his assistance. Pugasceff again attacked him with embittered fury, and as he could not dislodge him he withdrew the remainder of his troops from Kazan and encamped on the plain.

[Pg 51]

[Pg 52]

The third day of the battle, fortune turned to the side of Pugasceff. They fought for four hours, and Michelson was already surrounded, when the hero put himself at the head of his small army and made a desperate rush upon Pugasceff.

The insurrectionary forces were broken asunder. They left 3000 men on the battlefield, and 5000 captives fell into the hands of the victors.

Kazan was free, but the Russian empire was not so yet.

Pugasceff, trodden a hundred times to the ground, rose once more. After his defeat at Kazan, he fled, not towards the interior of Siberia, but straight towards the heart of the Russian empire—towards Moscow. Out of his army which was split asunder at Kazan he formed 100 battalions, and with a small number of these, crossed the Volga. Immediately he appeared on the opposite banks of the river, the entire province was enkindled: the peasantry rose in revolt against the aristocracy. Within a district of 100 miles every castle was destroyed, and one town after the other opened its gates to the mock Czar. The further he advanced the more his army increased and the faster his insurrectionary red flag travelled towards the gates of Moscow. On their way the rebels occupied forts, pillaged and destroyed the towns, and the troops which were sent against them were captured. Before the Fort of Zariczin an Imperial force challenged their advance. In the ensuing battle, every Russian officer fell, and the entire force was captured. Again Pugasceff had 25,000 men and a large number of guns, and his road would have been clear to Moscow if the ubiquitous Michelson had not been at his back! This wonderful hero did not dread his opponents, however numerous, and like the panther which drives before him the herd of buffaloes, so he drove with his small body Pugasceff's tremendous army. The rebel felt that this man had a magic power over him, and that he was in league with fate. Finally, he found a convenient place outside Sarepta, and here he awaited his opponent. It is a height which a steep mountain footpath divides, and this path is intersected by another. Pugasceff placed a portion of his best troops on the ascending path, whilst to the riff-raff he entrusted his two wings. If Michelson had caught the bull by the horns with his ordinary tactics, he ought to have cut through the little footpath leading to the steep road, and if he had succeeded then, the troops which were at the point of intersection would have fallen between two fires, from which they could not have escaped. But Michelson changed his system of attack. Whilst the bombardment was going on, he, together with Colonel Melin, rushed upon the wings of the opposing forces. Pugasceff saw himself fall into the pit he had dug for others. The rebel army, terror-struck, rushed towards his camp. The forces that flew to his rescue fell at the mouth of his guns, and he had to cut his way through his own troops in order to escape from the trap. This was his last battle! He escaped with sixty men, crossed the Volga, and hid amongst the bushes of an uninhabited plain.

[Pg 53]

[Pg 54]

The Russian troops surrounded the plain, whence Pugasceff and his men could not escape. And yet he still dreamt of future glory! Amidst the great desert his old ambition came back to him—he pictured the golden dome of the Kremlin, and the conquered Czarina. And with these dreams he suffered the tortures of hunger. For days and days he had no nourishment but horse-flesh roasted on the reeds, which was made palatable by meadow-grass in place of salt. One night, as he was sitting over the fire and roasting his meagre dinner on a wooden spit, one of the three Cossacks who formed his body-guard said to him, "You have played your comedy long enough, Pugasceff!" The adventurer sprang up from his place.

"Slave, I am your Czar!" and whilst saying this he slew the speaker. The two others made a rush at him, struck him to the ground, bound him, tied him to a horse, and thus took him to Ural Sorodok and delivered him to General Szuvarof. It was the very same Ural Sorodok whence he had started upon his bold undertaking. From here he was taken to Moscow. The sentence passed upon him was that he should be cut up alive into small pieces. The Czarina confirmed the sentence, though her beautiful eyes had had great share of responsibility for the sinner's fate. The hangman was more merciful. It was not specified in the sentence where he should commence the work of slaughter, so he began at once with the head, and for this oversight he was sent to Siberia! Katharine about this time changed her favourite. Instead of Orloff, Potemkin, a fine fellow, was chosen.

[Pg 55]

TAMERLAN THE TARTAR

[Pg 57]

CHAPTER I

All around, as far as eye could range, not a palm, nor a plant, nor a blade of grass was to be seen. From one end of the horizon to the other, nothing on which the rising sun could cast a shadow! There was only a small hillock in the centre of this desert, and against this a man was resting, spreading out his hands upon the square stone which stood upon it. He had either just risen from sleep or from the recital of prayer, and, kneeling, he greeted the rising sun. His dress was similar to that of an Eastern mendicant, for he was covered with a long woollen cloak, and one could see

through his wide-hanging sleeves the wounds on his arms which had been scorched by the sun. He was short, and lame with a crippled foot, and, although his hair and beard were already white, his face, which was ruddy and youthful, belied his age, for on his forehead no wrinkles were to be seen, and his eyes were bright and sparkling. The expression of his face was as grave and gentle as that of a philosopher or a pilgrim.

To the eastern horizon of the desert, along the stony plain of Szivasz, a red pyramid arrested the sun's rays, and appeared through the morning mists like a red shadow, whilst westward, a long black streak of cloud seemed to hover, which the morning breeze was powerless to agitate and the light of dawn could not kindle into colour. Throughout the whole extent of the plains not a human voice was to be heard, but in the melancholy quietude some continuous and dismal sounds attracted the ear, proceeding apparently from the interior of the earth. Far and wide as the waste extended were these heartrending and distressing noises to be heard. It seemed as though the earth were sobbing, or as though one could recognise the sighs and groans ascending from lost souls in purgatory, numbed into faint echoes in their transit from the depths below. Or even as though the air were filled with the loud screams of evil spirits, coming and going one knew not whence or whither. On the face of the lonely wanderer no expression of fear was visible. He did not shrink shudderingly from the phantom of the plain, nor from the desolate picture spread before him. If he could pass the night alone amidst these ghostly surroundings, was it likely that he would be afraid in the sunlight?

[Pg 58]

He knelt once again upon the hillock, touching the stone with his forehead, speaking in low murmurs as though into the sand:

"Oh! Wisdom beyond all wisdoms! grant to me to acquire thy knowledge that I may wander throughout the world, and accomplish what Thou hast left unfinished."

[Pg 59]

Whilst saying this he rose, and, with dignified mien, gazed around the expanse of plain. These plains were the blessed soil of Irán. But yesterday it was the fourth paradise of Asia, while to-day it is a desert.

The little hillock was the sepulchre of Abu Mozlim who killed half a million of people in his fierce and continuous fights.

The philosopher, wanderer, and mendicant who rested upon it was Timur (the man of the iron sword), nicknamed also Timur Lenk (the lame), who in the language of flatterers was called Gurgan (the high and mighty lord), Szabil Kirán (the master of all time), or Djeihangir (the conqueror of the world)—one of the greatest of all conquerors. On his head rested the crowns of twenty-seven countries, and from the Indus to the Volga twenty-seven nationalities groaned under his yoke.

It was he himself, the dreaded Tamerlan. The red pyramid to the east was a pyramid of skulls, which had been piled up from the heads of 90,000 soldiers captured during the war, whilst the immovable cloud towards the west was the smoke rising from Szivasz, which only two days ago was inhabited by 100,000 people and to-day held as many graves!

The hollow murmuring from the centre of the earth was caused by the cries of 4000 Armenians, whom the victorious conqueror had caused to be buried alive in one vast timber-lined grave, so that their screams could be heard for some time. It was their moans which came from beneath the earth, whilst the cripple rested on his club, made from the horn of the buffalo, and gazed with a satisfied air around the desert wastes which, yesterday a paradise, had been battered down by his horses' hoofs into a dismal plain. What he saw and heard was delight to his heart. The air of the desert mourned, and the earth moaned in concert.

[Pg 60]

CHAPTER II

Timur's camp was always full of learned men, poets, and lute singers. When he devastated a country or uprooted a town, there was never a living soul left behind his track—not the sound of a child's cry, the bark of a dog, or the crow of a cock—everything was destroyed!

But he spared learned men and poets. On the day of destruction his camp was a place of refuge to them, and they were guarded by his soldiers in order that no evil might befall them; and when he moved onwards he carried with him not only the treasures of the dead—silver, gold, and jewels, but also those of the living—art and science. His camp was swarming with astronomers, magicians, singers, poets, painters, gymnasts, engineers, doctors, conjurers, monkey-trainers, and such like. Timur caused them to be elegantly dressed and well fed, and paid them handsomely. He carried them about everywhere with him, in order that they might amuse all but himself. Why should he trouble his head with astronomy when he knew no star so sparkling as himself? Why should he learn history, when he was the one to make it; or listen to verses which were sung in praise of love, when he distributed captive maidens to his soldiers as a portion of their pay? If he had scientific men in his camp it was in order that they should exert their power over his people. Let them hear the poet's stories, and the recital of heroic deeds, and let the chroniclers write on their parchment what he dictated. Let comedians amuse the crowd, so long as it was acknowledged that all the amusement was owing to him.

[Pg 61]

It was 830 in the Hedjir year, and the countries of two great conquerors adjoined one another. One was Timur, another was Bajazet, whose surname was Djildirim (the lightning). This latter name is also inscribed in letters of blood in the chronicles of other unfortunate nations, and a people who yet cannot fail to remember his name are still called Magyars. Bajazet was the victorious hero of Nicapol. Where two sword-blades touch there is sure to be fighting, and how could two conquerors of the world find room close to one another? Bajazet conquered three provinces which were in vassalage to Timur, and drove away the Khans of Taherten, Szarnchan and Aidin. The last he took captive, together with his wife. Timur, with whom the Khan of Aidin was a favourite, sent envoys to the Sultan, asking him to restore their provinces to his *protégés*, and to set the Khan of Aidin and his wife at liberty. The Sultan was inclined to slay these envoys, but was dissuaded from doing so by his advisers, who said, "Timur, the son of the desert, never causes the envoys sent by his opponents to be killed." However, he ordered them to be scourged through the streets with camel-hide whips, and thrust them into prison, whilst to Timur he sent word that if he dared to say another word on behalf of the Khan of Aidin he would send him back to him cut into two pieces.

[Pg 62]

Timur kept silent and prepared for war, and he inspired and humoured his troops by the aid of his dervishes, poets, and acrobats.

One day Shacheddin, Timur's historian, interrupted him whilst plunged in thought, "Master of the world, deign to be gracious! A magician wishes to appear before you."

"For what purpose? If he wants money he can have it without seeing me."

"He does not want money; he only asks to be received into your favour."

"If he does not gain that, then, he will have stolen my time, and time is life; therefore, he will have deprived me of life, and will have to be considered a regicide!"

Such thoughts as those were frequent utterances from Timur's lips, and it is a fact that he often had people killed for a mere trifle, and spared their lives as a sort of good joke.

Shacheddin did not relinquish his request, and a few minutes afterwards Timur's guards hastened to bring the magician before their master. It was a mark of respect that all should enter hurriedly into the presence of this mighty man, and that they should throw themselves upon their faces on the ground. To walk slowly was considered a mark of haughty conduct by him.

[Pg 63]

The magician was attired in grey robes, and on his head he wore a tall, silk cap. His beard was painted yellow, and his eyebrows blue, whilst on his face were inscribed Tallic words in green and red.

"Magician," said Timur, with mocking condescension, "where have you learnt your art? Amongst the idiots of Almanzor, or in the company of Chinese clowns? Do you understand how to charm people back to this country from another, or *vice versa*? Say, do you understand that?"

"I understand that," answered the magician, bowing down to the ground.

"If, indeed, you understand that, then command that in one moment my beloved servant, the Khan of Aidin, shall stand before me; and, if you cannot do this, perhaps you will manage to transplant yourself at least a thousand miles from me, for my hands can reach even to that extent, and may possibly cause your death!"

"It shall be as you command," said the magician. "Will you please to order your slaves to bring a vat of water before me?"

"Shacheddin has tried that," said Timur, with cold irony. "Bring water to the magician!"

A vat filled with water was placed before the magician, and he jumped into it, still wearing his clothes.

Timur gazed upon him with doubting condescension, thinking to himself at the same time what kind of death he should bestow upon this deceitful mortal. All at once the water was divided and in place of the magician a fine, tall young man, with hanging locks, stood before him.

[Pg 64]

It was the Khan of Aidin himself!

Timur rose hastily from his seat, and flew to him as a lioness who discovers her lost cubs. He embraced the young fellow and carried him in his arms to a panther skin, where he told him to be seated before him.

"How did you get here?"

"As an acrobat," replied the Khan of Aidin, with a smile. "I escaped disguised as a rope-dancer from your enemy's country!"

CHAPTER III

A Prince as an acrobat! Could there be a greater humiliation? Could there be anything in

existence calling for more bitter revenge?

"Which way did you come, and what towns did you touch?" asked Timur of the Khan, who was seated at his feet.

"From Smyrna I escaped as a running footman. The people praised my running to such an extent that I felt compelled to prove how far I could go by running away altogether! In Aleppo I was a monkey-trainer! In Bagdad I turned somersaults! In Damascus I climbed by a rope to the Tower of Minarch! At Angora I put sharp swords into my throat; whilst in Szivasz I swallowed burning coals before the son of the Sultan!"

[Pg 65]

Timur Lenk counted on his fingers the names of the towns as the Khan of Aidin recapitulated them; Smyrna, Aleppo, Damascus, Bagdad, Angora, Szivasz—not one stone of them should remain! And the people who had been so amused by the acrobatic performances of a prince should bitterly deplore this! Little time should be given them to lament!

"And your children?" asked Timur of his *protégé*.

The Khan gave a sigh.

"They are kissing the whips of Bajazet's slaves."

"They shall not do so long!"

Timur called Shacheddin before him, and had another letter written to the Sultan, taking care that every time his name was mentioned it should appear in a line with his in quite as large-sized letters, and not in different ink; whilst, in accordance with his usual custom, he signed his name at the top, not the bottom, of the page. The contents of the missive were not couched in angry terms, though they were written in a haughty manner.

"Do you not know that the greater portion of Asia is submissive to my sword and my laws? Do you not know that my army reaches from one sea to another, and that the world's rulers stand humbly at my doors imploring to be heard! What is your boast to me? A victory over the Christians? You have been victorious over them because the swords of the prophet—blessed be Allah!—were in your hands. But who will defend you against me? Your only protector is the Koran, whose commands I obey as you do. Be wise! Do not despise your opponent because he was once insignificant. When the locust grows up, and its wings become red, it attacks the very birds who wished to consume it before!"

[Pg 66]

Timur's envoys carried the message to Bajazet as quickly as Arab horses could gallop. In it he once more demanded that the captured towns of the Khan of Aidin should be restored to him in peace and quietness, and that his wife and children should be set at liberty, and he suggested that the joint armies of the Sultan and himself should afterwards start together and branch off in different directions, one east, the other west—one to destroy the Pagans, the other the Christians. Timur's messengers returned to his camp with Bajazet's reply, also as swiftly as Arab horses could gallop. Hardly had he opened the letter when Timur's face became flushed with anger. Bajazet's name was written in a different line to his, and was at least an inch larger, whilst Timur's name was similar in size to the rest of the lettering, and was in black ink! The name of the Sultan was in historic characters ornamented with gold. Nor were the contents of the letter couched in mild form. Timur saw here no flattering terms. He was not styled Gurgan, or Djeihangir, but "the Spoiler of Countries," "the Thief of the Desert," "the Worm," "the Crippled Man," &c.; and he had to read how his fame was disparaged, his guns ridiculed, his requests mocked at, and his threats ignored.

[Pg 67]

"What I have conquered belongs to me, quite as much as does my own country. Those whom I have captured are my slaves. If you want them, come for them! Come, and bring with you your million soldiers with their miserable arrows, who will be quickly scattered by my heroes as chaff before the wind! Come, and find me face to face! Come! If not, may you be thrice separated from your wife!"

CHAPTER IV

"May you be thrice separated from your wife if you do not appear before me!" Every Eastern chronicler notes these words with shuddering horror!

Ibu Shimah, Arabshah, Sherefeddin, and the Persian Khandemir all record them with the greatest loathing, and Christian historians, such as Phranzas and Chalcondylas, admit that a greater curse could not befall a Mussulman! "May you be thrice separated from your wife!"

He who loves, nay adores, and respects his faithful wife, the mother of his children, who is to him a queen of the world as well as the queen of his heart, and he who knows that in accordance with the Alkoran it is easy to be separated from a wife, but should remarriage be desired, she must live with another man first, and only when he has thrust her aside can she again marry her first husband—he it is who will understand what a frightful curse is this to a Mussulman!

[Pg 68]

"May you be thrice separated from your wife!"

It is a greater insult than to slap the face; it is far worse than to break in two your opponent's sword! Nay, it is even more than to have the graves of one's ancestors uprooted, and is a deadly offence to all Mussulmans. And when this Mussulman is a Monarch! and this Monarch, Timur!

Timur Lenk did not appear to be furious. He did not howl with rage. He stood up, speechless, and held the letter towards heaven as though he would say, "Here is this letter; read it!" His sons and generals and the vassal princes were horrified to see him as he stood there in his camp, apparently speaking, though none could hear him nor understand him, save those who are unseen, for his lips remained closed. He folded the letter slowly and placed it in his breast in order that he might carry it there until he could revenge himself for the insult. After this, anger was no longer visible on his countenance. He did not put the envoys in chains, though Bajazet had so treated those sent by him; he did not have their noses and ears cut off. On the contrary, he gave them presents of golden caps and richly embroidered coats, and had them mounted on horseback and escorted through his camp, in order that they might count his standards and number his troops. He had the fighting elephants brought before them; he let them know that his cavalry wore armour beneath their uniforms, in order that they might go back to their master and tell him that Timur was quite prepared and would soon meet him, or should he decide to come himself, that he would await him. The Sultan was not to hurry! He would do well to prepare himself in a befitting manner to meet his enemy! Meantime Timur would bombard the Fort of Szivasz, the Sultan's most important stronghold! [Pg 69]

Timur Lenk looked down from the Taurus Mountains into the Valley of Anadot. A new Paradise stretched before his feet. He saw hundreds and hundreds of places amidst the green meadows, and as far as eye could reach his troops were to be seen; and before him, in the mouth of the valley, lay Szivasz, surrounded on either side by massive citadels and canals, quite unapproachable, owing to morasses. There was but one route by which the gates could be reached, and this was defended by triple walls and high watch-towers.

The woeful news was brought to Bajazet that Timur had started his expedition against him. He had received tidings of this beforehand, and therefore had time to prepare himself. Szivasz had 100,000 inhabitants, amongst whom were 20,000 military. The Sultan reinforced them by sending 10,000 Armenians, the pick of his regiments, who were commanded by his second son, Ertogrul. The fort, which was called the "Unconquerable," was provided with ammunition for one year. One year's ammunition! Within that space of time barley was being reaped in its courtyard after its capture by Timur! [Pg 70]

Timur's followers were divided into a camp of twenty-seven sections. Tartars and Persians formed the cavalry; Manchou miners made the subterranean ways, whilst the supple Hindoos scaled the walls. These men were all veritable magicians! They climbed the enemy's ramparts like snakes, they were quite nude, with ropes round their shoulders, and they carried sharp iron prongs in their hands, and in their teeth yataghans. They clung partly to the bricks, partly to the smooth surface of the walls, and resting on the shoulders of their comrades beneath them, they reached the summit. Whilst this living ladder, man on man, made its way up the giddy heights and attained the foot of the citadel, those beneath were being continuously dragged up after them. Had they swerved or fallen they would have been dashed to pieces. Those who first reached the citadel, crept slowly, like so many panthers, to the unsuspecting guards, and stretched themselves along the ground as their backs were turned, then threw the ropes suddenly over their necks and pulled them down to the earth. Thus they died without making a sound. When one or two thousand Hindoos had reached the citadel, they flew down to the watch-towers, strangled the guard, and cut the chains of the bridges. Then Timur's iron men, with swords in both hands, made a rush to slaughter the whole population. They had been frequently successful in these cunning attacks upon the walled towns. Strong forts which had been prepared to resist an attack of a year's duration had often fallen suddenly in one night into the hands of the conqueror. [Pg 71]

This fate awaited Szivasz! The gates and trenches had been well seen to by spies, but yet Timur was ignorant of one fact—viz., that the Sultan's son, Ertogrul (called the "nightbird," as he only slept in daytime), guarded the walls at night, like an owl.

Timur and his men waited before the gates with drawn swords until midnight, and, indeed, until daybreak, to receive the expected signal for the onslaught to be made. The Polar Star and the Morning Star appeared in the skies, yet no sound was to be heard in the fort. When it was daylight, Timur caused twenty-four huge machines, used for flinging blocks of stone, to be brought into operation. With the bullets which were returned in answer, came back to him the heads of his own soldiers! From early in the morning till late at night the heads of his bravest men were thrown at him! Timur saw them coming in tens and twenties from the heights above him! They had been all selected athletes and clever mechanics who had completed their studies at Delhi, and had silently slidden down on ropes from the precipitous rocks of Georgia to surprise and slaughter the enemy. Until late at night these gory balls fell at Timur's feet. He could have added to the large collection he already possessed, but these were cherished heads, belonging to his own men! Ertogrul had indeed lashed the lion! [Pg 72]

Suddenly Timur put into work 8000 miners! The wall of the fort was only to be got at on one side, and under this he made a subterranean way, walled it with timber, and filled it up with sulphur and resin, which he caused to be ignited. After the seventeen days' bombardment, the watchmen of Szivasz perceived a suffocating smell in the air, which seemed to settle heavily down upon

them, and took away their courage. The earth beneath them became burning hot, the grass in the woods around the citadels dried up, and the walls could be heard to split and crack from top to basement. The heat became unbearable, the iron railings assumed a fiery red hue, whilst the grain stored away in the citadel was burnt as black as soot, and the wine-casks exploded. This was on the seventeenth day. On the eighteenth the walls of the citadel, together with the iron gates, fell down all together into a veritably burning hell! Then could be heard the Tartar cry of enthusiasm "Sürün!"

Thus were forced open the gates of the Ottoman Empire, and the enemy slaughtered the whole population of the town. Not a man, woman or child was spared on the day of the capture of Szivasz.

The lives of four thousand Armenians were alone preserved. Timur was merciful enough to promise Ertogrul that he would spare their lives, and that he would not kill the young prince himself until he should himself desire it, and he kept his word. He caused the four thousand soldiers to be buried alive in a huge vault, whilst Ertogrul was handed over to his slaves in order that he might be paraded about the camp with a crown on his head and golden circlets about him, and thus shown to the people as some curious monster. Three days later the Sultan's son himself prayed to be killed, and Timur acceded to his request.

[Pg 73]

On the very day that this happened, Timur absented himself from the camp and went to the grave of Abu Mozlim the Cruel, on the burying-ground where he could yet hear the curses and cries of despair which came from those whom he had caused to be buried alive. He gazed with admiration on the wilderness which his people had created, and passed a whole night there.

At daybreak his leaders came to him, bringing the copper gates of Szivasz, on which he rested his feet. These gates he caused to be afterwards sent to Samarcand, the capital of his empire, where were stored all the gates of those towns which he had captured or destroyed, making a terrible museum. They were placed at the base of an enormously high jasper monument raised to the god of the Delhi Brahmins, and were put along the roadway in order that every follower of the faithful might tread upon the emblems of Christianity with which they were adorned.

After the gates of Szivasz had been placed at Timur's feet, the venerated Tumanaga, the mother of his children, and Csolpán (the Morning Star), his youngest favourite, came before him. They always accompanied the conqueror to his battles, and whilst he bombarded forts, these revered women went in pilgrimage to the graves of the prophets, and caused mosques to be built and gardens planted upon them. When Timur proved victorious they proceeded to reward the prophets by throwing gold and pearls upon their graves! After these followed the learned men. Shacheddin, the historian, then pulled out his parchment, and read aloud his record of an event which he had described, in order that it might be handed down to posterity in the following terms:

[Pg 74]

"In the year 830 of the Hedjir—the day after the death of the Prophet Omar—at the mere glance of the never-to-be-opposed Djeihangir, the world-renowned conqueror, the impregnable walls of Szivasz, built up by the Alaeddin to an enormous height, fell to the ground. A hundred thousand armed men who defended this fort fell down on their faces, and surrendered at the word of the mighty Szabil Kirán. The gracious Gurgan, who has ever been merciful, gave his gracious pardon to those who were left alive, and forbade that their blood should be shed. May honour and glory attend his footsteps!"

Timur Lenk praised this description, and, after bestowing gifts upon the chronicler, shouldered his club and proceeded to further shatter the gates of the town. The desert plain continued to wail and groan after this, and who knows when it ceased to do so?

[Pg 75]

CHAPTER V

I wonder at what hour commence the reveries of a heart which has not yet been opened fully into the light of life? What are the dreams which woman's soul creates whilst she remains yet between childhood and womanhood, whilst she is yet half a slave, half a queen, partly a careless being, partly an angel of light!

On the day of the birth of Maria, the daughter of Eleázár, the King of Bulgaria, the horoscope which was cast for her by the soothsayers foretold that this woman would be the cause of a great monarch's death. King Eleázár naturally thought that this mighty monarch must mean himself, and on the day of her christening he left her in the convent where the ceremony had been performed, fully intending that she should never leave the place.

Just about this time the Osman Emperors commenced to overrun Europe, and Eleázár was vanquished by them, and, in order to save himself from slavery, he offered his daughter as wife to the notorious enemy, in accordance with a custom then prevalent. At this time the Sultans had their own lawful wives, and it happened that Maria became the last Sultana upon the Ottoman throne. Those who followed her were merely favourites, and sat on footstools at the steps of the throne.

Maria was just sixteen when she exchanged the walls of the nunnery for those of the Seraglio.

In this abode of innocent virgins she was taught that the world is divided into three parts. The portion above is Paradise, which is inhabited by angels; that below is Hades, where the devils abide; and between these comes the earth, where dwell women, and heartless beings, alien to animals, and nothing more! The inhabitants of the upper and lower worlds are continually fighting one against the other, and it is the duty of the women who live on earth to pray incessantly and to glorify and honour the angels.

The Sultan sent his chariot to fetch Maria away, and she only descended from this at the door of the Emerald Room of the palace, where she was greeted by three hundred maidens.

She now learnt to know that there was such a thing as a man in the world, and that he was the Sultan Bajazet! She believed in the existence of one man alone. The others she thought were all *Dzsins* (Christians)—that is to say, good and evil spirits, who continually fight against one another. She imagined Bajazet to be the chief of the good *Dzsins*, whom he led into battle against the bad.

Maria was just sixteen, and she did not know that there was more than one man in the world, and that was her husband, the Emperor Bajazet, whom she loved, revered, and adored, and for whom she forgot everything, even all that she had been taught by the sainted, marble-faced sisters in the convent, concerning the paradise which is lit up by the rays of the stars.

She was happy, and she made others happy. Both in the Seraglio and in the convent she saw none but women's faces. The only difference was that *here* were glitter and pomp, and nothing but cheerfulness and merriment, whilst *there* all was coldness and severe simplicity. *Here* she had a variety of enjoyments, whilst *there* she had to renounce all pleasure. *Here* her idol was a living man with a smiling countenance, who heaped love and flattery upon her, whilst *there* it was an unhappy Saviour who wore a crown of thorns, and whose pale face looked down upon her from the cross.

[Pg 77]

Bajazet reposed in the society of Maria after his victories, and it gratified him to recount to her how many of his opponents he had slain in one day, whilst she caressed his snowy beard, and kissed his wrinkled forehead, being glad to know that there were so many *Dzsins* the less in the world.

Little did she know that those very *Dzsins* were of her own creed, and that they were having their last desperate fight for existence with him.

The Odalisc (women of the harem) sang of the Sultan's glories in something like the following strain, in which Maria delighted: "The unbelievers disappear as a flock before a hailstorm, and as tow in the flames. They are burned in their own cities!" Maria applauded this singing, little knowing that amongst the *Dzsins* fell her own brothers!

"Should you kill the King of the *Dzsins* bring me his eyes," she said one day to the Sultan.

Bajazet was a tender husband and a cunning inventor of tales. The next day he made her a present of two diamonds as large as a man's eyes, and he said they had come from the forehead of the King of the *Dzsins*.

[Pg 78]

The eyes of other spirits were made, said Bajazet, of opals, emeralds, and rubies, and he, after each of his victories, heaped these precious stones upon her, and pearls, which he made her believe were the teeth of fallen *Dzsins*, were so heavy as to weigh down her bodice!

"When will you start again on a fresh campaign? And what will you bring me back? I have myself plaited your whip and I have embroidered the saddle which your horse is to wear when it carries you into battle."

Bajazet was at this time just starting on an expedition against the Greek Emperor, whose empire was then limited to the extent of the walls of Constantinople, which were being bombarded by his adversary.

CHAPTER VI

One morning the Sultan was awakened by what seemed to him to be the voice of a nightingale, and, looking up, he saw Maria near him kneeling down, with bent head and arms crossed. The Sultan gazed long upon the childish figure. He could not understand what she was doing.

Finally he interrupted her. "Morning Star, what are you doing?"

[Pg 79]

The girl started. "I am praying!"

Bajazet had never seen anything like this before.

"To whom do you pray?" he questioned her, with astonishment.

"To God!"

The Sultan shook his head, for amongst Mussulmans it is not customary for women to pray.

"And why are you praying?"

"That God may be with you when you start for battle, and that He may grant you victory!"

The Sultan was overcome with joy at the idea that Maria should pray to her own God when her husband started for battle—a battle which was to cause the destruction of her God's own altars. This idea was sweeter to him than the thought of the blood to be shed.

"Pray for me. Pray fervently, with all the orthodox prayers to which you are accustomed. I do not understand them, but your prophets will know how they can persuade the ruler of good and evil to act differently to what he had intended, perhaps, a million years before. Tell me about your prayers. I find delight in them. I do not believe in them, but you do, and that is pleasurable to me. And I swear to you by the name of my own prophet Allah, and in the name of your God, that when I return from the battle, concerning which you pray, you shall have whatever your heart desires. In the meantime think of some desire which is as yet unfulfilled—a desire which is yet hardly existent—which may be only a fancy—waken it into life, demand it, and I will fulfil it!"

[Pg 80]

Soon afterwards he left to bombard Byzantium.

The Sultan was right in his belief that the world's history does not depend on the tears of women. It was decided a million years ago that this rotten country was to fall to pieces, but no one man was empowered to hasten the destruction before the allotted day and year. Just when the siege was completed the frightful news reached Bajazet that the avenging Timur had accepted his challenge. Impregnable Szivasz had fallen, and his greatest hero, his son, had been killed by the enemy! Bajazet at once suspended the bombardment of Byzantium. He had neither time nor desire to attack the Christian Churches when an enemy, mightier than himself, approached. Byzantium, therefore, had for a short time to be spared the fate of having its name changed to Stamboul, just as, 450 years later, it was spared from being rechanged to Byzantium, though the change was already looming in the distance.

Bajazet was quite certain that he would take Byzantium. It was a dream from which he could not free himself until it was fulfilled. Every one was against the war. The soothsayers prophesied evil to come. His leaders warned him not to commence the bombardment until he had finished with Tamerlan. But he would not be dissuaded. The soothsayer who advised him to start against Timur before proceeding to Byzantium was dismissed from his presence.

[Pg 81]

When Timur approached towards Szivasz the Sultan's advisers again implored him.

"Do not let Szivasz fall, or your son be lost!"

When he was tired of hearing this he had a few of them killed, but the warning did not die with them. Though his advisers could no longer speak to him, a sad and moaning song was heard amongst the soldiers, the refrain of which was, "Do not let Szivasz fall, or your son be lost!" The Sultan had to listen to this nightly from his tent, and when he forbade it to be sung in his camp, it was passed on to the shepherds in the Izmid mountains. In the silent night, and in the far distance, the wailing of the shepherds' horn was heard from the Pontus as far as the Sultan's tent, "Do not let Szivasz fall, or your son be lost!"

Bajazet had the shepherds driven into the mountains, or killed, in order that he could no longer hear the cursed song! But he heard afterwards what he little wanted to believe, that both Szivasz and his hero had fallen, and had been destroyed by the hands of his enemy. Bajazet strewed ashes on his head! This was his own fault.

He no longer attacked the gates of Byzantium. He left the suburbs in the midst of their construction, crossed the Pontus with his army, collected his generals and all his war-utensils, and was ready to start on his big and revengeful expedition. As he anchored near the Izmid mountain, a shepherd was seen close by, resting on his crook. Bajazid exclaimed to him: "Now blow with your horn that song to me: 'Do not let Szivasz fall, or your son be lost!'" The shepherd obeyed his commands and blew the sad and melancholy sounds, which were re-echoed in the mountains. They found an echo in the heart of the Sultan, who cried out, with grief and despair, that he had let his bravest son die; and from that moment the trumpeters were ordered to constantly play the melancholy song during the expedition to Szivasz.

[Pg 82]

CHAPTER VII

Timur Lenk did not hasten. He had time to look through the towns in which the Khan of Aidin had been made to turn somersaults. He also had a little account to settle with the Sultan of Egypt. It was a short and gory one. He only took with him the metal gates of the towns—the others he left behind amongst the ruins. He did not leave one stone upon another, but he piled up the heads of the inhabitants in heaps.

This was his style of architecture!

When Damascus was burnt down, the tops of the burning cypresses and cedars and the smoking

resin perfumed the plain with their odour ten miles around. Of the holy town, only one minaret was left standing. It was that of the altar of the Omniads, which was covered with lead, and the metal from it streamed down into the street. The top being of wood, remained standing. It was this tower which the Khan of Aidin had ascended by means of ropes, and, according to the Turkish saying, when the day of resurrection comes, it will be here that the Lord will descend and give judgment as to life and death.

[Pg 83]

Whilst Bajazet was collecting his lightning forces, Tamerlan had time to destroy the three Iron provinces, and as many regiments, together with the Egyptian Mameluks. The heroic Syrians could not bar his way, and he made them fly like a cloud of mosquitos or a flock of swallows. Kings disappeared before him. The only one who escaped—and that by mere chance—was *Ferndzs*. In token of homage he sent gifts to the great Shah, nine, in number, of every kind, according to the religious system of counting in vogue with the Tartars: nine horses, nine camels, nine female slaves, and eight men slaves. Timur understood by this that it was intended to represent the sender himself as a ninth fraction, and for this reason he showed him mercy. Drunk with victory, thirsting for revenge, and loaded with treasure, Timur left Syria to meet his mightiest opponent, to whom he had now given time for preparation; and in the 804th year of the Hedjir, on a bright summer's day, he crossed the Araxes river!

Bajazet, the "lightning," dreamt a waking dream of revenge as he sat by Maria's side, and caused his forces to be collected together to await his opponent's arrival on to the battlefield which was to decide the fate of the world. Under such a roof of sweet delight no one could talk of battles. Here even the Sultan did not deplore his lost son; Maria did not even know that he was the father of sons—men like himself, but minus grey beards! The Sultana found in her returned husband a return of all her happiness, and at this joyful moment she remembered the promise he had made to her before his departure, "Whatever your desire may be, it shall be fulfilled." And when her husband asked of her "What do you desire?" she replied:

[Pg 84]

"Oh! my dear Djildirim, when will you next start against the *Dzsins*?"

"This year, perhaps this very month."

"Oh! how I should like to see a living *Dzsin*."

"That is impossible. A *Dzsin* is not a doll, my darling. Do you not know, from the tales your women tell you daily, that if you tread upon a talisman you will force a spirit to appear who will be always at your bidding, but who will rend you asunder if you do not keep him continually employed?"

But she was so delighted with this new idea that she would not allow herself to forget it for a moment.

Next day she said to Bajazet, "Bring me a *Dzsin*, and be here to order him about for me!"

"It is impossible. *Dzsins* do not tolerate the presence of another man near a woman."

"What idiots the *Dzsins* must be!"

The third day she said to Bajazet: "My lightning, my love, I have a desire which I want you to fulfil."

[Pg 85]

"It is already fulfilled, if you really desire it."

"What I wish is this, that when you next start against the *Dzsins* you will take me with you."

Oh! tempting heart of woman!

"My morning star, my darling, what would you do in the midst of battle? It is a cruel tempest, where lightning rages. The glittering stars have no place there. The thoughts of your heart are alluring songs heard amidst the thunder and tempest of the battle. There is no room there for your sweet soul. If you pass a mown meadow, you weep over every flower which has been trampled under foot. The battle blood flows from the cut-down human flowers. How could you see this? You would die at the sight of it."

But women do not give way.

"I want to see how thousands of *Dzsins* melt away at your glance; to note how they fall to the ground when you only look at them. Does not the song say this? 'They are numerous and come in great numbers. Their noise, like thunder, makes heaven tremble. My Djildirim steps forward, and they fall to the ground, and their voices fill hell.' Does not the song say, 'The opponents' leader is a metal idol, but Bajazet is the lightning, and the lightning melts the metal.' Does not the song tell the truth?"

Bajazet had to admit that all was true which the women of the harem sang about him.

"I wish to see you," urged Maria, "I wish to see you in the blaze of your glory. I wish to see you as Djildirim, as the lightning which pursues the enemy! I want to admire you in the height of your glory! I want to applaud at and delight in your glory! I want to be on the spot, so that I may weave the wreath, and place it upon your brow, so that, dazzled by the light of victory upon your face, I may fall at your feet! Will you not take me with you, my Djildirim?"

[Pg 86]

The Sultan said, "Let it be so!"

He was excited at the idea of fighting in the presence of his wife, and of proving to her, who believed him to be an earthly god, that he was one indeed. The desire being roused in his heart, he was now doubly thirsty for revenge and also for glory! His wife's eyes would watch his deeds; therefore they must be magnificent!

CHAPTER VIII

In the year 1446, according to the Christian era, an enormous comet appeared upon the horizon. The golden tint of this phenomenon of the heavens was observed for six months amongst the stars, and when it was closest to earth two-fourths of the sky was covered by the dreaded spectre. When the sun set and the gigantic marvel made its appearance, the pale phosphor head drawing its tail after it, everything was lit up by its wonderful light. Forests, mountains, people's faces, appeared ghastly by its illumination, and all around amongst the mountains was to be seen a glow which appeared like a distant fire lighting up the sky. Only the reflection of the light was not red, but green; and when the moon made her appearance, with her silver-tipped crescent, the two heavenly wanderers followed after one another with curious wonder. Once it happened that the moon went into the vaporous element of the comet, and astronomers then calculated how many million miles it covered and how long it would take before it would touch the moon with its head in place of its tail. Then both would shoot down from heaven, and the Day of Judgment would arrive. Religious folk went on pilgrimages and awaited the *Dies Iræ*; whose herald was this Lampadias, the name given it by Greek astronomers. Under the fearful glitter of this heavenly phenomenon, which wandered over the horizon and lit up the entire surface of the earth, compelling the inhabitants to breathe its deadly poison, the two most dreaded men in the Mussulman world prepared to fight against one another in a life and death struggle. Sultan Bajazet had 420,000 men; Timur Lenk had 780,000. One million two hundred thousand fighting men, therefore, had to seek a suitable place amidst the Asiatic wastes, which would afford sufficient space for the blood required to be shed.

[Pg 87]

The two conquerors of the world were not alarmed by the sign from Heaven. They not only divided between them the stars which led them, but they also cut the comet asunder! The head of the Lampadias bent towards the west, and the thinner end of its long mane hung to the east. Bajazet said it was a sword which the Prophet had sent to him, and that with its aid he should kill the heretic Shitáá. Tamerlan, however, gave out that this was the same club which the Prophet had given into his hands, and that the head was turned towards the heretic Szunnita. The stars at the end of the tail he held to be the head of the club, with which he would lay him low! And so, the two greatest generals of the period started in search of one another with two enormous forces, and as quickly as they neared one another, so quickly did the dreaded star approach the earth! The two conquerors debated to themselves which of them would first grasp the comet by its tail!

[Pg 88]

CHAPTER IX

Both Bajazet and Timur Lenk did what no conqueror of the world ever did before or after them. They each carried their favourite wives with them to view the decisive battle of the world! It was as though they were to witness a dramatic spectacle, in which one million armed men took part, and by which the government of a portion of the world would be decided either to the right or to the left. Such a spectacle was surely never before presented by a general to his wife!

Bajazet's wife was in the camp in an elevated tent made of muleskin. One thousand women riders went before, and one thousand after her, to keep from her gaze the face of every man. These were masculine women, accustomed to sword-handling, and to cutting off heads, women for whom men can feel but horror, and of whom it is difficult to form an idea. Bajazet headed this woman's camp with 10,000 veteran Janesars and old soldiers scarred with wounds. They were picked out from amongst the Nicapol victors. Every one of them was a hero, and their attacks on the enemy were always made simultaneously. To the right of Maria were 15,000 Christians, mounted and mailed, and under the leadership of Stephen Lazaruvich, the Servian Waidwode. These were the most faithful adherents of the Sultan. The remainder of the troops were led by the Sultan's sons. Suleiman, the eldest, was in the centre of the camp; whilst the two wings, consisting of Turcomans and Tartars, were commanded by Isá and Múza. Amongst these troops were the people of the Khan of Aidin. Mustafa, another of the sons of the Sultan, led the heroic Arab troops; and Mohammed, yet another, was in command of the reserve. Timur Lenk's sons, Mirán Shah, Chalit Shah, and Mirza Mohammed, were also in the camp. Fathers fought against fathers, sons against sons, and women against women! Mirza Mohammed Khan led his own troops, and each detachment was dressed in different colours—some, for instance, in red uniform and red bucklers, with red standards, red saddles, &c., others in blue or yellow, white or black. When they moved in square, it seemed as though figures were moving on a chess-board!

[Pg 89]

[Pg 90]

The name of the place where the two opposing forces met was Csibuk Abad. It is an historic spot. Here Pompey and Mithridates fought a decisive battle! At the back stand the celebrated Stetta

cedar-forests, and facing it are the endless plains where the tall oriental reeds grow in line from which the people cut stalks to make the stems of pipes, calling them from the place, Csibuk.

Towards the eastern horizon the towers of the citadels of Angora were to be seen, whence Timur might be observed approaching. He was engaged in bombarding this place against the Bey Yakab, when the approach of his opponent caused him to raise the siege.

Between the two forces was only one well (Miral) which supplied the district abundantly with water. The inhabitants were, therefore, right to call it the Sainted Well. Bajazet hastened to seize this before his enemy. He knew very well that he who secured it would have the advantage of tiring out his opponents, who would be forced out into the desert. Sheik Trzlan, an old Dervish, at one time an adherent of Timur Lenk, was the guardian of the well. As a follower of Shi he possessed magic power over the people.

Bajazet rode to this Sainted Well, and asked the Dervish for a drink of water out of it. He filled the jug, and gave it over to the Padishah with the usual blessing, "Glory be to Him who created clouds and wells!"

The Sultan threw a golden piece to the Dervish. Sheik Irzlan picked up the money and looked at the portrait. Then he returned it, saying, "Oh! my Lord, of what use is this money to me, when Timur Lenk's head is engraved here?"

[Pg 91]

The Sultan dragged the coin out of the Dervish's hand and threw it with horror into the air, wondering how his enemy's money could possibly have found its way into his camp. Then he took out another gold piece, upon which he first looked earnestly; then, seeing his own likeness engraved upon the coin, he threw it to the Dervish. Sheik Irzlan picked it up, and then, with marks of the greatest respect and reverence, he handed it back to him again.

"Why here, my master, on this piece also is engraved Timur's portrait!"

And so indeed it was.

Bajazet, who was now furious, took out a third coin, which he threw to the Sheik, who, on picking it up, showed him that again it bore the same superscription.

"You scoundrelly magician!" shouted Bajazet in despair, "it is your delusive magic!" and he slashed the Dervish across the face and breast with his whip.

"Thank you for your gracious kindness, mighty lord," said the Dervish, putting his blood-stained face into the dust.

Timur Lenk would not have acted like this. He allowed blood to flow in streams, but never in his life did he hurt a scholar or a Dervish. Afterwards when the infuriated Sheik ran bleeding from the breast through the streets of Chorazan, Timur Lenk, looking at him, smiled and said: "This is a sign that Chorazan itself, which is the breast of Asia, will fly to me voluntarily."

[Pg 92]

And so indeed it came to pass.

Bajazet was so certain of having obtained possession of the Miril well, that the next day he organised a hunting expedition to the ancient forest of Stetta for Maria's amusement. Whilst half of his troops were pursuing the stag or shooting game, and he himself was shooting wild peacocks, the enemy, at a distance of trumpet-call, commenced to pull down the stakes of his camp. In the evening, when the party returned, tired out, from the chase, Bajazet's son, Suleiman, who had been left behind with the rest of the forces, came to him in a furious state, and said:

"To-morrow we shall have to face the enemy."

"Why?" asked the Sultan, with surprise.

"Because we have no water!"

"Surely the well has not dried up in one night?"

"It has not dried up, but it is contaminated. The Dervish whose face you struck yesterday hung heavy stones round his neck last night and jumped into the well, where this morning he was found drowned. You know that when a man has been found dead in a well no one will touch its waters until the new moon. So the camp has been parched with thirst throughout the whole day!"

"Oh! cursed Dervish!"

"Ah! the Dervishes were all devoted to Timur. Beware, for he who was capable of killing himself might yet kill you! And now you had best decide whether you will retreat or make an advance to-morrow, for in this place it is impossible for us to remain longer."

[Pg 93]

Bajazet angrily pointed to the watch-fires of Timur Lenk, and exclaimed, in hot fury, "Advance!"

CHAPTER X

It is quite natural that two loving hearts should think and dream alike, but it happens often, too, that the hearts of two opponents who bitterly hate one another think in concord. That night neither Bajazet nor Timur shut his eyes. Both of them were tortured by the conjecture as to which of the two should lead the morrow's attack, prove victor, and destroy his adversary. They both anxiously awaited the break of day, for each longed to be first upon the battle-field.

It was yet dark when the priests completed their morning prayer in Bajazet's camp, and as the Sultan stepped out from his tent, the 10,000 Janesars, who stood ready for attack, commenced to sing the blood-curdling song which thus concludes:

Do not let your son be lost!

This was the Sultan's daily greeting, and he now stood face to face with his son's murderer! At the other end of the camp the dreaded signal of the *gurgach*, twice repeated, responded to the strains of the song, and this was accompanied by the screaming and clacking of the *kernai reveillé*. The *gurgach* was a big drum and the *kernai* a trumpet, and these signals announced that the attack had commenced. When the sun peeped out from behind the lilac-coloured mountains of Karadegh both camps were in marching order. The standards and the horses' tails used as banners were flying aloft in the centre, and the tails of two horses dyed red let it be known that two sovereigns were fighting face to face. Here were Bajazet's Janesars, while there were Timur Lenk's brave Samarcand troops, and between them two rows of fighting and mailed elephants were placed to form barriers. Skilful armed throwers of Greek fire were placed in towers with orders not to waste their arrows on other heads but those of princes. Timur, who was resting upon the bare earth, was greeted in turn by his officers, who stood with their horses' bridles in their hands, exclaiming:

"*Raszti ruszti!*"

These were historical words by which leave was taken, and they signified "Justice" and "Aid." Amongst the rows of elephants stood a white one, the largest of all. This Timur had brought from the Court of the Prince of Burmah, where it used to be worshipped as a holy animal. On the back of this curious beast a tower had been erected, where the two favourite wives of the Khan, Tumanaga and Csolpán, were seated. The one was the mother of his children, the other his latest favourite. Timur rode up to them before the commencement of the battle, greeted them lovingly, and unsheathed his sword before them. Raising it towards Heaven he exclaimed:

"Now may it be decided which of us is to be thrice separated from his wife!"

Sheriff Said then knelt down upon the ground at Timur's feet, filled his hands with grass, and as a symbol of cursing and destruction, he threw this towards Bajazet's camp. Then turning towards Timur, with a trembling voice he murmured:

"Go, and be thou victor!"

To these words the trumpeters in camp responded.

On the opposite side Bajazet had raised a high wooden tower for his wives, from whence they inspected as from an amphitheatre-box the magnificent and dreadfully dramatic spectacle which was being enacted before them by two real heroes. It could not indeed have been other than a truly novel spectacle to Maria. What a fearful array of *Dszins* she saw clad in iron and copper armour! Such garb surely could only be worn by inhabitants from another world! What tremendous camps! Surely only evil spirits who fly, constantly following one another through the air, could come in such large flocks! Likerbuli, the favourite songstress, was seated at Maria's feet when the attack commenced, and the strains of her lute seemed to bring the spectators into line to watch the battle which was proceeding before them.

"Look how they come towards us, the cursed enemy! Seven detachments in seven colours like the rainbow! The leader—Timur Lenk's son—the devil whose name is Mirza Abubekr, rides before them. His armour is made entirely of rubies. How it sparkles in the sun! He who faces him, clad in dark armour, and seated on a black horse, is our hero, Lazaruvich. He can be recognised by his standards, which bear crosses. Harken! how the earth trembles beneath the tramp of their horses. Listen! how the skies ring with the tumult of the battle!"

"'Sürün! Sürün!' exclaim the cruel enemy. 'Allah! Allah!' scream our troops. 'Jesus! Jesus!' shout the men of Lazaruvich, but Allah listens also to these!"

Maria secretly crossed herself, and prayed to Jesus.

"Look, they have just come into collision. The clashing of the swords and axes upon their shields can be heard up here. Look, Timur's seven-hued troops become disordered. Lazaruvich sweeps them away before him as a whirlwind tosses the mown grass, or as the waves of the sea sweeps the shells towards the shore. Ha! Mirza Abubekr's chosen horsemen no longer keep to their own colours. White is mixed with red, and green has yellow patches like china fragments trodden under foot! Lazaruvich is the first hero amongst our troops!"

Maria herself bent forward from her balcony, and applauded this wonderful spectacle, which was soon, however, obliterated from the sight of all in the reedy forest by the clouds of dust which were uplifted. Lazaruvich now commenced to pursue the despised Tartar horsemen who were fleeing towards Angora. Maria, intoxicated with joy, tore the lute out of Likerbuli's hands, and began to sing herself the song glorifying Bajazet and his hero "Korona" (Lazaruvich).

The wild madness of the battle seemed to enter into her soul, and she, too, cursed the drunken enthusiasm of these demons who were always the cause of glory or trouble to her own people.

In the dust-cloud of the battle, Khan Mohammed Mirza noticed his brother's flight, and rushed to his aid, with his crack Samarcand regiment. In the midst of the Csibukabad reeds he reached one of the wings of Lazaruvich, whilst Shah Miron, and Chalid with his archers threw themselves upon the troops of Prince Mustafa just where a gap had been caused owing to Lazaruvich having made a rush from thence upon the enemy. Mohammed, the Sultan's son, was there with reserve troops, but he had orders from Bajazet not to move until ordered to do so by him, for the deceitful enemy might make a circuit, and then there would be need for this reserve. Bajazet, in order to relieve his two sons, ordered Suleiman, who commanded the left wing, to throw himself upon Timur with his entire force.

[Pg 98]

CHAPTER XI

Suleiman had 15,000 Tartars amongst his troops, principally inhabitants of Aidin and Saruchán, who were led by Bey Illisz. These Tartar hordes were suddenly let loose in one body, being sheltered on either side by the Anatol troops. Timur's opposing force advanced slowly towards the rushing enemy. At its head was the Khan of Aidin who, on that day, wore neither armour nor helmet, and did not even draw out his sword from its scabbard, though he made straight for Illisz.

The Bey of Illisz was twirling his pike, and turned it towards the Khan. As he nearly reached him and was within throw, the Bey exclaimed, "Defend yourself," and threw the pike at him.

The Khan of Aidin smiled. Had he earned his bread for a whole year as a magician in vain that he should be frightened by a pike?

"You had better defend yourself," he replied to Illisz, as the pike hissed towards him. He grasped it in its flight, and threw it back to the Bey, and the iron penetrated his cheek-bone. In this state his terrified charger ran away with him. Then the Khan of Aidin rose in his saddle and straightened himself on his horse's back, whilst with ringing voice he cried out to the Tartars, "I am your Khan! Return to me, and aid me against the enemy!" In a moment the entire Tartar force turned round to him and threw clouds of arrows upon the Turkish horsemen behind them, and thus cut open a space in the left wing for the advance of Timur's troops.

[Pg 99]

This move decided the fate of the battle. Bajazet could not believe that his Tartar soldiers would desert him at the sight and by the command of their late master. Those whom he believed to be his own followers had now actually gone over to the enemy! The Sultan's son Suleiman upon this stroke of ill-fate turned his horse's head, struck spurs into him, and was the first to leave the battle-field.

Another son, Mohammed, commenced a fight with the reserve, but no success attended their efforts. The day was lost to Bajazet. The "lightning" was vanquished, and the iron sword prevailed; but Bajazet still could have escaped with the rest of his troops, and might have overcome his enemy from his European forts, could he have reconciled himself to the notion of flight. All round was heard the tumult of the tempestuous war. It was impossible to see, owing to the clouds of dust, and the women away yonder in the velvet tower no longer sang of victory, but trembling awaited the close of the day. Once during the afternoon a ray of hope sprang up, when Timur's force made an advance, and the Waiwode Lazaruvich cut his way through the Csibukabad reeds across Mohammed Mirza, and joined Bajazet in correct battle order. The Sultan stood motionless amidst his unconquered veterans. Lazaruvich, with his fagged out and wounded troops, who were blackened by dust and covered with the blood of the enemy, with broken pikes and torn standards, suddenly appeared before the Sultan.

[Pg 100]

Lazaruvich hardly recognised him.

"Is it you, my faithful friend?" the Sultan asked, with emotion.

"It is I, father. Escape; the battle is lost!"

"Then let me perish," replied the Sultan. "You had best return. You have wife and children, and have yet a long life to live."

"God can alone bring help," answered Lazaruvich, and quitted the battle-field.

It was already twilight. The escaping forces were seen in all directions. Only 10,000 Janesars stood steadfast round Bajazet. Since the morning they had been thirsting for water: now they thirsted for blood! They could have had plenty of time and opportunity for escape, for Timur did not attack them until later on. The night came on; the sun disappeared, and the comet—the dread of heaven and earth—shone out on the sky. By the aid of its demoniacal glitter Bajazet could see the opponent's army. He was not frightened, either by the star or by Timur's victory, and motionless he stood with his ten thousand men on the spot where half a million men had already perished. Then Timur raised his hand to heaven, as though he would grasp the flaming club, and with it strike his enemy.

"Well, so be it," he said, and with this he gave the signal to start his troops of mailed men, the

Dzsagata horsemen and the rows of fighting elephants, against Bajazet's Janesars. Maria heard tremblingly from her tower the bellowing of the elephants. "Ah! the *Dzsins*, the *Dzsins*! But Bajazet will pursue them and rout them asunder, for he is the 'lightning.'"

[Pg 101]

The flying Greek fire opened the attack. From the elephants' towers the blinding sparks came in clouds, and created dazzling colours in this night battle, whilst arrows shot at the same instant from all sides. The Janesars fought and died speechless, as though they were not men, but spectres. The two forces fought without a word. Only the clanking of their swords spoke. Oh! the *Dzsins*, the *Dzsins*!

Suddenly one of the flaming arrows cut its way through the ranks of the Janesars, and flew to the women's tower, igniting a velvet curtain, and so setting the whole place on fire. The women, terror stricken, rushed down from the burning amphitheatre, which, in a few moments, was as a burning torch in the midst of the camp, lighting up the spectacle of slaughter. Immediately Bajazet saw this his heart gave way, and he turned back with his suit of horsemen, and, leaving behind him the fighting Janesars, he galloped towards the women. Maria was then lying on the earth, her face covered with dust.

Oh, the *Dzsins*—the *Dzsins*! "To horse quickly, by my side, away to the mountains!" exclaimed the defeated "lightning," lifting his wife from the dust, and with these words he escaped from the field. One thousand brave horsemen and two thousand fighting Amazons accompanied them. Mahmud Khan saw the Sultan's flight, and rushed after him with 4000 Dzsagata horsemen. Until midnight he pursued him up to the foot of the mountain. The soldiers left behind fought with Timur's men whilst the Sultan got away.

[Pg 102]

The Khan of Dzsagat did not relax his search after Bajazet, whose horsemen and horses fell to the right and left, and by daybreak only forty men remained. The Sultan was, therefore, left almost alone with his women. He then stopped and awaited his pursuers. He was clad in impenetrable armour, and held a good Damascus blade in his hand, for he had to defend his beloved harem. Ten of his pursuers fell before their swords could touch him, but finally becoming dazzled by the frequent strokes of his sword, he fell down from his horse at Maria's feet, where he was captured. Maria had to see the face of her demigod become pale and besmirched with dust. His eyes were heavy, and from his lips issued impotent curses.

CHAPTER XII

Timur Lenk was playing chess with his favourite son. The young prince was commonly known as Schach Roch (castleing). He had been called this because it was he who had invented the chessmove where the king changes places with a castle. Just as the prince was saying "Schach Roch" to Timur, the curtains of the tent were drawn back, and before them stood the captured Bajazet. Schach Roch! A king who had exchanged his throne for a tower, indeed; the tower of captivity!

[Pg 103]

Timur got up from his place, and held out his hand to his opponent, leading him to the divan, upon which he placed him beside him.

"Bajazet, fortune has turned against you. Not so my heart! Fate has made you a captive. I shall allow you to remain a Sovereign. Your tent is ready. You will not be watched by any one. You will find there your wife and your son Muza, who have been taken prisoners, and they will remain with you. I only ask you one thing. That is, your solemn promise not to attempt to escape from me by trickery whilst I remain fighting your sons. If we can conclude peace, then you can return quietly to your country, for Allah does not permit two faithful Sultans to humiliate one another! Therefore you had best give me your solemn word of honour."

Bajazet was moved by his opponent's generosity, so he gave his solemn word, accompanied by a grasp of the hand, that he would not attempt to escape from Timur Lenk's camp. After this he was led to a pompous tent, where his wife and son awaited him. The tent was magnificent, and those whom he loved were there, yet it was a tower in place of a kingly throne. Schach Roch!

[Pg 104]

CHAPTER XIII

"So long as you keep your sovereign word to me you will be regarded as a Sovereign in my camp." This was Timur Lenk's promise to his opponent. Whichever direction Bajazet took, he was received with the honours paid to a Sovereign, and imperial pomp surrounded his tent. Overnight, whilst the captive Sultan was walking in front of his camp, he found a screw of parchment lying before him, on which the following words were written:

"MY SULTAN,—Your sons are coming with fresh forces against Tamerlan; Jacob Bey will break upon Angora. The Waiwode is returning with reinforcements. Be prepared. We are making a subterranean way from the Bakery which will lead into your tent. To-night all will be ready. Be ready yourself also. At daybreak disguise

yourselves as bakers, and you can escape with your wife and sons into the open, where you will find your horses awaiting you. Be ready!

"YOUR FRIENDS!"

This letter was too tempting for Bajazet, and he eagerly seized the opportunity offered. It was indeed a fact that a subterranean way was made to his tent, but it was Tamerlan's workmen who constructed it! At midnight the hammering of the subterranean poleaxes let the Sultan know that his rescuing body of moles were coming! The earth gave way under his feet, and from a narrow passage human heads rose up from the earth before him. "Come!" whispered the head which ascended from the earth's depths. "Come!" And the Sultan followed the enticer, taking with him Maria and his son Muza. They could only proceed in bent form along the footpath, holding one another's hands. Finally the neck of the cavernous way became visible. The extreme end was the Bakery oven. When Bajazet was going to step out from the low opening, some one put out a hand to assist him, and when he emerged he who had given him a helping hand did not release his own. The Sultan looked at him. Timur Lenk stood before him!

[Pg 105]

"What! Is this your sovereign word?" he softly demanded of the terrified Bajazet.

The Sultan saw that he was trapped. Timur threw away his hand from him:

"This is not the hand of a Sovereign. It is the hand of a slave."

So saying, he turned away and left him to himself. Bajazet saw only the executioners before him, carrying chains and iron rods in their hands!

CHAPTER XIV

Timur was not an ordinarily cruel man—satisfied to be able to bathe himself in the blood and break the limbs of his opponents. He was a veritable poet and artist in mercilessness! He required poisoned arrows by which to strike his foes. He did not want to kill Bajazet, but he wanted to drive him mad. After this attempt at escape he had a cage made for him out of iron rods, wherein he caused him to be imprisoned, and he placed the cage on a car and had it drawn about the camp. A crier preceded this, pointing out with his pike this spectacle to the curious multitude.

[Pg 106]

"Here is a captive Sultan; a celebrated wild animal whose name is Bajazet, the King of Kings, the Padishah, the Master of the Seas and Earth, a crowned king who has got four hundred thousand soldiers, foot and horsemen. Look at the conqueror of the Round World! who is the only Master from East to West! He is in the cage!"

Ha! ha! ha! laughed the armed crowd gathered together. Bajazet sat mute and motionless inside the iron bars as though nothing could hurt his feelings. The crowd threw jibes and curses after him, and the youth threw oranges and walnuts into his cage as it is customary to do to monkeys. But Bajazet's face did not change. The crier now formed the idea of playing on the drum and cornet an air which evidently amused him, and which ended in the refrain "Do not let Szivasz fall, or your son be lost!" If anything could fill the captive's heart with bitter sorrow it was this song! Oh, had he only listened in time to this! Oh, if he had not in the days of his pride forbidden it to be blown by the shepherds of Izmid! Had he but only hastened in time to the rescue of his son Ertogrul, he would not then have had to listen to it from the cornet of this bear-dancer and buffoon, who now paraded a King in place of strange animals!

[Pg 107]

The fellow carried him away in his cage up to the hills where the heads of his heroes were piled up. On the summit of these piles were placed here and there the heads of leaders, whose turbans fluttered in the wind! Bajazet knew these faces too well! They were the heads of his most trusted veterans. He had frequently distinguished them for their services, and kissed their faces after victorious battles! Now they stared at him with glassy eyes from the top of these piles raised from the heads of his troops! After this buffoon had carried the Sovereign captive about the camp, he returned with him to Tamerlan. The Khan, his sons, and the vassal princes, the Khan's wives, and the slaves of the Court were taking part in a *fête*, and at the height of its amusement the gilded iron cage arrived with its sad captive. A vanquished Sultan brought thus before drunken slaves!

Mockery and shouts of laughter greeted the appearance of the conquered lion from his intoxicated victors, and still Bajazet's face remained unchanged! Timur Lenk himself was drunk. Wine, victory, and revenge—this triple inebriety filled his veins.

"This glass I raise to the health of the master of half of this world," exclaimed the conqueror, and threw the contents upon his opponent's face in the cage.

Yet Bajazet's face remained unchanged!

"Bring fresh wine—more women slaves," said Timur Lenk, thumping with his hand, and Bajazet saw the figure of an elegant slender woman walking tottering forward. On her head rested a floral wreath. Her hair hung loosely and carelessly around her. Her silken mantle was rent from top to bottom in accordance with Tartar fashion. This woman tottered, for she was herself intoxicated. She went forward to fill the Khan's glass, and in her Bajazet recognised Maria! This

[Pg 108]

was the final blow to the captive Sultan when he saw his wife so humbled and tottering towards the Khan's footstool. Then he sprang up from his seat and grasped the iron bars of the cage, and burst out ravingly, "Oh, you demoniacal beast, Timur! You crippled dog, who have buried your soul's better part in your useless foot, and remain here living in this world, half of you a demon! You are no vanquisher of men! You have never wholly been a man. You can only revenge yourself on women. You grave-worm, who chew treacherously what a greater hero than you has let fall! Detestation rest upon your filthy name! Every woman will execrate you as a coward, and will throw your image on the ground to be played with and broken by her children. Disgrace be upon you and ignominy rest upon your belongings—you, who were hatched by a slave and will be buried by the executioner! You were born to drive camels, you wretch, and your father, who died on a dust-heap, was a better man than you! Faugh! I spit upon you! This will be the best spot in your filthy glory! Curses be upon you and upon your offshoots! Your soul to hell, and your bones to the dogs! Your name to derision! I shall await you, where both of us are to meet!"

[Pg 109]

With these words he struck his head with such force against the iron railings that he fell down dead.

Tamerlan could no longer joy in his opponent's impotent fury.

CHAPTER XV.

Timur Lenk arranged a pompous funeral for Bajazet. His entire troops came out to accompany the body. On his tombstone he caused to be engraved a recital of his glorious deeds, and he commanded the Sultan's women to wail and mourn for him. As he returned from the funeral ceremony his historian, Shacheddin, came before him, to read out what he had written down concerning the event, for the benefit of future generations. It was as follows:

"When Timur Djeihangir defeated his enemy and captured him, he treated him as a brother. He placed him next to him at table, calling him friend, and treated him with the distinction due to a Sovereign. When Bajazet, following fate's decree, departed to his ancestors, he had him buried like a King, and raised a royal mausoleum over his ashes. Glory be to Him who sees everything!"

The Comet disappeared, and did not destroy the Earth after all!

VALDIVIA

[Pg 111]

Valdivia is the name of a Chilian province; also of the river which there pours down from the mountains into the plains: and likewise of a city which is remarkable for its architecturally constructed bamboo-bridge, and for the fact that every man you meet in the street is called Rocca, and prides himself on his ancestors having been the ancient rulers of Chili and walked about there barefooted. Now the inhabitants have degenerated into wearing boots and they talk Spanish. Even, however, after centuries of blood-mixture by intermarriage, the men of the nation are still peculiar for a certain kind of beard which grows very thin, whilst the women still possess somewhat bronzed complexions and a love of ornamenting their hair with long feathers and snake-skins. Although the male population retain a traditional fondness for slaughtering an enemy when they get fairly hold of him, they no longer, like their fathers, hunt the wild boar; this unfortunate animal, indeed, having long since been hunted out of existence. The noble Roccas, no longer occupied with the chase or war, have become merchants. One, Bria Rocca, is a great sugar-planter; another, Marco Rocca, owns a huge coal-mine; and a third, Alvarez Rocca, does a nice little business in the slave trade.

[Pg 112]

The Rocca is a fine, powerfully built man, six feet in height, whom one would not care to meet in a lonely road. The native woman is a handsome creature with beautiful eyes, whom one would be charmed to meet in a lonely road were it not that she is a little too quick in slapping one's face.

Descendants of a long kingly lineage, these people to-day go about the streets and along the banks of the river selling Spanish onions and little trinkets.

The town of Valdivia, situated on the river, had a widely different aspect three hundred years ago. At that time stood there the bamboo palace of Bria Rocca, whose façade rested upon two mighty bamboos resembling, in appearance, a couple of polished marble columns. The whole palace was built of this same wood. Its walls were curiously carved, and, but for its majestic dimensions, it might have reminded you of the toy palaces you build in childhood. Its doors and windows were made of interwoven tree branches, whilst its roof was thatched with agave leaves. In front of the palace was a balcony where Bria Rocca was accustomed to hold councils with the sages of his nation, and from this balcony two doors opened into the interior. One of them led into the apartment of Bria Rocca. It was an immense lofty room, and the ceilings were lined with jaguar skins, while the walls were covered with the skins of the black buffalo. Here and there hung axes and hatchets, arrows, specimens of the dreaded tomahawk, sundry warlike weapons of

stone, and the deadly globe which, furnished with sharp teeth and hurled at an enemy, would not leave his body until it had torn out his heart. Finally, in a row, were ranged various trophies of victory, including a blood-stained helmet which the king had worn. [Pg 113]

The other door led into the queen's apartment. It was finely painted with the dye obtained from the native indigo trees, whilst its ceilings were covered with curiously woven mats. There were two magnificent bedsteads in the room, remarkable for the beauty of their coverlets and still more for that of the curtains with which they were hung; for had not Queen Evoeva spun them with her own hand? It was no wonder that Bria Rocca had chosen her to be his wife; for what woman in the land could weave such gorgeous tapestry as she, or prepare such delicious cheese? It was said of her, moreover, that in the whole dominions there was no woman of such entrancing beauty, her eyes being ablaze with all the colours of the finest opal; and if she only threw one momentary glance through her long, dark eyelashes she could tame the fiercest tiger—and even man himself. Her figure was exceedingly beautiful, and when she danced before her husband she would gracefully curve her head backwards and downwards until she could kiss her own heel. Yet she was wonderfully powerful, and if she was suddenly attacked by a jaguar she would press the beast to her bosom until she had crushed it to death. One might, therefore, easily imagine how highly her embraces would be prized by a man whom she was really in love with, and what pleasures would lurk in one kiss from her sweet lips. Once, when the king had been poisoned in the shoulder by an arrow, she herself sucked the poison out. She was, consequently, very ill for a year afterwards, and the king, of course, thenceforward loved her more passionately than ever. [Pg 114]

In the happy land of Chili the trees never cast their beautiful green leaves and the flowers never hide their heads in consequence of the cold. The bears do not betake themselves to slumber during the winter season; and the singing birds do not periodically fly away to a warmer climate. Summer, in this region, is only distinguished from winter by the fresh budding of the flowers, by the falling of cocoa-nuts from the trees; by a glittering appearance assumed by the stem of the *hevea* tree, which then sheds its juice in abundance; by the strewing of the ground with the nuts of the urcur tree, and by the flowers of the *pao* tree casting off their wool. There is no difference between the seasons but these, except that winter means a six weeks' spell of rain.

About that time a great fête is held in honour of the gods of the *hevea*, the *urcur*, and the *pao*, who have provided their chosen people with so many good things. On this occasion the inhabitants would cut open the bark of the hevea tree, from which would flow a white fluid which, when boiled by the fire of the urcur nut, was changed into a leathery solid, from which they manufactured all kinds of fancy articles in order to sell them to the surrounding countries, who, not knowing the secret of manufacture, were ready purchasers. On the day of the festival the male inhabitants would wash their skin with the sticky juice of the hevea, and then cover their bodies with the beautiful white wool which comes from the pao-tree, whereupon they painted themselves with gorgeous colours, and the whole covering looks as if it grew to their flesh. The women were not, however, permitted to practise this custom; they had to content themselves with ornamenting their necks with rows of coral, their ears with snake-pendants, and their waist with a girdle of long feathers. [Pg 115]

When the flowers are beginning to open afresh, and the beautiful roses for which this land has so long been famous commence to re-expand, then the summer is approaching, and a fête is held in honour of the goddess Morinka. The *morinka* is a gigantic flower which, growing from the bottom of the lake, expands the petals of its flower on the surface. So huge is it that one single petal would suffice for the cradle of a child, while a single flower will perfume the entire neighbourhood far and wide.

At the time when the morinka commences to spread forth its beauty the inhabitants bring sacrifices to the goddess, who, if in a good temper and auspicious, causes the flower to expand freely and with great beauty. In this case there will be a splendid harvest; but if the flower is scanty and reluctant to open, then the goddess is angry—there will be dearth, drought, and plague, and a foreign foe will invade the land.

The home of the Aruacans was indeed a happy land. The gigantic walls of the Andes mountains surrounded it like a fortification, and the steep mountain clefts cut it off from its neighbours, whose curiosity, desire of conquest, and thirst for treasures made them long to explore its unknown regions. It would have been useless for them to build bridges across the tremendous waterfalls that tore up the mountain peaks; in vain would they have made tunnels through the massive mountains; in vain would they have constructed winding pathways over the ridges; a December rain would have destroyed all man's labour. If that were not sufficient to protect the country from invasion, the Andes mountains had four mighty forts in addition—whose names were Maypo, Peteroa, Chollan, and Antuco. They were volcanic mountains. If only one of these strongholds would have started the campaign against the conquerors there would have been an end to all toils of theirs; the roads would have been replaced by precipices, while the valleys would be covered with lava and icebergs; the plains would be concealed by avalanches dotted over them like soap-bubbles; the entire district, with its cliffs and waterfalls, would appear in a different light, as though in a huge kaleidoscope: towering hills would have taken the place of running waters in the mountain basin. [Pg 116]

One day two hundred strangers appeared before Bria Rocca's town; peculiar looking people—such indeed as the good inhabitants had never yet beheld in their country. Straight to the Palace of Bria Rocca did the two hundred horsemen ride along, in presence of curious crowds and with [Pg 117]

sound of trumpet. Then the leader placed his soldiers in line, and a respectful message that he should allow them to pay him their respects was sent to the Cazcique. The leader's name was Valdivia, now for the first time pronounced in that territory. Did not the land of Chili tremble when she heard this name for the first time? Did not the river swell? Did not the volcanic mountains which had lain dormant for a long time burst out into violent eruption? No, oh no! They are deceived who imagine that the soil is mother of her people and that she feels and grieves over her sons' dangers. The soil is a coquette who delights in strangers, reveals her bosom to them, and to them as to others gives her bloom; she makes love to a new-comer and protects him from hostile attacks; on the graves of her old admirers does she grow him flowers.

Why should she not in the present instance? Were not the Spaniards stately men, superior to the ancient inhabitants? Their whole apparel was bright, and sparkled; the sun could see himself in their glittering buckles, the breeze found an attraction in their fluttering ribbons. And how much more intellectual were they than the old inhabitants! Why, they could actually hold communication by means of signs, and towards whatever direction they desired could shoot out fire by means of metal tubes; they could travel by ocean, and they knew those who lived beyond it; they could build high-towered palaces from stones, and from small threads they made delightful raiment; from seeds they prepared such savoury dishes! Why should not the land prefer them to her old inhabitants! Bria Rocca has already heard of the fame of those white fairies—rumour travels unaided—for now Pizarro had long conquered Peru, which is divided from Chili only by the snow-peaked Cordillera mountains. He accorded a warm reception to Valdivia; he conducted him to his palace, asked him to be seated on his finest bear-skin, and placed before him the best coca drinks in cocoa-nut shells. And no one could prepare them so well as Evoeva! Then Valdivia could talk the language of the Redskins; he acquired their tongue and primitive phrases and could talk as well as if he had been an Inca.

[Pg 118]

"Gentle Cazcique," he said to Bria Rocca, "brethren never come to visit you with strong and friendly arms. In one hand they hold glittering pearls and jewellery, which would gracefully adorn your women's necks, also fire-concealing liquor which exhilarates the sad ones and strengthens the feeble; it cools in hot weather, warms in cold. The other hand contains sharp iron which would cut your shields, and fire-throwing implements which aim from a distance! You can choose which one you please. We do not ask much of you, only give us that little hill you call Guelen, that we may build ourselves a shelter there, near the Matocko river. Consider your reply to my proposal."

Bria Rocca puffed thrice from his hookah, and while looking through its smoke, pondered what he should say.

"You remarked that you are white brethren and that you come with full arms; in the one hand carry presents, in the other guns. We are accustomed to catch monkeys in a similar manner; in one hand we hold fruit, in the other spears, and when the animal approaches for the fruit we hurl the spear at it. We desire not your presents—neither those from the right hand nor those from the left. Our women are pretty enough without your pearls, we are in good spirits without your liquors, and if you have more effective guns we have stronger arms; and if you present fire, we throw poison, which also brings death. If you wish for the Guelen mountain in exchange for your pearls and liquors you will not get it; if you ask it in return for sharp swords and fiery arrows, once more, you will not get it; but if you ask it nicely, you can have it gratis."

[Pg 119]

"What is the 'nice' phrase, gentle Cazcique?"

"That you will never do us any harm, that you will leave us in peace and not destroy our forests."

Valdivia promised the Cazcique that they would remain faithful brethren, and as a proof of eternal friendship they both drank water from the river Matocko out of a pumpkin-shell. They then broke the shell and divided its pieces as a token of the sealed friendship, the idea being that just as the pumpkin-shell could not be put together without mutual consent, so they themselves could not be happy the one without the other. They finally smoked the pipe of peace and parted company. Valdivia mounted his horse and his followers went away, leaving behind them a cask filled with the "drink of wisdom"—the phrase by which the Spaniards designated brandy when speaking of it to the Indians.

[Pg 120]

The Indian fathers asked Bria Rocca to divide the spirit amongst them, in order that they might all taste it and become as wise as the white people—"And such slaves as the Peruvians," thought Bria Rocca, though he did not say so. The spirit of the great Tao-tum had blessed him with the art of keeping judiciously silent. He poured out the spirit into a large tank and placed all the curious people around it, remarking that when he gave the signal they should bend down and drink to their hearts' contents. Bria Rocca then lit a long camphor laurel switch, which burned with a white flame, and twirled it round his head, thereafter dipping it into the tank. Hardly had the burning shoot touched the tank's contents when, in a moment, they became ignited, and the wonderful white transparent liquid began to burn with a pale blue flame from every part of the vessel's surface. The Indians recoiled in terror from this strange phenomenon, but Bria Rocca thrust his switch into the flaming fluid, and the blazing drops were spurted over their naked bodies like a shower of fire-sparks. He then grasped the edge of the tank and poured out from it the flaming liquid, which followed the Indians as they retreated. Even those of them who managed to escape carried on their heels some flames, and a certain amount they dropped at each step they took. The good people asked no more to taste the wise men's spirit, and the Spanish calabasse did not have the same destroying charm over them as it did over their copper-coloured brethren.

[Pg 121]

In the Tlenoch legendary lore there was a strange and ancient tradition, originated long before the Spaniards set foot on that soil. According to one legend the Quecualcot gnome had appeared hundreds and hundreds of years before in South America; its face was white, with a beard and moustache, and it taught the people what herbs to eat, also chronology, the use of copper, and the building of houses. The gnome remained there for a century, spreading happiness all over the country. Then it disappeared across the sea, towards the east, promising to return hundreds of years thereafter, when it would teach much more. Well! the legend has just been fulfilled. The blessed white-faced, black-bearded descendants of Quecualcot have come, and have brought many nice things. In the rich Aztec province of Tlenoch this teaching was very easy; the Aztec tribe were already an extremely submissive people; they knew already the value of gold and apparel; they had their own fashions and a rich capital, which overlooked on one side a salt-water, and on the other, a fresh-water, lake. Around the earth were built houses, pyramids, and sacrificial *teocallis*, where at holiday time hundreds and hundreds of their chosen men are sacrificed to their bloodthirsty gods. Gold and men's lives were of small value, but pleasures were expensive. No wonder, therefore, that the Spaniards taught them so quickly how to appreciate their imported pleasures. But in Chili the gold was still under the soil; the people were treading upon it, not it upon them. Their hatred of foreigners existed from time immemorial, and also the desire to preserve their ancient customs, which they worshipped. So the Spaniards found them very bad pupils, their alluring words were not appreciated by the old ones; their presents were not esteemed by the young; the women's eyes refused to rest upon them. These people could be subdued by bold and daring means only.

[Pg 122]

Valdivia gave wonderful presents to Bria Rocca for the Guelen mountain—a fully caparisoned horse, a kingly present and one worthy of acceptance being amongst the number. Cazcique could not refuse such a gift, and after having learnt to ride was pleased to know how he looked on horseback. At that time the proper use of the noble horse was unknown to the Indians. Valdivia had calculated well. As soon as Bria Rocca became possessed of his horse he rode about for several weeks upon the Salt Plains, and employed his time in pursuing herds of musk-ox in the high and luxuriant prairie grass, never dreaming that the Spaniards were building a fort on the top of Mount Guelen. When the Morinka fête was about to be held, Bria Rocca, according to established custom, ordered every man to retire from the scene; the Morinka fête was for women only, and no man's eye was allowed to witness it. On such occasions the people would retire to the forests to hunt; in town none were left but children and old women; the young married women and maidens were at the Morinka lake, and nobody was allowed to disturb them. Let that man beware who would dare to set eyes on this fête! He would carry the sentence of death upon his face. Although he should hide in forest after forest yet would he be traced out and killed for presuming to invade the Morinka fête. The heavenly flower *morinka* is herself goddess amongst flowers; a most peculiar plant is she; eleven months of the year she reposes under water, twelve feet beneath the surface. During this time she has no actual existence. When her birthday arrives, which it never fails to do, for it falls at that precise date when the day is longest and the night shortest, all of a sudden the lake gets covered with brown and orange-coloured bubbles a span long, which float on the surface like many small boats. One day later the bubbles will burst open, and the knotted membranes will expand, enormous cup-shaped leaves coming out, whose inside is painted a pale carmine colour, which glitters on the rich and fleshy fibres of the leaves like the inside of an autumn peach. Its light green netted veins turn to a bright gold as they approach the stamens, the leaves begin to develop with astonishing rapidity, and spread on the water's surface like round tables. The pale carmine enamel changes into a mild green colour, and the veins that from yellow and lily colour have become carmine in netted form divide it up into 1000 squares. The tremendous leaves grow and extend with visible rapidity; some of them are a fathom in width. Thus they cover the Morinka lake with a wonderfully rich carpet, over which, indeed, one may walk to and fro. The wide leaf may bend, but it will not become filled with water under the tread. A man's weight is no more to it than is a butterfly's to an ordinary flower. Ten days afterwards the buds—their huge closed cups as large as a child's head—burst from under the leaf, resting sideways owing to its weight. The outer leaves, which are white and netted, are as large as melon slices; two days afterwards they have changed to a pink colour, and on the night of the fourth day they burst. The flower does not bend any more, but stands straight.

[Pg 123]

[Pg 124]

As the cup bursts open many white petals appear from the light pink calyx. An indescribably sweet perfume spreads all over the district; and so intoxicatingly delicious a sensation does it produce upon those who have inhaled its pure and virgin fragrance that a woman forgets she is a woman and imagines herself a fairy. On the fifth and sixth days the flower opens quite, and one petal after another develops; on the seventh day it appears in its fullest glory.

The petals have snow-white branches, coloured deep red; their centre is of a rich gold colour, containing thousands of thready moulds. The length of the calyx is then from three to four spans. The Morinka fête takes place on the night when the flower opens. It is held at new moon, under a dull sky; for so sensitive to light are the petals of our fairy plant that with the moon's light even they open but half-way; when the sun shines they shrink together again; but the stars' cold glitter is very dear to them, as also are those star mimics which are visible from afar, and whose virgin brilliancy does not affect the picturesque senses, I mean the fire-fly.^[4]

[Pg 125]

[4] By the most serious people of serious Europe, this plant has been named "the Queen." *Victoria Regina* is the name by which it is called. It is to be found in royal collections only.

When the flowers begin to burst open millions of fire-flies appear by the lake—attracted perhaps, by the perfume; possibly they are born with the flower, so that each may be fated to take delight in the other. Now the tremendous calyx, with a light green colour like diamond glitter, bends to and fro. Nature's artistic hand has ornamented its crown with precious stones, for thousands of dewdrops, those stars of floral creation, are glittering from the petals, while the fire-flies are continually flitting from one leaf to another, thus forming a fairy-like walk; on the majestic flower glistens the sovereign fire-fly, the magnificent *avra*, the lenten insect, on whose glittering colours the petal shades are thrown. The night is moonless, but rich in stars; the surface of the Morinka lake is covered with a green leaf carpet, on which many little stars are shining as if in heaven above. The dense banana grove that surrounds the enchanting lake gives it the appearance of a temple encircled by thousands of green columns. And the surface of the lake forms a magnificent altar, whence, from the gigantic calyx, the most delicate sacrifice, the most delightful odour, rises to heaven. By the sides of the lake, on a grassy plot, the Indian women solemnise the sacrificial

[Pg 126]

rites. Thousands of the most beautiful virgins and childless women, placed in three circles, dance about and sing praises to the Great Spirit who brought forward the budding season of the water-flowers, and who awakes the feeling of the slumbering heart. Whoever saw them from a distance would imagine them to be fairy circles. Each woman had a chain of glittering gems round her neck. These in fact consisted of many hundred Brazilian insects, which the Indian women strung upon thread and used as neck-ornaments. The colours of the insects were continually changing from green and marigold to a ruby hue, and *vice versâ*, and surpassed in brilliancy the most precious stones.

In the midst of the circle stood Queen Evoeva. She was distinguished by her wearing three insect chains on her neck. Round her waist, too, was arranged a broad girdle, ornamented with many dazzling insects; their light was not, however, sufficiently great to allow one to see the shadow cast by this charming woman. In her dark hair there glittered a splendid "lampyris," whose moon-shaped light was thrown upon the lovely creature's face, to which it imparted a pale serenity.

Could one have seen those women one would have imagined they were fairies. But who would have presumed to approach them? Would not the Great Spirit have been enraged at the breaking of a divine command?

Indeed an Indian would not have dared to do this, even were he an enemy. A Spaniard, however, does it, though a friend.

All of a sudden wild noises of men were heard in the banana groves; the women, frightened, rushed into one group. "Men, it seems," cried they, "have broken into the Holy Grove on the eve of the Morinka fête." It was Valdivia with one hundred and fifty of his comrades. When Queen Evoeva recognised the Spaniards she stepped forward with stately tread, and boldly asked Valdivia how they dared appear on the sacred ground while the Morinka fête was being held, and when every man was required to keep at a respectful distance. Valdivia's reply was to embrace the queen's beautiful form, and to implant a kiss upon her cheek, burning with fury. "Ah!" shouted the Indians, "our queen has been kissed by a strange man—a kiss has reached her lip on the eve of Morinka! The kiss of a *strange man!*" The Indian women madly attacked Valdivia and his comrades and began a severe struggle for her majesty. Here, then, was a conflict between feeble, naked women, unarmed, and strong mailed men. With nails and teeth did the former fight, like wild beasts, considering but little the wounds which they themselves received. The Spaniards were obliged to have recourse to arms against those enraged attacking ones, and before long red streams were flowing towards the Morinka lake—streams of women's blood. But Evoeva was freed from Valdivia's grasp, and one moment gave her time to jump into the lake, whose surface was covered with huge nymphaean leaves. These clod themselves upon her and did not part asunder again. Hundreds upon hundreds of women followed the queen's example, throwing themselves into the lake to escape their pursuers. The Spaniards saw none rise to the surface; the nymphic leaves floated there as before. But the women swam under the smooth leaf-carpet to the river's mouth; the river emptied itself into the lake, and farther up formed a waterfall ten fathoms in height; across this the women proceeded. Those only escaped who were neither dashed by the rocks nor suffocated by the waterfall.

[Pg 127]

[Pg 128]

Bria Rocca was until late evening pursuing a jaguar—which he contrived to reach and kill—on the wild plains. It was nightfall when he returned with his men and reached the banks of the Mapocho river, where they encamped.

Bria Rocca led his horse to the river to drink. The noble animal had been moving about quickly the whole day and was very thirsty; but as soon as it bent its head towards the water it retreated and galloped to its master, shaking all over; then, tossing its mane from side to side, it broke into a violent snorting. The king thought that the horse had smelt an alligator in the stream, and conducted it to another part; but she manifested the old signs of aversion. "There is blood in the water, Bria Rocca, woman's blood; your horse dreads it, and that is why he refuses to drink." It was now midnight, but still a light seemed to shine from the forest. "Look how soon it gets light now!" said the Indians, awaking from their dreams. "It is not daybreak, nor is it the flames of a burning forest." The king's town was in flames, and beneath that spot where the sky seemed brightest blazed the royal palace. The strangers had set it on fire! Towards daybreak there was great commotion in the grove. At first a few crying children rushed thither and awoke the slumbering camp. These informed his majesty that the white strangers had disturbed their dreams and made fire on the roofs of their homes, and that those who could not run away were slain. Then came other messengers to Bria Rocca, and the heads of slaughtered women and

[Pg 129]

children could be seen floating down the river. These could not speak to the king, but sufficient could be gathered from their silent communication.

Bria Rocca stood on the river bank, resting on his axe and looking at the floating human remains. All around the following raving noise was heard, "It is all up with Matocka town; the dreaded of the Guelen mountain have by stealth broken into it and bombarded it with metal dragons; they have killed the children, carried away the women, and burnt down the king's palace."

The King himself replied quickly, "If the Great Spirit desires that Bria Rocca should bathe his feet in blood, and should warm himself at his town's flame, Bria Rocca is silent and refrains from shedding tears."

The old people told his majesty that the white men from the Papua and Omagua tribes had secretly collected in force in the Guelen mountain, and during the Morinka fête, when all had withdrawn to the forest, had attacked every village of Bria Rocca and destroyed them; and that Valdivia was proclaimed master of the country. The King quietly replied, "If the Great Spirit desires that Bria Rocca's people should leave their kingdom, Bria Rocca refrains from shedding tears."

[Pg 130]

Lastly, there became visible on the Mapocko river rush-boats, on which the women who had escaped, with their tiny children—many of whom, that possibly life might again appear, were still pressed to their mother's breasts, dead from the strokes of the enemy—lay terror-stricken and furious.

Now approached the king's wife, the beautiful Evoeva. Her black hair hung loosely over her face in order that her shame might be covered. The women grasped Bria Rocca's hand with great fury, pointing to Evoeva.

"Look," said they, "here is your wife; her cheeks were kissed by a strange man."

Bria Rocca's lips paled, and every vein on his temples became swollen; yet the war-lance did not move in his hand. He resignedly answered the women, "If the Great Spirit desires that I shall not behold Evoeva any more Bria Rocca is content and never will look at her again."

Whilst saying these words he covered with a skin the wife who knelt at his feet, and turned away from her. The Indians seized their arms and, beating upon their shields, vowed vengeance upon the strangers. Bria Rocca approached them softly, and said:

"Let your arms rest; this day we have lost, let our enemies gain it; it is to-day the fight of kings against beggars whose lances are weak as straw. Let them have happiness, splendid towns, fine women and children, and abundance of earthly treasure. At present they have nothing to give us in return for this evening's gift. Let us wait until they have."

[Pg 131]

Ten years have elapsed since Bria Rocca's palace was burnt, and since then many changes have taken place in Chili. Valdivia has occupied Chili in the name of Pizarro; then he goes over to the king's side and helps to overthrow Pizarro, and as a reward receives the Viceroyalty of Chili. A portion of the province which he had first conquered was named Valdivia, and also that river from which Bria Rocca's horse refused to drink. The splendid city too, which was built on the site of the ancient bamboo town of Bria Rocca, was named Valdivia. This Valdivia gave quite a different appearance to the whole district. Stone-made roads, constructed by European adventurers, were laid, and from town to town people have ploughed and gathered in the earth's produce, and have exposed the precious metal of the mountains, just as if they were really quite at home. Nobody has disturbed them in their work; the copper-coloured persons have disappeared, not a sound of them can be heard in the forest, nor a trace of their footsteps observed on the ground—like a crowd of grasshoppers before a seven-days' rain have they become entirely destroyed.

Perhaps they have gone up to the mountains or into the wastes of the interior, where the Golden Land has already sprung into existence, and concerning which so many wonderful stories have been related to adventurous Spaniards about the monks Cabeça de Vaca and Niça: where wild people were walking about in civilised clothing, where the towns were laid out with emerald and turquoise, and whose fort Cibolla was ten miles long.

[Pg 132]

Some people who tried to find out this remarkable land, never returned from it. In the time of Valdivia the Spanish imagination became excited about this El Dorado. If any wondered how Bria Rocca's people disappeared, without leaving a trace behind them, they could console themselves with the fact that they were now very happy, and that they had gone in search of brethren to Cibolla town, where they were now wallowing in milk and honey. Although they wondered why they could not follow the Indians, the Spaniards now quietly settled in Chili; they have ceased to dig trenches round the town, and to post guards along the roads; they no longer teach their bloodhounds to scent out the two-footed wild animal; there is peace and tranquillity in the whole country. The merchants count out their money and the great lords lavishly spend it; pretty women walk about in silks, and little children ride on their fathers' knees. Yes, yes! the Spaniards have everything—riches, happiness, and splendid towns, also beautiful women and tiny, chattering offspring. . . .

"Let us wait until they can repay us," said Bria Rocca.

A new lake would be found, and the waterfalls would have cut for themselves new passages. Still, Bria Rocca's people have taken refuge there with their herds and flocks, whilst the eager searchers for El Dorado have failed to discover the way to fairyland. The Chilian volcano has rested for a hundred years, and only a few craters have shown from a distance that he too was one of those gigantic bombardiers of the heavens who now rests conquered. But perhaps he sleeps merely—such great beings dream long. Whilst, then, he is thus dreaming, the Southern voluptuous plants have entwined themselves round about him, and every kind of grass and tree derives nourishment from his presence; at his foot a forest of red cedar has formed, and on his head tamarisk bushes live and flourish. From the autumn greenery which covers the mountain, dark caverns peep out. These are the mouths of ancient lava-streams by which one might get at the mountain's heart. According to the stories of the Omagua tribes, it was through such that the Aruacans made their way to the Cordillera interior. There were always a few adventurers who attempted to penetrate these caverns in search of the Golden Land, but they, as a rule, never returned, and nobody troubled about them. Once, however, two monks, accompanied by an Indian who understood the language, left Sant-Jago in search of this mysterious country. Had all three disappeared, no one would have made much ado; but it so happened that the Indian returned soon afterwards without the monks. He was interrogated on the subject, but he merely said that his comrades had perished—in what way he declined to tell. He had sworn by the great teeth of Mahu-Mahu that he never should divulge the secret. Valdivia had him placed on the bench of torture, and it appears that he felt the thumb-screwing instruments, and boiling oil had greater effect upon him than the big teeth of Mahu-Mahu, and so he promised to disclose everything. According to his story he and his comrades, after they had provided themselves with torchlights, entered the Chillon cavern, where, after proceeding a few hundred yards, they discovered on the moist soil the footprints of Aruacans. They knew them to be theirs, for they were marked by india-rubber heels, worn as a rule by the Aruacans to protect them from serpents. As they advanced further the cavern got wider in extent, and from its steep sides great rocks stood out. The descent, which became steeper and steeper as they advanced, was crossed by a stream that one could hear but not see from the cavern's mouth. Over this stream a bamboo suspension bridge became visible later on, similar to that which the Aruacans had erected over the Matocka river.

[Pg 133]

[Pg 134]

The volcanic footpaths got more and more difficult to tread upon, and at times he and his companions were obliged to climb upon the rocks, as if they were trying to ascend a mountain.

Finally the opening became so narrow that two men could hardly walk through it, and there they reached a spot that seemed hollowed out beneath. They advanced further when the earth gave way, and they all fell down to the cavern depths. It was a trap from which there was no escape. After they had for a few hours vainly endeavoured to rise from this pitfall, they suddenly heard sounds of voices, and—recognised the Aruacans. They recognised them from the wool which covered their bodies. The Indians pulled them up with long ropes, blindfolded them, and bound their hands behind their backs, driving them on between two tough trees. Ere long the echo from the narrow passage ceased, and the atmosphere revealed to them that they were in the open air. When their eyes were unfolded they saw they were in the Chillon crater. It was a dreadful smoking valley, with a funnel-like descent, whose sides were then just as bare as when the last eruption had taken place.

[Pg 135]

All around there were red-brown stone piles, quite burnt out—dead for ever—on which no plant could live. Not even a piece of moss or of lichen was to be seen upon them.

Lower down the valley got compressed, and on its sides numberless small holes, like wasps' nests, were visible. Neither grass nor flower could be observed anywhere—nothing of that kind, indeed, but a few pale green trees scattered about at intervals. These were upas-trees, in the poison of whose sap the Indians dip their spears. Every surrounding plant had been killed by their exhalations, so that they alone grew in the valley.

On the sides of this dreadful valley a wide, hollow border was to be seen; it represented the last active volcano; in appearance it resembled the gallery of a great amphitheatre. On this gallery stood the Aruacan fathers with Bria Rocca. Under it was formed a sort of semicircle, where many large china jugs might be seen placed near one another, whose mouths were for the most part covered with india-rubber; some were open. As the captives were brought before Bria Rocca two such jugs were procured, and the two monks, tied to a couple of columns, were then killed with two long axes, similar to those with which the Aruacans cut the hevea-trees. Their blood poured out into the jugs; their bodies were thrown down the precipice. After this the Indians carried away the jugs with the blood and placed them near the others. Soon thereafter numerous serpents peeped out of holes in the walls: in appearance they were like cigars. A traveller who does not know this serpent might be deceived, and, imagining it a cigar, pick it up—which would mean death. One bite from this serpent is fatal. These dreaded reptiles crept in thousands into the jugs in which the murdered Spaniards' blood had been placed, and when they filled them two Indians approached and carefully put two india-rubber covers over them, so as to prevent their exit.

[Pg 136]

They meant at first to kill the priest's dusky guide, but Bria Rocca said that black blood was useless, and they let him go. But he had to swear by the great Mahu Mahu that he should not tell a soul what he had seen; if he did tell, the Aruacans would come for him in tens of thousands, and they would not be particular as to who was white and who black. So they let him go through the same way as he and the monks came in, and he could not say how he got out of the crater.

Of course, nobody believed a word of the Indian's story, and they believed that he himself killed the monks and invented a fable. It was all a tissue of lies, they thought, and the unfortunate man was pinned to a stake outside Sant-Jago.

[Pg 137]

The Indian's story had long been forgotten in Chili. Valdivia returned with glory and overwhelmed with distinction from Peru, and settled down to live peacefully in the town which bore his name. He dispersed his troops amongst the various towns and settlements, and he had hardly more than three hundred soldiers left with him. These, moreover, got out of practice, as they seldom had occasion to handle the gun.

All of a sudden, on a still and quiet night, a wild noise awoke the peaceful inhabitants of Valdivia. Frantic shouting came from the surrounding hills, and all around the farm-buildings were set on fire; the faces of hundreds of people were distinguished by the flames. "The Aruacans have returned!" were the words, distractedly uttered, that sounded through the town, and that also reached Valdivia's palace. Yes, the Aruacans *have* returned—to ask for an explanation regarding the presumption of building a town over the graves of their ancestors; and Bria Rocca was there to inquire who it was that killed thousands of his subjects, and also who it was that kissed the cheek of Evoeva. The attack was so sudden and unexpected that there was no time to report the great danger to the adjoining town; and before Valdivia had time to draw his sword all the hills surrounding the town were occupied by thousands of the Red Indians. There was only one outlet from the town through which the Spaniards might have escaped, and it seemed as if the Indians had purposely left that unguarded. The Spaniards were not, however, to be led into a trap, rightly thinking that it would have been folly to throw themselves upon thousands of wild and enraged Indians, who would have despatched them with their poisonous spears; they, therefore, drew up their guns on the fortification walls. How, possibly, can the simple arrows of the Indians compete with such weapons?

[Pg 138]

The Indians occupied all the adjoining hills, and had they had guns in their possession they could very easily have fired into the town.

Valdivia's men looked quietly down from the rampart walls, for they observed that the Indians had no storming engines with which they might attack the stronghold.

Bria Rocca's tent was erected on a hill concealed from view by huge cocoa-palms, from which Valdivia's palace could be seen. At the Indian chief's command the brown leaves of eight trees were pulled down, and the trunks of the trees were cut open to the extent of several feet in width; then were tied to their tops long ropes of sap-wood, the other end of the ropes being twisted round a potter's wheel which was made to turn by means of long rods. Under the influence of these ropes the trees got quite bent and their tops touched the ground. Then the Indians placed some strange-looking vessels into the hollows of the trunks; the mouths of these vessels were covered over with india-rubber. Bria Rocca next pulled his axe from his belt and cut the ropes in twain. The palm trunks flew up with great force, and with a tremendous noise the jugs that had been placed in the tree-hollows shot into the market-place of Valdivia. Each tree discharged its dangerous bombs as did the others. Oh, what a curse those bombs proved! Thousands upon thousands of poisonous serpents escaped from the broken jugs and, maddened by white man's blood, rushed at the people in every direction. Guns were of no avail when dealing with these cursed little monsters. The bloodthirsty, devil-moved insects crept up the legs of the horses, and getting beneath the armour killed their riders. They swarmed all over the streets and streamed into the houses, killing the women and children and those who could not fly from them. In one hour's time Valdivia had more dead than fighting men. Valdivia himself became desperate and mounted his horse, and, accompanied by a hundred horsemen, proceeded towards the gate leading to Sant-Jago, that gate which the Indians had left unguarded. He heard the triumphant shouts of the Indians and saw before him the ancient forest shooting out flames in hundreds of directions. He was surrounded! The enraged Indians followed him up behind, and in front the burning forest cut off the means of escape. His companions rode away in alarm; they preferred to die fighting, not in this manner. Valdivia thought it best to boldly cut his way through the burning forest, and so effect his escape—or perish in the attempt. The Indians pursued him to the edge of the forest, but seeing how boldly he galloped through the flames they nearly all held back there. One man only attempted to pursue him further—namely, Bria Rocca. The Spanish horses on which both were mounted did not fear the fire. Burning foliage fell over them and little embers glowed under their feet; still the two horses wildly plunged forward, step for step. Valdivia did not even look back, and he did not, therefore, observe the Indian chief when he threw a long harpoon spear at him. This spear entered his body, and when it was pulled out the heart came away along with it.

[Pg 139]

[Pg 140]

The spot on which Valdivia stood was strewn with the charred ruins of the burned town, and there—on that gloomy space—Bria Rocca, after ten years' mourning, held a feast in honour of the injured Goddess Morinka. He sent for his wife Evoeva, whom he had thrust away from him, and upon whose countenance he had not gazed for ten years; and when he had embraced her he presented her with a tambourine and a flute of bone, as well as a cup filled with native wine. Then he said: "This is a day of great rejoicing, Evoeva. To-day you must sing, drink and dance. Strike upon this tambourine, blow the flute, empty the cup—the tambourine is made from Valdivia's skin, the flute is his bone, the cup his head."

Up to the present day the Aruacan's country has remained unconquered.

Such is the name of the deaf and dumb boy who waits upon the Sultan.

The art of manufacturing these *bizebans* is very simple, and at Gozond there are several hundred professors of it who find it lucrative enough. From poor people, who possess families, they buy children, at ten or twenty rupees apiece—mere infants a twelvemonth old. As yet, of course, they cannot talk. These men begin by pouring into the ears of the little creatures a fluid prepared from herbs, which renders them absolutely deaf. Two-thirds of the children die under the process.

Those which survive are valuable articles of commerce. Having lost their hearing they can, of course, no longer learn to talk, and they remain dumb, as well as deaf, for life. These children, as they grow up, see the world around them but cannot comprehend what they see. Their native intelligence cannot become developed: they are like human beings from whom the soul has been snatched. These soulless boys are very valuable articles in the seraglio. They are always hovering around the Sultan. In the most secret chambers they are in attendance; the most valuable documents are entrusted to their care; and beneath their eyes passes all the private correspondence between the Sultan and his confidential advisers. They do not hear a syllable of any conversation—of such a thing as speech they have no conception. How can they imagine what those peculiarly shaped letters mean which their eyes behold? There is no corresponding knowledge or intelligence within them which would render this possible; and the few things which they both see and understood, they could not communicate to other people.

[Pg 142]

Such were the unfortunate *bizebans*. Nevertheless they were dressed in purple and silk robes. Long chains of pearls hung from their neck, and they were fed upon what overflowed from the Sultan's own table. In all respects they were treated with especial consideration—like monkeys or parrots which are kept as playthings.

These creatures, deprived of soul, know how to do one or two things, but no more. They understand that they must remain on guard at a certain post and not move thence; they can carry a certain article to a certain place; they can cut the Sultan's nails to beautiful fine points and adjust his turban—such is the utmost limit of their accomplishments. They are indeed like dogs, taught to fetch and carry things for their masters in their mouth.

Before Sultan Mustapha II. ascended the throne he already possessed a number of *bizebans*. One of these was his especial favourite—a boy who was quite superior to the rest and who excited more sympathy; for in his big, dreamy eyes so much sentiment and intelligence was visible that it seemed sad that he could not be taught to feel and think like a human being. Like other *bizebans* he had no name. Why should a *bizeban* have a name? He won't hear it even if it is addressed to him.

[Pg 143]

As a rule the *bizeban* also fulfilled the office of eunuch, and walked freely into the seraglio. Prince Mustapha used often, by the hand of his pet *bizeban*, to send to his sister, the beautiful Saliha, presents of a certain kind of very choice melon which only grew in the Sultan's garden and concerning which fruit a very sad story was told.

One day, noticing that one melon was missing from the beds, the Sultan had all his gardeners tortured that the culprit might confess his theft. Then, when this experiment failed, he had seven of them cut open. To no purpose; but when the eighth was ripped up fragments of the melon were revealed, which was very fortunate, as a few hundred other servants would, but for this, have been treated likewise.

The lovely Saliha was a very kind-hearted creature. She thought her brother's *bizeban* was a very sweet and gentle little thing, and she did not hesitate to pet him. She tried to make him understand this and that, and he seemed to have a very quick intelligence. Why should he not one day possess a soul? This idea occurred to her as she was walking, on one occasion, in the shrubbery. Could she not give back to him the soul of which he had been deprived, could she not teach him the alphabet? If she showed him a certain letter and then pointed to some object with which he was familiar could he not by degrees be made acquainted with the world?

[Pg 144]

Saliha made the experiment. She found it a very pleasant recreation, for life in the seraglio is extremely monotonous.

We have heard that prisoners in their dungeons have even taught spiders to dance at the sound of music (and the seraglio as a place of detention is scarcely more exhilarating than a dungeon). Why should not the deaf and dumb boy prove as apt as a spider? At her first essay, Saliha was amazed to see how the soul of the *bizeban* began to expand. He grasped anything in a moment. Once shown the alphabet he could afterwards trace out each letter on the ground. Once shown the name of a certain article he never forgot it. This success encouraged Saliha to further attempts. Would it not be possible to speak to the *bizeban*? But how could the speaking be done so that no beholder comprehended it? Ah! with the hands! The human hand has five fingers, and their variety of motion, as they open and shut, is such that the entire alphabet might thereby be distinctly expressed. Saliha determined to teach the boy to converse with her by means of his fingers; and the success of her experiments exceeded her expectations. He quickly learned the secret signs. It was delightful to Saliha; and she determined to get amusement out of it too. She would extract from the *bizeban* secrets concerning her brother which he thought no one living

knew, and then she would tease this relative by pretending that she had discovered them through the mystic words of the Cabala. Who could ever dream of suspecting a *bizeban* who was deaf and dumb?

[Pg 145]

After the death of Osman, Prince Mustapha ascended the throne. His youthful gaiety now quickly fled—his shoulders began to bend beneath the weight of the Turkish Empire, which was then already in a tottering condition, with enemies on every side.

At that time the country possessed a great statesman in the person of Raghîb Pasha, whose potent hand had preserved the empire from destruction. It was he who crushed the forces of the rebellious Egyptian princes and laid the province at the feet of the Padishah. Raghîb was not only a hero in war, he was also a famous poet and the greatest scholar in the land. Historians describe him, in his character of statesman, as a "leader of leaders," *szad rul vezir*, and in that of writer as the "Prince of Roumelian poets". (*Sultani suari Rum*). In his gigantic work entitled *Zezinet Olulum* ("Ship of Knowledge") all the legends are collected which had lain scattered about the Arab plains. It was he who founded the splendid library which bears his name.

At the time of which we now write, Saliha was in the very springtide of her beauty—like the lotus-flower which opens its petals before the dew of dawn. Sultan Mustapha could not have given Raghîb Pasha a greater reward than by bestowing upon him the hand of his lovely sister; and as to whether he inspired her with real affection I need only say that he was fifty-nine when he married her and that she loved him so much that when he died her mind became deranged.

[Pg 146]

Raghîb Pasha ruled not only over the Mussulmans but also over the ruler of the Mussulmans, for he had divined the Sultan's thoughts—yes, his innermost thoughts.

It was the Sultan's habit not to retire at night to his bedchamber until he had recorded, in a voluminous diary, all the events of the day and his impressions concerning them. This book he habitually kept in the secrecy of his own room, and the *bizeban* watched over it until the morning. To whom would it ever have occurred that the deaf and dumb from birth could read, or that he could communicate the written lines to some one else? In the room where this diary was kept there was a little window which opened into the *khazoda*, the Sultan's place of worship. But it was so shut off from view by various corridors as to be only visible from the seraglio. Every evening, just as the Sultan was leaving his apartments in order to go and say his final prayers in this sanctuary, the murzims were accustomed to strike seven times with a hammer a bell without a tongue. Then the Imam who stood before the altar would say: "Ahamdu lillahi Rabbil alemum" ("Grace descends from Heaven, which rules over all"). Thereupon the congregation would fall on their faces. They remained prostrate until the Sultan reached the door; when the Imam would exclaim: Allehú ekber! ("The Lord is powerful"), and all present rose to their feet. During the period of prostration a secret hand would be stretched out from the little window we have mentioned, and would make all kinds of signs. No one noticed this hand, except Saliha, who carefully watched its mysterious movements whilst she was upon her knees. From these signs she knew everything that the Sultan had that day recorded in his diary; and the very same night she would whisper the information to her husband.

[Pg 147]

Raghîb Pasha was a wise man, who knew how to keep such information secret. He thereby learned who his enemies were and managed to clear them out of his way. He got to know the wishes of the Sultan and could long before anticipate them. Everything he did was done in the name of the Sultan: the pomp and glory which he himself achieved he allowed people to ascribe to his Sovereign, and he even made Mustapha imagine that he ruled; whereas the feeble-hearted monarch was a mere puppet in the hands of his skilful Grand Vizier.

In his poems Raghîb extolled the Sultan for his mighty and politic deeds—eulogised him for inspecting the navy and the military magazines, for increasing the nation's revenue by 6,000,000 piastres, and doing other things which Raghîb himself had in fact done on his own account.

Throughout Turkey, throughout Europe, it was known well enough that, not the Sultan, but his Minister, ruled at Stamboul; it was only Mustapha who did not know it.

One day Raghîb's enemies, Hamil Pasha, Bahir Mustapha, and Mohamed Emin, who were jealous of the Minister's great power, said to the Sultan:

"This man only calls you Sultan in mockery. He does everything without you, just as if the State were his. He has just concluded, without your knowledge, an alliance with the ruler of one of the infidel empires—an alliance which, although it may prove the destruction of other unfaithful nations, he should never have dared to make before obtaining the consent of his monarch, in whose presence he is nothing but dust." It was Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, who, believing in the wisdom of the distinguished Minister, had invited his alliance, and the documents ratifying it had already been signed. Had that alliance been allowed to continue, perhaps the crescent of Turkey would have risen again. But the heart of Mustapha had been perturbed by these malicious whisperings. When the traitors had left him he said nothing, but simply ordered his *bizeban* to bring him his diary, wherein he proceeded to record his impressions of the day. Then, shutting the book and giving it to the *bizeban*, he went to evening prayers. On this occasion the hand appeared at the little window and made certain signs which Saliha watched intently. They said: "Escape, Raghîb. The Sultan knows of your letter to the Prussian king. To-morrow your head will be cut off and your documents confiscated."

[Pg 148]

The Sultan returned from his profound devotions with a lightened heart. No one, he said to himself, knew his secret, and to-morrow morning he would send his executioner to fetch him

Raghib's head. Yes, he longed to possess that head ignominiously severed from its trunk.

But when the executioner reached the Grand Vizier's residence, he found there his dead body, which could no longer be killed. On his table lay a letter addressed to the Sultan and enclosed in a velvet envelope. It was taken to the Sovereign with the news that the Minister had been found dead. The letter ran thus:

[Pg 149]

"Mustapha, the Omniscient has vouchsafed, in His mysterious providence, to let me know that you wished to kill me because, without your knowledge, I concluded, for the benefit of your dominion, an alliance with the King of Prussia. I did not run away from death; I simply anticipated it. I consider I have lived long enough in order to die fitly now, and long enough not to be forgotten. All the documents at my palace I have burned. You will see what I have done for your country; the rest will be said when we meet in presence of the great Prophet."

The Sultan was paralysed with wonder and fear. How could that secret, which had been locked up only in his own heart, have been divined by Raghib? First he accused the *dsins* (Christian prophets), then the Hindoo soothsayers, then the interpreters of dreams—then the very pen with which he had written. How could he dream that the deaf and dumb could speak?

When Mustapha endeavoured to further the alliance with the King of Prussia, this great ruler of the infidels replied that there had until recently been one wise man in Turkey, but that he did not now propose to do business with fools. This was a bitter humiliation to the Sultan—to think that his late slave could have procured an alliance which was contemptuously refused to the King of Kings!

[Pg 150]

Mustapha frequently lamented the loss of Raghib, and was constantly tortured by the mystery whereby the secret of his heart had been penetrated. After the Grand Vizier's death the *bizeban* ceased to communicate to Saliha the secrets of the Sultan. He had no longer any motive to do so.

First came Hamil, who only, however, remained Grand Vizier for six months, when he was executed for his negligence; and chroniclers relate of him that he let the empire go as it pleased, doing it neither good nor harm. Then followed the head of Bahir Mustapha. It was cut off for his barbarity. The third was Mohamed Emin, whom the Sultan beheaded for cowardice on the battlefield. Mustapha shed tears over the loss of his three Grand Viziers—but not on their personal account, for he had never forgotten Raghib, who was so wise, brave, and noble; and whenever he beheaded one of his Grand Viziers he would always think of the unfortunate Raghib.

The *bizeban* laughed within himself; for the deaf and dumb can laugh when they are alone. His secret no one ever knew.

THE MOONLIGHT SOMNAMBULIST

[Pg 151]

Pozdordy was one of the best known and respected farmers in the province of B—, and the surrounding gentry were accustomed to visit him at his picturesque homestead. The frequency of their visits was, however, due chiefly to the circumstance that he was possessed of a lovely daughter. This maiden, besides being enchantingly beautiful, was as proud as a queen.

It was quite natural that the young men from round and about should be helplessly in love with her and willing to hazard life itself in the hope of winning such a prize. But many as were the rival suitors, they all at last had to give way to one upon whom Etelka bestowed her preference, and that preference could not be divided either in two or more parts. As a matter of fact no objection could have been made against her choice, for it fell upon such a man as is generally regarded as the ideal of a woman's dreams. He was of fine stature, tall, well-proportioned, no longer young, it is true, but far from his decline. He was a retired major, and bore himself with a faultless military carriage. His manners were polished, his education extensive, and his wit by no means inferior. He was good-hearted, patriotic, and keen in business matters; he did not gamble, neither did he run into debt—in fact, from top to toe, you could not find a fault in him.

[Pg 152]

Of course the various competitors for the hand of Etelka had to bow before her decision, they could not help themselves; but one of them, in his fierce dissatisfaction, vowed inwardly that he would not yield the prize so easily. This rival was a young man who fancied that Etelka had regarded him with a degree of favour which was only second to that which she had bestowed on the victorious Major.

But Mogyorôdy, the malcontent in question, knew that Major Duránczy was very handy with rapier and pistol and did not care to be trifled with. He therefore determined to use diplomacy. He paid a friendly sort of visit to the father of Etelka, and spent the evening with him. Pozdordy had a pretty good suspicion as to why the visitor had come.

In due course the conversation turned upon Duránczy.

"A very nice fellow indeed, isn't he?" said the farmer.

"Oh, yes," replied Mogyorôdy, who at the same time made a grimace which betrayed his real

opinion.

The farmer, who was evidently uneasy at the young man's obvious jealousy, exclaimed:

"But you have nothing to say against him?"

"Oh, no, nothing in the world!"

"But you have something on your mind. It is true he's not so youthful as you, but he is not yet old."

[Pg 153]

"Oh, no, he's in the prime of life."

"Do you wish to imply that there is anything against his past?"

"No; for who amongst us has not got a past?"

"Perhaps you wish to make out that he is only marrying Etelka for her money?"

"By no means."

"Do you accuse him of being a gambler?"

"He never touches cards."

"A spendthrift?"

"He is the very reverse—stares on both sides of every halfpenny before he parts with it."

"Do you think him lazy?"

"No, a model of plodding industry."

"Then what is amiss with his character?"

"It is perfect—almost monotonously so; but he has one peculiarity with which you ought to be made acquainted if you are going to marry your daughter to him."

"What is that?"

"Well, if you want to know, he's a lunar somnambulist—when the moon is at the full he rises at night from his bed, and, with open eyes, walks about the house in a dream, muttering all kinds of extraordinary things. If swords or pistols were then within his reach he would probably wound or kill any one, and I shouldn't like to see your daughter murdered in one of these moonlight perambulations."

"Oh, that is nonsense. I will believe no tale of that kind."

[Pg 154]

"Do as you please. I have discharged my duty, and told you. Now, good-night."

But after Mogyorôdy had departed, the farmer, although he had pretended to be unconcerned, said to himself:

"This might possibly be true; I must investigate the matter further before the marriage takes place."

His mind being very uneasy, he determined to invite Duránczy to his house on the next occasion, when the moon would be at its full; and when the night in question arrived he entertained the Major at his farm with all the outward demonstration of confidence and friendship.

It so happened that during the evening Mogyorôdy looked in, for although a rejected lover, he was still a recognised visitor, owing to business and family connections with the farmer.

Pozdorady, albeit that he was somewhat alarmed at the appearance of his rival, politely welcomed him, and was relieved to notice, as his two guests conversed together, that the old jealousy seemed to have quite disappeared, and that Mogyorôdy evinced towards the Major every symptom of good fellowship.

The wine circulated freely, and the night wore pleasantly away, until the clock reminded Pozdorady that there was a limit to every festivity. He had already intended to press Duránczy to sleep with him; but, as it was already late, he felt he could not do less than extend the invitation to Mogyorôdy. Wishing, however, to have the alleged somnambulist under his inspection, he assigned to the Major a spare bed in his own dormitory, and gave Mogyorôdy a separate room.

[Pg 155]

In due course, both host and guests retired. The farmer, as soon as he was between the sheets, lit a massive long-stemmed pipe, and began to smoke, keeping his eye upon Duránczy.

The moonlight was streaming in upon the Major's pillow. It looked weird. The farmer watched Duránczy as he lay prostrate—watched and watched until he himself dozed off into an involuntary slumber.

Presently he was awake by a noise. In the moonlight he perceived a figure, robed in a night-shirt. Ah! the Major, who seemed to be gazing around him with an air of mysterious inquiry. Then, step by step, with great circumspection, he advanced towards the farmer's bedside. Pozdorady held his breath. "Yes," he said to himself, "this man is a lunar somnambulist!"

Upon tiptoe the figure now went nearer and nearer to the farmer's couch. Pozdordy, in breathless expectation, grasped his heavy long-stemmed pipe—the only weapon of self-defence within arm's length—and just as the somnambulist was reaching towards an antique and richly inlaid sword, suspended high up against the wall, he dealt him a blow, so terrific as to produce a howl from the apparition. The farmer leaped out of bed, and, to protect his own life, was proceeding to half-strangle the sleepwalker, when, to his astonishment, he saw that it was not the Major. [Pg 156]

"Who are you?" he exclaimed.

There was no answer. The farmer looked towards the Major's bed—there, in the moonlight, lay the warrior, who was just beginning to be roused from sleep by the noise of the scuffle, and who dreamily exclaimed, "What the devil?"

Pozdordy released his hold of the neck of this unknown man, who hastily escaped from the room; and the report goes that Mogyoródy travelled home at 2 A.M. in his night-shirt. Anyhow, after hiding under the Major's bed in order to make him out to be a somnambulist, he never again dared to put his nose into Pozdordy's household; and the gallant soldier is to-day in peaceful possession of the beautiful Etelka.

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Transcriber's Note: Many of the Hungarian titles listed in the Introduction were misspelled. "Estilapok" was changed to "Esti Lapok", "A Magyar Nábob" was changed to "Egy Magyar Nábob", "A Kőszivű Ember Fiaa" was changed to "A Kőszivű Ember Fiai", "A Szerelem Bolondja" was changed to "Szerelem Bolondjai", "A Névtelen Vár" was changed to "Névtelen Vár", "Bálványvárak" was changed to "Bálványosvár", "A Fekete Gyémántok" was changed to "Fekete Gyémántok", "A Jóvé Század Regéje" was changed to "A Jövő Század Regénye", and "Az Új Földes Ur" was changed to "Az Új Földesúr".

In addition, the following typographical errors in the text have been corrected.

In "In Love With the Czarina", "she nodded to Genera Karr" was changed to "she nodded to General Karr".

In "Tamerlan the Tartar", Chapter I, "the immovable cloud towards the east" was changed to "the immovable cloud towards the west", and "the victorious couqueror" was changed to "the victorious conqueror". In Chapter III, a period was changed to a comma after "the Thief of the Desert". In Chapter VIII, "two real hereoes" was changed to "two real heroes", and "Mirza Abubker's chosen horsemen" was changed to "Mirza Abubekr's chosen horsemen".

In "Valdivia", "If you wish for the Guelin mountain" was changed to "If you wish for the Guelen mountain".

In "Bizeban", a quotation mark was added before "This man only calls you Sultan".

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN LOVE WITH THE CZARINA, AND OTHER STORIES ***

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