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by Sir Charles Augustus Murray

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AN EGYPTIAN TALE ***

HASSAN

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OR

THE CHILD OF THE PYRAMID

AN EGYPTIAN TALE

*WRITTEN AT BAGHDAD, WHEN H.B.M. MINISTER
TO THE COURT OF PERSIA*

BY THE

HON. CHARLES A. MURRAY, C.B.

AUTHOR OF

'THE PRAIRIE BIRD,' 'TRAVELS IN NORTH AMERICA,'
ETC.

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HASSAN;

OR,

THE CHILD OF THE PYRAMID.

More than thirty years have elapsed since, on a summer evening, the tents of an Arab encampment might have been seen dotting the plain which forms the western boundary of the Egyptian province of Bahyrah, a district bordering on the great Libyan desert, and extending northward as far as the shore of the Mediterranean.

The western portion of this province has been for many years, and probably still is, the camping-ground of the powerful and warlike tribe of the "Sons of Ali"; a branch of which tribe, acknowledging as its chief Sheik Sâleh el-Ghazy, occupied the encampment above referred to.^[1]

The evening was calm and still, and lovely as childhood's sleep: no sound of rolling wheel, or distant anvil, or busy mill, or of the thousand other accessories of human labour, intruded harshly on the ear. Within the encampment there was indeed the "watch-dog's honest bark," the voices of women and children, mingled with the deeper tones of the evening prayer uttered by many a robed figure worshipping towards the east, but beyond it nought was to be heard save the tinkling of the bells of the home-coming flocks, and the soft western breeze whispering among the branches of the graceful palms its joy at having passed the regions of dreary sand. It seemed as if Nature herself were about to slumber, and were inviting man to share her rest.

In front of his tent sat Sheik Sâleh, on a Turkish carpet, smoking his pipe in apparent forgetfulness that his left arm was bandaged and supported by a sling.

At a little distance from him were his two favourite mares, each with a foal at her side, and farther off two or three score of goats, tethered in line to a *kels*,^[2] surrendering their milky stock to the expert fingers of two of the inmates of the Sheik's harem; beyond these, several hundred sheep were taking their last nibble at the short herbs freshened by the evening dew; while in the distance might be seen a string of camels wending their slow and ungainly way homeward from the edge of the desert: the foremost ridden by an urchin not twelve years old, carolling at the utmost stretch of his lungs an ancient Arab ditty addressed by some despairing lover to the gazelle-eyes of his mistress.

The Sheik sat listlessly, allowing his eyes to wander over these familiar objects, and to rest on the golden clouds beyond, which crowned the distant sandhills of the Libyan desert. The neglected pipe was thrown across his knee, and he was insensibly yielding to the slumberous influence of the hour, when his repose was suddenly disturbed by the sound of voices in high altercation, and a few minutes afterwards his son Hassan, a lad nearly sixteen years of age, stood before him, his countenance bearing the traces of recent and still unsubdued passion, while the blood trickled down his cheek.

Although scarcely emerged from boyhood, his height, the breadth of his chest, and the muscular development of his limbs gave the impression of his being two or three years older than he really was; in dress he differed in no wise from the other Arab lads in the encampment, nor did his complexion vary much from theirs—bronzed by constant exposure to weather and sun; his eyes were not like those of the Arab race in general—rather small, piercing, and deep-set—but remarkably large, dark, and expressive, shaded by lashes of unusual length; a high forehead, a nose rather Greek than Roman in its outline, and a mouth expressive of frank mirth or settled determination, according to the mood of the hour, completed the features of a countenance which, though eminently handsome, it was difficult to assign to any particular country or race. Such was the youth who now stood before his father, his breast still heaving with indignation.

"What has happened, my son?" said the Sheik; "whence this anger, and this blood on your cheek?"

"Son!" repeated the youth, in a tone in which passion was mingled with irony.

"Whence this blood?" again demanded the Sheik, surprised at an emotion such as he had never before witnessed in the youth.

"They say it is the blood of a bastard," replied Hassan, his dark eye gleaming with renewed indignation.

"What is that!" shrieked Khadijah, the wife of the Sheik, suddenly appearing from an inner compartment of the tent, where she had overheard what had passed.

"Peace, woman," said the Sheik authoritatively; "and prepare a plaster for Hassan's wound." Then turning to the latter, he added, in a milder tone: "My son, remember the proverb, that patience is the key to contentment, while anger opens the door to repentance. Calm your spirit, and tell me plainly what has happened. Inshallah, we will find a remedy."

Hassan, having by this time recovered his composure, related how he had been engaged in taking some horses to the water, when a dispute arose between him and a young man named Youssuf Ebn-Solyman, in the course of which the latter said to him—

"How dare you speak thus to me, you who are nothing but an Ebn-Haram?" To this insult Hassan replied by a blow; Youssuf retaliated by striking him on the temple with a stone; upon which, after a violent struggle, Hassan succeeded in inflicting on his opponent a severe beating.

"And now," said the youth, in concluding his narrative, "I wish to know why I have been called by this hateful name—a name that disgraces both you and my mother? I will not endure it, and whoever calls me so, be he boy or man, I will have his blood."

"Are you sure," inquired the Sheik, "that he said *Hharam* and not *Heram*?"^[3]

"I am sure," replied Hassan, "for he repeated it twice with a tone of contempt."

"Then," said the Sheik, "you were right to beat him; but the name, among mischievous people, will occasion you many quarrels: henceforth in the tribe you shall be called Hassan el-Gizèwi."

"Why should I be called El-Gizèwi?" said the youth. "What have we, Oulâd-Ali, to do with Gizeh and the Pyramids?"^[4]

After some hesitation the Sheik replied, "We were passing through that district when you were born; hence the name properly belongs to you."

"Father," said Hassan, fixing his dark eyes earnestly on the Sheik's countenance, "there is some secret here; I read it in your face. If I am a child of shame let me know the worst, that I may go far away from the tents of the Oulâd-Ali."

Sheik Sâleh was more a man of deeds than of words, and this direct appeal from Hassan sorely perplexed him; thinking it better at all events to gain time for reflection, he replied—

"To-morrow you shall be told why you were called Ebn el-Heram, and why there was no shame connected with the name. Now go into the tent; tell Khadijah to dress your wound, and then to prepare my evening meal."

Accustomed from his childhood to pay implicit obedience to parental orders, Hassan retired into the inner tent, while the Sheik resumed his pipe and his meditations. The result of them may be seen from a conversation which he held with Khadijah when the other members of the family had retired to rest.

"What is to be done in this matter?" said the Sheik to his spouse; "you heard the questions which Hassan asked?"

"I did," she replied. "By your blessed head it is better now to tell him all the truth; the down is on his lip—he is no longer a child; his curiosity is excited; several of our tribe know the secret, and, although far away now, they may return, and he would learn it from them."

"That is true," replied the Sheik; "yet if he knows that he is not our child, he will not remain here—he will desire to find his real parents; and I would rather part with my two best mares than with him. I love him as if he were my son."

Now Khadijah, who had three children still living—two girls, of whom the eldest was fourteen, and a little boy aged eight years—did not love Hassan quite as she loved her own children; although she had nurtured and brought him up, a mother's instincts prevailed, and she was somewhat jealous of the hold which he had taken on the affections of the Sheik. Under these impressions she replied—

"The truth cannot be long kept concealed from him; is it not better to tell him at once? Every man must follow his destiny; that which is written must come to pass."

"I like not his going away," said Sheik Sâleh moodily; "for that boy, if he remain with us, will be an honour to our tent and to our tribe. There is not one of his age who can run, or ride, or use a lance like him. In the last expedition that I made against the tribe of Sammalous did he not prevail on me to take him, by assuring me that he only wished to follow at a distance with a spare horse in case of need; and did he not bring me that spare horse in the thickest of the fight, and strike down a Sammalous who was going to pierce me with his lance after I had received this wound?" Here the Sheik cast his eyes down upon his wounded arm, muttering, "A brave boy! a brave boy!"

Khadijah felt the truth of his observation, but she returned to the charge, saying—

"Truly you men are wise in all that concerns horses, hunting, and fighting; but in other matters, Allah knows that you have little sense. Do you not see that the youth already doubts that he is our son, and you have never adopted him according to the religious law.^[5] He will shortly learn the truth, others will know it too: then what will the men and women of the tribe say of us, who allow this stranger in blood to dwell familiarly in our tent with Temimah our daughter, whose days of marriage should be near at hand?"

Khadijah was not wrong in believing that this last argument would touch her husband in a tender point, for he was very proud of Temimah, and looked forward to see her married into one of the highest families in the tribe; he therefore gave up the contest with a sigh of dissatisfaction, and consented that Khadijah should on the following morning inform Hassan of all that she knew of his early history.

Now that she had gained the victory, Khadijah, like many other conquerors, was at a loss how to improve it. She was essentially a good-hearted woman, and although while Hassan's interests came into collision with those of her own offspring, Nature pleaded irresistibly for the latter, still she called to mind how good and affectionate Hassan had always been to herself, how he had protected and taken care of her little son, and tears came into her eyes when she reflected that the disclosure of the morrow must not only give him pain, but probably cause a final separation.

The hours of night passed slowly away, but anxiety and excitement kept unclosed the eyes of Hassan and Khadijah: the one hoping, yet fearing to penetrate the mystery of his birth, the other unwilling to banish from her sight one whom, now that she was about to lose him, she felt that she loved more than she had been aware of.

The hours of night! Brief words that should indicate a short space of universal tranquillity and repose, yet what a countless multitude of human joys, sorrows, and vicissitudes do they embrace! In the forest and in the wilderness they look upon the prowling wolf and the tiger stealing towards their unconscious prey, upon the lurking assassin, the noiseless ambush, and the stealthy band about to fall with war-shout and lance on the slumbering caravan. In the densely peopled city they look not on the sweet and refreshing rest which the God of nature meant them to distil from their balmy wings, but on gorgeous rooms blazing with light, in which love and hate, jealousy and envy, joy and sorrow, all clothed with silk, with jewels, and with smiles, are busy as the minstrel's hand and the dancer's feet; on halls where the circling cup, and laugh, and song proclaim a more boisterous revelry; on the riotous chambers of drunkenness; on those yet lower dens of vice into which a ray of God's blessed sun is never permitted to shine, where the frenzied gambler stakes on

the cast of a die the last hopes of his neglected family; on the squalid haunts of misery, to whose wretched occupants the gnawing pangs of hunger deny even the temporary forgetfulness of sleep. Yes, on these and a thousand varieties of scenes like these, do the hours of night look down from their starry height, wondering and weeping to see how their peaceful influence is marred by the folly and depravity of man.

Agreeably to Arab custom, Khadijah rose with the early dawn, and having seen that her daughters and her two slave-girls were busied in their respective morning tasks, she called Hassan into the inner tent in order to give him the information which he had been awaiting through a sleepless night of anxiety; but as the good woman accompanied her tale with many irrelevant digressions, it will be more brief and intelligible if we relate its substance in a narrative form.

A little more than fifteen years previous to the opening of our tale, Khadijah, with her husband and a score of his followers, had been paying a visit to a friendly tribe camped in the neighbourhood of Sakkarah.^[6]

On returning northward, through the district of Ghizeh, near the Great Pyramid, her child was born, who only survived a few days. It was buried in the desert, and as her health had suffered from the shock, Sheik Sâleh remained a short time in the neighbourhood, to allow her to recruit her strength.

One evening she had strolled from his tent, and after wailing and weeping a while over the grave of her little one, she went on and sat down on the projecting base-stone of the Great Pyramid. While gazing on the domes and minarets of the "Mother of the world,"^[7] gilded by the rays of a setting sun, her ears caught the sound of a horseman approaching at full speed. So rapid was his progress that ere she had time to move he was at her side.

"Bedouin woman," he said to her, in a hurried and agitated voice, "are you a mother?"

"I am," she replied. "At least, I have been."

"El-hamdu-lillah, praise be to God," said the horseman. Dismounting, he drew from under his cloak a parcel wrapped in a shawl and placed it gently beside her at the base of the pyramid, then vaulting on his horse, dashed his spurs into its flank, and disappeared with the same reckless speed that had marked his approach.

The astonished Khadijah was still following with her eye his retreating figure when a faint cry caught her ear. What mother's ear was ever deaf to that sound? Hastily withdrawing the shawl, she found beneath it an infant whose features and dress indicated a parentage of the higher class. Around his neck was an amulet of a strange and antique fashion; round his body was a sash, in the folds of which was secured a purse containing forty Venetian sequins, and attached to the purse was a strip of parchment, on which was written the following sentence from the traditions of the Prophet, "Blessed be he that gives protection to the foundling."

Hassan, who had been listening with "bated breath" to Khadijah's narrative, and who had discovered as easily as the reader that he was himself the "Child of the Pyramid," suddenly asked her—

"Was that horseman my father?"

"I know not," she replied, "for we have never seen or heard of him since that day. Nevertheless, I think it must have been your father, for I could see that, just before springing on his horse to depart, he turned and gave such a look on the shawl-wrapper that——"

"What kind of look was it?" said Hassan hastily, interrupting her.

"I cannot describe it," said Khadijah. "It might be love, it might be sorrow; but my heart told me it was the look of a father."

"What was the horseman like?" said Hassan.

"I had not time nor opportunity to examine closely either his features or his dress," replied Khadijah; "and were he to come into the tent now I should not know him again. But he seemed a tall, large man, and I guessed him to be a Mameluke."

Khadijah's narrative had deeply interested and agitated Hassan's feelings. As he left the tent and emerged into the open air, he mentally exclaimed, "Sheik Sâleh is not my father; but Allah be praised that I am not the son of a fellah.^[8] Unknown father, if thou art still on earth, I will find and embrace thee."

During the whole of that day he continued silent and thoughtful. He cared not to touch food, and towards evening he strolled beyond the borders of the encampment, lost in conjecture on his mysterious birth and parentage. Ambition began to stir in his breast, and visions of horsetails^[9] and diamond-hilted swords floated before his eyes. While engaged in these day-dreams of fancy, he had unconsciously seated himself on a small mound near where Temimah, the eldest daughter of the Sheik, was tending some goats, which she was about to drive back to the tents. With the noiseless step and playful movement of a kitten, she stole gently behind him, and covering his eyes with her hands, said, "Whose prisoner are you now?"

"Temimah's," replied the youth; "what does she desire of her captive?"

"Tell me," said the girl, seating herself beside him, "why is my brother sad and silent to-day; has anything happened?"

"Much has happened," replied Hassan, with a grave and abstracted air.

"Come now, my brother," said Temimah, "this is unkind; what is this secret that you keep from your sister?"

"One which will cause me to leave you," answered Hassan, still in the same musing tone.

"Leave us!" she exclaimed. "Where to go, and when to return? Do not speak these unkind words. You know how our father loves you—how we all love you. Brother, why do you talk of leaving us?" While thus speaking, Temimah threw her arms round his neck and kissed his eyes, while tears stood in her own.

Touched by her affection and her sorrow, Hassan replied in a gentler tone—

"Temimah, I have no father, no mother, no sister here." He then told her the story of his infancy, as related by her mother, showing that he could claim no relationship in blood to the Sheik Sâleh

and his family. As he continued his narrative, poor Temimah's heart swelled with contending emotions. She learned that the playmate and companion of her childhood, the brother of whom she was so proud, and to whom she looked for support in all her trials, and whom she loved she knew not how much, was a stranger to her in blood. A new and painful consciousness awoke within her. Under the influence of this undefined sensation, her arm dropped from Hassan's neck, but her hand remained clasped in his, and on it fell her tears hot and fast, while she sobbed violently.

Temimah was more than a year younger than Hassan, yet her heart whispered to her secret things, arising from the late disclosure, which were unknown to his. Although the idea of parting from her gave him pain, he could still caress her, call her sister, and bid her not to grieve for a separation which might be temporary, while she felt that henceforth she was divided by an impassable gulf from the brother of her childhood.

Slowly they returned to the encampment, and Temimah took the earliest opportunity of retiring into her tent to talk with her own sad heart in solitude.

Did she love him less since she learnt that he was not her brother? Did she love him more? These were the questions which the poor girl asked herself with trembling and with tears; her fluttering heart gave her no reply.

After these events it is not to be wondered at if Hassan permitted but a few days to elapse ere he presented himself before Sheik Sâleh, and expressed his wish to leave the tents of the Oulâd-Ali, in order to seek for his unknown parents: the Sheik being prepared for this request, and having made up his mind to acquiesce in it, offered but a faint opposition, notwithstanding his unwillingness to part with one whom he had so long considered and loved as a son.

"By Allah!" said he to the youth, "if destiny has written it, so it must be. My advice is, then, that you go to Alexandria, where I have a friend who, although a merchant and living in a town, has a good heart, and will be kind to you for my sake. I will write to him, and he will find you some employment. While you are with him you can make inquiry about the history and the families of the residents, Beys, Mamelukes, &c., and learn if any of them were at Cairo sixteen years ago. If your search there is without success, you will find means to go to Cairo and other parts of Egypt, and, Inshallah! the wish of your heart will be fulfilled."

Hassan thanked his foster-father, who forthwith desired a scribe to be called to write from his dictation the required letter, which bore the address, "To my esteemed and honoured friend, Hadji Ismael, merchant in Alexandria."

The simple preparations requisite for Hassan's departure were soon made, and all the articles found upon him when he had been left at the foot of the pyramid, and which had been carefully preserved by Khadijah, were made over to him, and secured within the folds of his girdle and his turban; a horse of the Sheik's was placed at his disposal, and he was to be accompanied by two of the tribe, charged with the purchase of coffee, sugar, and sundry articles of dress.

When the day fixed for his departure arrived, his foster-parents embraced him tenderly, and the Sheik said to him, "Remember, Hassan, if ever you wish to return, my tent is your home, and you will find in me a father."

Temimah, foolish girl, did not appear; she said she was not well; but she sent him her farewell and her prayers for his safety through her little sister, who kissed him, crying bitterly. Thus did Hassan take leave of the tents of the Oulâd-Ali, and enter on the wide world in search of a father who had apparently little claim on his affection; but youth is hopeful against hope, so Hassan journeyed onward without accident, until he reached Alexandria, where his two companions went about their respective commissions, and he proceeded to deliver his letter to Hadji Ismael, the merchant.

Hassan had no difficulty in finding the house of Hadji Ismael, the wealthy Arab merchant, situated in a quarter which was then near the centre of the town, though only a few hundred yards distant from the head of the harbour, known as the Old Port.

Alexandria being now as familiar to the world of travellers and readers as Genoa or Marseilles, a description of its site and appearance is evidently superfluous; only it must be remembered that at this time it wore something of an oriental aspect, which has since been obliterated by the multitude of European houses which have been constructed, and the multitude of European dresses which crowd its bazaars.

The great square, which is now almost exclusively occupied by the residences of European consuls and merchants, was then an open area in which soldiery and horses were exercised; and in place of the scores of saucy donkey-boys who now crowd around the doors of every inn, dinning into the ear of steamboat and railroad travellers their unvarying cry of "Very good donkey, sir," and fighting for customers with energy equal to that of Liverpool porters, there were then to be seen long strings of way-worn camels wending their solemn way through the narrow streets, whilst others of their brethren were crouched before some merchant's door, uttering, as their loads were removed, that wonderful stomachic groan which no one who has heard it can ever forget, and which is said to have inspired and taught to the sons of Ishmael the pronunciation of one of the letters of their alphabet—a sound which I never heard perfectly imitated by any European.^[10]

Harsh and dissonant as may be the voice of the camel to our Frankish ears, it was infinitely less so to those of Hassan than were the mingled cries of the Turks, Italians, and Greeks assembled in the courtyard of Hadji Ismael's house, busily employed in opening, binding, and marking bales and packages of every size and class. Pushing his way through them as best he might, he addressed an elderly man whom he saw standing at the door of an inner court, and whom he knew by his dress to be a Moslem, and after giving him the customary greeting, he asked if he could have speech of Hadji Ismael. Upon being informed that the youth had a letter which he was charged to deliver to the merchant in person, the head clerk (for such he proved to be) desired Hassan to follow him to the counting-house.

On reaching that sanctum, Hassan found himself in a dimly lighted room of moderate dimensions, the sides of which were lined with a goodly array of boxes; at the farther end of the room was

seated a venerable man with a snow-white beard, who was so busily employed in dictating a letter to a scribe that he did not at first notice the entrance of his chief clerk, who remained silently standing near the door with his young companion; but when the letter was terminated the merchant looked up, and motioned to them to advance. Mohammed, so was the chief clerk named, told him that the youth was bearer of a letter addressed to him by one of his friends among the Arabs. On a signal from Hadji Ismael, Hassan, with that respect for advanced age which is one of the best and most universal characteristics of Bedouin education, came forward, and having kissed the hem of his robe, delivered the letter, and retiring from the carpet on which the old man was sitting, stood in silence with his arms folded on his breast.^[11]

The Hadji having read the letter slowly and carefully through, fixed his keen grey eyes upon Hassan, and continued his scrutiny for some seconds, as if, before addressing him, he would scan every feature of his character. The survey did not seem to give him dissatisfaction, for assuredly he had never looked upon a countenance on which ingenuous modesty, intelligence, and fearlessness were more harmoniously combined.

"You are welcome," said the old man, breaking silence; "you bring me news of the health and welfare of an old friend—may his days be prolonged."

"And those of the wisher," replied the youth.^[12]

"Your name is Hassan, I see," continued the Hadji. "How old are you?"

"Just sixteen years," he replied.

"Sixteen years!" exclaimed the Hadji, running his eye over the commanding figure and muscular limbs of the Arab youth. "It is impossible! Why, Antar himself at sixteen years had not a body and limbs like that. Young man," he continued, bending his shaggy grey brows till they met, "you are deceiving me."

"I never deceived any one," said the youth haughtily; but his countenance instantly resumed its habitual frank expression, and he added, "If I wished to learn to deceive, it is not likely that I should begin with the most sagacious and experienced of all the white-beards in Alexandria."

"True," said the old man, smiling; "I did you wrong. But, Mashallah, you have made haste in your growth. If your brain has advanced as rapidly as your stature, you might pass for twenty summers. What can you do?"

"Little," replied Hassan. "Almost nothing."

"Nay, tell me that little," said the merchant good-humouredly; "with a willing heart 'twill soon be more."

"I can ride on camel or on horse, I can run, I can swim and dive, I can shoot and——" here he paused, and the merchant added—

"And I doubt not, from what my friend the Sheik writes, your hand is no stranger to the sword or lance; but, my son, all these acquirements, though useful in the desert, will not avail you much here—nevertheless, we will see. Inshallah, your lot shall be fortunate; you have a forehead of good omen. God is great—He makes the prince and the beggar—we are all dust."

To this long speech of the worthy merchant Hassan only replied by repeating after him, "God is great."

Hadji Ismael then turned to his chief clerk, and told him that, as the youth was a stranger in the town and intrusted to him by an old friend, he was to be lodged in the house, and arrangement to be made for his board.

It would seem that Hassan's forehead of good omen had already exercised its influence over the chief clerk, for he offered without hesitation to take the youth under his own special charge, and to let him share his meals; an arrangement which was very agreeable to Hassan, who had begun to fear that he would be like a fish out of water—he, a stranger in that confused mass of bricks and bales, ships and levantines.

On a signal from the merchant, Mohammed Aga retired with his young companion, and while showing him the storerooms and courts of the house, drew him to speak of his life in the desert, and listened to his untutored yet graphic description with deepening interest.

Although born in Alexandria, the old clerk was of Turkish parentage, and had followed his professional duties with such assiduity and steadiness that he had never visited the interior of Egypt. He had frequent transactions with Arabs from the neighbourhood on the part of his master, but he usually found that, however wild and uncivilised they might appear, they were sharp and clever enough in obtaining a high price for the articles which they brought on sale; but a wild young Bedouin, full of natural poetry and enthusiasm, was an animal so totally new to the worthy clerk, that his curiosity, and ere long his interest, was awakened to a degree at which he was himself surprised. Hassan, notwithstanding his extreme youth, was gifted with the intuitive sagacity of a race accustomed to read, not books, but men; his eye, bright and keen as that of a hawk, was quick at detecting anything approaching to roguery or falsehood in a countenance on which he fixed it, and that of Mohammed Aga inspired him with a sympathetic confidence which was not misplaced.

On the following morning the merchant had no sooner concluded his prayers and ablutions than he sent for Mohammed Aga, and asked his opinion of the newly arrived addition to their household.

"By Allah!" replied the clerk, "he seems a brave and honest youth, and were you Sheik of the Wâled-Ali^[13] instead of Hadji Ismael the merchant, I doubt not he would have been a gain to your tent; but to what use you can put him in Alexandria I know not."

"You say truly," replied his master; "he is not a youth to sit on a mat in the corner of a counting-house, or to go with messages from house to house, where knowledge of the Frank languages is required. But Allah has provided a livelihood for all His creatures: destiny sent the youth hither, and his fate is written."

"Praise be to God!" said the clerk; "my master's words are words of wisdom and truth. A visit to the holy cities (blessed be their names!) has opened the eyes of his understanding: doubtless he will discover the road which fate has marked out for this youth to travel; for it is written by the hand of the Causer of Causes."^[14]

"True," replied the merchant, "there is no power or might but in Him; nevertheless, a wise writer has said, 'When the shades of doubt are on thy mind, seek counsel of thy bed: morning will bring thee light.' I did so the past night, and see, I have found that Allah has sent me this Arab youth in a happy hour. Inshallah! his fortune and mine will be good. Do you not remember that I have an order to collect twenty of the finest Arab horses, to be sent as a present from Mohammed Ali to the Sultan? Neither you nor I have much skill in this matter, and those whom I consult in the town give me opinions according to the amount of the bribe they may have received from the dealer. We will make trial of Hassan, and, Inshallah! our faces will be white in the presence of our Prince."^[15]

"Inshallah!" said the clerk joyfully, "my master's patience will not be put to a long trial, for there are in the town three horses just arrived from Bahirah, which have been sent on purpose that you might purchase them on this commission. Does it please you that after the morning meal we should go to the Meidàn and see them?"

"Be it so," said the Hadji. And Mohammed Aga, retiring to his own quarters, informed Hassan of the service on which it was proposed to employ him. The eyes of the youth brightened when he learnt that his vague apprehensions of a life of listless confinement were groundless, and that he was about to be employed on a duty for the discharge of which he was fitted by his early training and habits.

Mohammed observed the change in his countenance, and thought it prudent to warn him against the wiles and tricks to which he would be exposed among the Alexandrian dealers, kindly advising him to be cautious in giving an opinion, as his future prospects might depend much upon his first success. Hassan smiled, and thanked his new friend; he then added—

"Mohammed, I have eaten the Hadji's bread, and he is a friend of my father's" (the latter word he pronounced with a faltering voice). "I will serve him in this matter faithfully. Until asked I shall say nothing, and when asked I shall say nothing beyond what I know to be true."

The morning meal despatched, Hadji Ismael proceeded to the Meidàn (then an open space, and now the great square of Alexandria) accompanied by Mohammed Aga, the *sàis* or groom, and Hassan. They found the horse-dealing party awaiting their arrival. It consisted of a *dellâl* or dealer, and two or three of his servants, and an Arab from the neighbourhood of Damanhourî. They had two grey horses to dispose of, and at a distance of some fifty yards were two *sàises* holding by a strong halter a bay horse, which was pawing the ground, neighing, and apparently well disposed to wage war with any biped or quadruped that might come within reach of its heels.

"Peace be upon you," said the *dellâl*, addressing the merchant. "Inshallah! I have brought you here two grey horses that are worthy to bear the Sultan of the two worlds—pure Arab blood—this dark grey is of the Kohèil race, and the light grey a true Saklàwi."^[16]

"Are they young?" inquired the merchant.

"One is four and the other five," was the ready reply.

The merchant then desired his *sàis* to inspect them and examine their mouths. They were both gentle and fine-looking animals, with splendid manes and tails, and their appearance prepossessed the merchant in their favour. They stood close by the assembled group, and allowed their teeth to be examined with the most patient docility.

"The marks are as the *dellâl* has said," reported the *sàis*, after having finished his inspection.

The animals were then mounted by one of the *dellâl's* men, who walked and galloped them past the merchant, who seemed as well pleased with their paces as with their appearance.

"What is their price?" he inquired.

"Their price," replied the *dellâl*, "should be very high, for they are pearls not to be found in every market; but to you, excellent Hadji, whom I wish to oblige, and whom I always serve with fidelity, they can be sold for sixty purses the pair" (about £300).

During all this time Hassan had never spoken a word, neither had a single mark or movement of the horses escaped him; the merchant now turned towards him, saying—

"My son, tell me your opinion of these horses; are they not very fine?"

"They are not very bad," replied the youth drily; "but they have many faults, and are much too dear."

"And pray what are their faults, master busybody?" said the horse-dealer in a rage.

"I am not a busybody," answered Hassan, looking him steadfastly in the face; "I merely replied to a question put to me by our master the Hadji. As for their faults, if you do not know them better than I, you are not fit to be a *dellâl*; and if you do know them, you must be a rogue to bring them here and endeavour to pass them on the Hadji at such a price!"

Words cannot paint the fury of the *dellâl* at being thus addressed by a stripling whom he supposed to be as ignorant of his craft as the other attendants on Hadji Ismael; the heavy courbatch^[17] vibrated in his hand, and he was about to utter some violent or abusive retort, when the merchant, interposing between them, said to the *dellâl*—

"Do not give way to anger, and remember if the words of the youth are not true they can do no harm either to you or to the sale of your horses."

The worthy merchant forgot at the moment that it was probably the truth of the words which gave them their sting; but fate seemed resolved that the horse-dealing transaction should not proceed amicably, for scarcely had the merchant concluded his pacific address to the *dellâl* when he heard behind him a sharp cry of pain, mingled with a sound resembling a blow, accompanied by the rattling of metal.

It seems that the Damanhourî Arab entertained a shrewd suspicion that Hassan was not a greenhorn in the matter of horse-flesh, and while the merchant was making his pacific speech to the *dellâl*, he had crept to the side of the youth and whispered to him—

"Brother, say nothing about the faults of the horses; say that they are very good: here is your bakshish" (present), and so saying he slipped five Spanish dollars into Hassan's hand.

The reply of the latter was to throw them with some force in the face of the speaker. Maddened by the pain and the insult, the Damanhourî drew a knife from his girdle and sprang upon the youth;

but Hassan, whose activity was equal to his strength, caught the uplifted hand, wrenched the knife from its grasp, and placing one of his legs behind his assailant's knee, threw him heavily to the ground. His blood was up, and the anger that shot from his eye and dilated his nostril produced such a change in his countenance that he was scarcely to be recognized; but the change lasted only a moment. Placing the knife in the hands of the astonished merchant, he briefly related to him the provocation which he had received, and the dollars still lying on the ground confirmed the tale. Attracted by the broil, several idlers and soldiers who were accidentally passing had now joined the party, and one whispered to another—

"Mashallah, the youth must have a greedy stomach. A bakshish of five dollars is dirt to him," for it never entered into the head of any of these worthy Alexandrians to suppose that Hassan's indignation could arise from any other cause than dissatisfaction at the amount of the bribe offered to him.

Peace was at length restored, the Damanhourî having picked up his dollars and slunk away, muttering curses and threats against Hassan. The merchant then asked him to state distinctly the faults that he found in the two grey horses.

"The dark one," replied Hassan, "is not of pure race; he is a half-breed, and is not worth more than ten purses. The light one is better bred, but he is old, and therefore not worth much more."

"Old!" ejaculated the *dellâl*, his anger again rising; "by your head, Hadji, your own *sàis*, who examined his teeth, said that he was only five."

The eyes of the merchant and the dealer were now turned upon Hassan, whose only reply was a smile, and passing the forefinger of his right hand over that of his left, imitating the action of one using a file. This was a hint beyond the comprehension of the merchant, who asked him to explain his meaning.

"I mean," he said, "that his teeth have been filed, and the marks in them artificially made,^[18] but his eyes, and head, and legs tell his age to any one that knows a horse from a camel."

The *dellâl* was obliged to contain his rage, for not only was he restrained by the presence of the merchant and the bystanders, but the rough treatment lately inflicted on the Damanhourî did not encourage him to have recourse to personal violence. He contented himself, therefore, with saying in a sneering tone—

"If the wise and enlightened merchant, Hadji Ismael, is to be led by the advice of a boy whose chin never felt a beard, Mashallah! it were time that the fishes swam about in the heaven."

"Allah be praised!" replied the merchant gravely, "truth is truth, even if it be spoken by a child. Friend *dellâl*, I will not dispute with you on this matter, but I will make a bargain with you, to which you will agree if you know that you have spoken truth. I will write to old Abou-Obeyed, whose tent is now among the Wâled-Ali. All men know that he is most skilled in Arab horses, and he is himself bred in the Nejd. He shall come here, and his bakshish shall be five purses. If he decides that all which you have stated of the race and age of these two horses is true, I will give you the full price that you have asked, and will pay him the bakshish. If his words agree with those spoken by this youth, I do not take the horses, and you pay the Sheik's bakshish."

As the *dellâl* knew that the old Sheik Abou-Obeyed valued his reputation too highly to allow himself to be bribed to a deception so liable to detection, he replied—

"It is not worth the trouble. Allah be praised, there are horses enough in Egypt and the desert; but if our master purchases none without the consent of that strange youth, methinks it will not be this year that he will send twenty to Stamboul. Doubtless he will now tell you that yonder bay is a vicious, useless brute, not worth the halter that holds him."

"If he is not a vicious brute," said Hassan, looking the *dellâl* full in the face and smiling, "mount him, and let our master see his paces."

The *dellâl* bit his lip at finding himself thwarted at every turn by the natural shrewdness of a mere stripling, for nothing was farther from his intention than to mount an animal whose uncontrollable violence and temper were the sole cause of its being sent for sale by its present owner. It had not been backed for months, and the two *sàises* who held it by the head were scarcely able to resist the furious bounds which it made in its endeavour to free itself from thralldom. While the *dellâl* went towards them to assist them in leading it up for the inspection of the merchant, the latter turned to Hassan, saying—

"My son, assuredly that is a vicious and dangerous beast. It can be no use my thinking of purchasing that for the great lords at Stamboul."

"Let us see it nearer," replied the youth, "perhaps we may learn whether it be play or vice. Mashallah!" he muttered to himself as it drew nearer, snorting, and bounding, and lashing out its heels, "that is a horse—what a pity that it is cooped up in this town! Would that I had it on the desert, with my greyhound beside, and the antelope before me!" His eyes glistened as he spoke, and the merchant, tapping him on the shoulder, said—

"My son, you seem to like that horse better than the others. Is it not a vicious, dangerous brute?"

"It is violent now," replied Hassan, "probably because it has been in hands that knew not how to use it; but I do not see any signs of vice on its head. It is evidently quite young—three or four at most—and it has blood: more I cannot pretend to say."

The noble colt had now cleared a respectable circle with his heels, as none of the bystanders chose to risk a near inspection, when the merchant, turning to the *dellâl*, said—

"That seems a violent, intractable animal; what is its lowest price?"

"When it is taught and a year older," replied the dealer, "it will be worth fifty purses. As it is, I can sell it to you for thirty."

"Tell him," whispered Hassan to the merchant, "to desire one of the *sàises* to ride it past you, that you may see its action."

The Hadji did so, but the endeavour of the dealer and his *sàises* to comply with the request proved utterly fruitless. No sooner did one of them approach with the object of mounting than he reared, backed, struck out with his forelegs, and played such a variety of rough antics that they

could not come near him. Perhaps none of them were over-anxious to mount an animal in such a state of violent excitement, without a saddle, and with no bridle but the halter passed round the head, and with one turn round the lower jaw. The merchant stroked his beard, and looked at the colt in dismay. Hassan drew near and whispered to him—

“Tell the *dellâl* that it is a violent, unruly brute, and offer him twenty purses.”

The Hadji had by this time acquired so much confidence in the opinion of his young *protégé* that he did so without hesitation. Then ensued a long bargaining conference between the merchant and the *dellâl*, which ended in the latter saying that he would take twenty-five purses and no less. The merchant looked at his young adviser, who said—

“Close with him at that price.”

The merchant having done so, the *dellâl* said to him—

“Hadji, the horse is yours: may the bargain be blessed.” As he uttered the latter words there was a sardonic grin on his countenance which, if rightly interpreted, meant, “Much good may it do you.”

The bargain being thus concluded, the *dellâl* thought it would be a good opportunity to vent the spite which he entertained against Hassan on the subject of the two grey horses, so he said to the merchant—

“Perhaps this youth, who has been so ready to offer his advice, and who wished that I or the *sàises* should mount the bay horse to show his paces, perhaps he will now do so himself.”

“And why not?” replied Hassan. “It is true that fools have made the horse foolish and unruly, but Allah made him to carry a rider. If the Hadji will give me leave, Inshallah! I will ride him now.”

“You have my leave,” said the merchant, “but run no risk of your life and limbs, my son.”

Hassan smiled, and going quietly forward, took the end of the halter from the nearest *sàis*, desiring the other at the same time to let go and leave him alone. He then approached the colt, looking steadfastly into its eye, and muttering some of the low guttural sounds with which the Bedouin Arabs coax and caress a refractory horse.

They seemed, however, to have no effect in this instance, for the colt continued to back, occasionally striking at Hassan with its forefeet. Never losing his temper, nor for an instant taking his eye off that of the colt, he followed its retrograde movement, gradually shortening the halter, and narrowly escaped, once or twice, the blows aimed at him by its forefeet.

At length the opportunity for which he had long been watching occurred. As the horse tried to turn its flanks and lash at him with its hind-feet, in a second, and with a single bound, he was on its back. It was in vain that the infuriated animal reared, plunged, and threw itself into every contortion to unhorse its rider. The more it bounded and snorted under him, the more proudly did his eye and his breast dilate. In the midst of all these bricks and houses he was again at home.

Shaking his right hand on high, as if he held a lance, and shouting aloud to give utterance to the boisterous joy within him, he dashed his heels into the ribs of the horse, and having taken it at full speed twice round the Meidàn, brought it back trembling in every joint from fear, surprise, and excitement. “Mashallah!” “Aferin!” (Bravo! bravo!) burst from every lip in the group. “A Rustum,” cried old Mohammed Aga, delighted at his young friend’s triumph.

Hassan seemed, however, of opinion that the lesson was not complete—the horse was mastered, but not yet quieted. So he turned it round, and once more took it at full speed to the farthest end of the Meidàn; then leaning forward, patted its neck, played with its ears, and spoke to it kind and gentle words, as if it could understand him. The subdued animal appeared indeed to do so, for its violence had disappeared as if by magic, and when he took it back to the side of the merchant, it stood there seemingly as pleased as any one of the party.

“I would give that imp of Satan twenty purses a-year to be my partner,” muttered the *dellâl* inaudibly to himself, as he turned away and withdrew with the two rejected greys.

The merchant returned to his house in high spirits, and willingly acceded to Hassan’s request that he should have sole charge of the new purchase. Hassan led the horse into the stable, fed and groomed it with his own hands, and in the course of a few days they were the best friends imaginable.

These events created no little sensation in Alexandria, and Hassan’s skill, courage, and his remarkable beauty of form and feature were the general subject of conversation among those who had witnessed the merchant’s purchase of the restive horse. All manner of speculations were afloat as to who or whence he was, for those who had most nearly observed him declared that, although his dress and language proclaimed the Bedouin Arab, his features seemed to be those of a Georgian or some northern race.

Many questions were addressed to Hadji Ismael on the subject by his friends, but he was either unable or unwilling to satisfy their curiosity. All that they could learn was that the youth had been sent to the merchant with a letter of recommendation from his old acquaintance Sheik Sâleh, and that he was to be employed in the purchase of the collection of horses to be sent to Constantinople.

Meanwhile Hassan passed his time more agreeably than he had expected, for he had abundance of liberty and exercise in his new vocation, and was treated with the greatest kindness and confidence both by the merchant and by the chief clerk. One remarkable feature they found in his character, that under no circumstances whatever did he deviate in the slightest degree from the truth. Whether money was concerned, or the relation of an event, they always found his statements confirmed, even in the most minute particular. He seemed, also, to have no care or thought of the acquisition of money, and these two features of character were so rare in Alexandria that some of the merchant’s friends, when speaking of his young *protégé*, were in the habit of shaking their heads and touching their foreheads significantly with the index-finger, thereby indicating that probably he was somewhat deranged.

These vague suggestions were confirmed by other traits of his character very different from other Alexandrian youths of his own age. He was never seen to enter a drinking-shop, nor to idle and lounge about the bazaars. When not employed in exercising his horses, one of his favourite amusements was to go down to the beach for a swim in the sea. The boundless expanse of salt

water was new to him: the more angry the surf, the more it seemed to please and excite him.

His companion on these bathing excursions was Ahmed, the chief clerk's son, a lad of some twenty years of age, to whom, notwithstanding the difference in their characters, Hassan became much attached. He was short and slight in figure, with a pale but intelligent countenance, and remarkable for his studious and industrious habits. Having been for some time employed as a junior clerk of an English mercantile house (there were only two at that time in Alexandria), he had not only become a very good English scholar, but had acquired a fair knowledge of Greek and Italian. He was a bold and practised swimmer; but on one or two occasions when he had followed Hassan to enjoy his favourite pastime in the surf, he had received contusions which stunned him for the moment, and might have cost him dear, had not the powerful arm of his athletic comrade been always near and ready to assist him.

41

This companionship, which soon ripened into friendship, was not without its corresponding advantage to Hassan. His eager imagination had already drunk in with avidity the feats of Antar, Sindbad, and other heroes of Arab story; but his new friend could tell him yet stranger tales of the regions beyond the sea—regions where from cold the waters grew as hard as stone, and bore the passage of loaded waggons; where ships, by the aid of fire, sailed against the wind and stream, and where the inhabitants of one small island possessed and ruled at a distance of many thousand miles possessions five times larger and more populous than those of the great Sultan of Islam.

These narrations, and especially the last, excited so forcibly the ardent imagination of Hassan, that he was never weary of listening, and he prevailed upon his new friend one day to take him to the counting-house where he was employed, that he might see some of these wonderful islanders. Probably he expected to find in them marvellous beings, like the giants or jinns of Arab fiction; but after accompanying his friend to the house of Mr —, whom he saw through an open door at the extremity of the counting-house, seated at a table writing letters and tying up papers, he went out again, with disappointment evidently written upon his countenance.

"What tales are these which you have been telling me, Ahmed?" said he to his companion; "by Allah, that is no man at all! He is smaller than I am; he has not the beard of Hadji, and he has not even a scribe to write his letters!"

42

"Hassan," replied his friend, smiling, "the habits of these islanders are different from those of Turks and Arabs. The pen is their sword in commerce, and they like to wield it themselves. Our chief writes on matters of importance with his own hand; it is good, for no scribe can betray him; but in the adjoining room he has two or three clerks who write on his affairs from morning till night."

Hassan shook his head, thought of the swift horse and the open desert, and said, "Allah be praised, I am not a merchant of these islanders." Nevertheless there was something mysterious about their history which continued to excite his fancy, and as weeks and months passed on, they found him, during the leisure hours of evening, employed in learning English from his friend.

As Turkish was the language habitually spoken in the family of Mohammed Aga and in other places which Hassan's avocations led him to frequent, he soon acquired a sufficient knowledge of it to enable him to understand and converse in it with tolerable fluency.

During the next three years of our hero's life he remained in the employment of Hadji Ismael, who never repented having trusted him implicitly in every commission with which he had been charged, and had procured for him a teacher under whose instructions he had learnt to read Arabic and to write a legible hand; but Hassan, though ready and quick of apprehension, did not evince any fondness for the study of books; his pleasures were a ride on the back of a fiery horse or a crested wave, and listening after sunset to the popular Arab romances of old, recited by some wandering *rāwī*.^[19]

43

Of these last he was so fond that he knew many of them by heart. Stories of princes and princesses in disguise, mingled with the mystery hanging over his own birth, floated in his imaginative brain, but the mystery remained unravelled. He had kept the secret confined to his own breast, never even communicating it to his friend Ahmed; nevertheless from him, from his father, and from all his acquaintance, he had diligently inquired into the early history of all the Turkish pashas, beys, and officers in Alexandria, but no known episode of their lives threw any light upon the object of his search. His passions were strong and turbulent, but he generally kept them under the control of a determined will, and the secret conviction that he was the son of "somebody" imparted to his character a certain pride and reserve which assorted better with his form and features than with his outward condition of life.

Connected with the mystery of his birth and with the events related in the wild tales with which he had fed his youthful imagination, was the image of a lovely princess whom he had clothed with all the attributes of beauty ascribed by Arab poetry to such damsels; waking or dreaming, she was constantly before his eyes: he had given her a name, and he loved this creature of his imagination with all the ardent fondness of a young and passionate heart.

44

If it be true that such visionary dreams of youth are necessarily followed by disappointment on awaking to the rude realities of life, it is also true that in some cases, as in his, they preserve those who are under their influence from the temptations to which that age is exposed. It is one of the evils of modern education in what we are pleased to call highly civilised countries to cultivate the understanding at the expense of the heart. The simplicity, the trusting confidence, the warm imagination, the love of all that is pure and high and holy, which are the proper attributes of youth, are sacrificed to what is termed a practical knowledge of the world, and the result is, that there is now many a young gentleman at Eton and Oxford who would listen with a sneer of contempt to a sentiment or a trait of character which would have drawn a tear of sympathy and admiration from the eye of a Burke or a Fox, a Pascal or a Newton.

To return from this digression. Hassan loved his imaginary princess; nevertheless, like a true lover, he put her in the deepest corner of his heart, and never spoke of her.

45

A short time afterwards Hassan was sent by the Hadji, in company with Mohammed Aga, to

collect a debt of considerable amount due to him in Damanhour, a large village distant a day's journey from the city.

This affair occupied some little time, and might not, perhaps, have been settled at all had not Mohammed Aga been provided with a handsome Cashmere shawl and a pretty Damascus handkerchief, in one corner of which a few gold pieces were secured by a silken cord. The former of these presents found its way to the Governor, and the latter to his chief scribe, after which the justice of the claim became as clear as day, and the debtor was ordered to pay up without delay.

While this affair was in progress, and Mohammed Aga was busy in the Governor's divan, Hassan was one day strolling near the village to pass the time when his ear was arrested by the sound of female cries and lamentations. Turning his head to the quarter whence the sounds proceeded, he saw a man with his hands chained together walking between two soldiers, who occasionally hastened his steps by blows from the butt-ends of their muskets. Behind them were two women and two children screaming at the top of their voices—

"Oh! mercy, mercy! Oh! my brother! Oh! my husband! Oh! my father! Mercy, mercy!"

In front of this lamenting group, and by the side of one of the soldiers, walked an individual with a paper in his hand, who seemed to be the man under whose authority the prisoner had been seized, and who bore the appearance of being one of the *kawàsses* of the Governor.^[20]

"May your day be fortunate, O Aga," said Hassan, addressing him in the Turkish language.^[21] "What is the fault of this man, and whither are you taking him?"

"Happily met, Aga," said the *kawàss*, impressed by the commanding figure of the young stranger. "This vagabond is now nearly two years in arrears of his taxes due to the Government; his tents are near the edge of the desert, and we never could find him. Praise be to Allah, I have got him now, and to-morrow we shall see whether five hundred good blows on the soles of his feet will help him to find the two thousand piastres that he owes."^[22]

The prisoner maintained a dogged silence, never even raising his eyes to look at the *kawàss* while speaking; but his wife now rushed forward, and, throwing herself at Hassan's feet, cried out—

"Mercy, mercy, young Aga! I and my children—our sister—we are all ruined. We have none to depend on but him. The sluices of the canal were not opened; our lands were dried up. We had no crop; we sold our animals; everything is gone. Speak to the Governor, young Aga; let him give us time and we will pay all."

Hassan turned aside his head to hide his emotion, for to misery, and to woman's misery above all, his heart was soft as a child's. Recovering himself, however, in a moment, he turned to the *kawàss*, saying—

"Would the Governor not excuse or delay the payment of this sum?"

"Surely not," said the other decidedly. "His Excellency is very angry with him for the trouble he has already given: the amount is entered in the accounts, and it must be paid. You are young, sir, and a stranger here; you do not know the marvellous power of the sticks in bringing to light hidden money; they are more powerful than the rods of the Cairo magicians."

"By Allah!—by the life of your mother!" screamed the poor woman, still at Hassan's feet, "we have nothing; they may kill us, but we have no money to give. For weeks past we have seen no bread, and eaten nothing but a few dates. We are miserable, O Aga!—look at us—mercy, mercy!" The emaciated appearance of the whole family bore witness to this part of the woman's statement.

"My friend," said Hassan, turning to the *kawàss*, "I know a merchant in Damanhour who will perhaps advance this money, and take a bond for repayment in one or two years. Promise me that you will not report this man's seizure till to-morrow at noon: the Governor will be better pleased with your zeal if you are then able to present him with the money required than if you beat the man to death without perhaps obtaining a third of it. Promise, then, that you will wait till to-morrow at noon."

"I will wait as you desire," replied the *kawàss*; "and if you come to the guard-house where this fellow will be confined, ask for Ibrahim the *kawàss*."

During all this time the eyes of the unhappy wife were fixed upon Hassan's countenance with an expression of intense anxiety. She had not understood a syllable of the conversation that had passed between him and the *kawàss*, but instinct taught her that in some way he was befriending her husband's cause; and as the latter moved on with his guards, she continued to overwhelm him with blessings and prayers mingled with tears.

"Be of good cheer," he said to her, now speaking in his own language. "Inshallah! all will yet go well. Meanwhile take this, and buy some bread this evening for your children and yourselves;" and as he spoke he slipped a piece of silver into her hand and turned hastily away.

When the poor woman heard herself addressed in the deep and not-to-be-mistaken tones of a Bedouin Arab, and felt the money, surprise and gratitude deprived her for a moment of the powers of speech; and Hassan was already at some distance when she recovered them, and throwing herself into her sister's arms, she exclaimed—

"He will save us!—he will save us!—he is not a Turk!—why did I call him Aga?—he is of the Sons of the Tent^[23]—surely my husband and he have met before in the desert and been friends—he will save us—the blessing of Allah be on his head!"

That same evening, at sunset, Mohammed Aga and Hassan were smoking their pipes and drinking their coffee in front of their lodging, when the former said to his companion—

"Inshallah! we will return in a day or two to Alexandria. Our affair is proceeding well: I have collected half the money, and the remainder is to be paid to-morrow."

Hassan made no direct reply to this address, but after a pause of a few minutes he abruptly asked the chief clerk—

"Do you remember how much of my salary is still due to me, in your hands?"

"Assuredly I do, my son," said the methodical clerk. "At the beginning of the year the arrears of salary, added to what the Hadji allowed of percentage on purchases, amounted to four thousand piastres (£40); then at the feast you sent a present of a bale of tobacco and a Persian dagger to your

father the Sheik, two pieces of Syrian silk and some embroidered napkins to your mother, two pieces—”

“Enough, enough!” interrupted Hassan, distressed at this enumeration of the mementoes which he had sent to his foster-parents; “how much remained after these presents were paid for?”

“They cost fifteen hundred piastres; so you still have two thousand five hundred left.”

“That is well,” said Hassan. “I want that money here. Will you give it me, Mohammed, and repay yourself from the chest in Alexandria?”

“The boy is mad,” said the old clerk, opening his eyes wide with astonishment. “By the head of your father, tell me for what purpose can you require all that money at once, here at Damanhour? Are you going to buy beans and wheat for the market?”

“No,” replied Hassan, with some confusion, “it is not my trade to purchase grain; but indeed I require that money, and hope you will let me have it.”

“Allah-Allah!” said the old clerk, as a sudden suspicion shot across his mind, “you have seen some Damanhour girl who has set your heart on fire! The songs tell us that the girls are famed for their beauty here: you have seen a moon-faced one behind a curtain, and you are going to be married! Wallah-Billah! brimstone and tinder are like wet clay when compared to the heart of a youth.”

“Indeed,” said Hassan, laughing, “I have seen no moon-faced houri here, and I have no thoughts of marriage.” He added more gravely, “I want the money for a purpose which I cannot tell you, though if I did you could not disapprove it.”

Mohammed Aga, seeing that opposition was useless, and feeling that he had in truth no right to keep back from Hassan what was his own, counted out the money to him the same evening, and took his receipt, to be presented to Hadji Ismael.

The following morning, about three hours after sunrise, when Hassan had made sure that the chief clerk was busily employed in the Governor’s divan, he bent his steps to the guard-house, and on asking for Ibrahim the *kawàss*, was at once admitted to the presence of that important official.

After the customary salutations, Hassan informed him that the merchant to whom he had yesterday alluded had agreed to advance the money, and that he was now prepared to pay the two thousand piastres due by the Arab, on receiving a discharge in full for the debt, sealed by the proper officer in the divan.

“That is easily done,” said the *kawàss*; “take a pipe and a cup of coffee, and in five minutes the paper will be here.”

Having given the requisite instructions to one of his subordinates, he resumed the conversation with Hassan upon general topics, it being indifferent to him to know what merchant in Damanhour could be so foolish as to advance money of which he would never be repaid a farthing.

In a few minutes the messenger returned, bringing a paper bearing the seals of the treasurer and chief scribe of the Governor’s divan, and setting forth that Abou-Hamedi, of the Gemeâl tribe, having discharged all the taxes and charges due by him up to date, was free to return to his place of abode.

Hassan having paid the money and placed the document in his girdle, inquired of the *kawàss* where the prisoner was confined, and whether he could see him alone.

“He is in the room at the back of that small yard,” replied the *kawàss*, “where you see the sentry walking before the door. I will tell him to open it and come away, as his service is no longer required. You will not find the Arab alone, because, as you had taken an interest in him, I allowed his family to remain with him.”

“May your honour increase and your days be long,” said Hassan, saluting him, and going towards the door of the cell, which the sentry, by desire of the *kawàss*, opened, and then came away.

On entering the chamber, Hassan found that it was more spacious than he had expected, and was partially lighted by two apertures near the roof, secured by cross-bars of iron. The place being considered sufficiently secure, the manacles had been removed from the hands of the Arab, and he was seated on the floor, his sister and wife beside him, and his children at his feet.

No sooner did Hassan enter the room than the wife sprang from her sitting posture, crying aloud

—
“It is he! it is he! we shall be saved yet.”

Abou-Hamedi also arose, and all the rest of the family came crowding towards Hassan. The Arab, who had been informed the preceding evening by his wife of our hero’s generous intentions, as well as of his having provided them with the bread on which they had supped, now expressed to him with much emotion the gratitude which he felt for the sympathy he had shown him.

“You are of the desert blood,” he said; “and whether Allah give success to your endeavours or not, you have our thanks.”

“Brother, you are free,” said Hassan; “free as the winds of the desert. Here is the Government receipt for your debt, and as you have been stripped of all, and must have something wherewith to recommence your toil for a livelihood, here are five hundred piastres; put them in your girdle. Fate is uncertain, Allah only is enduring; I am now rich, some day I may be poor and you rich, then you may repay me.”

Words cannot paint the tumultuous joy of the poor women as they crowded to kiss the hands and feet of Hassan, calling every blessing of heaven on his head. The wife, however, on looking at her husband’s countenance as he almost mechanically took the document and the money which Hassan placed in his hand, was frightened at its strange and wild expression; no word of satisfaction or gratitude escaped from his lips as, seizing Hassan by the arm, he drew him to a part of the cell where a stray sunbeam forced its way through the barred aperture; when it fell on Hassan’s face, the Arab, scanning his features with eyes almost starting from their sockets, said—

“Years have passed; the youth has become a man; the eye, the voice, the form are only his! Speak,” he continued, almost savagely; “do you remember one who strove to stab you in the Meidàn of Alexandria, and whom you threw to the ground by a wrestling trick? ’Twas I! and had you known me yesterday, instead of giving me money and freedom, you would have gone to that cursed Turk’s

divan to feast your eyes with a sight of my mangled feet." So saying, he dashed the paper and the money furiously on the ground.

"Brother," replied Hassan gravely, "I knew you yesterday at the first glance as well as you know me now. You were in misfortune and misery, and all that had passed before was forgotten."

The evil passions struggled for the mastery in that wild breast: it was but for a moment; the sight of his children and of the paper which secured his freedom called up the better feelings of his rude nature, and casting himself into Hassan's arms, he wept like a child.

Without having read or heard of the Scriptures, the generous impulse of Hassan's heart had taught him how to "heap coals of fire on the head of an enemy"; and the deadly hatred which Abou-Hamedi had entertained against him since the day of their first meeting was melted in a moment.

It was difficult for Hassan to tear himself away from the overflowing gratitude of the Arab's family. One only, the unmarried sister, had preserved a continuous silence, as became her condition; but she looked upon her brother's preserver with eyes swimming in tears, and when he bade them farewell and left the room, she felt as if life and sunshine had departed with him.

Little did Abou-Hamedi know when he thrust into his girdle the five hundred piastres given him by Hassan, that the latter had not even a dollar left. He had said, "I am rich," and in truth rich he was—rich in youth, and strength, and hope—rich in the esteem and affection of his employer—above all, rich in the possession of a heart which felt in giving his all to relieve distress a pleasure unknown to the miser who has found a treasure.

Hassan remained outside the guard-house talking to the *kawàss* on various subjects until he had seen Abou-Hamedi and his family clear of its precincts, and retiring in the direction of the desert. The Arab, looking back once at the figure of his preserver, muttered to himself: "Allah preserve you, brave youth. If ever you meet Abou-Hamedi again when you are in need, you shall find that he remembers good as well as evil; but we will leave this cursed district, where sorrow and tyranny pursue us; we will go to our cousins who have their tents near Fayoom."^[24]

When Mohammed Aga met his young friend in the evening, he asked whether he had commenced that wonderful speculation which he kept so secret.

"It is all laid out already," replied Hassan, smiling.

"Hasty bargains lead to repentance," said the old clerk, shaking his head; "pray, what makseb [profit] do you expect to make?"

"It has paid me a good interest already, and I am quite satisfied. Do not ask me any more about it," said Hassan, looking rather confused, for concealment was foreign to his nature.

Mohammed Aga refrained from asking any more questions; but, partly from curiosity and partly from the interest which he felt in Hassan's welfare, he was determined before leaving Damanhour to learn how he had disposed of his little property. Nor was the task by any means difficult; for in small towns in the East as well as in the West everybody knows and talks about everything. The chief clerk, therefore, had no difficulty on the following day in tracing Hassan to the guard-house, where he had been seen talking to Ibrahim the *kawàss*. To find that well-known individual was the work of a few minutes, and a few more spent with him over a cup of coffee and a pipe drew from him all that he knew of the transaction, including the release of the Arab family on Hassan's paying their debt of two thousand piastres. "You see, Aga," added the *kawàss*, concluding his narrative, "it was my duty to release them when the money was paid, and not to inquire whence it came; but if you are the merchant whom the young man mentioned as willing to advance it on any security offered by the Arab, why, I fear——" Here he looked very significantly at Mohammed, and threw out a long puff of smoke from his chibouque.

"Then you think the Arab cannot pay back the money?" inquired Mohammed.

"Not a dollar of it," answered the *kawàss*. "The Governor would have ordered him the bastinado as an example to others, but two bad seasons have left the poor devil's purse as empty as my pipe." So saying, he shook out its ashes, and left Mohammed to his own meditations.

"That boy will never have a farthing to bless his grey hairs with! Money in his hand is like water in a sieve, and yet, and yet,"—here the old clerk passed the back of his hand across his eyes,—"Allah bless him an hundredfold." He walked slowly home, and without saying a word to Hassan of his meeting with the *kawàss*, he told him that, as the affairs for which they had come to Damanhour were now settled, they might return to Alexandria, which they did on the following day.

The morning after their return Mohammed Aga went to the private room of the merchant to deliver the money which he had collected, and give a general account of his mission, in doing which he placed in the Hadji's hands Hassan's receipt for two thousand five hundred piastres.

"By your head," said the merchant to his clerk, "tell me what has the youth done with that money at Damanhour?"

Mohammed then told him the whole story from beginning to end, as related by the *kawàss*.

"And what has he left in your hands?" inquired the merchant, walking up and down the room in evident emotion.

"Nothing," replied the clerk. "Two thousand five hundred piastres were due to him; two thousand he paid for the liberation of the Arab, and I doubt not that he gave him the remainder."

"Mohammed," said the merchant, "as he wished to keep this secret, do not mention it to any one, nor let him know that you have told it to me. If it were spoken about, it would take from the youth the pleasure he now derives from it, and what say the traditions of the Prophet (on whose name be glory and peace!), "The good deeds done by the faithful in secret, He shall reward them openly on the day of judgment.""

During Hassan's short absence from Alexandria an English family of the name of Thorpe had arrived there—Mr Thorpe being an elderly gentleman of good fortune and education, whose passion for antiquarian pursuit had induced him to visit the land of the Pyramids, together with his wife and their delicate daughter. Mr Thorpe had brought a letter of introduction to the British merchant, who undertook to procure for him a dragoman to accompany the family on their excursion up the Nile. A Greek was recommended, by name Demetri, who possessed a fair smattering of all the

languages spoken in the Levant.

Foyster, Mr Thorpe's valet and confidential servant, having approved of Demetri, he was forthwith engaged. After a short search a dahabiah was found, which belonged to a pasha absent on service, and who had left with his wakeel (agent) a discretionary power to let his boat, which was large and well decorated. The wakeel, being a Greek, was an acquaintance of Demetri, which rendered the bargaining easy and satisfactory to both parties. It was agreed that Mr Thorpe was to pay £250 for the six winter months, the wakeel refunding from that amount £15 to Demetri, and £15 to Foyster. Mr Thorpe was informed by the English merchant that the charge was unusually high; but as in those days there was much difficulty in finding so large and comfortable a boat, the bargain was concluded and the ratification duly exchanged.

A few days after, Foyster and Demetri were walking homeward from the bazaar, where they had been making some purchases for the boat, when they fell in with Hassan, who was returning towards the house of Hadji Ismael.

Hassan was well acquainted with Demetri, who had frequently amused his leisure hours with tales of the countries he had visited, and the wonderful feats he had performed, in which latter branch the Greek had drawn more liberally on his invention than on his memory. The youth had also seen Foyster at the British merchant's house, and knew him to be an attendant on the rich English family, whose approaching excursion up the Nile was already the theme of general conversation. The place where they met happening to be immediately in front of a coffee-shop, Demetri proposed that they should rest for a few minutes and take a cup of coffee. While they were thus occupied—Demetri's two companions listening to his flowery description of the wonders of Upper Egypt—a Moghrebi,^[25] of gigantic and herculean proportions, who had probably been indulging in a forbidden drink more stimulating than coffee, came up, and his fanaticism being roused at the sight of Foyster's dress, he cried out to him, in an angry voice—

"Get up, Christian dog, and give me your seat."

The valet, not understanding a word, looked at Demetri for an explanation. The latter, much alarmed, and evidently not desirous of exhibiting any feat of valour similar to those of which he had often boasted, said to the Moghrebi—

"He is a stranger, and does not understand your speech."

"Does he not?" replied the other; "then perhaps he will understand this," and so saying he kicked the seat from under Foyster with such force that the latter fell backwards on the ground.

While this was being enacted, Demetri whispered to Hassan—

"Let us make haste to get away from this place. That is the noted *pehlivan*.^[26] He carries four men on his shoulders; he is an elephant."

"Why do you insult the stranger, and kick his seat from him?" said Hassan to the Moghrebi. "He offered you no offence."

"Offence!" replied the Moghrebi scornfully; "his presence is an offence. Is he not a dog of an infidel?"

"There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet," said Hassan. "Those who are ignorant of the truth are to be pitied; but our lord (Mohammed Ali) has made friends with these Franks. They buy and sell here in peace, and it is not right to strike or insult them without cause in our streets."

"And who are you, youngster, who dare to preach to me?" said the athlete contemptuously. "Are you perhaps a sheik, or a mollah, or a kâdi?"

"I am a man, and I fear not a wise one, for wasting my words upon an ox without understanding," replied Hassan, his eyes kindling with anger.

"You are a bastard (Ebn-Haram)," shouted the athlete; "and if you had half a beard I would spit upon it."

Hearing this abusive epithet now applied to him before a score of spectators, Hassan's fury was no longer to be controlled. Springing upon the Moghrebi with the bound of a tiger, he seized him by the throat, and a fearful struggle ensued.

Although the athlete was the heavier and more bulky man, it soon appeared that Hassan was his equal in strength, and far his superior in activity. After a contest of some minutes, in which each displayed a complete mastery of all the sleights of wrestling, Hassan succeeded in passing his hand under the leg of his gigantic opponent, and lifting him fairly in his arms, dashed him with terrific force on the ground. Hassan stood for a moment looking on his fallen opponent, from whose mouth and nostrils flowed a stream of blood. The people from the coffee-shop now crowded round him: some threw water on his face, and in a short time he recovered sufficiently to raise himself up; but he was in no condition to renew the struggle, and Hassan walked away with his two companions, followed by the ejaculations of the bystanders—"Mashallah! wonderful!"—the greater part of them being rejoiced at the discomfiture of the athlete, who was indeed a notorious brawler and bully.

The preparations of the dahabiah were now nearly completed. It had been found, however, that after all she was too small to accommodate all the party with comfort, so a second of a smaller size had been hired.

It was about this time that, after receiving a letter from Cairo, Hadji Ismael sent one morning for Hassan and told him that a new commission had arrived, in the execution of which his assistance would be requisite.

"Upon my head and eyes be it," said the youth.

"I have received a letter from my friend Ali Pasha, commonly called Deli Pasha;^[27] he tells me that our lord, Ibrahim Pasha, saw the horses which I sent to Constantinople two or three years ago, and was so much pleased with them that he gave great praise to his servant (me), saying that no horse commission had been so well executed as this. Our lord Ibrahim Pasha has now desired Deli Pasha to write to me and find out who purchased these horses for me, and if possible to send the person up to Cairo, where his services are much required. Now, Hassan, as you had the chief trouble and merit of that purchase, I propose to send you to Deli Pasha on this matter. It may open you a way to fortune."

"You are my uncle,"^[28] replied Hassan; "and I am ready to go where you wish, and my fortune is in the hand of Allah."

"Nay, my son," said the good merchant; "it is bitter to my heart to part with you, but you know that it is not consistent with the circumstances of your birth and early youth that you should remain always in this town: you do not wish to go to Cairo? Perhaps, by the blessing of Allah, you may learn things there which concern your happiness?"

Hassan saw at once that his foster-father had communicated to the Hadji some of the mysterious circumstances attending his early childhood, so he replied—

"It is true that I have a weight on my heart, and if I could remove it by a journey to Cairo, it would be a blessed journey indeed."

"You would seek for a father; is it not so?" said the Hadji.

"It is so," replied Hassan. "I have made search and inquiry in Alexandria without success; but I am sure I shall find him, for I have taken a *fal* in the Koran,^[29] and the words that I found were, 'The faithful who seek shall not be disappointed in their hope.'"

"Inshallah! your hope will be fulfilled!" replied the merchant. "Have you anything with you by which a parent, if found, could recognise you?"

Hassan undid his long girdle, and from its inmost folds produced the relics given him by his foster-mother. The merchant examined them attentively.

"These would be sufficient," he said, "to identify you; but, Hassan, if you go to Cairo, remember that there are many accidents by water and by land; you might be robbed, and could never replace them. You had better leave some of them with me; I will keep them for you in my iron chest; whenever you require them, you can send for them."

Hassan acquiesced in the proposal of his kind patron, and reserving only the quaintly devised amulet, he gave up the remainder, receiving from the merchant a paper describing them accurately and bearing the merchant's seal.

The worthy Hadji was grieved to part with his *protégé*, for whom he entertained an affection almost paternal; but having resolved to do so for the youth's own advantage, his chief anxiety now was to furnish him well for the journey. For this purpose he desired Mohammed Aga to procure a pair of stout saddlebags, into which he put two complete suits of clothes, and also two small Cashmere shawls; with respect to these last the Hadji whispered, "You need not wear these unless you find a father in some great man, but they may be useful to you as presents." He gave him also a sword of excellent temper, a slight but beautifully worked Persian dagger, and a pair of English pistols: to these he added a well-filled purse; but observing some hesitation in Hassan's countenance, the kind-hearted Hadji added with a smile, "Nay, it is almost all due to you for past services; but I shall write to Deli Pasha and inform him that your salary is prepaid for three months from this date." Hassan kissed the hand of his benefactor, his heart was too full for speech, and he could only utter—

"If I find a father, may he be like Hadji Ismael."

Of personal vanity Hassan was as free as from the foibles which usually attend it; but it cannot be denied that when he walked out in the full dress and equipment proper to a young Bedouin Sheik, it was with a prouder step, and the day-dreams concerning his future destiny took a firmer hold of his imagination.

"Whither bound, my brother?" called out to him Demetri, on meeting him near the door of the merchant's house. "Mashallah! you have the air and costume of a bridegroom! Who is the moon-faced one whom you have chosen? By our head, Hassan, it is not well to keep these things secret from your friends. When is the wedding to take place?"

"Nay, there is no wedding in the case," said Hassan, laughing. "The Hadji is going to send me on a commission to Cairo, and he has given me this dress and these arms."

"May Allah reward him!" said the merry Greek. "To Cairo, said you? Why, the Fates are propitious. We are going there likewise. Inshallah! we will go together."

"How may that be?" demanded Hassan. "You are going with that rich Frank family, and I hear that your boat will be so crowded with luggage and people that there will not be room for a sparrow on board."

"Nonsense," replied the Greek. "There is always room for a friend. The English servant and I can do as we please, for the old Englishman troubles himself about nothing so long as he has his books and a few old bricks and tiles to look at."

"Bricks and tiles!" said Hassan. "Why, is he going to build a house in Upper Egypt?"

"No; but by my father's head, he is mad about old bricks. The other day he made me go with him all round the mounds near Pompey's Pillar, and he brought back with him nearly an ass-load of fragments of stone, bricks, and pottery."

"Wonderful!" said Hassan. "But why do you think the English servant would be willing to give me a passage in the boat?"

"Why," replied Demetri, "because ever since the day that you threw down the Moghrebi bully who had kicked his seat from under him, he does nothing but talk of you. Never fear; he will be delighted to have your company; and we will tell the old gentleman that if we have you on board, all the thieves and robbers within twenty miles of the bank will disappear as by magic."

"Nay," said Hassan, laughing; "do not tell him anything that might lead him to think me a boasting fool. But you certainly may tell him that if he gives me a passage, and any danger or trouble occurs, I shall be ready to tender the best service in my power."

On this they parted, and Demetri communicated the plan the same day to the valet, who relished it extremely, being well satisfied to have by him in case of need a stouter heart and arm than that with which Providence had blessed the Greek interpreter. They proceeded together to Mr Thorpe, and explained to him the advantages to be derived from the proposed addition to their party.

"But," said Mr Thorpe, "I fear we have no cabin vacant."

"Cabin!" echoed Demetri. "Does your excellency think that a son of the desert like him would go

into a cabin? No, no. With his *bornoos* [cloak] over him, and his *khordj* [saddle-bags] under his head, he will sleep like a prince on any part of the deck."

Mr Thorpe having no other objection to make, and the ladies being curious to see the hero of Foyster's narrative, no further persuasion was requisite, and Hadji Ismael, on his part, was heartily glad that his young *protégé* had found so convenient and easy a conveyance to Cairo.

It was with sincere and mutual regret that Hassan parted with Mohammed Aga and his son Ahmed, who had shown him such invariable kindness during the three or four years that he had spent in Alexandria. But "destiny had written it," and it is wonderful to see the composure with which good Mussulmans resign themselves even to the heaviest misfortunes with that phrase on their tongue.

The chief clerk, in bidding adieu to Hassan, put a letter into his hand. "Take this, my son," he said. "It is addressed to Ahmed Aga, the *mirakhor*³⁰, and favourite Mameluke of Deli Pasha. I have known him long, and I trust he will be a good friend to you."

Hassan in quitting the merchant's house left universal regret behind him. Even the old Berber *bowab* [porter] said, "Allah preserve him. He was a good youth. Every Bairam he gave me a dollar, and if I was half asleep and kept him at the door, he never cursed my father."

On a fine autumnal day, about the middle of October, the Thorpe party embarked on the dahabiahs destined to convey them on their Nile expedition. The boats were moored to the banks of the Mahmoudiah canal, just opposite the pleasant and shady garden then occupied by Moharrem Bey, a relation of the Viceroy's by marriage.

As donkey followed donkey, and porter followed porter to the place of embarkation, the active Greek distributed the packages in their several places; but the space and his patience were wellnigh exhausted by their variety and multitude. There were Mr Thorpe's clothes and books and measuring instruments, and a box of tools for excavation. Then endless boxes and books and other sundries, the greater part of which Demetri considered as useless, were all to be added to the well-filled hampers of wine, spirits, tea, sugar, preserves, pickles, and a thousand other things with which his assiduity and Mr Thorpe's guineas had filled every available bunker and corner of the boats.

Hassan had gone down early to the place of embarkation, not knowing the hour at which the start was to take place; so Demetri availed himself of this circumstance to make him his lieutenant, in urging the porters and the sailors to hasten the stowage of the multifarious baggage.

"By your head, Hassan, you are welcome!" cried the busy Greek; "had you not come, we should not have finished this work to-day, for these fellows are asses and the sons and grandsons of asses. Here—here, you blind dog!" shouted he to a sturdy fellow who was carrying a hamper into the smaller dahabiah, "did I not tell you to put that in the large boat?"

Here he paused, and said in an undertone to Hassan—

"Mr Foyster and I keep the wine-store in this boat, to have it under our own eye. The tutor and the young gentleman are in the small boat, and they cannot require wine."

"If they are to study," replied Hassan, smiling, "I doubt not that Nile water would be better for them; but you should know better than I, who am not a student or a drinker of wine."

"That is the only fault you have, my lad," said Demetri; "there is nothing like wine to open the heart and brighten the eye. Oh! you pig," shouted he to another burly fellow going towards the cabin door; "are you going to carry that *kafass* full of fowls into the ladies' sleeping cabin?" So saying, he jumped upon the luckless porter, and with a few smart blows of his courbatch sent him forward with his chicken-load.

With the assistance of Hassan, Demetri contrived to get the multifarious boxes into something like order and arrangement by the time that a cloud of dust and the braying of half-a-dozen donkeys announced the approach of the Thorpe party.

Once fairly embarked, the boats, sometimes under easy sail, sometimes tracked from the shore, wound their slow way along the waters of the Mahmoudiah.

The voyage from Alexandria to Atfeh, the point at which the canal joins the Nile, is of itself dull, and is so familiar, either by experience or description, to the world in general, that it scarcely merits a separate notice. Still, as Emily Thorpe kept a journal, as many girls are in the habit of doing, a few pages therefrom may be transcribed, to give a further account of the voyage in the dahabiah:—

"I am surprised to hear that the Mahmoudiah canal, although cut by the present Viceroy at an enormous cost of money and of human life, through a country perfectly flat, is as winding in its course as a path through a labyrinth. On asking Demetri, our dragoman, if he could explain the cause of this, he answered me by a story—for he has a story ready for almost every occasion. The very same question, he says, was lately put to Mohammed Ali by a French engineer travelling through Egypt. The Pasha said to the engineer—

"Have you ever seen rivers in Europe?"

"Yes, sir, many."

"Are they straight or crooked in their course?"

"They are generally crooked, sir."

"Who made the rivers?" inquired the Pasha.

"They were made by Allah," said the astonished engineer.

"Then, sir," concluded the Pasha triumphantly, "do you expect me to know and to do better than Allah?"

"The poor engineer had no reply to make to this strange argument, so he took his leave and went his way.

"I hope we shall soon see this extraordinary man, who has raised himself from the position of a subaltern to the vicerealty of Egypt. He is now staying at a small country-house that he has built on the banks of the Nile, about fifty miles above this place.

"On the first day we had mostly contrary winds, and the tracking a boat of this size is slower than

a snail's gallop. Hassan having seen some wild ducks flying over a marsh at no great distance, went in search of them. In the evening he brought back five or six. But yesterday was our first adventure.

74

"We were sailing up the canal, the breeze being favourable, though very slight, when at a bend or sharp turn we came suddenly upon a large boat like our own, coming from Atfeh to Alexandria. Whether owing to a sudden change of course, or to some mismanagement on the part of one of the pilots, I know not, but the two boats came together with a fearful crash. The rigging of both was damaged, and for some minutes the vessels were locked to each other near the prow, the men being unable to extricate them. It seemed that the crew of the other boat was far more numerous than ours, and amongst others I noticed a man dressed in a military blue frock, who, Demetri told me afterwards, was a *kawàss* of the Viceroy.

"The noise, the yells that ensued, and the volumes of (to me unintelligible) abuse that were interchanged, baffle all description; but as no one seemed to think of disengaging the vessels, but all were bent upon gesticulations which became every minute more hostile, I felt seriously alarmed. Hassan, who had been sitting in his usual place behind our divan, seeing my alarm, came up to me and said with a smile (for he speaks English tolerably well)—

"Do not be afraid, lady; these fellahs make a great deal of noise, but there is no danger."

"Even as he was speaking, the man in the blue coat, who seemed to be in a perfect fury, and to be urging his men to board our boat and beat our crew, caught up a stone or brick, which happened to come within his reach. Whether he aimed it at Hassan, or the *rais*, or me, I know not, but it just grazed my head, drawing a little blood from the upper part of my cheek.

75

"Hassan's countenance changed in a moment; his eyes shone like lightning; it was terrible to see such concentrated fury in that young face, so gentle in its habitual expression. Calling the *rais* to hold up his large cloak before me to shield me from further harm, he sprang to the lower deck, and ran forward to the prow where the boat had been entangled. Before he reached the spot they had become disengaged, I know not how, and ours was beginning slowly to resume its course; clearing the intervening space at a bound, he leapt alone upon the deck of the other boat. There he was met and attacked by a man with what they call here a *naboot*, a thick heavy stick. Hassan wrenched it from the man's grasp, and whirling it round his head, and calling on the others to stand back, he forced his way to the spot where stood the *kawàss* who had thrown the stone; the latter drew his sword, but Hassan's blow fell with such terrific force that the sword was shivered, and the man fell senseless on the deck.

"We could see that four or five of the boat's crew struck at Hassan and grappled with him, endeavouring to throw him down and bind him, but he shook them off by the exertion of his tremendous strength, and plunging overboard into the canal swam to the opposite bank; two of the boat's crew jumped in and swam after him, but he reached the shore before them. He then ran along the bank till he overtook our boat, which was now going steadily through the water with a fair wind, and plunging into the canal again, caught a rope thrown to him by our *rais*, and in a minute was safely on board."

76

The two dahabiahs had passed through the locks of Atfeh, and were just about to commence their course up the broad stream of the Nile when a *kawàss* from the Governor of the town came to the water's edge and desired the *rais* of the larger boat to stay a few minutes, as he had a message to deliver to the English traveller.

On being presented to Mr Thorpe, at whose side stood Demetri as interpreter, the *kawàss* said he was instructed by the Governor to desire that an Arab on board, charged with assaulting and beating one of the servants of the Viceroy, might be given up to him.

Mr Thorpe, whose experience of Eastern travel was small, but who was at the same time too humane to think of giving up Hassan to the tender mercies of the Atfeh authorities, consulted apart with Demetri, and then replied—

"Tell the Governor that I have a complaint to make against the captain and crew of the boat which ran into and damaged mine; and also against that servant of the Viceroy who, without any right or provocation, threw a brick at my daughter, which struck her, and might have killed her. I am now on my way to Cairo, where the rights of the case will be examined by the English Consul and the Egyptian Government: then if any person in this boat shall be judged to be in fault he can be punished."

77

The *kawàss*, not having any reply ready to meet this reasonable proposal, permitted the boats to proceed on their way, and retired to deliver the message to his principal.

Unlike the Rhine, the Rhone, and other great rivers in Europe, which are, as it were, merely beneficial accidents in the countries through which they flow, the Nile is the creator and perpetuator, as well as the fertiliser, of the whole soil of Egypt. Wherever its prolific waters annually irrigate and subside, there spring up in exuberant abundance the grains and herbs of the field, the flowers and fruits of the garden, the almond and pomegranate, the fruitful palm, the fragrant orange and lemon, the cotton-plant and the sugar-cane, and, more frequent than all, the widespread shade of the sycamore.^[31] In Egypt it is unnecessary to inquire where vegetation ceases and the desert begins: from the Cataracts to the Mediterranean the answer would be always the same—whatever spot or line the waters of the Nile can reach there is, or may be, cultivation; all beyond that line is desert. The feelings of the party on attaining the fine view of this glorious river were various as their habits and characters.

78

Hassan reclined near the *rais*, reading snatches of his 'Arabian Nights,' and occasionally casting his eyes over the desert sandhills to the west, endeavouring to recognise among them some spot which he had passed in his expeditions with the Oulâd-Ali. The boats glided swiftly forward through the turbid stream under the impulse of a fair and fresh breeze, their crews seated lazily round the mast, passing their pipe from mouth to mouth, when Demetri, to whom everything like silence or quiet was naturally repugnant, came aft and asked Mr Thorpe whether he would like to hear the crew sing an Arab boat-song.

Emily's reply, "Oh! papa, let us hear it by all means!" anticipated and ensured the old gentleman's

consent. Demetri acted as leader, and beat the time with a cane in his hand, which he every now and then allowed to descend pretty sharply on the shoulders of any luckless wight who did not open his jaws and his throat to the utmost extent at the recurrence of the burden or chorus which terminated every verse.

The orchestra consisted of a miserable apology for a kettle-drum (called in Egypt a *darabooka*) played by a fellow who swayed his head and shoulders backwards and forwards to the time of the song. The tone was so strange and its vibrations so shrill as the fellow half shut one eye and threw up his head sideways to strain his voice to the utmost pitch, that Emily was fain to put up her handkerchief to her face, to hide the laugh which she could not resist, and shield her ears from the dissonant shrillness of the sound. When, however, he came down from these indescribable counter-tenor heights^[32] to a more natural tone, and Emily was able to follow the cadence of the song, especially of the wild and irregular chorus which terminated every verse, she began to find it more tolerable, and afterwards even pleasing in its effect.

Hassan being called upon by Mr Thorpe to explain the words, felt not a little confused; for independently of the fact that his knowledge of English was imperfect, it is certain that these songs of the Nile boatmen are extremely difficult to translate, sometimes from the elliptical vagueness of their language, sometimes from its plain and unveiled indecency; he succeeded, however, in giving the general meaning of the song, which cast roughly into English rhyme would run as follows:—

“O night! O night! O night! you’re better far than day;
O night! O night! O night! the Eastern sky is grey;
O night! O night! O night! a little longer stay;
To the girls of Damanhour speed on our homeward way.

Chorus.

The girls of Damanhour, like young gazelles at play,
The girls of Damanhour, none half so fair as they.

“O night! O night! O night! my love is far away,
O night! O night! O night! her form’s a willow spray;^[33]
O night! O night! O night! my heart is fallen a prey
To Damanhour eyes, like those of fawn at play.

Chorus.

Oh the girls of Damanhour, like young gazelles at play;
The girls of Damanhour, none half so fair as they.”

“Are the ladies of Damanhour so fair as they are described?” inquired Emily.

“I know not,” replied Hassan, smiling, “for I was never there excepting once or twice, and then only for a day or two; but I doubt their beauty, lady, for what are they but fellahs? Doubtless the song was written by some Damanhour rhymers, and we have a proverb in Arabic, ‘My children are fairer than yours,’ said the crow to the parrot.”

“Do you despise the fellahs, Hassan?” said Mr Thorpe.

“Despise them! No,” replied the youth (his countenance betraying the pride which his tongue disavowed); “Allah made them, and they are good to cultivate the ground—nothing more. The ox and the donkey are useful animals, but neither is an Arab horse.”

On the following day the dahabiahs continued their course up the Nile without accident or adventure, when, as they reached a bend in the river called Zauràt-el-Bahr, the party assembled on their decks saw before them at the distance of a few miles a number of tents, horsemen, and other indications of a large encampment.

On interrogating the *rais*, Mr Thorpe learnt that from these indications the presence of Mohammed Ali in person might certainly be inferred, he having built near that spot a small country-house, to which he occasionally resorted while inspecting the canals and other improvements which he had recently ordered to be made in the province of Menoufiah.

As the dahabiahs drew near the encampment, and Mr Thorpe was doubting whether he could gratify the curiosity he had long felt to see the celebrated founder of the new Egyptian dynasty, a six-oared boat, with an officer in the stern-sheets, darted out from the bank and was alongside in a moment. Stepping on deck with a polite salute, he said he believed that he had the pleasure of seeing the English lord who had lately come up from Alexandria on his way to Cairo.^[34]

Demetri having been desired to reply in the affirmative, the officer continued—

“The Viceroy has heard of your coming, and orders me to say that he hopes you will not find it inconvenient to remain here to-night, and to breakfast with his Highness to-morrow morning, with all your party.”

Mr Thorpe having desired Demetri to accept the invitation on his part with due acknowledgments of the Viceroy’s courtesy, the Greek made a most flowery speech upon the occasion, the half of which, at least, was of his own invention. It conveyed, however, the required acceptance; and the officer having withdrawn, the boats were made fast to the shore, a few hundred yards from the garden attached to the Viceroy’s villa. Guards were sent down to protect them from thieves during the night, and half-a-dozen sheep, fifty fowls, and several baskets of fruit were sent on board by his Highness’s order.

Mr Thorpe and all his party were pleasantly surprised at the agreeable opportunity thus offered by the Viceroy's unexpected courtesy of seeing one whom they justly considered as a celebrity of his time. Mr Thorpe, though believing that the Viceroy's invitation had been specially intended to include the ladies, sent Demetri on shore, desiring him to ascertain the point from one of the chamberlains. Demetri returned with a message that, as Mr Thorpe was accompanied by his wife and daughter, the Viceroy hoped to be honoured by their presence at breakfast.

83

On the following morning, at the appointed hour, an officer and several servants of the Viceroy's household came down to the boats to conduct the party to his Highness's presence, Demetri accompanying them in his capacity of dragoman. Mrs Thorpe and Emily had not omitted to follow the advice given them by the British Consul in Alexandria, and on landing from their boat they each wore a thick green veil over their face. The precaution was not unnecessary, for they had to pass through a great crowd of soldiers, Mamelukes, and attendants, all of whom stared with eager curiosity at the Frank ladies, whose dress and appearance presented a novelty to Egyptian eyes.

On reaching the villa, after passing through an antechamber, at the door of which were two sentries with musket and bayonet, they came to a silk curtain fringed with gold. The conductor raised it, and they found themselves in the presence of Mohammed Ali.

At the period of our tale Mohammed Ali was at the high tide of his personal and political career. Though upwards of fifty-five years—the latter half of them spent in constant warfare or intrigue—had passed over his head, they had not impaired either the energy of his mind or the activity of his frame.

All opposition to his government had been subdued: the scattered remnants of the Mameluke beys whom he had overthrown were fugitives in remote parts of the Soudan. The Divan at Constantinople had found itself compelled to treat him rather like an independent ally than a powerful vassal. Nubia, and the countries fertilised by the White and the Blue Nile, had submitted to his arms. He had restored the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, to the dominion of the Sultan, and had brought under subjection the warlike and independent tribes of Arabia—the sands of whose desert fastnesses had never before been trodden by the foot of a foreign invader. Even the dreaded Wahabees, the terror of whose fanatic arms extended across the Arabian peninsula from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, had been unable to oppose any effectual resistance to his well-disciplined troops. Their great chief, Souhoud, had fallen. Deraiah, his capital, in the wild recesses of the Nejd, had been taken and plundered, and his son and successor, Abdallah, with all his family, had graced as captives the conqueror's triumph in Cairo.

84

After all these successes in foreign and domestic warfare, he turned his attention to the improvement and development of his acquired dominions; and in these pursuits evinced the same energy, if not always the same sagacity, that had marked his military career. His first object was to free the valley of the Nile from the depredations of the Bedouins on the bordering deserts; and having learnt from experience the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of chastising the incursions of their flying squadrons with his regular troops, he adopted the plan of weakening them by division among themselves. With this view he cultivated the friendship of the chiefs of several of the more powerful tribes, whom he gained over to his interest by timely donations of money, dresses of honour, and land for the pasturage of their flocks; in return for which favours they were ready at his call to pour forth their numerous horsemen in pursuit of any predatory bands of other Bedouin tribes who ventured to make hostile incursions into his territory. By this prudent adoption of the well-known principle of "divide et impera," he had succeeded in so far weakening their general power that the cultivated provinces in Egypt already enjoyed a state of comparative tranquillity.

85

This object attained, he turned the energies of his active mind to the increase of his revenue; and not satisfied with those resources of agriculture which nature has indicated to be the chief if not the only wealth of Egypt, he already thought of rivalling at Boulak the silks of Lyons, the looms of Manchester, and the foundries of Birmingham. It was while his head was full of these projects, in the prosecution of which machinery of every kind was daily pouring into the country, that he received the visit of Mr Thorpe and his party.

At the time of their entrance he was seated on a divan in the corner of the room farthest from the door, and beside him stood a middle-aged man whom they conjectured to be his dragoman. He rose from his seat and received them with the polite urbanity for which he was distinguished, and motioned to the ladies to take their seats on the divan. Chairs having been prepared, the one nearest to his person was appropriated to Mr Thorpe. While the first compliments were being exchanged, and the coffee was handed round in small cups of enamel studded with diamonds, they had full leisure to examine the features and appearance of the conqueror and regenerator of the land of the Pharaohs.

86

Although below the average height, his active and firmly knit form was well calculated for the endurance of the fatigues and exertions which his restless mind imposed upon it. On his head he wore a fez or cap, around which was wound a fine Cashmere shawl in the shape of a turban; for he had not yet adopted the tarboosh, which forms at present the unsightly head-dress of Turks and Egyptians. His forehead was high, bold, and square in its outline, subtended by shaggy eyebrows, from beneath which peered out a pair of eyes, not large, but deep-set, bright, and singularly expressive; when in anger, they shot forth fiery glances which few could withstand, and when he was in mirthful mood, they twinkled like stars. His nose was straight, with nostrils rather wide; his mouth well-shaped, though somewhat broad, while beneath it a massive chin, covered by a beard slightly grizzled by age, completed a countenance on which the character of a firm, determined will was indelibly stamped. He was dressed in a pelisse lined with fur, in the front of which protruded from his Cashmere belt the diamond-studded hilt of a dagger. Large loose trousers, and a pair of red slippers, according to the fashion of the day, completed his costume, whilst on the little finger of a hand small and delicate as that of a woman shone a diamond of inestimable value.

87

After the interchange of the usual complimentary speeches and inquiries—such as, "Whether Mr Thorpe liked what he had seen of Egypt"; "Whether they proposed ascending the Nile as far as the

First Cataract," &c.—which the Viceroy's interpreter translated into French, breakfast was announced. On his Highness leading the way into the adjoining apartment, they were surprised at seeing a table laid out in the European fashion, with the unexpected luxuries, not only of knives and forks, but likewise of chairs and snow-white napkins. The dragoman stood behind his master's chair, and Emily was rather confused at finding that the chief part of the conversation fell to her share—on account of her speaking French much more fluently than her parents. The Pasha was much pleased at this, for he was devoted to the fair sex.

With the exception of a pilau, and one or two Turkish dishes of pastry and sweetmeats, there was nothing to distinguish the breakfast from one served in Paris. As soon as it was concluded, and the fingers of the guests had been duly purified by rose-water, poured from a silver-gilt vase, they returned to the reception-room and resumed their former places. Scarcely were they seated than there entered a row of well-dressed young Mamelukes, each bearing before him a long pipe, with a mouthpiece of amber, ornamented with diamonds, which they presented to all the guests, as well as to the Pasha. Of course neither of the ladies had ever held a pipe between their lips, and Mr Thorpe was as guiltless of tobacco as they were. The Pasha smiled, and told them, through his interpreter, that it was intended as a compliment, but the acceptance of it was optional.

Mrs Thorpe absolutely declined; but Emily took the pipe, and putting the pretty amber between her pretty lips, and making believe to smoke, pouted so prettily that the Viceroy heartily wished she were a Circassian that he might buy her on the spot. Mr Thorpe, wishing to be particularly civil, took two or three *bonâ-fide* puffs at the pipe, the result of which was that he was nearly choked, and his eyes filled with tears.

The attendants having retired, the conversation on general topics was resumed; and the Viceroy explained to Mr Thorpe some of the projects then floating in his active brain for introducing various branches of manufacturing industry into Egypt. In reply Mr Thorpe, who, although by no means a political economist, was a man of plain good sense, pointed out to his Highness the difficulties that he would obviously have to encounter from the want of hands (the agricultural population of Egypt not being sufficient to cultivate the arable soil), and also from the absence of the two most important elements of manufacturing industry—iron and coal.

"Ah!" said the Pasha, laughing; "I know all that; I shall have difficulties; what can be done without difficulty? All my life I have been contending against them; I have always overcome them, and, Inshallah, I will do so still! Did you see," he added, with increased animation, "a canal that joins the Nile a few miles northward of this spot?" Mr Thorpe had noticed it, but had not thought of inquiring whither it led. "Well, then," continued the Pasha, "that canal leads to a large village in the middle of the Delta, from which and from the neighbouring provinces it brings the produce down to the Nile. How do you think I made that canal? You shall hear. Two years ago I stopped here on my way to Cairo from Alexandria, and having determined to make a canal from the Nile to that village, I sent for the chief engineer of the province, and having given him the length, breadth, and depth of the canal required, I asked him in what space of time he would undertake to make it. He took out his pen and his paper, and having made his calculations, he said that if I gave him an order on the Governor of the province for the labour he required, he would undertake to finish it in a year. My reply was a signal to my servants to throw him down and give him two hundred blows of the stick on his feet. This ceremony being concluded, I said to him, 'Here is the order for the number of labourers you may require; I am going to Upper Egypt, and shall come back in four months; if the canal is not completed by the day of my return, you shall have three hundred more.'"

In relating this story the Pasha's eyes sparkled, and he almost jumped from his sitting posture with excitement, as he added, rubbing his hands, "By Allah! the canal was completed when I returned."^[35]

The Viceroy having enjoyed for a few moments the recollection of his successful engineering, turned to Mr Thorpe and said, with a graver air—

"I am sorry to have to speak on a disagreeable subject, but a letter has been brought to me by a horseman from the Governor of Atfeh, in which it is stated that a portion of the crew of your boat attacked the crew of a Government boat on the canal, and that they were set on and led by a young Arab of gigantic size, who nearly killed one of my *kawâsses*."

Here Demetri, whose office had hitherto been a sinecure, the translation having all passed through the Viceroy's interpreter, thinking it a good opportunity for displaying his descriptive powers, came forward, and addressing the Viceroy, said—

"May it please your Highness, my friend Hassan—"

"Silence, babbler!" said the Pasha, in an angry voice; "you may speak when you are spoken to." So saying, he darted upon the unfortunate Greek a fiery glance that almost made his heart jump into his mouth.

"Excuse me," said the Pasha to Mr Thorpe, recovering himself immediately, as he observed Demetri steal noiselessly out of the room; "these servants, especially Smyrniotes, always tell lies, and I desired to hear the truth of this story from yourself."

"I was in the cabin," replied Mr Thorpe; "but my daughter was on deck the whole time, and saw all that passed; she can give your Highness a correct report."

"If the young lady will so far favour me, I shall be obliged," said the Viceroy.

Emily then related what had passed with the utmost accuracy. She noticed that at the pauses of her narrative the interpreter made sundry marks on a letter which he held in his hand, and also that alternate smiles and frowns followed each other on the expressive countenance of Mohammed Ali. When she had ceased speaking he thanked her, and after conversing a moment with his interpreter, proceeded to ask her a few questions connected with the letter which he held in his hand.

"Do you know whether it was by accident or design that the two boats ran against each other, and if accident, whose fault was it?"

"I think it was certainly accident, as there had been no quarrel or cause of quarrel before; whose fault it was I am not able to judge."

"Are you sure that your crew did not attack the crew of the other boat first, with sticks or other weapons?"

"I am sure that nothing but words had passed on either side until the *kawàss* threw the stone or brick."

"Did you see him throw it?" said the Pasha, knitting his brows.

"I saw him certainly, and he very nearly hurt me seriously, as your Highness may see." While thus speaking, Emily turned her cheek aside, and lifting up one of the brown curls, she showed the hurt.

"*Kàhpe-oghlu pezevènk!*" said the Pasha, in an angry tone, looking towards his interpreter. (The words are untranslatable to ears polite, although they may fall from a Turk fifty times in a day. They may be rendered in this case, "The infernal scoundrel!") "One more question," he added, "I would beg to ask the young lady. You say that the youth you call Hassan jumped alone on the deck of the other boat; how many men might there be on the deck at the time?"

"I did not count them; there might be eight or ten; some were pulling at a rope on shore."

"And how is it they did not drive him back, and prevent him from striking the *kawàss*?"

"I cannot tell; I saw them strike at him on all sides, but it seems they had not power to stop him, for he reached the *kawàss*, broke his sword, and beat him down before jumping into the canal."

"*Ajàib!*—wonderful!" said the Viceroy, turning to his dragoman. "What a tale is this; and if it be true, what dirt have these lying dogs been eating?" As he spoke, he pointed again to the letter he held in his hand.

"The Viceroy is astonished at your tale," said the interpreter, addressing Emily; "it differs so entirely from the report sent to him by the *kawàss*."

"I grant that it seems improbable," said Emily, slightly colouring; "but as I own that I was very much frightened, if his Highness thinks that I have stated anything incorrectly, it is easy to know the truth. The *rais* of our boat was close beside me all the time, and saw what passed; let the Pasha send for him and make him relate what he saw."

When this was translated to the Viceroy, his eyes sparkled again, and he said, turning to Mr Thorpe, "The young lady is fit to be a *cadi*; by Allah! with your leave, it shall be as she says."

"By all means," replied Mr Thorpe; "let the *rais* be brought before his Highness immediately."

Demetri, having been sent down to the boat, returned in a few minutes with the *rais*, whose relation of the circumstances differed in no essential particular from that made by Emily.

"*Mashallah!*" said the Viceroy, "it is wonderful; with Mr Thorpe's permission I should like to see and question this youth."

Mr Thorpe having signified his acquiescence, Demetri was again sent to the boat, and soon returned, accompanied by Hassan.

During the brief absence of Demetri in search of Hassan, the Viceroy had made further inquiries concerning the latter, in reply to which Mr Thorpe informed him that the young man had been in the employment of Hadji Ismael, and was now on his way to Cairo with letters for some pasha whose name Mr Thorpe did not remember.

"What, Hadji Ismael, our good Arab merchant?" said the Viceroy.

"The same," replied Mr Thorpe.

Here the Viceroy spoke apart to the interpreter, by whose order an attendant brought a small box, containing letters, which he placed on the divan at his Highness's side. The interpreter, by the Viceroy's desire, ran his eye over two or three letters from Alexandria, till he found the one of which he was in search. He read a passage from it, at which Mohammed Ali laughed and chuckled immoderately, repeating over and over again, "*Aferin! aferin!*" (bravo! bravo!) He then turned to Mr Thorpe, saying—

"I wonder whether this can be the same youth as the one mentioned in this letter, who threw the famous Moghrebi wrestler, Ebn-el-Ghaizi? It is here written that he was in the employment of Hadji Ismael."

"There can be little doubt it is the same youth," replied Mr Thorpe. "I have heard the whole story from our English servant. Indeed, it was in protecting him that Hassan got into a quarrel with the wrestler."

"*Mashallah!*" said the Viceroy, "the youth deserves a reward, for that vagabond Moghrebi had beaten all the Egyptian wrestlers, and laughed at our beards."

At this moment Hassan reached the door of the apartment, and the Viceroy having given orders that he should be admitted, he came forward, and having made the usual obeisance and touched his forehead with the skirt of the Viceroy's pelisse, retired a few steps, and drawing himself up to his full height, awaited his prince's commands in silence.

Mohammed Ali had been accustomed from his youth to study the characters of men from their countenance and bearing, and he now fixed upon Hassan an eye whose piercing gaze few cared to encounter; but Hassan met it with a calm and untroubled look. "*Mashallah!* a noble-looking youth," muttered he to himself, after scanning the athletic yet graceful proportions of the figure before him. He then turned to his dragoman, saying—

"That youth is surely not an Arab. Of what race think you he may be?"

Before the dragoman could reply, Hassan, addressing the Viceroy, said—

"It is right that your Highness should know that I understand Turkish, lest you should say anything not intended for my ear."^[36]

"Ha! ha! I forgot that he had been in Alexandria some years," said the Viceroy in a low tone. He then added aloud, "Hassan—for so I hear you are called—whence do you come?"

"I was bred in the tents of your friends the *Oulâd-Ali*," replied the youth.

"A proud and a stubborn set of rogues they are," muttered the Viceroy in an undertone. He then continued aloud, knitting his shaggy brows as he spoke, "You are accused of having struck and nearly killed one of my *kawàsses*. What have you to say to the charge?"

"It is true, and he deserved it," replied Hassan.

"Deserved it!" repeated Mohammed Ali, his eye kindling with fire. "Do you dare, youngster, to

laugh at my beard, and to correct my servants at your pleasure?"

"Mohammed Ali," said the youth, with manly simplicity, "I have been taught to venerate and not to laugh at a beard silvered by time. How, then, should I not honour yours, for I have longed to see you from my childhood, having heard of your skill and courage in war and your generosity in peace? But your Highness cannot know and cannot be answerable for the insolence of all your servants. Had you been where I was when that cowardly fellow threw a stone at the head of the young lady beside you, you would not have beaten him—you would have cut his head off."

"By the head of my father!" said the Viceroy, pleased rather than offended at the unusual boldness of Hassan's speech—"By the head of my father! I believe the boy is right. I have heard the whole story from these strangers and from the *rais*, and though I was prepared to be angry with you, I now acquit you from blame. Where are you going to in Cairo, and what commission have you from our good merchant the Hadji?"

"I am going with a letter from him," said Hassan, "to Delì Pasha."

"Delì [mad], well named," said the Viceroy. "I can guess; it is about horses. Have you the letter with you? Let me see it."

Hassan with some hesitation withdrew the letter from a small silk bag which he carried in the folds of his girdle, and handed it to the Viceroy, who, without the slightest ceremony, opened it, and gave it to the interpreter to read to him, which he did in a tone audible only to the Viceroy himself.

"It is all right," he said. "Give it back to Hassan, and let him take it on to Delì Pasha."

"Pardon me," said Hassan; "I cannot receive it so. Delì Pasha might suspect me of having opened it. Let your Highness's secretary write in the margin that it was opened by your order, and reseal it with your seal."

"By Allah!" said Mohammed Ali, "the youth has brains, as well as goodly limbs. Call the *khaznadâr*."^[37] When that officer entered, the Viceroy, giving him the letter, whispered a few instructions in his ear, and he left the room.

It had not escaped the Viceroy's quick eye that Hassan had evinced some awkwardness or constraint in opening the silk bag containing the letter and replacing it in his girdle, and he said to him—

"These Frank travellers tell me that, while you were attacking the *kawàss* on that boat, you received some blows and a stab from one of the crew. Is this so?"

"It is true," replied Hassan; "but the blows were nothing, and the stab was of little consequence; the bleeding from it was soon stopped."

"Does it hurt you now?" demanded the Pasha.

"A little," he replied. "But it is not worth your Highness's notice."

"You are a madcap," said the Viceroy; "and young blood thinks nothing of wounds. Raise up your left arm to your head."

Hassan tried to obey, but the arm fell powerless at his side.

"Ha!" said the Pasha, "I knew it was so." Then turning to his interpreter, who was also a Doctor, he continued, "Hakim Bashi, take him into another room and examine his wound, and while you are away let that Greek come in again to interpret. His tongue will not run so fast now."

The Doctor conveyed Hassan to his own apartment, and the conversation was resumed through the medium of Demetri, who had been so thoroughly abashed by his first rebuff that he would not risk a second, but performed his interpreting duties with an accuracy which surprised himself—for he did not add more than one-third from his own head.

A quarter of an hour, then half an hour, passed away, and still neither the Doctor nor his patient returned. Several cups of coffee had been presented, and nearly an hour had elapsed ere the Hakim Bashi entered the room alone.

"Come here!" cried out the impatient Viceroy. "By Allah! your absence has been long. Where is the youth?"

"I left him lying on a divan in my room, your Highness, and he must not be moved for at least twenty-four hours."

"Was his hurt, then, so bad?" inquired the Pasha.

"It was such," said the Doctor, "that if your Highness had not desired me to examine and dress the wound, in a few days the amputation of his arm at the shoulder might have been necessary. I found on the top of the shoulder a large blue circle, which convinced me that there was something seriously wrong below. I was obliged to cut it open, and to cut deep, too. Then I took my probes and began to examine the bottom of the wound. As the inflammation was great, the pain must have been most acute; but, my lord, I never saw such a youth. He remained as firm and unmoved as if he had been made of wood or stone; and in the middle of the operation he said to me with a smile, 'Hakim Bashi, Mashallah! what an eye our Prince has got.' At last my instrument met with some hard substance, which, with some trouble, I succeeded in reaching with a forceps, and I drew it out. It proved to be the point of the dagger with which he had been stabbed, and which, encountering the bone, had broken off. Here it is." So saying, he produced to the Viceroy about half an inch of the point of a steel dagger.

"Aferin! aferin!" (bravo! bravo!) said the Viceroy. "Well have you done, my good Hakim Bashi. The young man will recover the use of his arm now."

"Yes, if it be the will of Allah. But he must remain at least twenty-four hours in the position in which I have placed him. I shall dress the wound once or twice, and at this hour to-morrow I can tell your Highness whether he is fit to pursue his journey."

"What do you think?" said Mohammed Ali, addressing Mr Thorpe; "if I had two or three regiments composed of fellows like this Hassan, might I not march to—any part of the world?" Another termination was on his lips, but he checked it, and substituted the vague phrase. A slight smile might have been noticed on the face of the medical interpreter, who well knew the word that had nearly escaped his chief, although the idea was not carried into execution until many years had passed.

"I have travelled in many countries," replied Mr Thorpe, "and can assure your Highness that men of the stature, strength, and symmetry of Hassan are rare everywhere; but your Highness knows better than I do, and has proved it to the world, that however advantageous to the individual may be the possession of these qualities, in an army there is nothing but discipline among the men, and skill in their commander, that can ensure success."

"May your life be long!" said the Viceroy, acknowledging the compliment; "but now you must tell me what you wish to do, for you see this Hassan cannot go forward for a day or two. Will you wait for him, or will you pursue your journey, and I will have him sent on in the first boat that passes?"

"Nay," said Mr Thorpe, "we are not so hurried but that we can wait for a day; and it would be unkind to leave him behind, as he received his wound in defending us."

"Be it so," replied the Pasha; "and there is another advantage in your staying. The Governor of Damietta has written me word that a Christian *kassis*^[38] is coming up the river on his way to the South. They say he is a very learned man, and has been some years in these countries: perhaps you might like to join him to your party?"

"Willingly," replied Mr Thorpe, "if he arrives in time. Meanwhile, I will take my leave, having trespassed too much on your Highness's time." So saying, he arose, but the Viceroy would not let him go until he had made him promise to come again on the morrow to breakfast.

The Thorpe party returned to their boat, and spent the remainder of the day in talking over the occurrences of the morning, and in discussing the character and qualities of the remarkable man whom they had seen for the first time.

A few hours later Demetri came into the cabin and stated that the Viceroy's interpreter was without, accompanied by a stranger. Orders having been given for his immediate admission, he came in and said to Mr Thorpe—

"I have been charged by the Viceroy to present to you Mr Müller, concerning whom his Highness spoke to you; and I do it with much pleasure, as he is a friend of mine, and a most worthy person."

The new-comer was apparently about forty-five years of age. His countenance was intelligent and benevolent, and his complexion, from long exposure to sun and weather, was tanned almost to the hue of an Arab. On his head he wore what had once been a German cap, but which, from the folds of grey serge wrapped around it, might almost pass for a turban; and his beard, which was bushy and slightly grizzled, fell nearly half-way to his waist. His outer dress was composed of a long robe or gaberdine of dark-grey cloth, with loose sleeves, and confined at the waist by a leathern girdle, from which depended a bag, made from the skin of an antelope, and containing all the sundries which the good missionary most frequently required in his long excursions in the forest and desert. His sandals were of undressed hide, and he had made them himself; and he carried in his hand a stout staff which he had brought from the Abyssinian woods, and which had been his constant companion in many a remote peregrination.

The two visitors remained some time, and the conversation turned on Egypt and the wilder regions to the southward, with all of which Müller seemed so familiar, and described them with so much truthful simplicity, that the Thorpe party were delighted with him.

On the following day they returned to breakfast with the Pasha, and were glad to learn that Hassan had passed a quiet night, and that the inflammation had so far subsided that he might go on board without risk.

"I have no fear," said the medical interpreter, "of any bad consequences now that you have agreed on going with Müller; he has had so much experience that he is half a Doctor himself: indeed," he added, smiling, "I doubt whether he has not more skill than many who hold the diploma."

The breakfast passed as agreeably as that of the preceding day, and after it Hassan was summoned into the Pasha's presence. He came in with his left arm in a sling. His Highness spoke kindly to him, and after receiving the thanks of the youth for the attention shown to him by the interpreter, the latter was desired by the chief to reseal and restore to Hassan the letter from the merchant to Deli Pasha, adding in the margin that it had been opened by himself, and, in conclusion, he whispered a few words in his ear, to which the interpreter only replied by the customary "On my head be it."

A few minutes sufficed to execute this order, and when the interpreter returned the letter to Hassan, he at the same time presented another to Mr Thorpe, informing him that it contained an order to the Kiahya Pasha^[39] to furnish his party with an escort to the Pyramids, and a guard while remaining there. His Highness also said that on their return from Upper Egypt he should probably be at Shoobra,^[40] and he hoped they would come to see him there.

Mr Thorpe having duly expressed his thanks for his Highness's hospitality and kindness, now rose to take his departure, and Hassan came forward and touched his forehead with the skirt of the Viceroy's pelisse; Mohammed Ali looked at him with a smile, and said—

"Good fortune attend you, Hassan—a mad follower going to join a mad lord—but you are a good lad, and I am pleased with you."

They all retired to their boat, Hassan taking an opportunity before they left to thank the medical interpreter for the service he had rendered him in restoring him the use of his arm.

Our party pursued their way merrily towards Cairo, Mr Thorpe's impatience to see his beloved pyramids becoming every hour more uncontrollable.

Müller's *canjah*^[41] kept company with them, and it had been agreed before they started that he should pass the day on board the large boat and at night sleep on his own; by this means he was enabled every day to dress Hassan's shoulder according to the advice given him by the medical interpreter.

The voyage was slow, and unaccompanied by incidents of interest to any excepting our friend Demetri, who daily landed at some village to purchase milk, fowls, and a lamb for the party; and as he only put them down in his account at one hundred per cent over the cost price, Mrs Thorpe, instead of complaining of the charges, only expressed her wonder at the cheapness of provisions.

We shall not be surprised at the good lady's satisfaction when we remember that at the period of which we write one hundred eggs were bought for a piastre,^[42] a couple of fowls for the same amount, and a sheep for five piastres.

We may here insert a few leaves from Emily's journal:—

"We have found the Missionary Müller a great addition to our party; he is the best, and the queerest, and the cleverest creature I ever beheld; he really seems to me to know everything. He has travelled a great deal in Nubia and the adjoining regions, and speaks several of those barbarous languages. His most constant companion on our boat is Hassan. I could not resist asking him the other day, after a conversation which seemed to me to have lasted above an hour, what he could find to interest him so much in Hassan's conversation, and whether it was about fighting and hunting.

"No," he replied, with a good-humoured smile, 'it was about religion.'

"Religion!" I exclaimed in astonishment; 'I can understand that he should listen to you on such a subject, but I observed that he spoke more and more vehemently than you did yourself.'

"True, lady; but I could not blame him, for I attacked, and he defended, his faith. I had before observed in him so much unselfishness, modesty, and such a love of truth that I thought it my duty to try if I might not lead him to the way of truth where we know it to be. With him, as with all true Mussulmans, it is next to impossible. They have got the one great undeniable truth—the Unity of God—so indelibly stamped upon their conviction that any attempt to make them understand, or even consider, the doctrine of the Trinity is attended with such difficulties as amount almost to an impossibility! The words with which Hassan closed our conversation were these: "There is no God but Allah; the days of fighting the Mushrekin and planting the true faith with the sword are gone—now we can only pity them."

"Who are the Mushrekin?" I inquired.

"The term signifies," he replied, 'those who assign a partner; and it is applied especially to Christians, who, in the estimation of the Moslem, assign in their doctrine of the Trinity two other persons or spirits as partners with the Creator.'

"Whence could Hassan," I asked, 'learn to discuss such subjects; has he any learning?'

"He has no learning," replied Müller; 'but he knows his Koran well, and reads it constantly. He knows not that all which is most valuable in its moral precepts was taken from our Bible; but his heart is simple, his faith fixed, and his will strong and determined. There is hardly a tribe in the deserts of Southern Africa, or in the islands of the Southern Ocean, where a missionary may not hope for some reward for his labours, but to convert an honest and believing Mussulman is a task almost hopeless.'

"The following day we continued our course up the Nile, passing by a number of villages and palm-groves, and towards evening I resumed my favourite seat on the upper deck, to see the beautiful Egyptian sunset; the Missionary Müller was by me, and interested me much by descriptions of the Soudan. Hassan was quite in the stern of the boat, reciting or chanting in a low voice. I asked Müller if he knew what the young man was repeating, but he could not catch the words, and said, "It is doubtless some old Arab legend." I felt a great desire to hear a recitation of this kind, and I inquired of the missionary whether he could prevail upon Hassan to repeat it to us.

"He got up and made the request. I could see that some hesitation and difficulties arose; but they were soon overcome, and Müller returned, bringing with him Hassan, who sat down in his old place between me and the *rais*. Müller said to me—

"Hassan desires the young lady to be informed that he is not a *râwi* [a teller of stories], but that he knows some old Arab legends. If it pleases her, he will tell the tale of Rabîah. It is,' added Müller, 'a legend of great antiquity, and its scene is laid in Arabia.'

"I told him it would give me great pleasure to hear it, so Hassan commenced.

"Although I could not understand a word, it moved me deeply. After the first few lines his faculties seemed all wrapped up in the tale: now the voice was deep and guttural, then it grew soft and sad; then came some scene of anger or strife, and his eyes flashed fire; then came a plaintive tone, which dropping almost to a whisper, suddenly stopped. I felt sure that the hero or the heroine was dead, and the tears actually stood in Müller's eyes, and the old *rais* at the helm uttered several sighs, or rather groans, in succession.

"On expressing my vexation that I could not understand the recital, Müller kindly said that he would make me a translation of the tale on the morrow, correcting it from Hassan's lips.

"Here is the translation of the Arab legend made by Müller:—

"RABÎAH.

"Rabîah was feeble, slowly recovering from severe wounds. Who has not heard of Rabîah?—the Lion of the Nejd, whose eyes were like burning coals, whose form was like the *at'l* (oak), whose voice was as a tempest; before his lance the brave fell bathed in blood, and the timid fled like herds of antelopes.

"When Rabîah came forth to battle and shouted his war-cry, the maidens of the Otèbah wrung their hands, saying, 'Alas for my brother!' 'Alas for my beloved!' and the mother, pressing her babe to her breast, cried, 'Oh, my child, wilt thou see thy father to-morrow?'

"Now Rabîah was feeble.

"Some months before he had borne away from the tents of the Otèbah, Selma, the pearl of the tribe; her form was like the Egyptian willow, her face like the full moon in its brightness, her eyes were those of the antelope, and her teeth pearls set between two cushions of rose-leaves, her neck was a pillar of camphor,^[43] and her breasts two pomegranates rivalling each other in rounded beauty.

"But Selma's eyes were averted, as if in scorn; and while Rabîah was consumed by the fire of love, her heart was a locked casket whose contents none might know.

"The season was spring, and the tribe, with their warriors and tents, their flocks and herds, had moved on to a higher region. Rabîah, retarded by his wounds, had remained behind, keeping with

him only a few followers, his sister, and Selma; but anxiety came upon his mind, and he said, 'Let us go to join the tribe.'

"So they went, the two maidens riding in a *musàttah*,^[44] and he on a *shibriah*,^[45] and thus they journeyed, and Rabîah sung in a feeble voice the following words:—

'Alas, my heart is bleeding! the arrows of the Otèbah have tasted my blood;
But their hurt is nothing: it is the glance of Selma's eye that hath pierced my heart.'

"The maidens heard the song, but Selma spoke not, and his sister wept for his wounds, but more for his unrequited love.

"On the second day they passed a mountain, and, reaching a sandy plain, journeyed slowly across it.

"Suddenly a cloud of dust appeared in the distance, and one of the followers sped on a swift horse to see whence it arose. The maidens trembled like willow-leaves in the morning breeze, but Rabîah slept. The man soon returned with a loosened rein and bloody heel, shouting—

"It is a large body of the Otèbah, and they are coming this way; there is no hope of escape; there is neither strength nor power save in Allah!

"Rabîah,' cried his sister, distracted with fear, 'canst thou do nothing to save us? Wilt thou see Selma carried off before thine eyes? The Otèbah are coming!'

"At these words Rabîah started up as if from a dream; his eyes shone like two suns.

"Bring me my led war-horse,' he shouted to his men, 'and fasten on my armour; let us see what enemy dare come near Selma while Rabîah lives.'

"Still while they fastened on his armour his old wounds opened afresh, and the blood trickled from them, and he sang the following lines:—

'Truly, to be near her and not have her love is worse than twenty deaths;
But to die for her is sweeter than to drink the waters of Keswer.'^[46]

"When Selma heard these words she turned towards him, and tears dropped from her eyes upon her soft cheek, like dewdrops on a rose.

"Rabîah,' she cried, 'thy great love hath torn away the veil of pride and deceit from my heart; truly my love is equal to thine; come to my arms, my beloved, let us live or die together.'

"Then the camels were made to kneel, and Rabîah came to the side of her litter, and she cast her arms about his neck, and he kissed her on the mouth, and their lips did not separate till their souls passed into each other, and they forgot the world.

"But the followers cried aloud, 'Rabîah, the Otèbah are coming!' and he tore himself from her embrace; and his great war-horse stood beside him stamping on the ground, for his ear caught the tramp of the steeds, and his wide nostrils snuffed the coming fight. None but Tarrad could bear that mighty warrior through the ranks of the foe; he was swift as an antelope, and like an elephant in his strength.

"Now Rabîah's armour was fastened, and his helmet on his head. He looked once more upon Selma, and repeated the following lines:—

'Our souls have drunk together the water of life,
There is no separation now, not even in death.'

"Then he mounted Tarrad, and took his great spear in his hand, though his limbs were stiff, and his wounds still bled beneath his armour.

"Make all speed,' said he, 'with the camels to the Horseman's Gap;^[47] beyond it is the plain where our tribe is encamped; there you will be safe.'

"So they went; and when he saw the Otèbah drawing near, his great heart rose within him; he forgot his wounds, and the fire shot from his eyes. Then he rode towards them, and shouted his battle-cry aloud. Their hearts trembled within them, and none came forth to meet him.

"But Fèsal, the young chief of the band, who was brother to Selma, reproached them, saying—

"Are ye men, or are ye sheep, that one hundred are afraid of one? Has he not slain our brethren, and carried away the pearl of our tribe? Now is the hour of revenge.'

"And he went forth at speed to strike Rabîah to the earth with his lance, but Rabîah met him in full career, and warded the blow. With the shock of meeting, Fèsal and his horse rolled together on the ground.

"Then Rabîah wheeled round to slay him, but the young man's helmet had fallen off, and Rabîah knew his face, and spared him, saying—

"Thou art Selma's brother.'

"Then he charged the band, and he raged among them like a wolf in a sheepfold, and he pierced a strong warrior through the body—the man fell from his horse, and the lance broke. Then they set up a shout of rage and triumph; yet they would not come near him, for he had drawn his limb-dividing sword, so they shot arrows at him from a distance.

"Casting his eyes behind him, he saw that his camels were entering the gap, and he retreated slowly, covering himself from the arrows with his shield; thus he gained the mouth of the defile. There he stood and faced them; and though the arrows showered upon him, and blood was flowing fast down the flanks of Tarrad, he spoke and moved not, but sat still, like a horseman carved in stone in the gap.

"But soon an arrow entering the eye of Tarrad reached his brain, and he fell dead. Then Rabîah lay down behind his horse's body, covering himself also with his shield, so that they saw him not;

but they continued shooting their arrows, until Fèsal, who had mounted another horse, came up and stayed them, saying—

“The horse is dead, and Rabîah must now be our prisoner.’

“Then he rode forward with a few followers, and called aloud, ‘Rabîah, yield thyself; escape is now impossible,’ but Rabîah gave no answer.

“Fèsal advanced still nearer, and repeated the same words, adding—

“It is useless to shed more blood.’

“But Rabîah gave no reply.

“He approached with the caution of a hunter coming near a wounded lion, till he reached the spot, and looked upon his face.

“Rabîah was dead!

“Then pity took possession of the heart of Fèsal, and having told his followers to place the body of Rabîah and of his horse gently on one side, he galloped alone after the party which had retreated through the gap. He knew that his sister was one; and seeing that they prepared to shoot their arrows, he called to them—

“Put away your weapons; this is the hour of grief and not of war.’ And he drew near to the litter, and said—

“‘Sad is the news of my tongue—Rabîah is dead—the Lion of the Nejd is no more.’

“Then a piercing shriek came from the sister of Rabîah, and she cried—

“Let us go back to him.’

“Selma spoke not a word; a great stone was upon her heart, and speech and tears were denied her.

“So they turned back; and when they reached the spot there was a dead silence, while the camel was made to kneel down, and the two maidens came forth.

“Rabîah’s sister wept and sobbed, holding her dead brother’s hand; but Selma threw herself on the body of her beloved, and cast her arms about his neck, and again she pressed her lips to his cold lips. None dared to move her, and Allah had mercy upon her, and her soul passed away in that last kiss.

“For many months there was wailing and lamentation among the tribes, and there was peace among them, for war lay buried in the grave where Rabîah and Selma slept side by side.”^[48]

The dahabiahs arrived safely at Boulak after an uneventful voyage. Hassan, having taken leave of his hospitable friends, and promised to pay them an early visit, proceeded to discover the house of Delî Pasha, in order to enter upon his new duties.

He learnt that the Pasha did not live in the city, but in one of the large houses recently built on the banks of the Nile, above the Port of Boulak, and below the palaces constructed by Mohammed Ali and Ibrahim Pasha for the harems of the viceregal family.

On reaching the door of the house Hassan was informed by the Berber porter that the Pasha was within, so he passed into the entrance-hall, at the end of which he observed one or two slaves lounging about, from whom he learnt that their master had lately come down from the upper apartments, and was now in the courtyard at the back of the palace. Availing himself of the guidance of one of the slaves, he soon reached the courtyard, a large space covering two or three acres of ground, and surrounded by a high wall. Here he found a motley crowd assembled, consisting apparently of Mamelukes, grooms, and servants of all descriptions, and the shouts, and cries, and turmoil proceeding from them baffled all description.

In the centre of the group he saw a horse, held by two or three grooms by long ropes, rearing, kicking, and plunging like a wild beast, and near him a middle-aged, strong-built man, with a turban on his head and his sleeves tucked up above his elbows, striking at the horse with a long courbatch,^[49] and cursing the animal, together with its sire, dam, and all its ancestry, in the most approved terms of Turkish abuse. As Hassan came forward, looking around in vain for any figure which he could conceive likely to be the Pasha, the person above-mentioned stopped a moment from his flogging and malediction to take breath, so Hassan took the opportunity of inquiring whether he could inform him where Delî Pasha was to be found.

“And what may be your business with him, young man?” said he, turning towards Hassan a face in which heat, anger, and good-humour were strangely blended.

“I have a letter for him from Hadji Ismael, the merchant,” replied Hassan.

“Where is the letter?” said the speaker.

“It is here,” said our hero, producing it from his girdle; “and I wish to deliver it to the Pasha in person, if you will tell me where I can find him.”

“Let me see the address,” said the strange man with the bare arms. Hassan handed it to him, and as he cast his eye on the outer seal, he said—

“Why, this is not the seal of Hadji Ismael, it is that of the Viceroy;” and he was proceeding leisurely to open it when Hassan snatched it from him, saying—

“How dare you open it! I must deliver it unopened into the Pasha’s own hands.”

“Why, you young hot-blood,” said the other, holding out his two large muscular hands, “whose hands are these if they are not Delî Pasha’s?”

“Is it so, indeed?” said Hassan, in some confusion. “I was not aware that I was speaking to his Excellency.”

“There is no harm done, boy,” said the Pasha, smiling good-humouredly. “You did not expect to see his Excellency with his arms bare and a courbatch in his hand. Now that you know me, give me the letter.”

Taking it from the youth’s hand, he read it carefully, stopping every now and then to give a scrutinising glance at the bearer; and when he came to the postscript added by the Viceroy’s order, he laughed till the tears stood in his eyes.

“By my father’s beard!” he said, “all will soon be mad in this house. Mohammed Ali sends you to me, saying that you are as mad as myself; and it is only yesterday that Ibrahim Pasha sent me that

cursed horse, telling me that it was as mad as myself. If the father's statement prove as true as the son's, you must be mad indeed, for such a devil I never beheld."

"Devil," said Hassan, looking at the furious and struggling animal with unrepressed admiration; "he seems to me beautiful as an angel."

"You say true," replied Deli Pasha, "his form is perfect; and Ibrahim brought him away as a colt from the Wahabees. He is of pure Kohèil blood; but Shèitan^[50] is his name, and Shèitan is his nature; nothing can tame him. He has nearly killed two of Ibrahim Pasha's grooms, and he sends the animal to me as a present, telling me that it is just like myself."

"If he be a Kohèil," said Hassan, "he will never be tamed by such means as I saw your Excellency using when I came into the courtyard."

"You speak boldly, youngster," said the choleric Pasha with a frown. "Do you think that, with my beard beginning to turn grey, I do not know how to tame an unruly horse?"

"I speak boldly, Excellency, because I speak truly; not from any wish to offend. Does Ibrahim Pasha know your Excellency well?"

"Wallàhi! [by Allah!] I believe you he does; we have marched together, bivouacked together, fought together for many years."

"Then," said Hassan, "as his Highness has likened your Excellency to that horse, permit your servant to ask you, if you were in an angry and fretful mood, and any one were to attempt to haul at *you* with ropes, and strike you with a courbatch, in order to tame you, how would he succeed?"

"Wallàhi! I would cut his head off," exclaimed the Pasha, feeling mechanically for the sword which he had left behind him in the palace. "Do you think that you could mount him?"

"It is better not now," said Hassan quietly.

"Mount him!" said a voice from behind; "he is afraid to go near the horse."

Hassan turned to look at the speaker, and saw a large, powerful man of about thirty-five years of age, to whose harsh features a deep scar on the cheek gave a still more forbidding appearance.

"Silence, Osman Bey," said the Pasha; "because the young man speaks his mind freely, you have no right to insinuate that he is afraid. What say you, Hassan? What do you propose about the horse?"

"If your Excellency desires it," said Hassan, drawing himself up and casting a look of contempt on Osman Bey, "I will mount the horse immediately, and he shall kill me or I will kill him; but if you ask me what I would advise, I would say leave him alone now: his flank is panting, his eye bloodshot, no good can come from gentle usage now. Let him be taken back to the stable; give orders that no one may tend or feed him but myself, and let me show him to your Excellency after two days are past."

The Pasha was just about giving his consent, when Shèitan thought fit to settle the matter otherwise for himself. With an unexpected bound he broke the halter held by one groom, and rushing upon the other, threw him to the ground, and grasping the unfortunate man by the middle, with his teeth shook him as a terrier does a rat.

None seemed desirous of approaching the infuriated animal; but Hassan, snatching a *nabout* (a long thick staff) from the hand of one of the bystanding servants, rushed to the spot, and striking the horse a severe blow on the nose, obliged him to drop the *sàis* (groom), who crawled away on all-fours and placed himself behind his protector.

Shèitan seemed resolved to be worthy of his name, for no sooner did he see Hassan standing before him than he ran furiously at him with open mouth, with the intention of worrying him as he had done the *sàis*; but Hassan had watched him with too steady an eye to be taken unawares, and no sooner did the animal in furious career come within reach than he dealt him a blow on the top of the head between the ears with such force that the staff was broken in half, and the horse stood still a moment completely stunned and bewildered. That moment was not unimproved by Hassan, who vaulted lightly on his back, and sat waiting until the animal's senses fully returned, during which time he gathered up the halters hanging from the horse's head and made therewith a sort of extempore bridle.

No sooner did Shèitan recover his senses and become aware of the audacious rider on his back, than he began to rear, plunge, and perform the wildest gambols in order to dislodge him. Hassan sat like a centaur, and the savage animal, determined to get rid of him, reared bolt upright and fell backwards; but Hassan was prepared for this manœuvre, and sliding off on one side, alighted on his feet, while the horse fell alone.

Hassan's blood was now up, and he determined to subdue his enemy by force. Giving the horse several severe blows with the broken staff which he held in his hand, he forced the animal to rise, and just as it was gaining its feet jumped once more on its back.

"Aferin! aferin!" (bravo! bravo!) shouted the old Pasha at the top of his voice, as the infuriated horse once more commenced its wild career, bearing its immovable and relentless rider. The large arena in which this scene took place was shut in by the house in front, by high walls on the two sides, one of which divided the outer house from the interior or harem, and at the farther end was a lower wall, between five and six feet high, which separated it from another large court beyond, in which were the Pasha's stables. Shèitan, goaded to madness by his vain efforts to get rid of his merciless rider, now rushed with full speed towards the stable-court. To stop him with that halter bridle was impossible, so, instead of attempting it, Hassan gave him his head, shouted aloud his wild Arab cry, and, to the surprise of the bystanders, horse and man cleared the wall and alighted in safety on the other side. Whether it were owing to the tremendous exertion that he had made, or to the concussion on alighting on hard ground after so unwonted a leap, Shèitan was no sooner over the wall than he stopped, trembling and panting.

Hassan allowed the affrighted animal a few moments to recover its breath, and then began to canter it round the stable-yard. "Now, friend Shèitan," he said, "thou hast come over this wall once to please thyself; thou must go over it again to please me." So saying, he again urged the horse to full speed with heel and stick, and charging the wall with the same success as before, galloped him to the spot where Deli Pasha and his followers stood. There, without difficulty, he pulled up, and the

foaming, panting sides of the exhausted steed sufficiently proved that he was subdued.

"That will do for the first lesson," said Hassan good-humouredly, patting the neck of Shèitan. "Tomorrow we shall know each other better."

Deli Pasha was so delighted with Hassan's performance that he could scarcely find words to express himself.

"See your horse safe in the stable," he said; "give your own orders about him, and then come up to me in the *salamlık*,^[51] I have much to say to you." Turning to the *mirakhor*, or head of the stable, he added, "Give him a good *sàis*, and see that his orders about Shèitan are punctually obeyed."

On inquiry Hassan found that the *sàis* who had been seized by the horse had not been injured, as the teeth had only caught his outer clothes and his broad girdle. This *sàis* was the one who habitually fed Shèitan in the stable, and Hassan accompanied him thither, telling him to walk the horse about for an hour, but to give it neither water nor barley till his return; to ensure his fidelity Hassan slipped a few piastres into the man's hand, and returned towards the house to present himself to his new patron.

We must now change the scene to the interior or harem of Deli Pasha's palace, which was separated by a high wall from the exterior building. There was, however, a private door pierced in the wall, by means of which the Pasha could pass from his *salamlık* to his harem, which door was, as usual in Turkish houses, guarded by several eunuchs, who relieved each other on guard day and night. One wing of the harem was assigned to the Pasha's two wives and their attendants, while the other was assigned to his only daughter, Amina, whose mother had died in her infancy, her place being supplied by a middle-aged Turkish lady, named Fatimeh Khanum, who enjoyed the title and authority of Kiahia, or chief of the harem.

All the Pasha's affections were centred in his daughter Amina, and she was one of whom any father might be proud; she was about sixteen years of age, and though her figure was rather above the average height, it was so beautifully formed, and rounded in such exquisite proportions, that every movement was a varied though unstudied grace.

Her face was one of those which defy the poet's description or the portraiture of the artist; for although each lovely feature might be separately described, neither pen nor pencil could depict their harmony of expression nor the deep lustre of those large liquid eyes, whose fringes, when she cast them down, trembled on the border of her downy cheek.

Her beauty was already so celebrated in Cairo that she was more generally known by the name of Nejmet-es-Sabah^[52] than by her own. Many among the highest of the beys and pashas had demanded her in marriage, but she was so happy with her father, and he loved her with such intense affection, that he had never yet been able to make up his mind to part with her. He spoilt her by indulging her in every whim and caprice, and yet she was not spoilt, partly owing to the gentleness of her disposition and partly owing to the care which Fatimeh Khanum, who was an unusually sensible and well-informed woman, had taken in her education.

From the latticed window in her boudoir, Amina had witnessed the whole of the scene described already; clapping her hands together with excitement, she had called Fatimeh to her side.

"Fatimeh," she cried, "who is that stranger, taller by the head than all the others?"

"I know not, my child," said Fatimeh. "I have never seen him before."

"Oh, the wild horse will kill him," said Amina, with a half-suppressed shriek, as she saw the horse rear and fall backwards. "No, he is on it again, and unhurt," she cried, again clapping her hands together for joy. Another half scream burst from her as she saw the wild horse and horseman clear the wall, and again when he repeated the same perilous leap.

Amina often sat behind the lattice of her window and amused herself by looking at her father's retainers when playing the jereed,^[53] and though herself invisible to them, she knew many of them by name, and almost all by sight.

"Oh, Fatimeh," she cried, "when you go downstairs do not forget to make one of the slaves inquire who is that strange youth. We never saw such a horseman, did we, Fatimeh? and then he has such a—" Amina paused and blushed a little.

"You were going to say such a handsome face and figure," said Fatimeh, smiling. "I daresay he is a new Mameluke of your father's, but I will find out and tell you who he is this evening."

They then withdrew into the outer apartment, and resumed the work which the noise made by the wild horse had interrupted.

Amina was making a beautiful embroidered purse for her father, and Fatimeh arranging some ornament of her favourite pupil's dress, when a slave entered and said that the Pasha required Fatimeh Khanum's presence in the *salamlık*. Throwing her veil over her head, she immediately obeyed the summons.

The Pasha was alone, having ordered his attendants to withdraw.

"How is my Amina, my Morning Star, to-day?" he exclaimed as soon as Fatimeh entered.

"Praise be to Allah, she is well, and her fingers are employed on a purse for your Excellency."

"The blessing of Allah be upon her," said the Pasha; "she is my heart's delight. Inshallah! when I have finished the business now in hand I will come to her. Tell her that I will sup with her this evening." He then proceeded to inform her that he had been appointed by the Viceroy to be Governor of Siout in Upper Egypt, and that in a few weeks he should take his departure, with all his family, to his new post. He proceeded to discuss with her the arrangements which it might be advisable to make for the conveyance of his daughter and for the other ladies of his harem.

Meanwhile Hassan, after seeing Shèitan secure in the stable, had returned to the house and inquired where he might find the Pasha.

"He is upstairs, in the *salamlık*," said the young Mameluke whom he addressed. "You will find him in the large room at the end of the passage on your right; he has dismissed us from attendance, but he has asked twice for you; better that you make haste; Deli Pasha does not like to wait."

Hassan rapidly mounted the stairs, and following the direction he had received, ran rather than walked along the dimly lighted passage which led to the Pasha's room. Just as he reached the end,

and was about to enter, he encountered a woman coming out, and the concussion was such that she must inevitably have fallen had he not caught her in his arms. As it was, the shock was such that it displaced her veil, and for a few seconds she was unable to speak. Hassan saw that she was a middle-aged woman, who still retained traces of early beauty; it was Fatimeh Khanum retiring from her interview with the Pasha.

"I hope you are not much hurt, lady," said he in a tone of respectful solicitude, and depositing her gently on a stone seat at the side of the passage. 130

"Not hurt," she replied, with difficulty regaining her breath, "but very much frightened."

"I cannot forgive myself for being so careless," he continued; "but I was in haste to obey the Pasha's summons. I hope you forgive me; you can be sure I meant no rudeness to you."

"I believe it, young Aga," she replied with a smile, fixing her eyes involuntarily on the open and animated countenance before her. "I am recovered now; you had better go in to the Pasha, who is waiting."

Hassan, after saluting her respectfully, left her and entered the Pasha's room.

"You have not been very quick in obeying our summons," said the latter, with a slight frown on his brow.

Hassan explained the accident by which he had been detained in the passage.

"What!" he cried, bursting out into a fit of laughter, "so you nearly knocked down our poor Kiahia Khanum, did you? I am glad she was not hurt. She is a good, kind-hearted soul. Now come here, Hassan, and tell me if you know anything of the postscript added by Mohammed Ali's order to the merchant's letter?"

"Nothing," replied Hassan. "His Highness gave his orders in a whisper to the interpreter."

"Well, it is written in this letter that I am to pay you ten purses [£50], and I shall order the money to be given to you this evening." 131

The Pasha made Hassan give him an account of his interview with the Viceroy, and of his affray with the Government *kawass* on the canal, at which latter Delì Pasha laughed heartily; he then continued—"Hadji Ismael speaks so highly of you in his letter, that I propose at once to offer you the vacant post of *khaznadâr* in this house. My *khazneh* [treasury] is not very full, and will not occupy you much, so I shall expect you to assist in the purchase of horses which I am making for Ibrahim Pasha."

Hassan stepped forward, and having placed the edge of the Pasha's pelisse to his forehead in token of acknowledgment, retired from the room.

"I like that young giant," said Delì Pasha to himself as Hassan withdrew. "His manners are so quiet and his face so prepossessing; but there is the devil in his eye when his blood is roused, as I saw this morning."

Hassan was no sooner alone than he remembered the letter given him by his old friend Mohammed Aga, in Alexandria, to Ahmed Aga, Delì Pasha's master of the horse, and hearing that he had gone to the stables, followed and rejoined him. Ahmed Aga, who had been an admiring spectator of Hassan's performance with Shèitan, was already prepossessed in his favour, and when he read the letter which Mohammed Aga's partiality had dictated, he welcomed Hassan with great cordiality; and as Ahmed himself was a man of open, honest countenance and sterling good qualities, they were disposed to like each other from the very first. 132

Hassan having communicated to his new friend that he had received the appointment of *khaznadâr*, the latter exclaimed—

"Mashallah! that is a good beginning; but the post is not so agreeable, for it brings you into constant collision with Osman Bey, the wakeel, who has charge of all Delì Pasha's lands and property. He is a spiteful, jealous, and dangerous man. I fear he has taken a dislike to you already."

"To me!" said Hassan, in surprise. "What can I have done to offend him?"

"You have offended him mortally by riding that horse Shèitan, which he was unable to mount; and as he is a good horseman, and very proud of his horsemanship, he is very angry at your having subdued that which he described this morning to the Pasha as a wild beast, perfectly untameable."

"If he is spiteful against me on such grounds as those," said Hassan, smiling, "I cannot help myself. I shall do my duty, and not trouble myself about his spite."

Ahmed Aga shook his head, as if Osman Bey were not a pleasant subject to speak upon.

"Come," he said, "let us go into the house. As *khaznadâr* you are entitled to a separate room, a privilege enjoyed by none of the Mamelukes." 133

When Fatimeh Khanum had recovered from the shock occasioned by running against Hassan in the passage, she pursued her way to the private door leading to the harem, where she was admitted by the eunuchs on guard.

No sooner had the good lady reached Amina's apartment than she threw herself down on a divan in the corner, and the quick eyes of her pupil discovered that she was labouring under some violent agitation.

"What has happened, my dear Fatimeh?" said Amina, seating herself beside her governess. "What has agitated you thus?"

Fatimeh related to her pupil her accidental meeting with Hassan in the passage, and that he was the same youth whom they had seen from the window riding the wild horse.

"He carried me so gently," she continued, "to a seat, and he was so kind in inquiring whether I was hurt, and his manner was so respectful, so unlike those young Mamelukes, that I could not take my eyes off him, I felt as if I were bewitched."

"Oh!" cried Amina, clapping her little hands together; "Fatimeh Khanum, my wise monitress, has fallen in love with the young stranger."

"My dear child," replied Fatimeh, "the love you speak of has been dead within me for many years and can never be revived; and that which frightens me so much is, that I cannot account for the agitation into which I was thrown by his looks and his voice otherwise than by saying that I must have been bewitched." And here the good lady began to recite some verses from the Koran as a 134

charm against the evil eye, and to count the beads of her rosary.^[54] Having performed this counter-charm against witchery, Fatimeh proceeded to inform her pupil of their change of residence and departure for Siout, and also of her father's intention to sup with her.

"Oh!" cried the light-hearted Amina, "I will prepare him a dish of *kadai*^[55] with my own hands. He says that no one can make it so well as I do." So saying, she bounded away to give the requisite orders to her slaves.

Meanwhile Hassan, aided by his new friend Ahmed Aga, had found a vacant room on the second floor, which was appropriated to his use, and his box and saddle-bags were transported thither. As he might, in his new capacity of *khaznadâr*, be called upon to take charge of sums of money belonging to Deli Pasha, he desired that a strong lock might be put on the door, of which he proposed to keep the key about his person. There was not much fear of thieves coming in at the window, as the only aperture for the admission of light or air was in the side-wall of the house, forty or fifty feet from the ground, and eight or ten feet above the floor of Hassan's room. The remainder of the day, with the exception of a visit made to Shèitan, Hassan spent with Ahmed Aga, who gave him many useful hints as to the character of his new chief—hasty, impetuous, and choleric, but warm-hearted, and soon appeased.

The moon was high in the heavens when Hassan retired to his own room, where he busied himself in arranging his few movables before throwing himself on his mattress to sleep. While thus occupied, a Turkish song, with the words of which he was perfectly familiar, caught his ear; the voice was evidently that of a woman, and it was rich, low, and musical.

Hassan listened like one in a trance to that sweet sound, wafted into his room, he knew not from whence, by the night breeze. The song consisted of three stanzas, two of which the songstress completed, and then her fingers wandered over the strings of a lute, as if to recall the third to memory. Moved by an impulse which he could not restrain, Hassan took up the song, and in a low voice sung the concluding stanza. After this there was a profound silence, broken only by the distant barking of dogs and braying of donkeys, sounds which never cease day or night in Cairo, and Hassan fell asleep with the song on his lips.

He was up before sunrise, and went straight to the stables, where he hoped to find that Shèitan, having been kept all night without barley or water, might be more disposed to cultivate acquaintance. Such, however, was not the case; for when he endeavoured to approach with sieve or bucket, the horse laid back its ears and struggled with the heel-ropes, endeavouring to kick at him.

"Softly," said Hassan; "no more violence now, we shall soon be better friends;" and putting away the corn and the water, he contrived with the assistance of his groom to saddle and bridle him. Armed with a good courbatch, he mounted and went out by a back gate, the horse fretting and plunging, but still evidently recognising his rider of yesterday.

Hassan gave him a good gallop of some ten miles over the desert, and brought him back much subdued to the stable. "Not a drop of water nor a grain of barley," said he to the *sâis*, "until he takes it out of my hand." So saying, he walked into the house and went up to his room, his thoughts ever reverting to the unseen songstress of yesterday evening. As he went along the passage his eye accidentally fell upon a small ladder, which appeared to have been lately used for whitewashing the upper wall and ceiling of the passage. A sudden idea struck him, and catching up the ladder, he carried it into his room, and after locking the door, by the help of the ladder he climbed up to the aperture which served as a window and looked cautiously out.

Opposite him, at a distance of not more than eight or ten yards, he saw a latticed window, which he at once knew to belong to the harem portion of the palace, and he guessed that from that window must have come the strain which he had heard the preceding night. Hiding the ladder, or rather the steps, under his bed, he went down to attend upon Deli Pasha, who received him with much kindness, and gave him several commissions connected with his new appointment. Having executed these, and dined as on the preceding day with Ahmed, he retired to his room, but not to sleep, for his imagination still fed upon the soft, musical voice of the night before, and he hoped that he might hear it again. Nor was he doomed to disappointment, for about two hours after sunset his ear again caught the same voice, singing, perhaps, in a lower tone and a different air.

Gently placing his steps against the wall below the aperture, he mounted, and found that the sound proceeded from the latticed window opposite. The moon shone full upon it, though he was in the shade. He fancied that through the little diamond-shaped apertures in the lattice he could distinguish a woman's figure behind it. Holding his breath, he remained for some time on the watch, when the fair songstress, having finished her lay, threw open the lattice to look out for a few minutes at the moonlit scene.

Hassan gazed at the lovely apparition as if under a fascination. Her gorgeous black hair was falling in clusters over her neck and shoulders, veiling at the same time half of the arm on which she rested her rounded velvet cheek. Sometimes her large lustrous eyes were raised to the moon, and then they dropped under the shadows of their long dark fringes.

"My dream—my destiny," murmured Hassan to himself, "there she is—she of whom I have dreamt—she whom I have adored from my earliest youth—her picture has been long in my heart, but my eyes never saw it till now!" In his excitement and agitation he sprang to the ground, and throwing himself on his bed, gave vent to all the impetuous and long-suppressed impulses of his romantic passion. He had not remained there many minutes ere the Turkish song of the preceding evening reached his ear, and the fair songstress paused at the conclusion of the second stanza. Moved by an impulse that he could not resist, Hassan caught up the air, and sang to it, with a voice trembling with agitation, the following lines:—

"Thy name is unknown, yet thy image is in my heart;
Thine eyes have pierced me, and if thou show not mercy, I die."

Again he crept softly up the steps and looked out; but the lattice was closed, and the fair vision had disappeared.

On the following morning Hassan was afoot before sunrise, and in walking across the space between the house and the stable he turned round in hopes of discovering the latticed window opposite to his own room. On carrying his eye along the wall that separated the outer palace from the harem, he easily recognised the window that he sought, in the upper storey of the harem, which faced the quarter of the house where his own room was situated, and being at the corner of the building, commanded a view of the space where he was walking, which was the Meidàn, where the Mamelukes and followers of the Pasha played at the jereed, and other equestrian sports in vogue at the time.

His thoughts still bent upon the lovely vision of the preceding night, he reached the stable, and on his approaching and speaking to Shèitan, the horse turned round and looked at him, seemingly more desirous of receiving something from him than of kicking or biting him. "So," said Hassan, smiling, "we shall be friends after all!" The half-pail of water that he carried up to the horse's head was swallowed, and Shèitan no longer disdained to eat the barley out of his hands. Allowing the horse only a few handfuls, Hassan gave him another canter over the desert, stopping every now and then to coax and caress him. After his return he gave Shèitan his full meal of barley, and from that day they grew more and more intimate, until at the end of a week the formerly vicious horse was as gentle as a lamb, and followed him like a dog.

During the first days of his stay he was chiefly employed in examining the accounts of his predecessor, in which he received great assistance from his friend Ahmed Aga; but the task was far from being easy, as the Pasha was very thoughtless and extravagant in all that regarded money, and the preceding *khaznadâr* had thought it his duty to follow his chief's example.

Hassan had also formed the acquaintance of the chief eunuch of the harem—a venerable-looking negro, with a beard as white as snow—and the old man took pleasure in relating to so enthusiastic and intelligent a listener some of the stirring and tragical scenes that he had witnessed in the days of the Mameluke beys and the French invasion, at which period he had been in the service of the famous Ibrahim Elfi Bey. Hassan had another motive in cultivating the acquaintance of Mansour Aga; for, as the old man seemed to know something of the history of every influential family in Egypt, he hoped through him to find some clue to his own parentage.

Every evening Hassan crept softly up to the aperture in the wall of his room; but the lattice was lost in the shade, owing to the change in the position of the moon. Nevertheless, though he could see nothing, he remained for a long time with his eyes fixed upon the lattice, as if the insensible wood could feel or return his gaze.

Lovers are never very good calculators, and thus Hassan forgot that the same change in the position of the moon which had thrown the latticed window into the shade, had also thrown her beams full upon his own face, and that the tenant of the opposite room could now, while perfectly concealed herself, trace every emotion that passed over his countenance.

The lovely songstress, behind her latticed shield, gazed in silence, night after night, on what was in her eyes the noblest face they had ever beheld; and when his longing and ardent gaze seemed to him to be arrested by that envious lattice, it fell in reality on the lustrous orbs and blushing cheeks of the lovely girl within, who, although concealed, trembled at her own audacity, and at the new emotions that agitated her. Having waited for some time in the vain hope of seeing a symptom of movement in the lattice, Hassan descended to his room, having sung before he left the following verse in a low voice:—

"Oh, sleep! fall like dew on that rosebud's eyelids;
Let her know in her dreams that Hassan's heart is burnt with her love."

On the following day Hassan had gone into the city on business intrusted to him by the Pasha, and on his return had just entered that part of the Frank quarter now called the Esbekiah when his attention was attracted to a tumultuous noise, occasioned apparently by some drunken Bashi-Bazouks.^[56] He was about to pass on, when he heard his own name called aloud by a voice which he easily recognised as that of Mansour the eunuch, "Help, Hassan! help!—they will murder me!"

Snatching a heavy club from the hands of one of the fellahs standing by, Hassan rushed into the fray, and arrived just as one of the Bashi-Bazouks was dragging poor old Mansour off his mule by his snowy beard. A blow from Hassan's staff on the fellow's shoulder made him let go his hold, and his arm dropped powerless by his side. His two companions (for the Bashi-Bazouks were three in number) now turned upon Hassan, and one of them, drawing a pistol from his belt, fired it as he advanced; fortunately for our hero, the ruffian's aim was unsteady, and the ball, passing through his sleeve, lodged in the shoulder of a boy who was an accidental spectator of the fray. The two then drew their swords and rushed upon him together, but the clumsy drunkards were no match for the steady eye and powerful arm of Hassan. Parrying their ill-directed thrusts, he struck first one and then the other over the head with the full weight of his club, and the contest was over; they both lay helpless on the ground.

Hassan then assisted the terrified eunuch to remount his mule, and the crowd was beginning to disperse when the *wali* (or police magistrate), who happened to be passing by, rode up and inquired into the cause of the disturbance.

It was soon explained by Mansour that the Bashi-Bazouks had been the aggressors, and therefore the *wali* ordered them to be conveyed to their quarters and delivered to their own officers. He then pursued his way, as did Mansour, after cordially thanking Hassan for his timely assistance.

Hassan was just returning to the spot where he had left his horse under the care of the *sàis*, when his eye fell upon the unfortunate boy whose shoulder had received the pistol-ball aimed at himself. On approaching to see whether he were seriously hurt, Hassan saw that he looked faint from

exhaustion, and that his vest was stained with blood. Drawing near to examine the wound, he inquired whether he felt much pain; the poor boy, whose countenance was prepossessing and intelligent, answered only with a faint murmur, pointing at the same time to his mouth.

"The ball cannot have wounded you both in the shoulder and the mouth," said Hassan. The sufferer shook his head, and again pointed to his mouth. Then Hassan understood that he was dumb.

"Poor child!" said Hassan compassionately; "I have been the cause of thy wound. I cannot leave thee here to suffer—perhaps to die. Where is thy home?"

A melancholy shake of the head was the only answer.

"Hast no parents?" Again the same reply.

Tearing a piece of linen off the edge of his shirt, Hassan stanchd with it the blood still flowing from the boy's shoulder, and binding a handkerchief over the wound, he lifted the sufferer gently in his arms; then placing him on his horse, and having desired the groom to go immediately for the Italian surgeon who attended Delì Pasha's family, he walked slowly home, supporting the wounded boy on the saddle.

Mansour, the eunuch, after being so opportunely rescued by Hassan, pursued his way to Delì Pasha's harem, and went up to give to the Lady Amina an account of the commission which he had been executing for her in Cairo.

After he had produced the gold thread which he had purchased for the completion of the purse which Amina was working for her father, the young lady remarked in his countenance the traces of recent agitation, and inquired the cause. The old man proceeded to relate to her his adventure with the Bashi-Bazouks and his timely rescue by Hassan. In speaking of the latter he launched forth into the highest praises of his courage and prowess, as well as the kindness of his nature and disposition.

Had the room not been darkened by curtains, and the old man's eyesight not been somewhat dimmed by age, he could not have failed to notice the tell-tale blood rush to the cheeks and temples of Amina as she heard these encomiums on one whom she knew to be the same whom she had seen from her lattice, and whose voice had taken up her song; nor could she doubt from the expression which he had used, and from the deep and earnest gaze which he had fixed upon her lattice, that she was herself the object of his romantic attachment.

Repressing her emotions with a slyness which is one of the earliest lessons that Love teaches to his votaries, she asked Mansour, in a tone of seeming indifference, who this new follower of her father's might be, and what his rank and parentage.

To these inquiries Mansour was unable to give her any satisfactory answer. He had heard that some mystery hung over Hassan's birth, and all that he knew was that his form was a model of strength and activity, that as a horseman he was unequalled, that from his good-humour and obliging disposition he was already a great favourite in the house, and that Delì Pasha entertained so high an opinion of him as to give him the appointment of *khaznadâr*.

Little did the old eunuch think that every word which he uttered was adding fuel to the fire already kindled, and that while Amina sat with downcast eyes and fingers busily employed on her purse, her ear was drinking in every word that he uttered in praise of Hassan, and her little heart was beating with throbs so violent that she feared Mansour must hear them. Her secret was, however, safe for the present, and the eunuch, changing the conversation, said—

"Have you heard that on the day after to-morrow there is to be a grand match at the jereed in the courtyard? The Kiahia Pasha is coming with some of his *golams*, and they will take a part in the game."

"No," replied Amina; "I had not yet heard of it. Are you sure if the match is to be the day after to-morrow?"

"Yes; I was told so as I came in by Ahmed the *mirakhor*. I hope that some of those brought by the Kiahia will be strong and skilful, so as to make head against that tyrannical, ill-natured Osman Bey, our Pasha's wakeel. Here we have no one who can contend with him. I dislike him," added the old eunuch, "but, to say the truth, I have not seen his match at the jereed."

"Will not the young stranger whom you spoke of?" said Amina, hesitating to mention the name.

"Hassan?" said Mansour.

"Yes, Hassan; will not he play at the jereed, and may he not be a match for Osman?"

"I doubt it," replied Mansour, shaking his head; "notwithstanding his strength, activity, and horsemanship, he is but a youth, and he can scarcely have had opportunity for acquiring the skill and experience requisite for complete proficiency in this game."

While this conversation was passing, Hassan had brought the wounded boy to the house, where he had carried him gently upstairs and deposited him on his own bed. Shortly afterwards the surgeon arrived, and having examined the wound, he found, to Hassan's great satisfaction, that the ball had passed clean through the fleshy part of the arm, just below the shoulder, without injuring any bone or ligament, and the patient was only suffering from loss of blood.

Having dressed the wound, he said, "Let him have rest and light wholesome food; in a few days he will be well." The doctor then took his leave, and Hassan, by the assistance of his friend Ahmed Aga, found a small empty room, not far from his own, in which he placed a bed, and having conveyed thither his patient, went to find some refreshing draught, for which he stood much in need. In a few minutes he returned with a cool lemonade, and having drunk it, the dumb boy looked up in his face with tears of gratitude in his eyes.

Hassan was desirous of ascertaining something of the history of his helpless companion, who began to converse with him by rapid movements of his slight and delicate fingers. This, however, being a sealed alphabet to our hero, he shook his head in token that he did not understand a syllable. The boy then began with his right (his unwounded hand) to imitate writing with a pen on paper.

"You can read and write, can you?" said Hassan. The boy nodded his head. Hassan then went

down to his office below, and soon returned, bringing with him an inkstand, a reed, and some paper. The result of the written conversation was that Hassan learned that the boy's name was Murad; that he was an orphan, ignorant of his parentage; that as a child he had been in the house of a captain of Bashi-Bazouks, who one day, in a fit of drunken fury, had cut off more than half of the poor child's tongue owing to some hasty word that had escaped him; that having been kicked out of the captain's house, he had been kindly treated by one of the mollahs attached to the Mosque El-Azhar,^[57] where he had remained for several years learning to read and write, fed from the funds of the institution; and that for the last two years he had picked up a precarious subsistence by carrying letters and parcels all over the town. He ended his artless tale by saying that everybody in Cairo knew him, and he knew everybody.

149

While this conversation in writing was passing, Hassan received a summons from Delì Pasha, whom he found in his *salamlik* on the first floor.

"Hassan," said the Pasha, "there are thirty horses just arrived, sent by an agent in my employ, for the service of a cavalry regiment which the Viceroy has ordered to be raised for Upper Egypt. I wish you to examine and try them, and cast any that you think unfit for the work. When you have seen them, bring me your report."

Hassan replied, "Upon my head be it," and was leaving the room when Delì Pasha called him back and asked him for an account of what had happened between his chief eunuch and the Bashi-Bazouks, a rumour of which had already reached him. Hassan recounted briefly, passing over his own services as lightly as possible, and concluded by mentioning the hurt of poor little Murad, and of his being now under the Pasha's roof.

"Poor child!" said Delì Pasha, "I have heard something of his history. After the massacre of the Mameluke beys he was found in a house that belonged to one of them, and afterwards fell into the hands of one of those Albanian savages, who cut out his tongue. I have often seen the little boy in the streets, and I pity him much. You may keep him and take care of him as long as you please, and while he remains I will give orders that he has his regular allowance sent from the kitchen."

150

Hassan thanked the Pasha for his kindness, and was about to leave the room when he was again called back by his chief, who said—

"In describing your interference to rescue old Mansour, you made little mention of yourself; but it seems clear that you must have knocked down three of these fellows with the *nabout*. Did you hit them very hard—do you think any of them are killed?"

"I think not," said Hassan quietly. As one had fired a pistol, and the two others used their swords, I was obliged in self-defence to strike rather quick and hard; but I did not use all my strength, nor endeavour to do more than prevent them from doing further mischief at the time. The rascals have thick skulls, which will stand many a tap from a club before they break."

"Well, Inshallah! may you not have killed any of them," said the Pasha; "for they are a revengeful race, and would never rest till they had your blood by fair means or foul. When you go out, keep a sharp eye upon any stray parties of them whom you may meet."

Hassan thanked the Pasha for his advice, and spent the remainder of the day in trying and examining the horses sent for approval, twenty-five of which he retained and cast the remainder. On the following morning he went out before sunrise to the horse-market and selected five, which completed the number required: they were forthwith sent on to the appointed depot, and Hassan was ordered to write to Ibrahim Pasha's agent to inquire whether any more were to be provided. When he brought this letter to his chief to be sealed the latter abruptly asked him—

151

"Have you ever played the jereed?"

"Often," replied Hassan; "we had a game somewhat similar when I was a boy among the Bedouins, and afterwards I practised it now and then among the Mamelukes of some of the beys and pashas in Alexandria."

"I am glad of that," said Delì Pasha; "to-morrow, Inshallah! there is to be a match in our courtyard, and Kiahia Pasha is coming with some of his Mamelukes. I have given it up myself," he added with a sigh, "but I love to look at it still."

Hassan spent the greater part of the afternoon with his little patient, conversing by notes which they handed one to the other. This, however, was too slow a process to satisfy the quick and intelligent boy, who proposed to teach his protector the alphabet which he had either learnt or invented with his fingers. Hassan assented, and studied his lesson with so much assiduity that after a short time, to the great delight of little Murad, they were able to converse together without the aid of pen and paper.

On the following morning all the house was astir early, making preparations for the jereed-playing and for the reception of the Kiahia Pasha, who had written to ask whether he might bring with him some English visitors, recommended to him by the Viceroy, and who were anxious to see the Oriental tournament. To this Delì Pasha had replied by a hospitable affirmative; and while refreshments, flowers, and sherbets were heaped upon a table in the large saloon, carpets and sofas were spread along the verandah which ran along the whole back part of the house, overlooking the large arena where the games were to take place.

152

At the appointed hour the Kiahia arrived in great state on horseback, with a gay and numerous retinue, for there was only one *carriage* in Cairo—that belonging to the Viceroy. Immediately following them came the whole party of the Thorpes, the strangers in whose favour the Kiahia had asked for an invitation.

Delì Pasha welcomed them with his accustomed frank hospitality, and Hassan, who was in attendance on him, received and returned the friendly salutations of all the party. Demetri's talents were now called into exercise, and as he had not the piercing eye of the Viceroy fixed upon him, he ornamented the phrases he was called upon to translate with all manner of Oriental tropes and figures. Hassan detected his additions and embellishments, but he only smiled and made no comment on them.

153

After the usual ceremony of pipes and coffee had been duly observed, Delì Pasha led his guests to

the verandah, placing the Kiahia in the centre, in the seat of honour, and left the others to arrange their seats according to their own fancy and convenience.

"Let the games begin," shouted Delì Pasha to Ahmed Aga, his *mirakhor*, and in a moment all was hurry and confusion in the space below. The Mamelukes of the Kiahia Pasha first entered the arena, well mounted and superbly dressed; after them poured in those of Delì Pasha, most of them wild youths, but admirable horsemen, and well skilled in the games about to be played.

Immediately in front of the verandah was a thick post or column of wood, on the top of which was placed a human head cut out of wood, not unlike those on which European barbers model wigs. The first exercise for the horsemen was to ride past this head at full speed and carry it off with the point of the lance. Just as the games were about to commence, Delì Pasha noticed that Hassan was standing in an attitude of abstraction a few yards off, at the back of the verandah.

"Why, Hassan, are you not going to play?" said the Pasha good-humouredly; "I thought you had said you were fond of the exercise."

"If your Excellency has no need of my service here," replied Hassan, "I will join the game."

"Go, my lad," said the Pasha; "but do not ride that ungovernable Shèitan, or his mad freaks will get you into trouble."

"Shèitan is quiet and well-behaved now," replied Hassan; "your Excellency will see that he is not bad at the jereed."

The game began, and the Mamelukes galloped in succession at the wooden head with their long spears, some carrying it off, and the greater number missing it; and while they were thus employed Hassan entered the arena from the stable entrance mounted on Shèitan. Whether it was that the latter had been left unexercised the preceding day, or that he was excited by the crowd and the galloping and neighing of strange horses, certain it is that his behaviour seemed much more to justify Delì Pasha's caution than Hassan's good report. He reared, he plunged, he shook his long mane, and every now and then he bounded into the air as if maddened by anger or excitement. Hassan sat easy and unconcerned, and his usual good-natured smile played over his lips as he patted the horse's neck and said—

"Shèitan, you are playful this morning."

"Mashallah! what a noble horseman is that Mameluke of yours!" exclaimed the Kiahia, addressing Delì Pasha; "where is he from?"

"He is not a Mameluke," replied Delì Pasha; "he is my *khaznadâr*, lately arrived. He was brought up among the Bedouins; in a room he is as quiet and still as a cat, but on a horse he is as mad as the animal he is now riding," and as he spoke he shouted aloud to Hassan to come under the verandah.

In a second Hassan's stirrup touched the flank of Shèitan, who bounded into the air, and then came at full speed to within a few yards of the house, when he stopped dead short, while Hassan looked up to inquire the orders of his chief.

"Hassan," said Delì Pasha, "I told you that it would be impossible for you to play at these games on the back of that wild, unruly beast; had you not better change it for one more manageable? You may ride one of mine if you will."

"Bakkalum [we shall see], my lord," was Hassan's only reply, and wheeling his horse, he charged in full career at the head on the post. Lowering his lance as he approached, he struck the head so full in the centre that the point of the lance entered several inches into the wood, and there it remained, while Hassan, galloping round the arena, came again under the verandah, and, holding up his lance, presented the head, still fixed on it, to Delì Pasha.

"Aferin! [bravo! bravo!] my son!" said the old Pasha, and it was echoed by many a surrounding voice.

The post was now taken away, and the lists were prepared for the jereed. The Mamelukes divided themselves into parties preparatory to the mimic fight, which was indeed nothing more than a succession of single combats. In the centre of the arena were a score of active *sâises*, or grooms on foot, whose duty it was to pick up the jereeds as they fell and hand them to the mounted combatants.

At this moment Osman Bey, Delì Pasha's wakeel, who thought the preceding game beneath his dignity, entered the arena, followed by several of his Mamelukes. He was dressed in a rich costume which was well calculated to show off the proportions of his strong and muscular figure, and mounted on a grey Arab, which for the first two years of its life had been fed on camels' milk in the deserts of the Nejd, and though not remarkable for size, was compactly and beautifully proportioned. Osman Aga was a practised horseman—firm in the saddle, strong in the arm, and proud of the reputation that he had gained in the mimic combats of the jereed. With a grave salute to the Kiahia and Delì Pasha, he took his place at the centre of one side of the arena, and the game began.

While Osman Bey and the elder Mamelukes engaged each other in a succession of these trials of skill and speed, Hassan hovered on the outskirts of the combatants, at some distance from the house, apparently engaged in repelling the attacks of half-a-dozen of the youngest of the Mamelukes of Delì Pasha's household. He was a general favourite with these lads, for whom he had on all occasions a kind word and a good-humoured smile, and the merry youngsters well knew that however they might pursue and torment him with their jereeds, they had no reason to fear his putting out his strength to injure them in repelling their attacks. Thus one would call out to him, "Hassan! Hassan!" and charge him at full speed on the right; and scarcely had he time to catch or avoid the jereed ere another attacked him with similar shouts on the left. Some of them struck him more than one smart blow on the shoulder with a jereed, and they shouted and laughed, while Hassan joined in their merriment.

But it was not only to play with these merry youths that Hassan had withdrawn to a part of the ground at some distance from the place where the older combatants were engaged. His quick eye, which ever and anon roved to a certain lattice high up in the adjoining building, had detected that it was partially opened, and revealed to him half of the lovely face ever in his thoughts peeping out

upon the arena; he believed that those eyes followed his movements, and he availed himself of every opportunity, when he could do so unnoticed, to cast an upward glance to meet them. But he was not destined to remain long without more serious employment, for several of the older and more experienced of the combatants in turn challenged him, by shouting his name and charging him at full speed. The first was his friend Ahmed Aga, whose jereed passed close over his back without touching him.

158

Hassan pursued him in turn, and, pretending to use much force, struck him lightly on the shoulder; next he was charged by the chief of the Kiahia Pasha's Mamelukes—a very handsome Georgian, and the only one who had this day interchanged several bouts with Osman Bey with nearly equal success.

Hassan prepared for this encounter with more caution. On the charge of his opponent he fled (as is the custom of the game) at full speed, looking back over his shoulder. The Georgian threw his jereed with faultless aim, when Hassan, instead of avoiding, caught it in the air, and, wheeling suddenly, pursued the Georgian, and struck him on the back with his own jereed. This feat, which is one of the most difficult of those practised in the game, elicited a loud "Aferin!" from Deli Pasha.

Osman Bey no sooner heard it than, fired by spite and jealousy, he shook his jereed in the air, shouted the name of Hassan, and bore down upon him at the full speed of his high-mettled Arab. Hassan had barely time to avoid the charge by wheeling Shèitan and striking the spurs into his flanks. Still over his shoulder he watched every movement of his pursuer. At length the Bey's jereed sped through the air with unerring aim; every one thought that Hassan was fairly hit, but he had thrown himself suddenly over the right side of his horse, hanging only by the left leg on the saddle, and the jereed passed harmlessly over him. Recovering himself instantaneously, he now pursued in turn, and his jereed struck Osman Bey fairly on the shoulder. The bout being over, Hassan was cantering leisurely away, when the Bey, goaded to madness at having been defeated by one whom he considered a boy, galloped again after him, and hurled a jereed with all his force at Hassan's head.

159

Hassan, hearing a horse approaching at full speed from behind, had just turned his head to see what it might be, when the jereed flew past him. The movement had saved him from a serious blow, but the stick grazed the edge of his cheek and drew blood as it passed. A loud shout broke from Deli Pasha, "Foul, foul! shame, shame!"^[58]

All the fire that slumbered in Hassan's impetuous nature was kindled by this cowardly outrage. Forgetting the rank of his opponent, and every other consideration but revenging the blow he had received, he snatched a jereed from the hand of a *sàis* standing by. Striking his sharp spurs into the flanks of Shèitan, he pursued his adversary with such terrific speed that even the grey Arab could not carry its rider out of his reach. Rising in his stirrups, he threw the jereed with all his force, and it struck the Bey full in the back, just between the shoulder-blades. The blow sounded over the whole arena, and having taken effect just in that part of the back which is nearest to the action of the lungs, the unfortunate Bey's breath was for the time totally suspended. He seemed paralysed, and after swaying backwards and forwards for a few seconds in the saddle, fell heavily to the ground. Had not his docile Arab stopped immediately beside him, his hurts would probably have been much more serious.

160

After a few minutes, during which water was thrown in the Bey's face by his Mamelukes, he recovered the power of speech; but he was still faint and weak, and after casting on Hassan a look of concentrated, inextinguishable hate, he withdrew, supported by his servants, from the ground. This accident occurring to a man of such high rank, and universally feared, broke up the sports for the day.

"I am sorry for it," said Deli Pasha, addressing Mr Thorpe; "but Hassan was perfectly justified, and Osman Bey only got what he deserved."

The spectators and combatants were gathered into little knots and groups, all uttering similar sentiments, and some adding, "This is an unlucky thing for Hassan—Osman Bey never forgives—'tis a brave youth, but the cup of coffee or the dagger will be his fate."^[59]

161

After the breaking up of the games, Hassan, having given over Shèitan to the groom to be taken to the stable, before he re-entered the house cast a furtive glance upward at the well-known lattice in the harem. This time he could not be mistaken—a white forehead and dark lustrous eyes were certainly visible at the curtained aperture, but they were hastily and timidly withdrawn when they encountered his eager glance.

"'Tis she—'tis the star of my destiny—the life-blood of my heart," said Hassan to himself, "whoever and whatever she may be. Well! she has this day seen that, humble and unknown as I am, the proudest bey in Egypt shall not insult me with impunity." And he strode into the house so completely occupied with dreams of the future that he nearly ran against Ahmed Aga, who was coming to tell him that the Pasha had sent for him. On reaching the upper room where they were assembled, the Kiahia Pasha paid him so many compliments on his uncontested superiority over all his competitors that Hassan looked quite confused; indeed, he had been so much taken up with other thoughts that he had not been aware, until Deli Pasha called his attention to the fact, that the blood was still trickling from the wound he had received in his cheek.

162

"It is nothing," said Hassan, smiling, and applying his handkerchief carelessly to it. "I hope Osman Bey's back will suffer as little."

"Hassan," said Deli Pasha, addressing our hero, "the Kiahia informs me that in the course of a day or two our English guests are going to pay a visit to the Pyramids, and that he sends with them a guard of fifty horsemen. They have expressed a desire that you should join their party, as you are already old acquaintances. If you wish to do so, you have my full permission."

Hassan accepted the invitation readily, for, notwithstanding the latticed window, from which it was difficult to tear himself away, he had an undefined longing to visit a spot connected with his earliest years and the mystery of his birth.

After the departure of the Kiahia and the Thorpe party, Deli Pasha detained Hassan alone and

said to him—

"This is a bad business, Hassan; Osman Bey is now your enemy, and he is a dangerous man. I will tell you something of his life. Years ago, when he was in charge of some money to pay the troops, Mohammed Ali discovered that he had appropriated a portion of it to his own use, and forthwith caused him to be severely beaten and thrown into prison; after his release he accompanied Ibrahim Pasha to the war against the Wahabees, where he gained a high reputation—for, to give him his due, he is a good soldier—and regained his Highness's favour. Since then Mohammed Ali, whose habit is to raise up those whom he has disgraced,^[60] has made him a bey, and treated him with much regard. Now he is named to be my wakeel or vice-governor at Siout, and as I know him to be a cruel and revengeful man, I fear he will find some opportunity of doing you an injury."

"I fear him not," said Hassan boldly. "I have nothing to do with him; I serve your Excellency, and if he seeks a quarrel with me, let him do so; I am ready."

"He will not seek a quarrel with you," said Deli Pasha, smiling at Hassan's simplicity. "Have you heard of calumny and slander? Have you heard of poison in a cup of coffee? Have you heard of stabbing in the dark? These are the weapons that great men in Egypt use when they wish to get rid of one whom they hate."

"I fear him not," repeated Hassan with the same frank boldness. "My life is in the hand of Allah, and neither Osman Bey nor any other man can take it until the predestined day arrives. Let him try his treacherous schemes if he will, he may perhaps learn the truth of our Arabic proverb, 'He dug a pit for his neighbour, and he fell into it himself.'"

While this conversation was going on between Deli Pasha and Hassan, Amina was sitting in her upper room, to which her slaves had just brought up a tray covered with sweetmeats and fruits. Mansour, the old eunuch, followed, bearing a cool sherbet of pomegranate. The younger slaves being ordered to retire, there remained only with Amina, Mansour and her governess, Fatimeh Khanum, both of whom had witnessed the jereed play—the eunuch from the front building, and the elder lady from another window in the harem, for Amina had not made the latter the confidant of her secret visits to the lattice in the boudoir. With well-assumed indifference Amina asked Fatimeh Khanum and Mansour to relate all the particulars of the games, which she had followed with an eye a thousand times more eager than theirs.

Hassan was a great favourite with them both, and as they expatiated on his noble figure, his grace and skill in the use of the jereed, and his unequalled horsemanship, Amina's blushes mantled on her cheeks and overspread her neck. Not satisfied with hearing the praises of Hassan from the lips of her attendants, she wished to hear them also from those of her father, and after Mansour had retired to the other wing of the harem, she said to Fatimeh Khanum—

"Fatimeh, I have a great desire to see my father this evening, and to hear from him all about those Franks who were his visitors to-day. Go to him and ask him if he will take supper with his little Amina. I will have prepared for him all the dishes that he best likes."

Fatimeh, who could never refuse anything to her beloved pupil, and who, from her mature age and position in the harem, was always permitted by the Pasha to come to him in his outer apartments through the private door of communication whenever she had any message from his daughter, willingly undertook this commission. After passing the eunuchs at the curtained door, she proceeded along the narrow passage which led towards the room usually occupied by Deli Pasha, but before reaching it she had to pass through an anteroom, in which, to her surprise, she found Hassan walking up and down alone. She was about to withdraw, when he came forward and said to her, "Lady, do not retire on my account. You were going to seek our Pasha; he will soon be disengaged. A visitor, a Bey whose name I did not hear, has just called, and has something for the Pasha's private ear. His Highness ordered all the other attendants into the outer hall, and told me to remain here."

Fatimeh Khanum knew that she ought to retire, but there was something in Hassan's voice and appearance which detained her in spite of herself. "Am I mad? Am I under sorcery? What is there that draws me to this youth by unknown cords?"

Such were the thoughts which followed each other through Fatimeh's troubled brain, when her eye happened to fall upon Hassan's wounded cheek, on which a patch of blood was visible. A woman's instincts impelled her at once to exclaim—

"Allah! Allah! you are wounded. Why has no one stopped or washed away the blood?" And without waiting for his permission, she caught up one of the porous jugs of water found in almost every Egyptian room and drew near to Hassan.

"It is nothing, my aunt," said Hassan, calling her by the name of affectionate respect given by the Arabs to elderly ladies; "but I will submit to your kind surgery."

While she was gently washing off the blood, and afterwards binding up the wound with a fine Turkish handkerchief, a sudden idea seemed to strike Hassan, and scarcely had she completed her simple dressing of his wound than he seized her hand, saying, "Thank you; may Allah prolong your life! I see you have a heart. Have pity on me."

"What is it, my son?" said Fatimeh in surprise. "Wherein can I serve you?"

"Oh, my aunt, my heart is on fire with love—my liver is roasted^[61]—and if you do not find some remedy I shall die."

"My son," said Fatimeh compassionately, though unable to repress a smile, "the complaint is not uncommon at your age; but how can I assist you? What is the name of your love, and who is she?"

"I know not her name, nor who she is," replied Hassan passionately; "but you must know her, for she dwells in the harem with you."

"In the harem!" said Fatimeh, surprised. "There are doubtless some fair maidens in our Pasha's harem, but how can you have seen them?"

"Ask me not how," said Hassan, who would not disclose the secret of the lattice and of the aperture near the roof; "but I have seen her, and she is lovely as a Hourai of Paradise."

"It is strange," said Fatimeh, musing; "but do not despair. Our Pasha has already married more

than one of his favourite Mamelukes to fair maidens from his harem, and if you serve him faithfully you may yet realise your hopes."

"Inshallah! Inshallah!" replied Hassan; "yet, Khanum, I would like to know her name, that I might whisper it to my heart and in my prayers."

"Agaib!" (wonderful!) said the Khanum, still in a musing tone. "Can it be Zeinab, the Circassian, who came last year from Stamboul?—she is small, with dark-brown hair and deep blue eyes."

"No, no, it is not she," said Hassan impatiently.

The Khanum then proceeded to name one or two others, giving a slight sketch of their features and appearance. But the same "No, no" broke from the impatient Hassan. She was sorely puzzled; for supposing that Hassan had by some accident caught a glimpse of one of the young slaves while attending the Pasha's wives to the bath or to some visit, the idea of her young mistress, who had not once left the harem since Hassan's arrival, never entered her head.

"I fear, Hassan, that I cannot help you. Methinks you must have seen some stranger coming to visit at our harem, for I have named all those who are young and attractive within our walls. Cannot you describe her in such a way as to assist my conjecture?"

"Describe her!" said Hassan, lowering his voice to a tremulous whisper. "Every feature, every look, every hair of her head is written in my heart!" He then proceeded to describe the features, the eyes, the looks, the complexion, the hair, with such accurate fidelity that Fatimeh, fairly thrown off her guard, exclaimed—

"Allah! Allah! it is Amina Khanum, our Pasha's daughter!"

"Amina!" cried Hassan. "Thrice blessed name,^[62] henceforth thou art the locked treasure of my breast. I thank thee, Khanum, for giving me the beloved name to think of by day and to dream of by night."

"Are you mad?" said the Khanum, wringing her hands in agitation and distress. "Do you remember your own position, and who the Lady Amina is? Do you know that the highest and proudest in the land have sued for her hand in vain?"

"I know," said Hassan with deep feeling. "I know who I am—that I am a poor unknown orphan, without name, without fortune. It is the love that I bear to Amina, not the thought that she is a pasha's daughter, which prompts me to bow my head and kiss the dust on which she treads. Were she a slave-girl in the harem my worship of her would be still the same. It is herself, her own pure image—not her station or her jewels—that I treasure in my heart of hearts. You say that her hand has been sought by the great and the rich. What are they," he added, drawing himself proudly up, "that I may not become? Pashas and beys, forsooth—what were they at my age?—'Mamelukes,' 'pipe-bearers,' and so forth. What was Mohammed Ali at twenty? Let the proudest and the best of them stand forth before me with sword and lance and prove who best deserves her. Will they climb for her as I would to the highest summits of the Kaf?^[63] Will they dive for her as I would to the lowest depths of ocean? Will they live for her, toil for her, bleed for her, die for her, as I would? My kind aunt," he added in a low and pleading tone, "have pity on me, speak to Amina for me; tell her that Hassan's heart is in her hand, and that it is only for her that he lives and breathes."

"Alas! alas!" said the kind-hearted Khanum, moved by the young man's earnest passion. "What misfortune has befallen? There is no refuge but in God, the compassionate. I pity you, Hassan, with all my heart; but you know that I dare not speak to Amina on such a subject. I am the guardian and protector of her youth, and I can name to her no suitor who does not appear with her father's sanction. Surely she can have no knowledge or thought of this insane passion?" she added in a tone of inquiry.

"I know not," replied Hassan confusedly. "It seems to me that she has been in my heart and in my dreams from my earliest youth; her image is interwoven with my being, with my destiny; it floats in the very air I breathe, impregnating it with sweetness and with life. I know not 'whether the zephyrs and the spirit of dreams have wafted the odour of my vows to the pillow on which the roses of her cheek repose.'^[64]

The Khanum was about to reply when the sound of approaching footsteps was heard, and a servant entered to inform Hassan that the Pasha's visitor had departed and that his attendance was required.

"Khanum," said Hassan, who had by a strong effort recovered his composure, "if you have business with the Pasha, I pray you enter first; I can await his Excellency's pleasure."

Poor Fatimeh, though scarcely able to control the agitation into which the events of the last few minutes had thrown her, adopted the suggestion of Hassan, and entering the Pasha's apartment delivered the message with which she had been charged by Amina.

"Tell my Morning Star," said Deli Pasha, "that I will willingly come and sup with her; indeed, I was going to propose it myself, for I have much to say to her. Draw nearer, Khanum," he added in a lower voice. "I know you are a discreet woman, and that you are much attached to Amina, therefore I may tell you that Hashem Bey (Allah knows what a rich old miser he is) has just been here, and the object of his visit was to propose a marriage between her and his son Selim."

This sudden announcement was too much for the poor Khanum's already over-excited nerves; she staggered and would have fallen had not the Pasha started up and supported her to the divan on which he had been seated.

"What is the matter, O Khanum?" he said. "What is there in this news to cause you so much agitation? Is not Selim a youth well-born, well-spoken of, rich, and high in the favour of our lord the Viceroy?"

"Forgive me," said the Khanum in a broken voice; "a sudden faintness, a giddiness came over me—perhaps—perhaps it was the thought that this marriage would separate me for ever from my beloved child."

"Nay," said the rough old Pasha, moved by her grief and the cause to which she had attributed it. "I know the love you bear to my Amina, and you must also know that the separation of which you speak would be yet more hard for me than for you to bear, but some day it must be endured. Amina

is now of an age to marry, and it would be difficult to find a husband more worthy of her choice than Selim. But no more at present; compose yourself; say nothing of this to Amina—I will break it to her myself; only tell her that I will come and sup with her at sunset.”

Fatimeh Khanum retired, and as she hurried through the room in which she had left Hassan, he marked her agitated step and caught the words, “Oh, grief! oh, misfortune!” ere she disappeared behind the curtained door that led to the harem.

After her departure Hassan remained for some time with Deli Pasha, receiving orders and writing letters on subjects connected with his private affairs; and when these were concluded he retired, and passed the remainder of the afternoon in finger-talk with his dumb *protégé*, whose intelligence and knowledge of all that was passing at Cairo he found to be much beyond his years. The boy seemed so happy and grateful that Hassan found a real pleasure in perfecting himself in the practice of finger-conversation.

At sunset Deli Pasha proceeded to take his supper with Amina, who, with the instinctive tact of an affectionate daughter, had not only taken care to provide the dishes that he most fancied, but had arranged the cushions of his divan so that they were perfectly adapted to his habitual attitude—they were neither too soft nor too hard, nor too high nor too low, nor too broad nor too narrow; and as she knelt playfully before him, and placed in his hand the gold-thread purse which she had just finished, he stooped to kiss her fair forehead, and meeting the upturned glance of her eyes beaming with affection, he said, “Allah bless thee, my child!” with an earnest tenderness, of which those who had known him in the days of his wild and wayward youth, would not have believed his nature capable.

Fatimeh Khanum was not present. The supper was brought up to the door by eunuchs, and served by the women attendants who usually waited on Amina. Deli Pasha did not fail to praise several dishes which had been prepared expressly for him with unusual care, not that the old soldier was a gourmand, but he recognised and appreciated the affectionate zeal evinced by Amina to please him.

During the supper he talked about the events of the morning and the English strangers, and it was arranged that he should send an invitation to Mrs Thorpe and her daughter to visit his harem. They were to be received by his eldest wife, but Amina might be present, as she would be interested in seeing the Frank ladies’ manners, appearance, and dress. The Pasha also alluded to the jereed game, and to the actors therein, and while so doing, he mentioned Hassan in terms which brought the tell-tale blood into Amina’s cheeks. He spoke of him not only as being unequalled in horsemanship and skill in arms, but as being remarkable for his truth, modesty, and integrity.

“I like the lad,” said the old Pasha; “he is of a kind rarely found nowadays—a hot head, a ready arm, and a warm heart, but no *laf guizaf* [talk and boasting]. If we had another war with the Wahabees, or with any other nation, that lad might soon be a Pasha; but in these dull times there is no fortune to be won by the sword. So Hassan must remain *khaznadâr* of a very small *khazneh*.^[65] Such is destiny, Amina—all is destiny.”

Little did the unconscious father think that in every word which he was then uttering he was fanning a flame already kindled in his young daughter’s breast.

No sooner was the supper over, and the Pasha had enjoyed his pipe and his coffee, than he called Amina to his side, and pushing back the tresses from her face, said to her, “Morning Star, you are no longer a child—you are a little woman now.”

The fair girl’s heart had lately explained to her this truth in language more expressive and convincing than her father’s.

He then proceeded to relate to her the visit of Hashem Bey and its object, together with the reasons which made him take a favourable view of Selim’s proposal, in words nearly similar to those which he had used when speaking to Fatimeh Khanum in the morning. Had the lights not been at some distance from the divan, and the room itself rather dark, he would have been frightened at the paleness which overspread his daughter’s face, though one little hand strove to cover it. She did not speak, but he felt the death-like coldness of the other little hand, which was clasped in his. “Speak, my child; what ails thee?” he said. “Marriage is the destiny, the blessing of women. What is there to terrify thee in these proposals from a youth who is rich, worthy, and of a condition equal to your own?” She sank on her knees before him and sobbed rather than said—

“Spare me, father! spare me!—save me from this hated marriage.” And as she bowed her head upon his hands, he felt her tears falling hot and fast upon them.

Astonished at this excessive and unexpected emotion, the fond father spoke gently to her, and used all the arguments which he could think of to reconcile her to the proposed match. For some time tears and sobs were her only reply. At length she found strength to say—

“Father, I will obey you in everything. My life is in your hands. But if you do not wish to break my heart and send me to an early grave, save me from this marriage. I do not wish to leave you, father. At least give me a year’s or six months’ delay.”

Deli Pasha could not resist the pleading grief of his beloved child. Secretly unwilling himself to part from her, he consented to the delay for which she so earnestly entreated.

“Be comforted, light of my eyes,” he said; “it is only your welfare and happiness that I wish. Dry up your tears and let me see you smile again. I have not passed my word to Hashem Bey. I will write to him that I wish you to go with me to Siout, and that the time for betrothal is not now opportune. That if after six months he desires to renew the subject, it can be then taken into consideration. Will that satisfy you, Amina?”

Amina did look up, and though her eyes were still bedewed with tears, rays of hope and joy and gratitude shone through them like sunbeams through an April shower. Covering his hands with her kisses, she exclaimed, “Oh, father, you have given me a second life—you are always too good, too kind to your Amina.”

What bright hopes, what sunny visions had the young girl’s sanguine imagination conceived and crowded into the space of six months! Selim would be gone to Turkey or the other world, Hassan would be a bey or pasha!

"My child, it is time for you to go to rest," said Deli Pasha. "Allah bless you! may your night be happy, and to-morrow let me see my Morning Star shine as brightly as ever." With an affectionate kiss on her forehead he went across to his own apartments.

Deli Pasha was neither a suspicious nor a reflecting man, but he had a fair share of good sense when he chose to exert it, and the more he mused on the events of the day the more did he feel puzzled and unable to explain them: the strange emotion and agitation of Fatimeh Khanum, usually so staid and tranquil in her bearing, the still more violent emotion and agitation of his daughter on receiving proposals of marriage from a suitor altogether unexceptionable, and whose name he imagined must be unknown to her. "Surely," he said to himself, "these women must have heard some story against Selim, that he is hateful, or cruel, or brutal. I must inquire of Fatimeh Khanum and find this out."

178

While he was indulging in these meditations Amina had locked herself into her boudoir, and having loosened the bands that confined her hair, left it to fall all over her lovely neck and shoulders; then, drawing forth her small praying-carpet, she went through her accustomed prayers, bowing her fair forehead upon it, and thanking Allah for having preserved her from a danger the recollection of which still made her shudder.

She went to the lattice and gently, very gently, opened the side of it. She could see nothing, for the moon was not up, neither could she be seen, though Hassan was watching like a true sentinel of love: the creaking of the half-opened lattice did not, however, escape his quick ear, and ere she retired from it she heard in a half-whispered tone, that seemed to hover in the air, the following verses:—

"Extolled be the Lord who hath endued with all beauty she who hath enslaved my heart.
I see her not, I hear her not, yet I feel the fragrance of her presence like concealed spikenard.
My love is the moon, and I am a solitary cloud wandering over the face of the sky—
A cloud obscure and unnoticed; but let the moon shine upon it, and straightway it is robed in silver."^[66]

The following morning Hassan was for some time with Deli Pasha explaining to him the results of his examination of his predecessor's accounts, and pointing out defalcations and deficiencies in some quarters, and certain sums due, but not collected, in others. Deli Pasha hated accounts and business, but he saw so much earnest zeal in Hassan's desire to render them clear that he forced himself to give them some attention, and even that little sufficed to make it evident that his former *khaznadâr*^[67] had complicated them on purpose to cheat him, and that his present one made them as simple as possible, and compensated for his want of experience by his conscientious industry. Scarcely had he got through the summary which Hassan had drawn up, ere he clapped his young treasurer on the shoulder and broke out into a fit of laughter.

179

"Hassan," he said, "you are the cream of *khaznadârs*, and I am sensible of all the zeal and industry you have shown, but I cannot help laughing when I see my young Bedouin-Antar doing the work of a Coptic clerk."

"I grant," said Hassan, smiling, "that the pen is not so familiar to my hand as the lance; but if I know too little, I see plainly that my predecessor knew too much, and I hope that the *khazneh* will furnish you with more purses this year than the last. It is my wish and duty to do you good service, and be it with lance or pen, Inshallah! I will do it."

180

"Would you like a little exercise for your lance?" said Deli Pasha. "I do not mean a jereed game, but a few sharp thrusts and hard blows in earnest."

"On my head be it—I am ready," said Hassan, his eyes brightening. "Where is such occupation to be found?"

"I have this morning received a note from the Kiahia," said Deli Pasha, drawing it out as he spoke from under a cushion of his divan, "and he tells me that a band of the Sammalous tribe have lately come up on a plundering expedition from their own country, near the Bahirah, and have ravaged several villages near Ghizeh, carrying off money and horses. It is said that they are now not very far from the Pyramids. The Kiahia proposes to send eighty horsemen instead of fifty to escort the English party going to-morrow to the Ghizeh Pyramids: forty can remain to guard them, and the remaining forty can make an excursion into the desert and try to find and capture these Sammalous thieves. He adds in his note that he should be glad if you could accompany that party, as you were trained in Bedouin warfare, and he has formed a high opinion of your skill and courage. What say you to the proposal?"

"Most willingly will I go," replied Hassan, "to have a bout with those rascally Sammalous, who are the enemies of my old tribe the Oulâd-Ali. The very last fight that I saw among the Arabs was with them, and they wounded my adopted father."

181

"El-hamdu-lillah" (Allah be praised), said Deli Pasha, "that the expedition is to your taste. I will write to the Kiahia that you accept, and will advise him to put the horsemen sent after the Sammalous under your command. And now as a chance hurt may befall from lance or bullet, and you might be unwilling to expose a horse not your own, to make your mind easy on that score I make you a present of your friend Shèitan: you have well deserved him, and, to say the truth, I do not believe he would obey any other master."

Hassan carried the Pasha's hand to his lips and said, "May your life and happiness be prolonged."^[68]

"Go, then, to-morrow morning," continued Deli Pasha, "and Allah go with you: the Kiahia's horsemen will meet you at Ghizeh, where you will also find one or two of those who were plundered by the Sammalous, and who will aid you in tracking the party."

182

Hassan took his leave, and as he went to his own room he met his dumb *protégé*. Greeting him kindly, he informed him that he was going on an excursion which might detain him a few days, and

at the same time thinking that the boy might be in want of some necessary during his absence, he offered him a few small pieces of silver.

Murad smiled, and declined the money, showing his protector a few coins of similar value in his own possession. In his rapid finger-language he then explained to Hassan that he was now sufficiently recovered to run with messages as before, and that he was already employed in this way at a coffee-house and one or two other houses in the neighbourhood. With a few words of encouragement Hassan left him and went on to his own room, where he busied himself in examining and cleaning his pistols, which he carefully loaded. He took care to see that both his sword and dagger were loose in the sheath, and that the point of his lance was sharp. While busied in these preparations, and in putting into his saddle-bags the few articles of clothing which he meant to take with him, he hummed rather than sung snatches of old Arab songs.

All at once the thought struck him that Amina might be at the lattice. He crept up the ladder and peeped through the aperture, that could not be called a window. There, indeed, was Amina, and the lattice was open, and though the twilight was darkening, Hassan could see that she was weeping, for the snowy Damascus kerchief was often applied to her eyes.

Hassan knew not what to do. He longed to comfort her, to sympathise with her, but he knew that if he showed himself or made her aware of his presence by addressing a word to her, she would immediately close the lattice and withdraw. So he looked on in silence, and partook of her unknown grief till the tears stole into his own eyes.

At length, unable any longer to keep silence, he drew his head away from the aperture so that he could still see her but she could not see him. He began to sing a well-known Turkish love-song in a very low tone. The sound of the air, though not the words, reached her ear; she cast her eyes furtively at the aperture in the opposite wall, but seeing nothing, she did not withdraw. A little louder he sung, and the words reached her ear, and she dried her tears and listened. It was a popular song, about Youssuf and Zuleika, which, even if others could have heard, would not compromise her; but her beating heart told her who was singing, and for whom the song was meant. In the last verse the voice sank nearly to a whisper. Still she caught the words, and the name of Amina was substituted for Zuleika. With a deep blush she disappeared from the casement, and all was silence and darkness.

On the following morning early Hassan set forth, mounted on Shèitan, and crossed the Nile to Ghizeh by a ferry, which then, as now, existed at a short distance to the southward of Boulak. He was accompanied by his *sàis*, who drove before him a donkey carrying our hero's saddle-bags, and the large cloak and Arab blanket which served him on such occasions for a bed.

On reaching Ghizeh he found the whole Thorpe party, with the horsemen who were to accompany them, already arrived: there were also forty or fifty donkeys laden with tents, bedding, cooking-utensils, and all the creature comforts which Demetri's foresight had prepared for a residence of several days in the desert.

Hassan saluted them all in turn, and Demetri and Foyster insisted on shaking hands with him in English fashion. After exchanging a few words he turned towards the Kiahia's horsemen, and was pleased to recognise in their leader the same good-looking young Georgian whom he had seen at the head of the Kiahia's Mamelukes at the jereed play. Calling him on one side, Hassan inquired whether he had any precise instructions as to the course to be pursued for the discovery and seizure of the Sammalous Arabs.

"Yes," he replied; "I have a letter to the Governor of this district ordering him to provide one or two villagers well acquainted with the road to guide the English party to the Pyramids,^[69] and also to place under our charge two Arabs now waiting here who belong to the villages robbed by the Sammalous, and who are supposed to have some knowledge of the direction in which they have retreated."

It was deemed advisable that the whole party should proceed towards the divan of the Governor of Ghizeh, which was at no great distance from the spot where they were now assembled. They moved onward accordingly, and as they approached the Governor's house the Georgian and Hassan rode forward to demand an interview with that personage, while the remainder of the party halted at a short distance from the house. They had not been there long before their ears were saluted by sounds too familiar to all who have passed any time in the neighbourhood of a Government divan in Egypt—namely, the heavy and swiftly-descending blows of a stick, accompanied by shrieks and cries of the victim, "Amân! amân! [mercy! mercy!] I am dead. Mercy! mercy! You may kill me, but I have not a farthing."

The Europeans stopped their ears to shut out these painful sounds, while Demetri, more accustomed to such sights, went forward to witness the punishment, and ascertain what might be its cause and issue. The cries died away into moans and groans, which soon became altogether inaudible, leaving the Europeans to imagine that the sufferer was dead or had fainted; and Mr Thorpe was virtuously and indignantly inveighing against the barbarous cruelty of the Turkish governors when Demetri arrived.

As he approached they saw that he was convulsed with laughter, which only redoubled Mr Thorpe's indignation; and he asked the dragoman, in an angry voice, how he could be so brutal as to jest over the agony and torture of a fellow-creature.

"You shall hear, you shall hear, O my master," said Demetri, still unable to compose his features to a serious expression. "The man whom they were beating is a fellah who occupies some land in the neighbourhood, and though he sells his beans and his wheat like others, he never has any money to pay the taxes on the day that they are collected: either he has been robbed, or the crop failed, or the rats devoured half of it, or he lost his purse on the road as he was coming to pay in the money due to the Government—always some excuse; and though for two successive seasons he has been severely beaten, they never could find a piastre about his person nor extract one from him. This morning, just as your Excellencies came, the same scene had been repeated: he had vowed his inability to pay, and the Governor ordered him two hundred and fifty blows on the feet. The fellow

took them all, bawling and screaming and groaning as you heard; and a stranger might well suppose that he was almost, if not quite, murdered. As soon as he had received the number of blows ordered, he was released, and began to stagger out of the Governor's presence as if he could scarcely stand on his feet. In doing so he nearly ran up against one of the *kawasses* standing by, a strong, rough fellow, who struck him a smart blow on the cheek with his open hand. The suddenness of the blow took him so by surprise that it opened his mouth unawares, and there dropped from it to the ground something enveloped in a piece of rag. The *kawass* darted forward and seized it. On opening it they found within four gold sequins, being the exact amount of the sum which he owed to the Government. The rascal had come with a full determination not to pay if he could help it, and rather to take any amount of punishment he could conveniently bear: if he found the beating carried to a length that his patience could not endure, he could at any time stop it by producing the money. It seems that the two hundred and fifty which he had received had produced little or no effect on his leathern feet, and he was going off, chuckling at having cheated the Government once more, when that accidental blow on the cheek made him spit out the money."^[70]

188

It may be believed that this version of the story changed the compassion of the Thorpe party into an inclination to laugh, and shortly afterwards the fellah who had received the beating, and had unintentionally paid his taxes, was pointed out to them by Demetri walking homeward to his village, apparently with as little suffering in his feet as if he had been beaten by children with straws.

While Mr Thorpe was discussing with the Missionary Müller the peculiar features of character exhibited by the Egyptian fellah in the scene which had just occurred, Hassan and the Georgian returned, accompanied by the guides required, so the whole party set off merrily towards the Pyramids.

Mr Thorpe had now reached the goal of wishes long entertained, for although Thebes, Memphis, and other places of antiquarian interest had mingled in his dreams, there was something in the grand and antique simplicity of the Pyramids which had assigned to them a pre-eminence in his imagination. Immediately on arriving he commenced his tour and survey of the Great Pyramid with his daughter and Müller. Hassan went with them also, rightly judging that his services might be necessary not only to interpret for them, but to protect them against the importunity of the Arabs, who had flocked in considerable numbers to see the strangers, and to devise various projects for extracting money from them. There were not then, as now, crowds of Arabs, half Bedouins, half villagers, who make a living at the Pyramids by running up and down them for prizes and assisting the numerous travellers to reach the top; but there was even then a remnant of some tribe located there in tents, who enjoyed a kind of prescriptive right to the custody of the place, and Hassan and the Georgian had agreed to pay a score of these to act as guards or watchmen while the party remained.

189

Mr Thorpe and Müller were already engaged in a discussion concerning the history of the Pyramids; Emily had fallen a little behind, and was turning to ask some question of Hassan, who had spoken to her a moment before, when she observed him standing on a large stone at the base of the Pyramid, his eyes cast down to the ground in a fit of profound abstraction. There was an air of melancholy in his countenance, so different from its usual expression, that she could not resist the impulse which led her to ask him the subject of his meditations, which she imagined to be something connected with the story of the Pyramids.

"Lady," he replied in a tone of deep feeling, "the dream of my infancy passed across my mind. This stone on which I stand was once my cradle."

190

"Your cradle, Hassan! How mean you?"

"It is now about twenty years ago," said Hassan, "that my foster-mother was sitting here—perhaps on this very stone, for she said it faced towards Cairo—when a horseman, believed to be my father, placed me—an infant wrapped in a shawl—at her side, and fled at full speed. He has never since been heard of. I know not who he was, nor whether he yet lives. I know not who was my mother—I am a stray leaf blown about by the wind of destiny."

"Be assured he was no mean or ignoble man—it could not be," said Emily. "I hope you may yet find him, and be happy with him."

"May Allah bless you, and grant this and all your other prayers," said Hassan. "But, lady, do not speak of this matter to others: though known to many, it pains my heart to hear it spoken of."

After making the tour of the Great Pyramid, and admiring with reverence and wonder the architectural energy and skill which, in the infancy of mankind, had piled upon each other those enormous blocks, brought from a distance of many hundred miles, Mr Thorpe proposed to ascend, and to see from the top the effect of a sunset on the valley of the Nile. A score of Arabs were already on the alert to assist the worthy gentleman and his party in the ascent, and so zealously obtrusive were they in their manner of bestowing their assistance that Hassan was obliged to tell them angrily not to pull and haul the strangers as if they were baskets of dates. When they reached the top, what a magnificent spectacle awaited them! There lay the broad and verdant valley of the Nile stretched out beneath them. Far as the eye could reach were gardens, villages, and palm-groves, among which the Nile, studded with white sails, wound its sinuous course, while beyond its eastern bank rose the Mother of the World,^[71] her multitudinous domes and minarets all bathed in the golden flood of the sun's descending rays. All there felt the softening influence of the hour—the imposing magnificence of the scene. None dared to break the spell by an exclamation of admiration. Emily glided to her father's side and looked up in his face, and as he returned the silent pressure of her hand, she saw that the heart of the kind and enthusiastic antiquarian was filled with emotions that could not find vent in words. After a while they descended as they had come up, and found that the servants had prepared in their tent a dinner, which, following the fatigues of the day, was far from unwelcome.

191

No sooner was Hassan free from the charge that he had undertaken, of escorting Emily and her relatives to the Pyramids, than he hastened to the Georgian's tent to ascertain whether any intelligence had reached him respecting the course taken by the Sammalous.

192

"Much," replied the Georgian; "an Arab has arrived, a friend of those whom we brought with us, who followed them stealthily at a distance and saw the spot where they encamped, about fifteen miles to the north-west of this place. They do not travel fast, as they are encumbered with the number of the horses which they have captured, there being among them some mares with foal."

"Can I see and speak with this man?" said Hassan.

"Assuredly," replied his friend, at the same time ordering his servant to summon the Arab. The latter entered, and displayed to Hassan's scrutinising gaze a light sinewy frame and a shrewd intelligence. The answers which he gave to Hassan's minute inquiries were clear and satisfactory, and from them he ascertained that the marauding party were about fifty strong, mostly armed with lances, some heavy guns, and pistols. "To overtake them will not be difficult," added the Arab, "nor to retake the horses—that is, if your own be swift and strong; but you will never capture their leader, for he is mounted on Nebleh."

"And what is Nebleh?" inquired Hassan.

"Have you never heard of Nebleh?" replied the Arab, eyeing our hero with an expression something between surprise and contempt; "I thought every one had heard of Nebleh.^[72] She is the fleetest mare in the desert: when or how the Sammalous stole her I know not, but none can catch her."

"We will see that," replied Hassan, smiling; then turning to the Georgian he said to him, "My friend, it is true that I am younger than you, and have less experience; nevertheless I am half a Bedouin, and have seen something of these desert forays: will you be guided by me in this expedition?"

"Willingly," replied the Georgian, with corresponding frankness. "I and my men will follow your counsel in everything."

After a few minutes more of earnest conversation with the Arab, during which Hassan learnt from him further particulars respecting the nature of the ground, the existence or non-existence of water, &c., he turned to the Georgian and said—

"My counsel, then, is that you select thirty-five of the best mounted of your men, leaving the remainder here to guard the English party under the charge of the Mameluke whom you consider most trustworthy: you and I will both go in pursuit of the Sammalous. Let men and horses take food now and rest till midnight, at which hour the moon will rise; let each man secure to his saddle a bag containing eight or ten pounds of bread and a few dates; our guide can lead us to water, not much nor good, but for two days it will suffice, and in that time, Inshallah! we will capture the rogues, and perhaps Nebleh too. Allah knows!"

The Georgian cheerfully acquiesced in Hassan's proposal, being inspired with confidence by the prompt decision with which he formed and uttered it. The two friends then supped together, and separated to make the preparations agreed upon.

At midnight the party moved silently out of the encampment, and, guided by the Arab who had brought the intelligence, commenced their march over the desert. For several hours there was no need for any precaution, and Hassan and the Georgian, riding side by side at the head of their men, conversed together with the frankness congenial to their age and spirits. Both were eager for distinction, and both hoped for an adventure that would do them honour. They talked much of Nebleh, and Hassan said, as he patted the sleek neck of his now miscalled steed—

"If Shèitan once comes within ten spear-lengths of her and she escapes, she must be swifter than any horse I have seen."

"Truly he is a noble horse," said the Georgian; "mine is not slow, and I remember that on the day of the jereed I could neither escape your horse nor your spear."

"Nay," replied Hassan, laughing, "these are but the chances of the game: had your horse been swift as Shèitan my shoulder would have felt your jereed."

Thus discoursing, they followed their silent guide, who had not struck into the heart of the desert, but had pursued a route parallel to that taken by the Sammalous, and nearer to the cultivated ground. He halted in a small hollow in which was a pool left by the receding waters of the Nile, and around its edge a few patches of the herbs and grasses which grow on the borders of the desert.

"We are now nearly opposite their last night's encampment," he said to Hassan; "the moon is low, and we must remain here till dawn."

The party dismounted accordingly to rest and refresh the horses and await the first grey approach of dawn: no sooner did it appear than they were again in motion, and from the summit of a small mound the guide pointed to a curiously shaped hill to the westward, saying—

"Just below that hill they encamped last night."

As soon as they reached its base the party was halted, and Hassan went up with the guide to reconnoitre. When near the top they crept on their hands and knees, and looked over into the plain below: it was of considerable extent, and although they strained their eyes in every direction, no trace could they see of man or horse.

"They have travelled faster than I expected," said the Arab, in a tone of disappointment; "they must already have passed over that ridge opposite, for that is the way to the tents of their tribe."

Hassan thought it now a good opportunity for trying the virtue of the present that he had received the day before. Unslinging his telescope, and adjusting its focus to the mark he had made on the brass, he directed it to the range of hills pointed out by the guide: for some time he looked in vain, but suddenly an exclamation of joy broke from him.

"Praise to Allah, I have them now! one, two, three horsemen just going over the ridge; the rest must have passed before."

"Which way are they going?" inquired the guide.

Hassan pointed with his finger. "Good, good!" exclaimed the guide. "Wait till you are sure that the last is past."

After some minutes of careful and minute survey with the glass, during which he satisfied himself that none remained on the near side of the ridge, he made a sign to the party to advance, and

informed his Georgian friend of what he had seen. "El-hamdu-lillah!" was the joyous reply, and Hassan having vaulted into the saddle, the party soon crossed the plain at an easy canter. When they reached the ridge the same manœuvre was repeated, and Hassan and the guide, creeping cautiously to the top, saw the whole party of the Sammalous crossing the plain beyond, their leisurely movement plainly indicating that as yet they had no idea of pursuers being on their track.

Hassan now took a careful survey of the country, from which, as well as from the opinion of the guide, he ascertained that at no great distance on the right hand a valley or hollow ran in a direction nearly parallel with that taken by the Sammalous. His decision was formed in a moment, and he hastily descended to communicate it to his companions.

"There they are in that plain below," he said. "I will take a dozen of the best mounted of your men and gallop down that valley, so as to get ahead of them and cut off their retreat. Give me two hours and then fall on their track; we shall have them between us, and, Inshallah! they will not escape us."

No sooner said than put in execution. Hassan led the way down the valley at a hand-gallop, checking, however, the speed of Shèitan so as not to exhaust the horses of the troopers behind him. The ground favoured their manœuvre, and they had already passed half the space requisite to enable them to head the enemy when they suddenly came upon an Arab riding leisurely up from a hollow at right angles to that which our hero was following.

"It is one of the Sammalous," he said, "who knows the country; he has been down to a well in that hollow. If he once gets to the crest of the hill he will give the alarm to his party, and our plan is spoiled: he shall not do so if Shèitan's breath holds good. Do you move gently forward and spare your horses; leave me to deal with him." So saying, he struck the stirrups into Shèitan's flanks, who darted forth like a bolt from a crossbow.

The Sammalous no sooner saw a horseman approaching at full speed than he divined that his followers were in pursuit of his party; he therefore urged his horse to his utmost speed. But Hassan had been too quick for him, and had got so far ahead on the hillside that he had nothing for it but to fight or be taken prisoner, and being a bold, stout fellow, he did not feel disposed to yield to a single enemy.

Hassan having got between the Sammalous and his party, reined up Shèitan and called to him to lower his lance and surrender. The Sammalous, seeing that Hassan's followers were already visible in the distance, and that no time was to be lost, made no other reply than by charging him at full speed. Our hero, observing that his adversary's lance was three or four feet longer than his own, and that he could not await the charge, dexterously avoided it by wheeling Shèitan suddenly to the right, and as he passed in full career dealt him a blow on the head with his *dabboos*,^[73] which hurled him senseless from the saddle.

"Aferin! [bravo!] Ahmed Aga, my friend," said Hassan to himself; "when you gave me this weapon I did not think to employ it so soon and so well!" So saying, he dismounted, and commenced operations by securing the fallen man's horse: after that he turned to examine the rider, whom he found to be stunned and bruised, but not mortally hurt. Hassan kept guard over him until the arrival of his friends. No sooner did they appear than he said—

"We have no time to lose. The Sammalous knew that this fellow came hither for water over that ridge; if he does not return they will begin to suspect, and send a party to look for him, who would discover us before our plan is ripe. I must throw dust in their eyes!" So saying, he coolly proceeded to take off the striped blanket which the Sammalous wore, and taking also the *kufiyah* or kerchief which formed the head-dress of the latter, he wrapped it round his own head.

Having thus disguised himself, Hassan mounted the horse of his fallen adversary, who at that moment came to his senses, and sitting up, looked on at what was going forward, and rubbed his eyes as if he were waking out of a dream. Hassan desired one of the troopers to bind the man's hands fast behind him and to tie his feet, after which the party proceeded according to his orders along the valley, whilst he himself, trusting to his disguise, took the way towards the top of the hill which divided his party from those of whom he was in pursuit.

As soon as he reached the summit he had the satisfaction of seeing them in the plain immediately below. They were going at a slow pace, some of the slaves and boys stopping and diverging to the right and left to drive up the lagging mares and foals, while the main body pursued their route, evidently unsuspecting of the vicinity of danger. Hassan had not been a moment on the crest of the hill ere they perceived him; but as they expected their comrade to reappear from that quarter, and they recognised his horse, blanket, and head-dress, it was impossible for them at that distance to distinguish the features or figure of the rider, and the motions of Hassan were such as to disarm all suspicion, as he rode leisurely and in a lazy attitude on a parallel line with themselves, apparently allowing the horse to pick his own way. Meanwhile he noted accurately their numbers and rate of march, so that he was able to calculate with considerable exactness the most favourable point for sweeping over the hill with his party to intercept their retreat. This latter manœuvre he was obliged to defer until the appearance of the Georgian and his followers in pursuit, his own being too few in number to make a successful attack alone.

Hassan had not long to wait, for the time arranged between himself and the Georgian had scarcely elapsed ere the latter appeared on the hill in the rear, and began to cross the plain with his men at an easy gallop. That he was noticed by the Sammalous was ere long evident from the sudden stir and movement observable among their ranks, as they held a hasty consultation whether they should abandon their booty or make a stand in its defence. The party in pursuit being apparently not more than half their own number, they resolved on the latter course; and from the shouts and signs which they made to Hassan to come down and join them, he conjectured that the man whom he had discomfited was of some rank or consequence among them. Regardless of their signals, he disappeared over the hill to join his own party, while the Sammalous leader exclaimed to his followers, "Curses on Abd-el-Atah, on his father, and on his mother; he sees we are about to be attacked, and he gallops off to save his own skin!"

Having rejoined his party, Hassan vaulted on Shèitan, threw off his disguise, and led them swiftly forward for about a mile, when perceiving a small gorge or cleft in the hill which opened upon the plain, he conducted his men through it, and had the satisfaction of seeing that the body of the Sammalous were between the Georgian and himself.

"El-hamdu-lillah, we have them!" he exclaimed, and as he spoke he loosened his sword in its sheath, looked to the priming of his pistols, and there was a joyous, exulting expression in his countenance which gave confidence to all the party.

The time for concealment was past, for the Georgian was now within an arrow's shot of the Sammalous. The latter had gathered their captured animals in the rear, and were preparing to resist the onset of the enemy in front, when shouts from the boys and servants in the rear caused them to turn their heads. They saw Hassan and his little band approaching in that direction. Escape was now impossible, and it only remained for them to conquer or be captured with all their booty.

The number of combatants was nearly equal; the Sammalous had, perhaps, eight or ten more than their opponents, besides a score of servants and boys on foot, who had each a sword or lance. Twenty of the fighting men of the Sammalous were quickly wheeled to the rear to oppose Hassan and his twelve horsemen, who now came on in a gallop, and in better order than might have been expected from their habitually irregular discipline.

"Gently, gently, my men," said Hassan, reining in Shèitan to a moderate hand-gallop. "Keep your horses in breath till you are at close quarters, then let them out. A gold sequin for the first empty saddle among the Sammalous." His men answered with a loud and cheerful shout, and in a few minutes the conflict began.

As Hassan had expected, the Sammalous did not await his charge in a body, but dispersed to the right and left, so as to reduce the fight rather to a succession of single combats. They fought well and bravely, nevertheless they were unable to contend with the impetuous force with which Hassan directed the attack of his small party; in fact, his appearance and his deeds contributed to strike a panic into them. His large and powerful figure, the joyous and exulting shouts that he raised as man after man fell under the sweep of his sword, together with the wonderful dexterity with which he guided and wheeled his strong and fiery horse amidst and around them, contributed to throw them into amazement and consternation.

The Georgian on his side was not idle, and it was soon evident to the leader of the Sammalous that all hopes of saving their booty must be abandoned: many of his men were killed, many wounded, when he reluctantly shouted aloud to the remainder words that may best be rendered by the French "Sauve qui peut!" Mounted on Nebleh, the chief had shot about the field like a meteor—now here, now there, darting and wheeling in every direction. Nebleh seemed to be unapproachable in her matchless speed and activity. Never had that gallant mare and her no less gallant rider better deserved the high reputation they had acquired than on this day so fatal to his tribe. One of the Turkish horsemen he had transfixed with his lance, and had grievously wounded two more; but now destiny had decided against him, and with a sigh he turned to fly from the luckless field.

Hassan had been so much occupied in the *mêlée* that he had not had time to seek out the Sammalous leader, and accident had not brought them together; but when the latter shouted to his men to fly, and turned Nebleh's head to the desert, Hassan struck his stirrups into Shèitan's flanks and darted forth in pursuit, and now commenced a race for victory on one side, for life on the other.

The Sammalous had a start of nearly fifty yards, which Shèitan's first furious bound had reduced to thirty. For nearly half a mile the speed of the horses seemed equal, but even in the heat of that exciting moment Hassan had the presence of mind to reflect that Shèitan's strength and speed had been severely tried by a long gallop on the other side of the hill, and also that his own weight was one-third greater than that of the light and sinewy form of the Sammalous chief, hence he rightly judged that in a long race he must be the loser. Both had hitherto kept their horses somewhat within their speed preparatory to a trial of endurance.

Hassan now resolved to call upon Shèitan for one great effort, and if that failed, to give up the pursuit. Once more he slackened the rein and struck the sharp stirrup into the flanks of Shèitan. The high-bred horse, responsive to the touch, bounded forward with an impetuosity that brought him within a few yards of Nebleh's flank. At this crisis the Sammalous chief drew a pistol from his girdle, and, turning round in his saddle, fired at his pursuer with so true an aim that the ball passed through Hassan's clothes and grazed his ribs, inflicting a slight flesh wound in its passage.

With a motion almost simultaneous Hassan drew out one of his pistols and aimed it full at the back of his enemy. The ball took effect between the unfortunate man's shoulders and passed through his lungs. After reeling for a few minutes in the saddle, he fell heavily to the ground, his hand still grasping Nebleh's bridle. The intelligent and faithful animal stood by the side of her dying master, putting her nose down towards his face as if inquiring what ailed him and why he stopped. Hassan dismounted, and leaving his panting steed at a little distance, approached the spot. The Sammalous chief was no more.

Hassan remained for a few minutes silently contemplating the body. A smile of satisfaction passed over his countenance as he reflected how well he had avenged the wrongs of his foster-father, but it quickly passed away as he said gravely, "He was a brave horseman, but his time was come—destiny had written it—Allah have mercy on his soul!" He then commenced an examination of the dead man's clothes, and found, as he had expected, in the shawl around his waist several small bags of money which the deceased had plundered from the villages whence he had taken the horses. Securing these in his own belt, he proceeded to lead away Nebleh, who was apparently bewildered by the death of her master, and accompanied him with the gentleness of a lamb.

Two or three of his men, who had followed the headlong chase as fast as their wearied horses could carry them, now drew near. Intrusting Nebleh to them, he slowly returned to the scene of the affray.

Hassan and the Georgian, after congratulating each other on the success of their expedition, began to examine into its results. Of their own party four were killed and ten wounded; of the

Sammalous nine were killed and thirty made prisoners, of whom seventeen or eighteen were wounded. Several bags of money had been found besides those in the possession of Hassan, and forty mares and foals carried away from the villages, besides twenty-five horses belonging to the Sammalous themselves. These items, added to a goodly collection of swords, pistols, and other accoutrements, made up a very respectable prize to lay at the feet of the Kiahia.

The solitary Arab whom Hassan had thrown from his horse and had left bound had wandered from his party to drink at a neighbouring well, whither, being at no great distance from the scene of the affray, Hassan and the Georgian now determined to proceed, there to pass the night, the state of the wounded rendering it impossible to carry them back direct to the Pyramids. To the well, therefore, they bent their course, the wounded being placed and supported on the quietest horses. They found the prisoner bound in the spot where he had been left, and he was not a little surprised to see his comrades and all their booty captured like himself. He bore it, however, with the resigned indifference common to oriental fatalists.

Having arrived at the well, arrangements were made for the night encampment. The prisoners were all placed, disarmed, in a body, with a strong guard over them, and they were told that any attempt at escape would be punished by instant death. The horses were picketed, and Hassan intrusted Nebleh to his own groom, with orders to sleep close to her, and with one eye open: over these a guard was set, which was relieved every two or three hours, Hassan and the Georgian agreeing to watch each one-half of the night. The barley and bread captured from the Sammalous was more than ample for the wants of the party, and half-a-dozen torn-up shirts supplied the bandages necessary for the wounded.

The night passed without incident or interruption, and the following day they pursued their course leisurely to the Pyramids, where their arrival with their captives and booty created no little sensation. After consulting with Hassan the Georgian sent off a fresh horseman with a letter to the Kiahia, informing him of the result of the expedition, and requesting that one or two surgeons might be sent to attend the wounded of both parties: he also desired to know the Pasha's pleasure whether he should convey the prisoners and recaptured booty into Cairo, or to the divan of the Governor of the province at Ghizeh.

The generous Georgian did not tell Hassan that in his account of the affray he had given the whole credit of its success to our hero, both from his having laid and carried out the plan, and crowned it by killing the Sammalous chief with his own hand.

Those who have lived or travelled in the East will exclaim, "This is unnatural; no Oriental was ever capable of so unselfish a trait." Rare fruit in that clime we admit it to be, nevertheless the exception does not disprove the rule. However contrary it may appear to general experience, truth, modesty, and unselfishness *may* be found in the East—that is, among the Arabs, Turks, and those brought up with them. He that would seek such fruit farther East—that is, in Persia—had better settle his affairs before he starts, and be prepared for a journey of indefinite duration and worse than doubtful result.

Having despatched the messenger, and sent another to the villages which had been plundered by the Sammalous to desire their sheiks to come on the following morning to identify and claim their lost property, Hassan and the Georgian proceeded without delay to render such assistance as lay in their power to their wounded comrades: in this work of humanity they found an efficient coadjutor in Müller. For most of the wounds, after cleaning them, cold bandages were his panacea, and these he applied with remarkable skill and expedition. In two instances he had to employ probe and forceps for the extraction of a pistol-ball: in these he was equally successful, and he plied his hands and instruments with much knowledge.

Hassan, as soon as he could leave the wounded, was summoned to Mr Thorpe's tent to give an account of the expedition and the affray, which he did with his accustomed modesty, passing lightly over his own share in them, and praising the gallantry of the Georgian and his comrades. But when he came to relate the chase, and what might be termed his flying duel with the Sammalous chief, his eye sparkled, and he told his tale with a force and vigour that produced the liveliest interest and excitement in his auditors. Emily gazed on the speaker in silence, and when he had concluded his narrative Mr Thorpe said—

"Hassan, you mentioned that the chief's bullet grazed your side: in attending to the wounds of others, have you seen to your own?"

"Mine is a mere scratch; I have not even looked at it," he replied.

"The very words you used before," said Mr Thorpe, shaking his head, "when you had a ball in your shoulder which threatened to cripple you for life. I insist upon it that you allow Müller to examine it."

"To please you, and to show you that I am grateful for the interest you take in me, I will do so," said Hassan, rising, and he went with Müller into the adjoining tent. On examination the latter found that our hero, though not seriously injured, had very narrowly escaped. The ball had, as he termed it, grazed his side: the application of some lint and a plaster was all that Müller thought necessary. He returned to give his report to the Thorpes, while Hassan went to sup with his friend the Georgian, who had already invited the doctor to join them.

On the following morning at daybreak the messenger returned, bringing an answer from the Kiahia to the effect that Hassan and the Georgian, together with those who had accompanied them, were to convey the prisoners, horses, and other booty to the Governor's divan at Ghizeh, where the Kiahia proposed himself to attend and to superintend the proceedings. The village sheiks having arrived, the party set forth to Ghizeh, and on arriving, Hassan was surprised and pleased to find there his chief, Deli Pasha, in attendance on the Kiahia. The hearty old Pasha welcomed Hassan with a smile, saying—

"Welcome, my son; you have done well, and have made my eyes glad."

The Kiahia then sat down in the centre, with Deli Pasha on one side and the Governor on the other, Hassan and the Georgian standing near their respective chiefs. The proceedings commenced

by an inquiry into the amount claimed by the several sheiks as having been stolen from their villages.

It were an endless task to relate the falsehoods and exaggerations uttered by each of these worthies as to the losses they had sustained: certain it is that five times the amount of money recovered would not have satisfied their claims. Hassan and the Georgian laid before the Kiahia the bags which they had found on the persons of the Sammalous, as well as the prisoners and the dead. Some of them were distinguishable by marks and seals: these were restored to their owners, and the others distributed according to the best judgment of the Kiahia. Still the claimants were dissatisfied, and one old sheik said—

“Would it not be well if your Excellency ordered these two young Mamelukes and their soldiers to be searched?—perhaps they have secreted some of the money.”

Hassan and the Georgian cast on the speaker looks of silent contempt, but the impetuous Deli roared out, “By my life, thou son of a dog, thou deservest to have thy white beard rubbed in the kennel! Dost thou think that these brave youths would risk their lives to recover your dirty piastres and then steal a portion of them? and if they had been thieves like thyself, dost thou think, thou father of asses, that they would have brought those piastres with them to this divan?”

The abashed sheik held his peace, and soon afterwards slunk out of the court.

The mares and foals claimed by the villagers were next distributed, and with less confusion and contention than the money, being more easily identified. This ceremony over, the Kiahia Pasha said

“As the goods of the villagers have now been restored, the persons and property of the Sammalous thieves are at the disposal of the Government—the prisoners are condemned to three years’ imprisonment. Kawasses, take charge of them, and remove them to Cairo. Now, Hassan and Reschid” (addressing the Georgian), “stand forth.” The young men obeyed. “Hassan,” continued the Kiahia, “the mare of the Sammalous chief whom you killed is yours. There are twenty-five horses, with arms and accoutrements, belonging to the Sammalous: of these fifteen are for you, as you took the principal lead in the expedition; the remaining ten are for Reschid.”

“My lord,” said Hassan hastily, interrupting the Kiahia, “pardon my freedom of speech. It is not just that I should take one horse more than Reschid: he is my senior, and he commanded your Excellency’s men; he fought and risked his life as I did. Whatever lead I had in the expedition was owing to his modesty and friendship: as we divided the duty equally, I beg your Excellency to divide the horses equally.”

The Kiahia smiled aside to Deli Pasha and replied, “Wallàhi! Hassan, your sentiment is friendly and good, but it is out of my power to comply with your wish. There are twenty-five horses; how can I divide them equally?”

“May your servant speak freely?” inquired Hassan. On receiving an approving sign from the Kiahia he continued, “Four of the brave soldiers who fought with us fell in the affray; they will have left behind them perhaps poor parents, perhaps poor families. I would beg your Excellency to give me eight of the horses, the same number to Reschid, and to allow the remainder to be sold in the horse-market and the money to be given to those poor families.”

“Mashallah!” said the Kiahia, “you have spoken kindly and wisely; it shall be done as you wish. Do you and Reschid take all the horses, choose each your eight, sell the remainder yourselves, and give the amount to the families of those on whom Allah has had mercy.”^[74]

Hassan bowed, and was about to retire when the Kiahia again called him and Reschid before him, saying to them, “You have both done well, and the Viceroy is pleased that those who do good service should be rewarded; my *khaznadâr* has orders to pay you each five purses [£25] on leaving this presence.”

The young men answered with the customary “May your years and honours be abundant,” and withdrew. Hassan having received permission to send his mare and his eight horses into Deli Pasha’s stable, went back with Reschid to the Pyramids in order to take leave of his English friends, while the Kiahia and Deli Pasha returned to Cairo.

Our hero and Reschid, whose liking for each other had already ripened into a warm attachment, rode side by side, conversing on many topics, when the former suddenly said to his companion, “Reschid, I know not how you may feel, but I do not like being paid in money for doing our duty in scattering, capturing, and killing those thieves of Sammalous, and methinks it were a more fitting reward for those soldiers who shared our danger and who have got nothing. What think you if we were to divide among them these purses which have been given to us, and allow some additional share to the wounded?”

Reschid eagerly embraced and seconded the proposal, saying, “You are right, Hassan; we have all that we need under the shadow of our Pashas. The money will be better bestowed among these fellows, whose trade it is to take hard blows for money.”

The idea was no sooner conceived than it was put in execution. Halting under a clump of palm-trees, they called up the men, and after a few words of encouragement and praise for their good conduct, divided among them all that they had received, reserving, as they had proposed, a somewhat larger share for the wounded. As they again rode forward towards the Pyramids, one of the horsemen said to his fellows—

“If our Pasha would give us leaders like that young Hassan, we would follow them to the last drop of our blood. How unlike he is to our captain, whose hands are idle in the fight, and busy only in gripping the money.”

Hassan was very anxious to learn something of his new friend’s origin and early history; but the latter was not able to satisfy his curiosity, answering with a smile to his inquiries, “Our fates seem somewhat similar. You tell me that you are a foundling and know not your parents. I am much in the same case; for I was brought over here from Stamboul, in company with two of my sisters, when I was four or five years of age: the elder was betrothed and married; the younger was destined for some great harem, but she fell in love, married secretly—I know not whom—escaped, and has never

since been heard of. As I never could learn the name of her husband, I have not been able to trace her."

"As our fates are alike, so let our hearts be alike," said Hassan cordially; "and may Allah some day reunite us both to those whom we have lost."

"So may it be! You are not a woman, and not very like one either," replied Reschid, casting his eyes on the athletic proportions of his companion, "and yet my heart leaned towards you from the first moment I saw you. Inshallah! now we are friends, we will see each other much and often."

"I should be truly glad," answered Hassan; "but our intercourse will be soon interrupted, for Deli Pasha goes shortly to Siout as Governor, and I am to accompany him."

"You will not remain there long," said Reschid, "neither you nor your chief. Mohammed Ali likes him and his blunt ways. You will see that he will not leave him long at Siout."

Thus conversing, the friends arrived at the Pyramids, where the report of their generosity to the soldiers and the wounded was soon spread over the whole encampment.

On the morning succeeding these events, Hassan, after taking leave of the Thorpe party, and recommending them to the care of his friend Reschid, returned to Deli Pasha's palace on the banks of the river, where he was cordially welcomed by his chief and by Ahmed Aga. The fame of his exploits, if so they may be termed, had already spread over the whole house, and indeed had been painted in glowing colours by the old chief himself to his daughter.

No greeting of all those which met him on his return pleased him more than that of the little dumb Murad, who looked up into his protector's face with eyes that scarcely required the aid of the tongue's interpretation, as his nimble fingers signed the words, "Allah give you a long and prosperous life—I have heard all, and oh! I am so happy."

Hassan patted the head of his young *protégé* and inquired what he had been doing during the last few days. The little boy had much to tell, and it required all Hassan's attention to follow and understand the language of those fingers, whose rapidity of motion almost confused his sight. Murad had taken many messages, and got into high favour with old Mansour, who knew that he was himself the unintentional cause of the hurt which the dumb boy had received. Finding him very faithful and intelligent in the execution of commissions, Mansour had sent him frequently to the city to bring trifles and samples for the ladies of the harem, and had even conducted him to the ladies themselves, his age not rendering that step objectionable.^[75] He had taken some silks to Zeinab Khanum, and some otto of roses^[76] to Ayesha Khanum (probably the two wives of the Pasha); also some beads and turquoises to the lovely Amina Khanum.

"To whom?" cried Hassan, grasping the little boy's arm with a grip which almost paralysed it.

"To the lovely Amina Khanum," repeated Murad, astonished at Hassan's outbreak. "And is she not beautiful as a houri?"

"And did you speak with her?" said Hassan, releasing the boy's arm and striving to master his emotion.

"In truth I did," he replied, "and she spoke to me kindly, and pitied my want of speech, and said she could almost weep for me."

"Allah! Allah! would that I were twelve years old and dumb," ejaculated Hassan.

"What said you?" inquired Murad, looking up into his face with astonishment.

"Nothing—nothing, boy; go on and tell me what passed with Am—, with the lady you were speaking of."

"She patted me on the cheek, and made me tell her what happened on the day that you saved Mansour from the soldiers. She asked me whether you had been kind to me, and what could I say of my protector but that you had been to me more than a father or a brother? She wished to know where you were gone, and whether there would be bloodshed, and when you were coming back. I wrote all my answers on slips of paper (for I have taught my finger-talk to none but you), and while she was reading them her breath was quick, and her colour changed, and she was so agitated—by Allah! just as you are now, Hassan. What has happened?" added Murad timidly; "have I said anything to offend you?"

Much of what had fallen from Murad was music to Hassan's ear and balm to his heart; yet a sort of dread came over him when he reflected how he had betrayed his feelings, and she hers, to a child, and one whose vocation it was to go from house to house with messages and commissions! Looking steadily into Murad's eyes, he said, "Were you alone with the lady when this passed?"

"I was," he replied, "for some time: two of the slave-girls were occupied at the other end of the room, but they were too far to hear what the lady said to me, and you know, Hassan, they could not hear what I said to her."

This reply somewhat reassured Hassan, while its closing words moved his compassion. Fixing his eyes earnestly, yet kindly, on the boy's countenance, he said to him, "Murad, do you love me?"

"Better than my life," replied Murad, eagerly seizing his protector's hand and pressing it to his lips. "Whom should I love, if I love not you? I have none on earth to care for, none to love, if it be not Hassan."

"Then I charge you by that love," said Hassan solemnly, "never to communicate what you have told me to any human being—not even to Mansour. Were you to do so," he added, with a stern expression, "much as I pity and love you, Murad, I would rend your limbs asunder and give them to the vultures."

Although hurt and surprised by the unwonted tone of his protector's language, Murad looked up in his face with a calm, untroubled countenance, and using his little fingers with slowness and precision, he said, "Kill me now if you doubt me! I am not noble nor honourable in birth, but I have a heart. Has Hassan forgotten our proverb, 'The good man's breast is the secret's tomb'?"^[77]

"Enough," replied Hassan, in the usual tone of kindness in which he addressed his young *protégé*. "I will trust you, and did wrong to doubt your truth. If you are again called to the Lady Amina, serve her and obey her faithfully in all things, but never communicate to any living creature what she may say or ask about me. You are too young to understand the dangers, the intrigues, and calumnies of

a harem—only remember that one unguarded expression from you might be the cause of misery and shame worse than death to her.”

Hassan, having received a message from Deli Pasha, dismissed his little *protégé* and presented himself before his chief, who began talking to him on the subject of his expedition against the Sammalous, and in the course of conversation asked him what he proposed doing with the eight horses taken from them, to which Hassan replied that it was his wish to send them as a present to his foster-father among the Oulâd-Ali.

“That is well,” said the Pasha, smiling; “youth should repay the bread of infancy. But what mean you to do with the beautiful mare Nebleh?”

Hassan thought for a moment, and then replied, “She is, indeed, beautiful and swift beyond any horse that I have seen; but she is small and light—too much so to bear me either after an enemy or an antelope, too much so even to bear your Excellency with freedom.” Here Hassan cast his eyes on the large and vigorous, though somewhat corpulent, proportions of his chief. “I was thinking that it would be well if your Excellency were to make her a present from yourself to Mohammed Ali, for it does not become one in my rank to make him such an offering. His Highness is small and light in person; nor do I believe that he has a mare like Nebleh in his stable.”

“Wallâhi! you say well,” replied Deli Pasha. “Nebleh would fly under him; it shall be as you wish. But as she is your property, if I present her from myself I must buy her from you. How many purses shall I give you for her?”

“Under your Excellency’s favour I have no need of money,” replied Hassan, with an abstracted, melancholy air that struck the Pasha. “Some day I may have a favour to ask of you; then, if you choose, you may pay me for Nebleh.”

“As you will,” answered Deli Pasha. “I will write a letter to his Highness, which you shall deliver yourself with the mare; he is coming to Shubrah^[78] in a day or two. Now,” continued the Pasha, “you must go to your office, for the *nazir* [steward] of my village in Karioonbiah has been here with the year’s account—you know how I hate accounts—so I told him to wait your return. Look through his accounts, receive his money, and send him back.”

Hassan had scarcely taken his seat in his office, and was beginning to look among his papers for the last year’s accounts of the above-mentioned village, when a servant announced to him the expected *nazir*. On entering he made a profound and ceremonious salam to Hassan, and remained standing until the latter desired him to be seated; and when he obeyed this order, it was with a feigned reluctance that he placed himself in the attitude of most respectful humility by sitting on his heels, carefully covering them with the edge of his robe and his hands with its sleeve. Hassan, rather surprised at this overstrained humility, bestowed upon the *nazir* a scrutinising glance, the result of which did not predispose our hero in favour of his visitor.

While the usual pipe and coffee were being offered and discussed a few indifferent and customary phrases were exchanged, and Hassan had more opportunity for studying the countenance of the *nazir*. It offered one difficulty to his scrutiny, as the eyes squinted so remarkably that he could not tell when they were looking at him or when directed elsewhere. Though not superstitious, Hassan was not free from the strong prejudice entertained by all his countrymen against this unpleasant peculiarity;^[79] and he noted that in the *nazir* it was accompanied by a pinched nose, a narrow forehead, and a mouth round which a false, sneering smile perpetually played. The servants having retired, the new-comer began, after his own fashion, to take (as a sailor might say) the soundings of Hassan’s character.

“A very pleasant office this, O Aga, upon which you have lately entered.”

“Pleasant enough for those who prefer the pen and the carpet to the lance and the desert,” replied Hassan.

“There is a time for all,” answered the *nazir*. “Your respected predecessor found it so; he was fond of both; he and I were great friends.” He laid much stress upon the last two words, which did not raise him much in the estimation of Hassan, who had already discovered among his papers not a few proofs of his predecessor’s dishonesty. While assuming a careless air, he resolved to watch the man more narrowly.

“Doubtless,” he said, “those who serve the same chief should be friends together.”

This observation, which was merely general, misled the *nazir* into a belief that he was understood and met half-way.

“What a good chief he is to serve,” said the *nazir*, with his sneering smile. “Open hands and eyes closed, never looks into an account, that is the kind of master I like.”

“Yes,” replied Hassan; “I believe he trusts a great deal to his agents without looking after his own affairs.”

“Wallâhi! that he does,” said the *nazir*; “and as he has plenty, why should not others also eat bread? Do you know,” he added, lowering his voice, while his eyes, apparently directed towards the door, were fixed upon Hassan—“do you know how much your predecessor had for his share out of our village last year?”

“No, I know not,” replied our hero; “I have not looked through the accounts.”

The *nazir* smiled at his companion’s simplicity as he said, “Accounts, indeed! Oh, they are all right and signed by me, while mine are signed by the Sheik-el-Beled.^[80] We must all three be friends, you understand. The village is rated to pay Deli Pasha two hundred purses a-year [£1000], but we easily raise a great deal more, and that we divide amongst us for our trouble. Last year we got each of us fifty purses, and, Inshallah! by your good fortune, we have as much this year.”

“You must explain more to me,” said Hassan, dissembling his indignation under a semblance of simplicity. “I do not understand all the details of your village affairs. I had understood that in the new measurement of the lands which the Viceroy ordered to be made throughout Egypt a few years ago, far heavier demands were made on the fellah than under the old measurement: how comes it, then, that your village produces so much more than is written against it in the books of the Defterdar?”^[81]

"The land was then only half cultivated," replied the *nazir*, "and was rated at only three *ardebs*^[82] the *feddan* [acre]. Since then Delî Pasha has spent much money on it in irrigation, and he is quite satisfied that it produces, as you see in our books, five *ardebs*; but we generally get seven out of it, and besides this there are many methods which we employ for getting an honest penny here and there out of the village. The recruiting time is our best harvest, for then all those who do not wish a son or a brother to be taken must pay the sheik well, and I have my eye always steadily fixed upon him to see that he shares fairly with us."

"Then," replied Hassan, "it is clear that the signature or seal of the sheik is necessary for all these papers, in case they should be suddenly called for and examined. How do you propose to arrange them with me in his absence?"

"He is on his way," said the *nazir*, "and will be here to-night. To-morrow morning we will come to you together, sign the papers, pay you the money, take your receipt, and divide the little perquisite that we take for our trouble."

He accompanied these last words with what he meant to be a knowing wink, but what was in fact a grimace so odious that Hassan could scarcely resist the impulse, which had been gradually growing, to kick him out of the room. But his resolution to seize and convict his accomplice the sheik enabled him to master the impulse, so he contented himself with saying—

"Well, bring him to-morrow morning and we will make it all right."

"I will be here," replied the *nazir*, who then rose and took his leave.

No sooner was he gone than Hassan's indignation found vent in words which, although not uncommon among the Arabs, are scarcely fit to be translated for ears or eyes polite. As he was not aware what spies or partisans the *nazir* might have among the servants in the house, he took no immediate step in reference to the late interview, but strolled down to the stable and spent some time in directing the exertions of his groom towards the rubbing and polishing the satin coats of Shèitan and Nebleh, and beautiful they both were in their several styles—the one above the ordinary size, fleet, proud, strong, and fierce in his bearing to all but one; the other gentle, sagacious, unequalled in her speed as in the fine and delicate proportions of her limbs. Still when any stranger approached, she turned to look at him, as if expecting again to see the form, again to hear the voice, of her Arab lord.

Hassan understood the gesture, and went up to caress her, saying, "Faithful creature, thou shalt see him no more; his destined hour was come, and you are separated. But you shall at least go where you will be sheltered in all seasons, nurtured with all care, fed with all fresh grasses and grains; thy sleek sides will be covered with velvet and jewels, a gold-adorned bit in thy mouth, and on thy back will be a rider like thyself—slight, indeed, and small in size, but unwearied in energy, and of a spirit unquenched by danger and fatigue: wilt thou be happy, Nebleh?"

While thus speaking, or rather half audibly murmuring, he stood with one arm thrown over Nebleh's neck and the other hand shading his own eyes, as his thoughts unconsciously wandered to Amina, and might have been embodied thus in words: "Were I lying on those sands where the Sammalous chief's bones now rest, would she start and turn at every approaching step; and if afterwards they wedded her to wealth and splendour, and her robes were studded with jewels, and gold and pearls were upon her neck, would she be happy?"

Hassan was roused from his wayward and dreamy thoughts by the cheerful voice of his friend Ahmed Aga, who had come to inspect the far-famed Nebleh, and was surprised to find Hassan apparently asleep, though standing on his feet and his arm over her neck. "Why, how is this, my Antar?" he cried; "asleep, and with your arm on Nebleh's mane."

The sudden effort made by Hassan to recover his composure was not entirely successful; besides, he was too natural to feign with his friend a gaiety that he did not feel, so he replied—

"In truth, Ahmed, I was thinking of this poor animal's former master, the Sammalous: she looks in vain for his return, and pricks her ears at every approaching footstep. Who knows what other loving hearts in the tents are also waiting in vain for that returning footstep?"

"Wallâhi!" said Ahmed; "if thou hadst only one-half thy size, and one-quarter of thy strength and courage, thou wouldst be a charming girl, and methinks I could court thee myself, for thy heart is as tender as that of Leilah herself. The Sammalous chief died like a brave robber, as he was, and far happier was it for him than to be captured and taken to Alexandria, and drag timber about the arsenal with two heavy chains round his ankles. Come, be pleased to remove thy giantship from the side of thy pet, that I may see her fair proportions."

Hassan, relieved and restored to his wonted good-humour by the bantering tone of his friend, complied with his request, and after they had stood for some time commenting on the beauty and symmetry of the Arab, they returned together towards the house. On the way Hassan, having first ascertained that Ahmed was but slightly acquainted with the *nazir*, told him all that had passed, and at the same time communicated to him the plan that he had formed for the morrow.

"You may remember," he said, "that in my office is a recess, covered over with a curtain, behind which, unobserved by any of the servants, I wish you to place yourself. There you will hear the rascality of these two confessed by themselves, even if they have not signed or sealed enough to convict them. At a signal from me you will come out; we will then seize them and deliver them over to the Pasha, to be punished as he sees fit."

"With all my heart," said Ahmed. "On my head be it; and, Inshallah! that squinting rogue's feet will get a lesson that will mend his morals."

On the following morning Hassan's plan was carried out with complete success, and scarcely had Ahmed Aga ensconced himself in the curtained recess of Hassan's office than the *nazir* entered, accompanied by the Sheik-el-Beled. The latter was what would be usually termed in Egypt a respectable-looking man, for one of his class; his turban and his dark serge robe well became the gravity of his countenance, and it required a close observation to detect the cunning that lurked in his small dark eyes. The servants who brought the pipes and coffee having retired, the *nazir* entered into the business which had been discussed at the interview of the preceding evening. He

had not proceeded very far in his discourse when Hassan, interrupting him, said—

“This is a serious affair; it will not do to have servants coming in with messages until we have terminated it. I will lock the door.” While he was doing so the *nazir* said to the sheik in an undertone—

“The young greyhound takes well to the game; after he has tasted blood” (here he rattled the money in his bag) “he will be keener yet.” A grim smile, accompanied by “Inshallah!” was the sheik’s reply.

In order that the unseen auditor might hear the whole scheme of fraud developed, Hassan now caused the *nazir* to repeat what he had stated on the preceding day, under pretext that he had not thoroughly understood its details. Our hero also put from time to time a question to the sheik, whose replies, brief though they were, proved him to be a thorough participator in the villainy of his colleague, and rather led Hassan to think him the deeper rogue of the two.

The discussion being closed, they now, as the *nazir* said, “proceeded to business”—*i.e.*, to the signature of the falsified accounts—which ceremony was accompanied by the delivery to Hassan of a bag containing fifty purses (£250), which the *nazir* drew from an inner pocket of his ample vest. Hassan weighed the bag in his hand without untying it, then placed it in a niche of the wall above his head.^[83] The *nazir* and the sheik having attached their seals to duplicate copies of the accounts, the latter were handed to Hassan to be certified by him in a similar manner.

“Before doing so,” said he, “I will call another witness to my sealing. Ahmed Aga, come forth.”

No sooner did the two accomplices see the *mirakhor* emerge from the curtain than they knew they were detected and lost. The falsified accounts were in Hassan’s hand, and it flashed across the *nazir’s* mind that if he could recover and destroy them, proof might be difficult where two would have to swear against two; and, quick as thought, he threw himself on Hassan as the latter was rising from his sitting posture to his feet. But Hassan had his right hand free, and the unfortunate *nazir* never knew what a right hand it was until he found himself lying prostrate and bruised at the farthest end of the room. Ahmed Aga burst into a fit of laughter.

“Mashallah!” he said, “a cheating, squinting, cut-purse dog like you to lay your dirty hands on our Antar. Ha! ha! ha! Come,” he continued, addressing the discomfited *nazir*, “give me up that sword, which you are unworthy to wear, or we shall have you trying to stab some one in the dark.”

Having received the fallen *nazir’s* sword, he opened the door, and calling aloud, ordered two servants to bring cords to tie the hands of the two miscreants and conduct them to the presence of Deli Pasha, whither they themselves at once proceeded, Hassan bearing with him the bag of money and the falsified accounts.

Whilst Hassan was narrating to his chief the manner in which he had been cheated by these scoundrels for years past, the Pasha’s brow was clouded. The written proofs of their guilt having been laid before him, and Ahmed Aga having testified to having heard from their own lips a confirmation of Hassan’s statement, Deli Pasha called aloud to his attendants to take the culprits into the court below and to give them each 250 blows on the feet,—“and mind that they are well laid on,” he added sternly. Then turning to the prisoners, he said, “You have owned to having continued this robbery for some years: after your punishment you will be shut up for a week, during which time you will find means to refund each 100 purses, the avowed spoil of the last two years. If you fail to do so, I hand you over to the Mehkemeh [the public tribunal], where, as you know, the galleys will be your fate. Begone!”

In a few minutes the shrieks and cries of “Aman!” [Mercy!] that arose from the court satisfied the Pasha that his orders were faithfully executed, and he turned with a cleared brow to Hassan, whom he warmly praised for his fidelity and intelligence, adding, “You have well deserved that bag of fifty purses, and I would willingly give it you, but I know, my brave lad, that the offer would offend you; if, however, it would give you pleasure to wear an old soldier’s sword, that has drunk no little Wahabee blood in its day, you are welcome to it. I know it could not be in better or in braver hands.” As he said this he unbuckled his sword and gave it to Hassan, who pressed the holy legend on the blade^[84] to his lips and forehead, saying, “May your honours increase with your life, and may I never be unworthy of your favours.”

We must now transport the reader to the interior of a house, or rather a palace, which stood, and indeed still stands, on the banks of the Nile, about a quarter of a mile from the site of that which we have before described as being occupied by Deli Pasha. This palace was larger and better built than others in the neighbourhood; its foundations of solid stone formed a kind of pier, capable of resisting and controlling the waters of the Nile in their wildest mood, so that a person at one of the windows facing the river might drop a stone into the flood below. At the back of the palace was a large garden filled with orange, lemon, citron, and pomegranate trees, and protected by a high wall; while the lateral front of the building, on which side the windows were all closely latticed, commanded a view of the streets and of the passengers coming to and going from the port of Boulak.

In a private apartment of this palace, adjoining the *ka’ah* or large central saloon, sat a lady, apparently between thirty and thirty-five years of age, the character of whose remarkable countenance was hard to read and define. The features were not regular in detail, yet they were not wanting in a certain beauty of harmony, and though they betrayed strong passions, they denoted a still stronger will to command them. The eye small, but full of fire; and though the stature was below the average height, yet the form seemed imbued with command, and the gestures, though imperious, were not devoid of grace.

Opposite this lady, whom we shall so far involve in mystery as to give her no name but that of the Khanum, sate, or rather crouched, at a respectful distance the figure of a little old woman, whose features were a true index of her odious character. She was what is called in Arabic a *dellaleh* or saleswoman, a class who frequent oriental harems for the ostensible purpose of selling to the

inmates jewels, silks, shawls, and toys of all descriptions, but are usually employed as the medium of all love affairs or intrigues in which the imprisoned beauties are or wish to be engaged.

"And is he then so very beautiful?" inquired the Khanum, with apparent listlessness.

"My lady, I am told that he is indeed beautiful as Youssuf,^[85] and strong and valiant as Antar, nevertheless the down of manhood is newly written on his lip."

"Who may be your informant as to this wondrous youth?" said the Khanum, in a tone in which curiosity was veiled under a semblance of haughtiness.

"May it please you, my lady, it was Ferraj, the confidential servant of Osman Bey, who has seen this youth called Hassan both in the street and at the jereed play; and Ferraj is a man who has eyes—Mashallah! he is not blind. I have before now served him in luring birds of beauty to his master's net, and—"

"Peace, woman," said the lady sternly. "Think you that I care to hear the intrigues of that ruffian Bey?" then dropping her voice to a lower key, she added, "Well, I will see this youth—I think you called him Hassan. When can you bring him hither?"

"It is not difficult, lady; to-morrow, if you will—unless he is absent on duty. Ferraj says that though all are afraid of him if he is angry, yet he is good-natured and simple as a child, and that if I only tell him that some one is in danger or in trouble, he is sure to come at once."

"Well, be it for to-morrow," said the lady impatiently; "only let me know in time whether you have succeeded."

"And if I do succeed," said the crone, "and if he be as beautiful as I have said, what will the generous lady bestow on her slave?"

"That," replied the Khanum, pointing to a small European purse ornamented with pearls which lay upon a stool of ebony inlaid with mother of pearl beside her, and through the network of which a certain number of gold coins were visible. "Go now, be silent and faithful, or ... you know me."

"That do I," muttered the crone between her teeth, as she made her salam and left the room. "I know thee for the veriest dragon that ever wore the form of woman."

That same evening, when Hassan retired to his small sleeping-room, he felt as happy, if not happier, than ever he had felt before: he had rendered to his chief an important service, and had received from him a sword of honour, a trusty blade of the finest Damascus temper, with which he hoped to carve his way to honour, distinction, and Amina.

As the image of the latter rose to view in his imagination, an irresistible impulse led him to close his door, mount the steps which he withdrew from behind his bed, and look through the aperture at the well-known window of his beloved. To his surprise and delight the lattice was open, and he could distinctly see the lovely form and features of Amina as she reposed upon a low ottoman; two candles in high silver candlesticks were on the carpet beside her; no other figure was visible, but Hassan knew that she was not alone, as he heard a voice addressing her in a low tone, which he fancied (although he did not catch a word) he recognised as that of Fatimeh Khanum.

In explanation of the open lattice, it must be remembered that Amina's apartments were high from the ground, and that on the side of the outer palace on which they looked there was not a single window, save only the aperture made by two displaced bricks, through which Hassan had already drunk so many deep draughts of love.

Now he could hear Amina's sweet voice replying to her companion; but he saw that a kerchief was applied to her eyes, and that she was weeping bitterly. At the same time he thought—nay, he was sure—that he heard his own name uttered by the other speaker. Abhorring even the thought of eavesdropping, he came down from the steps and replaced them behind his bed, on which he threw himself in an agony of conflicting emotion.

"Allah! Allah!" said the unhappy youth. "I have caused her tears to flow for whose happiness I would sacrifice my life." He then thought of the words of Fatimeh Khanum—of the high destinies reserved for Amina—of his own unknown birth and humble fortune; thence his thoughts passed to the kindness and trusting confidence shown to him by her father. "And shall it be said that I, Hassan, rewarded him by trying to steal the affections of his only daughter, the prop and pride of his old age. Why did I see her lovely face—why did I hear her sweet voice—why did I respond to her song? Allah! Allah! I have done very wrong—I have been blinded, bewitched, deprived of my reason. Ye cursed steps, ye have brought me to this evil." So saying, he rose in haste, and after ascertaining that there was no one in the passage, he carried out the steps and replaced them in the same corner whence he had first removed them.

More than half the night he spent in framing resolutions to tear the image of Amina out of his breast, or if this proved impossible, as his heart whispered to him it would be, at least to bury it within him, and permit no temptation to induce him to seek a return of his ill-starred passion. "Inshallah! I will never cause her to shed another tear, unless some bullet or lance removes me from the earth, and she drops one on my grave." With these resolutions Hassan fell asleep and dreamt of Amina.

The Easterns have a proverbial saying, that Fortune when serving Vice rides on an Arab horse, and when serving Virtue rides on a camel,—the moral being that she is generally swift to aid the vicious in their undertakings, whilst she is more slow, though more sure and steady, in aiding those of the virtuous. In illustration whereof it fell out that on the following morning Hassan rose early, and strolled in a musing mood on the road which led along the bank of the river to Boulak: he did not observe that he was followed by two persons at a little distance, an old woman and a man. "That is he," said the latter in a low voice to his companion, and immediately withdrew.

Hassan walked slowly forward, and just as he came to a part of the road where passengers were few and an unfrequented by-street led from it, he felt his elbow lightly touched by some one from behind, and turning, he saw a woman, respectably dressed and covered with a long black veil, whom he knew at once from her round shoulders and stooping gait to be advanced in years.

"What would you with me?" he inquired.

"I have a message for the private ear of Hassan," she replied, "if he will accompany me for a few

paces up the street"; and without waiting a reply she walked on before him.

The *dellaleh*, for she it was, felt that she required great caution and tact in order to secure the acquiescence of Hassan in her demand; for she had ascertained some particulars of his habits and character, whence she inferred that if she abruptly proposed to him any affair of gallantry he would turn on his heel and leave her. Having reached a secluded part of the street, she stopped and said, "I have been asked by a lady who is in trouble to see Hassan, and inquire whether he is disposed to render her a service."

"I do not understand or love mysteries," replied Hassan frankly. "Who is the lady, and what service does she require at my hands? Has she not father, or brother, or sons, or friends, that she asks you to apply to a stranger?"

"My son," said the old woman, modulating her voice to its softest tones, "know you not that in our country there are cases where ladies are deprived by fate of all these supports which you name? Know you not our proverb, 'He is thy brother who befriends thee, not he who came forth from thy mother's womb'?"

"True, my mother," said Hassan, smiling; "yet I would fain know what service is required of me—is the lady oppressed, and has she need of my sword?"

"I am not in the Khanum's confidence," replied the wily crone. "She has, I suppose, heard of your courage and fidelity, and wishes to consult you on some matter touching her honour or safety."

"If that be so," answered Hassan, "I am ready—lead on."

"Not now," she replied, "spies are about; and you yourself know that it would be impossible to admit you to the door of the harem in the daytime. Meet me this evening at sunset under the large sycamore by the river on the road to Boulak, and I will conduct you to the house."

"I will be there," answered Hassan; and the crone left him to make report of her success to her employer.

"I have half a mind not to do it," she muttered, as she went. "So young, so handsome, so unsuspecting; and after a few days' revelling in wine and luxury, to be consigned to the cord or the deep well." A shudder passed over her frame; but the tempter was at hand—if aught so foul and hardened as she could be said to require a tempter—the purse of gold flitted before her eyes, and she pursued her course to the side-door of her patroness's house. Admitted at once to the presence of the latter, she reported the success of her mission, adding, "He will be here just after sunset."

"Is he then so well-favoured as he had been described?" inquired the Khanum.

"Mashallah! you shall see with your own eyes, lady; my words are weak to describe what you will see."

"It is well," said the Khanum. "Go; I shall expect him at the hour."

"What strange folly have I now committed," said Hassan to himself, "in offering to assist this unknown person, and risking my neck within the walls of a harem? However, I have promised, and they shall not say that I held back from fear." So saying, he secured his dagger within his sash under his inner jacket, buckled on his old sword, leaving the splendid jewel-hilted present of Deli Pasha in his room, and sallied forth to the place of appointment enveloped in a dark-coloured *aba* or cloak. He found the old woman under the tree, and followed her through several streets without exchanging a word, until they reached the postern door before mentioned, at which she tapped three times: it was opened immediately by a Berber *bowàb*, or porter, beside whom stood two Nubian eunuchs of large stature.

"Follow your conductor," whispered the crone to Hassan; "my task is done." And so saying, she withdrew from the door, which was closed and bolted.

Fear was a sensation as foreign to the heart of Hassan as to that of any man who ever walked on earth, but the closing of the bolts behind him, and the grim smile which he observed on the faces of the swarthy eunuchs, made him for a moment repent of having embarked in this mysterious enterprise; but recovering himself immediately, and placing a hand on the hilt of his dagger, he followed his guides in silence. They led him through several winding passages, and at last to a curtained door which opened on the larger room before described as the saloon of the palace, and, making him a sign to enter, retired. Four large candles in silver stands of unusual height lighted up the farther part of the saloon, by the side of which stood several trays loaded with the finest fruits and rarest sweetmeats, while on another were ranged rows of sherbet-bottles of various hues, and others that might contain the forbidden juices of the grape: all these things Hassan noted with a rapid glance, and also that for the present he was the sole occupant of the splendid apartment.

"If the lady be mistress of all this wealth and luxury," said Hassan half aloud, "how strange that she should need aid or service from one so humble as myself." He then walked forward over the soft and silent carpets towards the lights, and with the curiosity of youth began to examine the fruits, which surpassed in beauty all that he had seen, and wondered how such could be collected and procured in the end of November.

Hassan was not aware that while the lofty saloon in which he stood reached to the roof of the palace, there were adjoining rooms of half the height, and that through the beautifully painted lattice-work which ornamented the sides of the saloon there was a woman sitting in one of those dark rooms above, who, invisible herself, could see every feature of his countenance as he stood in the full glare of the wax-lights.

"Wallàhi!" as a dark fire flashed from her eyes, "for once that old daughter of Shèitan has not lied. None so handsome have I seen in this land; who, whence can he be? Bakkalum" (we shall see). So saying she left the room, ordering the eunuch who stood without to give her the key. The corresponding rooms, she knew, were closed and the keys she held. This strange woman trusted none of her women slaves—they were all sent to another part of the house; the only confidants of her wickedness being four powerful black eunuchs and the porter of the postern door.

Meanwhile Hassan began to weary of his splendid solitude, and finding his head almost giddy from the aromatic odours which rose from a censer burning in the room, he threw open the large latticed casement, which, from the sound of the rushing waters, he judged to look out upon the

Nile. A young moon was rising, and not a boat was visible: the thought of the grim eunuch below flashed on his recollection, and as he gazed from the window on the turbid stream boiling below at a distance of thirty feet, a smile passed over his face. Retiring from the casement, he found himself suddenly standing before one whom he felt to be the lady of the palace.

Her appearance has been described, and she had not neglected to embellish it by all the resources of art. Her dress was tasteful rather than splendid, and only one or two jewels of price betokened the rank and wealth of the wearer; her hands were small and graceful, to which point a single brilliant of the purest water attracted the eye; and the natural fire of her dark eyes was now heightened as much by the passion which burnt within them as by the kohl,^[86] which had shed a darker hue on their lids and on the arching brows above.

"Pardon me, lady," said Hassan, "if I have done wrong in opening the casement; my head is not accustomed to these odours of aloes and frankincense, and I admitted the air of heaven. If you fear the cold I will close it."

"I have no fear of cold," she replied, as a ray shot from those piercing eyes; "let it remain open. But come and sit down on this divan; I have much to say to you in confidence. We can dispense with servants here; the fruits and sherbets will not spoil our conversation."

Hassan did as he was desired, wondering not a little at the unrestrained language and manners of the Khanum, who had allowed her veil to fall from her head; but he observed that, from the height of the sill of the open casement and of the floor of the room itself, nothing of its interior, save the ceiling, could be seen from the river.

The Khanum, with all her vices, was a woman of shrewd and sagacious intellect, and when she was in the mood few of her sex in the East could be more agreeable and prepossessing. She now employed all her powers to please her young and inexperienced companion, not omitting the artillery of her dark eyes. She observed, however, with secret spite, that the latter fell harmless on the impenetrable armour of Hassan's inexperience or insensibility. When at length, after something that she had said about love, conjoined with money, pleasure, luxury, &c., Hassan understood her meaning, he replied with a cold and constrained air—

"Lady, we have been mistaken in each other. I came here believing that you were in trouble, and requiring such aid as an honourable man might give you with sword or counsel; and you brought me here thinking that I was a minion or a toy that might be bought with gold, and afterwards cast away like a worn-out dress."

"Wallah! it is not so, Hassan. Whatever I have been or done before, I love you truly; and if you will only give me your love, all my time and wealth and power shall be spent in making you happy."

"Lady," replied Hassan with frank simplicity, "I will not mislead or deceive you. A man cannot give what is not his; I have only one heart, and it is given away. The gold in the Viceroy's treasury could not repurchase it."

"Then you refuse and scorn my love," she said, with kindling fire in her eyes. "Beware how you awaken my hate; none have ever done so and lived to tell it. I have means at hand for breaking your proud spirit. There are dungeons below which never see the light of day; a few weeks or months passed in them, with only black bread to feed on, will perhaps bring you to another frame of mind."

"Khanum," he cried, springing to his feet, "I replied to your offered favours with frankness and with courtesy,—your threats I despise."

"Despise!" she cried, no longer mistress of her rage; "and this to me!" As she spoke she clapped her hands loudly together; one of the eunuchs appeared. "The man and the cord," she said. The slave retired.

"Lady," said Hassan, drawing his sword, "methinks you are scarcely prudent to trust yourself so completely in the power of one whom you threaten with the cord and the dungeon: before your slaves appear I could sever your head from your body. But I have said it—I pity and despise you."

Her eye quailed beneath his stern glance; but at that moment the four black slaves, armed with swords, and one of them bearing a strong cord, entered the room.

"Seize and bind this villain," she cried, "who has threatened and insulted me."

"Lady," said Hassan in a low, determined tone, "you are mad. I could shout so loudly from this open window that neighbours and passengers would know what was passing in your harem. I must, if you force me to it, shed in your presence the blood of your slaves; but I would fain spare you. Think again, and let me depart in peace."

Her only reply, as she arose and stamped her foot on the ground, was, "Seize him and bind him, ye cowardly slaves."

"Must it be so?" said Hassan, grasping his dagger in his left hand and his sword in his right, while his eyes shone with that fierce fire which always animated them in the fight. "Come on, ye wretched slaves, and try your destiny!"

As he spoke these words, and, drawing up his towering form to its full height, placed himself in a posture of defence, the Khanum cast upon him a look in which love, admiration, and hate were strangely blended; but still she stamped her angry foot and ordered the slaves to do her bidding.

The negroes rolled their great eyes from their mistress to the powerful and well-armed youth before them, as if the job was not much to their liking; but their fear of the terrible and relentless Khanum prevailing, the boldest and strongest of the party advanced, whispering to his companion with the rope, "I will engage his sword in front, while you approach on one side and throw the cord over him"; and in this order they came forward, the two other slaves, with drawn swords, following close behind their leader.

Hassan saw their manœuvre at a glance, and before they could put it in execution he sprang like a tiger on the foremost, and guarding the cut which the other made at his head, he dashed the horny knob of his sword-hilt with such terrific force on his forehead that, after reeling backward several paces, he fell senseless at the feet of his advancing comrades. At the same instant, quick as lightning, he turned on the negro who had nearly reached his side with the cord, and with one cut laid open his right arm to the bone, the rope falling harmless on the carpet. Uttering a yell of pain,

the negro sprang backward to the side of the two who had not yet ventured within reach of Hassan's sword, and whose livid lips revealed their terror of an antagonist who in a few seconds had disabled the two strongest of their party.

"Come on! come on!" said Hassan, with a scornful laugh. "This game is more to my taste than the Khanum's sweetmeats and frankincense." But the men, instead of moving, cast their uncertain eyes on their disabled companions, and fear seemed to root them to the spot.

"Lady," said Hassan in a stern voice, "there is no honour to be gained by me in wounding or killing coward slaves like these; once more I warn you bid them retire, and spare me the trouble of defiling your fair carpets with their blood."

The Khanum looked at her disabled and trembling slaves, and from them to the bright, proud eye and commanding form of the young man; her spirit failed her, and her pride quailed beneath his glance.

"Retire," she said, "and carry out that body, be it alive or dead." The men obeyed, and the Khanum turning to Hassan, said in a trembling voice, "You have subdued one who was never conquered before. What is your purpose now—do you intend to kill me?"

Hassan, from whose brow the expression of anger had not yet passed away, looked at her in silence for a minute before he replied—

"Khanum, do I look like one who could strike a woman? It is punishment severe enough for you that I leave you alone with your own bitter thoughts. I know you, lady—yes, I know your name and rank, and others say what you have yourself avowed, that of those who have offended you none have ever lived to tell it. But I warn you that, if you pursue me with your hate and commission others to try and take my life, I will cleave their skulls with this good sword, and will report to the Viceroy what goes on in this house. If you choose that for the future there shall be peace between us, we will both forget this evening, and your secret is as safe with me as if I were dead: the choice rests with you. Now, lady, I shall go away;" and as he spoke he moved across the carpet towards the door.

"Stay—stay a moment," cried the Khanum in affright. "Let me call back the slaves and give them their orders. The passages are long and narrow—you may lose your way; slaves are there armed; the porter too is armed, and he alone has the secret of that door-lock."

"I had thought of all these things, lady," said Hassan calmly, as he returned from the edge of the carpet where he had taken up his slippers,^[87] which he placed under his belt, tightening the latter at the same time so as firmly to secure them as well as his dagger. "It is not my intention to trust to the good faith either of yourself or your armed slaves in those dark passages; I prefer a road that is open and familiar to me as the expanse of the desert." So saying, he leisurely approached the open casement, and looked out to see that no boats were below or in the neighbourhood.

"Stay!" she cried, looking out with a shudder on the rapid current that swept along the base of her house. "I swear to you by the Koran and by the head of my father that my slaves shall conduct you safely out of the palace." And perhaps she spoke the truth, for at that moment a passion that she would have called love, and admiration for the youth's dauntless courage, had banished from her mind the affront he had offered to her pride; but he calmly replied—

"Lady, if you are not treacherous, your slaves might be so. The Nile and I are old friends: if you are silent and your slaves faithful, you have nothing to fear for or from Hassan." So saying, he sprang head-foremost from the casement into the rushing waters below. Uttering a faint shriek, she looked forth from the window, and soon afterwards, at a distance of fifty or sixty yards from where he dropped, she saw by the moonlight that he had risen to the surface, and was swimming leisurely down with the swift current of the Nile. "Mashallah! Mashallah! what a man is that! and what a woman am I!" And for the first time—perhaps for the last—during a period of many years that victim of ungoverned passion buried her face in her hands and wept tears of shame and remorse.^[88]

During the same evening Osman Bey, who had received orders to precede his chief to Siout, and who was now on the eve of departure, sat in the corner of a private room in his house, leisurely smoking a chibouq, and questioning his confidential servant, Ferraj, who stood before him with his hands crossed on his breast.

"So the old woman told you that she saw the young vagabond safe within the door of the harem, did she?"

"It is even so, my lord, and she heard the bolts of the door shut upon him by the *bowàb*" [porter].

"Allah be praised!" said the Bey, with a grim smile; "that upstart will not cross my path again—he will never leave that house alive. Be on your guard, Ferraj, and warn that old gossip to put a key on her tongue; for if it were to be known that you or she had a hand in this matter, your feet would be beat into a pudding, and she would sup with the fishes of the Nile."

Leaving this worthy vice-governor to continue the preparations for his journey, let us return to our hero, whom we have most unkindly left swimming down the river on a cold November night. His course was rapid enough, and ere long he saw some lights on the right bank which he knew to mark a café where he often smoked his evening pipe, and which was not very far from Delì Pasha's house: there he landed, and having wrung the water from his clothes, walked on towards the café, which he found occupied by only two or three drowsy smokers, the night being now far advanced.

Making his way into the host's room, with whom he was well acquainted, he asked him to afford him lodging for the night, and to lend him a dry blanket or two, explaining his present appearance by saying that he had accidentally fallen into the water.

The host, with whom Hassan was a favourite, from his quiet habits and from his always paying ready money for his coffee and pipe, willingly granted his request, and ordered a fire to be lighted, at which our hero's clothes were hung that they might be dry by daylight. Hassan himself, after drinking a cup of hot coffee, lay down on the floor in his blanket, and in a few minutes was in a sleep as profound as if he had been reposing on the softest bed in Cairo. Rising at the first grey of dawn, and making the best toilet that the circumstances admitted, he proceeded to Delì Pasha's house before any of the servants were loitering about the door, and reached his own room

unobserved.

Very few hours elapsed before he was summoned to the presence of his chief, whom he found in one of the private apartments, and before him stood a woman's figure, in whom, although she dropped her veil over her face on his entrance, he recognised Fatimeh Khanum, the Kiahia, or governess of the harem. She was about to retire, but the Pasha stopped her, saying, "It is not necessary that you should go; I have but a few words to say to Hassan, and they contain no secrets."

The Khanum withdrew a few steps aside, while the Pasha proceeded to inform Hassan that the Viceroy had suddenly arrived at Shoobra, and as it was necessary that a messenger should be sent to compliment his Highness on his arrival and inquire after his health, it would be a good opportunity for Hassan to take the message, and also to present the Arab mare Nebleh.

"I have written a letter," he added with a smile, "which you will also bear, and which will inform our lord how I came to offer him this present."

"May your bounties always increase," replied Hassan; "on my head be it to obey your orders, but if I might be bold enough to make an observation——" here he hesitated, and cast his eyes aside at the Khanum, as if he would rather communicate what he had to say to his lord's ear alone.

"Speak out, man," said the impatient Pasha; "mind not our good Kiahia Khanum. She has been long in our house, and we know her discretion."

"I wished to say," replied Hassan, "that your *mirakhor*, Ahmed Aga, is a true and faithful servant of your lordship, and he is a true and good friend of mine: it is his right and privilege to convey to the Viceroy any horse presented by your lordship. On such occasions you know that his Highness gives a liberal present to the bearer. Were you to send me with the horse, it would be an unjust slight to a faithful servant, and would give me the pain of supplanting a friend."

"Wallah! Wallah! you are right, boy. I had not thought of it. You shall go together: you may deliver the compliments and the letter, while he presents the horse."

Before Hassan could reply, a servant came in to say that the Viceroy's secretary was in the saloon with a message from his Highness. Starting up from the corner where he sat, Deli Pasha told them to remain where they were, while he went in to learn the secretary's business with him. Thus were Hassan and the Khanum again accidentally left together.

"My mother," said our hero in a low and melancholy voice, "I remember well what you said to me when we last met: your words cost me much pain, but they were wise and true. I feel how far more humble I am in rank than the priceless pearl whom you guard, and that it would be selfish in me to do aught that could mar her high fortunes. Inshallah! I will never cost her a tear; but there is no harm in my loving her with my whole heart and soul as the Gheber loves and worships the sun, though he knows he never can reach it. Such is my destiny; Allah has willed it; and I could more easily pluck out my eyes from my head than her image from my heart. Tell me, then, is she well and happy?"

"She is well," replied the Khanum in a trembling voice, while she muttered to herself in an agony of sorrow, "Allah, Allah, what is to be done? Both these young loving hearts will be broken, for her love is as deep and passionate as his!"

Hassan saw that she was weeping; a secret instinct told him that he was loved by Amina. The ominous question shot from his eager eyes and rushed to his lips, but by a strong and determined effort he conquered himself, and compressed within him the words on which his destiny hung. He saw that the Khanum pitied him, that her heart was under the influence of tender sympathies, and he would not tempt her to forget her duty and betray a secret which she was bound to preserve.

Fatimeh Khanum saw the struggle, and loved him the more for it. The Pasha's returning steps being now audible, she had just time to say, "Allah preserve and bless you with all good," when he re-entered the room and resumed his seat.

"Hassan," he said, "I have informed the secretary of your mission to Shoobra, and he says that the Viceroy will be disengaged about the time of the *âs'r* to-day [three o'clock P.M.] Ahmed Aga shall go with you, and present the mare as you propose, and you will deliver to his Highness this letter."

Having received the letter, Hassan withdrew, leaving his chief to continue his conversation with the Khanum.

"What is the matter with Amina?" he said; "I have lately found her sad and weeping."

"How can your servant tell?" replied the Khanum. "Perhaps my young lady is still afraid that your lordship will oblige her to marry some one whom she cannot love—you had spoken to her on some such subject."

"Foolish child!" replied the Pasha. "Tell her, then, to dry her tears, for, Wallah! I only wish to see her happy, and I will not marry her by force to any one."

"I will convey your gracious message, and it will give her much comfort," said the Khanum, glad to escape from her lord's presence; for she felt oppressed by the secret of the mutual passion of the young lovers, and dreaded lest by some unforeseen word it should come to light.

Nebleh had been washed from head to foot in tepid water, and then rubbed dry with cloths until her coat shone like the finest satin. Her sweeping mane and tail had been carefully combed, and as she walked by the side of the *sâis* who led her, with a light elastic tread that scarcely touched the ground, Ahmed Aga sighed to think that such a beautiful animal was about to leave the stable of his chief.

When they reached the garden and mentioned their names to the porter at the gate, they were at once admitted, and found the Viceroy reclining on the crimson damask cushions of a divan in the corner of his kiosk, and smoking a chibouq. On the floor, at a little distance, sate a Bedouin sheik from the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai; and a little farther stood, in respectful silence, a good-looking boy, with a round chubby face and dark eyes, whose dress and jewel-hilted sword showed him to be of high birth.

Hassan and Ahmed Aga having entered and made their salam, the former informed the Viceroy that he was charged by Deli Pasha to present his respects, and to congratulate his Highness on his

safe arrival. Having said this he came forward, and touching his forehead with the hem of the Viceroy's pelisse, delivered his letter. Mohammed Ali took it, and bending his keen eyes on the bearer, as was his custom, with a scrutinising look, he desired his secretary, who then entered the room, to read it to him.^[89]

The latter did so in a low voice that reached only his master's ear, but it was easy to see from the twinkling of his eyes and the expression of his countenance that he was both interested and pleased by the contents. When it was concluded he simply said, "Peki, peki" (Very well, very well), then asked Ahmed Aga his business.

"May your Highness's life be prolonged. I am your servant, Ahmed Aga, *mirakhor* to Delì Pasha, who has charged me to present to you in his name the Arab mare Nebleh, who is, I believe, mentioned in the letter just honoured by your perusal."

"Where is she?" said Mohammed Ali; "I would see her."

"I left her outside the garden gate," said Ahmed. "The walks in your Highness's garden are not for horses' feet."^[90]

"True, true," replied the Viceroy. "Inshallah! we will go out and see her. Come along, Sheik Abou-Fazl, you should know an Arab mare; and you too, Abbas, will like to see one." So saying he walked to the garden gate, followed by the party and preceded by a dozen of his *kawasses*.

When they reached the gate, Ahmed Aga stripped Nebleh of the light gold-edged cloth which he had thrown over her to keep the dust from her glossy coat, and the Viceroy's eye fell on her form, in whose symmetrical proportions neither envy nor criticism could find a flaw.

Mohammed Ali looked at her in grave and silent admiration, the Arab sheik gave a strange grunt conveying a similar impression, while the young Abbas's eyes told the same tale, though he could not venture to speak until spoken to in the presence of his grandfather. After being led about for a few minutes amidst the "Mashallahs!" of all who saw her, she was saddled and bridled by the Viceroy's order, who turned to Hassan, saying—

"We know your horsemanship well; we should like to see her gallop and play."

"My lord," replied Hassan, casting down his eyes upon the large proportions of his frame, "although Nebleh could carry me, and would carry me until she dropped dead, she would look better and move more easily under a lighter rider. If your Highness will permit this young Prince (for such I take him to be) to mount her, I think it would please him much, and would show the mare to better advantage."

"Well, be it so," said the Viceroy, adding in a lower tone, "She is not violent or restive, is she?"

"Quiet and docile as a lamb, though swift as an eagle," was the reply.

With eyes sparkling with joy the young Prince jumped into the saddle, and in a moment Nebleh was in full career: now wheeling to the right, now to the left, at the slightest touch of the heel or bridle, and after a few minutes returning to the spot whence she had started, with her transparent nostril widely dilated and her proud eye awakened by the inspiring gallop.

"Aferin! aferin! [well done] Abbas," said the Viceroy; "it is enough for the present. Ahmed Aga and Hassan, you may return to Delì Pasha, and convey to him our friendly greeting and our wish that Allah may prolong his days."

The two friends made their obeisance and slowly returned towards Boulak.

"Do you know who is that youth?" said Ahmed Aga to his companion.

"I know him not," replied Hassan; "but from his dress and bearing I suppose him to belong to the Viceroy's family."

"You conjecture rightly, and the Viceroy is said to be very fond of him: he is the son of Toussoun Pasha, Effendina's second son,^[91] who distinguished himself so much in the war against the Wahabees. Alas! his fate was a strange and sad one."

"I have heard," said Hassan, "that he died in the prime of life, but I know nothing more."

"After his successes in Arabia," continued Ahmed Aga, "he was so popular in the army that Ibrahim Pasha grew jealous of him and hated him; but what is more strange is that his own father also grew jealous of him, and of his popularity with the soldiers: perhaps his suspicions were strengthened by the tales of slanderers, who told him that Toussoun meant to rebel against him and dethrone him. Certain it is that the unfortunate Prince died of poison administered to him in some sherbet or wine that he drank during a feast given by him to some of his friends: he died immediately, and it is believed that the poison was given by Mohammed Ali's order."

"Horrible!" ejaculated Hassan. "Father and son! As it is not proved, let us hope it is not true."^[92]

"The Discoverer of Secrets [*i.e.*, Allah] knows," replied Ahmed; and conversing on various matters, they reached the house of Delì Pasha.

No sooner had they put their feet on the stairs leading to the saloon than they became aware that something unusual had occurred: a crowd of servants had gathered near the door of the room, and from within was heard the voice of the Pasha pouring forth at its highest pitch a torrent of threatening vituperation. "You have never seen him in one of these fits of passion," whispered Ahmed Aga to Hassan; "when they seize him he is mad and ungovernable."

Hassan having inquired from one of the servants the cause of this storm, was informed that it was about a sword with a jewelled hilt of great value which Mohammed Ali had given to the Pasha after the war with the Wahabees. It had been in charge of a young Mameluke named Kasem, who filled the office of Master of the Wardrobe, and as it was now missing, Delì Pasha charged him with stealing it, and threatened to have him beaten to death. As this lad was one of those who had sportively attacked Hassan on the day of the jereed play, and from his frank and merry character was one of our hero's favourites, he would not believe him guilty of such a crime without the strongest proofs, and he resolved at once to hear what those proofs were.

Forcing his way through the crowd at the door, he entered the room, and his eye immediately fell upon the youth accused, standing apparently under arrest, between two of the servants. Hastily walking up to him, Hassan fixed his searching gaze on the countenance of the youth and said, "Kasem, tell me, by your life and by your father's head, have you committed this crime?"

"Wallah, I have not!" replied the youth, looking up in Hassan's face with a firm voice and clear, untroubled eye; "but our lord will not hear nor listen: the sword has been stolen from my room, but who is the thief is only known to Him to whom the absent is present."

During this short dialogue the Pasha had continued, like an angry lion in a cage, pacing up and down the upper end of the room as if "nursing his wrath to keep it warm" by rapid motion as well as by curses and threats; his eyes were inflamed, and his face red up to the very temples. These violent bursts of passion, although of late less frequent than of old, when they procured him his name of Deli (mad), were well known to his followers and servants, and while they lasted none dared to speak a word to him. Suddenly he stopped and shouted to the youth, "Viper! son of a dog! wilt thou confess thy crime, and where thou hast hid the sword?"

"My lord," replied the youth in a humble yet sincere tone of voice, "I have told you all I know: the sword has been stolen from my room—I know not where it is."

"Dog of a liar!" cried the Pasha in a still louder tone. "Take him away and beat him till he confesses: give him three hundred on the feet, and throw him into the dungeon. Away with him!"

With a hasty signal to the man who held the youth to delay a moment, Hassan came forward, and, to the astonishment of all the household, walking composedly to within a few feet of the Pasha, said to him—

"My lord, let me entreat you to have a little patience, and defer the punishment of this youth; perhaps we may find the sword or discover the thief."

"And who are you?" cried the Pasha, astonished at this unwonted audacity; "who are you that dare to offer me your unasked counsel, and come between me and my revenge?"

"I am your servant Hassan, whom you have already loaded with favours, and therefore it is that I love my lord so well that I wish his displeasure rather than see him commit an act of injustice."

"Begone," roared the Pasha, "if you would not drive me mad. When that imp of Satan has stolen a sword, the reward of my services and my blood, am I to be told by an upstart like you that I may not punish him?"

"You may punish him, doubtless," said Hassan calmly; "you may punish any in your house, for you have the power: but if you do punish him now, and after a few days we bring you the sword, or proof that it was stolen not by him but by others—I know your generous heart—you will then suffer tortures; you will curse this hour of hasty passion, and will say, 'Had I not one faithful servant to say to me, Do not stain your name with this act of cruelty?'"

During this speech the rage of the Pasha had been burning with a fiercer fire: to be thus lectured and reproved in the height of his fury by a mere youth, and in the presence of all his household, was a trial to which his fierce temper had never before been exposed. His lip grew white, and his limbs literally trembled with concentrated passion.

"Son of a dog!" he cried, "if thou wilt not hold thy peace this shall silence thee——"

As he spoke he drew his dagger from his shawl-sash and rushed at Hassan, who was standing a few yards in front of him.

Hassan plainly saw the movement, and with his activity and gigantic strength could easily have either sprung back a few feet and drawn his sword or have wrested the dagger from the feebler hand of the Pasha, but he saw before him only Amina's father. Opening wide his arms, with a calm, unblenching eye, he presented his broad chest to the descending blade: it fell, but harmlessly over his shoulder, for the demon-spirit had overpowered the frame which it possessed, and muttering, "Allah! I cannot do it," Deli Pasha staggered back a few paces, and would have fallen to the ground had not Hassan caught him in his arms and borne him gently to the divan whence he had so lately risen in the full tide of excited passion.

All the attendants now crowded round the insensible form of their lord, whom, by the order of Ahmed Aga and Hassan, they caused to be instantly transported to the private apartments of the harem, while servants were sent in all directions for the most skilful surgeon that could be found. Not many minutes elapsed before the arrival of one possessed of some skill and of presence of mind; blood was freely taken from the arm; soon afterwards twenty or thirty leeches were applied to the back of the neck, and before nightfall the symptoms that threatened a dangerous brain fever had passed away.

Meanwhile Kasem was confined to his room and a guard placed at the door. He was a general favourite, and none believed him guilty of the theft; but as the sword had been in his custody, it was judged necessary to keep him in confinement until some further light could be thrown on the case, or the Pasha's ulterior pleasure be ascertained.

In the course of two days, during which the invalid was tended by the affectionate and unremitting care of Amina, the Pasha made rapid progress towards recovery, but he observed a sullen and profound silence as to the cause of his illness, neither did he issue any orders respecting the punishment of Kasem; but all the circumstances were already known throughout the harem, the eunuchs having gathered them from the servants and repeated them, with various additions and exaggerations, to the women under their charge. On one subject all the reports agreed—namely, that Hassan had mortally offended his chief, and that his dismissal was certain.

Meanwhile all the exertions made by Ahmed Aga, Hassan, and others to trace the missing sword or discover the thief had been unavailing, until on the third day Reschid, the favourite Mameluke of the Kiahia Pasha, came to see his friend Hassan, and the smile on his countenance announced that he had some good news to communicate.

"Hassan," he said, "you may remember that on the evening of your Pasha's illness I was sent here to make inquiries after his health by my lord: you told me about the missing sword which he so much valued. One was brought to me for sale this morning by a Jew who resides in the farthest part of Cairo, which formerly belonged, as he said, to Ibrahim Elfi, the great Mameluke Bey. I doubt the story. Should you know your Pasha's sword if you saw it?"

"Yes," replied Hassan eagerly, "for I have seen it more than once in the hands of young Kasem when he was rubbing the blade to keep it bright. I know the sword even if the scoundrel has picked

the diamonds out of the hilt."

"Come, then, with me," said his friend; "we have no time to lose, for I told the Jew this morning that I was busy and had not leisure to bargain with him then for the price, but that he might leave it till the *âs'r* [3 P.M.], when he might return, and if we agreed on the price, I would pay him the money."

A short hour's ride brought the two friends to the Kiahia's palace, where they dismounted and proceeded at once to Reschid's room, in one corner of which was a sword. Hassan drew the sword from its sheath and exclaimed—

"Wallah! it is the same. See, near the hilt is a lion of inlaid gold, and below the words Fath-min-Allah [Victory is from God]. But, as I expected, the rascally Jew has taken the diamonds from the hilt and replaced them by these strips of gold."

"El-hamdu-lillah!" cried Reschid; "the character of poor young Kasem will, I trust, now be cleared."

The Jew having arrived at the appointed hour, was surprised to find himself in the grip of Hassan, who threatened to shake the life out of his body if he did not confess from whom he had got the sword. The affrighted Jew, finding that denial was vain, owned that it had been brought to him by a servant of Deli Pasha's, named Youssuf, a few days before, and that he had himself taken out the diamonds to prevent its recognition. The two friends followed up the investigation with energy. Under the wholesome discipline of the stick Youssuf confessed that he had stolen the sword from Kasem's room while he was in attendance on the Pasha. The diamonds were immediately recovered and replaced. On the fourth evening the sword was sent up into the harem by the chief eunuch with the following note:—

"HONOURED AND RESPECTED LORD,—The sword was stolen by the slave Youssuf while Kasem was waiting in your presence. This from your faithful and devoted

HASSAN."

Deli Pasha had read this note aloud. When he had finished it, Amina sprang up, and saying, "Allah be praised!" burst into tears of joy.

"Whence this strong emotion?" said he, surprised at her feeling so much interest in the subject.

"Because," she replied, while blushes mantled over her face and neck—"because I knew how much you valued that sword."

Oh, you little hypocrite, Amina!

Deli Pasha recovered slowly, and for several days never left his harem: something seemed to weigh upon his mind, and all Amina's caresses and endearments were unable to restore his usual spirits. She could not understand the cause of this melancholy, for his lost sword had been recovered, the young Mameluke Kasem had been liberated by his order, and Mohammed Ali had shown his regard for him and his appreciation of the Arab mare Nebleh by sending an officer specially to inquire after his health, and to present him with a diamond ring on the part of his Highness, accompanied by a handsome sword for Ahmed Aga and a cashmere shawl for Hassan.

By dint of coaxing she at length elicited from him that his proud spirit was chafing at the humiliation to which he had been exposed by the outbreak of his ungovernable temper before all his household, and that exposure he most unjustly laid to the account of Hassan.

"My father," she said as she sat at his feet, while his hand unconsciously played with the dark, redundant tresses that fell over her shoulders, "now that anger and illness have passed away, and that your good health and judgment are returning, do you not see that what Hassan did was done in fidelity and true service to you? Had he not spoken and stayed you in a moment when wrath had clouded your reason, the poor Mameluke would have been beaten nearly to death for a fault of which he was innocent. What would then have been said of my father's justice and humanity? Now that all has terminated so happily, ought you not rather to thank Hassan than to blame him?"

"I will thank him," said her father, "for you speak truly; he deserves it. But methinks you plead his cause with great earnestness, Amina." As he said these last words he looked fixedly at his daughter, who cast down her eyes, deeply blushing.

"My father," she replied timidly and with suppressed emotion, "you know our proverb, 'El-rghàib ma lehu nàib' [The absent has no advocate], and I have often heard from you that it is right to defend those who are absent and who are unjustly blamed. You have yourself spoken to me of the zeal, the courage, and good qualities of this Hassan, and I therefore felt sure that it was from his devotion to you, and not from insolence, that he spoke to you at a moment when your mind was not your own, and thus prevented you from doing that which would have cost you after-pain, in the experience of our saying, 'Precipitation is from Satan, but patience is the key of contentment.' You are not angry with me, are you, father?"

"Who could be angry with you, light of my eyes and treasure of my heart?" exclaimed the old Pasha, kissing her forehead. "No, my child; yet you know not what sufferings my mind has undergone. When one of those fits of fury is upon me, if any one opposes or remonstrates with me, I become mad. Hassan's speech, though true, drove me to the extreme of madness and to the verge of murder." Here his voice became husky with emotion. "Yes, Amina, I rushed at him with a drawn dagger; he never stirred, but opened his breast to me. I was in the act of striking when I met his large dark eye fixed upon me, not in fear, not in anger, but in love—yes, Amina, it was a look he might have fixed upon his mother, if he had one, poor youth! It conquered me! for the last thing that I remember was, that I passed the weapon purposely beyond his shoulder; but how he must hate—how he must despise me now!"

Amina's tears gushed from between the fair fingers that vainly strove to hide them. That her father should have been on the verge of murdering the idol of her heart,—that he, in the pride of youth and strength, should have bared his breast to the dagger rather than raise an arm against her father,—these thoughts produced contending emotions of horror and tenderness sufficient to

overpower her self-control, and she wept without interruption, for Delì Pasha himself was much overcome by the feelings which he had just expressed.

At length she looked up, smiling through her tears, and said, "Father, if he is brave and generous as you say, he will not hate you. Tell him frankly the truth—that in a moment when your mind was overclouded by anger you did him injustice—and he will love you, and you will love him, better than before."

"Inshallah! dear little prophetess, it shall be as you say, and, Inshallah! this shall have been the last time that men shall say of Delì Pasha that his passion blinded his eyes and overcame his reason."

Here we may add that the future confirmed the strength of his resolution. The mental shock which had followed this last outbreak was never forgotten. When, a few days later, he left the harem, his first act was to send for Hassan and to make the frank *amende* suggested by Amina. He read in the young man's glowing eyes, as he kissed his lord's hand with an eagerness and devotion such as he had never before exhibited, the truth of her prophecy that he should find himself not hated or despised, but better loved than ever.

Little Kasem was reinstated in favour, and it need not be said that his gratitude to Hassan was unbounded: neither will it excite surprise that the influence of the latter in the household had been much increased by the scene which they had so lately witnessed; for never before had they seen any one successfully venture to brave the wrath of their proverbially irascible chief.

Hassan spent the few days which yet remained before the migration of the whole family to Siout in making the few arrangements which he had for some time proposed. He sent off the eight horses taken from the Sammalous, with a respectfully affectionate letter, to his foster-father, accompanied by fitting presents to his foster-mother and sister; he wrote also a grateful letter to his former patron, the Hadji Ismael, in Alexandria, and another to his old friend the chief clerk. He went then with Ahmed Aga to the village in Karioonbiah, armed with the Pasha's authority to appoint another *nazir* and Sheik-el-Beled in the place of the two scoundrels who had been detected and dismissed. When they had made the best selection in their power, and arranged the village accounts, they turned their horses' heads again towards Cairo, Ahmed Aga saying as they mounted—

"I suppose now we have made two more rogues, for the saying in the country is, 'If you want to find a match for the priest and the *câdi*, you must go to the *nazir* and the Sheik-el-Beled.'"

"I am glad that they omitted the *khaznadâr* in the proverb," said Hassan, laughing.

"The *khaznadâr* and the *mirakhor*," replied his friend, "are bad enough in general, but, as the Arabs say, they are 'tied by a shorter rope,' and cannot eat so much of their neighbours' corn."

It was during the long ride from the village back to the city that Hassan related, in confidence to his friend, some of the details of his early life—the name that he had borne in his youth, and the mystery in which his birth was still involved.

"It is very strange," said Ahmed, who had mused in silence after Hassan had finished his narrative. "I have lived in Cairo now many years, and have known or heard the history of many families, high and low, yet I cannot recall any occurrence similar to what you relate; neither can I understand how it has come to pass that neither of your parents has ever made inquiries after you among the Arabs in the neighbourhood."

"That is easily explained," said Hassan. "My father, who was probably a soldier, may have been killed in battle, and my mother may never have seen him since he carried me off an infant, probably to save my life: if so, she may never have heard of my having been given into the charge of a Bedouin woman."

Hassan spoke these words in a tone so sad that to cheer him his friend replied, "Inshallah! this knot will one day be untied by the Revealer of Secrets,^[93] whatever be the secret. I will swear by my life that your father was a brave man and your mother a good woman; for you know the proverb, 'Grapes are not borne by the thistle-bush.' Meanwhile, you must comfort yourself by remembering the saying of the Persian sheik and poet [Sâdi], 'On the Day of Judgment Allah will not ask you who was your father, but who are you, and what deeds have you done.'"

Conversing on this and other topics, the friends concluded their journey, and were just re-entering Boulak about sunset, when, in passing a narrow by-street at right angles to that in which they were riding, Hassan saw at a little distance a figure in which, by the dress and gait, he at once recognised the old woman who had inveigled him into the house of the Khanum. Springing off his horse and giving it over to the *sâis*, he requested Ahmed Aga to continue his way homeward with the servants, promising to rejoin him shortly. Following the old woman until she reached a part of the street where not a passenger was to be seen, he quickened his step, and overtaking her, seized her by the arm and said to her in a stern voice—

"Mother of evil, tell me at once who urged you to take me to that house?"

The crone, trusting to the concealment of her thick veil, endeavoured at first to persuade him that he was mistaken in the person whom he addressed, but her voice only made him more sure than he had been before: then she tried sundry kinds of subterfuges and falsehoods, until his patience being exhausted, he exclaimed—

"Wallah! unless you tell me the truth, and that instantly, I will drag you straight to the Kiahia Pasha, and tell your story to him: you well know that in a few hours you will find yourself at the bottom of the Nile."

Under the terror of this threat she confessed that it was by Ferraj, the servant of Osman Bey, that she had been induced to address him and to introduce him to the house in question.

"Osman Bey!" said Hassan bitterly. "Well, I am his debtor; meanwhile do you, if you value your life, hold your peace and begone. I owe you no illwill. Wretched instrument of malice," he muttered to himself as he strode homeward, "thou art beneath my notice. What says our proverb, 'The anger of the arrow-stricken man is kindled not against the bow but against the archer.' Osman Bey, we shall meet again, and, Inshallah! with some weapon in our hands better than a jereed."

Little did Hassan know, when he breathed this wish, how soon it would be realised, and what an

influence that meeting would have on his after-destinies. When we see in life how often the blessings that we pray for become, when granted, sources of misfortune, and the events which we dread and deprecate result in our happiness, it seems an act of folly, if not of impiety, to pray for earthly goods in any other form than that of "Not my will, but thine be done."

281

Most of our *dramatis personæ* are now to be separated for a season. The Thorpe family having finished their examination of the Pyramids, had re-embarked on the Nile for Upper Egypt, and Delì Pasha's preparations for the journey to Siout were just completed. He himself, with his official secretary, pipe-bearers, and the greater part of his household, were embarked on board of a large dahabiah; a second of similar dimensions, the cabin-windows of which were provided with damask curtains within and venetian blinds without, was allotted to his harem, with their eunuch attendants, and was ordered to remain always immediately in the wake of the first; while Hassan and Ahmed, with a score of armed followers, were to perform the journey along the banks of the river on horseback, and to bivouac as a guard every night at whatever place the boats might be made fast at sunset.^[94]

All was ready for departure, and the harem was already embarked, when an officer from the Viceroy came to Delì Pasha and told him that his Highness wished him to remain a few days to attend a council on some matters of importance. "He knows," added the officer, "that you are on the point of departure, and part of your family already embarked, wherefore he desires that you will not take the trouble to detain them, but let them go leisurely on their journey, retaining two or three servants to attend upon you. When the council is over, his Highness will give you a swift *canjah* of his own, which will bring you to Siout as soon as your large heavy dahabiahs."

282

"On my head be it," replied Delì Pasha. And having retained only a few Mamelukes for the service of his wardrobe and chibouq, he desired his own boats to go forward as originally designed, placing the *kateb-es-serr*, or chief secretary (a quiet, respectable, and elderly Turk), in charge of the leading dahabiah, and in command of those whom she contained. To Ahmed Aga and Hassan he said, "I know that I can trust my boats and harem to your vigilance at night; there are many thieves in Upper Egypt, so you must not indulge in more than a hare's sleep."^[95]

Under these instructions the dahabiahs started on their voyage northward, and pursued it without accident or interruption until they reached a point of the river not more than twenty miles below Siout. Night was coming on, a strong gale of wind from the eastward had set in, which, in spite of all the exertions of the pilots and sailors, drove the dahabiahs against the west bank of the Nile, where the current was running with terrific violence, and the waves dashed over the low sides of the boats.

283

Fearful of being carried down by the stream, the *râises* ordered the men to jump out ashore and make fast the boats with the anchors, and also by ropes passed round sharp staves driven into the ground. With the leading boat the manœuvre succeeded, and she was brought to in a bight of the bank, where she was in comparatively smooth and sheltered water; but the boat containing the harem broke from her moorings, and in spite of all the exertions of her crew hauling on her from the shore, she was carried some way along the rough and jagged bank, thereby scraping off her cabin paint and terrifying the timid inmates.

Suddenly she came against some broken timbers of an old disused *sakiah* or water-wheel, which smashed in all the cabin windows on the land side, shivering in pieces the Venetian blinds and tearing the damask curtains in shreds. Immediately all was panic on board the boat, and the affrighted eunuchs and women, thinking that the cabin would be flooded, rushed on to the upper deck, which was entirely deserted by the crew, who were busily employed forward in endeavouring to bring the boat to. All were pulling, and hauling, and shouting, and ordering; but no one was listening or obeying. The consequence was that their exertions, without direction or unity, were fruitless, and the boat continued to drift down, still grating her sides against the high and jagged bank.

284

Among the affrighted women assembled on what we may call the poop, Amina and her faithful Fatimeh had withdrawn quite to the stern of the boat, the place usually occupied by the steersman, where the former sat herself down on a hen-coop and looked out in terror on the dark and turbid waters, when suddenly the tiller, which had been left unsecured, swept across the deck with such force that it threw Amina and her hen-coop overboard, at the same time knocking down and stunning Fatimeh Khanum, who fell against the low railing that surrounds the poop.

At the time Hassan and Ahmed Aga were some hundred yards astern of the boats, followed by their own men and by a dozen fellahs whom they had brought from the nearest village as night-watchers. Hearing the shouts and cries ahead, they conjectured that some accident had happened, though they could not see any distant object, as the dusk of evening was darkened by a gloomy sky and the dust borne on the wings of the angry blast. Suddenly a faint cry from the water reached the ear of Hassan, and turning his eyes in the direction whence it came, he thought he descried something like drapery hurried along by the current about fifty yards from the shore.

285

Quick as thought he sprang from his horse, cast his cloak on the ground, threw his pistols on it, and crying to Ahmed, "Wallah! there is a woman or child drowning," plunged head-foremost into the dark and boiling waters.

Ahmed Aga, who had seen no object in the water and heard no cry, thought that his young friend must be mad. Nevertheless, he could not help admiring the daring gallantry which prompted him to brave the roaring rushing waters on such a night with the hope of rescuing a fellow-creature, but he had no time left for musing, for the cries and shouts continued to rise from the dahabiah, and his duty bade him hasten thither without delay.

Ordering one of his men to secure Hassan's horse, cloak, and pistols, he went forward, and by the aid of his own presence of mind, and the force that he brought with him, succeeded at last in securing the dahabiah to the bank. It was not until order was somewhat restored, and the eunuchs

went up on the poop to reconduct the ladies and women slaves to the cabin, that they found Fatimeh Khanum lying half-stunned, and her head still confused by the blow from the tiller. Amina was nowhere to be found. The cries and confusion thence ensuing can be more easily imagined than described.

286

To return to Hassan. No sooner did he rise to the surface from his plunge than he swam down the stream with all his might, looking on both sides, and calling aloud as he went. For some time his humane endeavours met with no success, but at length, in answer to his call, a faint cry caught his ear. Striking out in that direction, he came up with a hen-coop made of palm-sticks, and over it he could distinguish female drapery.

"Take courage! take courage! I am here to help," he shouted aloud; and as he neared the hen-coop he heard his own name faintly uttered.

Who can paint the tumultuous rush of feelings as he recognised the voice of his idolised Amina—feelings compared to the moral force and impetuosity of which the rushing and turbid waters of the Nile were calm as a mill-pond. Terror, pity, joy, love,—all were poured into the thrilling tone in which he called aloud her name. "Fear not, my beloved," he continued; "you are now safe. Your arm over the hen-coop; your chin resting on your arm, my love. Hold fast to it, and do not speak; keep your sweet mouth shut, or these rough and angry waters might choke you. Thus, my love; my arm is close to you, so you have nothing to fear; I will guide the hen-coop towards the bank."

The tender and cheering tone in which he spoke as he swam beside her giving her these instructions, placing her hand himself on the centre and most buoyant part of the hen-coop, inspired the courageous girl with hope and confidence. Hitherto she had clung to her frail cage-support with the grasp of despair, and more than once the cold, and the water that had forced its way into her lips, eyes, and nostrils, had almost compelled her to let go her hold. But now she felt herself possessed of new life, and such was her confidence in Hassan's skill, courage, and devotion, she felt that with him beside her, whether in mid-ocean or mid-desert, she could know no fear. At the worst, to die in his arms would be bliss far beyond life without him. She now proved her own high courage by obeying implicitly his directions without uttering a word.

287

Hassan had noted in his evening ride that for some miles below the bank which he had left was high and precipitous; he well knew, therefore, that the opposite bank would be shelving, and the current less strong.^[96] This consideration compelled him to push the hen-coop before him to the opposite bank, the first object being to get Amina out of the water as soon as possible. This he accordingly did, though, much to her surprise, he kept talking loudly all the time, splashing and making as much noise as he could with hands and feet.^[97]

288

He thus succeeded in bringing his fair charge safely ashore, and opposite the point where he landed he descried a faintly-glimmering light, like that of a nearly extinguished fire. His first care was to wring the water from her drenched clothes, then casting off his own jacket and wringing it, he threw it over her shoulders to shelter her from the cold and biting wind.

Seeing that she was too much exhausted to walk, he lifted her gently in his arms and carried her towards the dim light. On reaching it he found that it proceeded from the dying embers of a fire which had been made in front of a small hut such as are often constructed in Egypt by shepherds or fishermen for temporary shelter. It was unoccupied, though he surmised that the tenant could not be far distant, as he perceived in one corner of it a striped blanket (such as is used by the fellahs in winter), and on it the owner's *nabout* or cudgel.

"El-hamdu-lillah! Praise be to Allah!" said he, as he possessed himself of these invaluable treasures; and in another moment he had wrapped Amina from head to foot in the blanket, and laid her gently in the corner of the hut.

Then he ventured to ask her how she felt.

"Faint and very cold, dear Hassan," was the gently murmured reply; for, notwithstanding her delicate nurture, the brave girl's spirit had sustained her so long as the danger endured, but now the reaction had come, and with it exhaustion, which seemed to deprive her of all bodily and mental energy.

289

"Patience," whispered Hassan; "this blanket will soon make you warm. Meantime I will see if there be wood or dry weeds to restore this dead fire." With the staff in hand he went round and round the hut, but his search was fruitless. He lay down, and, putting his ear to the ground, thought he could distinguish some sound: he crept quietly up to the top of a bank at a distance from the water, and could descry, about a mile inland, a large fire and some tents.

"Dry clothes and some warm drink she must have," he said to himself, "and there is no time to lose. I know not what men these may be, but the risk must be incurred." He felt his girdle, and to his great joy found that his dagger was safe in its place: he then returned to the hut and asked Amina if she felt herself sufficiently recovered to go to some tents and a fire not far off.

"Let me die here," she murmured; "you have saved me from those cold and rushing waters. Let me go to sleep here, Hassan, while you sing to me. Sleep, sleep."

Hassan saw that her mind was overpowered by exhaustion, but he so much feared the effect of the wet clothing on her delicately nurtured frame that he decided to reach the fire with as little delay as possible.

290

"Light of my eyes!" he said, sitting down beside her, "Hassan lives only to serve you, and were it safe I would sing you to sleep and watch at your door while you rest, but danger and pain would follow, unless you can reach the warmth of the fire."

"Where is the fire?" said Amina, trying to shake off the lethargy that threatened to overpower all her faculties.

"It is not far," he replied; "if you will come, I will soon carry you there, and you can sleep as you go."

"I will do whatever you say," murmured the exhausted girl, whose ideas were still so confused that she knew not what she said. "Let us go to Boulak, and there you shall sing to me, and I will not tell anybody except Fatimeh how I love you; but do not let us go into that cold water again."

Sweet to Hassan's ear were some of these words, though spoken in half-unconsciousness; but his first thought now being to convey Amina to the fire, he grasped the staff in his hand, and carefully wrapping the blanket around her so that nothing but her face was exposed to the night-air, he lifted her gently in his arms.

The motion, together with the warmth of the blanket, restored her scattered senses, and also the circulation of her young blood, which had been chilled by long immersion in the water. Who shall tell what were her sensations as she found herself thus tenderly borne along by her devoted lover, or what were those of Hassan when, from the position of her head, he felt her warm breath upon his glowing cheek? When Hassan arrived within three or four hundred yards of the fire he could perceive that it was in the midst of an Arab encampment, containing at least a dozen tents.

As he had passed over the tract near the river, which was overgrown with *khalfah* (brushwood and rushes), and had reached an open tract of smooth ground, he knew that his approach would ere long be descried, and judged that, to prevent being mistaken for a lurking enemy, his wisest course would be to make it known by calling aloud. Having gently lowered Amina's feet to the ground, and in reply to his inquiry having ascertained that she was sufficiently recovered to walk, he readjusted the blanket so as to cover her head and leave her the use of her feet.

"Honoured and beloved, light of my eyes," he whispered, "Allah knows whether we shall find friends or enemies in these Arabs: at all events, their watch-dogs are likely to be troublesome. I will try to move these men by words of friendship, but if they prove thieves and treacherous, we must trust to Allah. Do you remain close behind me, and leave me the free use of my arms." (As he said this he grasped the cudgel in his right and the dagger in his left hand.) "Before they shall offer you insult or injury, they must tear me limb from limb," he added. "It will perhaps be safer and better if among these people you pass for my—sister."

A blush came over her face, for she knew that another and dearer name had rushed to his lips and been checked in utterance.

"Hassan," she said, looking up into his eyes with the full confidence of a first and guileless affection, "to you I owe my life and all that makes life dear; how then can I refuse to do your bidding? for I swear by the memory of my sainted mother, on whose ashes be peace, that never did sister love a brother as—" Here she hesitated, fearful that she had said too much. How she would have finished the sentence we know not, for Hassan, stooping fondly over the sweet upturned face, now lighted by a moonbeam that struggled through the angry, flitting clouds, caught on his trembling lips the murmured confession that was denied to his ear. It was the first kiss of mutual love, and wet and cold and danger were awhile forgotten. Gently withdrawing herself from his fond embrace, she added, "Hassan, in dealing with the people of these tents, be they bad or good, curb your daring courage, and be cautious of your life for my sake."

"Blessed treasure of my heart, I will do as you desire: I will be patient and gentle as a lamb with them unless they offer you insult, and then— But no; if they are Arabs^[98] they will respect the law of hospitality."

So saying, he advanced from the shade of the copse directly towards the tents. Scarcely had they proceeded one hundred yards when, as he had expected, the watch-dogs began to bark, and two or three dusky figures were seen to move about near the fire: continuing his progress steadily until he came within hail, he shouted aloud at the full pitch of his powerful voice, "Brother Arabs, strangers in distress demand hospitality."

The encampment was now all astir; dogs rushed out, followed by their masters armed with spears. Hassan again repeated the same shout, and the men were seen driving back the dogs and advancing to meet him. To the first who came up he said—

"Brothers, we have seen trouble; my sister has fallen into the Nile and is half-perished with cold; if you have a sheik or chief, bring me before him."

With the brief reply of "You are welcome," they conducted him and his timid companion to the largest tent of the encampment, before which the well-fed fire was blazing: the owner came forth to meet his guest, when at the same instant the words "Abou-Hamedi" and "Hassan" broke from their respective lips. It was the Damanhour Arab, formerly rescued by Hassan, on whose encampment he had thus unexpectedly fallen, and, to the astonishment of Amina the Arab's wife and sister rushed out of their tent and crowded round her lover, kissing his hand and calling him brother and preserver.

A few words sufficed to explain the condition of Hassan and Amina, and in a few minutes the latter was in the recesses of the harem-tent, covered with dry clothes, rubbed until she was in a glow of warmth, and drinking a bowl of hot fresh milk sweetened with honey. Hassan fared no less hospitably with his host, and they related to each other their adventures over a pipe and coffee.

Whilst Hassan warmed himself by the fire he exchanged a recital of adventures with Abou-Hamedi. Those of the latter were not of a character to raise him in the estimation of the citizens of a civilised state, although they were far from being degrading in the eyes of an Arab, for he had become a leading member of a band of freebooters who had lately exercised their vocation with no little success in the province of Siout.

They were mostly Arabs from the interior of the Tunis and Tripoli deserts, who, having performed the pilgrimage to Mecca by way of Keneh and Cosseir, left the caravan on its return and levied blackmail on the villages of the left banks of the river in Upper Egypt. In order to avoid suspicion, Abou-Hamedi had located his family, and a few others of the Gemàat tribe who had accompanied him from Damanhour, on the spot where they were now encamped, on the right or eastern bank of the river, where they cultivated a small tract of ground, and passed for industrious, inoffensive people, as indeed they were, with the exception of Abou-Hamedi himself, whose notions of *meum* and *tuum* were somewhat indistinct, and who had "exchanged horses," as he termed it, with a rich merchant of Siout. This exchange had been effected by the simple presentation of a pistol at the head of the latter in an unfrequented spot; and although Abou-Hamedi had obtained a fleet and powerful horse in exchange for a sorry, broken-down nag, he was so ill-satisfied with the bargain

that he had politely compelled the Siout merchant to throw in his purse as compensation.

All this he detailed with imperturbable gravity to Hassan, adding that he and his companions always carried on their plundering expeditions on the other side of the river, so that his encampment was undisturbed and unsuspected. The band met at certain intervals and by preconcerted signals; when he joined them it was by night; and among his talents one of the most remarkable was his power of disguising himself in such a manner that the roving freebooter of the left bank and the peaceable fellah of the right were never suspected to be one and the same person.

Hassan was much amused by his adventures, and was pleased to find that in the rough breast of his lawless host there existed towards himself a feeling of gratitude and devotion that he had not expected to find: the latter even pulled a leathern purse from his girdle and proposed to repay a portion of the money advanced by Hassan for his liberation; but to this he would not consent, saying, with a smile, "Not now, my brother; I promised you that when I required it I would ask you for it. You have a family, and I have none; keep the money, therefore, until I ask you for it. Let us now talk of other things. Do you know whose are those two boats which lately passed?"

"Well do I know," replied the Arab. "They are the dahabiahs of the new Governor of Siout, Deli Pasha."

"True," replied Hassan, "and I am in his service. My sister, now in your tents, is in the Pasha's harem: she fell overboard in the storm, and they must think her drowned. As they must all be now searching, and weeping and wailing, is it possible to convey her to the dahabiah to-night, or must I go to inform them of her being safe here?"

"It is quite possible," said Abou-Hamedi, "if she be not too feeble and tired from having been so long in the water: we have several donkeys here with saddles, and there is a good path to the ferry just above the place where the boats are made fast for the night."

By Hassan's desire the Arab's wife was then called, and desired to inquire whether Amina felt herself sufficiently recovered to ride to the ferry. An affirmative answer being eagerly returned, the donkeys were soon caught and saddled, and the party ready for departure.

"I will not go with you myself," said Abou-Hamedi aside to Hassan. "It is better that none of the Governor's people should see my face."

"I understand," replied Hassan, laughing; "and if I meet you in Siout, I will take care not to know you; but as my sister is young, and unaccustomed to the presence of men, I wish you could let one of your harem go with her to the boats."

The wife and sister of Abou-Hamedi had anticipated the wish. No service that they could render seemed to them sufficient to repay their obligation to Hassan; and the extraordinary beauty of Amina, together with the gentle gratitude which she had shown for their attentions, had so won their affections that they determined not to leave her until they had seen her safely deposited in the harem. They now appeared at the door of their tent ready for their night journey, Amina clad from head to foot in the warmest clothes they possessed, her own wet suit wrapped in a bundle and intrusted to one of the three young Arabs selected to guide the party to the ferry, while one ran on before to rouse up the ferryman and to get ready his boat. The easiest-paced donkey was assigned to Amina, and Hassan walked beside her, his arm ever ready to support her in case of the animal stumbling over the dimly-seen bushes or earth-clods that might obstruct the path.

What a delicious hour for the lovers. Amina, now warmly clad and free from all alarm, recalled to mind the brief and thrilling moments in which she had exchanged with Hassan the confession of their mutual love; and as they spoke together in Turkish, which none of the party but themselves understood, they renewed the same sweet confession in a thousand forms of tenderness, such as love alone can invent, and in which love alone finds no satiety.

"I am very jealous," said Amina, while the little hand that trustfully reposed in his belied her words. "Do you know, Hassan, that these Arab women, both of whom are young, and one of them very comely, have done nothing but talk to me of my brother's amiability and generosity? They say that their service, their lives, all that they have, are at your disposal. When and how did you steal away their hearts, Hassan?"

"Perhaps they told you," he replied, "of a service which I rendered to the family, and their gratitude overrates its extent. They have kind hearts, I believe, and this is the custom of kind hearts. Look at yourself, sweet light of my eyes; you have filled my lonely heart with a joy it never knew before—you have quenched its burning thirst; from the Keswer of your love you have turned the night of my destiny into the sunshine of noon; you have bestowed on a humble *aga*, of unknown birth, who has nought but his truth and his sword, a treasure which the highest and the wealthiest in the land would be proud to solicit; and yet it is scarce an hour since you, teller of sweet untruths, said that you were my debtor."

"Is life and all that makes it dear no debt, Hassan?" replied Amina.

"If you will have it so," said Hassan, smiling, "you shall be my debtor, as the earth is debtor to the showery cloud, and repays it with a thousand fruits and flowers delicious to the taste. Yet, sweet light of my eyes, forget not that again our separation is at hand: at Siout you will be shut up in the harem, offers of marriage from the great and the rich will be made to your father, he will urge you to consent—how can you resist his will?"

"Hassan," replied Amina, with a firmness and solemnity of which he had scarcely thought her capable, "I love my father, and it would grieve me to disobey him, but Allah is greater than he. I have sworn, and I repeat the vow, by your mother's head, that neither force nor entreaty shall induce me to marry another. If destiny forbids our union, I can die."

"Allah forbid!" said Hassan, pressing her hand to his lips. "Destiny will not be so cruel. But tell me, as it seems to me necessary to my life that I should sometimes see your blessed face, even if it be for a moment and afar off—tell me, do you know the cry of the wit-wat?"^[99]

"I believe not," said Amina, laughing. "Why do you ask?"

Turning aside his head for a moment, he imitated the cry of the bird so exactly that the most experienced fowler would have thought that a curlew had just passed by.

"Be it my task," he said, "to find out the window of your apartment. When you hear that cry after sunset you will know that your wit-wat is watching below it for a glance from those loved eyes, or a word from that tongue which is more musical than 'the bird of a thousand songs.'"^[100]

Thus discoursing they reached the ferry, and crossed it without accident. On approaching the spot on the opposite bank where the dahabiahs had come-to for the night, they could see by the number of moving lights and figures on the bank that all the party was still astir and in unwonted agitation. One of the Arab youths who had accompanied our hero and his fair charge ran forward at full speed until he reached the boats, where he shouted at the top of his voice, "The Khanum is safe; Hassan has drawn her out of the river. They are coming."

The news spread with the rapidity of lightning. Men and women, masters and servants, all crowded forward to greet the advancing party; and Amina, on dismounting from her donkey, found herself in the arms of her beloved Fatimeh, who had been nearly deprived of reason by the supposed loss of her young mistress, whom she loved like a daughter.

The Arab women who accompanied her, and whose kind and hospitable attentions to her wants she explained, were taken into the harem cabin and so loaded with kisses, caresses, and presents that they began to think that Amina must be a daughter of Mohammed Ali himself, that her recovery should be attended with such extraordinary and generous demonstrations; nor were the Arabs without entertained with less hospitable warmth.

As for Hassan, the eunuchs of the harem crowded round him to kiss his hand, and the tears of the faithful creatures bore testimony to the attachment which they felt towards their young mistress, whose life he had saved. Neither on board nor on the bank was there any thought of sleep that night. The tale of Amina's miraculous escape was repeated from mouth to mouth, with a score of variations and exaggerations, by groups assembled around blazing fires on the bank, while interminable pipes and coffee beguiled the hours of night.

Hassan contrived ere long to withdraw from these wonder-loving circles to a spot where he was able to enjoy in quiet the hearty congratulations of Ahmed Aga, and one or two others of his intimate companions.

On the following morning the Arab party returned to their encampment, loaded with presents forced upon them by the generosity of the Pasha's major-domo and the ladies of the harem, while the dahabiahs pursued their course without accident or interruption to Siout.

The official residence assigned to the Governor was a large and tolerably convenient house, which had been built not many years before by order of Ibrahim Pasha, at the northern extremity of the town. The front looked upon an open square or *meidàn*, where the troops were paraded; while the back, occupied by the harem, was surrounded by gardens in which orange, lemon, and pomegranate trees flourished in considerable abundance.

Love, though proverbially blind to danger and to consequences, is quick-sighted and quick-witted. Thus not many days had elapsed ere the cry of the wit-wat was heard under one of the windows that looked upon the garden; the casement was cautiously half-opened, and the lovers enjoyed a few moments of stolen conversation, which, for fear of being overheard, they carried on chiefly by signs and glances, or as the Arab distich has it—

"Walls have ears, and rivals are ever on the watch.
Our tongues were silent; but our eyes mutually spoke, and were understood."

Notwithstanding these precautions, it unfortunately happened that one evening a gardener, who had remained beyond the usual hours of labour, saw Hassan spring over the wall at the bottom of the garden. Impelled by curiosity, he watched our hero's movements, heard his signal, and saw a window in the harem half-opened, partially disclosing a woman's form, to whom Hassan addressed a few words in an impassioned undertone.

No sooner was the casement reclosed and Hassan had retired from the garden than the gardener emerged from his hiding-place, and, in the anticipation of a good reward, hastened to communicate what he had seen to Ferraj, the confidential servant of Osman Bey, the deputy-governor, with whom he, the gardener, happened to be acquainted.

Ferraj being the unworthy pander to his master's passions in sensuality as in revenge, and who instinctively knew the hatred which he bore to Hassan, hastened to impart to his chief the information he had received. A grim smile passed over the features of Osman Bey. He had already heard of Amina's rescue by the devoted courage of Hassan, and easily divined the object which led him to the garden. He anticipated, therefore, the double satisfaction of punishing a man whom he hated for an infraction of the sanctity of the harem, and of wounding by publicity the tenderest feelings of Deli Pasha, whom he both feared and disliked.

"Take with you," he said, "three stout fellows and conceal yourselves in the garden after sunset, according to the directions given you by the gardener; repeat this every evening until you find this insolent harem-breaker. Have with you a large cloak and some cord; while he is looking up at the window throw the cloak over him and bind him fast, for the fellow is strong and active as a wild ox,^[101] and might otherwise escape. When you have got him, bring him straightway before me."

These instructions were only too punctually executed, and two or three evenings after, just as Hassan had reached the spot from which he gave his accustomed signal, and was watching for the opening of the casement, a large blanket was thrown over his head from behind, and, before he could extricate his limbs from its folds, he was thrown to the ground and bound hand and foot. In this condition he was carried before Osman Bey, who, in order to make his crime as public as possible, summoned Ahmed Aga and all the chief officers of Deli Pasha's household to attend the investigation.

The news spread like wildfire throughout the palace and the neighbouring houses, so that in less than an hour the Bey's divan was crowded with wondering spectators. Investigation was scarcely

required, for the evidence was clear; the culprit had been taken in the forbidden precincts. The gardener swore to the fact of the casement having been twice opened, and that a woman appearing there had held communication with the prisoner; while the eunuchs of the harem, when interrogated, could not deny that the casement in question belonged to the Lady Amina's private apartment.

Osman Bey, cloaking his revengeful hatred towards Hassan under a semblance of zeal for the Pasha's honour, ordered a pair of iron manacles to be fixed on the prisoner's wrists, and then having caused the cords and blanket in which he had been bound to be removed, ordered him to stand up and state what he had to say in his defence.

Hassan, drawing himself proudly up to his full height, and darting on Osman Bey a glance of withering scorn, replied in a loud voice, "Deli Pasha is father of the lady and Governor of the province; for him I reserve what I have to say: to you I shall give no reply."

"Take him to the guard-house prison," cried Osman Bey in a fury; "we will see if that insolent tongue will not find another kind of speech to-morrow. Let four soldiers with loaded pistols attend him to prison and watch at the door: if he escapes, their lives shall answer for it."

After Hassan had been removed in obedience to this order, Osman Bey remained for some time in consultation with the commander of the troops and other officers respecting the punishment to be inflicted on Hassan. Ahmed Aga lingered among these, and in order to disarm the Vice-Governor's suspicions of his sentiments towards the prisoner, he was loud in his condemnation of the offence, although he took no part in the discussion that arose regarding the punishment.

Osman Aga declared that the honour of the Pasha required it to be both prompt and severe, so as to deter others from invading the sanctity of his harem, and before the consultation closed he avowed his determination to have Hassan publicly beaten on the following morning in the open *meidàn* in front of the palace, and be afterwards reconveyed to prison to await Deli Pasha's arrival. Ahmed Aga, who well knew that all opposition to a decision based on motives of personal revenge and hatred would be fruitless, feigned acquiescence in its justice, and suggested to the Governor that it would be improper that the prisoner should be confined and punished in the dress of *khaznadâr* to the Pasha: he proposed, therefore, that he should be authorised to see him deprived of his household dress and arms, and that he should be clad in a costume more befitting his disgraced position.

To this Osman Bey, willingly assenting, gave an order that the prison should be opened to Ahmed Aga to allow him to make the change; but he knew so well Hassan's popularity in the Pasha's household, that he intrusted the custody of the prisoner, both in prison and at the place of punishment, solely to his own followers and to the soldiers now under his orders as Vice-Governor.

Ahmed Aga, having provided himself with a suit of clothes such as was worn by the humbler attendants of the Pasha, proceeded in company with two of Osman Bey's followers to the prison, and being aware that his every word and gesture would be closely watched and reported, he affected a tone of the greatest harshness in addressing the prisoner.

Hassan, to whom his secret motives were unknown, was more hurt at the conduct of his former friend than he could have been by any indignity inflicted on him by the spite of Osman Bey. Had he known Latin and history, he might have ejaculated, "*Et tu, Brute!*" but as it was, he observed a proud and haughty silence while delivering over his *khaznadâr* dress, together with his shawl-girdle, purse, and dagger, of all of which Ahmed Aga took possession. Scanning with a rapid glance the walls and dimensions of the prison, Ahmed Aga noticed that it was lighted only by one small aperture, so high that escape was impossible; and he had already heard the orders given to the sentries who paced before the door with loaded pistols, and who knew that their lives were made answerable for the prisoner's safety.

"Give him bread and water," said he to the guards, "and let him have a light burning in the cell; it may be useful if you want to look in at any hour before morning to see what he is doing. He is a desperate fellow; beware, my men, that you do not let him escape."

"You may trust us for that," they replied gruffly, "as we have no wish to take his place or share his punishment."

Poor Hassan made his solitary bread-and-water meal with the proud stoicism of a Bedouin, though his heart bled at the apparently hopeless issue of his love and the treacherous ingratitude of Ahmed Aga.

The early hours of the night had passed, and he was just about to lose a sense of his troubles and dangers in sleep, when he was aroused by seeing something drop near his feet, which had evidently been thrown in at the aperture in the wall. Reaching out his manacled hand, he found it to be a lump of clay, to which was attached a note containing a small file and the following words:—

"LIGHT OF MY EYES, BELOVED FRIEND,—Your condition is very perilous; all I could do I have done. Osman Aga swears you shall be publicly beaten to-morrow, and he will keep his oath. The place will be the wooden pillar in the middle of the *meidàn*; if you try to escape before you reach it you will be killed, according to his orders. The cords by which they tie you will be rotten; with the file you can cut nearly through one of the manacles near the wrist, where the cut will not be seen, and you may then break them with a sudden effort. Immediately in front of the post will sit the Bey, and behind him you will see a large clump of date-trees, at the back of which is a ruined sheik's tomb, where you will find your clothes, your arms, and your horse ready saddled; if you have courage and fortune to reach that spot you are safe. You must turn northward behind the date-trees, and I will direct the pursuit westwards toward the desert. Allah bless you. I have been obliged to seem your enemy to obtain the means of serving you, but Hassan knows the truth of this heart and hand."

"I should have known and trusted," said Hassan, pacing up and down his cell in agitation; "but I

doubted thee, Ahmed, and am unworthy of thy friendship."

After giving himself up awhile to these thoughts, he reverted to the letter. "Beaten!" he said, while he crushed the paper in his gyved hand. "I, Hassan, the Child of the Pyramid, whose lance has emptied the saddles of warriors; I, the betrothed of Amina, to be exposed in the *meidàn* and beaten like a thief or a slave—by Allah! rather will I die ten thousand deaths." He cast his eye scornfully down on the rusty manacles that fettered his wrists. "Fools," said he, "to think that the hands of Hassan could be held by brittle toys like these! The intention of Ahmed in sending me the file was friendly, and it may yet be needed, but not now. The slaves might examine these chains before leading me out, and my escape be thus rendered impossible."

So saying, he hid the file in the folds of a linen girdle that supported his *serwal* (or drawers), and having carefully reperused Ahmed's letter so as to fix it firmly in his memory, he tore it piecemeal and buried it in the dust in a corner of his cell, so that in case he should fall in his attempted escape there might not be found anything to compromise his friend.

Having made these preparations and recited his evening prayer, he lay down and slept soundly till he was awakened by the drawing of the bolts of the prison-door, and the entrance of half-a-dozen armed men appointed to conduct him to the place of punishment.

In obedience to their orders, before leaving the prison they examined the manacles, which Hassan held up to their inspection with an air of good-humoured confidence, which, together with his noble and distinguished mien, impressed the rough fellows in his favour.

They were strangers to him personally, but they thought it a pity that so handsome a youth should be subjected to a degrading punishment for speaking a few words in the garden beneath the window of a Khanum whose life he had saved only a few days before. However, they knew Osman Bey's character, and dared not disobey his orders, so they marched their prisoner to the appointed spot, where a man stood ready to tie his hands to the post mentioned in Ahmed's letter.

While performing this office, his back being turned to the Bey, a single wink of the eye sufficed to show to Hassan that he was a friend, and that the cord was either half-cut or rotten. Osman Bey sat on a cushioned carpet smoking his chibouq, some of the officers of his household standing on either side, while behind him Hassan recognised many friendly faces of Delì Pasha's attendants, on which sympathy and indignation were legibly written: beyond these again he noticed the palm-grove, where his horse and liberty awaited him if he could escape from stab or bullet on the way. The attempt seemed desperate; yet, although Hassan had resolved to risk it, none could read any agitation or emotion in that calm, proud eye, which, after surveying the surrounding crowd, rested its scornful glance on the Vice-Governor.

"Osman Bey," said Hassan in a loud, firm voice that was heard by all present, "I warn you to desist from this unjust punishment. I have appealed to Delì Pasha; it is he alone who should judge his own *khaznadâr*."

"Dog!" replied Osman Bey, "dost thou teach me my duties and my powers? Am I not Governor till Delì Pasha arrives; and shall I not punish a scoundrel who dares to invade his harem? I will have thy back beaten till thou canst not speak, and I will leave thy feet for Delì Pasha to beat till thou canst not stand. Slaves," he continued, addressing two men armed with sticks who had silently taken their places on each side of the prisoner, "strike! and if you do not lay it soundly on, by my head you shall taste the stick yourselves."

Even as he ceased speaking the fall of a heavy blow on Hassan's back sounded over the *meidàn*, and an involuntary groan burst from many of his former comrades in the Pasha's household. Uttering the single word "Allah!" in a voice of thunder, Hassan burst the cord that bound his hands to the post, and dashing them apart with the full power of his gigantic strength, the rusted manacles snapped like whipcord: a single bound brought him to the side of the astonished Bey, who had scarcely time to take the pipe from his mouth ere he received from the iron chain still hanging from Hassan's right hand a blow which broke his nose and deluged his face in blood. Without turning even to give him a look, Hassan dashed impetuously forward, brandishing a sword that he had snatched from the Bey's nearest attendant. Some made way for him apparently paralysed by fear or surprise, some doubtless from secret friendship, so that, here and there parrying a random cut or thrust, he succeeded in gaining the palm-grove.

Such was Hassan's extraordinary fleetness of foot that he had distanced all pursuers when the Bey, rising from the ground and holding a handkerchief to his bleeding face, roared aloud in fury to his *kawâsses* and Bashi-Bazouks to mount in pursuit. "A hundred purses to any one who takes him dead or alive!"

It may well be believed that a reward of such unheard of magnitude sent many of the greedy soldiers to their saddles with all possible speed.

Hassan meanwhile sped his way to the sheik's tomb, beneath which he found a friendly young Mameluke of the Pasha's mounted and holding Shèitan by the bridle.

"Quick, quick!" said the youth; "here is your belt and pistols—they are primed and loaded; here your sword and dagger; in these small bags, firmly tied to the saddle, are your clothes and purse. Away, away to the right, round these palms; I will gallop off to the left and shout as if in pursuit."

With a grasp of the hand, and without exchanging another word, Hassan fastened his arms in his girdle, and vaulting into the saddle, went off at full speed; while the young Mameluke galloped off in the opposite direction, shouting aloud, and followed, as he expected, by the first horsemen who came up, and who, supposing him to be in sight of the fugitive, hastened in pursuit, hoping to snatch from him the coveted prize of one hundred purses.

One of the mounted *kawâsses* only, a powerful fellow, and greedy, like the rest, to secure the promised reward, had heard the sound of Shèitan's retreating hoofs, and followed in the right direction; nor was it long ere, leaving the palm-grove and entering on the adjoining open fields which bordered the desert, he caught a view of Hassan in full flight before him. Well knowing that he could trust, if necessary, to his horse's speed, Hassan did not wish to distress him at the commencement of a chase the length of which was uncertain. He contented himself therefore with

going on at a moderate hand-gallop, which soon allowed the impatient *kawàss* to gain on him. Hassan perceiving, as he came nearer, that the man was armed like himself with sword and pistols, drew one of the latter from his belt and quietly awaited his adversary's approach.

The *kawàss*, thirsting for the hundred purses, and trusting to his skill in the use of his weapon, galloped by our hero, discharging his pistol as he passed. The ball whizzed by Hassan's head, but missed its mark; and, driving the stirrup into Shèitan's flanks, he brought him quickly within range of his opponent, when he fired with so true an aim that the *kawàss* fell dead at the first shot.

"Fool!" said Hassan; "what harm had I done you that you must strive to take me?"

He dismounted, and, seeing that no other pursuers were in sight, dressed himself in the *kawàss's* clothes, and throwing the body into an adjoining ditch, added a second brace of pistols to his own means of defence, and led off his late opponent's horse, which he resolved to retain or turn loose as circumstances might render it advisable.

A few days after these events Deli Pasha, who had been released from his attendance on the Viceroy, and had performed the voyage up the Nile in a light Government *canjah*, arrived at Siout, where he learnt the various "moving incidents" that had occurred in his household: the imminent peril of his favourite child, rescued by the devoted courage of Hassan, her name become the subject of scandal in connection with that of her deliverer, and the disgraceful punishment awarded to his *khaznadâr* by Osman Bey, who, as Deli Pasha well knew, had gratified his own revengeful hatred under a semblance of zeal for the honour of his chief.

All these things combined to rouse the feelings of the choleric old soldier to the highest pitch of excitement. He was angry with Hassan, angry with his daughter, angry with Osman Bey, and angry with Destiny, which had brought all these troubles on his old age. His attendants saw the cloud settled on his brow, and waited in silent apprehension to see when and how the storm would burst.

At last it fell, as is too often the case in this world of injustice, on the feeblest and most innocent head. Amina alone, of all the objects of his wrath, was under his roof and entirely in his power; she had heard from Fatimeh Khanum and the eunuchs the indications of her father's gloomy state of mind, and as on arriving he had neither come to see her nor sent her any message of affection, she dreaded the first interview. When, after the lapse of some days, he visited her apartment and ordered all the attendants to retire, she advanced to meet him, and observing no welcome sign of parental embrace, she kissed the hem of his robe and sat down in silence at his feet.

Notwithstanding all his stoic and stern resolves, the feelings that struggled for the mastery in his breast betrayed themselves; and as he contemplated her surpassing loveliness, and the touching and subdued melancholy by which it was shaded, he could not forbear the reflection that, had it not been for the courageous devotion of Hassan, that face and form, which he had so often caressed with all a father's love, would now be sleeping cold and lifeless in the muddy bed of the Nile.

"Better so than disgraced and dishonoured," said he to himself, rousing his own angrier passions, and giving them vent in a volume of reproaches directed against herself and her lover. For a long time she bore them in silence and in tears; but when at length he reproached her with giving her affection to a nameless adventurer, and said that he would rather see her dead than united to one who had ungratefully brought dishonour on his house, she started to her feet, and while the eyes so lately bathed in tears now flashed with the fire of indignation, she said—

"Father, you shall have your wish. Death has no terror for me, and I would meet it in any hour and in any shape rather than renounce a faith that I have plighted in the sight of Allah. Cruel and unjust father, how dare you tax with ingratitude one who risked his own life to save that of your child? Father, neither your anger nor your power can arrest the decrees of destiny. Was it Hassan's fault or was it mine that on that dark and stormy night I was cast into the waves of the Nile? He heard a faint cry, and though he knew not who uttered it, he plunged into those troubled waters and reached me just as I was about to sink from cold and exhaustion. Cheering and sustaining me, he brought me to the shore. In the very jaws of death I vowed to devote to him the life that he had saved; he stripped off his own cloak to shield me from the cold; he bore me to the friendly Arab tents, and his heart beat against my heart as I rested in his arms. He had seen my face uncovered, and we mutually swore to love each other faithfully until separated by that death from which we had just escaped. Cruel father, do you think that after this any other man would wish or dare to wed your daughter? In the sight of Allah, Hassan is my husband. The cruelty of man or Fate may doom me never to see him again; but I warn you, father, that I am Deli Pasha's own daughter, and if you compel me to become the bride of another, the bridal bed shall be the grave of one or both."

The Pasha gazed with mingled awe and astonishment on the flashing eyes and dilated figure of his transformed Amina as she uttered these words; while one of her hands rested on her girdle, as if seeking the hilt of that dagger to which her closing sentence had so plainly alluded.

"Amina," he said in a voice rendered tremulous by emotion, "you are right; it has been the work of destiny. I meant not to be cruel to you or unjust to Hassan. Come to my arms."

Who has not experienced the pleasure of seeing a dusky summer cloud, which lately obscured the sun and sent forth the lightning's flash and the thunder's growl, suddenly dissolve and pass away in gentle rain, while the sun resumes its empire over the sky, and the shower-spangled leaves and herbs and flowers exhale the grateful incense of their odorous breath?

Such, only so much more lovely as moral is superior to natural beauty, was the change wrought in Amina by a word of parental love. Throwing herself into his arms with a wild cry of irrepressible joy, she looked up in his face, and pressing his hand fondly to her lips, said—

"Father, dear father, I fear that my words have pained you; tell me that you forgive me. I can bear anything but to hear him ill-spoken of; then my heart jumps to my mouth, and my tongue knows no restraint; but now I am your own little Amina again. Kiss me, and love me, dear father, and, Inshallah! I will never do anything to offend you."

Deli Pasha could not trust himself to speak, but he folded her to his heart in a silence more eloquent than words, and the reconciliation between father and daughter was complete.

Often afterwards, when alone together, they spoke of Hassan, and wondered what had become of

him, till at length reports reached them which, although they threw a light upon his fate, filled them with grief and dismay.

In order to explain these more fully we must resume the thread of our narrative at the point where we left our hero clad in the dress of the *kawàss* whom he had despoiled, and journeying northward along the border of the desert, leading his spare horse by the bridle.

He had travelled some four or five hours at a round pace without halting, when he met half-a-dozen wild-looking Bedouin Arabs, well-mounted and armed with lance and sword. Forgetting at the moment that the dress which he wore might not find favour in the eyes of these children of the desert, he rode forward to meet them, when one who seemed their leader, after conversing for a few moments with his companions, called aloud to him—

"Halt, you *kawàss*, servant of some grasping Turk; if you would have us spare your life, dismount and give us up those two horses."

"I am no *kawàss*," replied Hassan, addressing the surprised Arabs in the deep-toned guttural accents of a Bedouin, "but a son of the desert like yourselves. 'Tis but a few hours since a *kawàss* attacked me, and I killed him and took his horse. If you wish to fight, the same arms that killed him are ready for you. If you desire peace, Bismillah! I am your friend."

While speaking, he deliberately drew a pistol from his girdle and brought round the hilt of his sword ready for his hand. The Bedouins were completely puzzled by his appearance and language; his powerful figure, noble mien, and the perfect coolness with which he challenged six men to combat, compelled their involuntary admiration, while his dress denoted hostility to their predatory band, and his horses excited their cupidity.

While they were holding a brief consultation as to the course which they should pursue, another Arab belonging to their party, who had followed them at some distance, came up: he was a broad-shouldered, stout fellow, with a black patch covering one-half of his face, and from the eagerness with which they crowded round him it was evident that his voice was not without weight among them.

"Let me see this *kawàss* who pretends to be a Bedouin," said he, pushing his way through them; "I will soon tell you whether he be lion or jackal." So saying, he advanced to within a few yards of our hero.

"Mashallah! Mashallah!" exclaimed the new-comer; and, to the astonishment of his comrades, he jumped off his horse, and running up to Hassan, kissed his hand, crying aloud, "Ya sidi, ya sidi,—My master, my master,—do you not know your faithful Abou-Hamedi?"

It was, indeed, no less a personage than our old friend the Damanhuri whom Hassan had thus unexpectedly encountered, and who was now out upon a marauding expedition with a fragment of the lawless and numerous band of which he was a member.

"The black patch could not disguise Abou-Hamedi from the eyes of a friend," replied Hassan, cordially returning his greeting. In a few minutes hasty salutations and mutual inquiries had passed, and Hassan found himself on his way to the Bedouin encampment, where he was invited to sup and pass the night.

Abou-Hamedi took the bridle of the led horse, and treated our hero with such evident deference that the other Arabs unconsciously adopted a similar manner towards him, and he entered their encampment rather with the air of its chieftain than of a homeless fugitive.

The band consisted of forty-five or fifty men, who were sitting in a circle round a large fire, at which a couple of black slaves were roasting several sheep and baking Arab bread on the cinders. The horses were picketed in a semicircle at the back of the party, and other black slaves were bringing them their evening supply of forage. Tents there were none, these hardy sons of the desert contenting themselves with a blanket for a bed and the open sky for a canopy.

Hassan saw at a glance that more than half of the band were Arabs from the West—rough, powerful fellows, who, having come across the Great Desert to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, had on their return been attracted by the "fleshpots of Egypt," and had remained behind to do a little business in the plundering line, while the rest of their caravan had continued its course to the desert borders of Tripoli and Tunis. The residue of the party was composed of Arabs who were either outlawed for some offence against the Egyptian Government or had been compelled to fly from some Bedouin tribe to avoid retaliation for a deed of blood.

Hassan had no sooner taken his seat among them than he was expected and requested to relate the circumstances which had brought him among them in the dress of a Turkish *kawàss*, and with iron manacles attached to each wrist. This he did in a simple and unpretending manner, which would have carried conviction with it even without the confirmatory evidence of the manacle chain which still hung from his right hand.

The Bedouins listened with grave attention and interest to his tale, and at the end of it Abou-Hamedi drew near to his side, and asking him for the file which the forethought of Ahmed had provided, set about the task of delivering our hero from bracelets which were neither convenient nor ornamental. This was a more tedious task than it appeared; and when at length they were removed, they were passed from hand to hand, the Arabs casting their eyes from the broken chain to the powerful limbs which it had failed to fetter, and paying that involuntary tribute to lofty stature and manly beauty which these qualities command still more in savage than in civilised life.

No sooner was Hassan relieved from his gyves than he rose up and went to see that his faithful Shèitan was duly cleaned and fed. He found a grinning negro belonging to Abou-Hamedi already employed on this service, whose goodwill he further stimulated by a smile of encouragement and a five-piastre piece slipped into his palm. The horse taken from the *kawàss* likewise received his due allowance, and both it and Shèitan were provided with a coarse rug to protect them against the cold of approaching night.

While Hassan was thus engaged, and in the subsequent recital of his sunset prayers, which, like a true Mussulman, he never omitted in any presence or under any circumstances, Abou-Hamedi was eloquently haranguing the listening Arabs concerning his character and qualities. He related to

them how he himself owed his life and liberty to Hassan's youthful generosity; and after extolling in the highest terms his deliverer's daring courage and aptitude for command, he proposed that the band should invite him to become their leader.

One of the party, named Abou-Hashem, who had hitherto acted in that capacity, listened to this address with a clouded brow. He was a strong, active man, well skilled in the use of his weapons, bold and resolute in danger, and versed in the various modes of Arab warfare. He expressed his dissent from the proposal of Abou-Hamedi, and said that he for one would not agree to surrender his own claims to command to a stranger, and one of less age and experience than himself. Abou-Hamedi replied, and the discussion was so warmly sustained on both sides that they did not perceive the return of Hassan, who had taken his seat in the circle and listened to the arguments of the disputants.

"Let this discussion cease, my brothers," he said in a voice whose deep authoritative tone commanded general attention. "I seek not to be your leader, and would not accept the charge otherwise than by your unanimous choice. So long as I remain among you I will be faithful to your cause; and if I see amongst you treachery or cruelty, or aught else that I do not approve, I shall leave you and follow my solitary path. In a band like this, where there is no hereditary title to command, the boldest heart, the strongest hand, and the wisest head must be your chief. In the first fair day of fight that we may have, show me the man who is first in the fray, stoutest in the *mêlée*, and last to leave it,—let him be our leader; I will cheerfully follow and obey him."

This speech was received with general acclamation. The party having set their guards, retired to rest, and thus Hassan found himself transformed from a Turkish *khaznadâr* into a comrade of predatory outlaws.

Not a week had passed ere Abou-Hamedi went disguised into Siout to perform various commissions and to gather information. On his return he told his companions that after two days the great annual caravan of *gellabs* (slave-dealers) was about to set out for the Soudan; that their sacks would be full of money and trinkets for the purchase of slaves; and that they were to be escorted by fifty Bashi-Bazouks, or irregular Turkish cavalry.

He also informed them that he had seen Osman Bey in his divan with a large black plaster covering his broken nose and lacerated cheek, at which intelligence a smile of satisfaction played over Hassan's features, which had worn an unusually grave expression. It was unanimously resolved to plunder the caravan, and a council was held as to the place and plan of attack, in which Abou-Hamedi and Abou-Hashem, as being best acquainted with the localities, were the principal speakers. After the council had broken up, Abou-Hamedi retired with Hassan, and produced from his saddle-bags a complete Bedouin dress, which our hero gladly donned in place of the Turkish costume which he had of late been accustomed to wear.

On the day fixed for the departure of the *gellabs*, our band, guided by Abou-Hamedi and Abou-Hashem, was posted behind a desert sandhill on the caravan-road to the south, at a distance of about fifteen miles from Siout. Swords were loosened in their scabbards, the priming of pistols and the points of lances duly examined, when towards four in the afternoon the caravan was seen slowly approaching, half of the armed escort in front, half in the rear, with the wealthy *gellabs* and their baggage containing money, jewels, trinkets, and numerous sets of manacles, in the centre.

Our Bedouins were awaiting them in profound silence, when suddenly their ambush was betrayed by one of their horses, a fiery and impatient animal, that began to neigh, snort, and execute various curvetings which exposed his rider to the view of the leading soldiers of the escort, who, seeing that the Bedouin endeavoured again to find concealment behind the sandhill, suspected the true state of the case and began to look to their arms and prepare for action.

"Upon them at once," shouted Hassan, "and overthrow them before the rear-guard has time to come up to their support! Strike only the soldiers; the merchants and travellers must be ours."

As he spoke these words he struck the stirrups in Shèitan, and charged at headlong speed the leading column. It was in vain that Abou-Hashem, jealous of his honour, strove to be first in the fray: he urged his horse with voice and stirrup, but before he came up Hassan had already emptied two troopers' saddles, and was dealing death among their fellows, uttering terrific shouts that rose high above the din of arms and the cries of the dismayed merchants.

At first the freebooters seemed about to gain an easy victory, but the rear-guard of the escort came up, and for some time the fight was continued upon nearly equal terms. Abou-Hashem, who fought that day with a fierce emulation, was wounded in the sword-arm by a pistol-shot, and having been thrown from his horse, was about to be despatched by a trooper, when Hassan's sword flashed above his head and the trooper fell senseless beside the body of his intended victim.

To dismount from his horse and remount his fallen comrade was to Hassan the work of a moment: springing again on the back of Shèitan, he plunged into the thickest of the *mêlée*, and ere long the discomfited troopers were in rapid flight towards Siout.

The Bedouins, not caring to pursue them, surrounded the caravan and commenced the work of plunder and distribution of the spoil with a readiness and order which proved them to be adepts at the trade. Hassan stood at a little distance wiping his stained sword and tying a handkerchief over a flesh-wound in the arm, from which the blood freely flowed.

The booty proved greater than the most sanguine of the Bedouins had expected, and Abou-Hashem himself proposed and demanded that the leader's share should be set apart for Hassan. Our hero, scarcely deigning to cast a glance at the heap thus placed before him, gave his hand to his late rival, and inquired kindly after his hurt. Abou-Hashem felt that, morally and physically, he was in presence of a superior, and from that day Hassan was uncontested chief of the band.

The merchants and other trafficking members of the caravan, with their servants, sat in melancholy silence on the ground, looking on at the distribution of their goods and money among the captors.

When Hassan, at the request of Abou-Hamedi, condescended to examine the share of booty allotted to him, he found that it consisted of two black slaves, three mules, a number of jewels and

trinkets, and nearly £100 in money. Of the slaves, one was a sickly-looking youth, to whom Hassan gave a piece of money, saying, "Go where you will—you are free."

The other was a tall, powerful fellow, with a look of pride and resolution in his eye which pleased Hassan's taste: he was a native of Darfour, and had accompanied the caravan as an interpreter among the tribes of that region. In appearance he was more like one of the Lucumi, or other warrior tribes of South-Western Africa, than the woolly-headed negroes usually met with in the Egyptian slave-market. At his girdle hung a short club made of the heavy ironwood of his native land, and in his hand he carried a long stick or cane, one end of which was tipped with a kind of fibrous cover of basket-work, while at the other end was an iron hook, which gave to the stick the appearance of a shepherd's crook.

"What is your name, and whence are you?" inquired Hassan.

"From Darfour, and my name Abd-hoo," replied the black.^[102]

"Have you been a warrior in your own country?"

"I have seen some fighting," said Abd-hoo with a grim smile.

"Why did you not, then, fight when we attacked your caravan?"

"Because that *gellab* broke his faith. He promised me forty piastres a-month and has paid me only twenty. I would not move a finger to save his life."

As he said this he pointed to one of the slave-dealers, who was looking in mute despair on his rifled bags and boxes.

"If your muscles answer to your appearance, you should be a strong fellow," said Hassan.

"Try me," replied the black, thrusting out from beneath his blanket an arm that would have done credit to the champion of the fistic ring in England.

A laugh among the Bedouins followed this sally of the sturdy negro. Hassan noticed it, and simply answering, "I will try a wrestling fall^[103] with you, and if you throw me you shall go free," threw off his *abah* (outer Arab scarf) and laid aside his weapons. The negro followed the example, and though he was half a head short of Hassan in stature, the vast size of his bull neck and shoulders, and the muscular development of his arms and legs, created an impression among the Bedouins (none of whom, excepting Abou-Hamedi, had any experience of Hassan's extraordinary powers) that their newly-appointed chief would be no match for the Darfour.

When, however, they grappled, and all the sleights and desperate exertions of the negro failed to move Hassan from his firm position of defence, or to disturb the quiet and confident smile that played upon his countenance, it soon became as evident to the bystanders as it was to Abd-hoo that he was in the grip of his master, and not many minutes elapsed before he measured his length upon the sand.

Hassan then resumed his *abah* and his weapons, and continued the conversation with his defeated opponent as if nothing had occurred to interrupt it.

"Abd-hoo, you are a stout fellow, though you have yet some sleights to learn in wrestling. Canst thou be faithful?"

"Where I promise I keep my word," said the negro.

"Enough," replied Hassan; "I want no slave. Here is a piece of gold for you; take it. You are free to go where you will or to serve me: if you choose the latter, you shall have your share of my bread and my purse."

"I will follow you to death," replied Abd-hoo, looking up to his new master with a reverence inspired by those physical powers which, in his rude breast, afforded the highest claim to respect.

Hassan, having given into his charge the horses which had fallen to his share, cast his eyes over the disconsolate group of merchants and their followers, among whom his quick eye detected a feeble old man whom he had more than once seen at the Governor's house at Siout. Approaching him, he inquired what had brought him on this route.

"My son is a merchant who deals in gum and senna in Soudan," replied the old man. "He has fallen into illness and trouble, and I was going to Dongola to see him, and to give some money to the Governor's secretary to get him released from trouble. Now my fifty dollars and my mule have been taken from me, I am ruined and my son is lost."

"I hope your case is not so bad," said Hassan, smiling good-humouredly; "here are one hundred dollars to make good your loss. You must now return to Siout, and, Inshallah! you will soon set out again for Soudan with a better escort and a more fortunate caravan." He then turned to the group of *gellabs*, and said in a voice that carried dismay to their already trembling hearts—

"Hark ye, I know you all, and shall know all your doings in Siout: if ye dare to touch one *para* of what I have given to this old man, your lives shall answer for it. Now gather up what you have left of clothes and goods and be gone."

The discomfited traders collected the goods and the sorrier nags and mules which the freebooters had left as useless to themselves and retraced their way to Siout, while Hassan and his band went off with their booty into the desert.

The news of this audacious *razzia*, exaggerated as it was by the defeated troopers and the despoiled *gellabs*, created the greatest consternation in Siout. Hassan's band was magnified into a force of two or three hundred ferocious and well-armed desperadoes, and he himself into some *jinn* or *afreet* in human shape, equally proof against lance, sword, or bullet.

Osman Bey was furious at this new triumph of his mortal enemy, the more so as a portion of the money captured by the Bedouins had been advanced by himself to the *gellabs* on speculation.

Deli Pasha was scarcely less vexed at the lawless and desperate course of life on which his late favourite had been driven to enter, although his former feelings towards him were kept alive by the trait of compassionate generosity which he had shown to the old man, who had himself related it to the Pasha with tears in his eyes. Hassan's warning threats to the *gellabs* had not been without effect, for none had dared to take from him a *para* of the hundred dollars given to him by the dreaded leader of the plundering band. The latter ere long acquired a notoriety equalled by that of Robin Hood in the olden time of England; nor were Hassan's character and conduct very different

from those of our prince of archers and foresters. To take from the rich and bestow generously on the poor and oppressed was the base of his system. Thus in every village he had voluntary and grateful spies, who gave him timely notice of the approach of any troops sent against him, and according to their numerical force or his own inclination, he either defeated or eluded them.

The attention of Mohammed Ali was ere long aroused by the depredations of this formidable band; but although he sent the most angry and severe orders to his provincial governors to seize the audacious rebel who set his authority at defiance, their exertions remained infructuous.

Tales of Hassan's deeds of prowess, daring, and generosity became current among the villagers of the whole valley of the Nile, among whom he was generally spoken of as "Hassan eed-el-maftouha," or "eed-el-hadid"—that is, "Hassan of the open hand" (*i.e.*, the generous), or "Hassan of the iron hand"; and the provincial governors were completely stupefied by his apparent power of ubiquity, for no sooner did one of them send a force in pursuit of him near some village where his presence had lately been reported, than they heard of his having plundered some Sheik-el-Beled or caravan one hundred miles off.

This latter circumstance, though devised by Hassan, was carried out by the versatile talents of Abou-Hamedi, who had secret friends and spies in most of the Nile villages. These fellows were instructed from time to time to run to the nearest town or residence of a governor bawling for help, and stating that they had seen Hassan and his band prowling near their village on the preceding night. Soldiers would be sent to watch for him, and then news would arrive that some depredation had been committed by his band in another province.

Meanwhile Hassan did not neglect the precaution of maintaining a good understanding with the Bedouin tribes: totally indifferent to money himself, all his share of booty that he did not bestow on the poor and helpless he gave in presents to the most powerful of the Bedouin sheiks, so that when Mohammed Ali tried to employ against Hassan his favourite method of "setting a thief to catch a thief," by calling upon some of the Arab chiefs to assist in apprehending our hero, they apparently obeyed the Viceroy's wishes, but it was after having sent a secret and timely notice to Hassan, and, as might be expected, their ostensible efforts were without result.

We have said that the wild and lawless career upon which our hero had entered caused deep regret to Deli Pasha, and it may be imagined that it caused the tears of his daughter to flow. Neither these tears nor these regrets were much diminished by a letter which the Pasha one day received, and which was brought by a stranger, who disappeared as soon as he had delivered it. Allowing for the difference between Turkish and English idiom, it ran as follows:—

"To the High in Rank, the Honourable and Honoured Deli Pasha, Governor of Siout.

"Hassan, his faithful servant, having been driven from his honourable place in his Excellency's service, and having been degraded in the eyes of the household and others by the tyranny of Osman Bey, has had no other choice than to maintain his honour and life as the chief of a Bedouin band. He may be exiled—outlawed, perhaps—if such be the will of Allah, put to death by the Egyptian Government, but no act of cowardice, treachery, or cruelty on his part shall cause his Excellency to blush for having once extended to Hassan his generous protection. His life is in the hands of Allah; but so long as it endures, his thoughts, his hopes, his heart, and his faith are a sacrifice at the feet of Amina, and his prayers are for her and for her honoured father."

Nothing can be more dull, hot, and disagreeable than a summer in Upper Egypt; we therefore take the liberty of skipping over the following six months, briefly mentioning the changes that took place in the destinies of our principal *dramatis personæ*.

Mr Thorpe and all his party had gone to pass the summer among the cool breezes of the Lebanon; but as the health of his daughter caused him some disquietude, he had determined to return to Upper Egypt in the following winter, for which purpose he re-engaged the two dahabiahs in which he had before made his voyage up the Nile.

Deli Pasha had obtained the Viceroy's permission to return with his family to Cairo, leaving Osman Bey in charge of the government of Siout; and the latter received a significant hint from his Highness that if he did not contrive some means of apprehending the formidable outlaw whom his ill-timed harshness had driven to revolt, it might prove the worse for himself.

As for our hero and his band, the heat of summer and the cold of winter were alike to their hardy frames, and the terror of his name spread far and wide with every succeeding month. The reports of his daring achievements excited the Viceroy's anger, sometimes mingled with admiration, sometimes with mirth, which he cared not to suppress.

On one occasion Abou-Hamedi (who had received several flesh-wounds in a late encounter) went into Siout disguised as a fellah, and, rushing into the presence of Osman Bey, claimed redress of his wrongs, stating that not more than five leagues from the town he had been plundered, beaten, and wounded by Hassan and a part of his band. His ghastly appearance, the blood on the bandages that bound his head and arm, the tone of helpless misery in which he told his tale,—all conspired to induce the Bey to give credit to it. A surgeon was ordered to remove the bandages, and there were the unhealed wounds to speak for themselves.

On being asked where Hassan now was, and how many of his band were with him, the pretended fellah named the place, and said that the greater part of the band had gone elsewhere to plunder some caravan, and that Hassan had with him only six or eight of his followers.

When told that he must guide a party to the place, he evinced such a dread of Hassan, and bargained so obstinately for the amount of his reward when the formidable chief should be captured, that all doubts of the truth of his tale were removed.

Osman Bey resolved at once to whiten his face before the Viceroy by heading in person the party selected for this important service, which was to consist of twenty of the best mounted and armed of his followers, each man being provided with a coil of cord to bind the prisoners.

Without relating all the details of the expedition, it is sufficient to say that the unlucky Bey fell into an ambush laid with admirable skill by Hassan. He and his party found themselves suddenly attacked in front and in the rear by two bands, each of which was as well mounted and more numerous than his own, so that after a brief resistance he and his followers were all captured, and bound with the same cords which they had brought to secure the freebooters. Their arms and horses having been taken from them, and having been placed at some distance under a strong guard, Hassan ordered them all to be released from their bonds; and Osman Bey having been brought before him, he said—

"Illustrious Governor, I think that two hundred and fifty was the number of blows which you once ordered to be administered to the back of your humble servant, and in dealing with so high a personage I surely ought not to show myself less liberal in my measure of reward. Neither have I forgotten the debt that I owe you for the kindness which you showed me in Cairo, when you endeavoured to take by treachery a life which you had not the courage openly to attempt. Inshallah! I will now pay my debts; after which we will be friends or enemies, as you may choose."

At the conclusion of this address two of the freebooters stepped forward by Hassan's order, and, in spite of Osman Bey's struggles and cries, applied their courbatches vigorously to his shoulders until Hassan called out "Enough!" They then tied him firmly, with his arms pinioned, on a lively young donkey, to the tail of which they fastened a bunch of prickly shrubs to quicken its movements, and having started it on the road to Siout, left the discomfited Governor to re-enter his capital in this humiliating guise, amid the suppressed jeers of its population.

As for the troopers, Hassan gave them a good supper, expressed to them his regret that he could not restore to them their arms and horses, which had become the property of his band; told them it was a great pity that such brave, honest fellows should be obliged to serve under so unworthy a chief, and having given each of them a present of five piastres, told them that they were at liberty to return to their several homes, or to their service in Siout, as it might suit their own convenience.

On another occasion Abou-Hashem, who had been engaged with a small portion of the band in a predatory excursion not far from the town of Girgeh, had been attacked by a party sent for that purpose by its governor, and in spite of a desperate resistance had been taken prisoner. His comrades, most of them wounded, escaped and brought the news to Hassan, who was with the remainder of the band encamped at a well a few leagues distant from the scene of the affray.

After reproaching them bitterly for their cowardice in surviving the capture of a comrade who had once been their chief, and after ascertaining from them that the soldiers were too numerous to afford him a reasonable prospect of rescue by open force, he resolved to effect it by stratagem, or perish in the attempt. Dressing himself in his *kawàss* costume, and taking with him only the trusty black, Abd-hoo, on whose fidelity and presence of mind he could confidently rely, he mounted Shèitan and set off at speed towards Girgeh, hoping to intercept the party before they reached the immediate neighbourhood of the town. Both he and his follower were fully armed, and the latter bore with him a chibouq and tobacco-bag to support his character of attendant on the supposed *kawàss*. Hassan gave his instructions to Abd-hoo as they galloped across the plain, and the confident grin of the sturdy negro assured him that he was understood, and would, if possible, be obeyed.

Fortune so far favoured our adventurers that several miles before reaching Girgeh they saw the party of which they were in search seated on the ground near a spring of water, and refreshing themselves with the fragrant fumes of the pipe.

Slackening his speed as he approached, Hassan drew near the group, and saluting them courteously in Turkish, sat down in the midst of them, nearest to one who by his dress he knew to be their *yuzbashi*, or captain, and ordering Abd-hoo to fill his pipe, our hero commenced a conversation on the heat, and indifferent subjects, with a careless ease that would have done honour to an old diplomatist. The captain was charmed with the polite frankness of his new guest, who failed not to call him colonel by mistake, and who ere long drew from him an account of the object and success of his morning's expedition.

No sooner did he hear that one supposed to be of some rank in the band of the formidable Hassan had been captured than he started with feigned surprise, and inquired, pointing to Abou-Hashem, who sat disarmed and pinioned at some distance, whether that was the fellow whom they had captured? A reply being given in the affirmative—

"By your head, colonel," he said, "I will go and look at the vagabond: they have done much evil to my lord the Pasha, and I have seen service against them. You son of a dog," continued he, drawing near the prisoner, and addressing him in a loud and angry voice, "methinks you are the very fellow who killed my brother near Siout; you have just his ugly, villainous look, and now I will have your blood."

So saying, he drew a sharp poniard and brandished it over the head of the prisoner.

"Do not kill the vagabond, O Aga!" shouted the captain, still lazily smoking his pipe, "for I hope to get five or six purses for his apprehension: could I have caught his chief, Mashallah! I would have claimed one hundred."

"Inshallah! you will claim them another time," said Hassan politely. "Meanwhile, I must give this vagabond a prick with my poniard. I will not touch his life, but I wish him not to forget me."

So saying, he brandished his poniard again, and advanced close to the prisoner in order to see how with one rapid cut he could sever his bonds.

"Do not touch him, Aga, with your knife," cried out Abd-hoo; "here is a courbatch wherewith to beat him."

Under this pretext Hassan led Shèitan and his own horse near to the prisoner: at the distance of only a few yards a groom was holding a horse which, from its appearance and trappings, seemed to

be that of the captain.

"Now is the moment," whispered Hassan to Abou-Hashem; "be ready to spring on that horse."

As he spoke he raised his knife as if about to strike, at the same time continuing to threaten and abuse Abou-Hashem in a loud voice, while the Turks were laughing at the anger of Hassan and the assumed terror of the captive, who called out "Aman! aman!" (Mercy!) With one swift stroke of his knife he divided the cords with which he was pinioned, and, springing aside, knocked down the unsuspecting *sàis* who held the captain's horse. No sooner done than Abou-Hashem was in the saddle; Hassan and Abd-hoo jumped on their horses, and in a second the freebooters were at full speed on their way to the desert. Shots were fired at them from pistols and carabines, some of which took effect, but not enough to stop their headlong course.

Hassan received a ball in the arm and another in the side, but he succeeded in his daring attempt. A few of the best mounted of the Turks who were able to keep the fugitives in sight found themselves, after a gallop of several leagues, in sight of Hassan's band, who received their chief and his rescued lieutenant with shouts of triumph; while the troopers, seeing that all chance of recapturing them was hopeless, wheeled their wearied horses towards Girgeh, glad to escape themselves unpursued.

One other instance of our hero's humorous audacity which reached the Viceroy's ears during that summer, and which excited his mirth almost as much as his anger, deserves to be recorded.

His Highness had collected a body of troops in a camp near the town of Esneh, in Upper Egypt, who were undergoing drill and training for service against the refractory tribes in the Soudan.

Hassan had received intelligence from one of his spies that a large sum of money had just been transmitted to Esneh for the payment of these troops, and was in the keeping of a certain Moktar Effendi, who resided in a village a few miles distant from the encampment, and who on account of this charge was dignified in the neighbourhood by the title of Defterdar.

Of this sum Hassan resolved to endeavour to obtain possession by stratagem, and he set about it with the confident coolness which characterised all his proceedings. Leaving the greater part of his band in the desert, at a considerable distance from the village, he dressed himself in his former *khaznadâr* uniform, and six or eight of the most resolute and best mounted of his followers in dresses becoming the attendants of a man in authority, gathered from the spoils of plundered caravans: he took with him also a firman bearing the seal of Mohammed Ali, which had been obtained by similar means. This firman stated in general terms that Latif-Aga, the bearer, was on duty in Upper Egypt on Government service, and ordered the governors of towns and provinces to afford him all necessary assistance.

Armed with this instrument, and with others of a more deadly kind in case of necessity, Hassan proceeded leisurely about midday to the village, having desired his followers to observe the strictest gravity and decorum in their demeanour, and having, as usual, invested the ready-witted and faithful Abd-hoo with the office of pipe-bearer, while Abou-Hamedi was to be left in charge of the horses and of the attendants, who were not expected to accompany their chief to the presence of the Defterdar.

Hassan had no difficulty in finding the residence of that well-known personage, and having announced himself as being charged with an important message from the Viceroy, was immediately ushered into the room where sat the Defterdar.

Moktar Effendi was a fat, puffy little man, and, though extremely timid, puffed up with a high sense of his own local importance. Hassan, as is the custom in the East, began the conversation with all sorts of commonplace observations, which he took care to interlard with fulsome compliments gratifying to the vanity of his host; and after two pipes and cups of coffee had been with due ceremony discussed, he prepared to enter upon the business with which he was supposed to be intrusted. But having observed a small room at the side, which seemed better suited to his purpose than the reception-room, which commanded a view of the court below, he proposed in a confidential tone that they should retire thither for a conference, which he said it was necessary that their attendants should not overhear.

To this proposal the Defterdar, who had read the firman presented to him by Hassan, made no objection, and they retired thither. No sooner were they seated than our hero, who had taken care to place himself between his host and the door, proceeded to inform him that he had come to relieve him of the charge of the money which had been transmitted to him for the payment of the troops. The astonished Defterdar said in a hesitating tone that, although he had no doubt of the authority under which his guest was acting, he could not transfer such a charge without direct instructions from the Viceroy.

"I will show you the authority under which I act," said our hero in the same polite and affable tone which he had hitherto used; and as he spoke he threw open his outer pelisse, and drawing a pistol from his belt, presented it within two feet of the Defterdar's forehead, who observed with horror another pistol and a dagger suspended from the same formidable belt. "Excellent Defterdar," he continued, "I do not wish to expose you to any unnecessary alarm or danger, but it is necessary for your safety that you give up to me the money in question. I am not Latif-Aga, but Hassan, the Child of the Pyramid, of whom you have perhaps heard, and who, as you may know, am not to be trifled with."

At the sound of that dreaded name, and at the sight of the pistol still pointed at his face, the unfortunate Defterdar grew speechless with affright; a cold perspiration broke out upon his forehead, and his tongue clove to his palate.

"For the love of Allah," he gasped, "do not murder me!"

"I have no intention of hurting you," said Hassan, "if you only do as I bid you without delay; but I warn you that if you utter a sound to compromise my safety you are a dead man. My pipe-bearer, at your outer door, and all my attendants below, are armed as I am, and we are strong enough, if it be requisite, to destroy you and all your household. But though I am not 'Latif' by name, I desire to be so in my conduct;^[104] therefore if you are quiet and reasonable you have nothing to fear. You will

please now to call whichever of your confidential servants has the care of this money, and tell him to bring it here and deliver it to me, as I am charged to convey it to the commanding officer at the camp. If in giving him this order you endeavour to betray me by word or sign, you die where you sit, and your servant will be killed by my pipe-bearer without."

The unhappy Defterdar, after giving vent to sundry suppressed groans, in which "Allah!" "Oh my misfortune!" "Mercy and destiny," were feebly uttered, and seeing no hope of saving his life excepting in implicit obedience to the orders of his formidable guest, clapped his hands, and on the entrance of his servant desired him forthwith to bring the money which Latif-Aga was charged by the Viceroy to convey to the camp.

The servant noticed the evident tremor and perturbation under which his master spoke, but like a true Oriental he attributed it to regret at losing so fair an opportunity of appropriating a certain portion of the money to his own advantage by cheating the soldiers in its distribution, and he soon reappeared, bearing with him three or four bags of gold, and one of larger dimensions containing Austrian dollars.

"Is the whole sum here?" said Hassan in a stern voice. "Bring me the letter that accompanied the money, and then count it before me, that I may see whether the amounts tally."

His orders having been obeyed, the servant counted the money before him, which (wonderful to relate of Egypt) agreed precisely with the letter of advice.

"You are a faithful servant," said Hassan, "and although I cannot touch this money which belongs to others, here is a bakshish for yourself." So saying, he threw him two or three pieces of gold from his own purse, adding, "Send hither my pipe-bearer and *mirakhor* [chief groom], that they may take charge of this money; and bring me a *doòàyeh* [oriental case containing pens and ink] and some paper, that I may give your master a receipt in due form."

Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo having been summoned and taken charge of their trust with a gravity and deportment suited to their assumed characters, our hero wrote the receipt in a bold hand, and in the following terms:—

"I, Hassan, Child of the Pyramid, hereby acknowledge that I have received from Moktar Effendi the sum of one hundred and twenty purses [£600] belonging to the Egyptian Government, and that it is my intention to repay the same when it suits my convenience. I further add that the said Moktar Effendi only delivered me this money when under fear of his life, and when he had no means of resisting the force which I had at hand: he should therefore be held exempt from blame by his humane and just lord, Mohammed Ali."

Having delivered this receipt to the still bewildered Effendi, Hassan said to him, "My good friend, now that our business is terminated, we will have one more pipe of fellowship before we part; but remember that my eye is upon you."

The pipe having been duly smoked and the attendants dismissed, Hassan addressed his terrified host—

"Effendi, the most disagreeable part of my duty remains to be performed, as I would fain have parted from you with politeness and friendship; but as your duty would require that you should alarm all the village as soon as my foot is in the stirrup, it is necessary for my safety and for yours that I should secure your quietude: your servants will soon come to release you, but for a while it is requisite that you should be bound." So saying, he produced a cord, which he had brought for the purpose, and having bound his terror-stricken host hand and foot, and stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth to prevent his calling out, he left the room, and leisurely descending the stairs, mounted his horse, giving pieces of silver to the servants at the door with a liberality worthy of a Bey or Pasha.

He and his party proceeded slowly on the road towards the soldiers' encampment until they were out of sight of the village, when they suddenly turned off towards the desert, and after an hour's gallop rejoined the remainder of the band. On the following morning at daylight they were eighty miles distant from the scene of this feat.

It is needless to portray the astonishment of Moktar Effendi's servants when they found their master bound and gagged in a corner of his room, grunting and sputtering in his vain endeavours to call for help. When they released his tongue and his limbs, his first act was to ask in a trembling voice, "Is he gone?"

"Who?" they replied; "his Excellency the Bey, your visitor?—yes, he is gone."

"The Bey!" muttered Moktar Effendi, whose courage was now partially restored. "Know ye not, sons of dogs and asses that ye are, that the scoundrel was no Bey, but Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm, the outlaw chief, who has plundered me and laughed at my beard. Allah! Allah! what dust has fallen on my head—what dirt have I eaten! There lies his cursed receipt for the money. How can I send it to Mohammed Ali? he will defile the graves of my forefathers. Alas! alas! there is no power nor trust save in Allah."

Such were the terms in which the unhappy Defterdar bewailed his fate, and prepared to enclose to the Viceroy a full report of his misfortune, together with the receipt left by the audacious outlaw. Mohammed Ali, in one of those moods of clemency and generosity which were not unfrequent with him, forgave the poor Defterdar, and replaced the plundered money from his own purse, saying, "Hassan shall one day fulfil his promise of repayment."

The cool breezes of November had returned, and the Thorpe party were again at Cairo, on their way to Thebes, where they proposed to pass the winter. During the few days that they spent in the capital before prosecuting their voyage, they visited the various objects of interest which they had not found time to see during their former stay. One scene, however, which they witnessed was so illustrative of the superstition of the "Cairians," or inhabitants of Cairo, that it is not unworthy of notice.

Returning one day from an excursion to the Mokattan hills, they saw an immense crowd of

persons, of all ages and conditions, on horses, mules, donkeys, and on foot, flocking to a spot called Sabaâ Benât (the seven daughters), on the edge of the desert. Piercing through the outskirts of this mixed assemblage, they were surprised to see beys, effendis, merchants, priests, and beggars all divested of their outer garments and rolling themselves with frantic energy and gesticulation in the sand.

On inquiring through Demetri what was the meaning of this strange ceremonial, they learnt that it was a miracle wrought through the instrumentality of a Moghrebi saint (such as in Algeria are termed Marabouts), who had been warned in a religious trance that the sand in this spot possessed a healing virtue, and that all who rolled themselves therein should be immediately cured of any malady.

News of this miracle had spread through the city, and for several days all who were, or imagined themselves, under the influence of any disease hastened to avail themselves of the holy panacea.

In some instances the pious fraud worked out its own verification. One fat bey, whose only ailment was plethora, brought on by gluttony, actually rolled himself so energetically and effectually that he perspired and vomited under the unwonted exertion. He returned home so much relieved that he spread the fame of the miraculous spot throughout all the members of the divan, and thus the superstition of the fanatic Arabs was communicated to the grave and influential portion of the Turkish community.

Mr Thorpe and his party made their way through this motley crowd with no little difficulty, and they found the whole road from the sacred spot to the city dusty and thronged as that from London to Epsom on a Derby day.^[105]

"How can they believe," said Mr Thorpe to Demetri, "that by rolling in that sand they can cure all diseases? Have the saints and dervishes so much power over the people's belief?"

"Saints and dervishes," said Demetri, "can make them believe that the Nile comes from the moon, or that the Pyramids were built of cheeses made from the milk of Pharaoh's cows. But that is nothing; priests can do as much in my country. If you want to see what the Cairians can swallow, you should go to that dome, under which you will find a jackass daily fed on the best of provender at the public expense, and almost worshipped by the people."

As he spoke he pointed to a cupola erected over the tomb of a saint or sheik, in the interior of which a donkey was contentedly chewing his straw and beans, totally unconscious of the religious honours paid to him.

"How came the donkey to obtain this great measure of respect?" inquired Mr Thorpe.

"He belonged," replied Demetri, "to a builder who was engaged in repairing some tombs in the neighbourhood: this donkey had been one of a score employed in carrying bricks and mortar. It would seem that he had contrived to shake off his load, and had gone for shelter into that half-ruined sheik's tomb: meanwhile his owner, with the other donkeys, had been suddenly called off to do some building-work at a distance for the Viceroy."

"That night it appears that a *fikih* [priest] of some celebrity in the town had a dream, warning him that if he wished his prayers to be heard he must go to the sheik's tomb in question and pay honour to whomsoever he might find under its roof. Hastening thither in the morning, he found it tenanted by a donkey, to which, in order to obey the warning he had received, he made an offering of some beans and barley. Having communicated his dream to his religious brethren, it was soon spread all over the town. Pious Mussulmans flocked thither to pray for their sick relatives, and the long-eared recluse tasted of the sweets of idleness, plenty, and all the other ingredients in the cup of donkey-happiness."^[106]

"Why, Demetri," said Mr Thorpe, laughing, "you have finished your tale in a style worthy of the 'Arabian Nights.'"

"It is no wonder," replied the Greek; "I hear so many of those story-narrators at the Arab cafés in the town that I borrow their style almost without knowing it."

"Mohammed Ali well knows," continued the Greek, "how to take advantage of this popular reverence for the tombs of sheiks. A short time ago one stood close to a garden of his, and the visitors who flocked to it disturbing his privacy, he determined to remove it in a manner that should offer no offence to the reputation of the sheik or the fanaticism of the people."

"Collecting in secret a large body of labourers from one of his distant villages, he caused them in the course of a single night to destroy the tomb and to rebuild it at a spot about two miles distant, in the same form and of the same materials, after which they were sent back to their own village as secretly as they had been summoned."

"On the following day all Cairo was full of the new miracle—Sheik-el-Ghazi had transported his own tomb two miles in the course of the night. Thousands flocked to the miraculous shrine, which is to this day an object of the deepest reverence in the neighbourhood."^[107]

The next day Mr Thorpe and his party went to pay a visit to Delî Pasha previous to their departure for Upper Egypt. Emily and her mother were conducted to the harem, where, after a brief and uninteresting visit to the senior Khanum, they went to the apartment occupied by Amina.

Both were struck by the change which a year had wrought in her appearance. She was not less lovely than before, but her bright and mirthful glance had given place to a look of saddened tenderness and a general expression of melancholy.

Neither did it escape Amina's observation that Emily looked more pale than on her former visit; and when her two guests were seated, one on each side of her, with the wife of one of the Italian doctors, who officiated as interpreter, she began to inquire after Emily's health, and how and where she had passed the summer.

These inquiries having been replied to, and the customary compliments exchanged while they sipped their coffee from lilliputian cups enclosed in *finjâns* of gold filigree studded with diamonds, the conversation assumed a more general turn; for Amina soon found that neither of her guests could bear the pipe, although the tobacco was of the mildest fragrance and the jewelled amber mouthpieces were such as might tempt the lips of a smoke-abominating admiral.

In the course of the conversation Mrs Thorpe observed—

“How sad it is that young Hassan, who came up with us in the dahabiah last year, and who seemed so gentle and polite, should now be a ferocious captain of outlaws and banditti! I hear that he has become a terror to the whole country.” At these words a burning blush mantled over Amina’s neck and crimsoned her cheek up to the temples.

“The subject is painful,” she said, in a tone in which anger was discernible through embarrassment. “You forget, madam, that he risked his life to save mine, and was afterwards driven from our roof by an act of cruelty never sanctioned by my father. He is now once more a Bedouin in his native desert, and an English lady should know that Bedouins, although wild and warlike in their lives, are not banditti.”

Mrs Thorpe saw by the hurried accent and kindling glance of the Turkish maiden that she had ventured on dangerous ground, and she and her daughter rose to take leave, and rejoined their dahabiah on the Nile. They passed Siout and Keneh, and were already within a day of Thebes. Mr Thorpe held in his hand a volume of Diodorus Siculus, but his eye wandered often from its pages and rested on Emily’s countenance, where he gladly traced the symptoms of improving health which the climate had produced.

Suddenly were heard loud cries for “help” and “mercy” from the boatmen on the shore who had been employed in slowly towing the heavy dahabiahs from the bank against an adverse wind and current. Immediately above the path was a dense copse of low brushwood, from which twenty or twenty-five men, well armed, sprang upon them, and in an instant they were thrown to the ground and secured, whilst the steersman, and the few others who remained on board, exclaiming, “It is the band of Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm,” gave themselves up for lost. The dahabiahs having been hauled up to the bank (during which operation loaded carabines were presented at the helmsman to warn him of the consequence of resistance), the freebooters sprang on board, and having bound all the men of the party, they proceeded to ransack the cabins and collect the spoil with a coolness and deliberation which could only be the result of long practice.

“Quick, my men,” shouted Abou-Hashem, for he it was who led the party; “let us collect the spoil and mount for fear of interruption.”

The last package brought out from the cabin contained Mr Thorpe’s writing-desk, and he called to Demetri, who was likewise tied on the deck, to tell them that he would willingly give them his money, but that the desk contained papers of value to him but of no use to them, for which reason he hoped they would leave it. While Demetri was explaining this to Abou-Hashem a crashing noise was heard among the bushes of the copse on the bank, and in a second Hassan, followed by Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo, stood on the deck of the dahabiah. The perspiration that streamed from his face, and the crimsoned foam that stained the lower border of his *serwal*,^[108] betokened the furious speed at which he had ridden; the veins on his forehead were swelled, and there was a dangerous fire in his eye, which his habitual self-command was unable at the moment to quell.

“Allah have mercy upon us!” groaned the Arab boatmen, recognising at once by his haughty look and towering stature the terrible outlaw of whose predatory feats they had heard so much; “we are all dead men now.”

“Mashallah! what an eye!” muttered another, who had been on hunting expeditions in Soudan; “it is like that of a lion who has been struck by a javelin.”

The freebooters dropped the half-raised packets of booty and listened in sulky silence as, addressing Abou-Hashem, who stood within a few paces of him, Hassan said—

“How have you dared to disobey my orders? Did I not tell you last night when our spy reported and described these dahabiahs that they belonged to Franghis who were my friends, whose bread and salt I had eaten, and that I would not permit them to be injured?”

“And why are we to be cheated of our spoil?” replied Abou-Hashem, furious at being called upon to resign so rich a booty; “why are we to be robbed of the fruit of our risks and toil by your sympathy with these unbelieving dogs? Am I not right, comrades?” said he, looking round at the armed men grouped behind him. “We will no longer submit to this tyranny; our arms shall keep what our arms have won.” A murmur of applause from his brother-plunderers followed this speech.

“Hark ye, men,” said Hassan in a voice which seemed to gather stern composure as the danger grew more imminent. “I am your chief, freely elected by yourselves, and, by Allah! while I live amongst you I will be obeyed. Not a parcel of booty, not a morsel of bread, shall ye plunder from these boats.”

“Take, then, example from me,” shouted Abou-Hashem to the freebooters behind him; and as he spoke he drew a pistol from his belt to level it at his leader’s breast. But Hassan’s eye had been upon him, and quick as thought one blow from the mace sent the pistol high into the air, and a second stretched Abou-Hashem senseless on the deck.

“Take example from him,” said Hassan to the freebooters in a tone of bitter scorn; “it is a deed worthy of the warriors of the desert to murder their chief and to plunder those whose bread he has eaten.” Observing symptoms of hesitation in the fierce and lawless band, he continued, “Return to your duty, and I may yet forgive you: if you refuse, the consequences be on your own heads.”

With a pistol in each hand he calmly awaited the result of the conference which they held in a few brief and broken sentences. During this time Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo stood beside their leader, pistol in hand, and ready to spend the last drop of their blood in saving or avenging him.

Hassan took advantage of the brief pause to say to Emily, who still stood trembling near her bound father, “Sit down, sit down, lady, beside your father; pistol-balls may be flying in a moment, and a stray one might strike you. It is only my life now that they seek; and if I fall, tell them in Cairo that Hassan’s death redeemed the last year of his life.”

Having uttered these words in the low and gentle tone so well preserved in Emily’s remembrance, he once more addressed the still hesitating mutineers.

“Quick, men! declare your choice—obedience or death. There is no path between the two.” None spoke, nor dared to meet the eye of his chief. “It is enough, my men; I see that you are ashamed,

and I may yet forgive this morning's work. Abd-hoo, unbind the Franghi bey. Abou-Hamedi, shoot the first man dead who moves an arm to interrupt him."

Whilst this order was being obeyed, and Abd-hoo was cutting the cords by which Mr Thorpe had been bound, Hassan stood silently but keenly scanning the countenances of the mutineers.

"What, my men," he called aloud, "still hesitating to repair a fault into which you were led by this headstrong fool!" pointing to the motionless form of Abou-Hashem. "Since I have been your chief have I been last in the attack or first in the flight? Have I been miserly in spending with you my blood or my money?" A murmur of "Never" broke from the group. "Why, then, when I have so often led you to plunder and to victory, did you desire to cover my head with ashes, my name with infamy? You did not know, what Abou-Hashem knew, that these dahabiahs belonged to my friends—that I had eaten from their table and shared their salt! When all the provinces of Egypt are open to our swift horses and our sharpened steel, could you, brave warriors of the desert, find no more honourable foray than to attack defenceless strangers, and those, too, the friends of your leader? If such be your mind, I know you no more. Go and choose another leader from among thieves and *moharrabin*,^[109] for Hassan will no longer be your chief."

"We never knew that these Franghis were your friends, or that you had eaten their salt," said one, who undertook to be spokesman for the rest.

"I thought so," replied Hassan; "but he, Abou-Hashem, knew it well. He deceived you, and he has paid the penalty. Come hither, men, and remove him to yonder *sant-tree*^[110] on the bank: perhaps he yet lives, and may be wiser hereafter. Remember that not a man is to remove the value of one *para* from these boats. I have sworn it, and, Wallah! if I live I will keep my oath."

Like hounds chidden by a huntsman, the subdued freebooters mechanically obeyed.

Whilst they were employed in removing their stunned and still senseless lieutenant, Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo busied themselves, by Hassan's order, in cutting the bonds of the captives, all of whom, Mr Thorpe included, came to shake hands with Hassan and to thank him for his generous interposition on their behalf, and would not listen to his expression of deep regret that they should have been exposed to so much alarm and inconvenience by his followers. But the victory had been won, for they slowly left the dahabiahs without attempting to remove one of the parcels of plunder which they had collected on the deck.

Mr Thorpe, after listening with grave attention to a few words whispered in his ear by Emily, said to Hassan—

"My brave young friend, we owe all we have on board, perhaps even our lives, to you, and we cannot bear that you should again incur the risk of living among those lawless and bloodthirsty men: they will owe you a spite for depriving them of their spoil, and perhaps when you are off your guard will assassinate you."

"Alas! sir, you are in error," said Hassan, in a voice whose melancholy and soft cadence contrasted strangely with the stern, deep tones in which he had lately addressed his followers. "You owe me nothing but forgiveness; for were it not for me, this lawless band might not have existed, and you might have pursued your journey without this vexatious incident. My lot is cast among them for the present; least of all could I leave them now, when my doing so would be attributed to fear. We all of us owe a life to destiny, and if a sword or bullet put an end to mine, where is the father or mother, sister or child, to shed a tear on the tomb of Hassan. No; these men must know and feel that I am their master and fear them not! The day will come, Inshallah! before long when I can part with them without regret or shame. May your journey be prosperous and your days prolonged."

As he said these words he bade them adieu, and in the Franghi fashion shook hands with all the Europeans, without distinction of rank.

"Hassan," said Mr Thorpe, taking him aside and speaking in a low voice, "before we left Cairo my wife and Emily paid a visit to the harem of Deli Pasha: they saw his daughter, and I must tell you that your present mode of life makes them both most unhappy." Hassan averted his face and spoke not. Mr Thorpe continued, "Yes, Hassan, it makes every one unhappy who has an interest in your welfare. It is a career in which you are exposed every day to lose your own life, or to take that of others, without honour or glory. Be persuaded to abandon it ere it is too late."

Mastering his emotions by a strong effort, Hassan replied—

"You know how I was driven from society by injustice. I feel that the advice which you give is kindly meant, and I thank you for it; but we who are children of the desert attach no dishonour to the life that I now lead: it is such as our fathers have led before us for centuries."

"But you are not in the desert, Hassan," said Mr Thorpe gently; "those to whom your band is a terror are merchants, villagers, and travellers. Even now it was only at the risk of your life that you saved us and our property from the ferocity of those who call you chief. Can you wonder that the daughter of Deli Pasha should weep when your name is mentioned?"

"Did she weep? when and where?" said Hassan.

"Yes; she wept in my daughter's arms. She could not speak, but her altered appearance shows how much she has suffered."

"Allah! Allah!" said Hassan, hiding his face for a moment in his hands; then, as if ashamed of his emotion, he wrung Mr Thorpe's hand with an energy that nearly dislocated the worthy antiquary's fingers, and hastily uttering, "Farewell, sir; I will not forget what you have said," he leapt ashore, followed by Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo, and rejoined his band beyond the copse whence they had attacked the dahabiah.

For many days the life of Abou-Hashem was despaired of, and even when by slow degrees he recovered somewhat of his strength, and was able to sit on horseback, his senses seemed wavering and unsettled. Many amongst the band wore a sulky and dissatisfied air, and Hassan saw that on the first favourable opportunity they were not unlikely to desert or betray him. With the bold frankness which formed the leading feature of his character, he resolved to come to an open explanation with them, and then to resign the office which they had conferred on him. Having

called them all together, he said—

"My men, I see that you are still vexed at my having disappointed you of the spoil of those dahabiahs. As for the blow which I gave to Abou-Hashem, I speak not of it: you saw that he attempted to take my life, and I defended it. How much, think you, would you have obtained had I permitted you to plunder those Franks?"

"We might have divided perhaps twenty purses [£100], besides the Franghi clothes, which were indeed of little value to us," replied one fellow, in a sulky tone.

"How much have you belonging to me?" said Hassan to Abou-Hamedi, who had charge of that portion of the spoil which had fallen to his share as leader.

"I have forty purses," replied Abou-Hamedi, after examining the contents of a bag which he carried in his belt.

"Here then, my comrades, are thirty purses," said Hassan, again addressing the freebooters; "take them and divide them among you: they will compensate for your disappointment. Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo, you have both been true and faithful to me; here are five purses for each of you. Now I resign my command, and leave you to follow your own counsel and your own path. We part as friends, I hope?"

"Mashallah! your hand is always open," shouted the freebooters, ashamed of their late conduct. "Stay with us, and be still our leader; we will never disobey you again."

"It cannot be," said Hassan; "my destiny compels me to go to Cairo, where certain death would await you all, and where it is not unlikely to await me also: but what is written must come to pass—there is neither power nor strength but in Allah. Abd-hoo, bring me my horse. Farewell, comrades; may happiness attend your path."

So saying, he vaulted on the back of Shèitan and rode slowly away in a southerly direction.

It was evident to all the band, from his abstracted air and the grave melancholy of his voice, that something weighed heavily on his spirits, and they noticed also that although he spoke of going to Cairo, the path he had taken went in the direction precisely opposite.

For an hour he rode slowly forward, revolving in his mind the last words addressed to him by Mr Thorpe, when, hearing behind him the sound of horses' feet, he turned and found he was followed by Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo, the latter driving a mule laden with saddle-bags containing Hassan's clothes and spare arms.

"What is this?" said Hassan; "did I not bid you farewell?"

"And did you think," said Abou-Hamedi, in a tone in which indignation almost mastered his habitual respect for his chief, "that Abd-hoo and I would take your money and leave you thus? What have we done that you should think so meanly of us?"

"Forgive me," said Hassan, "I have done you wrong; but my heart was heavy, misfortune hangs over me, and I thought it best to meet my fate alone."

"Be it misfortune, or prison, or death, we will share it with you," was the exclamation of Abou-Hamedi, echoed by a hearty "Yes, by Allah!" from the faithful black.

"Be it so," said Hassan, much affected by their devoted attachment; "we will part no more." So saying, he rode once more forward in the same direction as before; but Abou-Hamedi, who had in gaining his point recovered his former spirits and energy of character, came up to him and said, with a comic gravity—

"Hassan, you told us you were going to Cairo; have you forgotten that the path we are following will take us to Esnah and Assouan?"

"I know it," he replied; "but before returning to Cairo I wish to see El-Uksor^[111] and the wonderful monuments of which I have heard so much. The party of Franks are there, and I must speak to them again before I visit Cairo."

"There is a governor at El-Uksor; will the Franks not betray us to him?" said Abou-Hamedi doubtfully.

"Never!" replied Hassan with something of his former energy. "Allah has not given them light to dwell in the true faith, but they have hearts open to kindness and friendship."

We may here mention that the band lately commanded by Hassan, dispirited by the loss of a chief who had been the life and soul of every daring enterprise, and anxious to retain, without molestation from the Egyptian authorities, the considerable booty which they had amassed, were not long in breaking up, some seeking concealment among the Arabs bordering the desert, and the greater number joining a large caravan of pilgrims returning from Mecca to the west by the route of Cosseir and Keneh.

About a week after the occurrence of these events the Thorpe party were assembled at Thebes. Mr Thorpe, accompanied by Müller, was busy in copying hieroglyphic inscriptions. At a little distance from them Emily, seated on a fragment of stone, was sketching the interior of that magnificent temple whose massive proportions and antique beauty excited the admiration of the Romans eighteen centuries ago.

"What a picturesque and appropriate addition to this classic scene!" said Emily, half aloud to herself, as her eye rested upon the figure of a stranger who had just entered the temple from the side, and was looking up, apparently awed and surprised, at its gigantic though harmonious proportions.

He was a large, powerful man, considerably above middle height. His dark eye, sparkling with the fire of vigorous manhood, belied the age which the massive grey beard descending on his breast might seem to indicate, while the folds of his ample turban, the cashmere shawl around his waist, in which were two silver-mounted pistols, and the sword that hung at his side, bespoke at once a man of rank and a soldier.

"Do you know who he is?" said Emily, addressing Demetri.

"Yes, signora," replied the loquacious interpreter; "though he only arrived here yesterday, I have

found out all about him. His name is Dervish Bey, known as Es-Seyaf, or the Swordsman. He was one of the most celebrated warriors in Mohammed Ali's army of Arabia. He has lately been Governor of Assouan, but is now on his way to Cairo. His boats are gone on and wait for him at Keneh, to which place he travels on horseback attended by two or three mounted followers. They say that with that very sword now at his side he has often cut off the head of an ox at a single blow."

"I hope he will not cut off any of our heads," replied Emily, smiling.

"Were he to attempt it, lady, you would not be without a defender," said a low voice in English immediately behind her. At the sound of that well-known voice the blood rushed to Emily's temples as she turned and saw Hassan before her.

"I beg pardon for having startled you by my sudden appearance," said Hassan.

"I was, indeed, surprised at your unexpected appearance," said Emily, recovering herself; "but you know we are always glad to see you, Hassan. Will you come and speak to my father?" and she led the way to the spot where Mr Thorpe was transferring hieroglyphics to his album.

From him, as well as from Müller, Hassan received a friendly welcome, and in a brief conversation which ensued our hero informed them that he had finally quitted his roving life and his lawless band. Whilst they were still conversing, Dervish Bey approached the party, and observing that Hassan spoke to them in their own language, saluted him, adding, "Will you ask the Frank ladies whether one of them has lost a ring?"

Hassan having repeated the question, Emily, looking at her hand, observed that in the surprise which his sudden appearance had occasioned a ring had dropped from her finger. "Yes," she replied, "I see that I have lost my small emerald ring."

"I have had the good fortune to find it," said Dervish Bey, "near to the spot where the Khanum was sitting." So saying, he handed it to Hassan, who delivered it to the owner.

"Pray express my thanks to him," said Emily.

In obeying this command Hassan employed language so correct and courteous that the Bey's curiosity was excited, and he fixed upon him a glance of keen scrutiny. His eye was met by one frank and fearless as his own; and while the Bey looked with admiration at the noble features and commanding form of the young Bedouin, our hero thought that he had never seen the vigour of manhood so happily united to a snowy beard—that object of profound reverence to youth in the East.

No sooner had the Bey left than Mr Thorpe asked Hassan if they had ever met before.

"No," he replied; "I am only just arrived, and know not who he is." They then communicated to him the intelligence which Demetri had obtained respecting his name and history.

"What!" exclaimed Hassan, "is that the famous Dervish, the swordsman? Often have I heard Deli Pasha speak of his gallant feats in Arabia, and he looks like what they say of him: would that I had met him when he was twenty years younger!"

"Wherefore, Hassan?" inquired Emily, timidly.

"That I might have proved my sword against his," replied Hassan, his eyes flashing as he spoke.

"Surely, Hassan," said Mr Thorpe, mildly, "you could not indulge in hostile feelings towards one whose manner and appearance entitle him to respect."

"I was wrong, sir," replied Hassan; "I should ask pardon for my hasty speech. I have lived so much of late among those who are always engaged in strife, that I almost forgot that life has any other occupation. Believe me that I pay due honour to his white beard, and in the hasty words which I spoke I only meant that I envied him the honourable fame that his sword has obtained for him."

A moonlight November evening at Thebes—who that has once enjoyed can ever forget it? The mild and temperate air; the noble river—the author and nourisher of all the fertility of Egypt—rolling its majestic tide beneath the time-honoured remains of the temple of Luxor; a mile or two to the northward the yet more ancient and magnificent ruins of Karnak; while at some distance inland, on the opposite banks of the Nile, are dimly discernible the Memnonium, celebrated in classic fable, and the hills, within whose chambered sides repose the ashes of the mighty of olden time—monarchs who had conquered kingdoms and raised imperishable monuments of architecture and art ere Greece or Rome had emerged from the insignificance of barbarism.

Such was the scene where the Thorpes were assembled on the evening which followed the events just related. Hassan was with them, and had already during the day drawn from Mr Thorpe a detailed account of the ladies' visit to Amina; and as he heard recounted the deep emotion caused by the mention of his name, hope had once more arisen within his breast. Near, too, sat Dervish Bey, who had deferred his departure, and had courteously accepted Mr Thorpe's invitation to take a cup of coffee with their party. None of them failed to observe with how scrutinising a glance his eye rested upon Hassan, and Mr Thorpe felt convinced that the ex-Governor either had learnt or suspected that the young Bedouin before him was no other than Hassan, the far-famed outlaw. Upon Mr Thorpe's hinting as much to Hassan, he replied with a smile—

"If it be so, there is no harm. Dervish Bey is a brave soldier, not a spy or informer."

On the following morning Abou-Hamedi, who had been absent the greater part of the night, reported to Hassan that he had obtained information of a band of thieves in the neighbourhood who seemed to have evil intentions towards Dervish Bey. He had accidentally fallen in with one of these fellows at a small coffee-house in the village of Luxor, and suspecting from casual expressions that he belonged to some band who meant mischief, he plied him so well with arrack and the intoxicating drug called *hashish* that he was able to learn from the man that he was associated with a body of thieves and *moharrabin*, the latter of whom had escaped from the conscription lately issued in Upper Egypt for the levy of troops to march into Sennaar. Several of these fellows had been flogged for insubordination by Dervish Bey, who was a severe disciplinarian, and having ascertained that he was travelling down to Keneh on horseback with only a few followers, the greater part of his suite being on board his boats, they had laid a plot to waylay and rob him in some unfrequented part of the road. Abou-Hamedi encouraged his tipsy friend to believe that he

highly approved the scheme, and hoped to participate in its execution.

Hassan lost no time in returning to Luxor in order to put Dervish Bey on his guard, and was disappointed to find that the old soldier had started at daybreak, and was already some miles on his way.

Hassan resolved to follow him immediately. Before doing so he called on Mr Thorpe, and having informed him of the intelligence that he had received, recommended him to communicate it without delay to the Governor of Luxor, and to have the guards doubled for the protection of his own dahabiahs, lest the predatory band should be tempted to pay him a visit.

Mr Thorpe thanked him for his warning, and placed in his hands a letter, which he requested that he would find means to deliver to the Viceroy's interpreter, a commission which Hassan promised to fulfil. He was not aware that it contained an account of the attack made upon his boats by Abou-Hashem's band, and of the manner in which his party and his property had been rescued by Hassan at the imminent risk of his life. Our hero was so anxious to overtake Dervish Bey, and to warn him of the plot laid by the *moharrabin*, that, bidding the Thorpes a hasty but cordial farewell, he galloped off in the direction of Keneh.

Meanwhile Dervish Bey, unsuspecting of any danger, passed the ruins of Karnak and continued his course to the northward, intending to reach at nightfall a small village called Solemieh, which belonged to him, and the rents of which had fallen somewhat in arrear. He was accompanied only by his *khaznadâr*, his *chibouqchi*, two armed servants, and a couple of *sâises*, who looked after his baggage-mules, which were three in number.

He had journeyed about ten miles, and was crossing a desert plain on which no human habitation was visible, and where the neglected soil produced nothing but that rank mixture of tall weeds called in Egypt *khalfah*. His thoughts were dwelling on his unexpected meeting with the Frank party at Luxor, and, more than all, on the young Bedouin, whose remarkable appearance and qualities had strongly excited his interest. That the latter was, indeed, the formidable outlaw of whom he had heard so much he had no doubt; yet, instead of the fierce, rough bandit whom he had pictured to himself, he had found a gentle-mannered, noble-looking youth, speaking the language of the Franks, and evidently esteemed by them; one, moreover, the characteristic expression of whose countenance seemed to be a thoughtful melancholy, and whose taste for poetry and conversation appeared totally at variance with the deeds of lawless violence and daring attributed to him by report.

Whilst he was riding slowly on, musing on these things with an interest which he could scarcely explain to himself, his *khaznadâr* rode up and called his attention to a party of about twenty men who were approaching, and whose appearance was anything but reassuring. They were a strangely-assorted band, half on horseback, half on foot, some armed with guns, some with lances, and all with swords of different fashion. From the weather-stained and tattered remains of uniform still visible in the attire of some of the party, the experienced eye of Dervish Bey recognised them at once as *moharrabin*,—men who, as they rob and plunder with a halter round their necks, are generally the most cruel and bloodthirsty of lawless bands.

Dervish Bey lost not a moment in ordering his small party to get ready their swords and pistols, and as the robbers drew near he called out to inquire what they wanted. The only reply was a musket-ball, which passed close by his cheek.

Regardless of the disproportion of numbers, the brave old soldier struck his stirrups into his horse's flanks, and, followed by his attendants, charged full at the centre of the band. So well did he wield his once-renowned sword that several had already fallen victims to its edge when an unlucky ball entered the eye of his horse, which reared and fell on its side. In vain did he struggle to withdraw his leg from the carcass of the dead horse, which pinned it to the ground; but his right arm was free, and he still continued to ward off the cuts which one or two of the cowardly miscreants on foot were making at his head.

At this moment a black steed passed like a meteor by the fallen Bey, while a single groan announced the fate of one of those who had been cutting at him. Again the black horse wheeled and was at his side, and the second robber fell dead by his companion.

The Bey caught sight of the rider's face, changed indeed from what he had seen on the preceding day. Now the angry veins swelled on the brow, fire darted from the flashing eyes, and the sweep of the vengeful arm was like a tempest. Again and again did he charge among the astonished banditti, shouting and dealing his terrible blows, each of which bore with it a life or a limb. Cuts and bullets were aimed at him during his headlong course, but it seemed as if he were proof against lead or steel.

His impetuosity had carried him to some distance from the prostrate soldier, when he saw that again several of the miscreants on foot were approaching to despatch him. Shouting aloud his war-cry of "Hassan Ebn-el-Herâm" in a voice that rose high above the din of the conflict, he dashed his stirrups into Shèitan's flank, and in a few bounds was again beside the fallen chief.

For a second the sound of that dreaded name seemed to paralyse every arm, and Hassan had time to throw himself from his panting horse and to cover with his own person, and with his sweeping sword, the helpless form of the prostrate Bey.

Indignant at being foiled by a single man, they crowded around him, and had he not succeeded in snatching from one of the robbers a round shield of hippopotamus-hide, such as is used by the natives of Soudan, he must soon have fallen beneath the blows aimed at him from so many quarters. As it was, he fought like a lion at bay, and, though wounded in several places, was still maintaining the unequal contest, when Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo, who had been unable to keep up with the furious speed at which Shèitan had borne his impetuous rider, now appeared on the scene. Two of the ruffians who were attacking Hassan fell at once beneath the swords of his faithful followers, and the remainder, astonished and disheartened at this unexpected reinforcement, slowly retired.

Hassan vaulted once more on the back of Shèitan, refreshed by the short breathing-time which his rider's conflict on foot had allowed him, and again shouting his war-cry, charged the hesitating

band, accompanied by his two brave attendants.

The robbers, not knowing how many more of Hassan's followers might be approaching, fled as fast as their legs and horses could carry them. Several were killed and wounded by Abou-Hamedi and Abd-hoo, and two they seized and brought back prisoners. While thus engaged, Hassan returned to Dervish Bey and exerted all that remained of his fast-failing strength in extricating him from the carcass of the dead horse—an object which he had scarcely effected ere he sank down beside him, weak and exhausted from loss of blood.

A happy smile passed over his features as he observed that the brave old soldier was altogether unhurt. The latter, with the ready presence of mind gained in many a former fight, wasted not a moment in thanking his deliverer, but busied himself in examining and binding up his wounds.

The worst of these proved to be two deep sabre-cuts, one in the side and another in the thigh. These he carefully closed and bound, and then he observed that blood was still trickling down his chest from a cut between the neck and shoulder-blade. While engaged in stanching and dressing this, his eye fell upon the amulet which Hassan wore round his neck, and the trembling hand of the veteran was scarcely able to accomplish the task ere he whispered with a faltering tone—

"Hassan, whence got you that amulet?"

"It was on my neck when I was left an infant on the base of the Pyramid," replied Hassan in a faint voice.

"My son! my son!" ejaculated the old soldier in a voice in which joy, fear, and tenderness were strangely blended.

"Father! father! Allah be praised and thanked that I have found thee, if it be only to die on thy breast," murmured Hassan, as he threw his arms round the veteran's neck and fainted.

"Thou shalt not die, my beloved, my gallant boy," said the Bey, almost fiercely. "And yet," he added in a softened tone, as a tear trickled down his weather-beaten cheek and fell on the unconscious form of Hassan, "by Allah! and by my father's grave, wert thou now to die, I would not change thee for the proudest and noblest of the living."^[112]

Hassan was laid gently on the ground, and Abou-Hamedi brought water from a neighbouring creek, which they sprinkled on his forehead; while Dervish Bey produced from one of his saddle-bags a small phial containing a cordial, which he always carried with him on his journeys, and a few drops of which soon restored Hassan to consciousness.

"Was it a dream? Father! father!" were the first words he uttered.

Beckoning to Abd-hoo to assist him, Abou-Hamedi collected the mules, which had strayed to some distance, and placed on them the Bey's *khaznadâr* and *chibouqchi*, who were both severely wounded: then he carefully reloaded his pistols and made Abd-hoo do the same, with a significant hint to the two prisoners that if they attempted to escape, their brains should be blown out. He then came up to the Bey and whispered to him—

"Excellency, we must lose no time in returning to Luxor: Hassan and the only two of your followers who survive are badly wounded. The Franks have always plenty of medicines, and Müller is a skilful hakim; let us place Hassan on my horse, and Abd-hoo will walk beside his saddle and support him. You can ride Abd-hoo's horse and watch the prisoners, while I follow on foot and look after the mules."

Dervish Bey, who had somewhat recovered his composure, saw that the advice was good. The *cortége* having been organised as Abou-Hamedi suggested, and Hassan having been gently lifted into the saddle, where his half-inanimate form was supported by the powerful arm of Abd-hoo, they set out on their return, Abou-Hamedi bringing up the rear and leading the faithful Shèitan, who, like his master, was badly wounded but not disabled. In this guise they returned slowly, but without accident, to Luxor.

Müller's surgical practice and readiness of resource were now productive of the best results. His own bed was given up to Hassan, whose wounds were skilfully dressed, and who soon fell asleep, although the murmured words of "Father," "Shèitan," and "Amina" which escaped his lips proved that his wandering thoughts were busy with the past, and that a fever crisis was yet to be feared.

That evening, after the wounds of all the sufferers had been attended to and every arrangement made for their comfort, Dervish Bey related to the Thorpes the strange accident by which he had recognised his long-lost son, and the heroic gallantry with which he had defended an unknown father's life against such overwhelming numbers.

On the following day the Governor of Luxor, who was only a colonel, and consequently of inferior rank to Dervish Bey, went out by desire of the latter with a party of soldiers and fellahs to the scene of conflict in order to bury the dead. They were guided by Abou-Hamedi, who easily recognised and pointed out the spot where the Bey's horse had fallen upon its side, the rider having been unable to withdraw his leg from its pressure. There still lay the horse, and around it seven dead bodies of the thieves attested the desperate valour with which Hassan had defended the fallen Bey.

A very short time elapsed ere Müller was able to assure Dervish Bey that the youth and vigour of Hassan's constitution had triumphed over all dangerous symptoms. His strength was prostrated by great loss of blood; but this very circumstance saved him from the fever which had threatened to result from his severe wounds. Hassan learned with grateful pleasure that his faithful Shèitan had come in for his share of the attendance of the indefatigable Müller, who had sewed up the sabre-cuts and successfully extracted two balls which the gallant horse had received in the affray.

As soon as Hassan was able to sit up, an easy-chair was placed for him in the open air by his English friends, and daily he sat there with his father beside him, each looking upon the other with an affection too deep for words—an affection that seemed as if it were endeavouring by its intensity to make amends for the long separation to which they had been exposed by Fate.

This new and blessed sensation of filial love, and the happy feeling that he had been the fortunate instrument of saving that honoured parent's life, gave to Hassan's mind a feeling that now he had not lived in vain, and hope whispered to him that the son of Dervish Bey might aspire without presumption to the hand of Amina.

He was thus gradually recovering his health and strength, and during the hours of his convalescence listened with eager interest to the history of his father's fortunes, a brief abstract of which we will now subjoin.

About seventeen years before the opening of our tale Selim Aga, a young man of good birth and connections in Constantinople, being a son of a former Governor of Damascus, came to Egypt in the train of the chief eunuch, who had been despatched, with a numerous and honourable suite, as bearer of a diamond-hilted sword and other valuable presents from the Sultan to Mohammed Ali,—the chief object of his mission being to incite the warlike Governor of Egypt to undertake an expedition against the Wahabees, who were threatening to subvert the imperial power in Arabia. In the suite of the chief eunuch there were also Ingòu Khanum, a young lady of high rank, who had been betrothed to Mustapha Bey, the Viceroy's brother-in-law, and her younger sister, for whom the chief eunuch proposed to find an honourable alliance in the viceregal family. But by one of those accidents which occur in voyages, the latter saw Selim Aga, and they fell in love with each other.

She contrived to escape from the harem to which she had been brought in Cairo, flew to her lover, who married her secretly and conveyed her to a house which he had taken for the purpose in Ghizeh.

The rage of the chief eunuch knew no bounds. All Cairo was searched, but in vain; her disguise as an Egyptian woman, residing in a cottage at Ghizeh, protected her for a time, and the chief eunuch returned to Constantinople without having been able to discover her retreat.

The young couple lived for some time happily in their retirement, Selim Aga continuing to serve the Viceroy in Cairo and visiting his wife by stealth. However, some one who entertained a spite against him discovered his secret, and orders were given for the immediate seizure of his wife and himself: he fortunately received notice of this order in time to hasten to his cottage at Ghizeh and warn his wife of their perilous situation.

Not a moment was to be lost: disguised as a fellah, she sought and found refuge in the house of a kind-hearted neighbour; whilst he, snatching up their only child, with the few articles of value that he could secrete about his person, galloped off to the desert and placed his child in the hands of an Arab woman whom he found seated at the base of the Great Pyramid. Thence he fled towards Lower Egypt as fast and as far as his horse could carry him. In the neighbourhood of Alexandria he threw off his Turkish dress, having procured and assumed that of a wandering dervish.

When his beard and his hair had become sufficiently long and matted, and his face stained enough to ensure him against recognition, he ventured to return to Cairo in order to inquire into the fate of his wife; but all his researches proved unavailing, although he had the satisfaction of learning that she had eluded the search of those who were ordered to seize her.

Still habited and disguised as a dervish, he found his way with a caravan of pilgrims to Mecca, and thence, following the bent of his early habits and predilections, joined the army of Ibrahim Pasha, engaged in hostilities with the Wahabees.

On one occasion, when Ibrahim was nearly surrounded and hard pressed by a body of the enemy, he was surprised by hearing beside him the loud shout of a dervish ("Allah-hoo! Allah-hoo!"), who, armed with an enormous club garnished with iron spikes, came forward to the rescue. Horse and man went down before the sweeping blows of the dervish's terrible weapon. Apparently reckless of life, he went forward striking to the right and the left, and shouting "Allah-hoo!" in a voice that terrified the Arabs, who, thinking that he must be a *jinn* or *afreet*, fled before him. When the battle was over, Ibrahim sent for him to his tent and inquired what he could do to reward him.

"Give me a horse and a sword," was the reply of the dervish; "I ask no more."

"That you shall have," replied Ibrahim; "and, Wallah! if thou canst use a sword as thou dost handle that knotty club, it will not be long before thou dost attain to honour and distinction."

The horse and the sword were given, and in every succeeding action the dervish, still clothed in the same wild attire, was in the foremost ranks, shouting "Allah—hoo!" and striking down all before him. Such was his skill in the use of the sword that he was soon known in the Egyptian army as Dervish the Swordsman; and although, as he rose in rank, he laid aside the mendicant dress for that of an officer, he never thought fit to resume his original name, but retained that under which by his valour he had attained the rank of bey. He had the rare good fortune to be equally a favourite with Mohammed Ali and Ibrahim, as he never mixed in any political intrigues, but simply did his duty as a brave soldier.

"And have you never succeeded in learning what became of my mother?" inquired Hassan when the veteran had concluded his narrative.

"Never," he replied. "I learnt indeed that she visited her sister in disguise, who received her kindly, and procured for her, under a feigned name, a home in the harem of one of our pashas; but her sister is dead, and her secret died with her, unless, indeed, it be known to an old woman who was her favourite slave, and whom, if she be yet alive, I will try to find in Cairo."

"Inshallah!" ejaculated Hassan earnestly, "may we find her."

He then related to his father the incidents of his own brief but eventful life, which he did with the unassuming simplicity and truthfulness natural to his character. He made no secret of his attachment to Amina, or of the circumstances under which it had been fostered, and renewed hope arose in his breast when he found that his father and Deli Pasha were old companions in arms and intimate friends.

Hassan's impatience to reach Cairo, in the hope of seeing Amina and tracing his mother, became now so great that Dervish Bey could not long resist it; but before setting out he determined, with the usual energy of his nature, to break up the band of thieves by whom he had been attacked, and who, notwithstanding the severe loss they had sustained, might still be sufficiently strong to do much mischief in the neighbourhood.

A liberal application of the stick to the two who had been captured soon induced them to betray the habitual rendezvous of the band, and Dervish Bey, accompanied by the Governor and a party of fifty horsemen, having made a rapid night march to the indicated spot, came upon them at dawn so

unexpectedly that they had not time to make an effectual resistance or escape. A few were killed, and the greater part of the remainder were led back prisoners to Luxor, whence they were forwarded under a guard to Cairo, the galleys at Alexandria being their ultimate destination.

Having accomplished this task, Dervish Bey no longer resisted the urgent entreaties of Hassan that he should proceed to Cairo without delay. Mr Thorpe having brought up with him two tents, which were pitched on the river-bank, and sufficed for the accommodation of his party, he was able to lend his smaller dahabiah to convey Dervish Bey to Keneh, where his own boats awaited him. It was agreed that Abd-hoo should accompany Hassan, while Abou-Hamedi led Shèitan by slow stages to the capital.

Before leaving his kind English friends Dervish Bey testified his gratitude for the care and attention which they had shown to Hassan by giving them two curious relics which he happened to have with him, and which Hassan assured him would afford them the greatest pleasure.

To Mr Thorpe he gave a rare antique scarabæus, attached by a gold chain to a ring of the same metal, with a hieroglyphic inscription: it had been found near Assouan, and though only of the Ptolemaic date, was a very fine specimen. To Müller he gave a very old MS. of the New Testament, found in a ruined Coptic convent in the Said: one-half the page was written in Coptic and the other half in Greek. To Müller the volume was a great prize.

When the hour of leave-taking arrived, Hassan shook hands with all the party after the English fashion, thanking Mr Thorpe and Müller for all their kindness during his illness in few but feeling words.

Dervish Bey, who had followed close by Hassan in his leave-taking, now preceded him into the dahabiah, from whence they accomplished the voyage to Cairo without accident, and proceeded at once to a fine house belonging to the Bey, situated near the centre of the city, adjoining the Birket-et-Fil, or the "Lake of the Elephant."

The old soldier, knowing the severity of Mohammed Ali in all cases where his authority had been publicly braved, hastened to the Viceroy's presence to explain to him the strange circumstances under which he had recovered his long-lost son, and to solicit a full pardon of the latter's offences against the laws in Upper Egypt. He delivered also to the interpreter the letter written by Müller, which was forthwith read to the Viceroy. Mohammed Ali, who had listened with grave attention to all the arguments adduced by Dervish Bey and to the contents of the letter, said—

"Dervish, you know how highly I regard your services and your long-trying fidelity, and how willingly I would grant any request of yours. I rejoice, also, that you have recovered a son who is in many respects so well worthy of you; for I confess to you that I took a great liking to the lad, and our good hakim here is always speaking in his favour. I own that I owe him a debt for saving your life, my faithful old comrade, when he did not know that you were his father."

So far Mohammed Ali spoke in a kind and friendly tone: he added, with somewhat of severity in his manner, "But, Dervish, you must not forget that Hassan for some time openly defied my authority, and I am bound to listen to the complaints of the villagers and caravans who were plundered by his band: such deeds cannot go unpunished while I rule in Egypt. The government of the interior I intrust to the Kiahia Pasha, and I must consult with him before coming to a decision. Meanwhile go to your home, and consider Hassan as being under arrest in your house: you are answerable for his appearance when required, and I will cause the orders issued for his apprehension to be cancelled. For the present be satisfied with this. You may retire, and Allah be with you!"

Dervish Bey well knew from the tone in which these words were spoken that all further appeal at the time was unavailing, so, with a respectful salam to the Viceroy, he withdrew and returned home to report to Hassan the result of his interview.

Our hero was by no means discouraged thereby, for he saw that he stood high in the Viceroy's opinion, and he felt tolerably sure that both in Deli Pasha and in the Kiahia himself he would find advocates of his cause. On the subject his mind was soon made easy by his old friend and comrade Reschid, who no sooner heard of his arrival in Cairo than he hastened to him and embraced him heartily.

"Mashallah!" said Reschid, gazing at Hassan, whose countenance was bronzed and his figure developed by a year passed in constant exercise and exposure; "I left you a lion, and I find you an elephant. By the life of the Prophet, Hassan, I have often secretly envied your Bedouin life. I laughed heartily, and I can tell you that my Pasha in his private room laughed heartily also, at your having sent that ill-favoured cur Osman Bey into his own town tied on the back of an ass!"

"Then you do not think," said Hassan, "that the Kiahia will be very hard on my follies? Much will depend upon it, for the Viceroy told my father that he intended to consult the Kiahia on the subject."

"In the *mejlis* (i.e., the council), "and in the presence of others," replied Reschid, "the Kiahia will talk before Mohammed Ali with great solemnity and severity about offences against the laws, &c., but when they are together in private, he will tell him that you were a hot-blooded youngster, driven mad by the insulting cruelty of Osman Bey; and it is fortunate that even the merchants and villagers who have sent in complaints of having been plundered by your band have always written that you never permitted any bloodshed, and that you often restored to the poorest the booty taken from them. No, no, Hassan; you have nought to fear, for we will bring such a battery to bear upon the Viceroy that he will not be able long to hold out. We will attack him in front, while a certain Khanum, whom I could mention, will besiege the harem; for we have all heard how you saved the life of Deli Pasha's daughter, and as Fate seems to have destined you to be a robber, you began your trade by stealing her heart."

"Not so, Reschid," replied Hassan, laughing; "I gave her my own first, and if she would not give it me back, but chose to give me hers in place of it, you cannot accuse me of theft."

"I wish some dark-eyed houri would steal mine," said Reschid, "for it is a very troublesome article to keep in one's own possession. I know not why I should have lent you a large slice of mine from

the date of our first acquaintance, for you do not deserve it; you have not even offered me your congratulations."

"On what event?" said Hassan. "On your marriage?"

"Marriage? no," replied his merry friend; "on becoming a great man! Have you not heard that since we parted I have been made *khaznadâr* to the Kiahia? Mashallah! it is a wonderful office. Bakshishes are plentiful as petitioners, and if I wanted money I should only have to stand for a minute before our divan with my hand open and my eyes shut. Wallah! Hassan, I am in a fair way to become a greater robber than ever you have been."

"I will not dispute the precedence with you," replied Hassan. "I congratulate you heartily; but as I am now a poor prisoner, and have no bakshish to offer, I fear I cannot expect that your Excellency will intercede with the Kiahia on my behalf."

"Bakkalum! we shall see," answered Reschid with mock gravity, and took his leave.

Another of the earliest and most frequent of Hassan's visitors was his old friend Ahmed Aga, who brought him many kind messages from Deli Pasha, although the latter had been forbidden by the Viceroy for the present to visit Hassan in person. Neither did our hero long remain without secret communication with his lady-love; for he had not been two days in Cairo ere the *bowâb* sent up word that a dumb boy wished to see him, and Murad rushed into the room and kissed Hassan's feet and hands with every demonstration of overflowing attachment.

Our hero was much touched by the grateful affection of his mute *protégé*, whom he received with all his former kindness, and he soon found himself seated by the side of the intelligent boy practising over again the finger-language that he had partially forgotten. His efforts did not long go unrewarded, for he was soon able to comprehend that his youthful companion was a frequent visitor to Deli Pasha's harem, where he was a great favourite of the old chief eunuch and of Fatimeh Khanum, and that he sometimes had the honour of being introduced into the presence of Amina herself. The young lady flattered herself that the interest which she felt in the dumb boy arose entirely from compassion for his infirmity, but it *may* have been partially owing to his having been a *protégé* of Hassan.

How happily Hassan made him relate all his little tales of the harem—how he had bought some fine blue beads for the eunuch and some sweetmeats for Fatimeh, of which she had given him a portion to eat. "And see what I got from another," and as he spoke he pulled out a little bouquet of flowers.

"Who gave you these? and for whom were they intended?" said Hassan, impatiently.

"I must not tell," replied the sly little messenger, giving them to Hassan; "but I have done with them as I was bid."

"And I," replied Hassan, "must not give you any message concerning them, but you may say what became of them," and as he spoke he pressed them to his lips, and opening his vest placed them near his heart. The little boy smiled, and kissing his protector's sleeve, withdrew to give an account of his mission.

Cheered by such visits, Hassan's time passed agreeably enough. Nor was his confinement irksome, for at the back of his father's house was a space sufficiently large to admit of his taking his favourite exercise, and he employed several hours in breaking in and training for the jereed game several high-couraged young colts which he found in his father's stable.

Nevertheless, day after day passed without bringing any material change in his situation. The exertions of his friends seemed to have failed in inducing Mohammed Ali to grant him a free pardon, and Dervish Bey refused to make any second application, saying—

"If the fact of the brave boy's having saved the life of Mohammed Ali's faithful soldier and servant does not merit reward in his estimation, I would rather cut out my tongue than apply to him again."

Time wore on, and Hassan's spirits, which had begun to be depressed by the monotony of his life, were again refreshed by the arrival of Abou-Hamedi leading Shèitan, who had entirely recovered from his wounds, and whose coat, saving two or three honourable scars, was as bright and glossy as ever.

A packet also reached Cairo from Hadji Ismael, the merchant, sent in reply to a letter written to him by Hassan immediately on his arrival. The packet contained all the relics which had been found on Hassan's infant person. Although not necessary to confirm Hassan's identity, of which the veteran had never entertained a doubt, a tear fell as he saw these reminiscences of his youth and of his long-lost wife.

"Hassan," said his father, "I have ascertained that the old woman from whom I had hoped to learn something of your mother's fate is dead; but we must not abandon hope. Allah is great, and he is the revealer of secrets. Our proverb says, 'Patience is the key of happiness'; let us be patient, my son, and trust in Allah."

One day Dervish Bey, in consequence of a message received from Deli Pasha, had gone to Boulak to pay him a visit. After the interchange of the customary pipes and compliments the attendants were dismissed, and Deli Pasha told his old comrade that he had just seen the Kiahia Pasha, and had learnt from him that he entertained a good hope that Hassan would soon receive a full pardon from the Viceroy, in confident anticipation of which he wished to speak with him on the subject of the marriage of their children, of whose mutual attachment there could be no doubt.

Dervish Bey assured his old comrade of the sincere pleasure which the alliance would give to himself, and after a brief and friendly discussion respecting the dowry and the provision to be made for the young couple, which terminated to their mutual satisfaction, Deli Pasha said—

"Now, Dervish, that we are to be related by the marriage of our children, and as you have no wife to settle these harem affairs for you, it is right that you should see your intended daughter-in-law, and I will send and inquire whether she is in her apartment and can receive us now." He clapped his hands and delivered the message to a servant, who speedily returned from the harem door with the reply, "On our head be it, we shall be honoured by your visit."

Amina remained in her inner room. How her heart beat at the thought that she was going to see

Hassan's father, and as she reflected that her father could not have brought him to the harem had not the marriage been agreed upon between them. Fatimeh Khanum was charged to receive them and pay the first compliments in the outer apartment, after which she was to introduce both to Amina's presence.

As soon as they entered the harem curtain-door Fatimeh, in her capacity of Kiahia Khanum, received them with a courteous salam, and commenced the usual complimentary phrases of welcome, when her tongue began to falter: she threw back her veil to see more clearly the features of Dervish Bey, and then, throwing wide her arms in the attempt to embrace his knees, she exclaimed, "Selim! Selim!" and fell fainting at his feet.

Raising her gently and placing her on a divan which was near, the veteran gazed upon her altered but pleasing features, and tears of joyful emotion started in his eyes as he said, "It is, indeed, my long-lost Zeinab! Allah be thanked! what blessings has he poured on my grey head."

Amina, alarmed at the exclamation and the fall of her faithful friend, whom she loved almost as a mother, rushed into the room, and giving a rapid glance of greeting to her father, hastened to the side of the insensible Khanum.

With what overwhelming emotions did the rude old soldier, who had been for so many years cast out from all the comforts and tender ties of domestic life, contemplate the lovely figure bending with all the anxious care of a daughter over his newly-found wife. She sprinkled her brow with water, chafed the cold hands within her own, and when she found that her efforts were successful, and that the Khanum began to recover her senses, she threw back the redundant tresses that had fallen over her face and neck, and looking up in her father's face, said, almost in a tone of reproach

"Father, what has been said or done to reduce my dear Khanum to this state?"

"Come into the next room, my child, and I will tell you all," said Deli Pasha, leading her away; and then observing that the Khanum was fast coming to herself, he added, addressing the other attendants, "Begone, all of you, and wait without."

While Deli Pasha was explaining to his daughter the unexpected accident by which Dervish Bey had found in their Kiahia Khanum, whom they had always known as Fatimeh, his long-lost wife Zeinab, the reunited couple, left alone, were recounting to each other the incidents and adventures that they had met with during their long separation; and when Fatimeh learnt that Hassan was indeed her son, tears of grateful pride and joy streamed from her eyes as she said—

"Oh, Selim, a secret voice in my heart whispered this to me, and yet I dared not believe it. I saw him, and I loved him with an affection that I could not explain to myself. In fear and terror I was the confidante of his love for Amina. I thought that I was doing wrong; and yet, while I warned and reproved them both, Allah knows how my heart bled and longed to see them united. Allah be praised for all his goodness. They will yet be happy! for in truth, Selim, there lives not in all Egypt a maiden so sweet, so adorned with all high and lovable qualities, as my Amina. Let us go in and see her, and let her know how happy we are." So saying, she led the way into the inner room, where Amina threw herself into the Khanum's arms. The tender words of "my mother" and "my child" interchanged between them could scarcely add anything to the affection which they had borne to each other in their former relation of instructress and pupil.

Seldom does it happen that a Mohammedan soil, so sterile of domestic affections, can witness so happy a kindred group as was there assembled; and the news soon spread throughout the house that their Kiahia Khanum was the mother of Hassan and the wife of Dervish Bey. All the eunuchs and slave-girls in the harem crowded round her to kiss her hand, and she found in their sincere congratulations a reward for the gentle rule that she had exercised over them.

The other wives of Deli Pasha also sent over from the opposite wing of the harem a message that they wished to come over and pay her a visit of felicitation; and as it was contrary to etiquette that Dervish Bey should see them, he availed himself of the opportunity to rise and take his leave, saying

"I must go and communicate this happy news to our dear boy: you know not how his heart has longed to find and embrace his mother. Amina, may I take him a message from you? What shall I say to him?"

A blush passed over the face of the maiden as she replied in a low voice, "Say to him what your kind heart dictates. With my father's permission I will not gainsay your words."

"May I tell him, then," said the veteran, "that his faithful love is returned?"

Amina raised her liquid eyes to her father's face, and meeting there an approving smile, she murmured, "Now, and for ever!"

With what a light and buoyant heart did the old soldier mount his horse to return to his house and communicate his budget of glad tidings to his son; but he was doomed to disappointment, for on inquiring for Hassan he was nowhere to be found. One of the *sâises*, on being questioned, stated that he had ridden out early in the morning, accompanied by Abou-Hamedi, but no one knew whither he had gone.

"Rash boy!" exclaimed Dervish Bey; "now has he overthrown all our plans, and dipped our hands in scalding water. He was under arrest, and ordered to remain within these walls. Mohammed Ali will be furious, and Allah knows how we shall appease his anger."

Let us now explain the circumstances which had led to Hassan's sudden disappearance.

Before the dawn of this same day Hassan had been roused from his sleep by the entrance of Murad, the dumb boy, who had with the greatest difficulty awakened the drowsy *bowâb* and obtained admittance. Our hero saw at a glance that his young *protégé's* countenance was haggard and careworn, and that he was exhausted by fatigue.

After ordering some bread and a cup of coffee to be brought immediately, he asked Murad in his usual kindly tone what had led him to come before daylight, and why he looked so pale and fatigued. The little boy gazed at him earnestly, and then with his fast-moving fingers said, "A matter of life and death."

"Rest and compose yourself for a few moments," replied Hassan, who saw that the boy was in a state of nervous excitement, and he would not permit him to begin his story until he had eaten some bread and drunk his cup of coffee. But the secret with which Murad's breast was charged was of such a nature that he longed to unburden it to his protector, fearing that the loss even of a few minutes might be productive of disastrous consequences.

His narrative was as follows: On the preceding day he had accidentally passed by a café situated near the Bab-en-Nasr (the Gate of Victory), when he heard a voice within, which he thought he recognised as that of Osman Bey, in conversation with another man, and he distinguished plainly the names of Mohammed Ali, Delì Pasha, and that of the Kiahia, mentioned in rapid and eager tones. In conclusion the one speaker said to the other—

"It must be done quickly: meet me here again to-night, two hours after sunset, and bring the others with you."

Murad felt an irresistible curiosity to learn the subject of this evening conference, and he did not anticipate much difficulty in doing so, as he was well known to the keeper of the coffee-shop, a bluff old Arnàout, who had often allowed the friendless and mutilated child to earn or beg a few coppers at his door before the kindness of Hassan and Amina had placed him beyond the reach of absolute want.

Hastening home, Murad took out of his box an old and ragged dress, which he had not worn for a twelvemonth, and having put it on, hung round his neck a tablet with which he had formerly solicited the assistance of the charitable, and on which was written in Turkish and Arabic, "Give a few *paras* to the deaf and dumb for the love of Allah!"

He sallied forth about an hour after sunset, and made his way to the café. Old Arnàout, on noticing him, said, "Murad, poor little fellow, it is long since I have seen you; where have you been?" Receiving no reply, he added, "I forgot that he can neither hear nor answer me"; so saying, he dropped one or two copper coins into his hand, which Murad put into a little tin box which was slung beside his tablet. He then entered the café, as had been his custom of old, assisting the urchin who waited on the guests in carrying them lighted coals for their pipes or taking away empty *finjâns* of coffee. But the guests were few, for the café was in an unfrequented part of the town, and the weather was cold.

The last of them were just retiring when Osman Bey entered, accompanied by three or four other men, all of whom, like himself, were wrapped in large cloaks. It was evident that they were desirous of preserving an incognito, for they had brought with them neither servants nor pipes: they sipped, however, some coffee, and smoked the rude *chibouques* of the café.

After a short time they were joined by another party, consisting also of four or five men, in the foremost of whom Murad recognised Ali Bey, the colonel of the regiment of Bashi-Bazouks who were on duty at the Esbekiah, and guarded Mohammed Ali's palace in that quarter. For some time they conversed on indifferent subjects, but ere long they called for arrack, which seemed to loosen their tongues, while Murad went about among them renewing their pipes.

"Who is this youngster?" said Ali Bey, catching him by the arm, while he addressed the coffee-house-keeper.

"He is a poor child whom I have known for several years," replied the Arnàout. "He comes here sometimes to earn or beg a few *paras*; he is deaf and dumb."

"Is he?" replied Ali Bey, drawing the boy towards him and reading the tablet on his breast; "then he is just the boy for us. Send out those lads of yours, and Wallah! if we catch one of them coming within earshot we will clip their ears for them; we want to talk over our private affairs." He added a few words in Greek which Murad did not understand, to which the Arnàout replied by a wink and disappeared.

"Bring me a pipe," said Ali Bey, suddenly turning to Murad and speaking in a loud stern voice. Murad never stirred, but stared in the Colonel's face and opened his little tin box.

"Jaffier spoke the truth," muttered the Colonel half aloud. "I thought he would not dare to deceive me; the imp is as deaf as a stone." They then continued to drink their cans of arrack, which Murad refilled for them, while they spoke without reserve of the plans which they had met to arrange, and which were neither more nor less than to seize or kill Mohammed Ali and overthrow his Government.

"Are you sure of your Bashi-Bazouks, Ali?" inquired Osman Bey.

"Never fear them," replied Ali; "the dogs are as savage as bears. We have drawn their pay from the Treasury, but we have not given them a *para* of it for some months, and have told them that Mohammed Ali refuses to pay them and threatens to bastinado any of them that demand their pay. They are all on guard at the Esbekiah Palace, and if he falls into their clutches he will not give us much more trouble. The difficulty is how to bring him there, for the guards at Shoobra are obstinate fellows, and would fight like devils!"

"I will manage that matter," said Osman Bey. "Those Shoobra guards are from Delì Pasha's regiment. I will go there to-morrow morning and ask an audience of Mohammed Ali, and will easily persuade him that those guards are not to be trusted, for that Delì Pasha wants to marry his daughter to that outlawed robber Hassan, who is now in Cairo, and as they have not been able to obtain his pardon, they are conspiring against the Viceroy and tampering with the guards, who are of Delì Pasha's own regiment. Mohammed Ali will assuredly believe there is some truth in this statement, and will agree to my proposal of coming in at once to his palace at the Esbekiah."

"Have you succeeded yet in introducing the brother of your man Ferraj into the household at Shoobra?" inquired another of the conspirators.

"Yes," replied Osman Bey. "Hadji Mohammed is employed in the house, and tells me all that goes on. If our other plans fail, that scoundrel can do the job for us with a cup of coffee; and he *must* do my bidding, for he knows that a word of mine can send him when I will to the *gellad* [executioner] or the galleys."

"How are your fellows, Nour-ed-din?" said Ali, the Colonel, addressing one of the conspirators.

"Can we count upon them?"

"I am not sure," replied the officer thus interrogated. "I have kept back their pay too, and have thrown out a few phrases to stir their discontent. They grumble enough, and if our first blow succeeds they will doubtless join us; but they are much afraid of Ibrahim Pasha. How is he affected in this matter?"

"We must not tell it him beforehand," replied Osman Bey; "for with all his cruelty he is a craven at heart and might betray us, not from the love but the fear that he has for Mohammed Ali. Let us put the Old Lion out of the way, and I will answer for managing Ibrahim afterwards. He will not be very angry, depend upon it."

They then exchanged a few more sentences to regulate their proceedings for the following day, of which Murad only caught the words, "You all meet at my house at noon." This was spoken by Ali Bey, who as he rose up to go away almost stumbled over the prostrate form of Murad, who had rolled himself in his old torn cloak and lay on the floor feigning sleep, but listening with eager anxiety to the dangerous secrets of which he had accidentally been made the partaker.

"What is this son of a dog doing here?" said Ali Bey, pointing with his foot to the recumbent form of Murad.

"It is only the deaf and dumb child," replied one of the others contemptuously.

"Supposing he should prove to be neither deaf nor dumb, nor asleep?" said the suspicious Arnàout.

"I will just give him six inches of my dagger in the ribs, and then I shall be sure that he is deaf and dumb." So saying, he drew his dagger, and held over the boy's face a half-expiring lamp that he snatched from the table. A start, a tremor, the slightest indication of consciousness, would have been Murad's instant death-warrant; but the brave little boy bore the severe ordeal. Not a muscle nor a quickened respiration betokened aught but the quiet slumber of youth.

"Pish!" said the rough savage, "his sleep is fast enough, whether he be deaf or not. Inshallah! before long my dagger will drink better blood than his." So saying, he strode out of the café, followed by the other conspirators, who separated and went to their several homes.

For nearly an hour after they were gone Murad remained motionless collecting his scattered thoughts, which, unaccustomed as they were to dwell on conspiracies or political revolutions, seemed oppressed and overwhelmed by the terrible secret which he bore about him.

No sooner, however, did he recover from the terror which he had endured from the Arnàout's dagger than he resolved at once to hasten to Hassan and tell him everything. This he did before dawn, as we have above mentioned; and our hero, having heard his tale, and made him repeat certain portions of it so as to feel assured of the accuracy of his memory, told Murad to remain in his room till he returned.

Having armed himself with a brace of pocket-pistols and a short dagger, which he concealed within his vest, he mounted his horse, and, accompanied by Abou-Hamedi, rode out towards the desert by the Gate of Victory. After skirting the desert for a couple of miles he turned to the left, through some cultivated fields and olive-plantations, until he found himself at the gates of the Shoobra garden. His only fear was that he might be denied access to the Viceroy; but he had made up his mind to demand it through his old acquaintance the medical interpreter.

Assuming, therefore, an authoritative air, he said to the gatekeeper in Turkish, "I wish to see the Hakim-Bashi, and my business with him is urgent."

The man, influenced by Hassan's commanding figure and the use of the Turkish language, immediately led the way to a small pavilion occupied by the hakim, and adjoining the private apartments of the Viceroy.

When Hassan entered he found the Doctor sitting in a comfortable dressing-gown drinking his cup of coffee and looking over the last Italian journal. When he saw our hero, and received his salutation, he seemed sorely perplexed, for a year and a half of hardship and exposure had changed the youth into a powerful man; yet the frank, open countenance, not easily forgotten, was there unchanged, and it was not necessary for him to name himself, for the hakim broke out suddenly, "*Cospetto di Baccho!* it is Hassan himself. Why, man, I am glad to see you—no, I am not; I am sorry to see you, for you must be mad. You know that you are under arrest and forbidden to leave your father's house—the Viceroy will never forgive disobedience to his orders."

"Excellency," said Hassan gravely, "I have come upon a matter of life and death, and I must see the Viceroy immediately and alone. It is not my life or death that is at stake, but one of greater value to me, to you, and to Egypt."

"Per Baccho!" said the hakim, "your forehead looks like a thunder-cloud, and you speak like a man who is in earnest. You wish to see the Viceroy immediately and alone, you say?"

"Immediately," repeated Hassan impatiently; "and alone."

"But," replied the cautious physician, "Mohammed Ali is a fearless man—the world knows it; but would it be usual, would it be right, that he should be left alone with——" Here the worthy physician hesitated as he cast his eyes upon the powerful figure before him.

"With a freebooter and outlaw, you would say," interposed Hassan, with one of his frank smiles. "But I am not an assassin. I only said alone because I know not who of all his Highness's attendants are trustworthy! However, I suppose you are, and therefore if the Viceroy pleases, you may be present, and you may hold a loaded pistol at my ear all the time that I am in his Highness's presence."

"I ask your pardon," said the Italian hakim, offering his hand. "I did not mean to offend or to hint at your being an assassin; but you know what mischievous tongues wag in these Turkish *serais*, and how I should be blamed were I not cautious in all that regarded the safety of my chief. Now help yourself to a cup of coffee, and I will do your commission at once." So saying, the hakim disappeared through a side-door that communicated directly with the Viceroy's apartment. In five minutes he reappeared, and making a sign to Hassan to follow, led him to a small room where Mohammed Ali was seated in the corner on a divan covered with rich crimson damask.

"You have broken your arrest," said Mohammed Ali, fixing his piercing eyes on Hassan as he entered; "I trust you have sufficient reason for your disobedience."

"Your Highness shall judge," replied Hassan, "when you have heard what I have to tell. I knew that I had already given you such serious ground of offence that I would not for a light cause have added another to the list."

"Wallah! it is true that you have committed enough already in pillaging my villages and my people," said Mohammed Ali sternly; "let that pass for the present, and say what you have to say before the Hakim-Bashi."

Hassan proceeded to give a clear and distinct account of the conspiracy as communicated to him by Murad. The expressive features of Mohammed Ali underwent various changes during the narration, and his fingers more than once clutched the handle of the sword that lay across his knee when Hassan mentioned the names of the conspirators.

As soon as Hassan had concluded his narrative, Mohammed Ali, bending his shaggy brows on the speaker, said, "By the head of my father, if this tale be true, I will defile the graves of the fathers and mothers of these ungrateful dogs. But how can I feel assured that the whole is not an invention of this crazy, mutilated child?"

"I believe it is all true," said Hassan with simple earnestness, "for the boy, though dumb, is faithful and intelligent. I am sure he would not deceive me, neither has he knowledge sufficient to refer to all these names and plots if he had not heard them as he states. Moreover, it is easy for your Highness to ascertain some points which may satisfy you as to the truth of the whole."

"Which points?" said the Viceroy hastily.

"First," replied Hassan, "is it true that a man called Hadji Mohammed, the brother of Osman Bey's servant, Ferraj, has lately entered your Highness's service?"

"That is true," interrupted the hakim; "for I have seen the fellow, and an ill-looking dog he is."

"Secondly," continued Hassan, "if the boy's story be correct, Osman Bey will visit your Highness within an hour or two, and recommend you to leave Shooobra and go into your palace of the Esbekiah, where Ali Bey's Bashi-Bazouks are on guard."

"That is true," replied the Viceroy; "a few hours will remove all doubt. Hakim-Bashi, you remember that only a day or two ago the Kiahia wrote a note to say that some strange rumours were afloat as to these Bashi-Bazouks and another regiment being almost in mutiny from not having received their pay."

"It is so," replied the hakim, "and I went to the pay-office, by your Highness's order, and got Ali Bey's receipt for the whole amount due to them duly sealed and certified. I have it here," and he produced the paper in question.

"These hornets must be crushed, and there is no time to be lost," said the Viceroy in a musing tone; then suddenly bending his shaggy eyebrows on Hassan, he added, "Young man, you have done your duty in bringing us this news, bad though it be. What is the course which it is now best to pursue?—speak your mind."

"Nay, your Highness," said Hassan modestly; "if my arm or my life can be of use, they are at your service, but I am too young and inexperienced to offer an opinion in the presence of the best soldier in Islam."

"Nevertheless," replied the Viceroy, a certain malicious fun twinkling in the corner of his keen grey eye, "I would have your opinion, even though I should not choose to follow it. If all be true that I have heard, you have shown more skill in eluding or defeating my troops with your lawless band of vagabonds than could have been expected from so young a beard. I would see whether your wit be as sharp, now that you profess a desire to serve me. Speak, therefore, and without fear or reserve."

After a few moments of reflection Hassan replied, "Were I to speak as my own impulse would prompt, I should say to your Highness, Summon to your side the Pashas, Beys, and regiments in whom you can trust, place me in the foremost rank, and let us straightway attack, bind, or destroy these conspirators."

Mohammed Ali read in his bright, eager glance and bold, open front the sincerity which dictated these words. Hassan continued, "But I know that your Highness would gladly avoid, if possible, the bloodshed of your subjects, and the punishing the ignorant and the misled in the same degree as the scoundrels who have misled them. I therefore suggest that we meet stratagem with stratagem, and when Osman Bey comes, let your Highness pretend to be persuaded by his arguments, and agree to go into the Esbekiah Palace to-morrow. This will throw them off their guard, and all the conspirators will be gathered at Ali Bey's house. Meanwhile I have a trusty follower here, little known in Cairo, for whose fidelity I will answer with my life: let him go forthwith to the Kiahia with a few lines, written by your Highness's order, instructing him to send a regiment that he can trust, and two or three hundred horsemen silently and secretly to the Esbekiah before dawn to-morrow; let two or three guns be placed there, pointed at Ali Bey's house and your Highness's palace; let Deli Pasha take five hundred men from this regiment at Shooobra and march it at the same hour and in silence to occupy the gardens behind Ali Pasha's house and the road to Boulak; let the guards in the citadel be doubled at night, and the regiment of Dervish Bey, now encamped outside of the town, be brought in to keep in check that of Nour-ed-din, which is supposed to be in a state of mutiny. My follower shall then pass the night among them, and when they know that they have been cheated of their pay by their own officers, they will not raise a musket against your Highness. The most difficult task is to manage these Bashi-Bazouks, but I am not without hopes of reclaiming them without bloodshed. Let your Highness give me that receipt of Ali Bey's for their money, and let me hide it under my belt; order me now to be seized and taken by your soldiers into the guard-house of the Esbekiah Palace, where you intend to have me tried and judged to-morrow. As soon as it is known that Hassan the outlaw is confined there, they will flock in numbers to see me; I will talk with them; I will show them the receipt, and explain to them how they have been cheated and duped by Ali Bey. Inshallah! at dawn to-morrow, when the troops close in on all sides to surround the Bey's house and take prisoner himself and his confederates, I will have these Bashi-Bazouks'

minds so changed that instead of fighting against your troops they will cry 'Long life to Mohammed Ali!'"

While Hassan was speaking the Viceroy never took his piercing eyes off the young man's countenance, and when he had concluded he said—

"Hassan, you have not disappointed me: your plan is good, and I will have it followed out. But I do not like to send you in among those mutinous Bashi-Bazouks; they are bloodthirsty fellows, and if they find from your speech that you are exhorting them in my behalf to return to their duty, they will tear you to pieces."

"Fear not for me, your Highness," replied Hassan calmly. "In dealing with and leading turbulent spirits like these I have had much, too much, experience; let me try it once more in a good cause, and if my life is sacrificed, why, Allah is merciful, and your Highness will perhaps tell Deli Pasha and Dervish Bey that Hassan was not unworthy of your trust."

A bright gleam shot from the eyes of Mohammed Ali as he replied—

"You are a brave youth, Hassan, and all shall be done as you desire. Go in with the hakim to his room, prepare the letters, and despatch your messenger. Allah be with you."

Hassan retired, and in a short time Abou-Hamedi was despatched with the letters and full verbal instructions. An hour later our hero was arrested and sent into the Esbekiah Palace under a strong guard, and the news was spread all over Cairo that Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm was to be tried and judged on the following day.

Hassan had not left the Shoobra gardens more than an hour when Osman Bey arrived and demanded an audience, which was immediately granted, the Hakim-Bashi remaining in attendance on his chief.

After the usual preliminaries of respect and compliment, Osman Bey proceeded to unfold the object of his coming, which proved to coincide exactly with what had been stated by Hassan. The Viceroy listened in silence, and although Osman Bey could not avoid noticing the fire that gleamed in those deep grey eyes, he attributed it to the anger felt by Mohammed Ali against those whose treacherous designs he had pretended to expose.

"We thank you as you deserve for your communication," said the Viceroy, "and we will take all the requisite precautions. To-morrow, as you recommend, we will go to the palace of Esbekiah."

"May your Highness's life be prolonged," replied Osman Bey. "I rejoice to find that you have seized that dangerous robber Hassan. I met him on the road under the escort of your Highness's guards."

"Yes," said the old chief. "Inshallah! to-morrow you shall see him treated as he deserves—you shall see that Mohammed Ali knows how to punish traitors."

"Inshallah!" replied Osman Bey, taking his leave with a salutation of profound respect.

Scarcely was he out of sight ere Mohammed Ali muttered between his hard-set teeth, "Dog! hyena! serpent! Inshallah! to-morrow he shall see and feel how traitors are punished! Hakim-Bashi, you are a learned man, and read many books: I never read anything but men's faces, and, Mashallah! I rarely read them amiss. I have long had my eye mistrustfully on this scoundrel: look from his false and malignant countenance to the open face and clear bold eye of Hassan; why, man, there is truth written there as plainly as in the Fat'hah.^[113] I have been somewhat slow in forgiving him because he has a daring spirit that requires to be checked, and example requires that acts such as he has committed should be punished; but if he survives and succeeds to-morrow, by the head of my father, I will reward and promote him!"

"I am glad to hear your Highness say so," said the good-natured hakim, "for I liked him from the first day that I saw him; and his Bedouin education, added to the insults received from that hypocritical traitor, offer some excuse for the lawless life that he led for a while."

"Wait till to-morrow. Bakkalum, we shall see," said the Old Lion, smiling grimly. "Now send me Abd-el-Kerim, who commands the regiment on duty here. He, I know, is faithful, and I will give him orders for his night march on the gardens to the rear of Ali Bey's house, as Hassan suggested. Mashallah!" he continued, "did you notice how clear and complete were his plans to entrap and secure the scoundrels, after saying that he was too young to offer an opinion. Wallah! if ever I am obliged to send my troops there, that Hassan shall command a division."

"Send your troops where, your Highness?" said the hakim inquiringly.

"Peace, man," said Mohammed Ali, recovering from a momentary fit of abstraction. "I was thinking of—of—of—perhaps of Darfour and Abyssinia." A scarcely perceptible smile lingered on the lips of the medical interpreter, who had for some time suspected the ambitious views of his chief on Syria and Asia Minor, but he made his salam in silence and withdrew.

Meantime, while Abou-Hamedi was faithfully delivering the letters and messages intrusted to him, Hassan was no less diligent in the execution of the difficult task which he had undertaken. After being ushered into the precincts allotted to the Bashi-Bazouk guard, which included all the extensive area in front of the palace itself, Hassan remained for a considerable time apart, as if undesirous of communicating with them. His object was that they should come to him; nor was he long in attaining it.

Struck by his commanding figure and features, some of the loiterers about the door inquired his name of the guards who had brought him, and when they learnt that it was Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm, of whom they had heard so much, all flocked around him to scan more closely the appearance of the celebrated outlaw. Neither had he much to fear from their hostility, for being themselves engaged in a mutinous rising against the Government, they looked upon him as a sure ally during the outbreak expected on the morrow.

The intelligence of his capture and presence among them soon reached the farthest part of the barracks, and it happened that seven or eight were there who had formed a part of the band which, under Osman Aga's guidance, had made so unsuccessful an attack on Hassan near Siout, and whom, it will be remembered, our hero had dismissed unhurt, after giving them some dinner and some money, and telling them it was a pity to see such fine fellows in so mean a service.

These men no sooner heard of his presence in their barracks than they hastened to greet him, calling out as they approached—

“Welcome, Hassan eed-el-maftouha, do you not remember us? We were of the party whom you treated so well when we were in your power, and when you sent back Osman Bey to Siout on a donkey.”

“I believe, comrades,” he replied, “that on that day I maltreated none excepting Osman Bey, and he had deserved it at my hands.”

“He was a brute,” said the first speaker, lowering his voice; “but Ali Bey, our present chief, is better: he always takes our part against those who rob and injure us.”

“Who are they who rob and injure you?” inquired Hassan.

“Why, Mohammed Ali, to be sure, and his rascally Paymaster-General.”

“I had always heard,” said Hassan, “that Mohammed Ali paid his brave Bashi-Bazouks regularly.”

“He used to do so,” said the fellow sulkily; “but for eighteen months we have not had a piastre of pay. See, our clothes are all in rags, and we have nothing wherewith to buy a pound of tobacco or a little rice water.^[114] Ali Bey and Osman Bey have petitioned and laboured for us in vain. But we will have our rights. Inshallah! we shall see something to-morrow.”

“Yes, our rights and our pay, or else blood and plunder!” said half-a-dozen rough voices around.

It is unnecessary to detail all that passed between Hassan and the mutineers; suffice it to say that he completely gained their confidence, and occupied himself during the remainder of the day in ascertaining the character and views of those who seemed the more influential among them.

It was not his purpose to attempt putting in execution the plan that he had formed until nightfall, when the gates would be shut and none could go out to give notice of his proceedings to Ali Bey, whose house was only separated from the palace by a walled garden. No sooner had that hour arrived than Hassan desired those whose confidence he had gained, including the men from Siout, to call together all the regiment in front of the guard-house, as he had something of importance to communicate to them, and guards on whom they could depend were placed at the front and postern gates to prevent the ingress or egress of any one unchallenged.

As soon as they were all assembled he said in a clear and sonorous voice, that was heard by the farthest of that rough and turbulent band—

“Comrades! some of you have known me personally, and most of you have heard of Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm: did you ever hear of him that he aided the tyrant to trample on the oppressed, or the rich to plunder the poor?”

“Never!” shouted a score of voices.

“Did you ever hear,” he continued, “that he was sparing of his blood or his money, or that he ever betrayed a comrade?”

“Never!” shouted they again.

“Then, by Allah!” said Hassan, “he never will. He is here among you now alone. You may take his life to-night, or the Government may take it to-morrow; but so long as he has an arm to strike, it shall strike at the false and the oppressor in defence of the oppressed!”

“Hassan for ever!” shouted they again; “he is the man for us! Let us see the Government come to take his life to-morrow!”

“Then,” said he, raising his voice above the tumult, “if you believe me and trust me as you say, let me tell you that you have been falsely betrayed!”

“We know it!” they cried. “We have been betrayed; we have been robbed of our pay, and we will have it now, and plunder to boot!”

“You have been robbed and betrayed,” said Hassan in a deep, stern voice; “but you know not the robbers nor the traitors who have injured you. I now denounce them to your just anger—they are Osman Bey, Ali Bey, and your own officers! who have drawn your pay and have spent or locked it up themselves, in order to lead you to mutiny and to destruction!”

It is impossible to describe the confusion that prevailed in that lawless assemblage at the conclusion of this speech. Some shouted, “It is false!” others cried, “Kill him; he is a spy of Mohammed Ali!”

Pistols were drawn, daggers gleamed in the fitful torchlight; many cried, “Down with Ali Bey and the traitors!” but still the more numerous and moderate party in the regiment called aloud, “Proof! proof! we must have proof!”

“Proof you shall have, if you will be silent and patient like men, and not scream like the *bakkal*’s wives before the *câdi*.”^[115]

Silence having been restored, Hassan called aloud, “Bring hither those torches, and come to my side any of you who can read!” Half-a-dozen approached in answer to this appeal.

“This is not enough,” said Hassan; “where is the *yuzbashi*^[116] who commands the guard? Let him also come forward.” That functionary had hitherto remained a distant spectator of the scene; but he was now urged forward by some of his own men to the spot where Hassan stood, who shouted as they advanced, “Proof! proof! we want proof!”

“Are you one of those,” said Hassan, fixing a stern and penetrating look on the *yuzbashi*, “who have taken a share of these brave men’s pay, and withheld it in order to induce them to revolt?”

“I?” said the astonished *yuzbashi*. “No, Wallah! No pay have I seen myself for a year. See the holes in my shoes, and these ragged clothes; do these look like robbing the pay of my men? By the beard of my father, it is the Government who have robbed me and them of our due! But who, in the name of the Prophet, are you who are haranguing my men, and questioning me as if you were a *miralai* [general]?”

“I applaud your spirit,” replied Hassan frankly. “My name is Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm, my voice has no authority excepting that of truth, and I have no motive but to prove to these brave men who they are who have wronged and betrayed them. Canst read, *yuzbashi*?”

“Ay, Wallah! that can I. For two years was I clerk in a divan before I entered the army.”

“Well, then, read that aloud to your men,” said Hassan, placing a paper before him.

As the *yuzbashi* read the contents all the words in Turkish which correspond to "cheat," "rogue," "traitor," and "scoundrel" burst in succession from his half-closed lips.

"What is it? what is it?" shouted a score of impatient voices at once.

430

"It is a receipt in full showing that the Paymaster has regularly placed in the hands of Ali Bey the whole amount of pay due to you up to last month. And here is Ali Bey's seal at the bottom. I can swear to it, as I have often to countersign papers bearing his seal."

Curses on Ali Bey's father, mother, and all his ancestors, now issued in torrents from the lips of the indignant assemblage; and not the least loud in venting maledictions was the *yuzbashi* who had been unjustly suspected of sharing in the peculation of his superiors.

Hassan watched in silence the progress of the storm which he had raised; for he rightly judged that they would soon return to ask his advice as to the course which they should now pursue. Nature had formed him to lead either in the council or in the field such rough, bold spirits as those by which he was surrounded, and they now came back to ask him what was to be done as naturally as if he had been appointed their chief.

"My brave fellows," said Hassan, "if your eyes are now open, and you are satisfied that you have been deceived and betrayed by your officers, there is but one course by which you can save yourselves and punish them."

"Name it," shouted a score of rough voices.

"You know that I was brought here this morning from Shoobra; while there I was neither blind nor deaf. I can swear to you by the head of my father that the treachery of Ali Bey, Osman Bey, and the others is known to Mohammed Ali. Even now troops from all quarters are surrounding this palace and Ali Bey's house in the darkness of night. At daybreak you will see them with your own eyes—escape or resistance is no longer possible."

431

"Curses on Ali Bey's head and on his father's grave!" shouted the *yuzbashi*; "what dirt has that vile dog caused us to eat! But you have not told us yet, Hassan, what is to be done. Are we to stay here and be butchered like sheep?"

"Allah forbid!" said Hassan. "I will answer with my head that if you follow my counsel not a hair of your beards shall be touched. How many men are there now in Ali Bey's house?"

"If we count his and Osman Bey's, and Nour-ed-din Binbashi's Mamelukes and followers, there may be two hundred of them in the house and buildings round his courtyard," replied the *yuzbashi*.

"A mere handful," said Hassan scornfully; "you are enough to master them in five minutes. My advice, then, is this. As the Beys do not know that your eyes have been opened to their treachery, they will of course admit you at any hour. Let the *yuzbashi* knock at the gate and say that he has something of importance to communicate to the Bey; he will be admitted at once. As soon as the gate is opened for his admittance, a party of us following close behind him will rush in and overpower the *bowàbs* or sentries that may be there. We will then let in the remainder of our brave fellows, leaving only a small guard in this palace, and we will go and make prisoners of the Beys and all their followers. When Mohammed Ali's troops appear in the morning I will go out to their commanders and tell them that you had been deceived and misled, but that you had now returned to your duty, in proof of which you had seized and were ready to deliver up to them the conspirators. I will answer for you receiving your full pardon and your full pay besides."

432

"Mashallah!" cried several voices, "the plan is good; let us follow it at once."

"It is not so easy as it seems," said a cautious old fellow, who had a habitual dread of his commander. "Ali Bey is a desperate and dangerous man to take; he has always four pistols in his belt, and he fights like a devil."

"Give me a sword, my lads, and leave Ali Bey to me," said Hassan, his eyes lighting up as they always did at the approach of strife.

"Hassan's the leader for us!" shouted one of those whom he had released at Siout—"open hand in peace, and iron hand in the fight."

As he spoke his own and half-a-dozen other swords were offered to Hassan's choice. Selecting with the eye of a connoisseur the trustiest blade, he said, "Now, my lads, let us go; but remember, no bloodshed excepting in self-defence. Our business is to take them alive; and, Wallah! we will take them if you are firm and steady. Now assemble at the gate in silence, and be ready."

433

Whilst the men were collecting for the expedition, Hassan whispered to the *yuzbashi* the course that he was to pursue, adding, "I do not know you, but I shall be close to you and observe you well. If you are faithful, you will be rewarded; but if you attempt to betray us, your head shall be the first to fall."

"You shall see," answered the *yuzbashi* with a grim smile, "whether I do not pay my debt to Ali Bey and those other scoundrels."

The evening was now advanced, the Ezn-el-âshah^[117] had long since been chanted from the mosques, but there seemed to be no symptoms of retiring to rest in Ali Bey's house. He himself, surrounded by Osman Bey, Nour-ed-din, and the other leaders of the conspiracy, were seated in his large salamlik, or reception-room, arranging their plans for the morrow and discussing eagerly the course they should adopt towards Ibrahim Pasha after they had got rid of his father.

All of them felt confident that he would gladly profit by their crime; but few felt sure that he would not punish its authors.

434

"He dare not punish us," said Ali Bey boldly; "we are too many. See here," he continued, drawing a paper from his vest, "here are the seals of twenty-five, none of whom are without power or friends. He may, indeed, affect to be angry at first, but he will be obliged to pardon and reward us."

While he was yet speaking a servant came in and said that the *yuzbashi*, Suleiman Aga, followed by a number of the Bashi-Bazouks, was without, and wished to see the Bey.

"These fellows," said the latter to his companions, "are ready for any mischief. I have worked them up to such a pitch of discontent that I can scarcely prevail on them to defer plundering the palace until to-morrow, when we shall have Mohammed Ali in our power. Let him come in."

As he spoke, the *yuzbashi*, followed by a number of his men, entered the room, and the first words

that he uttered were—

“Bey, I can no longer control these men: they demand justice and their pay.”

“Justice and our pay!” said a number of rough voices, as they kept pouring into the room.

“You shall have it, my lads, to-morrow—pay and plunder to your heart’s content,” said Ali Bey. “Only be patient to-night, and you shall have vengeance on those who have robbed you of your right.”

“They shall have it now!” cried Hassan, coming suddenly forward, sword in hand.

“And who in the name of the Prophet may you be?” said Ali Bey.

“Wallah! Wallah! it is that traitor scoundrel Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm,” cried Osman Bey, astonished at the sudden appearance of our hero, whom he had seen some hours before under arrest.

“Present!” said Hassan in a deep, stern voice; and immediately the Bashi-Bazouks, who now lined the side of the room, presented their pistols at the knot of conspirators seated at its upper end.

“Ali Bey, Osman Bey, and you others who have deceived and betrayed these brave men by withholding their pay, their hour of vengeance is come, not against Mohammed Ali to-morrow, but against you to-night. Yield yourselves prisoners, or I give the word to fire.”

“Never!” cried Ali Bey, springing with the others to his feet. “We have adherents below enough to punish these mutinous scoundrels.”

“Ali Bey,” replied Hassan sternly, “your adherents are already overpowered—your whole plot is known to Mohammed Ali—his troops surround your house—you have no means of defence or escape; you can only now trust to the Viceroy’s clemency.”

“You, at least, shall never live to boast of this treachery,” cried Osman Bey, who was literally foaming with rage, as he drew his sword and sprang upon Hassan.

The result was such as might have been expected where strength, skill, and coolness were on one side and ungovernable fury on the other. Scarcely a few seconds elapsed ere Osman Bey’s sword-arm, severed by one cut, fell to the ground.

“Bind up his wound and secure him,” said Hassan coolly to one of the Bashi-Bazouks who was near him; and without deigning another look at his fallen adversary, he addressed himself to Ali Bey, saying—

“I would fain avoid useless bloodshed; will you yield yourselves prisoners or not?”

Ali Bey, though a cruel and vicious man, was not deficient in courage; but the hapless fate of his confederate, the determined language and commanding appearance of Hassan, and the formidable row of pistol-barrels that gleamed at his back, might well have intimidated a bolder spirit. In the countenance of his companions he read nothing but dismay, so he replied, “We yield ourselves,” and sullenly threw his sword on the floor at Hassan’s feet.

His comrades followed his example, and in a few minutes they were all disarmed and pinioned. Their persons were searched by Hassan’s order, and he thus obtained possession of the paper to which the seals of the conspirators had been affixed.

Hassan spent the remainder of the night in visiting all the quarters of the house and seeing that the prisoners of all ranks were duly guarded. The Bashi-Bazouks who had witnessed the summary chastisement that he had inflicted on Osman Bey, and who seemed to feel an intuitive conviction that he was armed with the authority which he assumed, obeyed him without a murmur.

No sooner had the day dawned than he took the *yuzbashi* and a few more of the men to the roof of the house, whence he showed them two field-pieces already in position in their front and the troops of Mohammed Ali drawn up and surrounding them on every side.

“Did I speak the truth,” said Hassan, “when I told you that if you continued in mutiny you would be cut off to a man?”

“Wallah! Hassan, you spoke the truth,” they replied. “Our only hope is now in you, for you said that if we obeyed you we should have our pay and our pardon.”

“Fear not, I will make my words good. I will go out now alone and speak to the officer in command of these troops in front: I think I should know him.”

Descending from the roof, he walked alone out of the gate and advanced to the front of the column, the Bashi-Bazouks watching his movements from the roof and from the windows with the deepest anxiety.

“Mashallah!” cried one, “what miracle is this? See, Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm is embracing that old officer, who by his uniform must be a Bey or Pasha. He is embracing also another younger officer: see, they are coming this way.”

“I know them well,” cried a soldier beside the first speaker. “The old officer is Dervish Bey the Swordsman, a brave old fellow; I served with him in Arabia: the other is Reschid, *khaznadâr* of the Kiahia Pasha.”

“Ajaib!” (Wonderful!) exclaimed several voices, “that Hassan the outlaw should be so familiar with these Beys.”

As they slowly approached the front of the palace Hassan had time to explain briefly to his father the events of the night, and the manner in which he had effected the capture of the conspirators.

On hearing his report Dervish Bey desired Reschid to ride with all speed to Shoobra to inform Mohammed Ali of what had passed, and to ask his further orders. He also sent messengers to inform Deli Pasha and the commanders of the other troops that had been drawn towards the palace that the conspiracy was already crushed.

“What news?” said the Viceroy to Reschid as the latter entered his salamluk breathless and dusty from his gallop.

“May your Highness’s life be prolonged; the conspirators are all prisoners awaiting your sentence.”

“El-hamdu-lillah!” (Praise be to Allah!) said the Viceroy. “Had you much fighting? did the scoundrels make a stout resistance?”

“We had no fighting at all,” said Reschid, smiling; “Hassan did it all himself.”

“How was that?” said Mohammed Ali, surprised.

"In the course of the night he explained to the Bashi-Bazouk regiment how they had been misled, robbed, and betrayed by their officers; he showed them Ali Bey's receipt, proving that your Highness had done them no injustice. Having convinced and brought them back to their duty, he led them into the adjoining house to arrest their own officers. Osman Bey made a sudden spring at him, but Hassan cut his arm off, and the rest surrendered without resistance."

"Aferin! [bravo!] Hassan," said Mohammed Ali; then turning to Reschid, he added, "Let them await my coming at the palace; I will be there within the hour."

In less than the time specified the Viceroy appeared at the Esbekiah Palace gates mounted on Nebleh, who had become his favourite charger, and surrounded by a numerous guard. Having received the reports of his Pashas and generals as to the events of the night, and the names of the conspirators captured at Ali Bey's house, he said in a loud and stern voice—

"Let Ali Bey, Osman Bey, and Nour-ed-din, who have robbed the troops of their pay, incited them to mutiny, and conspired against the Government, suffer the doom of traitors—off with their heads; and their villages, houses, and properties are confiscated. Let that villainous servant of Osman Bey named Ferraj, whose crimes are known to me, and his brother, Hadji Mohammed, who came into my service to poison me, receive one thousand blows of the stick; let the other prisoners await further inquiry and orders. Where is Hassan Ebn-el-Heràm? Let him stand forth."

Our hero, thus called upon, came out and stood in front of that numerous assemblage.

"Hassan," said Mohammed Ali, "if the disgrace imposed upon you by that dog Osman Bey led you for a time to forget your duty, your fidelity and good service now and on former occasions deserve reward; you are a worthy son of a worthy father. Hassan, son of Dervish Bey, I appoint you in the place of the traitor Ali Bey to the command of the Bashi-Bazouk regiment which he betrayed or misled. I grant them, for your sake, a full pardon, and they shall have all their arrears of pay. I present you also with the houses, lands, and property of Ali Bey, which have been forfeited to the Government."

"May your Highness's honour and prosperity be boundless as your bounty," said Hassan, coming forward to kiss the Viceroy's sleeve. He then retired a few steps, awaiting further commands or the signal to withdraw.

He thought not of the lands or the wealth he had acquired, but one of the brightest dreams of his youth was realised: he had been publicly recognised, by one whom he held to be the hero of the age, as a worthy son of the gallant Dervish Bey. This was the feeling which filled his breast with a bounding and tumultuous joy, and his eye sought and met that of his father. But Hassan's thoughts were speedily recalled to the presence in which he stood by the voice of Mohammed Ali, who, once more addressing him, said—

"I have rewarded your services only as you deserve; I wish now to add a favour from myself. Have you any request to make? Speak it boldly."

"If your Highness will pardon my freedom, I would ask you to give to my friend Reschid the command of the regiment vacant by the punishment of Nour-ed-din. These men, like the Bashi-Bazouks, have been misled by the treachery of their commander; but when they learn how they have been deceived, their hearts and swords will return to your Highness's service. I have seen the courage and fidelity of Reschid put to the proof, and under him that regiment will be as true and efficient as any in your army."

"What say you, Kiahia?" said Mohammed Ali to his chief Pasha; "shall Hassan's request be granted?"

"Hassan has robbed me of a good *khaznadâr*," said the old Kiahia, smiling, "but he has given your Highness a good colonel, so I must forgive him; neither will I deny that Reschid's fingers, when employed on the seal or the pen, are always itching for the lance and the sword."

"Be it so, then," said the Viceroy; "make out the order to our War Office and we will seal it. And now, Hassan, as you would not ask anything for yourself, I must select for you. Strength and youth, and, Mashallah! good looks and a good name you have; it is a shame that you remain unmarried,—I have chosen you a wife from a noble harem, and I will give her a dower myself."

Hassan's lip grew pale and quivered as he said in a hesitating voice—

"Pardon me, your Highness, if I decline the honour. I have made a vow that——"

Here Mohammed Ali interrupted him, saying—

"Peace, *delikànloo*,"^[118] and he fixed on the young man one of those piercing glances in which anger and humour were so strangely blended that it was difficult to know which was predominant. "Is there already so much wind of prosperity in your head that you despise the alliance of the daughter of Deli Pasha?"

At the sound of that name the blood rushed to Hassan's temples. He dared not testify his rapturous delight before so many witnesses. Mohammed Ali read it in his eyes, while the lips only said—

"Your Highness has loaded me with benefits that the gratitude and service of a life cannot repay."

"How obedient he became at once as soon as he heard the name," said Mohammed Ali in an undertone to Deli Pasha, who stood near him.

"Your Highness knew their attachment," said the old soldier gratefully; "to see them united under the shadow of your protection was my fondest wish."

The Viceroy now retired into the palace, and on entering his private apartment said to his Hakim-bashi—

"There is one thing yet I forgot to learn from Hassan; send him here immediately, and send my seal-bearer into Ali Bey's house with a guard, and tell him to seal every door, box, and cupboard till Hassan goes in to take possession, otherwise the thoughtless boy will find nothing but empty walls."

Our hero was just receiving the congratulations of his father and Deli Pasha when he was directed to reappear immediately in Mohammed Ali's presence. On entering the room the Viceroy said to him—

"When you captured the conspirators, did you learn anything certain of their numbers or

associates without? Wallah! I forgot myself, or I would have ordered the scoundrels to be tortured to make them tell before their heads were cut off."

"Men under torture," said Hassan, "often tell falsehoods to gratify spite and revenge; but I took from Ali Bey's vest a paper supposed to contain the seals of all those who had joined his plot. I have not shown it either to the Kiahia or to my own father, for I thought it might contain names which, for various reasons, had better be known to none but yourself."

"Mashallah!" said Mohammed Ali, "though you are sometimes a *delikànloo*, you have a head fitted for older shoulders than yours; but I have long known that you could keep a secret. Do you remember the night that you passed in a certain palace near the Nile?"

"Did your Highness know of that?" said Hassan in surprise.

"Everything that passed," replied Mohammed Ali. "One of the blacks in the service of that lady was a spy in my pay: her conduct compelled me to have recourse to these measures, but I have taken that house away from her. The old woman who plotted with Ferraj to entice you into the house is at the bottom of the Nile. You behaved nobly, and you have nobly kept secret events which, if known, would have brought disgrace on my family. Go on as you have begun, and, Inshallah! so long as Mohammed Ali lives you shall not want a friend. Now you may retire."

445

Hassan kissed the hand extended to him and left the presence with an exulting heart, repeating as he went out the Arabic proverb, "The husbandman prayed for a shower, and, lo! an abundant rain," which answers to our proverb, "It never rains but it pours"—*i.e.*, that blessings, like misfortunes, seldom "come single" in life.^[119]

A month has passed, and Hassan's mother has wept tears of joy on the breast of her long-lost son, and they have reiterated to each other the mysterious attraction which had linked them in sympathy from the first moment that they had met in Deli Pasha's house, and Zeinab Khanum (whom we have so long known as Fatimeh) has refused to leave Amina, now doubly dear to her, until her marriage.

And Amina—who can paint her happiness?—a happiness such as not once in a century can fall to the lot of a daughter of Islam: to be united to one whom her virgin heart has so long worshipped as an idol—one whose courage and devotion she has so surely proved—one whom her pure and trusting heart tells her, and tells her truly, will love her alone.

446

What an intensity of joy is mingled with the blushes on her cheek as she tries on the diamond ornaments with which the munificence of Mohammed Ali had decked the bride of Hassan. For his sake she is content to allow the busy tirewomen to exhaust their efforts in enhancing the brilliancy of her beauty: they stain her delicate fingers with henna, they draw a shaded line of kohl along the lids of her large and lustrous eyes, and they anoint her redundant tresses with the most sweet-scented unguents of Araby.

As Mohammed Ali had undertaken to dower the bride, all the city seemed disposed to take a share in the marriage festivities. For a week Hassan's house had been illuminated every evening, and had been open to all visitors. Lambs, fowls, pilaws, and sweetmeats were demolished wholesale, and thousands of the poor were daily fed in the courts below.

The last day of these ceremonials had now arrived, and Amina was conducted in state to her bridegroom's house. The procession, of immense length, was preceded by a band of tumblers or buffoons, who amused the public by their antics and somersaults; while in front of them walked a *sakkah*, or water-carrier, staggering under the weight of an enormous goat-skin sack filled with sand and water, which entitled him (if he could carry it to the bridegroom's house without setting it down) to a liberal present. Some malicious urchin contrived, unperceived, to cut a large hole in the bottom of the skin, and escaped in the crowd. The *sakkah*, feeling the water trickling down his legs and the lightened load on his back, soon became aware of the trick that had been played him, and attributing it to the tumblers and jugglers behind him, turned round and began to belabour them with his half-empty sack, covering them from head to foot with sand and water, to the infinite amusement of the spectators.

447

Behind these buffoons there followed several open cars, one containing a *kahweji*, or maker of coffee, with the implements of his profession; another a *helwaji*, or sweetmeat-maker; a third a *faterji*, or pancake-maker,—all of whom dispensed their good things to the bystanders as they passed.

After these came a band of musicians, who were followed by a dozen married ladies of rank mounted on white donkeys, their saddles adorned with crimson silk and gold embroidery: to these succeeded a troop of unmarried girls on donkeys similarly accoutred.

Then came the bride, veiled from head to foot, a cashmere shawl over the veil concealing completely her face and figure from the envious eyes of the spectators.

It is usual for brides of rank to ride on donkeys, but on this occasion Amina was mounted on Nebleh, splendidly caparisoned by the Viceroy's order, the beautiful Arab's embroidered reins being held by eunuchs who walked on each side of her head. The procession was closed by a party of Mamelukes richly accoutred and a band of Turkish music.

448

On reaching Hassan's house the bride and her attendants sat down to a repast prepared for them, the bridegroom being, according to etiquette, absent at the bath. After a certain time he returned with his party and a *cortége* scarcely less numerous than that of the bride.

On entering the house he left his friends to refresh themselves below, while he went to an upper apartment where Amina was seated, still completely veiled, between Zeinab Khanum and one of Deli Pasha's wives.

Agreeably to custom, Hassan went through the form of giving to each a piece of money, called the "unveiling fee" (for up to that moment the bridegroom is supposed not to have seen the face of the bride); the two elder ladies retired, and Hassan was left alone with Amina. According to the prescribed rules of their faith, he gently lifted the veil from her face, saying as he did so, "In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful."

But not strange to each other were those eyes that now exchanged their glances of unutterable love. Not the blush of a timid virgin on first seeing the stranger who is hereafter to be her tyrant

449

was the rosy hue that tinged the neck of Amina as she listened in breathless silence to the prayer which, according to Mohammedan rite, he uttered before he ventured to embrace his wedded bride. Placing his right hand on her head, he said with a deep-toned earnestness which thrilled to her heart—

“Oh, Allah, bless me in my wife, and bless my wife in me. Unite us, as thou hast united us, for our good, and separate us when thou hast decreed to do so, likewise for our good.”

Here let us take the veil which Hassan had removed from Amina’s head and hang it over the portal of the room where their love is crowned with that “sober certainty of waking bliss,” which heretofore they had only seen in the visions of hope and in the land of dreams.

THE END.

Footnotes

1. The "Sons of Ali," or, as they are called, the "Oulâd-Ali," have been settled for many years in Egypt, but their legendary history is carried back to the period when they dwelt in Upper Arabia, and they claim affinity with a tribe which still pastures its flocks on the borders of the Nejd.
2. A *kels* is a long rope extended in line, and fastened to the ground by pegs. Throughout its whole length, at intervals of eighteen inches, are fixed two short nooses or slip-knots, into which the forefeet of the goats are inserted at milking-time. In Persia it is usual on a march to fasten the horses at night in a manner precisely similar.
3. For the information of the English reader it is necessary to mention that the word Herâm, with a light aspirate of the initial letter, is the conventional term in Egypt applied to the Pyramid (its plural is Ehrâm), whereas Ĥharâm, with a slight guttural pronunciation of the initial letter, signifies "shame" or "sin." Although these two sounds are scarcely distinguishable from each other in the mouth of a European, they are perfectly distinct in that of an Arab; and thus the expression "Ebn-Harâm," according as the initial is pronounced, means "Child of the Pyramid," or "Child of Shame."
4. Hassan El-Gizèwi, or Hassan of *Ghizeh*, the district in which, about eight or nine miles from Cairo, stand the Great Pyramid and several of the smaller pyramids.
5. The Mohammedan law acknowledges in full the custom of parental adoption, and a child so adopted has legal right of inheritance; but certain religious forms are prescribed for this adoption, which it seems that Sheik Sâleh had not observed in respect to Hassan, probably from a belief that some day he would be claimed by his real parents.
6. Sakkarah is a district lying twelve or fourteen miles to the south-west of Cairo, and is familiar to all Egyptian travellers and untravelled readers as being the site of several pyramids, near which excavations have been made with highly interesting results.
7. One of the Arabic names of Cairo is "Omm-ed-doonia," "Mother of the world."
8. The fellahs, or agricultural population in Egypt, are much despised by the Bedouin Arabs.
9. Alluding to the horsetails which formerly designated the rank of a pasha. When three in number they indicated the rank of a vizier. The practice is now falling or fallen into disuse.
10. The Arabic letter *ain*. The Turks and Persians, in whose respective languages this letter frequently occurs, never attempt to pronounce it otherwise than as a broad Italian *a*. As the same letter is found in the Hebrew alphabet, it may be an interesting speculation for the learned to consider how it was pronounced by the ancient Jews; the modern Jews in Germany and Asia pronounce it like the broad *a*. Its pronunciation seems to have puzzled the learned Seventy in the time of the Ptolemies; at least in the Septuagint version we find it represented by various Greek letters; for instance, in the words "Amalek" and "Eli" the commencing letter in Hebrew is *ain*, as is likewise the last letter in the name of the prophet Hosêa.
11. For those who have not been in the East, it may be necessary to mention that the folding the arms on the breast, which in Europe is considered as a posture of meditation and sometimes of defiance, is among Orientals the usual attitude of humility and respect.
12. It is customary among the Arabs, when using either complimentary phrases or good wishes, to retort them on the speaker briefly, as in the text.
13. Wâled-Ali is synonymous with Oulâd-Ali, the name of a tribe already mentioned; the only difference is that Wâled is singular and Oulâd plural. The former name, though less classical, is in more common use in Alexandria.
14. The Causer of Causes is one of the highest of the attributive names given by the Arabs to the Almighty.
15. It has been the custom of the Egyptians ever since the accession of Mohammed Ali to the viceroyalty to call the reigning Viceroy by the name of "Effendina," "our Lord," or "our Prince."
16. The Kohèil and Saklàwi are two of the highest breeds of horses found in the Nejd or highlands of Arabia.
17. Courbatch is the name of the whip made from the hide of the hippopotamus, in common use all over Egypt and Nubia. The name seems to have an affinity with the French *cravache*, and I have been informed (though perhaps incorrectly) that it is of Hungarian origin.
18. The practice in question is indeed as prevalent among the Arab dealers in Egypt, Syria, and Bagdad as among those of London and Paris.
19. A *ràwi* is a professional reciter of romances, around whom a circle of listeners may always be seen gathered about sunset in Alexandria or Cairo.

20. A *kawàss*, or janissary, in Egypt is an upper servant in attendance on a pasha, a consul, or a person of rank; he is generally a Turk, wears a sword, and is frequently dignified by the title of Aga.
21. Hassan's experience seems to have taught him that, in addressing Turkish officials, the use of that language in place of Arabic is the likeliest method of obtaining attention and a courteous reply.
22. Two thousand piastres are about £20 sterling.
23. Arabs are divided into two classes, distinguished in their own language by the names of "People of the tent" and "People of the domicile"; the former, who are the Bedouins, and nomadic in their habits, have a sovereign contempt for the latter, who live in villages and cultivate the soil. In Egypt there are found on the borders of the desert and arable land a few small tribes who partake of both characters; that is, though Bedouins by birth, they have partially settled down to an agricultural life, and pay a tax to the Government for the land which they occupy. The prisoner under arrest belonged to this latter class.
24. Fayoom is a fertile region in Upper Egypt, on the left bank of the Nile.
25. The Arabs of the north-western shores of Africa are termed "Moghrebin," from the word "Moghreb," "the place of the setting sun." Most of the *pehlivan*s or wrestlers seen in Egypt are Moghrebin.
26. *Pehlivan* is the name common in Turkey, Arabia, and Persia for a "wrestler" or "athlete."
27. *Delì* signifies "mad" in the Turkish language, but it is frequently applied to those who have distinguished themselves in war by acts of daring courage.
28. The word "uncle" is frequently used in Arabic as a term of respectful affection.
29. Taking a *fal*, or an omen, is a very common practice all over the East among persons who are in doubt as to the advisableness of any scheme or project which they wish to undertake: it is done in various ways, sometimes with beads, sometimes with books; but in matters of a serious nature the Koran is usually resorted to. The person wishing to consult the oracle takes up the sacred book, and after putting it reverently to his forehead, opens it at random, and reads the first passage that meets his eyes; if the text is favourable, or can be construed favourably to his project, he follows it out with confidence of success.
30. *Mirakhor*, a Persian word commonly used throughout Turkey, meaning "master of the horse."
31. Not the tree commonly called sycamore in England, but the "wild fig-tree."
32. The reader may perhaps not have heard, or may have forgotten, a reply attributed to Dr Johnson, who being once present at a concert where an Italian singer was executing some bravura ornaments at, if not beyond, the highest notes of her voice, his neighbour observed to him, "How wonderful are those trills." "Would to Heaven they were impossible!" was the Doctor's surly answer.
33. It is a very common image in the popular songs of Egypt, and also in more classic Arabic poetry, to liken a graceful youthful figure in either sex to a spray or wand of the *bân*, or Egyptian willow.
34. In those days all Englishmen travelling in Europe, as well as in Egypt, who spent their money more freely than the average of travellers, were termed "lords."
35. A true story, and one that Mohammed Ali used to tell with great glee.
36. Notwithstanding his long residence in Egypt, Mohammed Ali understood but little Arabic, and could not speak it at all.
37. *Khaznadâr* or "treasurer." This officer often discharges the duties of a private secretary.
38. The term *kassis* is applied in Egypt indiscriminately to Christian clergymen of every sect and denomination.
39. This term, *kiahya*, now common all over Turkey, is a corruption of the Persian word *ket-khoda*, and signifies "master of the house," "vicegerent," &c. The *kiahya* in Egypt is next in rank to the viceroy.
40. Shoobra, a very pretty garden and palace, built and occupied by Mohammed Ali; it is about three miles from Cairo, on the bank of the river.
41. A *canjah* is a Nile boat, much smaller and lighter than a dahabiah.
42. A piastre is about 2½d.

43. Where in Europe it is customary to say as "white as wool" or "white as snow," the Orientals say "white as camphor." The "camphor-neck" of a beauty is an image constantly recurring in Arabic poetry.
44. *Musàttah*, a camel-litter for carrying two persons.
45. A *shibriah*, a camel-litter for a single person.
46. A perpetual fountain of the purest water in the Mohammedan Paradise.
47. The Horseman's Gap is a singular cleft in the high rocks which met at the end of the plain, just leaving a passage wide enough for horsemen to pass in single file.
48. The legend of Rabîah is one of the most ancient now known in the East. It was first communicated to me in the shape of an old Arab MS. by that eminent Arabic scholar, M. Fresnel. I believe he translated and sent it to one of the European Oriental magazines; but I have never seen it myself in print. As it is ten years since I saw the MS., I cannot remember exactly how far the tale in our text deviates from the original. The names which I have introduced are taken at random among names common in the Nejd; but I distinctly remember that of Rabîah, and his heroic death in the gap, as forming the catastrophe of the legend.
49. Whip made of rhinoceros-hide.
50. Shèitan, Arabic form of "Satan."
51. *Salamlîk* is a reception-room in houses of Turkish construction, generally on the first floor, and in the centre of the building.
52. Nejm-et-es-Sabah, "Morning Star."
53. The game of the jereed is almost too familiar to the reading world to require description. It is a mimic fight, representing a combat with the spear or javelin. The jereed is sometimes made of reeds or canes, but more frequently of palm-sticks cut in the form of a javelin, with a blunted point. It varies much in weight; and a heavy jereed thrown by a vigorous arm is capable of giving a very severe, sometimes a dangerous, bruise; for this reason, aiming at the face or head is strictly prohibited in this game, though it necessarily happens in so wild a sport, carried on with reckless riders and horses at full speed, that the head and face often receive a serious hurt.
54. The rosary here alluded to (called in Arabic *tashbih*) is a string of beads, generally one hundred in number, carried by the greater part of Moslems of the upper and middling classes: they are used as "omens," "counter-charms," &c.
55. *Kadaif*, a favourite Turkish dish, made of flour, honey, and other ingredients.
56. The Crimean campaign has now made the name of these Bashi-Bazouks, or irregular cavalry, familiar to all Europe. In Egypt, at the date of our tale, they were mostly Albanians, and a more lawless set of ruffians than they were could not be found on earth. On some occasions their savage violence could not be controlled even by the iron hand of Mohammed Ali. They would neither obey nor leave the country, and he was compelled to bribe them to adopt the latter course, and also to have them escorted by regular troops beyond the frontier.
57. The Mosque El-Azhar is one of the largest, wealthiest, and most celebrated in Cairo. Although devoid of all pretensions to architectural beauty, within its precincts is a college for the instruction of youth; but little is taught beyond reading the Koran and the commentators thereon, writing, and the first rudiments of arithmetic. To the children of the poorer classes the instruction is gratuitous, and even food and lodging are provided from the funds of the endowment. Its revenues were much curtailed by Mohammed Ali.
58. It has before been mentioned that at this game it is forbidden to aim at the head; but, moreover, in order to explain the expressions of Delî Pasha, it must be mentioned that, according to the rules of the game, every "bout" consists of two charges, in which each alternately advances and retreats. It is then considered over, and cannot be continued unless a regular challenge be given for another "bout."
59. "A cup of coffee" is a very common phrase in Egypt for expressing the word "poison," for which a cup of coffee is a frequent medium.
60. This peculiarity in Mohammed Ali's character is historically true. He was hasty and severe, often unjust, in his punishments; but there was a fund of generosity in his heart, a reaction followed, and he frequently elevated to the highest posts those whom he had previously degraded.
61. An Eastern image proverbial among lovers.
62. It may not be amiss to mention that "Amina" is not only a genuine Arabic woman's name, signifying "trusty," "faithful," &c., &c., but is also in high estimation, having been the name of the mother of Mohammed. The root of the word *amin* (true) is one of the original primitives of

the Arabic and Hebrew languages: it was the “verily, verily” so often employed by our Saviour in His threats and warnings, and is still familiar to all in the “amen” (“so be it,” or “may it be true”) which terminates the greater portion of the prayers offered up in Christendom.

63. Kaf, a lofty and inaccessible mountain, celebrated in Eastern romance and mythology.
64. The last two lines are from a well-known Arabic love-song.
65. *I.e.*, “treasurer of a very small treasure.”
66. These and other verses occasionally scattered through this tale are translations from Arabic scraps of poetry and love-songs popular in Egypt. The reader must not suppose that the interview related between the father and daughter is intended to represent the ordinary relations of domestic life in Egypt; on the contrary, it is an exceptional picture, exhibiting the fondness of an eccentric and warm-hearted father for an only child. It is scarcely necessary to say that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, marriages in the East are arranged by the parents and relatives without the slightest reference to the inclinations of the bride.
67. Treasurer.
68. Few of my countrymen who have not resided in the East are probably aware that it is contrary to custom, and indeed to good breeding, to return thanks for a present. The system of present-giving is widespread over the whole East. If a great man makes a present to an equal, the bearer is rewarded and a present of equal value is returned. If a present is sent by a great man to an inferior, the latter gives as much as he can afford to the bearer; but in no case is it considered good manners on the part of either giver or receiver to allude to a present in after-conversation.
69. It must be remembered that thirty years before our tale the path or paths leading from Ghizeh to the Pyramids were not beaten and trodden as they now are; and even now, so long as the waters of the Nile are high, the direct road is intercepted by a number of deep sluices or creeks which oblige the traveller to make a considerable circuit under the guidance of natives acquainted with the country.
70. Although the Thorpes are imaginary personages, and therefore did not witness this scene, it actually occurred some years later exactly as narrated in the text. It may afford food for reflection for those benevolent philanthropists who would encourage the introduction of sudden reforms and the abolition of corporal punishment among a population habituated to the stick and to slavery for a period of five or six thousand years!
71. Before mentioned as an Arabic name for Cairo.
72. *Nebleh*, in Arabic, means “arrow.”
73. A *dabboos* is a kind of war-club or mace much in use among the Mamelukes, in whose military equipment it hung at the saddle-bow. It resembles a pin in shape, being a smooth round handle, surmounted by a head or ball of iron; from the latter sometimes there protruded a sharp spike. I have seen some of these weapons beautifully inlaid with gold and silver, and the handles covered with velvet. They are not now in use, and are only sold as relics or curiosities.
74. Mussulmans, when speaking of those who have died in their own faith, always use the expression in the text, and never speak of them as “the dead,” which latter expression is used when speaking of Christians, heathens, or animals.
75. Up to the age of ten or twelve boys are freely admitted into the oriental harems. After that age no males are admitted, saving fathers, husbands, and brothers of the inmates. The privilege is sometimes extended to some other near relation, who is then termed “Mahrem,” meaning “one who is admitted to the harem.” Neither is it to be supposed that brothers, or even husbands, can intrude upon a lady’s privacy at pleasure. If she be of high rank, her husband cannot enter her boudoir without sending to ask permission. I speak now of Turkish harems especially.
76. This is one of the many instances which our language affords of the changes which words undergo in passing from the Arabic into European tongues, especially when the words contain that impracticable *ayn*, to which the reader’s notice has already been called. This word is written in the original *ayn*, *t*, and *r*, and should therefore be rendered *âtr* or *ôtr*. Some English dictionaries correctly write it “attar.”
77. The original word rendered “good” in the translation of this fine proverb signifies more usually “free,” “noble,” “honourable”; in fact, includes those qualities which ought to be comprised in the character which we designate as a “gentleman.” After studying with some care the proverbs of many European nations, I am bound to say that, in variety of illustration, in terseness and felicity of diction, those found in the Arabic language surpass every other.
78. *Shubrah*, a very pretty garden on the right bank of the Nile, about three miles below Cairo, which was planted and laid out with some taste by a Greek gardener under the instructions of Mohammed Ali. He built a small country house at one extremity, and a very handsome kiosk in the centre of it, containing a large basin of water. At the four corners of the kiosk were richly

furnished apartments, in one of which was a billiard-table, at which the old warrior used sometimes to recreate himself during his latter days with his officers or guests. After his death the garden was neglected and almost destroyed.

79. Squinting is considered in the East an ill omen, and those affected by it are generally avoided. "May you be blind," or "May you squint," is not an unfrequent Arab curse. It is curious that the word for "squinting" is identical in the French and Persian languages, *louche*.
80. Every *beled* or village in Egypt has its sheik or headman, who is responsible for the payment of the taxes, rents, and dues, as well as for the military recruits leviable on its population. Generally speaking, these sheiks are the greatest rascals and tyrants in the country, though they themselves are frequently oppressed and beaten by their Turkish masters.
81. The Defterdar at the period of our tale was a relative of Mohammed Ali, and was an officer possessed of vast power and influence. It may be added that his cruelty was commensurate with his power. The re-mensuration of the cultivable lands had been intrusted entirely to him, and he was responsible for the revenues of the enormous extent of land which the mistaken policy of Mohammed Ali had led him to take into his own hands. Despite the energetic vigour of the Viceroy and the severity of the Defterdar, these lands never produced one-half of the amount which they would have returned had they been farmed to a number of tenants, or to the villagers themselves.
82. One hundred *ardebs* are equivalent to sixty-three imperial quarters.
83. The reader is doubtless aware that in oriental houses there exist neither tables, chairs, cupboards, nor shelves. The last are replaced by niches and recesses of various forms and sizes made in the walls of the room, and in well-furnished houses these niches exhibit goodly rows of china, glass, scent-bottles, &c.
84. Most of the finely-tempered oriental blades, especially those of ancient manufacture, have stamped upon them, near the hilt, "There is no God but Allah," or some short sentence from the Koran.
85. Among the Orientals, Youssuf—*i.e.*, Joseph—was and still remains the proverbial type of manly beauty in the prime of youth. In the Eastern legends the frail helpmate of Potiphar has been changed into a lovely and high-born maiden, called Zuleika. The loves of this couple are referred to in one of the most eloquent chapters of the Koran, and have since been celebrated by Arab and Persian poets innumerable.
86. A dark powder used in the East.
87. I suppose it is well known that on entering a carpeted apartment in the East it is customary to leave the slippers near the door, or at all events on the stone or marble floor at the outer edge of the carpet.
88. The sketch given of this Egyptian Messalina is not imaginary, neither will it be difficult of recognition to any of the older residents in Cairo. The author, while passing in a boat before that window which has been made the scene of Hassan's leap, has often been told by the Nile boatmen, "That is the window from which the bodies of her hapless lovers were thrown when she was tired of them." The tale may be exaggerated, or perhaps invented; but at all events it shows the reputation enjoyed by the lady in question. Her crimes were not unknown to Mohammed Ali, for the author was once informed by a near relative of the old Viceroy that, on the occasion of some flagrant outrage similar to that described in the text, he was himself ordered by the indignant Prince to put her to death; and it was only by dint of urgent entreaties that he succeeded in procuring a commutation of the bloody sentence to a stern threat of summary punishment in case the offence should be repeated.
89. It must not be inferred from this that Mohammed Ali could not read: though not a good scholar, he could decipher a plainly written letter; but he rarely did so, and disuse made it daily a more troublesome and difficult task.
90. The walks in the Shoobra garden were then fancifully paved with parti-coloured pebbles. These walks have all been destroyed, and carriage-roads made through the garden.
91. It has before been noted that the Egyptians, when speaking of the Viceroy, always use the word Effendina or Effendiniz—the former being the Arabic form, the latter the Turkish, for "Our lord." The English word Viceroy has been generally used in this tale as being shorter and better known.
92. It would be unwarrantable to introduce, even in a work of fiction, such a charge against the memory of a man who, with all his faults, was certainly a great and sagacious Prince, had it not some foundation in truth. But it was stated to the author by Abbas Pasha himself that he fully believed that his father had been poisoned by Mohammed Ali's order. The author asked him whether there was any circumstantial evidence to corroborate this suspicion. "Yes," he replied. "The news of his death was conveyed from Lower Egypt to Mohammed Ali's confidential household officer by a swift courier. The officer, ignorant of his master's views, and afraid of the effect which might be produced on him by the sudden announcement of his son's death,

proceeded to break the intelligence to him with caution, saying, 'My lord, news is arrived of Toussoun Pasha.' 'When—how did he die?' was the answer. How," continued Abbas Pasha, "could he have known or guessed that a man in the prime of life had suddenly died unless he had himself decreed it?" There was certainly force in the argument; but as all substantial evidence is wanting, we must be satisfied with the universal Arabic conclusion on such matters—"Allah knows." Another reflection naturally arises from this tragedy—namely, that when we remember the energy and severity of Mohammed Ali's character, it seems incredible that if a favourite son, and one of the bravest commanders in his army, had been suddenly carried off by poison in the prime of life without any order or connivance of his own, no open and diligent examination of the officers of the Prince's household should have been made, and no medical inquiry as to the causes of death have been instituted. Such domestic tragedies are so common in the East that they create but little sensation on the spot. The fate of the son resembled that of the father. There is little doubt but that Abbas Pasha, the late Viceroy, was strangled in his bed by two Mamelukes who had lately entered his service, highly recommended by certain persons in Constantinople. They had stolen money from his harem, and he had threatened them with punishment. They were the only two on duty close to his bedroom on the night of his sudden death. They disappeared immediately after it, yet no real search was made for them; no public or satisfactory medical examination of the body was allowed; it was buried in unseemly haste, and with nothing of viceregal pomp. Crowds of sycophants flocked to the divan of the successor, and a very short time afterwards the author was informed that one of the supposed murderers had become an officer in the Egyptian army!

- [93.](#) One of the ninety-nine names of God among the Arabs.
- [94.](#) On account of the strong currents and numerous shoals and mudbanks that occur in the Nile, it is usual to fasten the boats to the banks at sunset and pursue the navigation at daybreak. During the night a certain number of guards or watchmen are hired from the nearest village, and while they watch (or sleep, as it may be) on the banks near the dahabiah, its owners and their property are usually secure from robbery.
- [95.](#) This phrase is rather Persian than Turkish, and arises not only from the fine sense of hearing supposed to be conferred by the long ears of the hare, but also from a popular belief that even when asleep pussy has one eye open.
- [96.](#) In the Nile, as in most alluvial rivers, the strongest currents are always under the high and precipitous bank; and it often happens that for several miles successively the strongest swimmer could not land on that side.
- [97.](#) Hassan's object being to frighten away any crocodiles which might be near.
- [98.](#) In Hassan's mouth the word Arab signified Bedouins; for he would not apply that honourable name to fellahs or the dwellers in villages.
- [99.](#) The wit-wat is the Arabic name for a kind of curlew very common in Egypt.
- [100.](#) One of the Eastern names for the nightingale.
- [101.](#) The word literally translated in the text "wild ox" is the *bakr-el-wachsh*, a very large and powerful species of antelope found in the deserts bordering on Egypt.
- [102.](#) It is probably known to most readers that nine out of ten Arabic proper names have reference to the Deity or the religion of Islam. The name Abd-hoo, literally "His servant," means "the servant of God." The pronoun "He," when standing apart from any person referred to in a sentence, always has reference to Allah.
- [103.](#) Wrestling-matches (called *musàara* in Arabic and *kushty* in Persian) are a very favourite exercise among the populations of both countries, and at them, as at the games of cricket in England and curling in Scotland, the higher and lower classes contend on a footing of equality. A highly respected and talented British Minister at the Court of Tehran used frequently to "try a fall" with some of his own servants at a gymnasium near the mission residence. We insert this note in order to prevent our readers from supposing that our hero had degraded himself by accepting the unexpected challenge of the Darfour.
- [104.](#) *Latif* signifies courteous, polite, amiable, &c.
- [105.](#) Lest the reader should suppose that this scene has been exaggerated or represents a state of superstition no longer existing at Cairo, it may be as well to mention that it was witnessed by the author exactly as here described in the summer of 1852.
- [106.](#) This incident actually occurred at Cairo in 1849-50.
- [107.](#) This incident also actually took place, though somewhat later than the period of our tale.
- [108.](#) Loose trousers, generally made of cotton.
- [109.](#) *Moharrabin* are deserters from the Egyptian army, who sometimes infest the provinces in considerable numbers; and as many have with them their arms and accoutrements, and are

always joined by thieves and runaways from justice, they are marauders very formidable to travellers and caravans.

- [110.](#) *Sant*, the Arabic name for the *Acacia nilotica*. It is a thorn-bearing variety, its wood very hard, and its yellow flower extremely fragrant.
- [111.](#) Thebes, in Upper Egypt, is vulgarly called “Luxor,” a corruption of its proper Arabic name “El-Uksor.” The name Thebes is completely unknown to the natives.
- [112.](#) Dervish Bey had never heard of the “gallant Ormond”; but the feelings and instincts of parental love are in all ages and climes alike.
- [113.](#) The Fat’hah is the opening chapter of the Koran. It is recited at least once on all solemn occasions among the Moslems, and, being very short, is known by heart by many among them, who, like Mohammed Ali, know little more of the contents of their sacred book.
- [114.](#) A slang term for arrack.
- [115.](#) Alluding to a popular tale, in which four or five women, wives of a *bakkal* or grocer, came before the *câdi* to make a complaint against their husband. They stormed and scolded all at once, and made such a din in the court that not a word could be heard or understood. When at length they stopped for want of breath, the *câdi* dismissed the case, saying, “There is no crime of which the man can have been guilty that is not sufficiently punished by his having those women for wives.”
- [116.](#) *Yuzbashi*, literally centurion, or captain over one hundred—a rank in the Egyptian army corresponding to that of lieutenant.
- [117.](#) The “Ezn-el-âshah” is the muezzin’s call to prayer about two hours after sunset.
- [118.](#) A very common phrase in Turkish for a “mad-cap.” It means literally “mad-blood.”
- [119.](#) The episode of the conspiracy described above is founded on fact but it took place some years before the date assigned to our tale. One day when I was sitting *tête-à-tête* with Mohammed Ali, he spoke very disparagingly of Ibrahim Pasha. I observed, “Yet on the occasion of that dangerous conspiracy against your Highness’s life Ibrahim behaved well, and gave no encouragement to it.” “He dared not,” replied the Old Lion; “but it was only fear that withheld him.” I shall never forget the fire that flashed from his eyes as he uttered these words.

Minor changes in presentation have been made from the layout of the original paper publication.

Footnotes have been renumbered and relocated at the end of the book.

Punctuation has been normalized. Variations in hyphenation have been retained as they were in the original publication. The following assumed printer's errors were corrected:

In Footnote #3, the word Ĥharâm as represented by an H capped by a circumflex was represented in this edition by an H capped by a tilde or possibly a pokrytie in the original edition, the fonts for which are not as commonly available.

every —> Every {Page 8}

mothor —> mother {Page 12}

arrear —> arrears {Page 46}

choloric —> choleric {Page 120}

untamable —> untameable {Page 132}

Skeik-el-Beled —> Sheik-el-Beled {Page 230}

know —> Know {Page 241}

Acacia hilotica —> Acacia nilotica {Page 364}

Deli —> Deli {Footnote 27}

and are alway —> and are always {Footnote 109}

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HASSAN; OR, THE CHILD OF THE PYRAMID: AN EGYPTIAN TALE ***

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