

K A R A H K A P L A N ;

OR,

THE KOORDISH CHIEF.

A TALE OF PERSIA AND KOORDISTAN.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1842.



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## KOORDISH CHIEF.

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### CHAPTER I.

Whose dog was Rustum, compared to you?

PERSIAN TALE.

It was nearly midnight, and a solemn stillness reigned throughout the camp, only broken by the tread of those sentinels, whom sleep had not surprised upon their posts, and by the baying of the dogs, that invariably infest a Persian camp. The moon having long since set, a gloomy darkness wrapped all around in its folds, save where the dim light of a solitary lamp might be seen through the can-

vass of a tent. The air was fresh and balmy, as is usual to the climate of northern Persia at that season of the year; but it was no intention of enjoying the delightful nocturnal breeze that induced a tall figure, wrapped in a huge kabau to creep slowly along the outer wall which enclosed the tent of Zoraya. This mysterious person gradually reached the entrance, but perceiving when so close upon him only that he nearly trod upon his face, a sleeping sentinel stretched across the opening; he was for an instant perplexed, a sudden thought, however, seemed to flash across his mind, for proceeding some steps further, he drew his cummar and slit up the canvass wall, until an aperture sufficiently large for his entrance was made; then bending down he crept through, and proceeded towards the tent containing the maiden, which was a few paces distance; just, however, as he had reached the door, a man, who was keeping watch, sprung

upon him, and was on the point of seizing him, and demanding the reason of his presence at such an hour; when prompt as thought, the intruder (although the attack was entirely unexpected), seized the throat of his assailant with a powerful grasp, and kept him at arm's length. The man struggled furiously to free himself, but his adversary was one possessed of such tremendous strength, that the other was as a child in his grasp. With a dying effort, however, the Persian drew his dagger, and struck it at the side of his foe; the weapon was truly aimed, and had it gone the road it was intended to do, would have caused a mortal wound, but a shirt of mail met the point, which snapped asunder like glass. The struggles of the wretch now became fainter, and presently ceased altogether, the unhappy victim having been strangled by the powerful grasp laid upon his throat. The deed had been performed with scarcely any noise, excepting

a slight rattle, and the murderer smiled contemptuously, as he gently laid the body on the ground. To him the encounter had been but child's play, having scarcely required the slightest exertion on his part.

“So may all mine enemies perish,” he ejaculated, as he lifted up the curtain which led into the tent, at the door of which the fatal deed had been committed. With this observation he entered.

A lamp was burning within, and by its light the sleeping form of the Hamadaneë maiden was visible; her head reclining upon one arm, while the other hung gracefully over her forehead. Her bedding, according to the custom of the country, was spread upon the beautiful carpets, which covered the ground. The arrangement of oriental bedding among the upper classes is simple, consisting of a mattress laid upon the ground, over which is spread a sheet, on which the form of the sleeper reclines, his



head being supported by pillows of down ; the outer covering is a lahoff, or quilt, made of silk stuffed with cotton. In the present instance, the materials composing the coverlet were of the most beautiful Cashmere shawls, and the sheets of the best European cambric. Near the bed occupied by Zoraya, slept Nargis and other kaneezes, upon couches formed of simpler materials.

The new comer paused for a moment as he entered, and gazed upon the sleeping forms before him ; and for a moment the feelings of him, who had just before committed murder, felt softened—so transcendently beautiful, so innocent was the scene before him ; but the sensation was momentary, for expelling from his breast every sparkling of humanity, the fiend prepared to finish his work.

Creeping softly as if treading upon ice, he approached the couch of the sleeping maiden, and bending down till his ear was close to her

mouth, he seemed listening, in order to ascertain whether her slumbers were sound. Human nature here prevailed, and he could not restrain himself from imprinting upon the pouting lips before him, an impassioned kiss. Still the maiden woke not, she was evidently under the influence of the potion he had directed to be administered. Encouraged at this, the ruffian quietly tied a gag over her mouth, and then proceeded to bind her arms and legs with a silken cord he had brought for the purpose. While he was thus engaged, Nargis moved and spoke ; the dagger of the intruder was instantly raised, but on his observing that the girl had merely uttered the sound in her sleep, it was returned to its sheath.

As soon as Zoraya had been so fastly bound, that even had she awakened, she could neither have screamed or struggled, the astrologer, (for it was he) raised her in his arms, and pre-

pared to leave the tent ; before, however, finally quitting it, he hesitated, and the idea ran through his mind, that it would be as well to drive his cummar to the heart of each of the sleeping kaneezes, in order to entirely prevent their giving any alarm, should they awake and find their mistress gone ; it was, however, a momentary thought, for the innocent faces of the maidens, as they lay wrapped in slumber, recalled to his recollection, that he had a sister and a wife—and that he had once been a child, and must have appeared as peaceable and innocent while sleeping.

Crossing therefore the threshold, and stepping over the dead body of the man he had slain, he proceeded with noiseless steps, towards the rent he had made in the canvass wall, and crept through ; but instead of returning towards his own tent, he turned his steps as fast as the darkness would permit, in a different direction, until he arrived at a spot

where several horses were tethered, while the Mehters,(1) whose duty it was to watch them, were lying fast asleep, near a heap of saddles. Placing the unconscious maiden on the ground, and laying hold of a saddle, he proceeded to strap it on the back of one of the animals, then having bridled it, he once more took up his sleeping burden, and placing her across the neck of the steed, mounted with a vault, and spurring its sides with the sharp stirrup, galloped off. The sounds caused by the animal's hoofs, awoke one of the Mehters, who instantly gave the alarm, crying out to his companions that a horse had been carried off by robbers. The man then hastily counted those under his care, and discovering the loss to be real, he halloed out to the sentinels on the outside of the camp to stop the thief.

The astrologer heard the cry, and knowing that he would be obliged to pass a spot where a sentinel was on guard, and apprehen-

sive of the man's being aroused by the alarm that had been given, he drew his sabre, and as he came up to the serbaz, who called on him to stop, he struck his head from his shoulders with one swoop of his arm, and with such force, that it flew several paces from the trunk, which fell heavily to the ground. The murdered serbaz, however, in the moment of death, had pulled the trigger of his musket, which going off, the report aroused the picket, who were sleeping close at hand. In a moment several soldiers had sprung to their feet, and discharged their muskets in the direction of the flying marauder. It was, however, too obscure to take an aim, and though several balls whistled by his ears, he was unscathed; but knowing well, that an instant pursuit would be made, he urged his horse, notwithstanding the almost impenetrable gloom, to its utmost speed, and being well acquainted with the ground over which he was galloping, he was

soon far beyond pursuit ; indeed, after a most unsuccessful search, the pursuers had returned to their stations, the only satisfaction received by the owner of the stolen horse, being the witnessing of a most terrible bastinado, which he commanded to be administered on the soles of the negligent Mehter, as a warning not to sleep another time, while watching over his charge.

In the meanwhile the astrologer, having held on his rapid course for a full hour, at length arrived where the ground became so hilly, and the path so winding, that he was obliged to rein in his panting steed, and moderate his pace. Having thus proceeded for above two hours, he came up to the brink of a steep precipice, where he gave a shrill whistle, which was answered by another, and in a few moments more, he was surrounded by several men who, by the light of a fanoos(2) held in the hand of one of them, appeared habited

in the Koordish costume, and armed from head to foot.

“ Welcome, thrice welcome, Moorad Beg,” they cried, “ have you been successful?”

“ Behold !” answered the soothsayer, or rather Moorad as we must now call him. “ Behold !”(3)

With these words he dismounted, and laid his burden on the ground.

“ By Ali !” cried the admiring throng, “ your head is exalted, and your face will be whitened in the sight of the Khan !”

“ Thank you, my friends,” replied Moorad, “ accept my thanks for your good wishes ; but stand back for the present while I unbind this girl ; no one excepting myself, must gaze upon beauty destined for his Highness.”

The Koords having respectfully retreated a few paces at this command, Moorad cut with his dagger, the cords which bound the limbs of Zoraya, and having removed the gag which

covered her mouth, cast a veil over her features, and calling to his companions observed :—

“ Tell me Ibrahim, have you prepared all, as was commanded ?”

“ Aye, Sahib, all is ready. In yonder cavern is a takteravan filled with the softest cushions, and four of the best mules to be found in the country. We have also brought an old woman from our tribe, in case the Khanum might need some gentler tending than we could bestow.”

“ Barakillah Ibrahim !” cried Moorad, “ you shall not want the reward due to your alacrity ; you are a good servant. By the bye,” he continued, “ have you got any provisions ready, for this ride has made me as hungry as a famished tiger. I could devour a bullock.”

“ So please you, Sahib,” answered the other, “ they are preparing an excellent pillouille, and also some other dishes ; such as would tempt a Mollah to break the fast of the Ramazan.



We have brought with us the cook Jaffier, who merits good fortune for his skill."

"Better and better," observed Moorad. "Jaffier is a cook beyond all price; his cabobs would excite hunger in a dead man. Go, therefore, and prepare our meal, while I bear this girl into the inner cavern. I trust you have spread a carpet and a mattress there, whereon I may lay her, for though she has been fast asleep during our late journey, still she has unavoidably been kept in an uncomfortable posture, and must have received some hard knocks; it will therefore be by no means amiss that she be laid upon cushions."

Thus speaking, he raised the senseless form of the maiden in his arms, and bore her towards a neighbouring rock, and having entered a low passage, in a few seconds found himself in a large cavern formed by nature, where a comfortable fire was blazing, before which a man was busily engaged in the act of

cooking. Hastily passing through this place, Moorad entered another cave, much smaller than the former ; in this a mungal(4) was burning, near which an old woman was preparing some bedding. Having given some injunctions to the crone, he laid his burden upon the mattress, and returned to the outer cavern. His entrance was the signal for the commencement of festivity ; seating themselves in a circle the Koords prepared to attack the savoury viands that were set before them by the renowned Jaffier.

First and foremost, an enormous pillouille of snow white rice, stuffed with raisins, vanished before the strenuous exertions of the hungry company ; then sundry cabobs, boiled meats and chickens were devoted to destruction ; next followed sweetmeats of various descriptions ; as provocatives to drinking, means for which were furnished by a large skin of Shiraz wine, from which the company, regard-

less of their being Mussulmen, took long and copious draughts.

The meal having come to a termination, Moorad took his seat at the upper end of the cavern, and proceeded to relate his adventures; the recital was received with rapturous applause by the Koords, particularly that part which made mention about the strangling of the attendant, at the entrance of the tent of Zoraya.

“Mashallah!” cried Ibrahim, “I have heard tales before, and wonderful tales too; but this is the very father of tales. Zaul(4) and Rustum were heroes, and great heroes; but they could scarcely have proved a match for you, Moorad Beg.”

“At any rate,” returned Moorad; “the dead dog of a pishkidmud proved but a sorry representative of the heroes you have named. I marvel that Mehtee Khan should have provided such a feeble guard for his daughter;

however, I was fortunate in one respect, my grasp fell at once upon his throat, and prevented his crying out and giving an alarm. I owe something also to this shirt of mail, for the cummar of the burnt-father struck so forcibly against it, that had it not intervened between my body and the dagger's point, you would not again have had me amongst you."

"However Sahib," observed Ibrahim, "are you sure he is dead?"

"If there is any strength in these forefingers and thumbs," replied Moorad; "I would not give a Shai(5) for the chance of his ever again drawing breath. Had you heard the gurgle, and the death-rattle in his throat, you would not have asked the question."

"Alhamdellillah!" cried Ibrahim, "that it hath so happened, and also that you have returned safe. The Khan would rather lose his right arm than you, for are you not in truth, the right arm and stay of the tribe; barakil-

lah, Khuddamee shooma mabarak bashad, may your steps be fortunate.”

“Alhamdellillah !” added Moorad ; “ that I had my trusty sword with me, and was so enabled to wipe out the disgrace it underwent on the Alwend hills with the blood of a Persian sentinel. By the beard of the Shah, you should have been near, when his head flew from his shoulders, like the cap of an Iranee on a windy day. By the bye, Abbas,” he continued, turning to a Koord who was standing at the further end of the cavern, “ see that you clean my sabre well, and take care that the blood of the Persian hound, whose soul I have sent to grill with his fathers, rust not on it.”

“ Bachesm,” answered the man, respectfully ; “ provided the steel hath not already begun to rust, the rising sun shall see his rays reflected from the blade as brightly as from a mirror.”

“ You are a good servant,” said his master,

“give heed to it well; but firstly see whether the dawn is breaking.”

The man quitted the cavern, and returning after a few minutes, announced that all without was yet dark.

“Would to Allah it were otherwise,” observed his master, on hearing the answer to his injunction; “I would fain proceed with all speed; but it would be too hazardous to pass with a takteravan over the hills, while the path was wrapped in obscurity. I shall not feel satisfied till the girl is safely within our camp; for then, let the Shah himself come at the head of his army and attack our valleys, would he not wish he had kept away; here, Ibrahim, you must help to wile away the time with a song; you have a good voice and a round store of melodies, therefore give us one of them at present, for I feel no inclination for sleep.”

“With pleasure,” returned Ibrahim; “listen while I sing to the praise of Shiraz wine, and

to the downfall of the enemies of the Karah Kaplan.”

## KOORDISH SONG, SUNG BY IBRAHIM.

## I.

O cupbearer, linger not long on thy way,  
Bring hither the golden wine;  
What pleasures, what joys, say Mollah, say,  
Than drinking, are more divine.

Then drink, drink, drink away,  
By night and by day,  
Think not it hurts a mussulman's soul;  
To drain Shiraz wine from a Koordish bowl.

## II.

Our prophet forbade us the juice of the vine,  
In giving his rigorous laws;  
But surely he ne'er could have dreamed of such wine,  
As they make from the grapes of Shiraz.

Then drink, &c.

## III.

Here's to Karah Kaplan, our Tiger Lord,  
The dread of the Persian hound,  
May he rule o'er the tribes, may the Koordish sword  
Deal death and destruction around.

Then drink, &c.

## IV.

May all who oppose the Koordistan bands  
 Grill and rot for ever in hell,  
 We'll defile their hearths, and we'll ruin thier lands,  
 And their children to slavery sell.

Then drink, &c.

## V.

O give me the liquor that maddens the brain,  
 While it gladdens the heart of man,  
 Or transplant the vineyards of Shiraz's plain,  
 To the valleys of Koordistan.

Then drink, &c.

## VI.

No wonder the song of our Saadi(6) was sweet,  
 The language of love and of bliss,  
 And his thoughts as the wind and the antelope swift,  
 When he drank of such nectar as this.

Then drink, &c.

## VII.

I swear that the soul that is hovering still,  
 Round Hafiz(7) and Saadi's tomb,  
 Hath entered the juice that my beaker doth fill,  
 And lent it, its vigour and bloom.

Then drink, &c.




## VIII.

But by Allah himself and his prophet divine,  
Though a thousand times brighter it ran,  
There is but one pledge that is worthy such wine  
'Tis the glory of Karah Kaplan.

Then drink, &c.

This song was received with enthusiasm, and by the manner in which the company assembled joined in the chorus, it was evidently a well-known and favourite melody. After the applause had finished, another vocalist was about to commence one of those interminable recitatives common to oriental countries, when the attention of all present was excited by a shrill shriek issuing from the inner cave. Gnashing his teeth with rage, Moorad sprang to his feet, and bidding his companions remain where they were, he seized a lamp and rushed into the inner cave, where he had deposited the sleeping form of the Hamadane Maiden.



## CHAPTER II.

Is this a dream ?

ON entering the inner cavern, Moorad beheld the maiden in a half kneeling, half recumbent attitude on the mattress, and supporting the weight of her body on one hand, while she held the other over her eyes. That portion of her face which was visible showed signs of the utmost terror, mingled with astonishment.

“ Merciful Allah !” she was exclaiming, “ what is this ; do I dream, or have my senses left me. Who are you ?” she continued addressing the old woman, who was standing near. “ Speak, am I alive.”

At this moment she beheld the countenance of Moorad, which she instantly recognised as belonging to the man, who had seized her during her journey from Hamadan; upon which leaping to her feet and rushing to the further end of the cavern, she exclaimed in an agonised tone,

“Monster, fiend, why do you thus persecute me? Begone! or if I am dreaming, O Allah suffer me to awake.”

“Khanum,” answered Moorad quietly, “calm yourself, this is no dream; but fear not; you are in the power of Allah Ver-dee Khan, generally known as the Karah Kaplan.”

“What say you?” cried Zoraya, horror struck at the news. “In the power of Karah Kaplan? How, when, by what means?”

Moorad in answer gave a rapid sketch of the manner in which she had been carried off;

at the same time assuring her, that there was no cause for alarm. The unhappy girl, at the recital clasped her hands together, and for a moment remained motionless ; then approaching the Koord, she threw herself on her knees, and beseeched him to plunge his cummar into her breast.

“ If you have any sense of mercy left !” she said, “ kill me outright ; death is better than dishonour.”

“ Khanum !” replied the Koord, “ no dishonour is intended ; surely you cannot term an alliance with our chief, by such a name.”

“ Aye, surely I do !” returned Zoraya. “ Is he not at the head of a band of robbers ; is he not a marauder, a rebel, and a cut throat ?”

“ When you have brought your complimentary epithets to a close,” observed Moorad

with something like contempt in his voice and manner, “you will, perhaps, allow me to add to the list of appellations you have bestowed upon the Khan, that of a Koordish independent chief, owing alliance to no one, and therefore no rebel. What prouder situation think you can there be?”

“Were your leader the Shah of Iran,” answered the maiden, “he has forfeited all title to the name of a man of honour. Call you your present an honourable act?”

“Permit me, lady!” said the Koord, “to observe that violent measures were not had recourse to, until your hand was refused—aye, refused in a most contemptuous manner by your father. The love the Khan bore towards you could not so be baulked.”

An involuntary shudder ran over the frame of the maiden at these words; wilfully misunderstanding the cause, Moorad continued,

“Allow me to make a representation Kha-

num, and to suggest that it would not be amiss for you to spend in repose, the short time that remains before we proceed on our journey. I perceive you are shuddering from cold. Yonder Geesifid will supply you with warm covering ; in the meanwhile I will retire. Should you require any refreshment, you can mention the circumstance to your attendant. May your shadow never be less."

With these words, he inclined his figure in the most respectful manner, and quitted the cavern. As soon as he had disappeared, Zoraya threw herself upon the bed, and gave way to the most bitter lamentations ; the Geesifid(1) gazed upon her for a while, with no complacent air ; she had heard the damsel utter abuse against her chief, and that was sufficient to excite angry feelings in her bosom ; for, in unison with the rest of her tribe, both old and young, man and woman, she entertained a devoted affection for Karah Kaplan.

Her youth and beauty, however, together with the evident heart-rending grief demonstrated by Zoraya, seemed to soften the feeling of rancour, entertained by the old woman; for approaching her charge in a most respectful manner, she inquired whether she could do any thing for her. Zoraya raised her eyes on hearing the attendant's voice, and looking earnestly at her, exclaimed,

“ You are a woman, and must therefore feel some kindness towards your sex; say, is it really true, that I am in the power of Allah Verdee ?”

“ You are, Khanum !” replied the Geesifid; “ but grieve not thereat, his equal breathes not; so cheer up, young one; and instead of going into my master's presence in tears, let him behold you with a smiling face; your's will be by no means a hard fate.”

“ Are we near the encampment of your tribe ?” demanded Zoraya anxiously.

“ A Chupper(2) would go there in less than five days,” replied the old woman ; “ but, travelling in the manner we are about to do, it will take at least fifteen.”

“ Allah be praised,” muttered the maiden ; “ there is still hope, if pursuit be made.”

“ What did you please to observe, Khanum,” asked the Geesifid.

“ Nothing,” replied Zoraya ; “ but tell me, shall we be well attended ?”

“ About twenty well armed horsemen will ride close to the takteravan, in which you will be carried,” said the old woman, “ which force will be sufficient to guard us against the attack of a much larger number ; as each of our warriors is well acquainted with the different windings of the mountains : and every peak is as familiar to him as his own tent pole, so that nothing will intervene to prevent your safe arrival within our valleys.”

Zoraya, on hearing this answer, raised her



eyes to her attendant's countenance, then holding up her hands beseechingly, she exclaimed,

“Are you a mother!”

“Thanks be to Allah, I am,” said the Geesifid, “and of a son, who is a blessing to his only parent.”

“Are you a widow too?” inquired the maiden.

“Alas, such has been the will of Allah,” answered the old woman, as a tear rose to her eye.

“Did you love your husband,” said Zoraya, “that is, did you love him devotedly?”

“By our blessed prophet,” said the Geesifid, “did I not dote on my poor Rasam, and with good reason too; he never had another wife but myself, and never spoke an unkind word to me in his life; but alas, he is gone for ever, and has left me an only son, to be the comfort of mine age.”

“Suppose,” said Zoraya, “that son was

torn by violence from you, and dragged away to undergo captivity and dishonour, would you not deem it a misfortune ?”

“ Afakerillah !” answered the old woman, “ why, the very idea is almost sufficient to drive me mad. What, lose my brave boy !”

“ But !” continued the maiden, “ suppose fate had ordained that your son was to be seized and dragged from your presence ; suppose, all hope of seeing him more had fled, would you not bless the name of any one, who should be the means of rescuing him ; and, restoring him to your arms ?”

“ I would pray for him, night and day,” answered the Geesifid earnestly. “ I would call upon Allah to raise his fortune ; I would curse his enemies, as if they were mine own.”

“ Woman !” said Zoraya in a low voice, “ I am an only child. My father loves me ; when

he discovers my absence, he will go mad with grief. O! as you hope for happiness yourself, pity and assist me."

"How! Khanum," said the old woman, "what can one so full of years, and feeble as myself, do to serve you?"

"You can help me to escape from these cruel marauders?" answered the maiden; "do so, and endless will be your reward."

"It is impossible!" exclaimed the Geesfid; "there is no outlet from this place, save through the cavern where Moorad Beg and his companions are carousing; escape is impossible."

"O! say not so!" cried Zoraya in an agony of grief, "think of some scheme, which will ensure my liberation. I have jewels of value on my person; all, all shall be your's, if you will procure me freedom."

"You had better reserve your wealth for other purposes!" said a voice from the entrance; "think not, Khanum, to corrupt

yonder woman, either by prayers or bribes ; she is a Koord, and loves her master too well, to allow the sight of gold to turn her from her duty.”

With these words Moorad (for it was he) came forward, carrying a round tray filled with provisions ; setting it down before Zoraya, he continued,

“ Allow me, once for all, to observe that you are wasting both your wealth and time, in talking about escape ; it would be easier for you to walk on the ocean, than give us the slip. Permit, therefore, your slave to entreat you to drive such futile schemes from your imagination ; they will only harass your mind, and can serve no purpose. In the meanwhile, let me advise you to partake of some refreshment, you will require it before we set off on our march, which will be in less than an hour’s time. Should you require any thing else, you can inform your attendant ; remember all that these caverns contain, is at your service.”

Having thus spoken, he made a salaam and retired.

“Wahi! wahi!” cried the unhappy captive, “am I then utterly forsaken? O! that my brave Eliaut were present, to rescue me from the clutches of these barbarians; but, alas, none are near but the friends of my ravisher.”

The Geesifid now approached, and besought the maiden to partake of some food, as a long journey was before them. Zoraya shook her head, declaring she had no appetite; when, suddenly changing colour she cried,

“You may give me, however, a draught from yonder bowl of sherbet, for I am racked with thirst. My brain burns, my heart throbs, as if it were about to burst; I have been poisoned. Well, well, death is welcome, as it opens the only door to freedom.”

Thus speaking, she sank half fainting on the bed; the Geesifid alarmed at the symptoms displayed, called out for assistance, and on

Moorad's entrance, informed him of what had happened, at the same time pointing to Zoraya.

“ It is nothing !” said the Koord, on taking a survey of his prisoner ; “ at least, only the effect of agitation acting upon the potion she drank, on retiring to rest. Give me yonder bowl.”

The woman hastened to obey the order, and Moorad having poured some liquid from a small leathern bottle, into the sherbet, held the bowl to Zoraya's lips ; who, almost unconsciously drained it to the dregs.

The good effects of the remedy soon showed itself, for a delicious coolness ran through the veins of the sufferer ; entirely dispelling every symptom of fever, and refreshing the blood, which had been heated by the soporific draught.

“ I will again leave you !” said Moorad, on observing the effects of his remedy, “ as I must prepare for our setting forth. The false dawn(3)

is already appearing in the east ; and long before sunrise, we must be on our road. Yonder girl can rest as well in the takteravan as here ; and, therefore, cannot complain of our moving her too soon. Prepare, however, some warm clothing for her, as the mornings are chill, though the midday sun burns like a furnace."

" Bachesm !" was the answer, as Moorad retired. " Poor girl, she has indeed need of rest. I confess my heart bleeds for her. Inshallah, her grief will soon be changed to joy, Inshallah ! Inshallah !"

## CHAPTER III.

All furnished, all in arms!  
All plumed, like estridges, which wing the wind  
Bated, like eagles, having lately bathed—  
Glittering in golden coats, like images.  
As full of spirit as the month of May,  
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer.

FIRST PART OF HENRY IV, ACT 4. SCENE 1.

ZORAYA on quitting the presence of Moorad, proceeded through the outer cavern and entered the open air; here, preparations were already making for departure; about twenty Koords were visible by the dim light of the false dawn, in the act of saddling their steeds, while several muleteers were busied leading some mules, and harnessing others to a takte-



ravan. A glance at his companion served to show Moorad how fully they were prepared to meet a foe. Each horseman wore a coat of chain armour, perfectly sabre proof, and also a good protection against fire-arms; on their heads they bore a steel cap, with a sharp pique, covered with a shawl, the ends of which hung in folds, reaching nearly to their shoulders and affording a protection against the rays of the sun. Over their thighs and legs were fastened plates of iron. Their arms consisted of a curved sabre hanging partly behind, partly on the left side; a heavy gun slung across their shoulders besides a brace of enormous pistols and a short cummar, stuck into their girdles. On the right side of their saddles was swung a quiver, containing three short steel javelins—a weapon most destructive in the hands of the Koords, on account of the unerring aim and force with which they are wont to hurl it. The steeds, also, of these men had

breast plates of iron, and coverings of the same metal for their foreheads.

This was the escort which was intended to accompany Zoraya on her journey to the tribe of Allah Verdee; and seldom, if ever had a finer body of men been seen together, being the chosen of the tribe, inured to every hardship and trained from their infancy to the use of arms and the management of the most furious steeds.

The very muleteers to whose care the takt-ravan and loads were consigned were by no means wanting in weapons of defence; each wore a large cummar at his side, and a heavy pistol in his girdle. These men(1) were famed for their pedestrian powers, being able, when called upon, to run by the side of a horse without feeling fatigue; indeed, persons of this class have been known to tire out the best steeds of the country.

On inquiring whether all was ready, and

being answered in the affirmative, Moorad returned to the cavern for the purpose of changing his dress, which he had not yet done. This operation, however, did not take up much time, for having doffed his flowing robe and a pair of wide shelwars, he stood fully equipped as a Koordish warrior. His chain armour and leggings having been covered by these garments, the only addition required to his arms and dress being the steel cap and a brace of pistols, which were handed to him by an attendant, and having thrown over his shoulders a warm Kooladjah,(2) he was perfectly ready for the journey.

As soon as the real dawn had appeared, the Koord proceeded to the inner cavern, and respectfully informing Zoraya that all was ready, requested her to put on her chauder and accompany him to the outside.

He found the maiden lying pensively on the bed, having refused the garments presented to

her by the Geesfid. On hearing the request of Moorad, she turned to him, and in a determined manner answered,

“ You may drag me away by force ; but by no help of mine shall you remove me from hence.”

“ Lady,” returned the Koord, “ let me entreat you not to act thus. What can resistance to our wishes possibly avail you ? Come, prepare yourself, the takteravan awaits.”

“ You have had my answer,” replied Zoraya. “ I tell you of my own will, I stir not.”

The Koord ground his teeth in anger. “ Obstinate girl,” he muttered ; “ would I were acting on my own account. Khanum,” he continued aloud, “ I have hitherto conducted myself towards you as a slave to his mistress ; take heed I alter not my behaviour.”

“ As a slave,” said Zoraya scornfully ; “ methinks slavery must bear an unusual signification in your country. It is I who am the

slave, though you shall not find me a willing one."

"Once more, khanum," exclaimed Moorad, "will you do what you are required?"

"I will not," returned Zoraya.

"Then, khanum," said the Koord, "we must find means to force you; hark you, a word in your ear!"

He approached the maiden and addressed her in a whisper; but brief as were the words, they produced an instantaneous effect upon her, for springing to her feet, she cried out piteously,

"No! no! not so, I will obey you as soon as I have put on my veil and chauder; begone, I will not tarry."

The Koord smiled in irony at the effect of his threat, which in fact he had no intention of carrying into execution, but had merely used it, to prevent being obliged to use forcible measures in order to carry the girl from the cavern.

“Ha! Khanum,” he observed, “I have brought you to your senses; we are, you will discover, by no means the burnt fathers you imagined us to be. However, if you will make haste, no harm shall happen to you. Here,” he continued, “make up yonder bedding in readiness for the muleteers, and assist the khanum to arrange her dress.”

Having given forth these injunctions Moorad returned to his companions and gave directions to the muleteers to enter the cavern and bring out the bedding, in order to load the mules.

“I wish,” he observed as he vaulted into his saddle, “that my trusty Murwari was here. I feel bereft of a limb when I am away from him.”

“Aye Sahib,” returned Ibrahim, “the plain of Nedj never sent forth a better horse; search Arabia throughout, search the tribes of the Turcomans,(3) wander over the hills and valleys of Iran, and I defy you to produce an

animal equal either to Murwari, or the Khan's two favourites."

"True," said Moorad, "Hamdane(4) and Kiorooglee(5) are admirable coursers, and did not Murwari exist, would be without a rival in the world; but the superior qualities of my own animal throw theirs into the shade; they certainly surpass him in beauty of form and symmetry of limb; but in respect to speed and powers of lasting, Murwari would burn their fathers. But, see our captive approaches, to your post."

Zoraya now came forth completely veiled, and having entered the takteravan, the party was set in motion and proceeded on their journey.

The sun had not yet risen, nor indeed had the dawn rendered the surrounding scenery distinctly visible, although there was sufficient light to render it safe for a takteravan to proceed.

As, however, the day broke and the sky and mountain tops began to be tinged with a rosy

tint, the rugged nature of the road became apparent, showing how dangerous it would have been for a conveyance such as contained the Hamadane maiden to journey along the steep declivities while obscurity prevailed. For some distance the path was so narrow that two horsemen could not proceed abreast, while at the same time it was on the edge of a precipice so steep that a false step would have proved inevitably fatal to both mule and rider, had they gone over. In consequence, the cavalcade presented the appearance of a lengthened line. In front rode the bold Koord who had hitherto so successfully conducted the enterprise. His person appeared to full advantage while on horseback ; seldom, indeed, if ever, had a more perfect specimen of a warrior been gazed upon by man ; his eye seemed to reconnoitre every place at the same instant, so quick and changing were his glances, and yet nothing escaped his vigilant observation ; next in order, and closely following him rode about half



of the band ; behind them came the takteravan and the loaded mules, the rear being brought up by the remainder of the armed Koords ; the captive maiden being thus completely guarded against reprisal both from before and behind. Last of all rode Ibrahim, the second in command, who was imitating the example set him by his superior officer, by taking constant surveys of the surrounding country.

In this order the party proceeded for several hours ; the powerful rays of the sun had already begun to be felt when they reached the termination of the Cotall(6) and descended into a wide extensive plain, bounded in the distance by a lofty range of mountains ; as far as the eye could reach, no signs of habitations were visible, excepting here and there a few black tents ; all was bleak and dreary, not a single tree reared its head throughout the vast expanse ; no signs of cultivation appeared, and had it not been for the few miserable tents that appeared like black dots on a yellow board, and

some straggling sheep and goats that were in their vicinity, the travellers might easily have imagined that they were about to enter upon an unknown, uninhabited region.

On arriving at the level ground a short halt was proclaimed by the commander of the party, in order to recruit the strength of the animals, which had been somewhat exhausted by the labour attending a march over the rocky and mountainous road over which they had passed. As soon, however, as the flanks of the beasts had ceased to pant and their coats had dried, the band was marshalled into order and proceeded at a brisk amble to cross the plain. Every step taken in advance diminishing the hope of rescue in the breast of the unhappy captive, and exciting the most acute pangs of despair, as she called to mind that every moment increased the distance between herself and her father, who she knew must by this time have discovered her absence.

## CHAPTER IV.

You knew, none so well, none so well as you of my daughter's flight.

MERCHANT OF VENICE, ACT 3. SCENE 1.

THE day had broken upon the Persian camp at Sultaneah, and the various sentinels having awakened from their slumbers, had sounded the watch cry from post to post, and Mehtee Khan was about to rise from the couch, on which he had passed the night, when a tumult was suddenly heard without, and before he could inquire the cause, an eunuch, his face pale as marble, and his whole frame trembling with agitation, rushed into the tent.

For a few moments, he was unable to articulate, as his tongue actually clove to the roof of his mouth; and it was not until thrice interrogated by his master, that he exclaimed,

“Wahi, Sahib! what misfortune is this! Alas! our hearts are dried up, and no blood is left in our veins.”

“Fool!” cried the Khan, “speak out; what has happened?”

“Alas, Sahib, I dare not,” answered the man; “you would kill me, for being the bearer of bad news.”

“I am much more likely to kill you, if you hesitate longer,” replied the Khan. “Ass! dolt! speak out without fear?”

“Then my lord!” cried the attendant, “you must know that the Khanum and all her attendants have been murdered.”

The Begler Beg started to his feet, as this terrible announcement was made, and seizing

the man by the arm, cried out in a trembling voice, "What say you, murdered! do I hear aright, murdered! O! say you have lied, and I will reward you well!"

"Alas master," answered the man, throwing himself upon his knees, "I have spoken the truth; this morning on awakening I arose, and proceeded towards the Khanum's tent, when I perceived what I imagined to be a Pishkidmud lying asleep near the entrance. I approached him, and administered a violent kick to his body, as a punishment for his laziness. When, O Ali! I discovered that he was dead, and by the manner that his tongue was hanging out of his mouth, and his eyes starting from their sockets, it was evident he had been strangled; my heart sank at the sight; I hastened to the tent, and having called several times without receiving any answer, I raised the curtain, when to my horror, I saw——"

“What?” cried Mehtee Khan, breathless from agitation, “what did you see?”

“Several kaneezes lying motionless on their couches,” returned the eunuch; “they spoke not, neither moved when I called to them in a loud voice; in consequence, I have hastened here in order to inform your excellency of the fact.”

“Allah be praised!” ejaculated the Khan, lifting up his hands to heaven, “there is yet hope. My child! my child! I will hasten to you.”

Thus speaking, he hastily left his tent and proceeded to that inhabited by his daughter; on his way, he saw the dead body of the murdered pishkidmud lying near the threshold, and shuddering, past over it, his anxiety to know concerning Zoraya superseding all other feelings. He drew back the curtain and entered, when at once proceeding to the couch which ought to have held his beloved child,

one instant served to show that it was untenanted. Claspng his hands together in agony, he turned to the couch of Nargis, who lay wrapped in a death-like sleep, and violently shaking her, at length succeeded in awakening the kaneez who stared about her, for a few moments, in a vacant manner. The expression of the Begler Beg's features, however, soon recalled her to a state of sensibility, which she was nearly losing again, on his demanding in a hollow voice for his daughter; so unearthly, so hollow was the tone.

“Girl!” he exclaimed, “where is my child? Speak! as you wish to live. Where is she? my child! my child!”

“What mean you, Sahib?” said the astonished Nargis. “Is not the Khanum here?”

“No, she is not!” cried the Khan, “would she were; I would give all I have, even my life, to press her once more in these arms

O! my daughter! my daughter! where art thou? Speak, if you are within hearing; speak, and ease the mind of your wretched father."

In the meanwhile, Nargis had arisen, and proceeded to her mistress's couch; but, on discovering it to be empty, she added to the fears of the Begler Beg, by the extreme astonishment she evinced; having looked around, she ran to the couches of the other kaneezes, and violently shaking the still unconscious maidens, succeeded in arousing them from their sleep. The death-like stupor, which had seized upon these girls, did not escape the vigilant eye of the eunuch, who had entered with the Khan, and having noticed it, he drew towards it the attention of his master.

The truth now began to flash across the brain of the unhappy father, who called to mind the former unsuccessful attempt, which had been made to carry off Zoraya; and it occurred to him, that this might have been



a successful continuation of the plot. For a few moments he remained paralysed at the idea, so extreme was the misery felt by him at his loss ; but collecting his thoughts, he rose, and having gone to the exterior of the tent, called around him his attendants, and in a firm and business like manner, gave such orders as he deemed necessary, and chuppers having been sent forth in every direction, he returned to his daughter's tent, and proceeded to closely question the female attendants. Under the cross-examination, the story of the astrologer came to light, and then the truth appeared in the most vivid colours to the Begler Beg. Violently abusing Nargis for her heedless conduct in the affair, and informing her that she should be severely punished, he left the tent, and returning to his own habitation, ordered a strict search to be made after the astrologer ; upon which, the rent in the canvass wall was discovered, and the story con-

cerning the carrying off the horse during the night, came to light, and the fortune-teller's tent being found untenanted, proved that the murderer, the ravisher, and the horse-stealer must have been the pretended holy man.

While the unhappy father awaited, in an anxious state, for news to arrive by some of the messengers whom he had sent forth, he turned his attention towards those to whom the charge of Zoraya's safety had been committed; and although they were scarcely to be termed in fault, still as in Persia misfortune and crime, are synonymous, punishment of the most severe nature was inflicted. First of all, the weight of his master's displeasure fell upon the eunuch, who was condemned to undergo a severe bastinado. In vain did the unhappy man sue for mercy; in vain did he protest his innocence; he was tied up, and underwent the terrible infliction. After him, several other servants suffered the same tor-

ture, until at length, Mehtee Khan rendered savage at the non-arrival of any tidings concerning his daughter, ordered Nargis and the other kaneezes to be brought into a private tent; on their entrance he commanded the bastinado to be administered to the former girl, as a chastisement as he termed it, for her folly and heedlessness, on the previous evening. As, however, the sticks cannot be inflicted in a Mahomedan country in the same manner upon a woman as on a man, a small aperture was made in the canvass of the tent, through which the hands of the maiden were introduced, and fastened to a pole outside, the executioners striking them with poplar sticks. The punishment is thus inflicted on a woman in order to prevent her face being exposed, and seen by the performers.

Thus did the innocent Nargis undergo a cruel and painful chastisement; for her savage judge, unheeding her cries, allowed the blows

to fall long and heavily, and did not make the signal for a cessation, until the sufferer had fainted. On Nargis being released, it was merely to make way for others, as several of the kaneezes were tied up, and bastinadoed by order of their tyrannical master.

The irritated feelings of the Khan having been thus vented, (as frequently happens in an oriental country), upon innocent persons, because they were the nearest who were under his control, Mehtee Khan made signs for all to retire, and being left to himself, gave way to the most bitter lamentations.

## CHAPTER V.

Hope on ! hope on ! hope ever !  
Though clouds obscure the ray,  
And shades the sunlight sever  
From thy life's opening day ;  
Who knows but that the morrow  
Bright joys may smile upon ;  
Then yield thou not to sorrow,  
Hope on ! hope on ! hope on !

J. E. CARPENTER.

IT was on the afternoon of the eighth day, that the party which escorted Zoraya, arrived in sight of the chief encampment of the tribe, which owned Allah Verdee Khan for its chief; the journey had been performed without any incident occurring to interrupt the harmony of the march; and it was evident, that if search had been made after the maiden, the pursuers had not followed the same route as the Koords.

Indeed, in order to mislead any one who might attempt the rescue of the captive, Moorad had proceeded along an unusual and devious path, avoiding as much as possible all villages, and resting only at Koordish encampments.

On hearing the cry which proclaimed their arrival, a pang of despair thrilled through the heart of the Persian maiden. As long as the journey remained unfinished, she nourished a secret hope that succour might arrive; but now, on hearing the joyful exclamations of her guards on their beholding their homes, all hope at once vanished, and bursting into a flood of tears, she gave way, in the solitude of her takhteravan, to the most violent grief. Moorad, who was riding close to the litter, hearing her sobs, cursed her in his heart, but dissembling his hatred, he came up to the curtains, and besought her to be comforted.

“By the head of Ali,” he said, “I swear that no harm shall happen to you. The Khan, instead being an object of abhorrence, is one who

merits both love and admiration ; dry your eyes, therefore, and prepare to meet the chief with a smiling countenance.”

The cavalcade had now arrived at the outskirts of the vast encampment, and a large crowd, consisting of men, women and children, came out to meet it, accompanied by quantities of huge dogs, common to the wandering tribes of Persia, at once the guardians of the flocks in which consist the main riches of these people, and the terror of all strangers and wild beasts who may approach the tents. These animals are usually of enormous size, and covered with long shaggy hair of a dirty dun colour ; their bark is sharp and loud, and their ferocity equal to their strength, which is so great, that many are a match, in single combat, for a wolf.

It was by a medley, such as this, that Moorad and his companions were met, and greeted with an enthusiastic welcome, which

was greatly increased on their observing that the takhteravan was tenanted; a word informed them that the enterprise had proved successful, and numberless were the cries of,

“Barakillah, Moorad Beg, may your shadow never be less;—may your head be exalted;—your face is white already, and will become still whiter, when you have seen the Khan.”

“Is his highness in the camp,” inquired Moorad of an aged man, whose silvery beard and furrowed cheek proclaimed him to be an octogenarian.

“He is at present on a hunting excursion,” was the reply. “Some goor khur have lately appeared in the valley of Gulsheereen, and in consequence the Khan (may his fortunes prosper) has gone forth to hunt them; you know his passion for the chase; why the very name of a wild ass, or an antelope, would be sufficient to make him rise from a bed of



sickness. We expect him, however, to return in about four days."

"Thanks!" returned Moorad, "I am glad to see you in good health; may your brain ever remain in good order."

With these words he proceeded with the muleteers, and the litter, to a spot at some distance, where a couple of tents, of a superior sort were pitched, here he reined in his steed, and having dismounted, entered the largest.

It would have been somewhat difficult to have analysed the feelings of Zoraya at that moment. Notwithstanding the intense grief that oppressed her breast, still a sensation of joy shot through her frame, when she heard of the temporary absence of Karah Kaplan, and although his return was soon expected, still she hailed his not being within the camp as a favourable omen; most earnestly did she pray that some unforeseen event might inter-

vene to prevent her becoming the wife of one so odious.

She had not, however, much time for reflection, as Moorad soon re-appeared and requested her to alight. On her complying, he conducted her to the interior of the tent, where she found herself in the presence of two well dressed women and several kaneezes, who were employed in embroidering. They rose respectfully to receive her and paid her the usual Oriental compliments.

“Khanum,” observed Moorad, when the necessary civilities were terminated ; “here are my wife and mother ; for the present I leave you to their care, which will be unremitting ; whatever you require will be laid at your feet ; for myself, I will retire in order to send off a chupper to inform the chief of his happy fortune. May your steps be fortunate, is the wish of your most devoted slave.”

“Sir,” answered Zoraya from under her

veil, "your words savour of humility; it were well had your acts been in uniformity; but it appears to be a Koordish custom, to speak one thing and mean another."

"When you have seen more of the tribes," replied Moorad, "you will have reason to change your opinion; as yet you know little concerning us, or you would not accuse us so unjustly. It is true that you have been forcibly carried off; but in order to gain possession of you, some violence was necessary; in all other respects we have been, and are, your most humble slaves. But I must away; allow me to wish you all possible peace and prosperity."

The Koord having thus spoken gave a respectful salaam to his charge, and repeating his injunctions to the inmates of the tent retired.

The two women, to whose care Zoraya had been entrusted, now pressed forward and requested Zoraya to unveil and be seated; she passively obeyed, and as soon as the features of

the beautiful Persian were exposed to view, notwithstanding she was pale and harassed, still their loveliness was of such a soft and perfect nature that her companions could not restrain their admiration.

“ Mashallah !” cried Shekerdahanee the wife of Moorad, “ I have heard much of your beauty, khanum, but I perceive I never imagined its perfection ; surely there is some excuse for the manner in which Allah Verdee Khan has acted ; he had beheld those features once, and well can I conceive that no man, who has gazed upon your unveiled face, could ever drive the remembrance of them from his imagination.”

“ I agree with you completely,” said Khattoon the mother of Moorad ; “ although I have hitherto by no means approved of the manner in which the khanum has been torn from her friends, still I must confess his Highness has much to plead in justification of his violence.

By the beard of Mahomed, though I have lived long and seen many of my own sex who were esteemed beautiful, I never beheld one who would not have been compelled by shame to hide herself under the covering of a veil."

Zoraya appeared during this conversation, to be giving heed to nothing; she remained silent, shading her brow with her hand; but her feelings proved too much for her, and although she strove to smother them, the effort proved vain, and she burst into a flood of tears.

The consternation of the two Koordish women at this sudden ebullition was great: pressing forward they took the unhappy girl by the hand, and begged her to be calm, at the same time making use of the most soothing expressions.

It was long, however, before the agitation of Zoraya was lessened; for hours did she continue to weep as if her heart was breaking, and it was not until worn out by exhaustion that she sank on the pillows prepared for her

and slept. The tortured wretch will sleep upon the rack-frame during an intermittance of pain, though aware that his limbs are again to be twisted and his flesh torn as soon as his executioners have rested from their exertions. Thus did Zoraya slumber, though conscious of a coming fate, in comparison to which, in her estimation, torture would have been a pleasure ; but her spirits were overcome, her frame worn out, and sleep unsought, for awhile wrapped her miseries in oblivion.

On leaving the tent of his women, Moorad directed his steps to another habitation of the same construction, and having entered and seated himself on the carpets, was soon surrounded by persons of various conditions, some placing themselves on the same nummud with him, others sitting at a distance, while the remainder stood respectfully around ; kaliauns and pipes were handed about and an animated conversation soon sprang up.

“ But do you not think, Moorad Beg,” said the old man whom Moorad had addressed on entering the precincts of the camp, in answer to an observation that had been made; “ do you not conceive that this violent measure may bring the wrath of the Shah upon us, for the carrying off a nobleman’s daughter almost before the royal musnud is not exactly the circumstance to please his Majesty.”

“ Let the Shah come with all his serbaz,” replied Moorad, “ if such be his pleasure; we would soon show him how a Koord can laugh at a Persian’s beard.”

“ But are you of opinion,” said the other, “ that we are strong enough to resist a regular attack from the Persian troops ?”

“ From whence is a regular attack to come ?” cried Moorad; “ you may wait a long time ere such padersooktehs as those whom I mixed with at Sultaneah, shall make demonstration of any signs of regularity. Teach them first

to keep a better watch ; for their sentinels are marvellously given to slumber on their posts. I tell you, my friends, there is as much likelihood of Rustum's rising from the grave, as that his Majesty Fath Ali, may his shadow never be less ! should take the trouble of sending an army against us. However, did he choose to do so, let them come ; how are these Iranees to pass the mountains ? Surely some of the passes that intervene would puzzle them."

"Your words are wise," returned the veteran ; "but for my part I like to be prepared for the worst. Suppose the royal army was encamped on the hills and plains before us, what would you do then ?"

"Should we suffer them to arrive there," answered Moorad, "we should merit the appellation of a set of asses, and it would be easy to prove that our ancestors were cow-beards. What !" he continued warming with the subject. "Think you we are children, that we have



put on the garments of women, and are fit for nothing but to be the guardians of an ande-room! Afakerillah! when such a time arrives, Moorad will go forth, into the presence of the Shah, and presenting his head will say, take it."

"Barakillah! you speak like a Locman," shouted his hearers approvingly; "what, indeed, have we to fear, while two such Rustums as Karah Kaplan and Moorad are our leaders? Bash! we could laugh at the beard of every foe that dared to show his face."

"Come, old Ali," said Moorad pleased at the enthusiasm of his friends; "be not cast down, you have never seen our tribe eat dirt as yet, and inshallah! never will. But time flies, and we must despatch a chupper to the Khan in order to inform him of the success of our enterprise. Here, Bachahan, who among you is inclined to carry the message, and obtain a mujdehlek for being the bearer of good tidings?"

Several persons now came forward volun-

teering their services, and Moorad having selected one from their number, bade him prepare to set out immediately.

“Bachesm !” was the reply, “my body shall not rest, nor my heel quit my courser’s flank, until I stand before the chief.”

Moorad having drawn forth his kalem done, proceeded to indite a letter which he delivered to the messenger, with renewed injunctions to him to make all speed; the man retired and in a few minutes the sounds of horse galloping, were heard from without.

For several hours afterwards the company remained with Moorad; a repast was brought in and being partaken of, and some kaliauns having been smoked, Moorad arose, the others immediately following his example.

“My friends,” he observed, “I must wish you good night, my limbs have somewhat need of a sound rest; you are dismissed, may the peace of Allah be with you !”

Having received the customary salutations,

Moorad quitted the tent, and having entered another adjoining the one where he had placed Zoraya, and which had been prepared for him as a sleeping apartment, he summoned some kaneezes, and bid them inform his wife of his coming. He had not waited long before she appeared, and it was easy to perceive, by the affectionate manner in which she cast her arms round her husband's neck, that she loved him tenderly.

Indeed the affection borne by this Koordish woman for her husband, was of that sort with which a devotee regards her tutelary saint; conscious that her lord and master was not only the handsomest man of the tribe, but one who excelled all, not excepting the chief himself, in intellect and powers both of mind and body, she almost worshipped him. Some time had elapsed since she had beheld him, and the few minutes during which she had enjoyed his presence, had been before others when she could

not give expression to her feelings of attachment; now, however, that she was alone with him, she clung for some moments in a close embrace, and exclaimed,

“Light of mine eyes, my soul, my heart, may every blessing rest on your head. O my Lord what happiness is it, thus to hold you in mine arms.”

“Jaunum,” returned her husband, affectionately pushing back her dark locks, “your joy is not less than mine; it is indeed happiness to behold you again.”

“And after such a long absence too,” continued Shekerdahanee; “the time appeared so tedious while you were away, that I began to fear that I might be deprived for ever of the light of your countenance.”

“Well, Azezim,” observed her husband, “if I have been long absent, you have to thank yonder Hamadanee girl for it; by Ali she has been the cause of much delay, bloodshed and

exercise of brain, by the beard of the Shah, if those Persian asses had possessed a miscal of sense, I should not yet have been under the shelter of my black tent; but all is finished now, and I am once more come home."

"Alhamdellillah," responded the wife, fervently.

"Tell me, however," said Moorad, "how does the maiden bear herself?"

"Wahi, mine aga!" replied Shekerdahanee; "her lamentations are enough to dry up our hearts; she hath done nothing but sit in a corner and weep."

"Curses on it!" cried her husband; "if she continues to behave thus, she will scarcely be fit to appear before the Khan; she will fret herself till she becomes a skeleton, and then I shall be accused of eating dirt."

"Fear not," said Shekerdahanee, "she will soon recover her spirits. At present, her late companions and her home, from whom she

has been (it must be confessed) cruelly torn, are fresh in her remembrance ; but as time moves on, the agony attending such recollection will wear away. She is young—her grief will become every day less violent. When the Khan returns, let him remain a few days without entering her presence, and wait until her feelings have experienced a rebound.”

“ But, Jaunum,” observed her husband, smiling, “ do you suppose it possible that Karah Kaplan will agree to such a delay ? His composition is rather warm, and the approaching summer will by no means assist to freeze his veins.”

“ Inshallah !” said the wife ; “ when he begins to reflect, he will perceive the necessity of delay. If he at once rudely send for the girl, and declare his love, I will by no means answer for her tongue ; and her pretty mouth may utter such abuse, as will exasperate him to frenzy ; while, on the other hand, if he will

but give her time to recover from the first effects of her grief, she will be better disposed towards him."

"By the head of Ali," cried Moorad, "you are right. If she excite his anger, she will have no slight cause for repentance. It were better to attempt the quenching of a furnace with oil, than to turn the Karah Kaplan from his purpose. The damsel too, has a tongue which can utter some sharp things. She has been little accustomed to obedience. But no more at present, Dilum; I am weary, let my bed be prepared, that I may rest my limbs; it is a long while since they have enjoyed the luxury of a sound repose."

The orders of the Koordish warrior having been obeyed, he inhaled the smoke of a last kaliaun; then, having said his prayers, he retired to his couch, and was soon fast asleep, his slumbers being watched by a fond and loving wife.

## CHAPTER VI.

Oh ! search, ye chiefs ! oh ! search around  
Allan, with these, through Alva fly ;  
Till Oscar, till my son is found.  
Haste, haste, nor dare attempt reply.

OSCAR OF ALVA.

THE news of Zoraya's abduction had gone forth through the Persian camp with all the gross exaggerations attendant on such an event. In one place, it was said that the tents of Mehtee Khan had been attacked during the night, and himself, his daughter, and every moveable article of value carried off. In another spot, the tale recounted was, that Zoraya and her female attendants had been murdered by the eunuchs ; and as the reports proceeded to a greater distance, it was cur-



rently affirmed that the camp had been attacked, and the inmates of several anderoons carried off, while their lords had been murdered.

Still, notwithstanding the difference existing among the numerous accounts, enough truth was elicited to cause a general rush to the exterior encampment of Mehtee Khan, and great was the clamour and confusion among the anxious crowd. The relations, also, and friends of the murdered man were raising lamentations, and calling out loudly for revenge and the blood of the murderers.

Among others who proceeded to the spot, was Feridoon, in whose breast the greatest anxiety had been excited by the various reports, as they all seemed to involve the safety of his beloved Zoraya. He had managed to get near one of Mehtee Khan's household who was relating the late events with some truth, when, to his horror, he learned that she had in reality been carried off. Listening attentively to the

words of the ferash, he no sooner heard the story of the fortune-teller, than he cried out in a wild tone, which excited much surprise among the crowd,

“I see it all! It is that burnt father. I thought I remembered his face when he addressed me yesterday. It must be so! the Khanum has been carried off through the agency of Karah Kaplan.”

“How know you that?” exclaimed several bystanders. “Tell us at once.”

“Alas! it is too plain!” replied Feridoon. “Know all of you, the accursed fortune-teller, who caused such a sensation in the camp yesterday, was no other than Moorad, foster-brother and lieutenant of Karah Kaplan, the famous Koordish robber.”

“What words are these?” was the general cry; “how are you certain it was he; why did you not recognize him yesterday; you were talking very earnestly together?”

“As I am a true believer,” returned the Eliaut, “methought I knew the features of that son of Shaitan, but at the same time, I could not recall to my mind when or where we had met. Allah knows he was well disguised, and had not this misfortune come to light, I should never have remembered him, although I have fought with him, and drawn his blood. Would that I had drained it from his heart !”

“Would you had indeed,” observed Mehtee Khan’s ferash; “you would have spared us no small degree of trouble. However, you must accompany me to my master’s presence, as you seem somewhat acquainted with this matter. Follow me immediately, whether willingly or not, you must come.”

“Man, I am ready,” said Feridoon; “lead on. Oh! would to Mahomed, I had recognized him while he was foretelling me my destiny. Wahi! where could have been my

brains, that I discovered not the trick at once."

Thus lamenting, Feridoon followed his conductor to the audience tent of the father of Zoraya, at the door of which he was ordered to remain until the Begler Beg had been apprised of his coming.

During the absence of the attendant, the young man had ample time for reflection; he remembered that he was about to enter into the presence of one who had not only deeply injured and cruelly treated his father, but who had shown an utter want of gratitude, in never taking the slightest notice of the rescue and rescuer of Zoraya. All these circumstances came to his recollection, and caused feelings of bitter hatred and anger to rise within him; but repressing them, though with difficulty, he obeyed the call of the ferash on the reappearance of that personage, and entering the tent, found himself in the presence of the Begler Beg.

“Well, Sir,” exclaimed the Khan, in no gentle voice, “they inform me you are acquainted with certain circumstances connected with the unfortunate affair of last night; speak out, therefore, and beware of lying, else you shall be flayed alive—aye, flayed alive, though you are under the protection of a powerful master.”

“My lord,” replied Feridoon; “may your shadow never be less; your slave begs to make a representation.”

“What is it?” cried the Khan sneeringly.

“He would observe, with all due respect,” answered the youth, “that the Khanum was attacked not long since, near Hamadan, and carried off——

“Aye,” said the Begler Beg impatiently, “we know that already; we do not want to listen to old stories.”

“If your excellency would allow me to speak without interruption,” replied the Eliaut,

“ I could inform you of my opinion ; but I must recapitulate.”

“ Well then,” exclaimed Mehtee Khan, hastily, “ speak on ; but make your story as concise as possible.”

“ Your slave is your sacrifice,” returned Feridoon. “ I will proceed with all possible speed :—you are aware that the Khanum was attacked by the Koords on her way from Hamadan to Sultaneah ; well, she was rescued from the clutches of her abductor, by your most humble servant.”

“ In-deed !” drawled out the Khan ; looking at the youth in a most supercilious manner ; “ was it you that performed that deed ? we have heard something about it.”

Feridoon’s blood boiled with indignation, as he heard this cold and heartless acknowledgment of the service he had rendered the haughty noble ; but subduing all feeling of irritation, he answered mildly,

“ My lord, it is scarcely meet for me to boast of my deeds ; but I must with your leave observe, that without my humble efforts, you would never have beheld your daughter more.”

“ Well, padersookhteh,” cried the Khan bitterly, “ what good has your assistance been ? She has been again torn from me.—Young man, you have only protracted the hour of evil. Can you again restore my daughter to my arms ?”

“ O Sahib !” exclaimed the Eliaut, “ would that my power were equal to my will. I would welcome death in its most appalling shape, if by so acting, I could rescue the Khanum, and bring her in safety to you. O my lord, judge me not harshly, as you are a mussulman ; believe me, although I am a Persian, I speak the truth.”

The earnest tone in which the youth uttered these words touched even the heart of the

Begler Beg ; who, however, still feigning to be unconvinced, observed :

“ Your words are high-flown, young sir ; by your own account you are a Rustum. Still inform me how it occurred, that you failed to recognise the fortune-teller, with whom you had such a long converse yesterday ; how does it happen you only remember him now ? ”

“ Khan,” replied Feridoon, firmly, “ I had gazed upon his features but once before—when I was opposed to him in mortal strife ; they were then lighted up with the ardour of the moment, and flushed with the feelings of deadly hate : could it be expected, that I should have recognised him, when disguised by the artful marks of age, and covered with the garb of a wandering fakeer ? It is true, that for a moment, I imagined that his face was not unfamiliar to me ; but on my questioning him



concerning it, he denied our having met before, without the slightest confusion. In the hurry, and tumult of the crowd, I was pushed away, and saw the man no more. O your excellency! be just; surely I have eaten no dirt, in not having penetrated so perfect a disguise? Alas! it was not until I heard of the unfortunate occurrence of yesternight, that the truth flashed across my mind. My lord, pardon your slave's presumption; but you are wrong to blame him."

Even the unbending nature of the proud noble, was not proof against this address, spoken as it was in the firm tone of conscious rectitude. For a moment, however, he attempted to look stern, but failed; for an unbidden tear stood in his eye.

"Young man," he cried in a softened voice, "you have eaten no dirt. O that you had been near, when the villain carried off the prop of my house!"

“ Would that I had !” said Feridoon, “ she had either been saved, or the marauder had added another to his list of slain.”

“ I believe you, my gallant youth,” said the father, “ your open brow proclaims itself to be the habitation of truth. O say, can you not imagine some scheme, whereby to rescue her from the toils of the sons of Shaitan ; may everlasting curses cleave to them.”

“ I will consult with my chief,” answered the Eliaut, “ he is one to whom age has brought not only grey hairs, but wisdom.”

“ Go then, young man,” returned the Khan ; “ the thoughts of two such brains as yours, will surely devise some means of acting. Go, and may Heaven assist you. But stay an instant, I am your debtor for your former service ; here, take this, may it bring you good fortune.”

He drew forth a heavy purse of ducats, and presented it to Feridoon, who proved himself

no true Persian, by the hesitation he evinced in accepting it; but recollecting that the money would be of service during his intended search after Zoraya, he received the gift.

“ My lord,” he said at the same time, “ this gold shall be spent in your service; may fortune attend your house in future. Is your servant dismissed ?”

“ You may depart,” replied the Begler Beg, “ May you on your return be the bearer of good tidings. Adieu, may peace attend you.”

Feridoon bowed, and left the tent, where his reception had been so unpromising, while on the contrary, his departure had been marked with such commendation from the noble owner.

On his way from the encampment of Mehtee Khan to that of his own master, the Eliaut passed by the spot where the miserable tent of the disguised Koord had been pitched, it had been torn to pieces by the fury of the populace, who were invoking curses on the late tenant.

Joining in their imprecations most fervently within his heart, he was passing in silence when a roll of paper lying on the ground caught his attention. Having taken it up, he perused its contents at first carelessly ; but in an instant it was evident by the change in his countenance, that the document was of the utmost importance. It proved, indeed, to be a letter from Karah Kaplan to his lieutenant Moorad, giving him directions whither to proceed, if his enterprise proved successful ; and what was of the greatest consequence, the valley in which the chief camp of the tribe was at that time pitched, was named in the epistle.

The heart of the young man beat with rapture, as he perused the precious lines which it was evident had been accidentally dropped by Moorad. In a moment his plans of action were laid down ; he placed the paper within the folds of his cap, and proceeded with all haste to the tent of Abbas Khan, in order to request

leave to absent himself for a while from his duty. He was aware that such a favour would be easily granted, without even the reason of the request being asked, as he was in high favour with his chief, who had already shown him several marks of his good will, the most welcome of which was his appointing him to the chief place among his Gholams, which had been vacated by the dismissal of the former officer for misconduct.

The leave of absence was immediately granted, and the young Eliaut hastily equipping himself for a journey, proceeded to the spot where his master's horses were tethered; and selecting from the number the animal which had been allotted for his own use, which was a stout active steed, well inured to fast travelling, he mounted and having ejaculated a fervent Bishmillah, was now far on his way towards the valley, where he expected to find the encampment of Karah Kaplan.

## CHAPTER VII.

The shades of eve come slowly down,  
 The woods are wrapped in deeper brown,  
 The owl awakens from her dell,  
 The fox is heard upon the fell ;  
 Enough remains of glimmering light  
 To guide the wanderer's steps aright,  
 Yet not enough from far to show  
 His figure to the watchful foe.

LADY OF THE LAKE.

“PADERSOOKHTEH ! ass ! dolt ! how comes it that the steeds have been so carelessly tended ; see the dried sweat still remains on the coat of Murwari. Dog of a Persian, I have defiled your father's grave, and will make your very heart leap out of your mouth. What filth have you been swallowing ?”

The above invectives were addressed by

Moorad to a trembling Mehter, to whose charge had been entrusted Murwari, and the two favourite horses of Allah Verdee Khan; the animals had been tethered at a short distance from the camp upon a plot of ground, where the herbage was fresh and abundant, and had been left under the charge of a skilful Mehter, whose orders were most strict to attend to them with the greatest attention. Moorad, however, having visited the spot with several attendants about two hours after sunset, had discovered by the light of a fanoos, that Murwari had not been groomed with the nicety his master always required; and being greatly attached to the animal, he had not allowed the negligence to go unreprimanded. Nor, indeed, did he confine his anger to mere words, for having given utterance to the above speech, he ordered the upper garments of the Mehter to be stripped from his back, and directed one of his attendants to lay his kaboos(1) across the bare

shoulders of the culprit, who in consequence received a most severe flagellation, as the Koord did not give the signal to cease, until several dozen lashes had been inflicted; then proceeding to address the unfortunate man who was writhing from the severity of the discipline, he observed,

“I trust, dog of a Persian, that you will remember your duty in future, else I would not give a Shai for your ears; for by Ali, if I find you again neglecting to groom the horses properly, may my father’s grave be defiled, if I fail to chop off those excrescences, which ought indeed to belong to an ass’s head.

“So please your greatness,” answered the Mehter, “methought all had been finished in the best manner. - I can assure you, I worked hard for that purpose.”

“You thought, did you?” exclaimed his master. “You thought! and pray what business had you to think? However, take



heed, or prepare to bid adieu to your ears. Come, Bachahau, lead the way with the fanoos, I must return to my tent."

In obedience to this order, the ferash, whose duty it was to carry the lantern, moved on before his master, who left the place.

It was above two hours after sunset, and the moon not having risen, while at the same time, the sky was overcast with clouds; the obscurity which reigned around was very dense, so that it was impossible to distinguish objects beyond the distance reached by the rays of the fanoos, while on the contrary, the figures of the Koord and his companions were rendered visible from some distance.

On account of this circumstance, a figure, wrapped in a dark-coloured cloak, who following the party, while unobserved himself, was carefully watching them, and gathering up with greedy ears the substance of several observa-

tions which fell from Moorad's lips, and which had evidently reference to the chief.

Moorad having proceeded for some distance, suddenly halted, and ordered his attendants to turn their steps towards the sentinels which were posted near the tent of the Khan; in consequence, the men altered the direction of their route, and continued walking until they arrived at a narrow path, where an armed man was standing.

Far different from the manner in which the sentinels of the Persian camps had kept their watch, was the conduct of the Koordish soldier; no signs of sleep were evinced by him, for on the approach of the party, they were immediately challenged.

“Who goes there?” demanded the sentinel, presenting his musket.

“A friend to Koordistan,” answered Moorad, in a common watch word of the tribe.

“ May peace attend you,” replied the man, recognising the voice of the speaker; “ have you any commands for your slave ?”

“ I have,” returned Moorad. “ See that you are vigilance itself to-night, and that no one passes your post without giving the proper watchword. “ Bachahau,” he continued, turning to his attendants, “ go beyond ear-shot till I summon you ; I would speak with this man in private.”

The commands of the Koord being obeyed, he moved up close to the sentinel, and observed, in a low voice,

“ The watchword at present is Allah O Achbar,(2) is it not ?”

“ You are right, Sahib,” was the answer.

“ Well,” continued Moorad, “ I am about to change it. Observe attentively : let no one pass who is not possessed of the watchword, ‘ Lahnet ba Aboobekr,’ you understand ; on your head be it, if you neglect your duty.”

“ Medanum Sahib, I understand,” said the

soldier, and Moorad, summoning his attendants, passed on.

This scene was repeated again before they arrived at the canvass wall which surrounded the tent of Allah Verdee, before which was posted a single sentinel, who received the same commands and watchword as the others. Just, however, as Moorad had pronounced the latter he gave a sudden start, and exclaimed,

“In the name of Ali, what was that?—something moved close to me! Who goes there?”

No answer was returned, and the fanoos-bearer having approached, and thrown lights upon the surrounding objects, nothing was discovered.

“It is strange!” said Moorad; “it appeared to me that some moving object was close to me. However, I must have been mistaken. Mind your instructions, sentinel.”

“Bachasm,” said the soldier, as his commander left the spot.

## CHAPTER VIII.

I loved you as a wife ; but now I love another.

I love you still, but only as a brother.

No sooner had Moorad retired, than the figure shrouded in a dark coloured kabau, who had followed the party and overheard all that had been said, began stealthily to recede from the spot, and under cover of the pitchy darkness, effected his purpose without detection.

It was Feridoon, who having arrived three days previously in the vicinity of the camp, had donned the dress of a Koordish peasant,

and employed his time in carefully watching for every opportunity by which he might collect information.

He had quitted the Persian camp with a firm determination of discovering the retreat of Zoraya, and to attempt every possible means of restoring her to liberty. He was aware that his intended enterprise, if not impossible of performance, was one of the utmost difficulty, and if known to any one but himself would have brought down ridicule on his head. He was, however, young and ardent, and to sum up all in one phrase, "he was in love ;" he gave no thought to what might follow, in case of success, namely, that although he might bring back the maiden—a maiden to her father's arms, his hopes, even then, of possessing her would be but small, as the Khan would scarcely bestow her on a poor Eliaut. Feridoon thought only of his love and his devotion for the girl, and nothing appeared to his

mind, too arduous an undertaking in her service.

On leaving the camp, he had directed his journey towards the south, according to the knowledge he had acquired from the letter dropped by Moorad on the plain of Sultaneah; for some period he wandered on, often mistaking his road and frequently remaining the whole night in the open air, until, on the sixth day from that on which he had started, he discovered that but a few fursuks intervened between himself and the Koordish encampment. His horse being jaded and completely overcome by fatigue, he was compelled to leave it in the keeping of a poor Rayat, at whose miserable habitation he had ascertained the fact of Allah Verdee's vicinity, and then proceeded on foot.

Before, however, he had arrived near enough to make any observations, he had exchanged his Persian dress for the habiliments of a

Koordish peasant ; concealing beneath a large dark coloured balapoosh, a brace of pistols a cummar, and a Koordish bludgeon.(1) Thus disguised he lurked about, at a short distance, trusting for some opportunity presenting itself of discovering the abode of the captive maiden. He could easily distinguish the tent of the chief, standing as it did apart from the rest ; but his heart misgave him, when he observed that it was most rigorously guarded by sentinels, who were regularly changed, and who appeared never to relax an instant from the strictness of their watch.

At this sight despair began gradually to gain possession of his feelings, and he could not help remembering that Zoraya must already have been several days in the clutches of the Koordish chief, who, by all accounts, was by no means likely to delay the time for accomplishing any object on which his mind was fixed. The Eliaut, however, was not aware that



Allah Verdee had only just returned to the camp, from the hunting excursion on which he had set out previous to the arrival of his intended bride. The chupper despatched by Moorad, with the glad tidings of Zoraya's capture, had reached him while on the very point of beating up the lair of some goorkhur, and although it was a sport on which he doated, still the news brought to him was of so elating a character, that having liberally rewarded the bearer, he ordered the hunting party to be broken up, and preparations to be made for his return to his tribe, and on the third day he was among them.

As soon as Karah Kaplan had bathed and refreshed himself after the fatigues of his journey, he summoned Moorad to his presence, and having received from his trusty adherent a full account of his successful expedition, he gave way to the most unbounded expressions of gratitude.

“By the head of Ali, Moorad!” he exclaimed, “you are, indeed, the prop of the tribe. O tell me, my trustworthy and gallant follower, how can I sufficiently reward you?”

“My Lord,” answered his foster-brother, “you have already bestowed on me a sufficient recompense.”

“How?” demanded Allah Verdee.

“By calling me by the appellations of trustworthy and gallant,” answered Moorad; “thus blotting out the ignominious epithets you applied to me on a former occasion.”

“What mean you?” said the Khan.

“I would fain not revert to them,” replied the other, “only as you desire it, I must observe that your having called me trustworthy and gallant, throws into oblivion the epithets of coward and fool, which you applied to me, on my return wounded and vanquished from the encounter on the Alwend hills.”

“I was wrong, my brave follower,” said

Karah Kaplan, "when I gave utterance to such sentiments; it was merely the effects of my being goaded to madness, by the sudden and total frustration of my most ardent hopes. Moorad, you should not have taken my angry words so much to heart; you ought to know my hot and wayward temper better; the expressions I make use of, when enraged, come from my tongue, not from my heart."

"Sahib," said his foster-brother, "you have said enough. I should eat dirt were I not satisfied. Were you, however, to spurn me from you, and look upon me with contempt, still your devoted slave would be ready to die in your service."

"Nay," replied Allah Verdee, "talk not of dying yet, we can little spare you; live, Moorad, as you have hitherto done, to be the prop, the ornament, the right hand of the tribe."

Moorad bent low at this compliment and observed,

“Khan, you have whitened your servant’s face ; still allow him to observe that a right arm would be useless did it not belong to a powerful body, and were it not directed by a wise head, Sahib ! you are that head ; the tribe the body.”

“Excellent !” exclaimed the surrounding Koords ; “your words are those of truth ; where will you find one fit to be named, by the side of Karah Kaplan, the Black Tiger of Koordistan ? May Allah bless him, and keep his steps in a straight path.”

“Thanks, my brave friends,” said the chieftain ; “from the bottom of my heart I thank you. I must, however, dismiss you for the present, as I would be alone with Moorad. Khoda Hafiz O Shooma !”

In obedience to this order the company retired, and the Koordish chieftain was left alone with his foster brother ; who having informed Karah Kaplan of his conversation with Sheker-

dahanee, strongly advised him to wait a few days before he entered the presence of the Persian maiden, in order to allow her time to recover from the first effects of the anguish she was suffering. Karah Kaplan, however, shook his head at this advice.

“Moorad,” he observed, “I deemed that you knew me too well to counsel delay. Go! Bid the hungry lion pause o’er the heifer he has carried off from the herd; bid the miser pause awhile before he seizes upon a long sought treasure, on its presenting itself to his grasp. Once for all, counsel the avenger of blood to pause ere he strikes his father’s murderer to the heart, and then come and bid Karah Kaplan pause at the threshold of his happiness; can it be possible that you, Moorad, should make such an unwonted proposition; sooner had I expected to hear the wolf preach mercy, than you to counsel delay.”

“Sahib,” returned the other, “you mistake

me ; I counselled not delay while the maiden was under her father's roof ; on the contrary, I urged the necessity of action ; but surely now that she is entirely and irredeemably in your power, it were better she came before you as a willing and a cheerful, than a weeping bride."

"I cannot wait," answered Allah Verdee, impatiently ; "this night, this very night must see her mine, let her be informed that this is her nuptial night. But stay ! where is she at present?"

"Under the charge of the inmates of my anderoon," said Moorad, "who inform me that she passes her time in weeping, and refusing all consolation ; but they give me hopes that if left to herself for awhile, a change for the better will soon come over her."

"Nay," returned the Khan, "they err ; on the contrary, if she be allowed to brood over her fancied misfortunes, she will daily become

more unhappy. It is better at once to relieve her solitude, and let her behold better company than that of her own sex. Let her, therefore, be forthwith conducted to my anderoon, and placed under the charge of my other wife."

Moorad perceiving that his chief's determination was fixed, retired for the purpose of putting his commands into execution; while Allah Verdee proceeded to the tent which was inhabited by his wife Zaira, one who had formerly had a strong hold on his affections; but to whom he had of late shown much coldness; in truth he had ceased to love her, and in general left her to pine in solitude. Zaira, indeed, little deserved this usage from her lord and master, for besides possessing beauty of no common order, she tenderly loved her husband, and would willingly have laid down her life, could she, by the sacrifice, have regained a portion of his love; but Allah Verdee though firm and stable in other matters, was fickle in his

affections, and could not remain constant for any lengthened period, to any one object.

As the chieftain entered the tent, Zaira arose and saluted him ; without, however, paying her any attention, he seated himself on the cushions she had quitted, and at once informed her of his intentions with regard to Zoraya. A pang like ice ran through the heart of the Koordish woman as she listened to him, and a solitary tear rose to her eye ; it was, however, but one drop, an effort which nearly killed her ; she restrained her feelings, and gave utterance in a calm voice, to the usual sentence of “ You have said it.” O had the fickle husband but really known the acute anguish which rankled in the bosom of his once loved Zaira, could he but have imagined a small portion of what she endured, he must have been moved, else he had been marble !

O cursed religion of Mahomed, of what evils art thou not the parent ! How many crushed yet



loving hearts have had cause to execrate the law of polygamy; happy those that dwell in a christian country, where the blessed gospel has been received. But alas, how few are even those favoured lands, where the name of the Saviour is revered as it ought to be, and where his divine precepts are made the chief end of life. How frequently do we hear many *Christians* repining that their laws restrict a man to one wife. Let those who thus repine, visit eastern lands, let them observe the misery entailed upon them by the law of polygamy, let them behold the darkness, the ignorance, the vice that prevails, where the religion of Jesus is despised, let them inquire into the state of morality that exists in Persia, in Turkey, and in Egypt; and then let them give thanks to their Almighty Father, that their lot was not cast among infidels.

Notwithstanding the mastery with which the neglected woman restrained her feelings; nature

would have its course, and there was something in her manner which excited the attention of Karah Kaplan.

“Zaira !” he observed sneeringly, “what ails you? Is it thus you meet your lord on his return? Had you been at his funeral your mournful countenance might have suited the occasion ; but its rueful aspect is hardly befitting a bridal night.”

“Sahib, you are my lord and master,” said Zaira, humbly. “I know that I am unworthy to wipe the dust from your feet ; still I am a woman, and have the feelings of my sex, and I cannot behold unmoved, another raised to a situation I once held. But pardon me, I am eating dirt, you have informed me of your wishes, and your slightest desire is a command to your slave. Here, my children,” she continued, turning to her kaneezes, “prepare to receive your new mistress ; for myself, Khan, allow me to retire ; you will surely not be so

cruel as to force me to witness the reception of your freshly arrived bride? May your slave depart?"

The Khan in answer, inclined his head, and the wretched woman having retired proceeded to an inner tent, where bursting into a flood of tears, she found some relief for her pent-up anguish.

And who was the woman looked so coldly upon by the Koordish chieftain?—and why had all his affection for her vanished? She was not old—twenty years had not yet beheld her;—she was not ugly, that would have been impossible for one possessing those beautiful features, and large lustrous eyes;—she had not lost the power of charming with her tongue; on the contrary, when in a happy mood, she had a ready wit—she wanted not grace, O no! her figure was symmetry itself.—Then how happened it, that she was no longer beloved

by Allah Verdee?—how came it that he could so remorselessly trample upon her feelings?—The answer can be easily given—possession was the cause;—she was his, he had palled upon her, and being devoid of that moral principle, which can only be inculcated by a true spirit of Christianity, he had laid her aside, (as observed in a former chapter), like an old garment, to make way for a newer, and consequently to him, more grateful object. Such are the evil effects of polygamy, one of the **MANY BLOTS**, in the religion spread by the Arabian impostor.

Karah Kaplan had remained a short time reclining on the cushions, upon which he had thrown himself, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him, for rising, he observed,

“ I have changed my mind, and instead of receiving the girl in this spot, our first interview shall take place in my private tent. Hark you,

children," he continued, addressing the kanezes, "when the Hamadane maiden arrives here, let her remain till I send for her."

With these words he arose, and proceeded at once to a small tent pitched at a short distance; but which was still within the enclosure of the Serperdeh, which gave notice of the anderoon of a chieftain, or royal personage being within. Having entered, he gave orders that Moorad should be immediately summoned.

The tent to which Karah Kaplan had gone, was in exterior, shape and colour, like any other of the tribe, and not of ample dimensions; but on entering, it would have been impossible not to have remarked the luxurious, and splendid manner in which it was furnished. The walls were lined with gaudy chintz, and the ground covered with carpets of so soft a texture, that they felt like velvet to the tread. In various places were piled cushions of the

richest damask stuffed with down, of such an elastic nature that they invited slumber, even to the unwearied body. It was easy too from the different nature of the many ornaments of immense value, that were distributed around, to imagine that the plunder of many caravans had contributed to the furnishing of the habitation. Magnificent mirrors, boxes of Indian wood, clocks of European manufacture, Turkish daggers and Khorasan scimitars were there, proclaiming the extent of the frays committed by the Koordish band.

The tent we have described, was one of four, surrounded by the extensive canvass wall; three of which were pitched close to each other, while this, which was of smaller size, was at a short distance from the rest. Like other Koordish tents, it was singled walled, differing therein from the Persian, which generally have an outer covering, which protects the inmates from the heat, caused by the

powerful rays of an oriental sun, penetrating through the thin, white canvass. The tents of the Koordish and Eliaut tribes, however, being made of a coarse thick black cloth, the necessity of a second wall, although felt in a slight degree, is not so absolutely required.

The Khan had not waited long, before his foster brother arrived, whom he informed of his intention of receiving Zoraya where he then was, on account of its being more private and apart from the others. "My chief reason," he continued, "in sending for you, was to order you to see that every sentinel is at his post to-night, and to cause their present watchword to be changed. It is Allah o Acbar is it not?"

"It is," was the answer.

"Let it be altered to "Lahnet ba Aboobekr,"\* said Allah Verdee; "it is a good

\* Curses on Aboobekr—a *Persian malediction*.

sentence for a Sheah sentinel, and shows we are not unmindful of our religion, it would scarcely please the ear of a Sunnee."

"Bachesm!" replied Moorad, "it shall be as you order."

"Mark, however," continued the Khan, "that you give the sentinels most explicit instructions on pain of death, to avoid letting any one pass who knows not of the change; but, at the same time, to delay none who can give the new watch-word. I may, perhaps, have occasion to send to you during the night. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly," answered Moorad. "I will also take care that even my own attendants are out of ear-shot, when I make the sentries acquainted with the new words."

"You are right, my excellent Moorad," returned the Khan. "I entrust all to your management. The reason I have been so explicit is, that Kerbelai Hassan, the astrologer,



has informed me that the stars have shone threateningly upon me, and menace some coming misfortune ; it is well, therefore, to be prepared."

"Kerbelai Hassan is a most ominous croaker, Sahib," said Moorad. "He is ever proclaiming some threatening appearance in the planets. He is no favourite of mine."

"But, Moorad," returned Allah Verdee, "you surely must confess he is a man of infinite wisdom, and has made astrology his study from infancy."

"As for astrology," observed the other, "methinks he might have taken a lesson from my demeanour in the Persian camp at Sultaneah. Mashallah ! I made the science of some use there. But, Sahib, am I dismissed ? If so, I will away, in order to put your commands in execution. May your shadow never be less !"

"What is the hour ?" demanded the chief, as his follower was about to retire.

“The sun has set some time,” replied Moorad; “and all without is wrapped in obscurity so great, that without the aid of a fanoos, it would be difficult to tell the difference between a white crane and a black eagle. (2) With your permission, I will proceed to the spot where your highness’s steeds are tethered in company of my beloved Murwari, in order that I may see how they have been tended. That Persian Mehter has been careless of late; may his father’s grave be defiled! I will then go round and visit the various sentry posts that are in the vicinity of your Highness’s tents, and give them their instructions.”

“Barakillah!” answered Karah Kaplan. “May peace attend you. You are dismissed.”

Moorad bowed, and leaving the tent, joined his attendants, who were waiting without, and having proceeded to the spot where the horses were tethered, the scene related in the last chapter took place.

## CHAPTER IX.

Show a Persian a purse of gold, and he will cut his father's throat.

## TURKISH STORY.

FERIDOON had heard the watchword given by Moorad to the sentinels. Not a syllable had escaped him. He had acquired his quick and active movements on the mountains of his own country; and happily did they serve him at need, for, covered by his dark cloak, the colour of which resembled the ground on which he trod, he had crept, unobserved and unheard, close to the Koord as he gave his orders, and

by such means, had obtained most valuable information. He narrowly, however, escaped detection, for while he was in the act of retiring, as Moorad was addressing the last sentinel, his foot struck against a stone, which caused the noise and movement that had attracted the notice of the Koord. Instantly recovering himself, he ran off on all fours, a feat he had learned while hunting on his native hills.

Having passed the other sentry-posts without detection, he stopped, in order to collect his thoughts, and to consider what ought next to be done. He had gathered from Moorad's words enough to discover that Karah Kaplan had only just returned, and that it was his intention to make Zoraya his bride that very night. How was his intention, therefore, to be frustrated? Even if he could get access to the maiden, how could it be possible to effect her escape?

While he was deliberating, the moon rose,

and dispelling the darkness, he found himself close to the plot of grass where Murwari was tied. In an instant he had planned a scheme, which, though difficult of performance, was not totally impossible, and, to his ardent mind, promised entire success. During Moorad's angry address to the Mehter, the Eliaut had observed that the man was not a Koord, but a Persian. It was evident, also, that the treatment he had received was not of a kind to excite in his breast friendly feelings towards his Koordish master; and it was upon these feelings that Feridoon determined to act. Creeping, therefore, slowly up to the spot where the Mehter was seated, engaged in rubbing his shoulders, he suddenly addressed him with,

“Hist, comrade, I wish to speak to you.”

“Who is there!” exclaimed the Mehter, springing to his feet in alarm. “What want you with me?”

“I am a Persian, not a Koord,” replied

Feridoon. "On the contrary, I hate all appertaining to Koordistan; curses rest on their defiled kindred! I saw them maltreat you just now. How happens it that you, who are not of their tribe, serve such sons of Shaitan."

"Wahi! it is a long story," answered the Mehter, who was evidently pleased at hearing the abuse showered upon the Koords by his new acquaintance. "You must know that I am an outcast, having been obliged to fly my country in order to avoid the anger of a powerful Khan, whom I had unwittingly offended; and in a fit of desperation, I was ass enough to offer my services here; it then being discovered that I was a first rate Mehter, I have been entrusted with the care of these animals; but Allah knows that I have not changed my lot for the better, as my life at present is one continued sequel of misery—one long catalogue of stripes and abuse."

"Why then, my friend," observed Feridoon,

“do you remain here? Surely, if you are so maltreated, you can seek another place.”

“That is easier said than done,” answered the other. “If I were even to hint at a desire of leaving them, I should receive such a bastinado, that scarcely a poplar tree would remain in the country; and as for my quitting without asking permission, it would be to tempt fate, for were I retaken, I verily believe that I should be flayed alive. However, suppose I were to escape, whither can I go? Alas! woe is me! I have eaten dirt, and must sit in a corner in patience. My evil destiny has prevailed, and I cannot change it.”

“Methinks, however,” said the Eliaut, “that I can assist you. Return thanks to Allah, for fortune is about to shine upon you.”

“You speak in riddles!” answered the other. “What mean you? Your appearance does not promise much. Besides, if it were not for

your tongue, "I should scarcely take you for a Persian."

"Do you see this?" was the reply of the Eliaut, holding up a purse in such a manner that the moonbeams played upon it. "It is large—feel it; it is heavy."

The Mehter did as he was requested, and having tested the weight of the bag, asked whether the contents were gold or silver.

"Every coin therein contained," said Feridoon, "is a gold bajaklee, and every coin shall be yours, if you perform what I shall require."

"Mashallah," answered the Mehter, in astonishment; "how comes it that one so poorly clad as yourself, should offer bribes like this?"

"Judge me not by my outward covering," said Feridoon, "I am not what I seem; ask no questions, but tell me at once whether you are inclined to be the possessor of this gold; it will make you rich for life, remember that



with gold you can purchase all things—happiness, love, luxuries, friendship and power, and remember power can coin gold; so that with this purse you can open the way to greater wealth. Speak, do you wish to call this gold your own.”

“By the beard of the Shah, I should be a fool else,” replied the other; “tell me at once what you require, it can surely be no easy task, which is paid so well.”

“True,” replied the Eliaut; “still it is not so hard as you might imagine, there is little peril therein, as far as you are concerned. Open your ears and listen attentively, while I rehearse to you your lesson.”

Feridoon then proceeded to give a rapid sketch of the abduction of the Hamadane maid from the camp at Sultaneah, depicting the anguish of the father in the strongest colours; and on observing some hesitation in the man’s manner, he attempted to impress on his mind the extent of the Khan’s gratitude

towards any one who might assist in the rescue of his daughter. He wound up his discourse with the following words,

“I have well observed the chieftain’s tent; I know the watch-word, by means of which I can pass the sentinels, I can therefore gain access to the very tent of Karah Kaplan ; who, from what I have overheard, has not long since given order that his captive be conducted to his own private tent. I have observed its situation from the hills above, and can easily discover it. Now your duty is this, saddle these three steeds, prepare everything for a start, you must accompany us, being well conversant with the localities of this country, and of course unable to remain in safety among the tribe after the bearing off of your charges. You are aware that the animals cannot be surpassed in speed and lasting; once therefore mounted we can laugh at the beards of the Koords; while, therefore, I am absent, you must prepare the

horses for the journey. If I return not—well! you have lost nothing, you have run no risk, you can easily take off the saddles, and replace the nummuds, and no one will be the wiser. Speak, do you consent ?”

The man still hesitated, when Feridoon silenced all his scruples, by drawing from the purse half of its contents, and placing it in his hands, observing,

“If I return, you shall receive the remainder, if not you will already have had a good reward. Remember once more, that the father of her of whom I am attempting the rescue, is all powerful and rich. Say the word, yes or no !”

“I am your slave,” replied the Mehter. “May a fortunate issue be granted to your enterprise ; it is by no means either a safe or an easy task ; besides yon moon will not aid you, it shines too brightly ; however, happen what may, if you return within a reasonable time, you will find the horses saddled, and

ready to start wherever you list ; if you return not, may Allah have mercy upon you ; for as I am a true mussulman, the Karah Kaplan will show you none.”

A most important part of his scheme being thus accomplished, Feridoon prepared to put the remainder in operation.

## CHAPTER X.

He mounted himself on a coal-black steed,  
And her on a freckled grey,  
With a bugelet horn hung down from his side,  
And roundly they rode away.

OLD BALLAD.

IT will be necessary to inform the reader concerning the position of the Koordish camp, in order to demonstrate in what manner it was possible to gain access to the chieftain's abode, without exciting attention.

The encampment consisted of about three hundred tents, pitched in regular rows throughout the valley; apart from the others were those belonging to the wealthier persons—the

positions being chosen with a consideration for coolness.

The space taken up by the habitation of Allah Verdee was of great extent, and was upon a slight eminence, at some distance from the main body of the tribe. The chief approach to it was by a narrow path, guarded in several places by sentinels; having once, however, ascended, the ground for some distance around was level, and being well supplied with water, was at this season of the year covered with the most luxuriant grass.

Just outside the serperdeh, which surrounded the harem, was pitched a tent used for the purpose of *giving audience*, and *public business*, and where also the chief was wont to receive his friends. The canvass wall itself, hid the interior tents from the view of any one who was not posted on the hills above; those hills from which Feridoon had remarked their position.

The serperdeh possessed but one outlet, at which a sentinel was always posted, so that no one could enter without passing him.

The greatest difficulty to be overcome by Feridoon, had been to gain access to the eminence, without being perceived by the sentinels. As long as all was wrapped in obscurity, this, though arduous, was possible; but with the bright moonbeams shining full upon it, the attempt would be vain. Now, however, that the Eliaut was possessed of the watchword, a chief difficulty was surmounted; as he would be allowed to pass, without any opposition, or the fear of exciting any suspicion: but how was he to return if he were successful, and accompanied by Zoraya, for the appearance of a woman at that late hour, would cause particular inquiry to be made before she was allowed to pass, and inquiry would almost certainly lead to detection, and detection to death? But Feridoon, trust-

ing in providence for providing the means of return, determined at once to pass the sentinels, and proceed to the tents of Karah Kaplan.

He accordingly directed his footsteps towards the narrow path, in which the Koordish soldiers were stationed, and having been challenged by each in turn, was allowed to go by at once, on his uttering the words "Lahnet ba Aboobekr; having arrived on the level ground, he walked boldly to the entrance, and on being stopped by the sentinel, he gave the word in a firm tone. The man, however, appearing scarcely inclined to let him pass immediately, the Eliaüt hastily observed:

"Delay me at your peril; I am sent hither by Moorad Beg, on the most important private affairs for the Khan. Have you forgotten your instructions, or do you wish to let your ears pay the forfeit of your impudence?"

The man convinced at these words made



way, and Feridoon passed on; but just as he was entering he observed, "The Khan is in the smaller tent, is he not?"

"As far as I am aware he is," answered the Koord, as the Eliaut disappeared.

Feridoon now found himself alone, within the precincts of the anderoon, and a somewhat natural tremor passed over him as he thought upon his perilous situation; but calling to mind why he was thus hazarding his life, he proceeded with firmly strong nerves, towards the smaller tent; as he approached he distinguished voices, and having come close up, the tones of one of the speakers thrilled through his heart.

It was evidently the voice of Zoraya, in the most earnest entreaty. Excited to the utmost at the sound, Feridoon making a slight incision in the cloth, applied his eye to it, when a sight which made his very blood boil, met his gaze. There were but two persons within, Karah

Kaplan was one, the other was the Hamadane maiden, the latter of whom was struggling in the sturdy gripe of the former ; who was endeavouring, with fury in his looks, to prevent her exit.

In one instant, the Eliaut had ripped up the cloth covering, in another, he was at the side of Allah Verdee, in a third he had felled him with the heavy bludgeon he carried in his hand.

The Koordish chieftain fell motionless to the ground, stunned by the blow he had received, which had struck him on the back of the head. One moment served for Zoraya to recognise her preserver, into whose arms she threw herself with all the fervour of gratitude and love. After one ardent embrace, Feridoon being recalled to a sense of his situation, pointed to the prostrate Koord, and informing the maiden in a hurried tone, of the necessity of securing him, in case of his recovering

his senses, proceeded to gag and bind him so securely, that in case of his revival, the chieftain could neither have called for assistance, or moved hand or foot.

This operation being finished, the Eliaut turned to Zoraya, and hastily informed her of what he had done. The girl clasped her hands together in ecstasy at this announcement, and having expressed in a few words the excess of her gratitude, declared herself ready to leave the spot instantly.

The greatest difficulty had still to be surmounted;—how were they to pass the sentries together With respect to Feridoon, the affair was easy as he knew the pass word, and had already been observed to go by; but in what manner Zoraya could accompany him, was to be settled. Several methods were proposed, but on deliberation proved futile. At one time Feridoon thought that, by adopting the

dress of the unconscious chieftain, Zoraya might be able to elude the vigilance of the guards; but the idea was almost immediately repudiated as impossible, for the maiden although nearly of the same height as Allah Verdee, would have been instantly detected by her gait and voice, should her features fail of being discovered by the light of the moon. Another scheme suggested, was that Zoraya should enter a large Yekdoon,(1) which stood in the tent, and enclosed within, should be borne on the shoulders of Feridoon, until they reached the spot where the horses were stationed; but this idea was also scouted as impracticable, both on account of the weight, and the danger likely to accrue, should the sentinels insist on examining the contents.

Time flew, Karah Kaplan gave signs of returning life, and nothing was yet determined on. The lovers were in an agony of despair,

when Feridoon observing the kalem done of the chieftain lying on the ground, seizing it with avidity he exclaimed,

“ I have it, Mashallah ! Khanum, you are saved, the means for our escape are supplied.”

“ Allahee(2) shukur !” ejaculated the girl, “ are you sure ?”

“ Behold this kalem done,” answered Feridoon, “ it contains the seal of the Khan. I will take a scroll of paper, and write a peremptory order in the chieftain’s name, for our both being allowed to pass the sentry-posts, without being delayed. This done I will sign it with the Khan’s seal,(3) and if Karah Kaplan be the dreaded commander I have heard of, his soldiers will scarcely dare to detain the possessors of such a document.

“ O ! admirable !” exclaimed Zoraya, in an ecstasy. “ Thanks be to Providence, we are safe.”

It was evident by the powerless struggles

of the Karah Kaplan, that he was now perfectly sensible ; his eye which was fixed upon the lovers, sparkled with the effects of his impotent rage, while he in vain attempted to tear his bonds asunder ; he had, however, been bound too securely ; while the gag which was most effectually thrust into his mouth, answered perfectly the purpose for which it was intended. He was apparently nearly suffocated by the violence of his rage ; the Eliaut, however, bade his companion not to fear, as they were completely out of his power. Then approaching the Koord he observed,

“ Khan ! were I to take your life, it would be but a just punishment for your inexcusable villany ; but I will not shed your blood. Live to repent, live to learn that Persians have better brains than the Koords.”

Another desperate but ineffectual struggle from Karah Kaplan was the answer to this speech ; which being observed by the Eliaut he continued,

“ Spare your efforts, they will only serve to tighten your bonds. Think you I am an ass, that I made not the most of my opportunity, while you were lying senseless. Take my advice, therefore, and remain quiet; you cannot change the laws of destiny.”

With these words he turned to the maiden, and informing her in a whisper, in what manner it was his intention to proceed at first, he left the tent, followed by Zoraya closely veiled, and moved slowly and cautiously towards the spot where the sentinel at the entrance in the canvass wall was stationed; and before the soldier was aware of his vicinity, the youth presented a pistol at his head, and commanded him, in a determined tone, “ To be silent on pain of instant death.”

The Koord was so taken by surprise, that he suffered Feridoon to get possession of his musket, without giving the slightest alarm. Having gained his point so far, the youth

motioned to Zoraya to advance, and on the maiden's coming forward, he placed his pistol in her hand, at the same addressing the Koord in a firm but low voice,(4)

“ Remain perfectly still !” he said, “ and your life is safe, but should you make the slightest movement demonstrative either of an intention of escape, or giving an alarm, this woman will instantly pull the trigger of yonder pistol, and dismiss your foul soul from your unclean body. I am now going to bind and gag you, as I have already done your master ; see, therefore, you make no resistance, or you will never behold the light of day.”

The Koord perceiving how desperate was his situation, after having cast one hasty glance around, made signs of his obedience to the commands imposed upon him ; when Feridoon proceeded to gag and bind him ; this being done, he left him extended on the ground ; but before finally quitting the spot, he placed a



gold piece in the man's pouch, in order to show it was necessity, not inclination, that caused him to be so severe.

The anxious couple now made for the steep path, and having arrived at the first post, were challenged by the soldier placed there on guard. Feridoon uttered the watch-word; but the Koord, gazing upon the form of Zoraya, exclaimed,

“Why are you thus accompanied? Women walk not abroad at this hour of the night! You must wait till I summon my superior, before I can allow you to pass.”

“As you please,” replied Feridoon, carelessly, speaking in the Koordish tongue. “I am obeying the orders of the chief in conducting this woman to the tent of Moorad Beg. Here is an order for a free passage. Can you read?”

“I can,” answered the other. “Let me see the writing.”

Feridoon presented the forged document, and the sentinel, having looked at the seal of Allah Verdee by the light of his lantern, exclaimed,

“ Pass on. May your steps be fortunate !”

The Eliaut and his companion needed not a second injunction ; but having returned the soldier's parting salutation, directed their course towards the lower part of the hill, and having arrived at the termination of the path, and undergone the same questioning from the sentinel posted there, were allowed to proceed, and at length found themselves out of immediate danger.

The heart of Feridoon bounded with joy as he approached the spot where Murwari and the other horses were stationed. He was aware that no more guards would impede his further progress, and that, provided his new friend the Persian Mehter had remained faithful, all was right ; and, from his know-

ledge of his countrymen's character, he felt no doubt of the man's proving himself trustworthy. He had touched some gold, and was expecting more. What Persian, indeed, ever was faithless under such circumstances, unless under an expectation of a greater amount from a contrary quarter, and of such an event there was no likelihood.(5)

His anticipations were just. On their arriving at the appointed place, the horses were standing ready saddled, while the anxious Mehter was holding their bridles.

On Feridoon's arrival with his charge, the Persian gave a suppressed cry of exultation.

“ Alhamdellillah !” he exclaimed, “ you are safe. O Sahib, you have tarried a long while, and I began to fear that you had been discovered ; but Allahee Shukur, you are safe, and my reward is earned.”

“ Silence !” answered Feridoon, “ act and

“speak not; here is the bag containing the remainder of the ducats, and now hasten to assist the Khanum to mount.”

Zoraya having been placed on one of the Khan's horses, the Eliaut mounted Murwari, while the Mehter leapt upon the remaining animal.

“Forward!” cried the Eliaut, when all were ready to start; “you know the way, proceed in front; let us see whether these steeds deserve their vaunted fame.”

The Mehter galloped off at this command, followed by the two lovers, at a pace which seemed to bid defiance to pursuit.

They had only, however, ascended the nearest height, when the report of several guns from the camp, proclaimed that their flight was discovered; lights were observed moving quickly in various directions; while shouts were wafted by the gale to the ears of the fugitives.

“The dogs are already on the scent, I hear their baying,” cried Feridoon; “let them follow. With such coursers as ours, and a good cause, surely with the blessing of Allah, we may laugh their beards to scorn. Cheer up, my Zoraya, while Feridoon breathes you shall never fall into the power of these unsainted curs.”

## CHAPTER XI.

To thwart a great man in his desires, is to place oneself in the path of a hungry tiger.

PERSIAN SAYING.

WHEN Mehtee Khan had quitted the tent in which the affecting scene between himself and his daughter had taken place, on the day preceding her abduction, he determined to report at once to Mahomed Reza Meerza, Zoraya's rejection of his suit. This was indeed, a task of extreme delicacy, for the Khan was fully aware of the great danger consequent on offending such a powerful personage. His

love, however, for his daughter, had triumphed over both his ambition and his dread of incurring the anger of the Shah zadeh.

On arriving before Mahomed Reza's tent he requested an audience; this was immediately granted, and Mehtee Khan having entered into the presence of the Prince, found him in earnest conversation with Meerza Sadek, who was standing near him, with a quantity of papers in his hand.

“Khosh amedeed, you are welcome,” exclaimed the Shah zadeh, on the Khan's entrance; “your place has been empty.”

“May the condescension of the Prince never be less,” answered the Begler Beg. “His slave requests permission to make a representation.”

“Speak on,” said the Prince, “you are permitted.”

“May your slave be allowed to observe,” continued the Khan, “that he would fain address your Highness in private.”

“ There is no occasion of such mystery,” observed Mahomed Reza ; “ speak out freely, I have no secrets from Meerza Sadek.”

“ At least, Sire,” said Mehtee Khan, “ allow your slave to request your Highness to dismiss your attendants for a while ?”

“ By the head of Ali !” replied the Prince, “ your conduct is strange ; however, as you appear to be so earnest, I will not thwart you in your wish. You may retire,” he continued addressing the numerous throng of retainers, who are ever to be found near a Persian prince’s presence.

The crowd having made their obeisances, obeyed the mandate, and the Begler Beg was left alone with the Shah zadeh, and his confidential secretary.

“ Well, Khan,” said the Prince, “ you have your desire ; proceed !”

“ O Sire !” cried the Khan prostrating himself, “ the least of your slaves is afraid to give



utterance to his words, lest he should be made to eat dirt, in your gracious sight."

"Why should you fear?" exclaimed Mahomed Reza in surprise; "surely I have never given you cause to tremble. Have I not always treated you with the most marked condescension?"

"True, Sire," returned Mehtee Khan; "but notwithstanding, I tremble. Hitherto, I have been fortunate enough to inform your Highness of nothing, that could excite unpleasant feelings in your bosom; but alas, Sire, I am now come into this gracious presence as a bearer of evil tidings."

"By the blessed prophet!" cried the Shah zadeh impatiently, "you are becoming every moment more mysterious; as you value my favour, let me at once know the worst."

"I am less than the dust of your footsteps," said Mehtee Khan; "but still trusting to your Highness's well known sense of

justice and mercy, I cast myself on your generosity. O Sire! my house has been exalted by a gracious offer from your mightiness, to elevate my daughter to a place in your anderoon."

"Well!" cried the Prince hastily, "is that a misfortune?"

"Wahi! wahi!" exclaimed the Begler Beg, piteously; "O illustrious Sire, my daughter——"

"She is not dead?" ejaculated Mahomed Reza, "she is not ill?—Keep me no longer in suspense."

"Thanks be to Allah," replied the Khan, "her health is good; but (that I should live to say it,) she begs to decline, with all due respect, the high honour intended for her, of which she feels herself unworthy."

A flush passed over the visage of the Shah zadeh, as these words were pronounced; re-

covering, however, his composure, he exclaimed,

“Khan are you mad?—have you forgotten your native language?—In the name of the Imams, render yourself intelligible.”

The Begler Beg, rendered desperate by circumstances, now gave the Prince a succinct account of his interview with Zoraya, merely suppressing her avowal of her love for Feridoon. Having brought his recital to a close, he once more prostrated himself, and begged for mercy.

Mahomed Reza Meerza gazed sternly upon the trembling nobleman. His brow contracted, and his bosom panted with the emotion he in vain attempted to conceal; at length, bursting into a sardonic laugh, he exclaimed, scornfully addressing Meerza Sadek,

“Azaib ! wonderful ! Meerza, have you heard ? By Ali, this is amusing ! Go tell his

majesty, the Shah, that he must be mistaken in calling me his son. The name of Shah zadeh would better suit yonder illustrious personage, who is forsooth so exalted that he considers my alliance beneath him. Ha! ha! it is too good. Meerza, pay your respects to his royal highness."

"Alas, Sire!" exclaimed the Begler Beg, beseechingly, "think not so ill of me. For my part, your highness's condescension made me feel as if my head were about to touch the skies. But alas! although my daughter fully appreciates the value of the offer made so graciously by your mightiness, for some secret reason which I cannot worm from her, she declines becoming an inmate of the royal anderoon; and surely, Sire, your highness would not desire me to use force, in order to drag her hither against her will."

"Surely not!" answered Mahomed Reza, contemptuously. "O, little man! think you

that my affection for your daughter is so strong, that I should give myself the trouble of thinking twice concerning such a low-born slut. Go and grovel under the tyranny to which, doubtless, you are subjected, when you once enter the walls of your anderoon. Begone, and pollute no longer our tent with your unwelcome presence."

The Khan bowed low, and fixing his eyes imploringly upon the scornful countenance of the Prince, read therein, that to attempt further excuse, would be but to cause the now suppressed anger to explode ; he, therefore, not unwillingly took his departure from the royal tent.

It seemed that with the presence of Mehter Khan that all intention vanished of concealing the anger which raged like a volcano in the Prince's breast, for on the departure of that nobleman, Mahomed Reeza leapt to his feet.

and pacing up and down with hurried strides, exclaimed,

“May he grill in Jehanum! I have defiled his house. His kindred are asses, and he is the greatest ass of his family. Did you hear, Meerza, what he said?—that his minx of a daughter refused to enter my anderoon? Allah is great! I have almost a mind to have her dragged hither, that I may give her in marriage to one of my servants. O! that toothless old miscreant of a father! I have no patience with him! to allow himself to be persuaded by his daughter! Why, if a child of mine were to behave so, it would repent that it ever had beheld the light. By Mahomed, by Hussein, I will be revenged. The foozool shall rue the day when he dared to thwart the wishes of a Shah zadeh.”

“May it please your highness,” observed the Meerza, in an obsequious manner, “an

opportunity offers, and one in which you may mingle vengeance with justice. Is your slave allowed to speak?"

"Speak on, my trusty friend," cried the Prince. "You are indeed a good subject; not one like that polluted cur, on whose head may everlasting filth accumulate."

"Mehtee Khan is Begler Beg of Hamadan, so please your highness," returned Meerza Sadek, "and being in that capacity, much of the public money passes through his hands. Now, most gracious Prince, I have positive proof that he has embezzled many sums that ought to have been delivered up to your highness, and which he has accounted for by making various excuses, such as bad seasons having prevented the Rayats from paying their tribute exactly."

"Aye, I remember," said Mahomed Reeza, "that more than once the tribute money has

been short, and that such excuses as you mention were given, which I believed to be true. But say, have you proof of his having received the money, and placed it in his own coffers?"

"It is but this very day," answered the wily Meerza, "that I have discovered the Begler Beg's dishonesty, which has perfectly surprised me, as I had ever believed him incapable of acting such a foul part. It pains me also much to be compelled by my duty to report his misconduct, as my affection for him was once great."

"But the proof of his guilt," interrupted the Prince, "I want the proof. Were I to condemn him without good evidence of his guilt appearing, it might be said that I was vexed at his daughter's conduct, and I would not have it imagined that such a low-born slut should cause me a moment's uneasiness."

"But, Sire," returned the Meerza, "the



evidence I can adduce is enough to cover the Khan with endless shame. Alas! that one I deemed so perfect, should turn out such a rogue! Alas! in whom can we trust?"

"You speak the truth," answered the Prince. "After what I have heard from Mehtee Khan's lips, I should not be surprised at any act of dishonesty or madness performed by him. But tell me, Meerza, what evidence have you of the Begler Beg's rascality, and where are your witnesses?"

"There is one in the camp," returned the Meerza, "who can swear to the facts I have mentioned, and who is ready to swear on the Koran to the truth of what he will assert."

"Who is he?" demanded the Shah zadeh.

"He is one," answered Meerza Sadek, "who was once much in the confidence of Mehtee Khan, having been his chief gholam, and is a man of the highest respectability. I can also produce writings given to several

persons, acknowledging the receipt of the full amount of the tribute due, while at the same time I have understood that on paying the sums into the government coffers, half the amount was appropriated to his own use ; while, to hide his guilt, and to account for the default, excuses were made that, on account of bad crops and other misfortunes, the peasants had been unable to pay the whole of the tribute required by the law. The excuses, I am aware, were accepted by your royal highness, who has ever been noted for the kindness and generosity of your disposition ; but little were you aware that the remainder of the money went to increase the already too great hoards of the supposed upright Begler Beg."

"By the head of the Shah," said Mahomed Reza, in anger, "he shall repent him of his duplicity, and rightly too, for shall I not be performing an act of justice, in bringing the miscreant to punishment? Yes, Meerza, it is

a proper sense of justice, not a feeling of vengeance which prompts me to severity. I harbour no ill-will against the Khan, but I should not be acting fairly to others, were I to show any mercy to such aggravated roguery. Mehtee Khan shall not only be deprived of his situation, but shall be made to disgorge some of his ill-gotten gain. Meerza, you are for the present dismissed; go and prepare your writings and the papers which are to prove the guilt of this heinous offender, who shall be judged by the Shah himself, before whose tribunal he shall be summoned. His Majesty, my honoured father, is one little calculated to show mercy to a criminal found guilty of defrauding the revenue. It is in his eyes one of the most unpardonable of offences. The royal ferashes will soon have plenty of work prepared for them; for such an example shall be made of the Khan that it shall prove a terrible warning to all other magistrates. Meer-

za, you may depart ; you have found favour in our eyes. Peace be with you.”

The obsequious secretary bowed low and summoning the attendants of the Prince to their master's presence, proceeded to take his departure, chuckling over the almost unexpected success which had attended the sinister plot which he had so long been planning against Mehtee Khan. Indeed, the downfall of that nobleman was now so evident, that nothing short of a miracle could possibly interfere between him and his disgrace.

## CHAPTER XII.

———a mixture dire

Like thunder clouds—a mixture dire

Like thunder clouds, of gloom and fire !

In which the Peri's eye could read,

Dark tales of many a ruthless deed ;—

The ruined maid—the shrine profaned—

Oaths broken———

PARADISE AND THE PERI.

IT was on the very night following this conversation that the abduction took place, the news of which reached the Prince's ear in the morning. He had somewhat relented from his intended severity against the Begler Beg ; but on learning the disappearance of the maiden, it instantly struck him that the whole was a

mere stratagem to get her away from his neighbourhood. Rendered frantic at the supposition, he proceeded at once to his father's palace and made his accusation against the Khan, calling upon the Shah to visit the offence with the utmost rigour.

A deposition made by such an illustrious personage was of course immediately attended to, and soon after the departure of Feridoon from the presence of Mehtee Khan, in search of the Koordish camp, that nobleman was surprised by the sudden arrival of a large party of the royal ferashes before his tent, who in an imperious manner informed him that his presence was required by the Shah. In Persia, if not in all countries, the respect entertained by the master for any one, may be divined by the manner of the servants; and when, unfortunately, a nobleman, however high his rank, has provoked the King's displeasure, long before that displeasure is made known by words,

it may be read by means of the ominous frown on the brow of the menials and the utter want of respect shewn to him, before whom, but a few hours before, they would have bent low and servilely. The Begler Beg was therefore at once made aware of his danger by the insolent bearing of the ferashes. Suppressing, however, all outward signs of fear, though inwardly trembling with agitation, he rose and summoning his attendants, informed the ferashes that he was prepared to accompany them. But the word had gone forth among the household of the Khan, that their master had incurred the anger of the King, and in consequence his suite presented but a meagre appearance, as most of those whose duty it was to wait on their master's person, managed to render themselves absent on various pretexts. The Khan observed the falling off of his adherents, and felt the bitter pangs of disappointment, at beholding many to whom

he had shown the utmost kindness, thus desert him in the hour of adversity.

With an anxious heart he turned his course towards the royal tent, wondering indeed, of what crime he was about to be accused ; for although he suspected that Mahomed Reza Meerza, was the cause of his present situation, he could not by any means conjecture the actual reason of his being summoned ; for although he was aware that he had excited the Prince's anger, by the refusal of his suit, still he was certain it was impossible, that such could be made the object of an accusation.

The windows of the royal dewankhaneh, on the side looking towards the north, were lifted up, and on Mehtee Khan's entering the court yard, he perceived Fath Ali seated on his musnud, surrounded by his ministers. Having performed the customary prostrations, he was commanded to approach, and on arriving within speaking distance, and looking up, read



in the frowning features of the Shah, that his fate was pre-determined; particularly as he observed Mohamed Reza Meerza standing next to his father, with his countenance pursed up into a malignant and sarcastic expression. Behind his Royal Highness stood Meerza Sadek, whose face was lighted up with a look of irrepressible triumph. Opposite to these two personages on the left hand of the King, were the first Vizier, and Meerza Abool Hassan Khan, the Nizam-adowlah;(1) at a farther distance, were a multitude of Meerzas and under secretaries, some in the apartment itself, others standing in the court below; while close at hand was a large band of executioners, in the midst of whom was the felek, and an enormous bundle of poplar sticks.(2)

Mehtee Khan having performed the last requisite prostration, remained stationary, awaiting for the expected accusation, with as slight a demonstration of fear, as was possible

for one in his situation. The silence was soon broken by Fath Ali, who having thrown on the Khan one of those shrewd glances, which all who have beheld him, must remember, exclaimed,

“Mehtee Khan! you must be well aware why you are summoned hither; your guilt is too apparent for me to allow the slightest doubt of it to remain.”

“Your majesty is the King of Kings,” answered the Khan, “and should never hear the voice of contradiction; still if the humblest of your slaves is allowed to make a representation, he must beg leave to assert his perfect unconsciousness of any reason, why he should have the felicity of beholding the august countenance of the Asylum of the Universe.”(3)

“Your pretended ignorance will avail you little,” said the Shah; “you are not accused without proof. Say, little man, how comes it, that you have defrauded the treasury, and

applied to your own use, money, which ought to have been delivered up to the government? You thought to have sinned undetected; but that could not be."

"O Sire!" replied the Begler Beg, "I am innocent. I have never defrauded the revenue of a single shai. Let me know my accuser, that I may controvert him."

"Meerza Sadek advance!" exclaimed Fath Ali. "Speak! and put this braggart liar to shame."

The person addressed, prostrated himself, and, rising, proceeded to accuse the Begler Beg in the same strain as he had used on the previous day, towards the Prince.

On his mentioning that there was a witness ready to prove the Khan's guilt, the latter, who had been, for the moment, almost stupefied with astonishment, rousing himself, exclaimed,

"O! King of Kings live for ever: may your

condescension permit your slave to declare that this accusation is one whole tissue of lies. I defy yonder Meerza to produce a witness to prove what he falsely asserts, unless indeed, he has bribed some wretch to pawn his soul for gold. As I am a true believer, I am innocent."

"Khan," answered the King sarcastically, "you certainly conceal your guilt by a most skilful flow of words. I fear, notwithstanding, that your protestations will serve your cause but little. Meerza Sadek! is the person who can give testimony against this man within call?"

"So please, the Lord of the Universe," replied the Meerza, "he waits without; if it be the royal pleasure that he should appear, he is in readiness to kiss the dust from your footsteps."

"Bid him come forward," was the command given by the Shah, in obedience to

which Meerza Sadek addressed a few words to an attendant, who retired, and in a moment returned in company with the same man, who had previously been accused before the tribunal of Mehtee Khan at Hamadan, of stealing a bale of silk. The Lootee having touched the ground with his forehead, was thus accosted by Fath Ali,

“Are you willing to swear on the Koran, that you are aware that Mehtee Khan, the Begler Beg of Hamadan, has, while in that capacity, defrauded the government, and placed money in his own coffers, which ought to have been delivered up to our well beloved son, the Prince Governor of the province of Hamadan?”

The man inclining his body answered in a firm tone, “The Shah has rightly spoken.”

“You see!” cried the Shah, turning to the Khan, “and you have heard; your guilt is clear as a summer’s sky; and, in consequence

we must proceed to condemn you to the punishment you richly merit."

"Afakarillah!" ejaculated Mehtee Khan. "Surely your majesty is not going to condemn your slave, on the bare word of a Loootee, who is well known in Hamadan as the greatest villain in the place."

"So please your majesty," said Meerza Sadek, "the Khan is wrong; yonder man is in my service, and a honester, and more trusty-worthy person exists not. Since, however, the Begler Beg appears still to deny the accusation, this witness is perfectly ready to swear to the truth of his evidence on the Koran; and from such an oath there is no appeal."

"Gracious Allah!" cried Mehtee Khan, "has the impious wretch no reverence for the deity, that he is prepared to foreswear himself on the sacred volume; is he not fearful of the earth's opening, and swallowing him up,

on his eating such dirt in the sight of his God and his prophet?"

"Silence, padersookhteh!" exclaimed the Shah; "silence! Add not to your guilt, by seeking to cloak it under the veil of hypocrisy. Silence! while I give ear to the evidence. Mollah! proceed to swear the witness."

An aged priest advanced at this command, bearing a magnificent Koran in his hands; turning to Ali Acma the Lootee, he gazed sternly on him for a few moments, and then in a slow and solemn voice, exclaimed,

"Man! as you are a true believer! tell me, are you prepared to swear on this sacred volume, that the evidence you are about to give is the truth; remember that should you swear falsely, you will invoke the vengeance of Allah on your head; if the earth fail to open and swallow you up on the instant, it will be merely that you are reserved for a more horrible fate. Your body will wither away,

rot, and become corrupt, your flesh will drop piecemeal from your bones ; your hearth and home will be defiled, your children will perish before your very sight, and you will linger out the remainder of your wretched life, cursed by your God and your prophet, a warning to all mankind, how dreadful is the judgment denounced against perjurers. After death has released you from your earthly sufferings, your soul will be tormented by the pains of hell, where you will burn, grill and roar in anguish during all eternity, being excluded from the blessed Paradise of true believers for ever, for ever, for ever. Man ! having listened to my words, are you prepared to swear ?”

During this dreadful denunciation against perjury, the countenance of Ali Acma underwent a marked change ; his face turned to deadly white, his knees knocked together, and he seemed on the point of dropping to the ground ; twice he opened his mouth, and



twice his tongue refused to give utterance to the words which trembled on his tongue.

The Begler Beg noticing the confusion of the LooTEE, drew the attention of the Shah to it in the most earnest manner.

“O! King of Kings!” he said, “can your gracious majesty give a moment’s credit to yon trembling wretch, who has not the courage to put the final stroke to his villany. See, how he shakes at the words of the priest. O, Sire! can your majesty require greater proof of his being a suborned witness.”

“What mortal!” quickly interposed the Meerza, “what human being could fail to tremble at such a solemn denunciation, however conscious he might be of his rectitude, and the truth of his testimony?”

While giving utterance to these words, Meerza Sadek contrived to throw unobserved, a threatening glance upon the panic-stricken LooTEE, who, having by this time recovered

himself, put on an appearance of composure, and exclaimed,

“ Sahib, you are right ; it would be vain for a mere mortal to hear such terrific words without feeling fear, whether he were guilty or not. Yes, O, Mollah !” he continued, addressing the priest, “ I am ready to swear on the holy book to the truth of what I shall assert ; and, as I am a Mussulman, I invoke the vengeance of Allah on my head, if I lie.”

The oath was now administered with all due form, and having been taken, the Shah, turning to Ali Acma said,

“ Mention all you know concerning yonder burnt father.”

It would be useless to detail the whole of the complicated mass of false evidence adduced against the unfortunate noble. One of his chief crimes consisted in his being rich, and that was sufficient to condemn him in the eyes of Fath Ali. That Prince, though possessed

of many good and shining qualities, threw them into the shade by his avaricious disposition, which was the cause of his committing many unjust acts, which otherwise would never have stained the annals of his reign ; but, alas ! the ruling passion of this sovereign was for money. Where gold was concerned, justice, and indeed every other virtue fled from his bosom, and left the field open for vice to exercise her sway unopposed. Thus it was that, on listening to the evidence produced, the Shah at once decided that Mehtee Khan was guilty, and addressing him in a mocking manner, he observed,

“ Wonderful ! have we not here a good servant ? He is fearful our treasury should become overcharged, and has, therefore, taken care of the superfluous coin. Does not such disinterested conduct merit reward ? Ought we not to exalt his head to the skies ? ”

“ Mashallah ! but on a pole ! ” cried the at-

tendant courtiers. "He has forsooth, eaten much dirt."

"By the head of the Shah! by the soul of Mahomed!" cried the Begler Beg, "Aman! mercy! I am innocent. I have eaten no money belonging to government. O! most sublime of monarchs! O King of Kings, have mercy upon your miserable slave!—he is innocent."

"Were we to pardon such heinous guilt as yours," returned the Shah, "we should encourage fraud. Your crimes are proved; and for those crimes you must suffer. We will, however, temper justice with mercy. Listen; by rights your life is forfeited; but, impelled by the natural kindness of our disposition, we will spare that. You are, however, from this moment, deprived of your place as Begler Beg of Hamadan, your house in that city is confiscated, and you are condemned to pay a fine of thirty thousand tomans."(4)

“Wahi!” faltered out the Khan, “who ever heard of such a sum? Where am I to get it? Were my very soul beaten out of my body, it would not enable me to produce a tenth part of it.”

“We will, at all events, make the essay,” replied Fath Ali, with great coolness. “Here ferashes, tie the padersookhteh to the felek, and beat his feet until his toe-nails, aye, and even his toes themselves fall off.”

The words were hardly out of the mouth of the Shah, when the Begler Beg was seized by the executioners, and, without being allowed a nummud(5) to lie on, he was thrown on the ground, while his feet, being fastened to the pole, were elevated in the air, ready to receive the blows, which only awaited a signal from the Shah, to fall.

“Aman! Aman!” cried the prostrate nobleman.

“Are you ready to pay the thirty thousand tomans?” demanded Fath Ali.

“You cannot squeeze milk out of a flint,” cried the Khan, “nor money out of a poor man.”

“Proceed,” said the Shah, addressing the ferashes; and the command was followed by the descent of a tremendous shower of blows on the soles of the unfortunate man, who, for a time, bore the punishment without flinching; but, at length, the anguish becoming insupportable, the sufferer roared out,

“By the head of Ali, stop! will five thousand tomans suffice?”

“Strike on,” cried Fath Ali.

“Will ten thousand do?” sobbed out the Begler Beg.

“Lay on harder!” was the only observation made by the King.

“Will fifteen thousand satisfy your Ma-

jesty? screamed the Khan, almost at his wit's end with pain.

“Lay on still harder!” said the Shah.

“Wahi! wahi!” ejaculated Mehtee Khan; “give me but time, and I will do my best.”

“Stop!” said Fath Ali, who, on the operators ceasing from their exertions, continued:

“What did you observe?”

“Give me but time, most gracious King,” answered the Khan, “and I will see whether I can possibly find the money.”

“Barakillah!” said the monarch; “I am rejoiced to discover that we have managed to refreshen your memory. You ask for time; well! time shall be given you; but mark me, if, after this indulgence, you fail to pay the money, you shall renew your acquaintance with the felek. Listen; we give you ten days from this, to collect ten thousand tomans, which must be then forthcoming, and on each of the

two next forthcoming tenth days, the like sum must be told down, or your soul shall be dried up. Do you hear?"

"Your slave has heard the commands of the Asylum of the Universe," returned the Khan, "and will strive to obey them; but still he fears that—"

"Silence!" said the Shah. "We will listen no longer; either the money must be paid, or you suffer. Choose between the two. Go, and thank providence that your King knows how to temper justice with clemency, and that he leaves you a skin to cover your unclean body."



## CHAPTER XIII.

May your majesty live for ever ; your slave has found a treasure.

A few days after the circumstances detailed in the last chapter, while Abool Hassan Khan was busied in making out some firmans in his tent, he was interrupted by the entrance of Nadan Khan, the master of the ceremonies, a stout heavy built man, with a head of enormous size ; possessing a face which was perfectly devoid of all intellectual expression, causing the spectator to be at once struck by the remarkable coincidence existing between

the name and appearance of the nobleman.(1)

After the usual salutations had passed, and a kaliaun been smoked, Nadan addressing his friend, exclaimed,

“ Wahi! my liver has been nearly dried up; by the head of the Shah, I scarcely know whether I am alive, or dead !”

“ What has happened ?” inquired Abool Hassan, “ as you love me let me know. Any misfortune? Afakerillah !”

“ Alhamdellillah! no, but the affair stands thus: this morning at daybreak, the chief eunuch entered my tent, conducting an old Eliaut, who he informed me had come up to him on the previous day, and without proffering any salutation, had rudely said, “ I want to see the Shah,” nothing further could be extracted from him, although repeatedly asked what was his business, and he was driven away. At break of this day, however, the

shepherd, (for such is his rank in life), was again at his post, and renewed his application to the eunuch; refusing, however, to give more information concerning his business, than by saying, "I want to see the Shah." The Kışlar Aga,(2) tired out with his importunities, at length brought him to me; but notwithstanding I flatter myself that I can pick a man's brain, as well as any one in the world, I have been unable to elicit any thing more from the old fool, than the sentence, "I want to see the Shah," "I must see the Shah." Being undecided what to do, I have come hither, in order to have the benefit of your advice; for Mashallah! you are a man endowed with much sense."

"This is a curious tale," observed the Nizam-adowlah; "a wonderful tale—the very father of tales, and it certainly requires consideration; perhaps this man may have some most im-

portant matter to relate ; still it would not do to bring him to the King of Kings, before learning his intentions. What sort of a man is he ?”

“ To all outward appearance, he is a common shepherd,” said the Khan ; “ still there is a certain carriage about him, which puzzles me. His eye is a very fire, and seems made for better purposes, than the watching of sheep and camels. Besides what few words I have got from him, are spoken in the most elegant Persian, mingled with Arabic ; where did one ever hear of a peasant using courtly language ?”

“ It is strange,” said Abool Hassan, “ forefend its proving a plot ! I would give a good deal to know the real reason of this Eliaut’s anxiety. Do you think the felek would bring him to reason ?”

“ By my father’s beard !” replied Nadan,

“ it would hardly be proper, or wise to bastinado a man for asking to see the Shah ; we might raise a tumult.”

“ You believe, however, that the foozool will utter his communication to none other but his Majesty ?” asked the Nizam-adowlah.

“ You have said it,” replied Nadan.

“ Then I have it !” cried Abool Hassan, triumphantly. “ Bismillah ! I will be the Shah myself.”

His companion opened his eyes wide with astonishment at these words, and lengthening his visage exclaimed,

“ In the name of Ali, what did you please to observe ?”

“ That I would be the Shah myself,” returned the other laughing ; “ but look not so panic-struck. I intend merely to *act* the part of royalty ; for instance, the Eliaut must be conducted hither, and made to believe that I am the Asylum of the Universe. By such

means we will pick his brains of their contents ; Medaneed ?”

“ Mashallah, wonderful !” ejaculated Nadan ; “ yours is indeed an admirable head, a very Locman’s head ; why I might have lived a thousand years without imagining such an ingenious devise. Let us at once put it into execution, and see what this son of a burnt father is concealing within that impenetrable skull of his.”

“ I am quite willing,” replied Abool Hassan, “ you must, however, allow me a short time for preparation, that I may surround myself with some of the appendages of royalty, in order the better to impose upon this foozool ; who I suppose has never yet set eyes upon the King of Kings.”

“ That would be scarcely probable,” returned Nadan Khan ; “ this is I understand the first time that the shepherd has left his native mountains, where it would be difficult

to conceive how he could have cast eyes upon the august countenance of the Asylum of the Universe ; still I am somewhat puzzled to discover how he has picked up his courtly language, and his lofty demeanour, for lofty it certainly is."

" I can account for it now I reflect," said the Nizam-adowlah ; " those wandering tribes have always some Meerzas among them, for the purpose of drawing up petitions, and other documents, and these men are in general remarkable for their learning, and the polish of their manners, and no doubt this old Eliaut has received some instruction from one of these gifted persons ; it is the more necessary, therefore, that I take some pains to imitate the bearing of the Shah, as the rayat will very probably have heard a concise account of the manner in which his majesty demeans himself, during a public audience."

" True," observed Nadan Khan, in admira-

tion at his companion's understanding ; " by Hussein you speak like a Locman. I will now depart, and summon the obstinate old mule of an Eliaut, and in the space of an hour will bring him hither ; take heed, therefore, to be well prepared by that time, and be seated with all due solemnity on your musnud."

About the time specified Abool Hassan was seated King-like in his tent, surrounded by his attendants, who had been well drilled for the occasion. Shortly afterwards Nadan Khan was seen in the distance approaching in company with Ismael, the Eliaut, and father of Feridoon, and performing all the forms requisite in those entering the presence of an oriental monarch. The last prostration had been made, and Ismael had respectfully raised his eyes in order to look upon the Shah, before which august personage he imagined himself to be standing, when his manner became on a sudden totally changed, an angry scowl knit



his brow, his eye flashed with indignation, and gazing sternly upon the countenance of Abool Hassan, he exclaimed,

“ Methought I was to be conducted into the presence of the Shah ?”

“ O, little man !” answered Nadan Khan, in a low voice, “ what irreverence is this. Are you not this very moment in the presence of the King of Kings ?”

“ I see him not,” said Ismael, boldly. “ Where is his majesty ?”

“ Ass of asses !” returned his conductor, in a threatening, though under tone. “ I tell you that the Shah is seated there, before you ! Take heed of your safety, as you wish to avoid paying the penalty due to insolence.”

“ Khan,” observed Ismael, scornfully, “ if you wish to persuade me that yonder is the Shah, you waste your words. He is no King. Noble as is his appearance, he lacks the majesty of royalty. Where, too, is the long flow-

ing beard,(3) the pride of Iran, that decks the person of its lord? He, in whose presence I am, has no reason to be ashamed of his beard; but to compare it with that of the Shah, would be to place an ass by the side of an Arab courser. By Ali, he is no King; why, therefore, call you him by such a title?"

"Padersookhteh!" cried Nadan, furiously. "He is the Shah, as you will soon discover to your cost, if you run on thus."

"I want to see the Shah," answered Ismael. "I was promised that I should be conducted before him; he is not here. To his ears alone will I make my representation."

"Foozool!" exclaimed the Khan, "go and be grilled; go, and keep company again with your cows and sheep, for by my father's head, you see no other Shah than that."

"I am a Persian," cried Ismael, haughtily, "and as such, claim an audience with my sovereign. Refuse me at your peril. My

news is too important to be entrusted to meaner ears."

"By the death of Hussein," said Nizam-adowlah, throwing aside at once all pretensions to royalty, "you bear yourself tolerably high for a peasant. Know you not there is such a thing as a felek, and such men as ferashes?"

"Think not to frighten me," retorted the old Eliaut. "I fear you not. Strike me, cuff me, slay me; I will utter nothing concerning my business, till I behold the Shah. As you value your heads and your souls, lead me to the royal footstool."

"Are you come all this way to laugh at our beards?" said Aboul Hassan. "Think you the Shah will consent to see you without knowing wherefore you come? By your grandfather's grave, which I have defiled, you have brought your neck to a pretty market, if you flatter yourself with such a hope."

“I am a Persian,” answered Ismael, with great coolness, “and I want to see the Shah.”

In this strain, the conversation ran on for some time, till at length, tired out by the shepherd’s obstinacy, and urged also by his own curiosity, the Nizam-adowlah proceeded to the presence of Fath Ali, and having related the whole event, received from that monarch an order for Ismael’s immediate admittance.

The Eliaut was accordingly conducted to the royal palace, and while approaching the person of the Shah, looked up, and in a low voice observed,

“It is the Shah at last!”

“Well,” cried Fath Ali, as Ismael rose from the last prostration, “what require you with us? We are ever open to listen to the complaints and petitions both of the high and low, the rich and the poor; but yours is a most uncommon request. Speak out—what is it?”

The shepherd gazed around, and his eye

gleamed, as old reminiscences rushed thick upon him. Collecting, however, his thoughts, he answered the question of his Shah firmly, though with the utmost reverence.

“May your majesty live for ever,” he said, “my news is great; it will bring great joy to the Shah. Pardon me, however, if I request that all here present may stand back, in order that I may respectfully inform your majesty with the mouth of humility, but with the tongue of secrecy.”

At this unheard of, and, to them, audacious request, the attendants present gazed with astonishment upon the bold Eliaut, while Abool Hassan cried out,

“O! Sire, this insolence is unfitted for your illustrious presence. What punishment can be too severe for such a foozool?”

Fath Ali, however, chanced to be that day in an excellent humour; and, besides, perceived, with his usual penetration, that Ismael

had come on no idle errand, but had really some important communication to make.

“It is our pleasure,” he observed, “that all stand back, excepting this man; let him advance.”

“Alas! your majesty!” exclaimed the Nizam-adowlah, “your majesty is exposing yourself to great risk. For aught we know, this shepherd may have some design on your life. O! as you value the happiness of your subjects, put not your august person in danger.”

As Aboul Hassan spoke, the form of the old man dilated, while his lip curled with contempt, as he exclaimed,

“O! minister of state! what thoughts are running in your brain? Search me, bind my hands, if you will; but accuse not an honest man without cause.”

“By our musnud,” said Fath Ali, approvingly, “you do not speak ill. Let all stand

back, excepting the Eliaut. Tell me at once," he continued, addressing Ismael. "What is it?"

While the courtiers were obeying the command of their master, the old shepherd, having approached within two paces of the Shah, exclaimed, in a distinct, but under tone,

"May your majesty live for ever! your slave has found a treasure."

"By Ali!" ejaculated the Shah, almost leaping to his feet from the effects of the information. "A treasure, say you?—How much?—how great?"

Ismael, taking off the sheepskin cap which covered his head, observed,

"Fill this two hundred times with the gold I have found, and gold will still remain in the heap!"

"By our blessed prophet!" cried the Shah, in an ecstasy. "Your face is white. Prove

that you have spoken the truth, and a prince shall envy your destiny.”

“It is thus your slave speaks,” returned Ismael. “I was tending some flocks the other day, on the hills near Hamadan, when a furious tempest suddenly came on—a tempest worse than the blast of Israfeel;(4) in a few moments, my charge was dispersed in various directions; and it was not until several hours afterwards, when the violence of the storm had abated, that I was enabled to go in search of the animals. After a long time spent in laborious toil, I was fortunate enough to collect the whole flock, with the exception of one sheep.”

“But the treasure!—how found you the treasure?” said the Shah, impatiently. “Hasten as fast as possible to that part of the story which mentions the discovery of the treasure.”



“May the takdeer of the Shah be fortunate,” answered Ismael; “his least of the least will fly over the high road of his tale with the wings of speed. On discovering the loss of the animal, my heart became sad; it was the pride of the flock. Being unwilling to lose it, I went here and there, until the sun began to decline, but in vain, and I was bending my steps sorrowfully homewards, when I heard a bleat, seeming to come from within a mountain. I stopped—I listened; the sound was repeated. I looked around, and perceived a small aperture in the rock, the ground near which was marked with the footsteps of a sheep. I gave thanks; and stooping down, crept in, and having proceeded a few paces along a narrow passage, I perceived that I had entered a vast cavern; the light however, being only admitted through the aperture by which I had entered, I was unable to ascertain what the interior contained. I, therefore, retraced

my steps once more to the open air, and collecting some dry furze, returned with it to the cavern; and having struck a light, soon made up a blazing fire. By your majesty's power, what a sight met my astonished eyes! I found myself in a hall of immense dimensions, the roof and sides of which sparkled as if covered with diamonds. At the further end, I perceived the lost sheep, and rushed up, in order to secure the truant. Just as I was on the point of reaching it, I stumbled, and fell over a heap lying on the ground; stretching forth my hand, for the purpose of discovering what had caused my fall, I grasped a handful of coin. Unable to believe my sense of touch, I proceeded to the fire, and seizing a burning brand, cast a vivid light over the spot, when, by the blessed Imams, such an enormous heap of gold met my gaze, that I almost died on the spot."

"Well!" cried the Shah, deeply interested

in the tale; "what did you do?—have you brought it here?"

"May the condescension of the Shah be ever on the increase," said Ismael. "On recovering from the stupor into which I had been thrown, I reasoned thus to myself, 'If I tell the history of this to any one but the Shah himself, I run a great risk of being murdered, so that the owner of the secret may secure the treasure; while, if I attempt to carry off any of the coins for the use of the Shah, I may be seized on the way, and accused of robbery.' The only plan, therefore, that remained for me to pursue, was to proceed at once to the camp, and having thrown myself before the footstool of the King of Kings, to inform his illustrious majesty of my discovery. I have so done. My duty is performed, and it only remains for the Shah to give proper directions for the gold to be secured. Sire, my tale is told."(5)

With these words, Ismael prostrated himself, and touched the ground with his forehead.

The Shah now gave way to all the extravagance of joy; leaping to his feet, he seized Ismael by the hand, and having patted him on the back, exclaimed, "O well done, most excellent of men, your head is exalted henceforth in Iran; Mashallah, well is it for the king to have an honest servant. You are sure you remember the spot."

"I could find it blindfolded," replied the Eliaut, "I have taken such precautions with regard to marking the localities, that if your majesty will send some baggage mules with me, and a band of soldiers, sufficiently strong and numerous to protect them, I am ready to conduct them to the spot, and hither return before the sun has made ten revolutions round our earth."

"You speak well," said the Shah, who had

recovered his composure, "I will send for our chief ferash, and give orders that as many mules, as you may require be placed at your disposal; you shall also be accompanied by a large band of serbaz; with respect to yourself, provided you have told us the truth, and the gold is secured, you may make any request, and it shall be granted."

"By the head of the Shah," returned Ismael, "your slave has uttered nought but the truth; if your majesty find that all is not as has been related, cut his tongue out, and cast it to the fowls of the air."

"I believe you," said Fath Ali, "you bear upon your face the imprint of honesty; but tell me, how comes it that one so miserably clad, one evidently of so low a situation in life speaks so well, and makes use of such good language. Do the Eliaut tribes in general, educate their peasants so well?"

"O my gracious sovereign," responded the

old man, "your slave would speak; but he is afraid."

"Speak out at once and without fear," said Fath Ali, "your Shah says so, what is it?"

"The slave before you," replied Ismael, "though now reduced to the low grade of an Eliaut shepherd, was formerly one whose name was known throughout Iran; but misfortunes have fallen upon him—he is now nothing."

"What mean you," cried the king, "who and what were you?"

"Your slave is fearful of exciting the royal anger," was the answer; "he dares not speak."

"Fear not," replied Fath Ali, "we pledge our royal word, that no harm shall happen to you—were you to prove yourself Yezeed(6) himself."

"The Shah has pledged his word," proceeded the Eliaut, "and therefore I can speak in safety. Know O king, that the name I once

bore was that of Ismael Khan Arslanee,(7) my post was that of Ameeree Nizam to your uncle Aga Mahomed Shah, my rank was that of Serdar,(9) and now I fear that my life will be forfeited."

While Ismael spoke, an evident change came over the visage of the Shah; his brow was wrinkled by frowns, his frame became agitated, his eye glared, and his teeth clenched, gazing firmly on the form of the Eliaut, he observed, "It is well you first caused us to pledge our word, you had else thrust your head into the lion's mouth. What! do we behold the rebel Ismael Khan Arslanee, whom we reckoned dead long since—he whom we proscribed as a traitor—he on whose head we set a price—he who dared to oppose our succession; by Ali! by Hussein! by Hassan! by my father's soul, my heart withers at the recollection of his treachery."

The Shah in his anger had raised his voice to such a pitch, that it brought his ministers

and attendants to the spot ; who hearing Ismael denounced as a rebel seized him, while several ferashes drew their swords from their scabbards, expecting a signal from the Shah, to strike the old man's head from his shoulders. Ismael however, rendered desperate by the seeming peril of his situation ; cried out, " O most gracious king, you pledged your word, that I should speak without risk, suffer me not to be slain by these tigers, who are thirsting for my blood ; after all am I not an harmless old man, of what rebellion can I now be guilty ? Alas, I have already eaten too much sorrow, that I should think of aught that savours of ambition ; I came to bring good tidings to the royal footstool—Aman ! Aman !"

The Shah, whose calmness had been upset by the suddenness of Ismael's declaration ; had now become cool, and remembering the necessity of the Eliaut's knowledge of the spot, where the gold was concealed, in order to



discover the cavern, he made a sign for his ferashes to release the old man from their gripe,

“Ismael Khan,” he observed; “it is fortunate for you that old age has whitened your beard, otherwise notwithstanding your knowledge of the hidden treasure, your life had been forfeited; as it is, provided you have uttered truth in every respect, and that the treasure is discovered, I swear to you that not only shall your former treason be pardoned; but you shall be restored to your rank, and titles, and among other marks of my favour, I will bestow upon you the situation of the Begler Beg of Hamadan, vacant by the disgrace of Mehtee Khan, whose house also shall be given up to you; but mark me, if you have deceived us, and fail to produce this treasure, we will judge you as if your treason had only just been committed, and short shall be the distance between the sabre’s edge and your neck. Go, therefore,

hasten to your mountains, and return hither with all possible speed."

Ismael prostrated himself before the monarch as he concluded this address, and in the most energetic manner protested his fidelity and truth." If he said, "in ten days hence, the coffers of the Shah contain not the gold of which his slave has spoken, I am prepared to come and offer up my life as a peishkish(10) to the asylum of the universe; may my father's grave be defiled—may my right hand wither—may my son perish if I have uttered a lie. O king of kings live for ever, the old man is ready by his future deeds, to do away with the foolish actions of his youth. Would he had died, ere he took up arms against the best, the noblest monarch that ever sat upon the throne of Iran."

"Ayb na daurad, there is no harm in that," said Fath Ali, in a good natured voice; "we will give you credit for being henceforth a good

servant. You are now dismissed ; as many men and mules as you desire shall be at your disposal. Go, tarry not on the way, be successful, and your head shall be one of the most exalted in the kingdom.”

Ismael having arisen from his kneeling position, now took his departure, while the Shah proceeded to give the proper directions for an escort to be prepared to accompany the old man to the mountains near Hamadan.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Conscience makes cowards of us all.

ON Ali Acma's retiring from the royal presence, after he had taken the false oath on the Koran, he was evidently in such a state of agitation, that Meerza Sadek, who was obliged to remain in attendance on the Prince Mahomed Reza, and, consequently, was unable to keep the Lootee in sight, whispered to one of his attendants to follow the man, and conduct him to his own tent. As soon, however, as he was at liberty, the wily villain hastened

home and commanded Ali Acma to be brought into his presence.

The Loozee made his appearance white as a spectre ; and, indeed, more like a corpse than a living man ; his body shook, as if afflicted with palsy, his lower jaw was drooping, so as to show all his under teeth, while his knees were knocking together.

“ Is that reality ?” said the Meerza, sarcastically, “ or, are you feigning that state in order to impose upon me, and make me believe that you have a conscience ; remember, O ! little man, that I am no child, to be easily taken in, by your paltry acting.”

“ O Sahib !” answered Ali Acma, “ I am not feigning, did not your Excellency hearken to the words of the Moliah, how he called down damnation on my head, if I spoke not the truth ; and, in spite of his denunciations, did I not lie, aye, horribly lie ; with the dreadful

sentences sounding in mine ears. Wahi ! I am doomed—I know I am doomed !”

“ Curses light on you, for your paltry cowardice,” cried the Meerza, perceiving that the man’s agitation was real. “ May ten thousand years of misery be your portion, if you thus allow yourself to be possessed by such womanish fears. What were the words of the Mollah ? Why ? mere empty *words ! bash ! wind !* that bloweth here and there ; and can you, a Persian Lootee, ponder over sentences, fit only to frighten women and children. I thought more highly of you.”

“ Sahib !” answered the Lootee, “ I am a Persian it is true ; but, I am also a Mussulman, and believe in the doctrines of the Koran, and well you know how that volume denounces those who swear falsely upon it ; indeed, there are many, who, rather than swear truly upon it, would give up a just claim ; such a fear have they of offending in the sight of

Allah, while the sacred book is present; and yet those very men would commit robbery and murder, without the slightest compunction."

"No more of this mummerly," cried Meerza Sadek. "I spit upon you, either you are the greatest of hypocrites, or the most pusillanimous of cowards. However, remember the deed is done, and cannot be retracted, so that your remorse will avail you little. Come, be a man, and I will reward you for the service you have done me; here is gold, does not the sight of the yellow metal prove a most excellent remedy, for what you have undergone?"

The Lootee took the proffered purse, and raised it mechanically to his forehead, he was then about to retire, when his employer stopped him observing,

"I cannot allow you for the present to remain in the camp, for I know not whether your fears may not prompt you to confess

your guilt to the priest, during an hour of remorse, you must therefore prepare to proceed forthwith to Teheran, whither I have letters to write, and will dispatch you Chup-peree; send therefore, one of my servants for your travelling clothes, and be ready to start in an hour. You must not leave this spot, for a moment before your departure; retire for the present to one of the pishkidmud tents, and on peril of my anger, stir not thence till I send for you, else you shall be skinned alive; and what could you do without a skin?"

Ali Acma, knowing that there was no appeal from this injunction, bowed and retired. As soon as he had disappeared, the Meerza's features were lighted up with a smile of triumph, while his eye burned keenly in its socket.

"Alhamdellillah!" he exclaimed, "all works well; my enemy is ruined at last! The man I most hated on earth, is now an object of pity



to a beggar ; and with how little trouble and expense has all this work been accomplished, a few words, a false oath, and a dose of flattery properly administered. By Hussein, how small an exercise of brain it takes to undermine the strength of a giant, though strong as a castle ; provided the proper way is pursued, and the mine well laid. See the changing fate of mortal man, a few hours ago Mehtee Khan deemed himself one of the most fortunate of men, wealth, rank, station, court-favour, all were his ; but, now how altered his lot, his only child carried off by violence, his favour with the Prince utterly lost, his rank and situation forfeited, his wealth taken away, his body suffering from the severity of his punishment, and his mind ? Who would envy that ?

“ O ! happy day of my birth, you ought to be proud, that you shone upon the first hours of such a man as myself ; who, Inshallah will rise, till he can rise no higher, then and only

then, will I be satisfied, then and only then will I cease from my ambitious labours, and enjoy in peace the fruits of what I have sown."

The Meerza now busied himself in writing some letters for Teheran, which being finished, he summoned Ali Acma, and delivered them to his care, with injunctions to ride fast, and not to delay on the road. The man, who appeared in a bewildered state, received the packet with the customary sentence, of "Bachasm, on my eyes be it," and quitting the presence of his employer, proceeded on his journey.

On leaving the camp, he was overtaken and accosted by a Gholam Shah, who being bound the same road, proposed their joining company. The offer was thankfully accepted by Ali Acma, whose solitary reflections were anything but soothing, and who was rejoiced to have a companion.

The two men had accomplished their route in safety as far as the hills that rise between

Korumdada and Seahdahan, when they were overtaken by one of the violent thunderstorms, common in the country at that season of the year; the rain poured down in torrents, the thunder roared like a continued peal of artillery, while the heavens were one mass of liquid fire. The Gholam, accustomed to such scenes, merely wrapping his balapoosh tightly around him, and throwing the cape of it over his head, proceeded on his way as if nothing was the matter. Not so his companion, although well inured to such tempests, he fancied that he beheld in this particular one, a sign that the divine wrath was excited against him; trembling every limb, he reeled upon his horse, and so agitated and inarticulate was the answer given him to a chance question from the Gholam, that the latter observed in surprise:—

“ Ali Acma, what ails you? Why you look like one about to be impaled?”

“Allah-al-illalah!” answered the Lootee, “do you not see the lightning and hear the thunder? Though I am a man, my heart quakes!”

“Nay, surely,” replied the Gholam, “you are not going to prove yourself a woman. Why, I have seen you in many storms, even worse than this, and you never flinched; how comes it that you are thus changed?”

“I had not taken a false oath on the Koran,” cried Ali Acma, rendered veracious from the excess of his terror.

“Afakerillah,” said the Gholam, horror-struck, “was your oath you swore yesterday a false one? If so, I no longer marvel at your fears. Did you not call down the vengeance of Allah upon your head if you perjured yourself? did you not pray to be struck dead in such a case? O, by your father’s soul, you have eaten dirt, and I no longer wonder at your cowardice. May Allah protect you! Here, wrap your cloak over your pistols, cover well

your steel scabbard, they may else attract the lightning. Now then, proceed on your way boldly, if, indeed, it is possible.”

The Lootee, almost unconsciously, had acted upon the advice of his companion, and for some minutes the men rode on in silence, when a flash of lightning chancing to split a rock close by the perjured Iranee, his terrors became so great that he could not proceed further, but reining in his steed, threw up his arms, and called aloud for pardon from heaven. This action casting his balapoosh to one side, uncovered his sword, the metal thereof attracting the electric fluid, his horse was struck dead to the ground.

The Gholam, who had been a few paces in advance, and was looking back at the moment, saw the dreadful accident, and hastening to the spot, raised the Lootee from the ground. The man was alive, and to all appearance unharmed,

but on looking up, he exclaimed, in an agonized voice :—

“ What is this ! where am I ? Allah, Allah ! Hammeh shab ast, all is night ! ”

The remark was just, the vision of the unfortunate man had passed away for ever.

“ A judgment ! a judgment ! ” cried the Gollam shah, prostrating himself ; “ there is but one God.”

## CHAPTER XV.

Sweet is revenge.

BYRON.

THE expedition to the mountains had proved most successful. The treasure discovered by Ismael had been secured, and turning out on examination to be infinitely more than was expected, the Shah was perfectly intoxicated with joy, and in the overflowing of his heart, showered down honours in profusion on the head of the lately humble shepherd. Ismael was restored to his former title of Khan, he was arrayed in the gaudiest possible kalaat(1) and appointed Begler Beg of Hamadan in the

room of the disgraced Mehtee Khan, the house and gardens of which person were also confiscated, and bestowed upon the newly appointed magistrate, who thus found himself unexpectedly raised from one of the lowest possible grades, to great wealth and rank. One circumstance, however, damped the pleasure felt by Ismael at his good fortune ; this was the protracted absence of his son Feridoon, concerning whom Abbas Khan had received no tidings since his departure from the royal camp. The heart of the old man trembled with apprehension as he thought of the dangers to which the rash and courageous disposition of the youth might expose him ; still, he did not despair, for to him, despair would have been death. With oriental resignation, therefore, he determined to seat himself, for the present, on the nummud of patience, and smoke the kaliaun of hope.



One of the first acts of the newly appointed Begler Beg, on his taking possession of the tents allotted to him by the Shah, was to dispatch some messengers in search of Mehtee Khan, with orders to bring that unfortunate nobleman before him without delay.

The disgraced Khan, it must be observed, had with seeming difficulty paid the enormous fine imposed upon him by his sovereign; but in so doing, had, to all appearance, beggared himself. His magnificent tents, his horses, his furniture, his slaves, were sold, and his servants dismissed, while he himself had taken up his habitation in a small mean tent, attended only by a single attendant, trusting for some sign of mercy to show itself in the king's breast; until which event might occur, he did not dare to let it be known that he had any wealth remaining; for, indeed, it must be confessed, that besides his property in Hamadan, and the money in which he had been mulcted,

he possessed great concealed riches, to have made the slightest demonstration of which, at the present season, would have been to have brought down certain and complete ruin on his head. His poverty, therefore, was feigned, although his dejection had more of reality than might have been supposed; his grief at the loss of his beloved daughter having absorbed most other feelings.

On receiving the summons of Ismael Khan, he proceeded at once to that person's tent, although he felt convinced that the invitation could proceed from no friendly motives, as it was beyond the bounds of probability, if not of possibility, that the old man could have forgotten or forgiven the terrible bastinado bestowed upon him at Hamadan. Mehtee Khan well knew the vindictive nature of the Persian character, and made up his mind for the most ignominious reception. He, however, felt exceedingly callous for the consequences, and entered

with the utmost apathy the presence of his once despised and cruelly treated inferior.

Ismael received him haughtily, and a fierce scowl disfigured his naturally good-natured features ; still, with a cold courtesy, he pointed to a distant corner of the tent, and bade him be seated. This condescension was unexpected by Mehtee Khan, whom the invitation somewhat surprised ; his astonishment, however, increased, when Ismael, in a measured tone, exclaimed ;

“ You have read the Gulistan(2), I presume, and remember the tales therein contained ?”

“ Certainly I have,” answered the other ; “ it were strange, indeed, if a Persian of my education were ignorant of the writings of our far-famed Saadi ; I should be an ass else.”

“ Well then,” proceeded the Eliaut, “ I suppose you are acquainted with the story of

the dervish and the vizier who maltreated him ?”

Mehtee Khan seemed somewhat agitated at these words, but answered as unconcerned as possible : “ You have said it.”

“ You are aware, therefore,” continued Ismael, “ that a certain vizier one day threw a stone at the head of a dervish ; the poor man said nothing at the time, but picking up the stone, put it into his pocket. A short time afterwards, the vizier fell into disgrace, and having been bastinadoed was let down into a deep well which being dried up, was used for the purpose of a dungeon. While he was meditating upon his adverse fate and the vicissitudes of fortune, he suddenly received a violent blow on his head, from some heavy substance thrown from above, and on looking up, he beheld the face of the same dervish, at whom he had once cast a stone, looking over the edge of the well. ‘ Who is it,’ cried the disgraced minister, ‘ that

thus adds to my misfortunes ; is not my cup full?' ' Do you not remember me, O vizier,' answered the dervish, ' you once cast a stone at my head and wounded me when I preferred a petition before you ; at that time you were powerful, I was weak, but though I dissembled my rage, it rankled the more in my bosom from that very cause. I gathered up the stone, and swore that whenever an opportunity occurred for casting it at you without danger, I should avail myself of it ; alhamdellillah the time has come and I have returned your ill-usage, for that stone which has just broken your head, is the same you hurled at me during the time of your greatness ; O man, I waited patiently, and now that you are defenceless and without the means of retaliation, I can pick out your brains.' ”

On finishing this narration, the old man turned fiercely to his companion, and observed, “ Khan, was not that true policy, did not the

dervish show himself to be a wise man, and one who watched his opportunity."

"What can I say," replied the other, "the poet was no fool."

"Think you not too," added Ismael, "that some resemblance exists between the fable and a circumstance which happened not long since, when two persons here present were tolerably good representatives of the dervish and the vizier; thou, O Khan, of the latter, and I, your humble slave, of the former; methinks too that we are now placed in somewhat similar circumstances as when the fakeer cast the stone upon his former tyrant's head. Alhamdellillah! revenge is sweet, think you I have forgotten the stripes you inflicted upon me, on my preferring a simple petition before your judgment-seat, when you treated me like a dog and ordered me to be driven for ever beyond the city walls. Say, khan, have you forgotten that day?"

“Khan!” said the disgraced nobleman, “I deserve your taunts, I confess I ate dirt on that occasion, and know also that now you possess the power, you will pick out my brains or you are no Persian.”

“But Mashallah,” said Ismael, “I am a Persian and a Mussulman, it is the precept of the follower of Jesus to forgive, but not of the Mussulman, eye for eye—tooth for tooth—blood for blood is our law, and Allah knows I am not one to cast away an opportunity of a revenge, permitted by our prophet. Man! you are now completely in my power, I could have your very heart’s blood drained if I chose, but your death I want not; live therefore Khan, live to remember the vengeance of the injured Ismael.”

These words were spoken in a voice of thunder, and so fierce was the expression in the old man’s eyes, that the bystanders trembled; the most unmoved of the party, however, was

the unfortunate Mehtee, who bowing his head resignedly exclaimed :

“ The will of Allah must be fulfilled, I have had my day, you have yours.”

“ Do you not tremble,” returned Ismael contemptuously, “ do you not melt away at the thoughts of my wrath ?”

“ I tremble not,” answered Mehtee firmly, “ so much affliction has of late visited my house, that I am callous to all. Speak on, therefore, let me know the worst at once.”

“ Forsooth, you are no coward,” observed the Eliaut, “ I must at least say so much in your favour. Now for my revenge, in return for all your ill usage, your abuse and your injustice; come to me as a guest(3), come and share my house, and eat my salt, and let us live as friends together. This, Khan, is my revenge. I cannot forget that my son loves one of whom you are the parent, and as such I freely forgive your conduct towards me,



and will feel happy in its lying in my power to befriend you ; henceforth you are my brother.”

On hearing these unexpected words, Mehtee Khan was rendered speechless for several moments from astonishment; then suddenly leaping to his feet, he threw himself into Ismael's arms and burst into a flood of tears.(4) Although he was a Mussulman, and in the presence of witnesses, his feelings were too fervent to be restrained, and he gave free vent to them, the mention of his daughter had softened his heart, and he gave no heed to what the bystanders might think of the unusual circumstance of a Persian and a Mussulman shedding tears.

“ My friend,” he sobbed out, “ I deserve not this treatment, may Allah shower down blessings on your head, and grant you the free reward, your generous conduct merits.”

The two fathers being now completely reconciled, the conversation turned upon the

abduction of Zoraya, and the absence of Feridoon, and great were the fears entertained about the safety of the latter, whose disposition was known to be of that ardent nature, which would prompt him to court every danger, for the cause in which he had embarked. He had now been absent more than a month, and no tidings of his movements had reached the camp ; as for Zoraya(5) the most sanguine persons could scarcely entertain an idea of her being recovered from the custody of Karah Kaplan. It must however be confessed that a gleam of hope remained in the breasts of the two fathers, the mutual knowledge of which served to drive despair from their hearts.

Among other topics of conversation brought forward in the course of the day, the former condition of Ismael was discussed, when that personage observing that his new friend was unacquainted with all the circumstances at-

tending his fall, he offered to relate his adventures, which proposition being seized with eagerness, the old man took a long pull at his kaliaun and thus began.

## CHAPTER XVI.

The last—the sole—the dearest link  
Between me and the eternal brink,  
Which bound me to my falling race,  
Was broken in this fatal place.

PRISONER OF CHILLON.

“ I AM the son of one of the most powerful Khans, who served under the late king, and was brought up at the court of that illustrious monarch, who cruel and tyrannical as was his disposition, still was every inch a king, aye a king at whose very name the Muscovites turned pale, and the fame of whose deeds was resounded from one end of the world to the other. My father was one of his chief favou-

rites, and was well deserving of the king's condescension. Brave, generous, and wise, he appeared born to command an army, for united with great courage, he possessed perseverance, prudence and forethought in a surprising degree. However, it is useless for me to repeat his praises, I have only to mention his illustrious name, in order that you may judge for yourself; my father was no other than the renowned Almas Khan(1) Serdar, surnamed on account of his heroic deeds, the "Roaring Lion." It may easily be conceived, that the son of so great a man, was by no means suffered to linger out his youth in idleness, or in private; ere I had attained the age of sixteen, I had fought in several actions, and had conducted myself in such a manner as to excite the favourable notice of the Shah my master, who was wont at times to observe jocosely to my father, that if he did not take care the Juwan(2) would surpass even him in deeds of prowess. I was

also surnamed Arslanee,(3) and given the title of Khan. However, to shorten my tale, it will be well to observe, that my father died as he had lived, gloriously ; he fell in one of the most bloody fields, that was ever fought during the reign of Aga Mahomed, the ball that pierced his heart having been aimed at the life of his sovereign, who was only saved by my parent interposing his body between the fatal musket, and the person of his master. Although I was but young in years, the Shah at once placed me in my late father's situation, bestowing the rank of Serdar upon me, in the most flattering terms, and praising the conduct of my family to the skies. I now found myself at the head of a magnificent body of serbaz, and my name in the mouth of every courtier, which is as much as to say I was universally courted. At this time I married, my wife was the handsomest woman, and of the noblest family in Iran. I loved her, O

how I loved her. My days seemed to fly, I had arrived at the very pinnacle of earthly happiness; but alas, how often does it occur that there is but one short step from the summit to the base of a precipice, the height which has been ascended, and gained at the expense of much time, and heavy toil may be left from in a moment; thus it was with me, my felicity was too perfect to last.

“ My illustrious master was at this time about to make war against the Muscovites, and as I was second only to him in command, you may conceive that for me it was an anxious time. I turned with the desire of meeting the infidel dogs, those idolators, those worshippers of painted portraits,(4) and I glowed with the ardour of distinguishing myself in the eyes of my royal master; but alas! one stroke of evil destiny changed the aspect of affairs, and all my lofty ideas were dashed to the ground. You must remember how the hopes of Persia

were blighted, and how great cause the Muscovites had of rejoicing on that occasion. On the eve of the commencement of the campaign, which was to have raised the glory of Iran to the skies, Aga Mahomed(5) was murdered in his tent by two attendants, whom he had condemned to death, and with him fell all my hopes of advancement and glory, for I was aware by some unlucky fate, I had fallen under the displeasure of his successor, the present monarch, whose ear had been poisoned against me by some malicious slanderers jealous of my power.

“As, however, I saw the body of the murdered Shah borne to its last home, a thought occurred to me, that I might strike a successful blow for independence; this did not appear very difficult of accomplishment, as I was in command of a large force, the soldiers composing which were devoted to me; and besides every fortified place in the province of Azerbaijan, up to



Erivan, was in my hands. I determined; therefore, to make a push in order to gain possession of the province, of which it was my intention to make myself the independent sovereign; but I will delay no more, the story of my defeat through the treachery of one I supposed my friend must be too well known;—to be brief, one morning saw me on the very verge of success, the same even beheld me a fugitive and an outcast, I was only indeed just able to preserve my life by means of a hasty flight, in which I was accompanied by my wife, my infant son, and two trusty servants; but Wallah! Billah! my misfortunes did not terminate here.

“ During my rapid journey, just as I was entering the province of Hamadan, we were attacked by a band of Koordish robbers, who having slain my servants, and left me for dead on the field, carried off my wife and child. It was long ere I came to myself, when, however,

I was restored to consciousness, I found myself supported in the arms of some Rayats. A dreadful thirst parched my throat, the pain of my wounds was excruciating, but this state was paradise in comparison to the agony of mind, I felt at discovering the loss of my wife and child ; my weakness alone prevented me from tearing my beard from its roots. I even attempted to rise, in order to follow the marauders, who had robbed me of all that could make life endurable. What, however, could any efforts of mine have availed ? were not they in the clutches of Koords, and by that time far away, Allah alone knowing where ? but enough. O Khan, Khan, I never saw either my Ayesha, or my boy again. The kind Rayats bore me to one of their wretched dwellings, where I was tendered with every kindness that their poverty could bestow ; it was, however, long ere I could move ; days, weeks, flew by, before I was able to walk, the agitated state of my

mind retarding my recovery; but at length I was restored to health, when bidding farewell to my kind benefactors, I turned my steps away from their hospitable roof, scarcely knowing whither to proceed. The villainous Koords had robbed me of all I possessed, excepting one large diamond which had escaped their notice, and which was all that now remained to me of my once enormous wealth. O, how inscrutable are the ways of providence! how truly has Saadi said, 'place no reliance on things of this world.' I deserved, however, my misery, for in my prosperity I had turned my thoughts too little to heaven, and had not given sufficient thanks to the author of all things; I had been neglectful in my devotions; I had employed too little time in returning thanks to Allah for all his mercies; I was justly punished for my vanity and ingratitude.

“ As I journeyed on, reflection came to my aid, and after some consideration, I determined

to seek an Eliaut tribe, to the chief of which, I had once rendered a great service, and from whom I had therefore some slight hopes of receiving friendship, notwithstanding my fallen condition. This tribe fed its flocks near Hamadan, and possessed a right of pasturage over a large tract of land in the vicinity of that city. Thither I bent my steps, and seeking out the chief, cast myself upon his gratitude, may Allah bless his memory; he well responded to my call, for having listened to the recital of my misfortunes, he pressed me to his bosom, and bade me consider all his goods as mine own. Not content with words, he installed me into a tent, gave me some flocks, and having converted my diamond into money, bestowed the whole amount upon me, refusing to accept of a single shai. O what a munificent heart that man possessed, may he be eternally blest, would that all Persians might follow his example!

“ For the space of a year or two, unknown as the once great Serdar, I led a quiet, unambitious life in this Eliaut encampment, and tried to forget the days I had passed at court; still I must confess, I should have found it vain to stifle a desire for mingling in a more glorious sphere, had I not at that time met with an angel, who would have converted the jehanum of the infidels into a Mahometan paradise. This angel was an Eliaut girl, whom I married. She was the daughter of one of the wealthiest Khans of the tribe; with her I passed a few happy months; O, how happy! when ill-fortune, as if jealous of my felicity, once more made its appearance in my neighbourhood. My friend, the chief, was suddenly called to his last account; and my father-in-law, while, at the court of the Shah, falling under his sovereign’s displeasure,(6) was beheaded, and all his property seized. I unfortunately fell under the ban of confiscation, as my flocks were

mingled with his, and the despoilers pretended to consider me as one of his family. I could seek no redress, for had I complained, I should have been recognised, and my life forfeited; it was for this reason I suffered in silence, as I knew that the discovery of who I had been, would have been followed by my immediate execution, as the Shah's anger against me had been kept alive, and fomented by the malice of several favourites who hated me. I was now totally ruined, I had no friends, all I possessed consisted of a few goats, and a miserable tent that were bestowed upon me, through the charity of some of the wealthier Eliauts who pitied my misfortunes. I was constrained, therefore, to tend the sheep of others for hire. Consider what a change, I that had once been a vizier, and a serdar; I that had mingled all my youth among courts; I that had been the favourite of the Shah; to sink down to the grade of a common hireling shepherd!

“ One consolation was still left to me—my beloved wife ; but fate had not yet ceased from tormenting me—she died shortly after, in giving birth to my son Feridoon. Here was the climax to my misery—I was now alone in the world ;—I felt that death would be an alleviation to my misery, and death alone.—Long, long was it before I recovered from the stunning effects produced by this last overwhelming loss ; but at length I bowed to the will of Allah, and resigned myself to my destiny. The cries of my infant, which was brought to me, assisted to arouse me from my stupor ; I seized him in my arms, and swore to make him every amends for the lack of a mother’s care. Inshallah ! I have kept that promise, I taught the boy in private all that I knew, and Alhamdellillah ! Feridoon was an apt scholar, and will find few able to compete with him, in ought necessary to form a

Persian noble ; which thanks be to Allah, he has now become.

“The remainder of my history is already known, and you may now easily perceive that it was no mad freak of mine, that led me to present myself before you at Hamadan, when you certainly did not receive me with open arms ; but all that is forgotten ; as I have said before, I freely forgive you, and am ready to receive you as a brother ; for I cannot forget that my Feridoon loves, and that the object of his affection, is your daughter. May Allah grant that they both return in safety ; though I must confess, I have fears to the contrary.”

“ Afakerillah !” returned Mehtee Khan, “ do not despond. Allah will never desert them. The greatest fear I have, is for Zoraya, as she is in the clutches of one as cunning as he is powerful. As for your son, provided



he is not too rash, I cannot think that there is much to be apprehended on his account."

"Alas!" said Ismael, "I know the feelings of the youth too well; he has set his heart so fixedly on one object, that he would perish sooner than give up the pursuit, while a shadow of a chance remained of restoring your daughter to your arms."

"But my friend," answered Mehtee Khan, "suppose, as is very probable, that he should discover Zoraya to be already the wife of Karah Kaplan; what could he do?"

"Wahi!" cried the other, "I tremble lest it be so, for notwithstanding he is a Persian, and a Mussulman, his heart would break, he would die. The only satisfaction then remaining to me, would be revenge, and although this arm is enfeebled with age, it would still try to reach the heart of the Koordish robber."

These last words were spoken in a trembling

voice ; but in a manner that showed the determination of the old man. Mehtee Khan wishing to turn the current of his thoughts away from the distressing subject, proceeded to inquire whether Ismael had ever received any tidings, concerning his former wife and child.

“ Never has the slightest clue to their destiny reached me, since that fatal day,” replied Ismael. “ I am totally ignorant whether they are alive, or dead. I would give much to behold that child again, and embrace him in remembrance of his mother. O if he live, and resemble my Ayesha, he must be perfection. But it is vain to hope, it is beyond the bounds of probability, that we shall ever meet even if he survives, and, indeed, should we be ever accidentally thrown together, it will be as strangers to each other ; but Khan, we must bend to fate, all things are in the hands of Allah.”

At this moment, Ismael was interrupted

by shouts from without, accompanied by loud wailing. The sounds approached nearer and nearer, till at length one of the new servants engaged by Ismael Khan, rushed hastily into the tent, with the greatest consternation depicted on his features.

“What is the matter?” exclaimed his master, springing to his feet. “What evil has happened?”

The attendant answered by lifting up the curtain which covered the door; this action rendered visible a procession, moving towards them, in front of which rode a closely veiled female, whose frame appeared convulsed with agitation. Behind her was borne a large board by several men on which reclined a pale, fainting, bleeding form. Ismael rushed forward, and gazing on the sufferer, sunk with a groan to the ground, as he recognised in the owner of the pallid features his son Feridoon.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell !  
Yield up, O love ! thy crown and hearted throne  
To tyrannous hate ! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,  
For 'tis of aspicks' tongues.

OTHELLO.

FOR some time after the departure of Feridoon and Zoraya, Karah Kaplan lay furiously struggling to free himself from his bonds. His exertions were long in vain, as the Eliaut had drawn the cords too tightly together, for the chieftain to unloose them without assistance. At length he succeeded in dislodging the gag, that covered his mouth, when making amends for his former forced

silence, he roared out for help at the full stretch of his voice. The angry tones were heard from the other tents, and the inmates rushed in a body to attend the call. As may easily be surmised, their surprise and consternation, at discovering the situation of their lord, was without bounds, and it was not before he had several times angrily commanded them to cut asunder the cords that their faculties were restored. At length Karah Kaplan, his limbs being free, rose from the ground, when his appearance presented a most ghastly picture: his neck, face and garments being daubed with the blood which flowed profusely from a wound in his head, inflicted by the bludgeon of Feridoon. The rage of Allah Verdee, however, was so great, that he was unconscious of pain, for seizing his sabre, he rushed from the tent to the spot where the nearest sentinel had been placed, when his fury was by no means diminished, by the dis-

covery of the situation of the man ; and hearing from him on his mouth being released from the gag, how Feridoon and Zoraya had passed on, he called out with a loud voice for his attendants to disperse in different directions in immediate search of the fugitives, while he himself proceeded to the tent of Moorad. His foster-brother's surprise was excessive on perceiving the state of his chieftain, but on Allah Verdee's mentioning the circumstances that had taken place, surprise gave way to rage. Bitterly cursing Feridoon and all belonging to him, he rushed in company with his master, to the plot of ground where Murwari and the other steeds had been tethered. The fury of the Khan and his followers, however, on their discovering nothing else, but the halters and heelropes, which had belonged to the animals, may be easily conceived. Deep and heartfelt were the imprecations invoked by the disappointed Koords on the traitorous Mehter, who

it was evident to them by his absence, had accompanied the fugitives in their flight. Having saddled some horses they started off in pursuit, taking the same direction as Feridoon, whose departure had been noticed from an outpost he had passed.

After two hours of vain pursuit, they were obliged to draw rein, as even if they were on the same track as the Persians, it was evident the steeds of the latter were too swift and long-winded to be overtaken. Having, therefore, returned to the camp, Karah Kaplan gave orders that every possible inquiry should be made, in order that it might be discovered, by what negligence the Eliaut had gained access to his tent; the sentinels who had been placed on the narrow pathway were summoned, and gave as evidence how Feridoon had passed with the watchword, and returned with a woman and a written order from the Khan himself, to allow them to proceed. It was perfectly clear

from the answers of these men, that they were free from blame, and they were dismissed accordingly; at length the sentinel who had kept the guard nearest to the tents, was brought forward and interrogated, on his mentioning how he was compelled to silence, by a pistol having been presented at his head, he was suddenly interrupted by Allah Verdee, who angrily exclaimed,

“ So then it was possible for you to have raised an alarm ? ”

“ Yes, your Highness,” was the man’s answer, “ I might have cried out once, but it would have been the last sound, that I should have ever uttered, as my death would have instantly followed.”

“ And therefore padersookhteh,” observed the Khan, “ in order to save your life, you disobeyed the commands given you. Coward! had the last drop of blood been leaving your veins, you should have raised the alarm. It is



the duty of a sentry to obey his orders, and his orders only, though obedience cost him his life. Wretch! for the sake of inhaling a few more hours of life, you have rendered vain all the trouble and labour undertaken by us and our followers. Through your faint-heartedness you will have made the Koords the derision of the Persians, who will now have an opportunity of laughing our beards to scorn."

"O Sahib," ejaculated the trembling sentry, "have mercy upon me, what could I have done?"

"You should have cried out for help," answered Allah Verdee; "though you died at the moment of giving utterance, your name would then have been remembered with honour, as of one who perished in the service of his tribe; as it is, you will rest in the memory of all, as a wretch who suffered punishment as a coward. Away! with him, let his head be struck from his shoulders, and his body thrown to the

wolves, and may his fate prove a warning to my followers, of the stern necessity of preferring duty to safety, death to dishonour.”

The culprit was led away at the command, and executed outside the camp according to his sentence.

It was by such terrible examples as these as well as by his liberality, that Karah Kaplan kept up the discipline of his tribe, which had rendered them so formidable. No one found fault with the severity of the punishment, as all acknowledged that according to the laws of the tribe it was well merited.

The wound which Allah Verdee had received from Feridoon's bludgeon, and which had been but temporarily bandaged before his late exertions, was now carefully dressed, while his person was washed and his clothes changed, this being finished, a troop of armed men were collected, and the chieftain placing himself at their head left the camp, directing his course towards

Sultaneah, being determined to proceed to the very boundaries of the Shah's camp, in order to regain if possible possession of Zoraya, his passion for whom was increased with tenfold force, by the frequency of his disappointments; besides he was actuated as much by the desire of vengeance, as the ardour of his love.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

I have had my blow :

But 'tis revenged, and now my work is done.

THE REVENGE, BY E. YOUNG.

It was on the sixth day after the commencement of their flight that Feridoon and Zoraya arrived within a few fursuks of the royal camp. They had proceeded by a very circuitous route in order to avoid as much as possible, any chance of being overtaken by their pursuers, and also because the path they followed, was well known to their guide the Mehter. They had taken but little rest on their journey,

merely indeed sufficient to prevent their horses being knocked up ; as for the maiden, notwithstanding her gentle frame, the excitement under which she was labouring, served to keep up her strength, and render her competent to support the fatigue of the arduous route.

Several of the peaks which overlook the plain of Sultaneah had become visible to the travellers, and the overjoyed youth was already congratulating his companion upon her safe return.

“ Alhamdellillah,” he exclaimed, as they reined in their steeds at a slight ascent, “ we are safe, three hours more will behold us within the camp of the Shah, and you under the shade of your father’s tent.”

“ And for my safety,” replied Zoraya, “ I have to thank you, my gallant preserver. O had it not been for your bravery, where ? what ? should I have been at present ?”

“ Dwell not on my poor services,” said

Feridoon, "had it not been the will of Allah, my efforts would have availed nothing; to him therefore give thanks, not to the humble instrument of his providence."

"What should we mortals be, without the good will of Him, that ruleth over all; that holdeth the lot of kings in his hand," observed the maiden; "still there are some more favoured by Heaven than others, and those excel their fellow creatures in all the attributes that become man. Surely I err not in placing you in the list of these favoured mortals."

"You do me too much honour," returned the Eliaut, "your condescension is too great, may I really prove myself worthy of it."

"Are you not already worthy of every reward earth can bestow," cried Zoraya. "O my brave preserver, my gratitude will ever be owing to you."

"Gratitude!" said Feridoon, who, however, checked himself, and pointing to the Mehter

who was riding in advance of them, observed, "we both owe gratitude to yonder man, who hath accompanied us in our flight; had it not been for his exertions, the means of escape had not been prepared for us, and you Khanum would still have been amongst the Koordish robbers."

"Aye, but not alive!" said the maiden with a shudder. "Had I not escaped I should never have survived my dishonour; as for that man, he shall by no means complain of the paucity of his reward."

While thus conversing, the maiden and her companions, arrived at a spot where the road made a sudden turn round a high rock, when judge of their horror, on rounding the point, at beholding a band of armed men, not far in front, and advancing rapidly towards them. There could have been no doubt of their nation, even if Feridoon had not immediately recognised one of the foremost riders as Moorad.

The Koords gave a loud shout on perceiving the approach of their intended victims, and spurring their horses approached them at full gallop. Feridoon and his companions, however, quick as thought had wheeled round, and taken to flight retracing nearly the same ground they had just passed over.

To explain how the pursuers were thus in advance of the pursued, it will be necessary to observe, that the Koords being much better acquainted with the roads which led to Sultaneah, had proceeded by short cuts across the different ranges of mountains which lay in their course, and had thus managed, notwithstanding the inferiority of their steeds to arrive first near the plain of Sultaneah. They had discovered through means of spies, that the fugitives had not yet arrived at the camp, and had consequently lain in wait for their coming. They had not long before observed from a height the distant approach of two men and a



woman, and divining with truth who they were, had proceeded towards the turn in the road, for the purpose of intercepting them, and had nearly reached the spot, when Feridoon and Zoraya became aware of their vicinity.

Like lightning flew the far famed steeds, and soon would Karah Kaplan and his followers been left far behind, when a shot from the rifle of Moorad, struck the haunch of Hemdane, the horse bestrode by Zoraya; still for some distance the gallant animal showed no signs of relaxing in his speed, till at length the loss of blood caused by the wound began to tell, and it became evident that he was flagging.

Feridoon being now obliged to rein in his horse to the speed of the weakened one, perceived with maddening vexation that the marauders were gaining upon them; rendered desperate at this sudden change of affairs, he was about to turn round and oppose with his solitary arm, the whole band of his foes, when to

his inexplicable delight a regiment of Persian cavalry came in sight ; there was no mistaking their black lambskin caps, there could be no doubt of their nation, particularly as a Farin-gee(1) officer rode in front.

Applying his whip with his utmost force to the hide of Zoraya's horse, Feridoon excited the animal to a last struggle and succeeded in gaining the ranks of his countrymen, to whom in a few words he related the cause of the scene before them.

The Koords had reluctantly drawn rein, on perceiving that there was no chance of overtaking the maiden before her reaching her deliverers, and riding away to one side began to consult with one another, concerning the practicability of attacking the Iranees. This scheme, however, was immediately scouted as impossible, or at least allied to madness, as in numbers the Persians more than quadrupled the Koords, and from their being accompanied by

a European officer, it was known that they were one of the best disciplined regiments in the service of the Shah.

“Curses light upon these Kizzilbashes,”(2) exclaimed the disappointed chieftain; “had it not been for their inopportune appearance, our prey was within our grasp. May they grill in Jehanum; they have rendered futile all our plots and pains, I almost feel a desire to charge them notwithstanding their superiority of numbers.”

“Nay, my Lord,” answered Moorad, “that would avail nought, though we are Koords, we are men, and five to one are fearful odds to contend against. But Wallah! it is time to look to ourselves.”

This last exclamation was occasioned by an intention becoming evident on the part of the Iranees to make an attack; much, therefore, as it grieved the Koords to show their backs to an

enemy, they found themselves necessitated to take to flight.

“Forward,” cried Feridoon, addressing his new friends, “forward, remember what a reward will be given for the heads of either Karah Kaplan or Moorad. Let us charge them gallantly, and rid the world of these unsainted dogs.”

A most animated scene now took place, for the whole regiment, with the exception of a few soldiers, who remained behind for the purpose of guarding the maiden, flew to the combat, if combat it could be termed, where the enemy stood not the charge; during the rapid pace at which they were proceeding, several discharges from the rifles of either side took place, many shots emptying a saddle. The superiority of the Koordish coursers at length began to tell, and most of the Iranees, seeing that the foes were increasing their distance at every step, began to draw rein. Feridoon, however, carried on by

the heat of the moment, did not perceive that he was far in advance of his companions, and was pursuing the marauders nearly alone, for but a few followed him, and those were far in his rear. Burning with the desire of reaching Moorad, he proceeded with unabated speed, till he was within hail of that person and his chief, who were riding in the rear of their men; the furious execrations of the youth reached the ears of the two leaders, when Moorad looking round and observing the approach of the gallant Eliaut, entreated Allah Verdee to proceed and allow him to remain alone in order to avenge himself, as he observed, upon the carcase of the unclean cur, who had thrown dirt over him, on the hills near Hamadan.

“Permit me, Sahib,” he cried in a hurried tone, “permit me to wipe out the stain cast on my arms by yonder youth. Thanks be to Ali, we are now met on equal terms.”

With these words he suddenly wheeled

round and attacked Feridoon as he rode up. The two foes rushed eagerly to the combat, it was however of short duration, for the Koord being now equally well armed with his opponent, was far superior to him in strength and skill. A few blows were given and parried on either side, when Moorad rising in his stirrups discharged such a violent and heavy blow at the head of Feridoon, that it cut completely through the interposing shield, and the sabre glancing to one side, cut deep into the youth's shoulder, who was flung senseless and to all appearance dead to the ground.

The victorious Koord seized with exultation the bridle of Murwari and discharging a pistol at a Persian who was riding up, galloped off in the direction of his friends, firmly believing in his own mind, that he had given his death-blow to the young Eliaut who had so often successfully marred his well planned enterprises.

The above circumstances will explain the

reason of the appearance of Feridoon in an apparently dying state before his father Ismael. The wounds of the young man had been bound up as well as the nature of the spot, where the encounter had taken place, would allow, and he was borne upon a flat board to the royal camp of Sultaneah.





## NOTES.

The reader, who may find himself at a loss to make out the meaning of the oriental words, and expressions contained in this work, will, on consulting the notes of this, and the other volumes, receive the required explanation.



## NOTES.

### CHAPTER I.

(1) *Mehter.*

A Persian groom.

(2) *Fanoos.*

A large lantern, made of transparent paper, and so constructed, that when not required to be used, it shuts up into a small space.

(3) *Mungal.*

A kind of brazier.

(4) *Zaul.*

The father of Rustum.

(5) *A Shai.*

A copper coin, rather more than an English halfpenny.  
Twenty shais make one sahibcroon, and ten sahibcroons

make one toman, which is nearly equal to ten shillings of English coinage.

(6) *No wonder the song of our Saadi was sweet.*

Saadi, a celebrated Persian poet, author of the Gulistan. His tomb is at Shiraz, built there by Kurreem Khan.

(7) *Hafiz.*

The Anacreon of Persia. He lies buried at Shiraiz; over his remains is a magnificent tomb, built by Kurreem Khan.

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## CHAPTER II.

(1) *Geesifid.*

An old woman.

(2) *A chupper.*

A courier.

(3) *False dawn.*

See Morier's "Ayesha."

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## CHAPTER III.

(1) *These men were famed for their pedestrian powers.*

The Shatirs, or running footmen of Persia, are men of

the most extraordinary powers. There is the following story concerning a royal shatir, that in former days a Shah of Persia promised his daughter in marriage to any one who would run before his horse all the way from Shiraz to Ispahan. A royal Shatir nearly accomplished the task, having reached to the eminence marked by the tower, when the King, fearful that he should be obliged to keep his promise, dropt his whip. The ligatures which encompassed the Shatir's body were such, that in the state he then was, he knew for certain, that if he stooped to the ground to pick up the whip, his death would immediately follow ; therefore he contrived to take up the whip with his foot, carried it to his hand, and presented it to the King. This trick having failed, the King then dropped his ring ; upon which, the Shatir, who saw that his fate was decided, exclaimed : " O King, you have broken your word, but I will show you my submission to the last." Upon which, he stooped, picked up the ring, and died. In commemoration of this event, the Shatir was buried on the spot, and this tower, now called the Shatir's Tomb, was built over his remains.

(2) *Kooladjah.*

A kind of frock coat, made either of shawl or cloth,

and generally lined with lambskin or fur, for the wealthier wearers, but of coarse sheepskin for the poorer classes.

(3) *Search the tribes of the Turcomans, etc.*

The Turcoman horses are of large size, and of strong and bony make, and are famed more for their powers of lasting than their speed.

(4) *Hamdaneë.*

Literally, One breath.

(5) *Kiorooglee.*

Literally, Blind of one eye. A very common name given to a horse in Persia.

(6) *Cotall.*

Λ precipitous mountain path.

## CHAPTER V.

(1) *Gulsheeren.*

Literally, sweet rose; from *gul*, a rose, and *sheereen*, sweet.

(2) *Shekerdahaneë.*

Literally, sugar-mouthed; from *sheker*, sugar, and *dahan*, a mouth.

(3) *Musnud.*

The Musnud is, really, the small carpet on which a king or a royal personage is seated when receiving audiences. It is, however, used in a general sense, to signify a throne.

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## CHAPTER VII.

(1) *Kaboos.*

A very heavy whip, made of a buffalo's skin, and dried till it is nearly as hard as iron.

(2) *Allah o achbar.*

God is merciful.

(3) *Lahnet ba Aboobekr.*

Curses on Aboobekr. The Sheahs curse that caliph in their profession of faith ; while the Sunnees, on the contrary, bless him.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

(1) *A Koordish bludgeon.*

See Alcock's travels in Persia.

(2) *It would be difficult to tell the difference between a white crane and a black eagle.*

An oriental figure of speech, denoting excess of darkness.

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## CHAPTER IX.

(1) *Bajaklee.*

A Persian coin, about nine English shillings in value.

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## CHAPTER X.

(1) *Yekdoon.*

A large square trunk, made of wood, covered with leather.

(2) *Allahee shukur.*

Praise be to Allah.

(3) *This done, I will sign it with the Khan's seal.*

The signature to a document, is not always written. The name is cut out on a small seal, upon which some ink is rubbed, and the paper stamped with it. In conse-



quence of this manner of signing the name, forgery is by no means a crime difficult of commission in the East.

(4) A fact.

(5) *What Persian, indeed, ever was faithless under such circumstances, etc.*

There is no nation in the world, whose inhabitants are more susceptible of bribes than Persia. Every virtue belonging to human nature leaves them, at the sight of gold. Although the honour of every Mahometan is more or less accessible by means of money, still the Persians are sunk the lowest in the scale of morality, both on that and other points. And even (alas that it should be so) the Christian (Armenian) population of the country, is as degraded as the Mahometan, if not more so; but it must be known, that the Armenian Christians of Persia are grossly ignorant of their religion; and were it not that they are dignified by the name of Christians, it would be difficult to discover, either by their conversation or works, that they were followers of the blessed religion of Jesus.

The American Missionary Society have, some time since, to their great credit, sent out a mission to these benighted countries, for the purpose of instructing the Christian inhabitants in the religion which they profess. The excellent men who are thus sent, have established

(besides others at different places) a school at Oorumia in Azerbaijan, which is, I believe, numerously attended by the Nestorians there. Of the seed there sown, may an abundant harvest be reaped !

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## CHAPTER XII.

(1) *Nizam-a-Dowlah.*

The title of the minister of finance. It means literally, "the regulator of the state."

(2) *And an enormous bundle of poplar sticks.*

Poplar sticks are used in inflicting the punishment of the bastinado.

(3) *Asylum of the Universe.*

A title belonging to the Shah of Persia.

(4) *Thirty thousand tomans.*

About fifteen thousand pounds.

(5) *And without being allowed a nummud to lie on, etc.*

When a man of rank, in Persia, undergoes the punishment of the bastinado, he is usually allowed a carpet to lie on during the infliction. It is considered the greatest disgrace to be denied this courtesy.

(6) *You cannot squeeze milk out of a stone, etc.*

This answer was made by a Vizier of Hussein Ali, Meerza, the Farmoon Farmah of Shiraz, when he was ordered by Fath Ali Shah to pay a sum of money. He was, in consequence, bastinadoed nearly to death; but being a man of strong nerves, he bore the torture without either a word or a groan, till he fainted. The consequence was, that he was ever after left unmolested, though known to be enormously rich; as the Shah was wont to observe, "It is useless to bastinado that man; we may kill him, but we cannot make him speak."

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### CHAPTER XIII.

(1) *Nadan Khan.*

The name Nadan, when literally translated, signifies "blockhead."

(2) *Kislar Aga.*

The chief guardian of the women, from *kislar*, women, and *aya*, chief. They are Turkish words.

(3) *Where, too, is the long flowing beard, the pride of Iran?*

The beard of Fath Ali was the longest and most perfect specimen of its kind ever known.

(4) *A tempest, worse than the blast of Israfeel.*

Israfeel is the angel appointed to sound the trumpet on the day of resurrection.

(5) *Sire, my tale is told.*

Ismael's story is a real fact, which took place not very long previous to Fath Ali's death.

(6) *Yezeed.*

The name of Yezeed is peculiarly hateful to the Persians, who curse him as the murderer of their two saints, Hassan and Hussein. There is at present a sect in Persia, called Yezeedes, who reverence the name of the devil, and never mention his name, or any sound resembling it. The words lahnet ba shacten, "curses on the devil," uttered before a Yezeedee, drive him frantic, and cause him to foam at the mouth. The Yezeedes are considered most despicable by orthodox Mahometans.

(7) *Arslanee.*

Literally, the lion.

(8) *Amenee nizam.*

A title answering to Commander-in-chief.

(9) *Serdar.*

General.

(10) *Peishkish.*

A present from an inferior to a superior. Literally, an offering.

## CHAPTER XIV.

(1) *Chupperee.*

An adjective meaning "as a chupper, or courier," from chupper a courier.

(2) *Gholam Shah.* :

A king's messenger.

## CHAPTER XV.

(1) *Kalaat.*

A dress of honour.

(2) *Gulistan.*

A work written by the poet Saadi, consisting of various stories in prose, intermingled with scraps of poetry. It means literally a rose garden,

(3) *A guest.*

In Persian mehman

(4) *Although he was a Mussulman.*

Mussulmen are by no means wont to give way to their feelings in public.

(5) *Zoraya.*

It may be as well to observe that the name Zoraya means "Heart-turner."

## CHAPTER XVII.

(1) *Almas Khan Serdar.*

Almas means a jewel. The three words literally translated, would signify in English, General Jewel Khan, or rather General Lord Jewel.

(2) *Juwan.*

A young man. Some resemblance may evidently be traced to the Italian word *giovane*.

(3) *Arslanee.*

Having the nature of a lion, from arslar, a lion.

(4) *Those worshippers of painted portraits.*

The professors of the Greek religion pay the same deference to the pictures of the Crucifixion and of the Madonna and saints as the Romanists do to images.

(5) *Aga Mahomed was murdered in his tent, etc.*

See Malcolm's History of Persia, vol. ii.

(6) *And my father-in-law falling under his sovereign's displeasure was beheaded and all his property seized.*

The property of any nobleman suffering death and disgrace in Persia, is always confiscated, and this custom as may be surmised, often gives rise to acts of the greatest injustice and oppression: as the Shah ever anxious to gain possession of the property of any Khan who is

reputed to be wealthy, is too ready to lend a willing and listening ear to evil reports and malicious slanders, and condemns the unhappy and frequently innocent victim, without any proof of his guilt, excepting the information given by persons known to be inimical to the accused.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

(1) *Particularly as a Faringee officer rode in front.*

One of the most remarkable facts in the modern history of Asia is the introduction of European discipline in the armies of Persia. When we have seen such discipline entirely destroyed in one Mahomedan state\* (Turkey) in spite of the efforts of the government to maintain it, when the prejudices of the Mahometan religion are considered and particularly the doctrine of predestination which it inculcates, it must remain a matter of surprise how it has commenced, maintained and strengthened itself in Persia. It had not indeed Janissaries to oppose it, as in Turkey, but it was cried down by some of the Princes, and derided by many of the nobles, and if it had

\* The Journal from which this note is taken, it must be borne in mind, was written in the year 1812.

not been for the personal exertions of Abbas Meerza,\* it must have fallen. Abbas Meerza in fact, must be looked upon as the origin, the support, and the chief promoter of it. His first essays in discipline were attended with little success, because he had in the outset to combat the prejudices of the Persian recruits themselves, who rejected the idea of being assimilated in any manner to Faringees and particularly to Russians, whom their national hatred made them despise, or perhaps their fear caused them to hate, more than all other Europeans. To efface such impressions, the Prince himself was obliged to adopt a soldier's dress, and to submit to learn the military exercise from a Russian; he commenced with twenty or thirty men at a time, whom he caused to be drilled in a separate court by themselves, in order that they might not be exposed to the ridicule of the populace; and it was not until he had ordered his nobles to follow his example and handle a musket, that he found his scheme making any progress. So far he had succeeded in teaching a few of his the platoon exercise, to march abreast, to turn about at the word of command and to beat a drum; but he wanted officers, and he very probably would have got no further, if the French Embassy

\* Prince Royal of Persia, son of Fath Ali Shah.



from Buonaparte had not arrived in Persia at that time, when the officers attached to it, were put into commands of large bodies, and they advanced his views to the utmost of his expectations. What were but the rudiments of military science appeared to him its perfection, and notwithstanding he afterwards discovered how little his first levies had learned, yet still in recollection of the pleasure which their appearance had given him, he ever after entertained a greater partiality for them, than for his other troops.

The English mission which succeeded the French also supplied him with officers, and his first wish was to raise a corps of artillery, which was done by Lieutenant Lindsay,\* an officer of the Madras army, in a manner truly astonishing. The zeal of this officer was only to be equalled by the encouragement of the Prince, who putting himself above all prejudices, resisting the jealousy of his officers and the cabal of courtiers, liberally adopted every method proposed, and supported Lieutenant Lindsay against every difficulty that was thrown in his way. He gave him full power to punish his recruits in any manner he chose, and gave him unlimited control over his troop.

\* Now Sir Henry Bethune.

The English officers who were employed in Persia, notwithstanding the Prince's zeal for improvement, still found many impediments in their way, originating from the confined ideas which the Prince himself had of military science. The necessity of a strict subordination of ranks seemed to him incomprehensible; he did not see why the lieutenant, the sergeant, and even the common soldier should be debarred the privilege of speaking to him upon matters of service; and why every thing should first be reported to the commanding officer. It was long before he could seize the true routine of service, and was slow to discover the necessity of adhering scrupulously to regulations, which appeared to him to clog rather than to facilitate.

The greatest difficulties in the way of our officers, were the knavery and intrigue of the Persian officers appointed by the Prince to aid them in their different commands. The men themselves, they found most docile and tractable, receiving the discipline quicker than even Englishmen; but the moment a Meerza or a Khan interfered, all was trouble and dispute. As for instance a Meerza, who was appointed to pay the men, would keep a per centage from each man for himself; sums which he received for the supplies of dress, furniture, &c., he would detain to trade

with, or put out to usurious interest. A man of some consequence was one day discovered to have stolen two muskets, and similar instances of knavery might be cited without end.

As raw materials for soldiers, nothing could be better than the Eliauts. Accustomed from their infancy to a camp life, habituated to all sorts of hardships and to the vicissitudes of weather, they are soldiers by nature, &c.—

*Extract from Morier's Second Journey through Persia.*

(2) *Kuzzilbash.*

A nick-name for the Persians, signifying red head from *kuzil* red, and *bash*, a head, originally given from their formerly wearing red caps.

END OF VOL. II.

