The Pirate City

by

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The Pirate City

Chapter One.

Opens the Tale.

Some time within the first quarter of the present nineteenth century, a little old lady—some people would even have called her a dear little old lady—sat one afternoon in a high-backed chair beside a cottage window, from which might be had a magnificent view of Sicilian rocks, with the Mediterranean beyond.

This little old lady was so pleasant in all respects that an adequate description of her is an impossibility. Her mouth was a perfect study. It was not troubled with anything in the shape of teeth. It lay between a delicate little down-turned nose and a soft little up-turned chin, which two seemed as if anxious to meet in order to protect it. The wrinkles that surrounded that mouth were innumerable, and each wrinkle was a distinct and separate smile; so that, whether pursing or expanding, it was at all times rippling with an expression of tender benignity.

This little old lady plays no part in our tale; nevertheless she merits

passing introduction as being the grandmother of our hero, a Sicilian youth of nineteen, who, at the time we write of, sat on a stool at her feet engaged in earnest conversation.

“Grandmother,” said the youth in a perplexed mood, “why won’t you let *me* go into the Church instead of brother Lucien? I’m certain that he does not want to, though he is fit enough, as far as education goes, and goodness; but you know well enough that he is desperately fond of Juliet, and she is equally desperate about him, and nothing could be more pleasant than that they should get married.”

“Tut, child, you talk nonsense,” said the old lady, letting a sigh escape from the rippling mouth. “Your father’s dearest wish has always been to see Lucien enter the Church, and although Juliet is our adopted child, we do not intend to interfere with the wishes of her uncle the abbot, who has offered to place her in the convent of Saint Shutemup. As to you taking Lucien’s place,”—here the mouth expanded considerably—“ah! Mariano, you are too foolish, too giddy; better fitted to be a sailor or soldier I should think—”

“How!” interrupted Mariano. “Do you then estimate the profession of the soldier and sailor so low, that you think only foolish and giddy fellows are fit for it?”

“Not so, child; but it is a school which is eminently fitted to teach respect and obedience to foolish and giddy fellows who are pert to their grandmothers.”

“Ah! how unfair,” exclaimed Mariano, with assumed solemnity; “I give you good advice, with gravity equal to that of any priest, and yet you call me pert. Grandmother, you are ungrateful as well as unjust. Have I not been good to you all my life?”

“You have, my child,” said the little old lady; “very good—also rather troublesome, especially in the way of talking nonsense, and I’m sorry to find that although your goodness continues, your troublesomeness does not cease!”

“Well, well,” replied the youth, with a sprightly toss of the head, “Lucien and I shall enjoy at least a few weeks more of our old life on the blue sea before he takes to musty books and I to the stool of the clerk. Ah, why did you allow father to give us a good education? How much more enjoyable it would have been to have lived the free life of a fisherman—or of that pig,” he said, pointing to one which had just strayed into the garden and lain down to roll in the earth—“what happy ignorance or ignorant happiness; what concentrated enjoyment of the present, what perfect

oblivion as to the past, what obvious disregard of the future—”

“Ay,” interrupted the little old lady, “what blissful ignorance of the deeds of ancient heroes, of the noble achievements of great and good men, of the adventures of Marco Polo, and Magellan, and Vasco de Gama, over whose voyages you have so often and so fondly pored.”

“I see, grandmother, that it is useless to argue with you. Let us turn to a graver subject. Tell me, what am I to bring you from Malta? As this is in very truth to be our last voyage, I must bring you something grand, something costly.—Ah, here comes Juliet to help us to decide.”

As he spoke a pretty dark-eyed girl of nineteen entered the room and joined their council, but before they had gone very deep into the question which Mariano had propounded, they were interrupted by the entrance of the head of the house, Francisco Rimini, a strong portly man of about fifty years of age, with a brown, healthy complexion, grizzled locks, a bald pate, and a semi-nautical gait. He was followed by a stranger, and by his eldest son, Lucien—a tall, grave, slender youth of twenty-three, who was in many respects the opposite of his brother Mariano, physically as well as mentally. The latter was middle-sized, broad-shouldered, and very powerful, with short curly brown hair, flashing eyes and sprightly disposition—active as a kitten, and rather mischievous. Lucien was grave, gentle, and studious; elegantly rather than powerfully formed, and disposed rather to enjoy fun by looking on than engaging in it. Both brothers, as well as their father, possessed kindly dispositions and resolute spirits.

“Mother,” said Francisco, “let me introduce to you my friend Signor Bacri, a merchant who goes in my vessel as a passenger to Malta. He dines with us to-day; and that reminds me that you must hasten our dinner, as events have transpired which oblige me to set sail two hours earlier than I had intended; so please expedite matters, Juliet.”

The stranger bowed with Oriental dignity to the little old lady, and, seating himself by her side, entered into conversation.

Bacri was a middle-aged man of magnificent appearance. From the cast of his features it was easy to perceive that he was of Jewish extraction, and his proportions might have been compared to those of the ancient enemy of his nation, Goliath. Like Saul, he was a head and shoulders higher than ordinary men, yet he evidently placed no confidence in his physical strength, for although his countenance was grave and his expression dignified, he stooped a good deal, as though to avoid knocking his head against ceilings and beams, and was singularly humble and unobtrusive in

his manners. There was a winning softness, too, in his voice and in his smile, which went far to disarm that distrust of and antipathy to his race which prevailed in days of old, and unfortunately prevails still, to some extent, in Christendom.

With the activity of a good housewife, Juliet expedited the operations of the cook; dinner was served in good time; Francisco, who was owner of his vessel and cargo as well as padrone or captain, entertained Bacri with accounts of his adventures on the sea, which the Jew returned in kind with his experiences of mercantile transactions in savage lands. Mariano drank in all that they said with youthful avidity, and the little old lady's mouth rippled responsive, like the aspen leaf to the breeze; while Lucien and Juliet, thus left to themselves, had no other resource than to entertain each other as best they could!

Then the adieux were said, the voyagers went down to the port, embarked on board their good ship—a trim-built schooner—and set sail with a fair wind.

"I wish I saw them all safe back again!" said the little old lady, with a sigh.

Juliet said nothing, though she echoed the sigh.

Meanwhile the schooner leant over to the breeze, and ere night-fall left the shores of Sicily far behind.

Chapter Two.

Unfolds a Little of the Tale.

Another and a very different vessel chanced to be floating in those seas at the time the Sicilian trader set sail. At a distance she might have been mistaken for a fishing-boat, for she carried only two lateen sails, of that high triangular form which may still be seen in the Mediterranean and on the lakes of Switzerland. In reality, however, the vessel was of greater dimensions than even the largest boat, and her main-mast with its sail was of gigantic proportions. She was also full-decked, and several pieces of heavy ordnance pointed their black muzzles from port-holes in her bulwarks.

No one could have mistaken her character as a vessel of war, for, besides the guns referred to, she had an unusually large crew of bronzed and stalwart men. Their costume, as well as their arms, told that these were of Eastern origin. Although there was much variety in detail, they all wore

the same gold-laced jackets, the same loose Turkish drawers gathered in below the knees, and broad silken scarfs round their waists, with richly chased silver-mounted pistols and yataghans or curved swords. Some wore the turban, others the blue-tasselled red fez or tarbouch of Tunis, while a few contented themselves with a kerchief tied loosely round their heads.

One, who appeared to be the captain of the vessel, stood near the steersman, leaning on the bulwarks, and scanning the horizon with a telescope. His costume was similar to that of his men, but of richer material.

“It is certainly a sail,” said he whom we have styled the captain to one who stood by his side, and might have been his lieutenant or mate.

“She bears sou’-west, I think,” replied the latter.

“So much the better,” returned the captain; “let her fall off a little—so, steady. If this wind holds for half an hour we shall get well abreast of her, and then—”

The captain shut up the telescope with an emphatic bang, by way of termination to his remark, and, turning on his heel, paced the deck rapidly by the side of his mate.

“We have been unlucky hitherto,” he observed; “perchance fortune may change and now be favourable. At all events, we shall be ready. See, the breeze freshens. Go, call up the men and clear for action.”

The breeze had indeed been freshening while he spoke, and now came down in a series of squalls that caused the piratical-looking craft to lie over as if she were about to capsize. The vessel which they were pursuing also bent over to the breeze and crowded all sail; for well did Francisco, its owner and padrone, know, from past experience, that Algerine corsairs were fast sailers, and that his only hope lay in showing them his heels! He had often given them the slip before—why should he not again?

While thus doing his best to escape, however, the bluff merchant did not neglect to make preparations for defence.

“Clear away the big gun,” he said to Mariano, who acted as his first officer, Lucien being the scrivano or supercargo of the vessel; “’tis a good piece, and has turned the flight of many a pirate with its first bark.”

The latter part of this remark was addressed to Bacri, who stood, leaning over the taffrail, looking anxiously at the vessel in chase.

“If it be Sidi Hassan,” muttered the Jew half aloud, “there is little chance

—”

“What say you?” demanded Francisco.

“I say that if it be the vessel of a man whom I happen to know, you will have to trust to your sails for deliverance—fighting will be of no avail.”

Francisco looked at the Jew with some surprise, not unmingled with contempt.

“A warlike spirit, it seems, does not always consort with a powerful frame,” he said; “but how come you to have scraped acquaintance with these pirates, whose existence is a blight upon the commerce of the Mediterranean, and a disgrace to our age?”

“None should know better than thyself that a trader, like any other traveller, becomes acquainted with strange bedfellows,” replied Bacri, with a quiet smile. “As to a warlike spirit, of what use would it be in a despised Israelite to display such?”

“There is truth in that,” returned the padrone in a more respectful tone; “nevertheless, if fighting becomes needful, I trust that one furnished with such thews and sinews will not fail to lend effective aid.”

“That he will not, I dare say; and here is a cutlass for him, wherewith to carve a name and fame,” said Mariano, coming aft at the moment and presenting the weapon to Bacri, who took it with a half-humorous smile, and laid it on the seat beside him.

“Hast got the big gun ready, boy?” demanded Francisco.

“Ay—loaded her almost to the muzzle. I ordered her to be double-shotted, and that big black rascal Manqua slily crammed in a handful of nails without leave. I only hope she won’t burst.”

“Burst!” exclaimed the padrone, with a laugh; “if you were to load her even beyond the muzzle she wouldn’t burst. I remember once loading her with a full dose of canister, and clapped two round shot on the top of that, after which the same negro you have mentioned, (for he has a tendency in that way), shoved in a handspike without orders, and let the whole concern fly at a pirate boat, which it blew clean out of the water: she well-nigh burst the drums of our ears on that occasion, but showed no sign whatever of bursting herself.”

“Nevertheless,” said Bacri earnestly, “I advise you to trust entirely to your sails.”

“We haven’t another stitch of canvas to set,” said Francisco in reply; “and

if we had, the old schooner couldn’t stand it, for, as you may see, the strain is already as much as she can bear.”

This was indeed the case, for the vessel was by that time flying before a stiff breeze, with all the sail set that she could carry, while the water dashed in clouds from her bows, and rushed over her lee bulwarks.

But the sailing powers of the pirate-vessel were superior to those of the trading schooner. In a short time she was close alongside, and fired a shot across her bows to cause her to heave-to. This, however, the determined skipper resolved not to do. In reply he sent on board the pirates the varied contents of the big gun, which cut the halyards of their smaller sail, and brought it down on the deck. This result was celebrated by a hearty cheer from the schooner’s crew. The pirates, in return, discharged a broadside which cut away the foremast of the schooner, thus rendering escape impossible.

“Now, men,” cried Francisco, when the disaster occurred, “you must this day make your choice—victory or slavery—for there is no mercy in the breasts of these scoundrels.”

He waited for no reply, but at once sprang to the big gun, which had been re-loaded with a charge so miscellaneous that the sable Manqua grinned with satisfaction as he endeavoured to ram it home.

Meanwhile Mariano and Lucien placed the men, who were armed to the teeth, at the gangways, and along the weather-side of the schooner, to be in readiness to repel the foe when they should attempt to board.

There was no hesitation on the part of the pirates, although they saw plainly the vigorous preparations which were being made to receive them. Bearing down on the crippled vessel at full speed, in spite of the bellowing discharge from the great gun, and a well-delivered volley of small shot, which stretched many of them on the deck, they ran straight against her, threw grappling-irons into the rigging, and sprang on board with a fierce yell.

The mêlée that followed was sharp, but very short and decisive. The Sicilian crew fought with the courage of desperate men, but were almost instantly overpowered by numbers. Mariano had singled out the pirate captain as his own special foe. In making towards the spot where he expected that he would board, he observed the tall Jew standing by the wheel with his arms crossed on his breast, and regarding the attack with apparent indifference.

“What!” cried Mariano, anger mingling with his surprise, “do you stand

idle at such a moment?”

“You will miss your chance,” returned Bacri, giving a glance and a nod towards the side of the vessel where the pirate captain stood ready to spring.

Almost at the instant that the brief hint was given, Mariano had sprung to the bulwarks, and parried the thrust of a boarding-spike, which act unfortunately disconcerted his aim in discharging his pistol. Next moment he had seized the pirate by the throat, and fell with him to the deck, where a fierce struggle ensued.

We have said that the Sicilian youth was powerfully made, but the pirate captain was more than a match for him in size, if not in courage; nevertheless, the superior activity of Mariano, coupled with the fact that he chanced to fall uppermost, gave him an advantage which would in a few moments have cost the pirate his life, had not a blow from behind rendered his youthful adversary insensible.

Rising hastily and regaining the yataghan which had fallen from his grasp in the struggle, the pirate captain was about to rush again into the fight, but, perceiving that although one or two of the schooner’s crew still showed resistance, his men were almost everywhere in possession of the deck, he desisted, and turned with a look of surprise to the man who had freed him from his antagonist.

“*You* here, Bacri!” he said. “Truly my fate is a hard one when it condemns me to be rescued by a dog of a Jew.”

“It might have been harder, Sidi Hassan, if it had condemned you to be slain by the hand of a Christian,” replied the Jew, with an air of humility that scarcely harmonised with his towering height and his breadth of shoulder.

Hassan uttered a short laugh, and was about to reply when a shout from his men caused him to run to the forward part of the vessel, where Francisco, Lucien, and the warlike negro already referred to were still fighting desperately, surrounded by pirates, many of whom were badly wounded. It was well for the three heroes that their foes had discharged all their pistols at the first rush. Some of them, now rendered furious by the unexpectedly successful opposition made by the dauntless three, as well as by the smarting of their wounds, were hastily re-loading their weapons, when their captain came forward. It was obvious that mercy or forbearance had been driven from their breasts, and that a few seconds more would put a bloody end to the unequal contest.

“Spare them, Sidi Hassan,” said the Jew in a deeply earnest tone.

“Why should I spare them?” returned the captain quietly; “they deserve to die, and such men would prove to be but troublesome slaves.”

The Jew bent towards Hassan’s ear and whispered.

“Ha! sayest thou so?” exclaimed the pirate, with a piercing glance at his companion. “May I trust thee, Jew?”

“You may trust me,” replied the Jew, apparently quite unmoved by the insolent tones of the other.

“Stand back, men!” cried Hassan, springing between the combatants; “death by sword or pistol is too good for these Christian dogs; we shall reserve them for something better.” Then, turning to Francisco, “Lay down your arms.”

“We will lay down our arms,” answered the bluff merchant, who was not at all sorry to obtain this brief period of breathing-time, “when we have laid you and a few more of your ruffians on the deck.”

Hassan turned to his men and gave them an order in the Turkish language.

Several of them hurried aft, and immediately returned, dragging along with them poor Mariano, who was just recovering from the blow given to him by Bacri. On seeing the plight of his father and brother he made a desperate effort to free himself, but quickly found that he was as helpless as a child in the grasp of the three powerful men who held him.

Hassan drew a pistol and put its muzzle to the youth’s temple, then, turning to Francisco, said:—

“Lay down your arms, else I scatter his brains on the deck. Take your choice, but see that you be quick about it.”

There was that in the pirate captain’s tone and look which induced instant compliance. Francisco and his companions, at once laying down their weapons, were seized and had their arms pinioned. Mariano was also bound, and then their conquerors proceeded to clear the decks of the dead and wounded. This was soon accomplished; a prize crew was placed in the schooner; the captives, still pinioned, were transferred to the deck of the pirate-vessel, and there left to do as they pleased, while the captain and Bacri descended to the cabin.

Night soon after descended on the sea, the wind fell almost to a calm, the moon shone round and full in a cloudless sky, and the vessel glided quietly along, while the rascally crew lay conversing and smoking on her deck,

many of them bearing marks of the recent conflict, and some sleeping as peacefully as though their hands were guiltless of shedding human blood, and legitimate trade their occupation.

Chapter Three.

Reveals something Surprising in Regard to European Forbearance And Piratic Impudence.

Seated on a gun-carriage, apart from his comrades in sorrow, Francisco Rimini gazed in stern silence upon the moonlit sea, and thought, perchance, of the little old lady with the rippling mouth, and the dark-eyed daughter of his adoption.

“Your fate is a sad one,” said a deep voice close to his side.

Francisco started, and looked round with indignant surprise at Bacri.

“None the less sad that a friend has proved false, Jew,” he said sternly. “It has never been my custom to call any of your race ‘dog,’ as too many of my creed have done in time past, but I am tempted to change my custom this night.”

“To misname me would do you no good and me no harm,” replied the Jew gravely. “My race is an accursed one as far as man is concerned, but man’s curse is of no more value than his blessing.”

“If these arms were free, Bacri,” retorted Francisco hotly, “I would teach thee that which would prove anything but a blessing to thy carcase, thou huge caitiff! I had thought better of thee than thou didst deserve.—Go, thy bulky presence is distasteful.”

“Wherein have I wronged you?” asked the Jew.

“Wronged me!” exclaimed Francisco, with rising wrath, “art thou not hand and glove with the chief pirate? Thinkest thou that my eyes have lost their power of vision?”

“Truly I am acquainted with the corsair, though the acquaintance was none of my seeking,” returned the Jew, “for, as I said before, traders have dealings with many sorts of men; but I did not advise him to attack you, and I could not hinder him.”

“Scoundrel!” exclaimed the padrone, “couldst thou not restrain thine hand when it knocked the senses out of my boy Mariano? Wouldst have me

believe that thy huge fists are not subject to thy villainous will, or that they acted as they did by mere accident, instead of aiding to repel the pirates?”

“I did it to save his life,” replied Bacri, “and not only his, but your own and the lives of all your men. I saw that Mariano was about to prevail, and if he had slain the corsair chief, not one of you would have been alive at this moment.”

Francisco’s wrath when roused was not readily appeased, nevertheless this statement puzzled him so much that he remained silently gazing at the Jew, from sheer inability to express his feelings.

“Listen,” continued Bacri, drawing nearer, and speaking in a lower tone, “the man into whose hands you have fallen is Sidi Hassan, one of the most noted and daring of the pirates on the Barbary coast. Escape from him is impossible. I know him well, and can assure you that your only hope of receiving anything that deserves the title of good treatment depends on your quiet and absolute subjection to his will. Rebellious or even independent bearing will insure your speedy and severe humiliation. We ‘dogs of Jews,’” continued Bacri, with a sad smile, “may seem to you to hang our heads rather low sometimes, but I have seen Christian men, as bold as you are, crawl upon the very dust before these Turks of Algiers.”

“Our fate, then,” said Francisco, “is, I suppose, and as I half suspected, to be slavery in that pirates’ nest, Algiers?”

“I fear it is,” replied the Jew, “unless Providence permits a storm to set you free; but let me correct your notion of Algiers. A pirates’ nest it undoubtedly is, but there are others than pirates in the nest, and some of these are even honest men.”

“Ha!” exclaimed the padrone, quickly and with bitterness; “is one of these said honest men a Jew of stalwart frame, and does his connexion with the piratical nest free him from the bonds to which I and my sons are doomed?”

“To both questions I answer yes,” replied the Jew.

“Then a fig for your honesty, Master Bacri!” said Francisco, with a toss of his head, in lieu of a snap of his fingers, which in the circumstances was impossible, “for I now believe that you knocked Mariano down simply to save the life of your comrade Sidi Hassan, and that you will pocket your own share of my ship and cargo.”

“I have not the power to alter your belief,” said the Jew quietly, as he turned away and left the unfortunate captive to his meditations.

As the night advanced the wind continued to abate, and when morning broke, the broad breast of the Mediterranean undulated like a sheet of clear glass, on which was gradually revealed the form of a strange vessel becalmed not far from the prize.

As soon as it was sufficiently light to permit of objects being clearly seen, Sidi Hassan fired a gun and showed the Algerine flag.

“Our luck has changed,” he said to his first officer, with an air of satisfaction. “Get the boats ready; we will board at once.”

“She shows British colours,” said the mate, regarding the vessel in question intently through his glass.

“So she does,” returned the captain, “but that device won’t go down with me. Board her at once, while I bring our broadside to bear.”

The mate, with two boats full of armed men, soon pulled alongside the strange sail, and the pirate-vessel was brought round with her broadside to bear by means of long oars or sweeps. In a short time the boats returned with the mortifying intelligence that the papers were all right, and that the vessel, being in truth a British merchantman, was not a legitimate prize. The corsair therefore sailed away under the influence of a light breeze which had arisen.

At the time of which we write, (about sixty years ago), Algiers was under the dominion of Turkey, but exercised all the rights of an independent state. It may be described as a monstrous blot of barbarism hanging on the skirts of civilisation. It was an anomaly too, for it claimed to be an orthodox power, and was recognised as such by the nations of Europe, while in reality its chief power consisted in consummate impudence, founded on pride and ignorance of the strength of other powers, coupled with the peculiarity of its position and with the fact that the great nations were too much engaged fighting with each other to be at leisure to pay attention to it. Its rulers or Deys were most of them ignorant men, who had risen, in many cases, from the ranks of the janissaries or common Turkish soldiery, and its sole occupation was piracy—piracy pure and simple.

It did not, like other powers, find a pretext for war in the righting of a supposed or real wrong. The birds of the Pirates’ Nest were much too simple in their grandeur thus to beat about the bush. They went straight to the point. Without any pretext at all they declared war with a nation when they had a mind to plunder it, and straightway set about making prizes of the merchantmen of that nation; at the same time keeping carefully clear of its cruisers. If there had been a tangible grievance, diplomacy might have set it right—but there never was any grievance, either real or

imaginary. If there had been a worthy fleet that would come out and face a foe, courage and power might have settled the question—but there was no such fleet. The nest possessed only a few small frigates and a considerable number of boats, large and small, which crept along the northern shores of Africa, and pounced upon unwary traders, or made bold dashes at small villages on the southern shores of Europe and in the isles of the Mediterranean. Trade was horribly hampered by them, though they had no ostensible trade of their own; their influence on southern Europe being comparable only to that of a wasps' nest under one's window, with this difference, that even wasps, as a rule, mind their own business, whereas the Algerine pirates minded the business of everybody else, and called *that* their own special vocation!

Like other powers, they took prisoners, but instead of exchanging these in times of war and freeing them on return of peace, they made galley-slaves of them all, and held them to ransom. At all times there were hundreds of Christian slaves held in bondage. Even in this present century, so late as 1816, the Algerine Turks held in captivity thousands of Christian slaves of all grades and classes, from all parts of Europe, and these were in many cases treated with a degree of cruelty which is perhaps equalled, but not surpassed, by the deeds recorded of negro slavery; and so hopeless were people as to the power or intention of governments to mend this state of things, that societies were formed in some of the chief countries in the world, including England, France, and America, for the express purpose of ransoming Christian slaves from those dreaded shores of Barbary.

Having said this, the reader will doubtless be prepared to hear that the civilised world, howling with indignation, assailed, burned, and exterminated this pirates' nest. Not at all. The thing was tolerated; more than that, it was recognised! Consuls were actually sent to the nest to represent Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, America; disgraceful treaties were entered into; and annual tribute was paid by each of these, in the form of a costly "present" to the Dey, for the purpose of securing immunity to their trading vessels! Whatever nation kept a consul at this nest and paid "black-mail" passed scot free. The nation that failed in these respects was ruthlessly and systematically plundered—and this at the time when Lord Nelson was scouring the ocean with mighty armaments; when our songs lauded the wooden walls of old England to the skies; and when Great Britain claimed to herself the proud title of "Mistress of the Sea"! If you doubt this, reader, let us assure you that all history asserts it, that recorded facts confirm it, and that our proper attitude in regard to it is to stand amazed, and admit that there are some things in this curious world which "no fellow can

understand."

Without apologising for this digression, we return to the thread of our tale.

Finding, then, as we have said, that the British merchantman was not a legitimate foe, the corsair proceeded to look out for a more worthy object of attack—namely, a vessel of some hapless petty state, which, being too venturesome, or too poor to pay black-mail, was at war, perforce, with the Algerines. Fortune, however, ceased for a short time to be propitious. No suitable vessel was to be found, therefore Sidi Hassan resolved to exercise the rights of the unusually free and independent power of which he was a worthy representative in a somewhat strange fashion.

Bearing down on the coast, he sailed along it for some time, with the intention of making a bold dash at some small fishing village. His mate rather objected to this, knowing well that such attempts were too apt to be attended with considerable loss of life; but Sidi Hassan was not a man to be easily turned from his purpose. The sight of a brig in the offing, however, induced him to run out again to sea. He was soon within hail, and, finding that the vessel was a Sicilian trader, boarded her at once.

No opposition was offered, the brig being totally without arms and her crew small. She, like the vessel of our friend Francisco, was laden with wine and fruit. There were only two passengers on board, but these two were great prizes in Hassan's estimation, being beautiful girls of about seventeen and eighteen respectively. They were sisters—the elder being on her way with her infant son to join her husband in Malta.

Hassan was glad of the opportunity thus thrown in his way of pleasing his master the Dey of Algiers by presenting to him these unfortunates, whose manners and appearance bespoke them ladies, and at once sent them on board his vessel, along with their money and jewels. Their wardrobe was distributed among the pirate crew—the money and jewels being the Dey's perquisite.

"I have a plan in my head," said Hassan to his second in command, "which the capture of this brig has suggested to me. Go, take charge of our vessel, and send me twenty of the best men of our crew fully armed—also a British Union-jack. There is a captain of a port in this neighbourhood against whom I have a special grudge, and to whom I would fain give a free passage to Algiers! so make haste."

The order was soon executed, and the pirate-vessel ordered to remain where she was while the brig stood inshore and sailed along the coast. In a few hours she was off the port above referred to, when she hove-to, hoisted the British flag, and fired a gun. The captain of the port innocently

put off to the brig, and in a few minutes found himself and his boat's crew taken captive by the Algerines!

Having thus successfully accomplished his design, Hassan returned to his vessel, put a crew on board the second prize, and, directing his course to Africa made all sail for the port of Algiers.

During the voyage the unfortunate captives saw little of each other, nevertheless Mariano saw enough of the sisters, to create in his breast feelings of the tenderest pity—especially for the younger sister, whom he thought rather pretty than otherwise! As for the Jew, he kept aloof from all the captives, but seemed to have a good understanding with the pirate captain, and to be acquainted with several of his men.

Chapter Four.

Introduces the Reader to the Pirate City, and to a Few of its Peculiarities and Practices.

Permit us now, good reader, to introduce you to the top of a house in Algiers. The roofs of the houses in the Pirate City are flat—a most admirable Eastern peculiarity which cannot be too strongly recommended to Western builders. They are, therefore, available as pleasant "terraces," on which you may rise above your cares, to lounge, and smoke—if afflicted with the latter mania—and sip coffee with your wife, (wives, if you be a Turk), or romp with your children—if not too dignified—or cultivate flowers, or read in a state of elevated serenity, or admire the magnificent view of the blue bay, backed by the bluer Jurjura mountains, with the snow-topped range of the Lesser Atlas beyond. How much wiser thus to utilise one's house-top than to yield it up, rent-free, to cats and sparrows!

Achmet Pasha, the Dey of Algiers at this time, or rather the pirate-king, had a thorough appreciation of the roof of his palace, and spent many hours daily on it, in consultation with his ministers, or in converse with his wives.

As deys went, Achmet was a comparatively respectable man. He thought no more of cutting off a human head than of docking a rat's tail; but then he did not take a particular pleasure in this employment, and was not naturally cruel, which is more than could be said of many of his predecessors. He was also said to be a kind husband and a fond father, but as no one, save the wives and children in question, knew anything of the

inner and private life of the palace, this must for ever remain a matter of uncertainty. There was no doubt, however, that he was a tall, handsome, dignified man, in the prime of life, with a stern eye and a pleasant expression of mouth; that, in character, he was bold and resolute; and that, in his jewelled turban, gold-incrusted vestments, and flowing Eastern robes, he looked resplendent.

Courage and resolution were, indeed, qualities without which a Dey of Algiers could scarcely come into existence, because his high position, not being hereditary, was naturally the ambitious goal of all the bold spirits in the Turkish army of janissaries which held the city with its mixed Arab population in subjection. The most common mode of a change of government was the strangulation of the reigning Dey by the man who had power and party influence sufficient to enable him to ascend the vacant throne. Sometimes the throne thus obtained was held for only a few days, or even hours, when it chanced that there were several factions of pretty equal power, and two or three men of similar vigour in the army. It is a fact that on more than one occasion three Deys have ascended and sat upon this undesirable throne within twenty-four hours, each having been strangled or having had his head cut off by “the opposition” soon after occupying his predecessor’s warm seat!

Achmet, however, had reigned for a considerable period in peace, and was on the whole a popular ruler.

At the time when we introduce him he was pacing the terrace, or roof of the palace, with slow dignified steps, but with a troubled expression of countenance. His chief adviser, Sidi Omar, the Minister of Marine, and one of the most unscrupulous and cunning men in the nest, walked beside him. They were attended and followed by a young but nearly full-grown lion. It was a common thing for the Deys and his chief officers to keep lion-pups as pets, but as a rule these were chained up on becoming too large to be safe playthings. Achmet, however, being of a bold, reckless nature, seemed to enjoy the occasional symptoms of alarm betrayed by his attendants at sight of his overgrown pup, and kept it by him until, as we have said, it was nearly full-grown. He appeared to have no idea of personal danger. Possibly he did not believe the huge playful brute to be capable of mischief. Perhaps he felt confident in the keen edge of his Damascene scimitar, and in the power of his arm to lop off even leonine heads. Whatever may have been the truth on this point, his ease and indifference were evidently not shared by Sidi Omar.

That sly individual was a strong-bodied, middle-aged Turk of commanding presence but sinister countenance, which latter was damaged

by the loss of an eye and a sabre-cut across the nose.

“I have been asked,” said Omar, continuing a conversation which had already lasted some time, “to beg that your highness will grant an audience to the Spanish consul; he claims as countrywomen the two ladies who have been just brought in by Sidi Hassan, but I advise that you should refuse him.”

“Why so?” asked Achmet.

“Because, although there is, I believe, some ground for his claim, the investigation of the question will only occasion useless trouble, as he is unable to prove his case.”

“Nay, then, your last reason seems to me in favour of granting an audience,” returned the Dey, “for if his plea be insufficient I shall thus appear to be desirous of furthering justice without suffering loss. It is always wise to act with urbanity when it costs one nothing.”

Achmet smiled, and a gleam of mischievous fun twinkled in his eyes as he observed his minister cast a furtive glance, suggestive of anything but urbanity, at the lion, which had playfully brushed its tail against his leg in passing.

“Your highness’s judgment is always just,” returned Sidi Omar; “and were we desirous of maintaining peace with Spain at present, it would be right to propitiate their consul; but, as you are aware, the treaties which we have recently formed with various nations are not to our advantage. The peace recently forced upon us by America has stopped suddenly the annual flow of a very considerable amount of tribute, and the constant efforts made by that nation of ill-favoured dogs, the British, to bring about peace between us and Portugal will, I fear, soon dry up another source of revenue, if things go on as they have been doing of late, it is plain to me that we shall soon be at peace with all the world, and be under the necessity of turning our hands to farming or some such work for a livelihood!”

“Fear not, Sidi Omar,” replied the Dey, with a short laugh, “this fair and ancient city has lived too long by war to be capable of condescending now to arts of peace. We shall have no difficulty in picking a quarrel with any nation that seems most desirable when our coffers begin to grow empty—in regard to which, let us be thankful, they show no signs at present. But have a care, Omar, how you speak disrespectfully of the British. They are apt, like their representative at your heels, to spring when you least expect it, and they have powerful claws and teeth. Besides, they are my very good friends, and some of their statesmen have a great regard for me. Being at war, as you know, with some of the most powerful European nations just

now, they know that I do them good service in the Mediterranean by rendering trade difficult and hazardous to all except those with whom I am at peace. Spain being on friendly terms with us at present, I will receive the Spanish consul. Go, let him know my pleasure, and see that thou hast my scrivano instilled with all requisite information to refute him."

Sidi Omar bowed low, and retired without venturing a reply. At the same time a man of curious aspect stepped from the doorway which conducted from the terrace to the lower parts of the house. His Eastern costume was almost equal to that of the Dey in magnificence, but there was a tinselly look about the embroidery, and a glassy sheen in the jewels, which, added to the humorous and undignified cast of his countenance, bespoke him one of low degree. He was the Dey's story-teller, and filled much the same office at the palace that was held by court jesters in the olden time. The presence of some such individual in Achmet's court, even in the first quarter of the present century, was rendered necessary by the fact that the Dey himself had risen from the ranks, and was an illiterate man.

Advancing towards his master with a freedom that no other domestic of the palace would have dared to assume, he, with affected solemnity, demanded an audience.

"I cannot refuse it, Hadji Baba, seeing that thou dost swagger into my presence unbidden," said Achmet, with a smile, as he sat down in the usual oriental fashion—cross-legged on a low couch—and patted the head of the noble animal which he had chosen as his companion, and which appeared to regard him with the affection of a dog—

"What may be your news?"

"I have no news," replied Baba, with humility. "News cannot be conveyed to one who knows all things, by one who is a dog and knows nothing."

"Thou knowest at all events how to look well after that which concerns thyself," replied the Dey. "What hast thou to say to me?"

"That the man with the proboscis, who struts when he walks, and snivels when he speaks, desires a favour of your highness."

"Speak not in riddles," returned the Dey sharply. "I have no time to waste with thee to-day. Say thy say and be gone."

Hadji Baba, who was indeed thoroughly alive to his own interest, was much too prudent to thwart the humour of his master. Briefly, though without changing his tone or manner, he informed him that the Spanish consul awaited his pleasure below.

“Let him wait,” said the Dey, resuming the pipe which for some minutes he had laid aside, and caressing the lion’s head with the other hand.

“May I venture to say that he seems anxious?” added the story-teller.

“How much did he give thee for thus venturing to interrupt me, at the risk of thy head?” demanded the Dey sternly.

“Truly,” replied the jester, with a rueful air, “not much more than would buy gold thread to sew my head on again, were your highness pleased to honour me by cutting it off.”

“Be gone, caitiff,” said the Dey, with a slight smile.

Baba vanished without further reply.

Meanwhile Sidi Omar left the palace and directed his steps to his own quarters, which stood on the little fortified island in front of Algiers. This islet, having been connected with the mainland by a pier or neck of masonry about a hundred yards long, formed the insignificant harbour which gave shelter to the navy of small craft owned by the pirates. At the present day the French have constructed there a magnificent harbour, of which that now referred to is a mere corner in the vicinity of the old light-house. Although small, the port was well fortified, and as the Minister of Marine descended towards it, his eye glanced with approval over the double and treble tiers of guns which frowned from its seaward battlements. In passing over the connecting pier, Sidi Omar paused to observe a gang of slaves at work repairing some of the buildings which covered the pier stretching from the mainland to the island.

Although slaves, they were not of the black colour or thick-lipped, flat-nosed aspect which we are apt to associate with the name of slave. They were, indeed, burnt to the deepest brown, and many of them also blistered, by the sun, but they were all “white men,” and contemptuously styled, by their Mohammedan task-masters, Christians. The pier on which they wrought had been constructed long before by thirty thousand such slaves; and the Algerine pirates, for above three centuries previous to that, had expended the lives of hundreds of thousands of them in the building of their fortifications and other public works; in the cultivation of their fields and gardens, and in the labours of their domestic drudgery.

Some of the slaves thus observed by the Minister of Marine had been sailors and merchants and mechanics, military and naval officers, clerks, scholars, and other gentlefolks from Italy, Portugal, America, and all the lands which chanced to be “at war” with his highness the Dey. Formerly there had been hosts of English, French, Spanish, etcetera, but their

governments having bowed their heads, opened their purses, and sent consuls to the piratical city, they were now graciously exempted from thraldom. It was hardish work for men accustomed to cooler climates to be obliged, in the sunshine of an African summer, to harness themselves to carts like oxen, and lift huge stones and hods of mortar with little more than a ragged shirt and trousers to cover them from the furnace-heat of day or the dews of night. Men who carry umbrellas and wear puggeries now-a-days on the Boulevard de la République of Algiers have but a faint conception of what some of their forefathers endured down at the "Marina" not much more than fifty years ago, and of what they themselves could endure, perhaps, if fairly tried! It must not be supposed, however, that all the slaves stood the trial equally well. Some were old, others were young; some were feeble, others strong; all were more or less worn—some terribly so.

Yonder old man carrying the block of stone which might tax the energies of a stout youth, and to whom a taskmaster has just administered a cut with the driving-whip, looks like one who has seen better days. Even in his ragged shirt, broken-brimmed straw hat, and naked feet, he looks like a gentleman. So he is; and there is a gentle lady and a stout son, and two sweet daughters, in Naples, who are toiling almost as hard as he does—if hours be allowed to count for pains—in order to make up his ransom. The strong bull-necked man that follows him with a hod of mortar is an unmistakable seaman of one of the Mediterranean ports. He is a desperate character, and in other lands might be dangerous; but he is safe enough here, for the bastinado is a terrible instrument of torture, and the man is now not only desperate in wrath, but is sometimes desperately frightened. His driver takes a fiendish pleasure in giving him an extra cut of the whip, just to make him apparently a willing horse, whether he will or not. The poor youth beside him is a very different character. His training has been more gentle, and his constitution less robust, for he has broken down under the cruel toil, and is evidently in the last stages of consumption. The taskmaster does not now interfere with him as he was wont to do when he first arrived. He knows that the day is not far distant when neither the bastinado nor any other species of torture will have power to force work out of him. He also knows that overdriving will only shorten the days of his usefulness; he therefore wisely lets him stagger by unmolested, with his light load.

But why go on enumerating the sorrows of these slaves? Sidi Omar looked at them with a careless glance, until he suddenly caught sight of something that caused his eyes to flash and his brows to contract. A sbirro, or officer of justice, stood near him, whether by chance or otherwise we know not.

Touching the sbirro on the shoulder, he pointed to a group under the shade of an archway, and said in a low tone—

“Go, fetch hither that scoundrel Blindi.”

The sbirro at once stepped towards the group, which consisted of two persons. One was an old, apparently dying, slave; the other was a strong middle-aged man, in a quaint blue gown, who knelt by his side, and poured something from a flask into his mouth.

The sbirro seized this man rudely by the neck, and said—

“Get up, Blindi, and come along with me.” Laying the head of the old man gently on the ground, and rising with some wrath, Blindi demanded, in English so broken that we find difficulty in mending it sufficiently to be presented to the reader—

“Wot for you means by dat?”

“Speak your mother tongue, you dog, and make haste, for the Minister of Marine wants you.”

“Oh! mos’ awfrul,” exclaimed Blindi, turning pale, and drawing his blue garment hastily round him, as he meekly followed the officer of justice—whose chief office, by the way, was to administer injustice.

The man whom we have styled Blindi was a somewhat peculiar character. He was an Algerine by birth, but had served several years in the British navy, and had acquired a smattering of the English language—forecastle English, as a matter of course. In consequence of this, and of having lost an eye in the service, he had obtained a pension, and the appointment of interpreter to all his Britannic Majesty’s ships visiting Algiers. He dwelt at the harbour, or Marina, where he excited the wonder and admiration of all the Turks and Moors by his volubility in talking English. He was a man of no small importance, in his own estimation, and was so proud of his powers as a linguist that he invariably interlarded his converse with English phrases, whether he was addressing Turk, Jew, or Christian. Lingua Franca—a compound of nearly all the languages spoken on the shores of the Mediterranean—was the tongue most in use at the Marina of Algiers at that time, but as this would be unintelligible to our reader, we will give Blindi’s conversations in his favourite language. What his real name was we have failed to discover. The loss of his eye had obtained for him in the navy the name of Blind Bob. In his native city this was Italianised into Blindi Bobi. But Bobi was by no means blind of the other eye. It was like seven binocular glasses rolled into one telescope. Once he had unfortunately brought it to bear on the Minister of Marine with such a

concentrated stare that he, being also blind of an eye, regarded it as a personal allusion thereto, and never forgave Blindi Bobi.

“This is the second time,” said Omar, when the culprit was brought before him, “that I have caught you interfering with the slaves.”

“Please, sar, hims was werry bad—dyin’, me s’pose.”

“Speak your own tongue, dog, else you shall smart for it,” said the Minister of Marine, with increasing wrath.

The poor interpreter to his Britannic Majesty’s navy repeated his words in the Lingua Franca, but Omar, again interrupting him, ordered the sbirro to take him off and give him the bastinado.

“And have a care, Blindi,” added Omar, observing that the interpreter was about to speak; “if you say that you are under the protection of the British consul I’ll have you flayed alive.—Off with him!”

The sbirro, with a comrade, led Bobi through several of the narrow streets of the town to a chamber which was set apart for the infliction of punishment. It was a dark, vaulted apartment under a public building. The massive pillars of stone which supported its roof looked pale and ghostlike against the thick darkness which was beyond them, giving the idea of interminable space. One of the sbirros lighted a lantern, and led the way through a massive door, all studded with huge nails, into a small square chamber, the walls of which looked as if they had been bespattered with a dark-brown liquid, especially in the neighbourhood of several iron rings, from which chains depended. In addition to these and a number of other characteristic implements, there was a pile of blood-stained rods in a corner.

Saying a few words to a powerful negro whom they found in attendance, the sbirros handed Blindi Bobi over to him. He instantly disrobed him of his blue gown, and threw him on his back with the aid of an equally powerful assistant, and began to uncover his stomach.

The interpreter was no coward. He had prepared himself to endure manfully the bastinado on the soles of his feet—as it was usually administered—but when he perceived that they were about to inflict the blows on a more tender part of his body, he trembled and remonstrated.

“Sidi Omar no’ say you hit ’im dare. Hims ’peal to British consil—”

Thus far he spoke, from the force of habit, in his adopted tongue, but fear speedily drove him to that of his mother.

All tongues, however, were alike to the negroes, who, rendered callous from long service against their will in a brutalising office, went about their preparations with calm and slow indifference.

Just as they were about to begin, one of the sbirros, who had a personal regard for Bobi, spoke a few words to one of the negroes, who immediately turned Blindi Bobi on his face and firmly raised his feet so that the naked soles were turned upwards. The other negro applied one of the rods thereto with all his might. For a few seconds the poor sufferer uttered no sound, but at last he gave vent to an irresistible yell. At a sign from the chief sbirro the punishment was stopped, and Bobi was released and allowed to rise.

Conducting him to the door, the sbirro thrust him into the street, flung his blue gown after him, and advised him to beware of again rousing the wrath of Sidi Omar.

Blindi Bobi was far too well acquainted with the cruelties perpetrated continually in the pirate city to be ignorant of the fact that he had got off with a light punishment, yet we fear that did not cause him to entertain much gratitude to Sidi Omar as he limped back to his quarters at the Marina.

Arrived there, he observed that the sick old man still lay where he had left him. Running towards him with a sudden impulse, he drew forth his flask, knelt down, raised the old man’s head and gave him a long hearty draught, after which he took another to himself.

“Derre!” he said, rising and shaking his fist defiantly in the direction in which Sidi Omar dwelt, “I’s revenged on you—brute! bah! boo-o!”

After this relief to his feelings Blindi Bobi went home to attend to his poor feet.

Chapter Five.

Shows the Light in which Consuls were Regarded by Pirates, and tells of a Cruel Separation and a Stunning Blow.

Seated on a throne in a recess of the audience-chamber of the palace, Achmet Pasha at length condescended to receive Don Pedro, the representative of Spain.

The Dey was robed in barbaric splendour, and absolutely shone with gold

embroidery and precious stones. Centuries of robbery on the high seas had filled the treasury of the pirates' nest to overflowing, not only with hard cash, but with costly gems of all kinds, hence there was a lavish expenditure of jewellery on the costumes of the Dey and his wives and courtiers.

The recess in which he sat had a dome-ceiling, of workmanship so elaborate that there was not a square inch of unadorned stucco on any part of it. It was lighted partly from the roof by means of four minute windows, of yellow, crimson, green, and blue glass. The walls were decorated with coloured china tiles, and the floor was paved with white marble.

In front of the throne or elevated daïs couched the magnificent lion which we have already mentioned. It was the Dey's whim to use this animal as a footstool on all public occasions, much to the annoyance of his courtiers and household, who felt, although they did not dare to express it, considerable anxiety lest it should take a sudden fancy to feed on human flesh.

Behind the Dey stood several guards, two of whom were negroes.

Don Pedro bowed low on being admitted, and the lion, raising his head, uttered a low growl, which had something distantly thunderous in the tone. Being apparently satisfied that the Don was a friend, it again laid its chin on its paws and appeared to go to sleep.

The Spanish consul was a fine-looking, dignified man, with a nose sufficiently prominent to account for the irreverent reference made to it by Hadji Baba, the story-teller.

In a few words he stated his case touching the female captives recently brought in by Sidi Hassan, and claimed that, as Spanish subjects, they should be set free and placed under his care.

"What proof can you give," demanded the Dey, "that these ladies are really the subjects of Spain?"

"Alas!" replied Don Pedro, "I have no means of verifying what I say; but I feel assured that your highness will not doubt my word, when I say that, while in my own land, I knew the family to which they belong."

"That is not sufficient," returned the Dey. "From all that I can learn, their father lived and died and they were born, in Sicily, and the eldest is the wife of an Italian merchant, who will doubtless be glad to pay a good ransom to get her and his little infant back. As to the sister, we can find room for her in the palace, if she be not ransomed. Besides, Monsieur le

Console,”—here the Dey spoke sternly—“your word is not a good guarantee. Did you not give me your word three months ago that your government would pay the six thousand dollars which are still due to us? Why has not this promise been fulfilled?”

“It grieves me, your highness,” replied Don Pedro, with a mortified look, “that this debt has not yet been discharged, but I can assure you that I have communicated with my Sovereign on the subject and have no doubt that a satisfactory explanation and reply will be sent to you without delay.”

“It is to be hoped that such may be the case, for I give you *my* word—and you may safely rely on *it*—that if the cash is not sent to me immediately I will send you to work in chains in the quarries with the other slaves.—Go, let your Sovereign know my intention as speedily as may be.”

Lest the reader should be surprised to hear of any consul being thus cavalierly treated, it may be well to explain that the barbarians, who were thus unworthily honoured in being recognised by the European powers at all, were grossly ignorant of the usages of civilised nations, and of the sacred character in which the persons and families of consuls are held. The Deys of Algiers were constantly in the habit of threatening the consuls themselves with flagellation and death, in order to obtain what they desired from their respective governments, and sometimes even carried their threats into execution—as an instance of which we may cite the well-authenticated fact that when the French Admiral Duquesne bombarded Algiers, the consul and twenty-two other Frenchmen were sent out to the fleet in small pieces—blown from the mouths of cannon! True, this was in the year 1683, but up to the very end of their bloody and ferocious domination, the Deys maintained their character for ignorance and barbarity—evidence of which shall be given in the sequel of our tale.

When Don Pedro had been thus ignominiously dismissed, Sidi Hassan was sent for by the Dey. This man was one of the most turbulent characters in the city, and the Dey thought it his wisest policy to secure his friendship if possible by mingling kindness with severity. In the event of this course failing, he comforted himself with the reflection that it would not be difficult to get rid of him by the simple, and too frequently used, process of strangulation. The knowledge that Hassan was a favourite among the Turkish troops prevented his at once adopting the latter method.

He was all urbanity and smiles, therefore, when the pirate captain obeyed his summons. He thanked him for the two pretty slave-girls he had brought in, commended him for his success in taking prizes, and added that he had appointed him to fill the office of attendant janissary upon the British consul.

Up to this point Sidi Hassan had listened with satisfaction, but the appointment just offered seemed to him so contemptible that he had difficulty in dissembling his feelings. The knowledge, however, that his despotic master held his life in his hand, induced him to bow and smile, as if with gratitude.

“And now,” said the Dey, “I have a commission for you. Go to the British consul, tell him of your appointment, and present him with my compliments and with the eldest slave-girl and her infant as a gift from me. Paulina is her name, is it not?”

“Yes, your highness—Paulina Ruffini, and the sister’s name is Angela Diego.”

“Good. Angela you may keep to yourself,” continued the Dey, as coolly as if he had been talking of a silver snuff-box.

Hassan again bowed and smiled, and again had to constrain his countenance to express gratification, though he was not a little disgusted with Achmet’s indifference to the captive girls.

Leaving the palace in a state of high indignation, he resolved to sell Angela in the public market, although by so doing he could not hope to gain so much as would have been the case were he to have disposed of her by private bargain. Thus, with strange perversity, does an angry man often stand in the way of his own interests.

We need scarcely say that, when their fate was announced to the unhappy sisters, they were plunged into a state of wild grief, clung to each other’s necks, and refused to be separated.

Little did Sidi Hassan care for their grief. He tore them asunder, locked Paulina up with her infant, and led the weeping Angela to the slave-market, which was in the immediate neighbourhood of one of the largest mosques of the city.

This mosque, named Djama Djedid, still stands, under the name of the Mosquée de la Pêcherie, one of the most conspicuous and picturesque buildings in Algiers. It was built in the seventeenth century by a Genoese architect, a slave, who, unfortunately for himself built it in the form of a cross, for which he was put to death by the reigning Dey. In front of the northern door of this mosque the narrow streets of the city gave place to a square, in which was held the market for Christian slaves.

Here might be seen natives of almost every country—men and women and children of all ages and complexions, civilised and uncivilised, gentle and

simple—exposed for sale; while turbaned Turks, Moors in broad-cloth burnouses and gay vestments, Jews in dark costume, Arabs from the desert, and men of nondescript garments and character, moved about, criticising, examining, buying, and selling.

Just as Sidi Hassan reached the market, a gang of Christian slaves were halted near the door of the mosque. It was evening. They had been toiling all day at the stone-quarries in the mountains, and were now on their way, weary, ragged, and foot-sore, to the Bagnio, or prison, in which were housed the public slaves—those not sold to private individuals, but retained by government and set to labour on the public works.

A few of these slaves wore ponderous chains as a punishment for having been unruly—the others were unshackled. Among them stood our unfortunate friends Francisco Rimini and his sons Lucien and Mariano—but ah! how changed! Only two days had elapsed since their arrival, yet their nearest friends might have failed to recognise them, so dishevelled were they, and their faces so covered with dust and perspiration. For their own garments had been substituted ragged shirts and loose Turkish drawers reaching to below the knee. Old straw hats covered their heads, but their lower limbs and feet were naked; where not stained by blood and dust, the fairness of their skins showed how little they had been used to such exposure. Lucien’s countenance wore an expression of hopeless despair; that of his father, which was wont to look so bluff and hearty, now betrayed feelings of the tenderest pity, as if he had forgotten his own sufferings in those of his children. Mariano, on the contrary, looked so stubborn and wicked that no one could have believed it possible he had ever been a gay, kindly, light-hearted youth! Poor fellow! his high spirit had been severely tried that day, but evidently not tamed, though the blood on the back of his shirt showed that his drivers had made vigorous attempts to subdue him. During the heat of the day Lucien had grown faint from toil and hunger, and had received a cruel lash from one of their guardians. This had roused Mariano. He had sprung to avenge the blow, had been seized by three powerful men, lashed until he became insensible, and, on recovering, had been forced to continue his toil of carrying stones until not only all the strength, but apparently all the spirit, was taken out of him.

From this condition he was reviving slightly when he reached the market-place, and, as his strength returned, the firm pressure of his lips and contraction of his brows increased.

The slave-drivers were not slow to observe this, and two of them took the precaution to stand near him. It was at this critical moment that the poor

youth suddenly beheld Angela Diego led into the market—more interesting and beautiful than ever in her sorrow—to be sold as a slave.

Mariano had been deeply touched by the sorrow and sad fate of the sisters when he first saw them on board the pirate-vessel. At this sight of the younger sister, prudence, which had retained but a slight hold of him during the day, lost command altogether. In a burst of uncontrollable indignation he sent one of his guards crashing through the open doorway of the mosque, drove the other against the corner of a neighbouring house, rushed towards Sidi Hassan, and delivered on the bridge of that hero's nose a blow that instantly laid him flat on the ground. At the same moment he was seized by a dozen guards, thrown down, bound, and carried off to the whipping-house, where he was bastinadoed until he felt as if bones and flesh, were one mass of tingling jelly. In this state, almost incapable of standing or walking, he was carried to the Bagnio, and thrown in among the other prisoners.

While Mariano was being conveyed away, Sidi Hassan arose in a half-stupefied condition from the ground. Fortunately he was ignorant of who had knocked him down, and why he had been so treated, or he might have vented his wrath on poor Angela.

Just at that moment he was accosted by Bacri the Jew—a convenient butt on whom to relieve himself; for the despised Israelites were treated with greater indignity in Algiers at that time than perhaps in any other part of the earth.

"Dog," said he fiercely, "hast thou not business enough of thine own in fleecing men, that thou shouldst interfere with me?"

"Dog though I may be," returned Bacri, with gravity, but without a touch of injured feeling, "I do not forget that I promised you four thousand dollars to spare the Christians, and it is that which induces me to intrude on you now."

"Humph!" ejaculated Hassan, somewhat mollified; "I verily believe that thou hast some interested and selfish motive at the bottom. However, that business is thine, not mine."

"Whether my motive be interested or not you are well able to judge," returned Bacri gently, "for the slaves are poor and helpless; they are also Christians, and you know well that the Jews have no love for the Christians; in which respect it seems to me that they bear some resemblance to the men of other creeds."

Sidi Hassan felt that there was an intended sarcasm in the last remark, but

the thought of the dollars induced him to waive further discussion.

“Do you wish to sell the girl?” said Bacri in a casual way, as though it had just occurred to him.

“Ay, but I must have a good price for her,” replied the Turk.

“Name it,” said the Jew; “my wife has need of a handmaiden just now.”

Hassan named a sum much larger than he had any expectation the Jew would give. To his surprise, the other at once agreed to it.

“Why, Bacri,” he said, with a smile, as with his right hand he tenderly caressed his injured nose, “you must have been more than usually successful in swindling of late.”

“God has recently granted me more than deserved prosperity,” returned the other.

Without further palaver the bargain was struck. Hassan accompanied the Jew to his residence in one of the quaint Moorish houses of the old town. Angela was handed over to Bacri’s wife, a pleasant-visaged woman of forty, and Hassan returned home with his pockets well lined, his nose much swelled, and his temper greatly improved.

Bethinking him of the Dey’s commands, he set out with Paulina and her infant for the residence of the British consul, which lay a short distance outside the northern wall of the town, not far from the bluff height on which, at the present day, towers the picturesque pile of Nôtre-Dame d’Afrique.

Chapter Six.

Sends a Gleam of Hope into a Gloomy Region.

The short twilight of southern latitudes was giving place to the shades of night, when Bacri the Jew issued from the low door of his house, and threaded the narrow labyrinth of streets which compose the old town of Algiers.

The greater part of the old, or, as it is styled, the Moorish town, remains almost exactly the same at the present time that it was at the time of which our tale treats. It occupied the face of a steep hill, and was built in the form of a triangle, the apex being a fort, or “casba,” near the summit of the hill. The base was a street of oriental houses upwards of half a mile in extent,

beyond which the sea-wall, well lined with batteries, rose directly from the beach, and was washed by the spray in every breeze. All the houses facing the sea have now been taken down, and their places are occupied by wide handsome streets of French buildings; the beach and the site of the old wall being occupied by splendid quays, wharves, and terraces.

The houses of the Moorish town were square white-washed blocks, built so close to each other that most of the streets were mere lanes, not more than from six to ten feet wide. No windows worthy of the name garnished the dead white walls of these houses, whose light sprang in reality from within, each house being in the form of a square of building surrounding a central court, which at the top was open to the weather. The real windows of the houses looked into the courts, which, however, were by no means dismal. They had fountains in the midst of them, which sent up a perpetual —and, in such a climate, grateful—sound of trickling water; while in their corners and elsewhere boxes of earth enabled banana-trees, and palms, and various creepers, to convert the little spots into delightful, though miniature, gardens. Such windows as opened outwards were mere loop-holes, not much more than a foot square—many of them less,—the larger of them being always strongly grated. Most of these houses projected beyond their basement storeys, thus rendering the open space above narrower than the streets below, and in many cases the walls absolutely met, and converted the streets into tunnels. Strange wooden props, seemingly insufficient for their duty, upheld these projecting upper storeys, and gave a peculiarly un-European character to the streets,—a character which became still more perplexing to the stranger when he observed here and there, in places where architecture had scarcely space or light to be seen, fountains of the most elegant design and workmanship; doorways of white marble, most elaborately and beautifully carved; and entrance-halls that resembled courts of the Alhambra in miniature.

When one first sees such things they induce surprise, but the surprise evaporates when we reflect that these pirates had at their command the services of thousands of slaves, many of whom represented the artistic talent of the civilised world.

Passing rapidly along these narrow streets, and bending his tall form when he came to low archways, Bacri at length emerged on the chief “high street” of the town, which, entering at the north, or Bab-el-Oued gate, completely traversed the city under that name as far as the Dey’s palace, where it changed its name to Bab-Azoun, and terminated at the south gate of the same name.

In this street was the Bagnio, already mentioned as being the prison of the

government slaves.

Here Bacri paused, drew a glittering coin from his pocket, and knocked at a strong oaken door. A janissary opened, and roughly demanded his business, but changed his tone at once and gave the Jew admission, on receiving the coin.

Passing though a lobby, whose marble pillars were sadly broken and disfigured, the Jew entered a courtyard, open to the sky, around which were a number of recesses or cells. In these the unhappy slaves sat huddled together. They were not cold, for it was summer; but their misery and want of space probably induced them to cling closely to each other.

The place had once been a bathing establishment, and an old fountain still gurgled in the centre of the court; but its drains had been choked long ago, and the waters had overflowed, to find exit as they best might, rendering the floor a damp and uncomfortable residence for scorpions, centipedes, and other repulsive insects.

The slaves received only two small rolls of black bread as their rations at the close of each day, and they were too eagerly engaged in devouring these to pay much regard to their visitor.

Looking carefully round, the Jew at length discovered the objects of his search,—Francisco, Lucien, and Mariano Rimini. The two first were seated side by side, eating their meagre meal. Mariano lay near them, heavily laden with irons, and also endeavouring to eat.

“Friends,” said Bacri, approaching them.

“Villain!” cried Mariano, starting up into a reclining attitude, despite the agony that the act occasioned, and fixing his eyes on the Jew.

“You do me injustice, young man,” said Bacri, seating himself on the basement of a pillar.

“It may be that he does you injustice,” said Lucien sternly, “nevertheless we have all of us good reason to believe that you are a friend of the pirate Hassan, and no friend of ours.”

“Whether friend or foe, say thy say, man, and be gone,” cried the bluff Francisco, whose spirit suffered even more than his body from the indignities to which he had been subjected that day.

“Listen, then,” said Bacri impressively. “You know my name and nation, but you do not know that I am the chief of the Jews in this city of devils. I and my people are regarded by these followers of Mohammed as worse

than the dogs in their streets, yet, while they treat us with the utmost indignity, they know that we are good traders, and as such bring riches within their walls. I have power—the power of wealth—to help you at a pinch; indeed I *have* helped you, for it was only by means of a promise of gold that I induced Sidi Hassan to spare your lives when his men were bent on taking them. But that is not what I came to tell you to-night. I came to say that the poor captive girls with whom you voyaged to this place are for the present out of danger."

"Say you so?" exclaimed Mariano eagerly. "How can that be? Did I not see Angela led to the slave-market this very afternoon?"

"You did, and I purchased her for the purpose of protecting her. She is now in my house. Her sister and the infant have been sent as a temporary gift or loan to the British consul, under whose care she is safe *for the present*. But be not too sanguine," added Bacri, seeing that Mariano's countenance brightened; "the whim of the Dey, or a change of government, which latter is common enough here, may totally alter the state of affairs. If the Dey willed it, I could not hold anything that belongs to me for an hour. They call us dogs, and treat us as such."

"They are themselves dogs!" cried Mariano indignantly.

"Christians have called us by the same name," returned the Jew calmly, "thereby proving the falsity of their own faith."

"Say not so!" cried Lucien with animation. "Many, calling themselves Christians, have undoubtedly treated your race ill, but those who really love the Lord Jesus cannot help respecting the people from whom Himself sprang. I side not with those who disgrace themselves by vilifying the Jews."

Lucien extended his hand as he spoke, and Bacri grasped it kindly.

"Bah! you are fools; all of you arrant idiots!" cried a wild-looking ragged man in the neighbouring cell, starting up and glaring at them as he clenched his fists. "What avails Christianity, or Judaism, or anything else here? 'Tis a world of fiends!—ha, ha! murderers, tormentors, hypocrites, —ha! ha!"

Here the man gave vent to a burst of wild ferocious laughter, so loud that even the careless and callous warder was disturbed, and rattled his keys as if about to enter. The sound appeared to send a chill to the heart of the captive; an expression of terror overspread his thin haggard features, and he shrunk together as he retired quickly to the remotest corner of his cell.

“A maniac, I fear,” said Francisco in a low tone, observing that the Jew regarded him with a look of pity.

“No, not quite mad,” replied Bacri in the same low tone, “but sometimes very near it, I think. Poor man, I know him well. He has been fifteen years a prisoner in Algiers. When first brought here he was as fine a specimen of a Genoese youth as I ever saw. His name is Lorenzo Benoni. He was captured with his wife and two children, all of whom died before the first year was out. Of course, although in the same city, he was never again permitted to see wife or children. He was very dangerous at first, attacking and nearly killing his guards whenever he got a chance, and frequently attempting to take his own life, so that they were obliged to make him work constantly in heavy irons, and, I need scarcely add, bastinadoed and tortured him until his body became a mass of bruises from head to foot. They subdued him, in the course of years, to a condition of callous and brutal indifference to everything, and at last his great strength began to give way. He is now considered incapable of doing much injury to any one, and seems almost tamed. The Turks think that this has been brought about by sickness and starvation; it may be partly so, but I cannot help thinking that, despite the contempt which, in a sudden burst of passion, he poured on it just now, religion has something to do with it, for I have noticed a considerable change in him since he began to listen to the voice of an old man who has been a true friend of the poor slaves since long before I came here. The old man professes, at least he teaches, your religion; but I know not to what sect he belongs. Indeed, I think he belongs to none. This, however, am I sure of, that he holds equally by our Scriptures and your Testament as being the whole Word of God.”

The three captives listened to this narration with sinking hearts, for it opened up a glimpse of the terrible and hopeless future that lay before themselves, so that for some time they sat gazing in silence at their visitor, and at the miserable beings who were devouring the last crumbs of their black bread around them.

“I came to see you,” continued Bacri, “partly to assure you of the comparative safety of the girls who interested us all so much on board the vessel of Sidi Hassan, and partly to say that I will do what lies in my power to alleviate your sad condition. With Lucien’s education and knowledge of languages, it may be possible to get him into the immediate service of the Dey, in which case he will be able to aid his father and brother.”

“Have you, then, much influence with the Dey?” asked Francisco.

“None,” replied the Jew, with a sad smile. “I have already told you that the

pirates detest us; that we are tolerated only because of our money-making powers, and the ease with which they can bleed us when they want gold. But I have some influence with others in the city who have power to move the Dey. There is one thing, however," here the Jew glanced pointedly at Mariano, "in regard to which I would give you most earnest counsel, namely, that you should at once dismiss all idea of rebellion. It will be utterly unavailing. You may, like the caged lion, if you will, dash yourselves to death against your prison bars, but you cannot break them. Countless thousands of bold and brave spirits have attempted this plan, with no good result, in time past. The Turks are well acquainted with and quite prepared for it. Your only chance of mitigating the woes of your condition lies in submission."

"It were better and nobler to die than to submit," said Mariano gloomily.

"It were better and nobler to bow to the will of the Almighty than to commit suicide," retorted Bacri, somewhat sternly. "It is selfishness and pride which induces us to seek deliverance from sorrow and suffering in death. There are men who have thought that truest nobility lay in choosing a life in the midst of suffering and woe for the purpose of alleviating it, and who have acted on their opinion. This lesson, however, is not so frequently learnt by us through precept as in the school of sorrow."

Mariano felt abashed, yet at the same time rather nettled.

"Truly, then," he said, with a glance at his blood-stained shirt, "it seems to me that I have at all events begun my lesson in the right school. However, I believe thou art right, Bacri, and I bear thee no ill-will for the rap thou didst bestow on my skull, which, luckily, is a thick one, else thy ponderous fist had split it from the cranium to the chin."

"We had misjudged you, Bacri," said Francisco, extending his hand, as the Jew rose to depart.

"We will lay your advice to heart; and we thank you, meanwhile, for coming to see us in this foul den, which I dislike less because of moisture and dirt—these being familiar to me—than because of the lively reptiles which hold their nightly revels in it."

There was mingled humour and bitterness in Francisco's tone, as he uttered this sentence, which he concluded with a heavy sigh. Immediately after, the rusty bolts of their prison-door grated harshly on their ears, and they listened sadly to the retreating footsteps of one whom they now esteemed their only friend, as they died away in the distance.

Chapter Seven.

Some New Characters walk, glide, and furiously gallop into the Tale, and otherwise introduce themselves to Notice.

In the interior court of a beautiful Moorish villa not far from the city, sat Mrs Langley, wife of Colonel Langley, British consul at the “Court” of Algiers.

The lady of whom we write was unusually romantic, for her romance consisted of a deep undercurrent of powerful but quiet enthusiasm, with a pretty strong surface-flow of common-sense. Her husband was a man of noble mind and commanding presence—a magnificent representative John Bull, with the polish of a courtier and the principles of a Christian; one who had been wisely chosen to fill a very disagreeable post, full of responsibility and danger.

On a stool at the feet of Mrs Langley sat a sunny second edition of herself, about eight years of age, named Agnes. In the cradle which Agnes had formerly occupied reposed a remarkably plump and dimpled representative of the Colonel. When respectfully addressed he was called Jim, but he was more familiarly known as Baby.

A small negress from beyond the Zahara, and blacker than any coal, rocked Jim violently. For this—not the rocking, but the violence—she had been unavailingly rebuked by Mrs Langley, until that lady’s heart had nearly lost all hope.

“There—you have done it again, Zubby,” said Mrs Langley, referring to a push that well-nigh rolled Master Jim, (as a sea-captain once said), out at the starboard side of the cradle.

Zubby confessed her guilt, by looking abashed—and what a solemn look an abashed one is in a negress with very large eyes!—as well as by rocking more gently.

Agnes vented a sudden little laugh at the expression of Zubby’s face; and, the door opening at that moment, Colonel Langley entered the court, and sat down beside his wife under the giant leaves of a small banana-tree, whose life was drawn from a boxful of earth about three feet square.

“My dear,” said the Colonel, “I have two rather amusing things to lay before you this evening. One is a gift from the Dey, the other is a letter. Which will you have first?”

“The gift, of course,” replied the lady.

“Let her come in, Ali,” called the Colonel to his interpreter, who stood in the passage outside.

Rais Ali, a Moor clad in the usual Turkish garb, but with a red fez or skull-cap on his head instead of a turban, threw open the door leading out of the court, and ushered in poor Paulina Ruffini with her child.

“Is *this* the Dey’s gift?” asked the astonished lady, rising hurriedly.

“It is; at least she is lent to us, and we are bound to accept her.—Address her in French, my dear; she does not understand English. In fact, you’d better take her to your own room and have a talk.”

Mrs Langley addressed to the poor captive a few reassuring words, and led her away, leaving the Colonel to amuse himself with Agnes.

“What has she been sent to us for?” asked Agnes.

“To be a serv— a companion to you and baby, my pet.”

“That was kind of the Dey, wasn’t it?” said the child.

“Well—ye–es; oh yes, doubtless, it was very kind of him,” replied the Colonel.

We fear that the Colonel did not fully appreciate the kindness that resulted in the gift either of Paulina Ruffini as his servant, or of Sidi Hassan as his attendant, for he saw clearly that the former was unaccustomed to menial work, and he knew that Sidi Hassan was a turbulent member of the community. However, being a man of prompt action, and knowing that it was of the utmost importance that he should stand well in the good graces of the Dey, he resolved to receive Paulina into his establishment as governess of the nursery and companion to his wife, and to leave Sidi Hassan very much to the freedom of his own will, so long as that will did not interfere with the interests of the consulate.

On the return of his wife he listened to her pathetic account of Paulina’s sad history, and then produced the letter to which he had referred on first entering.

“This letter necessitates my riding into town immediately. It is a curious document in its way, therefore lend me your ear.”

Opening it he began to read. We give it *verbatim et literatim*:—

“*To the brittish Cownsul algeers*.

"7 *teenth Jully*, 18—

"Sur i'm an irishman an a sailer an recked on the cost of boogia wid six of me messmaits hoo are wel an arty tho too was drowndid on landin an wan wos spiflikated be the moors which are born divls an no mistaik. I rite to say that weer starvin but the Kaid as they cals the guvner Here says heel take a ransum for us of 150 spanish dolars the Kaid has past his word in yoor name to the moors for that sum or theyd hav spiflikate us too. I hope yer onor has as much to spair in yer pokit, an will luke alive wid it, for if yoo don't its all up wid me mesmaits inkloodin yoor onors obedent humbil servint to comand ted flagan."

"Well, I hope, with poor Flaggan," said Mrs Langley laughingly, "that you *have* as much to spare in your 'pokit,' for if not, it is plain that the poor fellows will be led into captivity."

"I would readily advance a larger sum for so good an end," replied the consul, folding the letter. "I shall at once ride into town to make arrangements, and as it is so late, will pass the night in our town house. I shall send our new attendant, Sidi Hassan, on this mission, and leave you for the night under the guardianship of Rais Ali."

The consul left immediately, and next morning Sidi Hassan set out for Bugia with the necessary ransom.

In regard to this we need say nothing more than that he accomplished his purpose, paid the ransom, and received the seven British seamen, accompanied by whom he commenced the return journey, he and his men riding, and driving the sailors on foot before them as though they had been criminals. On the way, however, they were attacked, not far from Algiers, by a body of predatory Arabs from the Jurjura mountains.

These bold villains, at the very first onset, killed more than half of the Turkish escort, and put the rest to flight. Six of the sailors they captured and carried off, but Ted Flaggan, who was an exceedingly active as well as powerful man, proved himself more than a match for them all. During the mêlée he managed to throw himself in the way of one of the best-mounted among the Arabs, who instantly charged him, but Ted sprang aside and let him pass, ducking low to avoid a cut from his curved sword.

Before he could turn, the Irishman ran close to his side, seized him by the burnous, at the same time grasping his bridle, and pulled him out of the saddle with such sudden violence that he fell headlong to the ground, where he lay quite stunned by the fall. Flaggan instantly sprang into the

saddle, as if he had been an accomplished cavalier, though in reality he knew no more about horses than an Esquimaux. However, a man who was accustomed to hold on to a top-sail-yard in a gale was not to be easily shaken off by an Arab charger. He clung to the high saddle-bow with one hand, and with the other grasped his clasp-knife, which he opened with his teeth. Therewith he probed the flanks of his fiery steed to such an extent that he not only distanced all his Arab pursuers, but overtook and passed his own escort one by one, until he reached Sidi Hassan himself. He then attempted to pull up, but the clasp-knife had fired the charger's blood in an unusual degree. With a wicked snort and fling that lifted Flaggan high out of the saddle, it rushed madly on, left the pirate captain far behind, and at length dashed through the Bab-Azoun gate of Algiers, despite the frantic efforts of the guard to check or turn it. Right onward it sped through the street Bab-Azoun, scattering Turks, Moors, Jews, negroes, and all the rest of them like chaff; passed the Dey's palace, straight along the street Bab el-Oued; out at the water-gate, with similar contempt of the guards; down into the hollow caused by the brook beyond; up the slope on the other side, half-way towards the summit, on the opposite side of Frais Vallon, and was not finally pulled up until it had almost run down the British consul, who chanced to be riding leisurely homeward at the time.

"You seem to have had a pretty sharp run, my man," said the consul, laughing, as the Irishman thankfully jumped off, and grasped the bridle of the now thoroughly winded horse.

"Faix an' I have, yer honour; an' if I haven't run down an' kilt half the population o' that town, wotever's its name, no thanks to this self-opiniated beast," replied Flaggan, giving the bridle a savage pull.

"You're an Irishman, I perceive," said the consul, smiling.

"Well, now, yer right, sur; though how ye came to persaive is more nor I can understand."

"Where have you come from? and how in such a plight?" demanded the consul in some surprise, observing that a troop of janissaries came galloping up the winding road, near the top of which they stood.

"Sorrow wan o' me knows where we touched at last," replied the seaman in some perplexity; "the names goes out o' me head like wather out of a sieve. All I'm rightly sure of is that I set sail four days ago from a port they calls Boogee, or so'thin' like it, in company with a man called Seedy Hassan; an' sure he'd ha bin seedy enough be now if his horse hadn't bin a good 'un, for we wos attacked, and half his party killed and took, forby my six messmates; but—"

“Your name is Ted Flaggan?” inquired the consul hastily.

“It is,” said the seaman, in great surprise; “sure yer honour must be—”

The sentence was cut short by the arrival of the janissaries, who pulled up with looks of considerable astonishment on finding the mad fugitive engaged in quiet conversation with the British consul.

“Gentlemen,” said Colonel Langley, with much urbanity of tone and manner, “I suppose you wish to make a prisoner of this man?”

The soldiers admitted that such was their desire and intention.

“Then you will oblige me,” continued the Colonel, “by allowing me to be his jailer in the meantime. He is a British subject, of whom I can give a good account at the fitting time and place. Sidi Hassan, under whose charge he has been by my orders, will doubtless soon arrive in town, and further enlighten you on this subject.”

Without waiting for a reply the Colonel bowed, and wheeling his horse round rode quietly away, followed by the Irishman, who regarded his new jailer with a very puzzled look, while a touch of humour further tended to wrinkle his remarkably expressive countenance.

Chapter Eight.

Ted Flaggan and Rais Ali proceed on a Mission, and see Impressive Sights.

Two days after the events narrated in the last chapter, Mrs Langley, being seated on her favourite couch in the court under the small banana-tree, sent Zubby into the garden to command the attendance of Ted Flaggan. That worthy was gifted with a rare capacity for taking the initiative in all things, when permitted to do so, and had instituted himself in the consul’s mansion as assistant gardener, assistant cook and hostler, assistant footman and nurseryman, as well as general advice-giver and factotum, much to the amusement of all concerned, for he knew little of anything, but was extremely good-humoured, helpful, and apart from advice-giving—modest.

“Flaggan,” said Mrs Langley, when the stout seaman appeared, hat in hand, “I want you to accompany our interpreter, Rais Ali, into town, to bring out a message from a gentleman named Sidi Omar. Ali himself has other duties to attend to, and cannot return till evening, so take particular

note of the way, lest you should miss it in returning."

"I will, ma'am," replied Ted, with a forecastle bow, "Does Mister Ally onderstand English?"

"Oh yes," returned Mrs Langley, with a laugh. "I forgot that he was absent when you arrived. You will find that he understands all you say to him, though I'm not quite sure that you will understand all he says to you. Like some of the other Moors here, he has been in the British navy, and has acquired a knowledge of English. You'll find him a pleasant companion, I doubt not. Be so good as to tell him that I wish to see him before he leaves."

Obedient to the summons, Rais Ali quickly appeared. The interpreter was a stout, tall, dignified man of about thirty-five, with a great deal of self-assertion, and a dash of humour expressed in his countenance.

"Ali," said Mrs Langley, "you are aware that Sidi Omar is to be married to-morrow. I have been invited to the wedding, but have stupidly forgotten the hour at which I was asked to see the bride dressed. Will you go to Sidi Omar, or some of his people, and find this out? Take the sailor, Mr Flaggan, with you, and send him back with the information as soon as possible."

"Yis, mum," replied the interpreter; "an' please, mum, I was want too, tree days' leave of absins."

"No doubt Colonel Langley will readily grant your request. Have you some particular business to transact, or do you merely desire a holiday?"

"Bof," replied the Moor, with a mysterious smile. "I'se got finished the partikler bizziness of bein' spliced yesterdays, an' I wants littil holiday."

"Indeed," said Mrs Langley in surprise, "you have been very quiet about it."

"Ho yis, wery quiet."

"Where is your bride, Ali? I should like so much to see her."

"Her's at 'ome, safe," said Rais Ali, touching a formidable key which was stuck in his silken girdle.

"What! have you locked her up?"

"Yis—'bleeged to do so for keep her safe."

"Not alone, I hope?" said Mrs Langley.

“No, not ’lone. Her’s got a bootiflul cat, an’ I means buy her a little nigger boy soon.”

Having arranged that Mrs Langley was to visit his bride on her way to Sidi Omar’s wedding the following day, Rais Ali set out on his mission, accompanied by Mr Flaggan.

The Irishman soon discovered that the Moor was a conceited coxcomb and a barefaced boaster, and ere long began to suspect that he was an arrant coward. He was, however, good-humoured and chatty, and Ted, being in these respects like-minded, rather took a fancy to him, and slily encouraged his weakness.

“Ye must have seed a power o’ sarvice in the navy, now,” he said, with an air of interest; “how came you to git into it?”

“Ha! that wos cos o’ me bein’ sitch a strong, good-lookin’ feller,” replied Ali, with an air of self-satisfaction.

“Just so,” said Flaggan; “but it’s not common to hear of Moors bein’ taken aboard our men o’ war, d’ee see. It’s that as puzzles me.”

“Oh, that’s easy to ’splain,” returned Ali. “The fac’ is, I’d bin for sev’l year aboord a Maltese trader ’tween Meddrainean an’ Liverp’l, and got so like a English tar you coodn’t tell the one fro’ the oder. Spok English, too, like natif.”

“Ha!” exclaimed Ted, nodding his head gravely—“well?”

“Well, one night w’en we was all sleeperin’ in port, in a ’ouse on shore, the press-gang comes round an’ nabs the whole of us. We fight like lions. I knock seven men down, one before the tother, ’cause of bein’ very strong, an’ had learn to spar a littil. You know how to spar?”

“Well,” returned Ted, looking with a smile at his huge hands, “I can’t go for to say as I know much about the science of it, d’ee see; but I can use my fists after a fashion.”

“Good,” continued the Moor. “Well, then, we fights till all our eyes is black, an’ all our noses is red, an’ some of our teeths is out, but the sailirs wos too many for us. We wos ’bleeged to gif in, for wot kin courage do agin numbers? so we wos took aboord a friggit and ’zamined.”

“An’ what?” asked the seaman.

“’Zamined. Overhauled,” replied the Moor.

“Oh! examined, I see. Well?”

“Well, I feels sure of git hoff, bein’ a Algerine Moor, so w’en my turn comes, I says to the hofficer wot ’zamined us, says I, ‘I’s not a Breetish man!’

“‘Wot are you, then?’ says the hofficer.

“‘I’s a Moor,’ says I.

“‘Moor’s the pity,’ says he.”

Ted gave a short laugh at this.

“Now, that’s strange,” observed Ali, glancing at his companion in some surprise; “that’s ’zactly wot they all did, w’en the hofficer says that! I’ve thought oftin ’bout it since, but never could see wot they laugh at.”

“Oh, it’s just a way we’ve got,” returned Flaggan, resuming his gravity; “the English have a knack o’ larfin’, off and on, w’en they shouldn’t ought to.—Git along with your yarn.”

“Well, that wos the finish. I became a Breetish tar, an’ fouted in all the battils of the navy. I ’spected to get promotion an’ prize-money, but nivir git none, ’cause of circumstances as wos never ’splained to me. Well, one night we come in our friggit to anchor in bay of Algiers. I gits leave go ashore wi’ tothers, runs right away to our Dey, who gits awrful waxy, sends for Breetish cap’n, ’splain that I’s the son of a Turk by a Algerine moder an’ wery nigh or’er the cap’n’s head to be cutted off.”

“You don’t say so?”

“Yis, it’s troo. Wery near declare war with England acause of that,” said Ali, with an air of importance. “But the Breetish consul he interfere, goes down on hims knees, an’ beg the Dey for to parding hims nation.”

“He must ha’ bin a cowardly feller, that consul!”

“No,” said the interpreter sternly, “him’s not coward. Him was my master, Kurnil Langley, an’ only do the right ting: humbil hisself to our Dey w’en hims contry do wrong.—Now, here we is comin’ to Bab-el-Oued, that means the Water-gate in yoor lingo, w’ere the peepils hold palaver.”

This in truth appeared to be the case, for many of the chief men of the city were seated under and near the gate, as the two drew near, smoking their pipes and gossiping in the orthodox Eastern style.

The big Irishman attracted a good deal of notice as he passed through the gates; but Turks are grave and polite by nature: no one interrupted him or made audible comments upon his somewhat wild and unusual appearance.

Passing onwards, they entered the town and traversed the main street towards the Bab-Azoun gate, which Ali explained to his companion was the Gate of Tears, and the place of public execution.

Here they came suddenly on the body of a man, the feet and limbs of which were dreadfully mangled, showing that the miserable wretch had perished under the bastinado.

At the time we write of, and indeed at all times during Turkish rule, human life was held very cheap. For the slightest offences, or sometimes at the mere caprice of those in power, men were taken up and bastinadoed in the open streets until they died from sheer agony, and their relations did not dare to remove the bodies for burial until their tyrants had left the scene. Cruelty became almost the second nature of the people. Theft was checked by the amputation of the first joint of the fore-finger of the right hand for the first offence. For the second, the whole hand was sacrificed, and for the third, the head itself was forfeited. Sometimes, in cases of capital punishment, decapitation was performed by degrees! and other refinements too horrible to mention were constantly practised.

While the interpreter was explaining to his companion as much of this as he deemed it right for him to know, several of the sorrowing relations of the dead man came forward and carried the body away. Little notice was taken of the incident, which, from beginning to end, scarcely interrupted the general flow of business.

At the Bab-Azoun gate, which occupied a position not many yards distant from the spot on which now stands the principal theatre of Algiers, Ali left Ted Flaggan for a few minutes, begging him to wait until he had transacted a piece of business in the market held just outside the gate.

“Tell me before ye go, Ally, what may be the use of them three big hooks close to the gate,” said Flaggan, pointing upwards.

“Them’s for throwin’ down teeves an’ murderers on to.—You stay here; me not be wery long come back.”

Rais Ali hurried away, leaving the sailor to observe and moralise on all that passed around him. And there was a good deal to induce thought in one who had been accustomed to comparatively humane laws and merciful dispensations in his native land, for, besides the scene which he had just witnessed, and the huge hooks whose uses had just been explained to him, he now noticed that several conspicuous places near him were garnished with the heads of malefactors who had been recently executed. He observed, also, that the innumerable donkeys which were being constantly driven past him, overladen with market produce, were

covered with open sores, and that these sores appeared to be selected for special flagellation when the brutal drivers wished to urge the wretched creatures on.

He stood thus for some time watching with interest the throng of Turks, Jews, Moors, negroes, and others that continually streamed to and fro, some on foot, some on horseback, and others, especially the men with marketable commodities, on mules and donkeys. It was not difficult for him to distinguish between the races, for Rais Ali had already told him that none but Turks were permitted to wear the turban, not even the sons of Turks by Algerine mothers, and that the Jews were by law commanded to dress in sombre black.

Suddenly he observed a body of men advancing towards the gate, carrying something in their arms, and followed by an orderly crowd at a respectful distance. With the curiosity of an idler he approached, and found that they bore a man, who was firmly bound hand and foot. The man was a Moor, and the anxious look of his pale face showed that he was about to suffer punishment of some kind.

The seaman mingled with the crowd and looked on.

Laying the man on the ground with his face downwards, the officers of justice sent away two of their number, who speedily returned with a blacksmith’s anvil and forehammer. On this they placed one of their victim’s ankles, and Flaggan now saw, with a sickening heart, that they were about to break it with the ponderous hammer. One blow sufficed to crush the bones in pieces, and drew from the man an appalling shriek of agony. Pushing his leg farther on the anvil, the executioner broke it again at the shin, while the other officials held the yelling victim down. A third blow was then delivered on the knee, but the shriek that followed was suddenly cut short in consequence of the man having fainted. Still the callous executioner went on with his horrible task, and, breaking the leg once more at the thigh, proceeded to go through the same process with the other leg, and also with the arms. When twelve blows had thus been delivered, the writhing of the wretched victim proved that he was still alive, though his labouring chest was now incapable of giving vent to his agony in shrieks.

We would not describe such a scene as this were it not certainly true; and we relate it, reader, not for the purpose of harrowing your feelings, but for the sake of showing what diabolical deeds we men are capable of, unless guarded therefrom by the loving and tender *spirit* of Jesus Christ. We say “spirit” advisedly, for we are well aware that false professors of that blessed name have, many a time, committed deeds even more horrible

than that which we have just described.

Unable to bear the sight longer, the sailor turned and hurried away from the spot.

Fortunately he met Rais Ali just outside the crowd.

“Come, lad, come,” he cried, seizing that boastful man by the arm, in such a grasp that Rais turned pale with alarm. “I can’t stop here. Let’s git away. Sure it’s divls they must be, an’ not men!”

Blindly dragging the interpreter along by main force through several streets, Flaggan stopped suddenly at last to recover breath and to wipe the perspiration from his brow.

“Don’t ask me wot I’ve seen,” he said, to Ali’s inquiries, “I can’t a-bear to think on it. God help me! I wish I could wipe it out of me brain intirely. Come along, let’s finish our business, an’ git out o’ this cursed place.”

Proceeding rapidly and in silence towards the street at the base of the triangular town, which followed the line of ramparts that faced the sea, they discovered the great man of whom they were in search, Sidi Omar, walking up and down with the cadi, or chief judge, to whose daughter he was to be united on the following day.

“It won’t do to ’trupt ’em jus’ yit. Hold on a littil,” said Rais Ali to his companion.

Ted Flaggan had no objection to “hold on,” for the sight of the ocean with its fresh breezes cooled his brow, and tended to turn his mind away from the horrible thoughts that filled it.

While they are waiting, let you and me, reader, listen to the conclusion of the converse held between the bridegroom and father-in-law.

The cadi was a stern old Turk, with a long grey beard. The son-in-law elect was, as we have elsewhere said, an ill-favoured elderly man with only one eye. He did not look quite so happy as one would have expected in a bridegroom so near his wedding-day, but that was to be accounted for, to some extent, by the fact that he already possessed four wives, and was naturally somewhat used to weddings.

“No, no,” said he, in a cautious tone, to the judge; “it won’t do to be hasty about it, Achmet is too popular at present.”

“What has that to do with the question?” asked the cadi, in a tone of contempt. “If our party be strong enough we have only to strike; and I tell you that I believe it to be quite strong enough.”

“I know it,” returned Omar impatiently, “but I also know that my enemy, Sidi Hassan, is more than usually on the alert just now; I think it well to delay for a time. Besides,” he added, smiling, “you surely would not have me begin a revolution on the very eve of my marriage!”

“I would have you lose as little time as possible,” replied the cadi. “But see, if I mistake not, these two men are eyeing us rather narrowly.”

Seeing that they were observed, Rais Ali advanced, and, with a low salaam, delivered his message to Sidi Omar, who gave him the necessary reply, and dismissed him.

Resuming their conference, the two magnates turned to saunter along the street, when Omar observed a dark object like a dog, coiled up in an angle of the parapet. Poking it with his cane, he caused it to uncoil and display the vacant, features of a half-witted negro boy. The poor creature fell on his knees in alarm on seeing the well-known face of Sidi Omar, but sprang to his feet with alacrity, and ran off at full speed on being sternly told to “be gone.”

Meanwhile Rais Ali led his friend safely through the Bab-el-Oued gate, and, turning his face in the right direction said—

“Now, you git ’ome, fast. Keep ’er steady—a point morer to the westward —so, yoo can’t go wrong.”

Instead of obeying orders, Ted Flaggan turned, and, with an amused smile, watched the retreating figure of the interpreter. Then, after sauntering on some distance in a reverie, he stopped and gazed long and earnestly at the pirate city, whose white-washed domes and minarets gleamed in the sunshine like marble, contrasting beautifully with the bright green of the Sahel hills behind, and the intense blue of the sky and sea.

“A whited sepulchre!” muttered the seaman, with a frown, as he turned away and pushed forward at a rapid pace towards the residence of the British consul.

Chapter Nine.

Describes a Moorish Bride, a Wedding, and a Metamorphosis, besides indicating a Plot.

On the following morning Mrs Langley set out on horseback for the palace of the cadi, to attend the wedding of his daughter with Sidi Omar, and, true

to her promise, turned aside on the way to pay a visit to the imprisoned bride of Rais Ali.

She was accompanied, of course, by the remarkable bridegroom himself, and also by her husband's janissary, Sidi Hassan, as well as by her daughter Agnes, who rode a spirited Arab pony.

Immediately on entering the gate of the city, Rais and the ladies dismounted, and leaving their horses in charge of a groom, ascended on foot one of the narrow streets of the town. So steep was this street that it consisted of a flight of broad steps, which led ultimately to the casba, or citadel, at the upper part of the town. But before they had ascended it very far, the interpreter diverged into a cross street, which was much narrower. It terminated in a *cul-de-sac*, at the bottom of which stood the door of Rais Ali's town residence.

And a remarkable door it was, made of thick oaken planks, studded with enormous nails, the heads of which were as large as a half-crown. Just above it there was a square hole grated with thick iron bars, which served to enlighten the gloomy passage within.

Applying the key before mentioned to this door, Rais threw it open and bade the visitors enter.

Having carefully shut and re-locked the door, the interpreter led them through a narrow passage, which terminated in the usual square court of Moorish houses. This was very small, and, like all such courts, had no roof, so that a pleasant gleam of sunshine flickered through the creepers which twined up its pillars and gleamed on the drops that fell from a tinkling fountain in the centre.

Entering an open doorway on the right of the court, the interpreter led the way up a flight of marble steps to the second storey of the house. A small gallery, such as one sees in public libraries in England, ran round the four sides of the building over the balustrade, of which one could look down on the leafy court with its ever singing *jet d'eau*. The windows of the several private, apartments opened upon this gallery.

In the centre of one side of the square was a large open doorway, in the form of a Moorish arch, by which entrance was obtained into a little extremely ornate apartment. The dome-shaped roof of this boudoir was lighted by four little holes filled with stained-glass, and the walls were covered with beautifully painted tiles. Rich ornaments of various Eastern and fanciful kinds were strewn about, and valuable Persian rugs covered the marble floor.

On an ottoman, in the centre of all, sat Rais Ali’s bride, cross-legged, and on a cushion before her lay the cat, her only companion.

She was clothed in garments of the richest description, which glittered with gold embroidery and jewels. Seated thus, stroking the cat, and with a self-satisfied smile on her fat pretty face, she seemed the very personification of contentment. Her soft brown neck was almost hidden with rows of pearls, and long rows of the same jewels depended from the high filigree cap which towered above her head. Her dress consisted of three open jackets or short caftans, one above the other, without sleeves. These were profusely garnished with gold lace, and fastened only at the waist. White linen trousers or drawers covered her limbs to the ankles, but these were so immensely wide as to bear more resemblance to female drapery than to the masculine appendages which their name suggests. A silken, gold-striped shawl was fastened by two corners round her waist, and hung down in front like an apron. Sleeves of fine embroidered muslin and of great width covered her arms. Her little feet and ankles were bare, but the latter were ornamented with several thick gold leglets. In each ear she wore five large round ear-rings, two of these fitting into two holes in the lower, and three into the upper part of the ear. One awkward result of this was that the upper ear-rings pulled the ears down, and made them pendent like those of a poodle!

The visitors having been introduced, Madam Rais Ali received them with a good-humoured stare, but said nothing. Mrs Langley then tried to engage her in conversation, but Mrs Ali continued to stare and smile without speaking, for the good reason that she understood neither French nor English. Requesting Ali to interpret, Mrs Langley then put one or two questions. The bride turned her large dark eyes on her husband while he was speaking, and then, instead of replying, turned them on her visitors and laughed. Whereupon little Agnes, unable to control herself, also laughed; this unhinged Mrs Langley, who laughed likewise, and Rais Ali followed suit from sympathy.

After this satisfactory ebullition, Mrs Langley again essayed to induce conversation, but beyond yes, no, and a laugh, she could draw forth nothing whatever from the bride, whose mind, in regard to all things terrestrial, with the exception of household affairs, was a perfect blank. Mohammedan females are treated by their lords like babies. They receive no education worthy of the name, and are therefore apt to be childish in their ideas.

After one or two fruitless attempts, the visitors took leave of the happy bride, who was thereupon locked up again by her jealous husband, and left

to her own resources and the cat.

Returning to the place where their steeds had been left, the party re-mounted, and proceeded to the palace of the cadi.

This palace, being situated in one of the narrow lanes of the town, had a very undignified and dull exterior. Indeed, no one could have imagined it to be a palace, but for the spiral columns of marble and other rich and costly carving around the entrance. Inside, however, the aspect of things was more in keeping with the dignity of the owner.

The lady and her daughter were ushered into a little square hall, in which several guards were seated, cross-legged, on small stone seats or niches round the walls, smoking long pipes. Beyond this was the principal entrance-hall or antechamber of the palace. It was gorgeous in marble pillars, stucco designs, horse-shoe arches, and other Mooresque decorations. Here a large party of officials and friends were moving about. Beyond this, they came to the square court, which is the same in general arrangements, in all Moorish houses, though, of course, not in size or luxury of detail.

Here the cadi himself met his guests, and conducted them to the suite of chambers on the second storey, which were devoted to the ladies. At the principal entrance to these they were received by the cadi's wife, and, with much display of friendliness and affection, were conducted into the harem —that mysterious retreat which, in a Mohammedan household, is never entered by mortal man, except the lord thereof.

It was Mrs Langley's first visit to such a scene, and, although she had been prepared for something magnificent, the gorgeous nature of everything far surpassed her expectations. The rooms, indeed, were small, being, like those of all Moorish dwellings, rather long and narrow, with recesses or antechambers. Some of these latter had dome-shaped roofs, with little coloured glass skylights, such as we have already described, and were delightfully snug retreats. The walls and ceilings of all the apartments were profusely ornamented, and the hangings and furniture were of the richest material.

On a silken couch, at the farther end of one of these small apartments, sat the bride, Zara, youngest daughter of the cadi, and a lovely girl of nineteen. Poor Zara! Her history—not by any means an uncommon one in that land—goes to prove that Mohammedan women, far more than English, have need of a "Women's Rights Society."

Zara was already a widow with two beautiful children! Her first husband, to whom she had been married without her inclination being consulted,

had been strangled.

It was afterwards proved that he was innocent of the crime for which he had suffered, but that gave very little pain to the consciences of those who had strangled him, partly because their consciences were callous, and partly because they regarded the event as one of the decrees of “Fate.”

After his death it became necessary that another husband should be found for Zara. She, poor creature, would have been thankful to have remained in a state of widowed felicity; but this was not deemed proper by her wealthy relatives. Of course it was not difficult to find a suitor where a pretty girl was the hook, and a large dower the bait. Sidi Omar came forward, and all the relatives said that it was an excellent match—all save one, Zara’s eldest sister, Hanyfa.

Hanyfa was—to speak plainly—a bad girl. She was one of the wives of a great officer of state—in other words, a particularly noted pirate—named Sidi Hamet. Now, Hamet was the Aga or commander-in-chief of the cavalry. He was an ambitious man, and a rival of Sidi Omar in this respect. Of course he hated Omar, and so did his wife Hanyfa, hence her objection to him as her sister’s husband. But neither she nor Hamet could stay the marriage; they therefore made up their minds to endure it.

One thing that struck and surprised Mrs Langley was the extreme fairness of many of the Moorish ladies; some of whom were quite as fair as Europeans, and very beautiful, with much finer eyes than those of the more northern belles.

Having laid aside the shroud-like veils which Moorish ladies wear when exposed to the slightest chance of meeting the gaze of man, they now stood confessed in all the magnificence of Oriental taste. It is impossible to describe the dazzling splendour of the jewels with which their costumes absolutely blazed; especially those in the little golden caps, or salmas, which some of them wore. There were bouquets of roses, jessamine, peacock’s-feathers, and butterflies, formed of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other precious gems. We do not draw on our imagination here, good reader. It is probable that if a comparison had been instituted, these pirates could have far outshone any court of Europe in the matter of jewellery.

Of course no gentlemen were present. It is one of the drawbacks of Mohammedan female life that the ladies can never enjoy the satisfaction of displaying themselves to male admirers, with the exception of husbands, fathers, and brothers. How far the display of themselves to each other is attended with pleasure remains a doubtful point—especially when we consider that jealousy has not yet been quite eradicated from the

female human breast.

However, on the occasion of which we write, most of the assembled ladies appeared to be highly delighted with each other. They were all very merry too, and, being little better than children as regards intellectual training, they were particularly childlike in their merriment.

As the wife of the British consul was a lady of some importance just then, (the consul being high in favour with the Dey), she was received with becoming ceremony, and conducted to a seat next the bride. This seat, like the seats of Orientals in general, was simply a cushion laid on the marble floor. Seating herself with some difficulty in the Moorish fashion, she proceeded to pay some compliments to the bride in English and French, but as Zara knew neither of these languages, she shook her head, smiled, and returned some compliments in Turkish; whereupon Mrs Langley shook her head and smiled. The rest of the company, from infection probably, nodded to each other also, and smiled. Two or three pretty young and rather stout girls turned aside, and went the length of giggling.

Fortunately at this point an interpreter was brought forward in the person of an Italian slave, a good-looking middle-aged lady, who understood French, and who, during a servitude of ten years, had also acquired Turkish.

Compliments were now bandied to and fro with great volubility, without any introductory references to weather, and much notice was taken of little Agnes, whose appearance was the cause of some good-natured criticism among the Algerine belles. As the costume of these latter,—with much variety in colour and detail,—bore strong general resemblance to that of the bride of Rais Ali, it is not necessary to describe it more minutely.

Coffee and sweetmeats were now served, the former in exquisitely delicate porcelain cups, so small that they might have been easily mistaken for part of a doll’s establishment. They had neither handles nor saucers, and were prevented from burning the fingers by being inserted into what we may style egg-cups of beautiful gold and silver filigree. The coffee was too thick to suit the European palate, being ground in a fashion peculiar to the Moors. It was also too sweet.

There was present a younger sister of the bride, who had not only a tendency, but had already attained in an unusual degree, to the possession of *embonpoint* and was appropriately named Fatma. She wore the salma, a dazzling little golden cap, in token of being still unmarried. She seemed much captivated with little Agnes. No wonder, for, in the simplicity of a pure white dress, and with her fair curls streaming down her cheeks,

unadorned save by one little blush rose, she looked like an ethereal spirit dropped into the midst of the garish party.

Fatma got up suddenly and whispered to her mother.

“My little girl,” said the Moorish lady, through the interpreter, “thinks your daughter would look *so* pretty in our costume.”

“I have no doubt she would,” replied Mrs Langley, glancing with some pride at Agnes.

“She asks if you will allow her to be dressed just now in the Moorish fashion.”

“If there is sufficient time,” said Mrs Langley, with an amused smile.

“Oh, plenty of time,” cried Fatma, who immediately seized the not unwilling Agnes by the hand, and ran off with her.

Opposite to Zara sat her sister Hanyfa, who looked pretty and innocent enough just then, though Mrs Langley was struck by her look of superior intelligence, and a certain sharpness of glance which might almost have been styled suspicious.

The consul’s lady was about to address her, but was interrupted by the entrance of several dancing-women, who immediately claimed the undivided attention of the company.

One of these carried a sort of guitar, another an earthenware drum covered at one end with parchment, and a third a large tambourine, while a fourth prepared to dance.

Of the dancing we need say little. It was unworthy of the name. There was little motion of the feet, and a good deal of waving of a kerchief held in each hand. The music was still less worthy of note; its chief feature being noise. Nevertheless, the Moorish ladies, knowing no better, enjoyed it extremely, and Mrs Langley enjoyed it sympathetically. These women were professionals, the ladies themselves taking no part in the dancing.

After this the bride ascended by steps to one of the shelves or stone recesses, which formed convenient sofas or couches round the walls of the apartment, and there, seated on cushions, submitted to be arrayed in bridal apparel. None but a lady’s pen could do full justice to her stupendous toilet. We shall therefore do no more than state that the ludicrously high head-dress, in particular, was a thing of unimaginable splendour, and that her ornaments generally were so heavy as to render her incapable of walking without support.

While this was going on in the chamber of state, a very different, but not less remarkable, transformation was being wrought in Fatma's own private apartment, where she and several of her Algerine companions, assisted by a coal-black slave-girl, named Zooloo, converted innocent little Agnes into a Moor.

Of course conversation with the heroine of the hour was impossible, but this mattered, little to Agnes, for she could converse quite powerfully with her eyes, and her young friends chattered more than enough among themselves.

Standing over her with a formidable pair of scissors, and grasping her front hair with her left hand, the coal-black Zooloo said—

"Stand still, you white thing, till I perform my duty."

Of course she said it only by her looks; and Agnes quite understood her.

Next moment a whole cluster of golden ringlets fell to the ground. For one moment Agnes's eyes and mouth resembled three round O's. She felt that something telling had been done, and thoughts of her mother flashed into her mind, but Fatma's pretty little round face, with no eyes to speak of owing to laughter, caused her to smile and then to laugh heartily.

Having brushed the front hair over her forehead, and cut it straight across, the energetic Zooloo next painted her eyebrows black with a substance called kohl, causing them to meet over her nose in the most approved form of Algerine elegance. Then she dyed her nails and the palms of her hands dark-red with another substance named henna. The first of these takes about a week to remove, and the last can be got rid of only by the growth of the nail. Agnes was not aware of this, else she might have objected. They finished up the adornment of the face by sticking it all over with gold spangles.

"Now you look lovely," said Zooloo—with her eyes—stepping back and surveying her as a painter might his *chef-d'oeuvre*.

"Do I? How nice!" replied Agnes.

Then the whole party broke into a chorus of laughter, and running to a wardrobe tumbled out a mass of richly embroidered garments—in silk, satin, muslin, damask, fine linen, and gold, that would have stocked at least half a dozen European families with charading material for life.

From this heap were selected and put on a lovely pair of fair linen drawers, of that baggy kind peculiar to Algerine ladies; also an exquisite little caftan, or sleeveless jacket, of scarlet cloth, so covered with gold lace

that scarcely any of the scarlet was visible; likewise a perfect gem of a cap of gold, not bigger than Agnes's own hand, which Fatma put on in a coquettish style, very much to one side of the head; saying, (with her eyes), as she did so, and laughing heartily the while—

"You're not married yet, of course?"

To which Agnes replied, also with her eyes, innocently—

"No, not yet, but I hope to be soon." Whereupon the whole party laughed immoderately and said, each one with her eyes—

"There can't be the smallest doubt whatever upon *that* point!"

At this point they were interrupted by the entrance of Hanyfa, but that lady, far from damping their ardour, took particular pleasure in assisting. By her advice they cut off a good deal more of the flaxen hair, and deepened the dye on the eyebrows, nails, and palms. Gradually, however, Hanyfa drew the negress Zooloo from the scene of action, and entered into a very earnest conversation in whispers, quite unheeded by the riotous youngsters. There seemed to be a pretty good understanding between these unusually intelligent females, if one might judge from the nods and winks and knowing smiles which passed between them; but their confabulation was cut short by the completion of the toilet.

Many other things of rare value and beauty, which we cannot afford space to mention, were put upon Agnes, and then she was led by the hand into the presence of her mamma!

To say that Mrs Langley was dumbfounded is but a feeble way of expressing the state of her mind. Although a lady of great moral courage, and accustomed from infancy to self-control, she felt, on first beholding her timid little daughter, strongly disposed to seize Fatma by the hair of the head, and use her as a bludgeon wherewith to fell her Algerine mother; but, remembering the dignity of her position as, in some sort, a reflected representative of the British Empire in these parts, and also recalling to mind the aptitude of Algerine gentlemen to tie up in sacks and drown obstreperous Algerine ladies, she restrained herself, bit her lips, and said nothing.

Fortunately at that moment it became necessary to conduct the bride to her future lord's apartment, which, for the time, was in another part of the same mansion.

To the cry of "Lai! lai! lella!" which was meant to express great joy, and was always raised at Moorish weddings, the guests conducted poor Zara to

her “fate.”

That evening Hanyfa sat at the feet of her lord, Sidi Hamet, and watched the curls of smoke which, arising from the bowl of his magnificent hookah, rolled like cannon-wreaths from beneath his frowning and no less magnificent moustache.

“Zooloo is a smart girl,” said Hamet, referring to something that had just been said.

“She is,” assented Hanyfa.

“You are sure she cannot have misunderstood?” asked Hamet.

“Quite sure. Dressed as a boy, she lay close to their feet at the time in an angle of the wall near the Djama Djedid, and overheard every word distinctly.”

“Good,” said the Aga of cavalry, venting a sigh of relief, which propelled a miniature gunshot half-way across the room; “that enables me to decide the course which I shall pursue, and gives us a little breathing-time before entering on the final act of the play.”

Chapter Ten.

Shows what Lessons were taught in the Bagnio, and describes a Brave Dash for Freedom.

Bacri, the chief of the Jews, proved as good as his word.

By means of a golden lever he moved some one, who moved some one else, who moved the Dey to make certain inquiries about the slaves in the Bagnio, which resulted in his making the discovery that Lucien Rimini was a first-rate linguist and an excellent scribe.

Immediately he was commanded to fill the office of scrivano to the Dey—that post being vacant in consequence of the previous secretary having given his master some offence, for which he had had his head cut off.

But Lucien’s elevation did not necessarily improve the condition of his father and brother. The Dey cared only for those slaves who made themselves useful to him; their relations he utterly ignored, unless they succeeded in gaining his regard. The Sicilians had too much common-sense to expect any great immediate advantage from the change,

nevertheless, the slight hope which had been aroused by this event enabled the two who were left in the Bagnio to endure their lot with greater fortitude and resignation. As for Lucien, he resolved to win the Dey's esteem in order to be able to influence him in favour of his father and brother.

"We must learn to submit, my son," said Francisco, one evening, while he and Mariano were finishing the last crumbs of the black bread which constituted their morning and evening meals.

"I admit it, father," said Mariano, with a long-drawn sigh. "Bacri was right; but it's not easy to bear. For myself, I think I could stand their insults and their lash better if they would only spare you, but when I see the villains strike you as they did to-day—oh, father!"—Mariano flushed and clenched his hands—"it makes me so wild that I feel as though the blood would burst my veins. You cannot wonder that I find it impossible to submit."

"God bless you, boy," said Francisco, laying his hand on the youth's shoulder; "I understand your feelings—nevertheless it were well that you learned to restrain them, for rebellion only works evil. You saw what was the consequence of your attacking the man who struck me to-day—you got knocked down and bastinadoed, and I—"

Francisco paused.

"Yes, go on, father, I know what you mean."

"Well, I would not hurt your feelings by mentioning it—as you say, you know what I mean."

"You mean," said Mariano, "that in consequence of my violence they gave you an additional flogging. True, father, true; and *that* is the one thing that will now enable me to suffer in silence."

At this point in the conversation they were interrupted by a deep groan from a young man in the cell opposite, which was prolonged into an appalling cry.

Most of the slaves in the foul den had finished their meagre meal and lain down on the hard floors to seek, in heavy slumber, the repose which was essential to fit them for the toils of the coming day.

Some of them awoke and raised themselves on their elbows, but sank back again on seeing that nothing particular had occurred. A few who had been rendered callous by their sufferings did not take the trouble to move, but Francisco and Mariano rose and hastened to the man, supposing him to

have fallen into a fit. Mariano moved with difficulty owing to the chains, upwards of sixty pounds weight, which he wore as a punishment for his recent violence.

“Go—go back to your rest,” said the man, who lay with clenched teeth and hands, as Francisco kneeled beside him, “there is nothing the matter with me.”

“Nay, friend, you are mistaken,” said Francisco, taking his hand kindly; “your look, and that perspiration on your brow, tell me that something is the matter with you. Let me call our jailer, and—”

“Call our jailer!” exclaimed the young man, with a fierce laugh; “d’you think that he’d take any notice of a sick slave? No, when we get sick we are driven out to work till we get well. If we don’t get well, we are left to die.”

“Surely, surely not!” said Francisco.

“Surely not!” repeated the young man. “Look; look there!”

He pointed as he spoke to the old man who lay on his back at full length in the recess next to his own.

“See. He is a free man now! I knew he was to be released to-night. I have seen many and many a one set free thus since I came here.”

Francisco was horrified, on going to the place where the old man lay, to find that he was dead. He had observed him tottering and looking very feeble at his work in the stone-quarries that day, but in his own misery had forgotten him since returning to the Bagnio.

“Too true!” he said, returning to the young man; “his troubles are indeed ended; but tell me what is it that ails thyself.”

“’Tis memory,” said the young man, raising himself on his elbow, and gazing sadly into Francisco’s face. “Your conversation to-night for a moment aroused memories which I have long sought to stifle.—Lad,” he said, laying a hand impressively on Mariano’s arm, “take the advice that Bacri gave you. I was once as you are. I came here—years ago—with a father like thine; but he was an older and a feebler man. Like you, I fought against our fate with the ferocity of a wild beast, and they tortured me until my life hung by a thread, for I could not endure to see the old man beaten. As you said just now, ‘you cannot wonder that I found it impossible to submit,’ but they taught me to submit. Oh! they are clever devils in their cruelty. They saw that I cared not for my life, but they also saw that I suffered through my father, and at last when *I* became rebellious

they beat *him*. *That* tamed me, and taught me submission. The old one who lies there was a friend and comrade in sorrow of the dear father who was set free a year ago. I lay thinking of them both to-night, and when I saw you two taking the first steps on the weary path which I have trod so long—and have now, methinks, well-nigh finished—I could not restrain myself. But go—get all the rest you can. We cannot afford to waste the hours in talk. Only be sure, lad, that you take the Jew's advice—submit."

Without replying, the father and son crept back to their hard couch. Had they been in more comfortable circumstances their thoughts might have caused them to toss in feverish restlessness, but sheer muscular exhaustion, acting on healthy frames, caused them to fall at once into a deep slumber, from which they were rudely aroused next morning at four o'clock to proceed to the Marina, where they were to be engaged that day on certain repairs connected with the bulwarks of the harbour.

On the way down they were joined by an old man in a semi-clerical costume, whose gentle demeanour appeared to modify even the cruel nature of their savage guards, for they ceased to crack their whips at his approach, and treated him with marked respect.

Some of the slaves appeared to brighten into new creatures on beholding him, and spoke to him in earnest tones, addressing him as Padre Giovanni.

The padre had a consoling word for all, and appeared to be well acquainted with the various languages in which they spoke.

Approaching Francisco and his son he walked beside them.

"Thou hast arrived but recently, methinks?" he said in a tone of commiseration, "and hast suffered much already."

"Ay, we have suffered somewhat," replied Francisco in an off-hand tone, not feeling much inclined to be communicative just then.

In a few minutes, however, Giovanni had ingratiated himself with the Sicilians to such an extent that they had related all their sad history to him, and already began to feel as if he were an old friend, before they had traversed the half-mile that lay between their nightly prison and the harbour.

Arrived at their place of toil—the artificial neck connecting the little light-house island with the mainland,—Mariano was ordered to convey large masses of stone for the supply of a gang of slaves who were building a new face to the breakwater, while his father was harnessed, with another gang, to the cart that conveyed the stones to their destination along a

temporary tramway.

The severity of the labour consisted chiefly in the intense heat under which it was performed, and in the unremitting nature of it. It must not be imagined, however, that there was not a single touch of humanity in the breasts of the cruel slave-drivers. Hard task-masters though they undoubtedly were, some of them were wont to turn aside and look another way when any of the poor slaves sat down for a few minutes, overcome with exhaustion.

There was little opportunity allowed, however, for intercourse among the unfortunates. One or two who, judging from their faces, showed sympathetic leanings towards each other, were immediately observed and separated. This had the effect of hardening some, while it drove others to despair.

One of those whose spirit seemed to vacillate between despair and ferocity was the young man already referred to as being an inhabitant of Francisco's part of the Bagnio. He was a Portuguese, named Castello. In carrying the stones to and fro, he and Mariano had to pass each other regularly every three or four minutes. The latter observed, after a time, that Castello glanced at him with peculiar intelligence. At first he was puzzled, but on next passing him he determined to give him a similar look. He did so. Next time that Castello passed he said, in a low tone, without looking up, and without in the least checking his pace—

"Better to die than this!"

Mariano was taken by surprise, and at first made no reply, for he recalled the man's advice of the previous night, but, on passing the Portuguese again, he said, in the same low tone—

"Yes, much better!"

Curious to know what was meant by this—for the tones and glances of Castello were emphatic—Mariano kept on the alert as he repassed his comrade, expecting more. He was not disappointed, though the nature of the communication tended to increase his surprise.

"Fall and hurt yourself," whispered Castello, and passed on.

Much perplexed, Mariano tried to conceive some reason for such a strange order, but failed. He was, however, one of those rare spirits who have the capacity, in certain circumstances, to sink themselves—not blindly, but intelligently—and place implicit confidence in others. Hastily reviewing the *pros* and *cons* while laying his stone on the breakwater, and feeling

assured that no great harm could possibly come of compliance, he gave a nod to his comrade in passing.

“I want to speak to you,” muttered Castello briefly.

At once the reason flashed on Mariano’s mind. The delay consequent on the fall would afford opportunity for a few more sentences than it was possible to utter in passing.

On returning, therefore, with a huge stone on his shoulder, just as he passed his friend he fell with an admirable crash, and lay stunned on the ground.

Castello instantly kneeled by his side and raised his head.

“Ten of us,” he said quickly, “intend to make a dash for the Bab-el-Oued gate on the way back to-night: join us. It’s neck or nothing.”

“I will, if my father agrees,” said Mariano, still lying with closed eyes—unconscious!

“If he does, pull your hat on one side of your head as you—” A tremendous lash from a whip cut short the sentence, and caused Castello to spring up. “Rise, you dog!” cried the Turk who had bestowed it; “are Christians so delicate that they need to be nursed for every fall?”

Castello hurried back to his work without a word of reply, and Mariano, opportunely recovering, with a view to avoid a similar cut, staggered on with his stone; but the Turk quickened his movements by a sharp flip on the shoulder, which cut a hole in his shirt, and left a bright mark on his skin.

For one moment the gush of the old fierce spirit almost overcame the poor youth, but sudden reflection and certain tender sensations about the soles of his feet came to his aid, in time to prevent a catastrophe.

When the slaves were collecting together that evening on the breakwater, Mariano managed to get alongside of his father, who at first was very unwilling to run the risk proposed.

“It’s not that I’m afraid o’ my neck, lad,” said the bluff merchant, “but I fear there is no chance for us, and they might visit their wrath on poor Lucien.”

“No fear, father; I am convinced that the Dey has already found out his value. Besides, if we escape we shall be able to raise funds to ransom him.”

Francisco shook his head.

“And what,” said he, “are we to do when we get clear out of the Bab-el-Oued gate, supposing we are so far lucky?”

“Scatter, and make for the head of Frais Vallon,” whispered Castello as he passed. “A boat waits at Barbarossa’s Tower. Our signal is—”

Here the Portuguese gave a peculiar whistle, which was too low to be heard by the guards, who were busy marshalling the gang.

“You’ll agree, father?” urged Mariano, entreatingly.

The merchant replied by a stern “Yes” as the gang was ordered to move on.

Mariano instantly gave his straw hat a tremendous pull to one side, and walked along with a glow of enthusiasm in his countenance. One of the guards, noting this, stepped forward and walked beside him.

“So much the better,” thought Mariano; “there will be no time lost when we grapple.”

Traversing the passages of the mole, the gang passed into the town, and commenced to thread those narrow streets which, to the present day, spread in a labyrinth between the port and Bab-el-Oued.

As they passed through one of those streets which, being less frequented than most of the others, was unusually quiet, a low hiss was heard.

At the moment Mariano chanced to be passing an open doorway which led, by a flight of stairs, into a dark cellar. Without an instant’s hesitation he tripped up his guard and hurled him headlong into the cellar, where, to judge from the sounds, he fell among crockery and tin pans. At the same moment, Francisco hit a guard beside him such a blow on the chest with his fist, as laid him quite helpless on the ground.

The other ten, who had been selected and let into the intended plot by Castello on account of their superior physical powers, succeeded in knocking down the guards in their immediate neighbourhood, and then all of them dashed with headlong speed along the winding street.

There were one or two passengers and a few small shops in the street, but the thing had been done so suddenly and with so little noise, that the passengers and owners of the shops were not aware of what had occurred until they beheld the twelve captives rush past them like a torrent—each seizing, as he passed, a broom-handle, or any piece of timber that might form a handy weapon.

Of course the other guards, and such of the maltreated ones as retained consciousness, shouted loudly, but they did not dare to give chase, lest the other slaves should take it into their heads to follow their comrades. Poor creatures! most of them were incapable of making such an effort, and the few who might have joined had they known of the plot, saw that it was too late, and remained still.

Thus it happened that the fugitives reached the northern gate of the city before the alarm had been conveyed thither.

The sun had just set, and the warders were about to close the gates for the night, when the desperadoes, bursting suddenly round the corner of a neighbouring lane, bounded in perfect silence through the archway.

The sentinel on duty was for a few moments bereft of the power of action. Recovering himself, he discharged his musket, and gave the alarm. The whole guard turned out at once and gave chase, but the few moments lost by them had been well used by the fugitives; besides, Despair, Terror, and Hope are powerful stimulators. After running a short time together up the steep ascent of the Frais Vallon, or Fresh Valley, they scattered, according to arrangement, and each man shifted for himself—with the single exception of Mariano, who would not leave his father.

Seeing this, the Turks also scattered, but in this condition they began to waver—all the more that the short twilight of those regions was rapidly deepening into night. They reflected that the guarding of their gate was a prior duty to the hunting down of runaway slaves, and, one by one, dropped off, each supposing that the others would, no doubt, go on, so that the officer of the guard soon found himself alone with only one of his men.

Having observed that two of the fugitives kept together, these Turks resolved to keep them in view. This was not difficult, for they were both young and active, while Francisco was middle-aged and rather heavy.

“Stay a moment, boy,” cried the bluff padrone, as they tolled up the rather steep ascent of the valley.

Mariano stopped.

“Come on, father; they are overhauling us.”

“I know it, boy,” said Francisco, taking Mariano by the shoulders and kissing his forehead. “Go thou; run! It is all over with me. God bless thee, my son.”

“Father,” said the youth impressively, grasping a mass of timber which he

had wrenched from a shop front in passing, “if you love me, keep moving on, I will stop these two, or—Farewell!”

Without waiting for a reply, the youth rushed impetuously down the hill, and was soon engaged in combat with the two Turks.

“Foolish boy!” muttered Francisco, hastening after him.

Mariano made short work of the soldier, hitting him such a blow on the turban that he fell as if he had been struck by a sledge-hammer. Unfortunately the blow also split up the piece of timber, and broke it short off at his hands. He was therefore at the mercy of the young officer, who, seeing the approach of Francisco, rushed swiftly at his foe, whirling a keen scimitar over his head.

Mariano’s great activity enabled him to avoid the first cut, and he was about to make a desperate attempt to close, when a large stone whizzed past his ear and hit his adversary full on the chest, sending him over on his back.

“Well aimed, father!” exclaimed Mariano, as the two turned and continued the ascent of the valley.

At its head Frais Vallon narrows into a rugged gorge, and is finally lost in the summit of the hills lying to the northward of Algiers. Here the panting pair arrived in half-an-hour, and here they found that all their comrades had arrived before them.

“Friends,” said Castello, who was tacitly regarded as the leader of the party, “we have got thus far in safety, thank God! We must now make haste to Pointe Pescade. It lies about three or four miles along the shore. There a negro friend of mine has a boat in readiness. He told me of it only an hour before I spoke to you to-night. If we reach it and get off to sea, we may escape; if not, we can but die! Follow me.”

Without waiting for a reply, Castello ran swiftly along a foot-path that crossed over the hills, and soon led his party down towards that wild and rocky part of the coast on which stand the ruins of a fort, said to have been the stronghold of the famous pirate Barbarossa in days of old.

Chapter Eleven.

Is Diplomatic and Otherwise.

Just after the escape of the slaves, as already narrated, the British consul demanded a private audience of the Dey. His request was granted, and one morning early he set off on horseback to the city. Arriving there too soon, he put up his horse, and, threading his way through the streets of the old town, soon found himself in front of the small and unpretending, though massive, portal of Bacri the Jew.

He found the master of the house seated in the central court, or skiffa, drinking coffee with his wife and children.

“Bacri,” said the Colonel, “may I venture to interrupt your present agreeable occupation? I wish to have a talk with you in private.”

“With pleasure,” replied the Jew, rising and ushering his visitor into a small apartment, the peculiar arrangement and contents of which betokened it the wealthy merchant’s study or office,—indeed, it might have been styled either with equal propriety, for Bacri, besides being an able man of business, was learned in Arabic literature—of which the town possessed, and still possesses, a valuable library,—and was a diligent student of the Hebrew Scriptures.

“You are aware,” said the Colonel, “that I am, at your request, about to use my influence with the Dey in behalf of certain friends of yours. Now, there is an old saying—and I have great respect for many old sayings,—that ‘one good turn deserves another.’ May I, then, ask you to do me a favour?”

“Certainly,” said the Jew. “Name it.”

“You must know, then, that the Dey has been pleased to send me a pretty Portuguese girl as a slave, along with her infant child.”

“I know it,” said Bacri.

“You do? Well, this poor girl turns out to be a very sweet creature, and my wife, although somewhat annoyed at first by the unexpected gift, and puzzled what to do with her, is now so fond of her, and finds her so gentle as well as useful, that she has set her heart on having Paulina Ruffini—that is her name—freed and sent home. This, however, is not the point. Paulina has a sister named—”

“Angela Diego,” interrupted the Jew.

“Oh! you know that too?” said the Colonel, with some surprise. “You seem to know everything that goes on in this curious city! Indeed, it is a belief in this general knowledge of yours that brings me here. Well, poor Paulina is naturally in great anxiety about her sister’s fate, not having heard of her since the day they were cruelly separated by Sidi Hassan. The

latter is now my janissary, and tells me that he sold Angela to a Jew in the public market, and does not know where she is. Believing that you can find this out for me, I have come hither this morning on my way to the palace. Do you think you can?”

“I think I can,” said the Jew, opening a door and beckoning to some one without. “Come hither, Angela. A gentleman wishes to see you.”

“What! is this Paulina’s sister?” said the consul in surprise, as a pretty bright-eyed girl obeyed the summons.

“Speak, fair one,” said the Jew. “Dost know of one Paulina Ruffini, and her infant Angelina?”

We need scarcely add that Angela admitted, with a look of surprise, that she did, and was overwhelmed with joy on finding that her sister was a happy inmate of the consul’s villa, and that in a short time she would be permitted to see her.

Leaving the Jew’s house, well satisfied with his unlooked-for success in this matter, the consul proceeded to the palace, and was at once admitted into the audience-chamber.

According to custom, the Dey was seated on a sort of throne, with the huge lion-pup serving as a footstool. We have said before that this lion had a decided antipathy to the British consul. Not being able to speak, it could not give the reason why! Perhaps, although unable to speak, it might have been able to understand what was said, and, possibly, had taken offence at the straightforward manner in which the consul had more than once remonstrated with the Dey for allowing so old a pup to be at large. Be this as it may, certain it is that, on the present occasion, the lion raised its head when the consul was announced. On seeing his hated scarlet uniform, it uttered a savage growl, sprang up, and ran out of the room by another door, with its tail between its legs. In springing up, the brute had forgotten its temporary character of footstool. The result was that the Dey was tilted violently backwards, and fell off his throne in a confused and most undignified heap!

Fortunately for the lion—perchance also for the consul—Achmet possessed too much native dignity and common-sense to allow such an accident to ruffle his temper. He rose and resumed his seat with a hearty laugh, as he said—

“You see, Monsieur le Consul, that even lions are afraid of the English uniform!”

“Your highness is pleased to be complimentary,” replied the consul, with a bow; “and that emboldens me to observe that a Dey should not retain the services of one who is capable of showing fear.”

“Perhaps you are right,” returned Achmet, with a smile; “especially one who has had the audacity to dethrone me.—And now, what demand have you to make of me to-day? Not, I trust, that old one—the liberation of slaves!”

“No, not exactly that,” replied the consul. “Nevertheless,” he added earnestly, “I do come to make an appeal in behalf of slaves.”

The Dey’s countenance became grave.

“I refer,” continued the consul, “to those unfortunate slaves who recently attempted to escape, and are now lying in chains condemned to be bastinadoed, thrown on the hooks, and otherwise tortured to death.”

“How!” exclaimed the Dey, frowning darkly, while a flush of anger covered his face, “can you plead for slaves who have not only rebelled and fled, but who have disabled two of my janissaries, and some of whom—especially their leader Castello and the young Sicilian Mariano—are so turbulent as to be an absolute nuisance to their guards?”

“Your highness is aware,” answered the consul respectfully, “that British ideas in regard to slavery and all connected with it are widely different from those entertained by Algerines, and I do not presume to pass an opinion on the sentences pronounced on men who are held guilty of having violated your laws. I merely plead that you will extend to them the royal prerogative of mercy—especially to two of their number, Francisco and Mariano.”

“On what ground do you ask mercy for these?” demanded Achmet sternly.

“On the ground that courageous and worthy men, although tempted to rebel in order to regain their liberty, are not deserving of death; that the Portuguese girl your Highness was so generous as to send me, and who was captured along with them, has interested me deeply in their history, and also on the ground that one is the father and the other the brother of your scrivano Lucien Rimini.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed the Dey in surprise, “Lucien never told me that, although his own hand made out the order for their execution!”

“That,” answered the consul, with a smile, “is because I advised him to leave the pleading of their cause to me.”

“Believing, no doubt,” returned the Dey, with a laugh, “that your powers of persuasion are superior to his. Well, Monsieur le Consul, you may be right; nevertheless, let me tell you that short though the time be in which Lucien has been my scrivano, there is that in his modest air and ready will, as well as his talent, which constitutes a sufficient plea to induce me to pardon his relations.”

“It rejoices me,” said the consul, “to find that, as I expected, your highness’s—”

“Yes, yes; say no more on that head,” interrupted the Dey. “Here! Lucien,” he added, calling aloud to his secretary, who, clad in superb Oriental costume, appeared at the door which led into his office, “make out an order to cancel the sentence against your father and brother, and let them be sent to the palace immediately. I will speak with thee again on the matter.—Meanwhile, will Monsieur le Consul come and behold the present which I am preparing for my royal master the Sublime Porte?”

There was a touch of sarcasm in the tone in which he used the words “royal master,” which the consul understood well enough, for he was aware that although nominally subject to Turkey, Algiers was to all intents and purposes an independent power, and that the present referred to was almost all the benefit derived by the Sultan from his piratical vassal.

It was costly enough, no doubt, viewed simply in the light of a gift, and afforded a subject of great interest to the consul when permitted to survey it—an honour, by the way, which the Dey would not have conferred on the consul of any of the other nations represented at the Algerine court, for the British consul at that time was, as we have said, a special favourite. It consisted of two magnificent milk-white Arab horses, richly caparisoned; their saddles and bridles being profusely ornamented with diamonds and other gems, and their shoes being made of pure gold; several boxes of rare and costly jewels; six women-slaves with skins of the most beautiful ebony tint; a number of black-maned lions, several parrots, and a few monkeys.

“Your highness is resolved to please the Sultan by means of variety,” observed the consul, with a smile, after commenting on the gift in detail.

“That,” replied Achmet, “would have little power to please if the jewels were not numerous and costly. But happily our treasury can afford it, although we have not been very successful in war of late.”

He looked at the consul with a sly smile as he spoke, but the latter deemed it wise to be lost in admiration of some of the jewels in question.

After examining the “present,” the consul retired, and Achmet went to his private apartments to enjoy a cup of coffee and a pipe.

The room in which he sat was similar to that already described as being the reception-room of the bridal party, only the decorations were if possible more elaborate and sumptuous. Here, seated on rich cushions, with, not his most beautiful, but his wisest wife beside him, Achmet—once a petty officer of janissaries—gave himself up to the enjoyment of the hour. Christian slaves—once the happy butterflies of European and other lands—attended on him, filled his pipe, brought him hot coffee, and watched his every movement. They were richly dressed, more richly and gaily, perchance, than they had ever been in the days of freedom, when they had been wont to chat and laugh with careless hilarity. But they were mute enough now. A few of them had tasted the bastinado and been tamed; most of them had been wise enough to tame themselves. If Shakespeare had been a Turk he would probably have written a very different version of the Taming of the Shrew!

When coffee was finished, the Dey ordered the attendants to withdraw, and then settling himself comfortably on the cushions, and puffing two white streams of smoke slowly through his nose, in order to gather the fullest enjoyment therefrom, he thus addressed himself to his better-proportion—we had almost said “half,” but forgot for the moment that there were several Sultanas!

“Ashweesha, thou art a wise woman. I might almost style thee my guardian angel, for not only hast thou often guided me on the right road, but sometimes thou hast prevented me from straying into the wrong.”

Ashweesha, who was a sweet and passably good-looking woman of about thirty, raised her large dark eyes to the face of Achmet with a look of gratitude, but did not reply. Indeed, her husband did not seem to expect an answer, for he continued to smoke for some time in silence, with his eyes fixed abstractedly on a tame gazelle—the kitten of the harem—which tried to attract his attention.

“Thou art sad, or anxious, to-night,” said Ashweesha, at length breaking silence.

“Both sad and anxious,” replied the Dey slowly. “My position is indeed one of power, but not of comfort or safety.”

A shade rested for a moment like a flitting cloud on the face of Ashweesha. Gladly would she have exchanged her high estate, with all its costly and gorgeous array, for a life of humble toil accompanied with peace and security—for she was of gentle nature—but this was denied her.

“Listen,” said the Dey, laying aside his pipe and talking earnestly; “it may well chance, as it has happened before, that thy counsel may lighten my care. I am sad because two of my chief officers are snakes in the grass. They are venomous too, and their bite will prove deadly if it be not avoided. Canst thou guess their names, Ashweesha?”

“Sidi Omar and Sidi Hassan,” said Ashweesha.

Achmet looked surprised.

“Thou art partly right, though I did not expect thy swift reply. Is it a guess, or hast thou obtained information?”

“I have heard of it from one who is our friend.”

“Indeed. Well, thou art right as to Omar, and it is that which makes me sad. Thou art right also in regard to Sidi Hassan, but I care little for him. He is but a tool in the hands of one whose power is great—Hamet, our Aga of cavalry. Omar I had hoped better things of; but fear him not. The Aga, however, is a dangerous foe, and unscrupulous. I do not clearly see my way to guard against his wiles. My chief safeguard is that he and Omar are bitter enemies. I know not what to do.”

“The bow-string,” suggested Ashweesha.

The reader must not think this suggestion inconsistent with the character of one whom we have described as gentle and sweet. The Sultana had been trained in a peculiar school, and was as much accustomed to hear of disagreeable and troublesome people being strangled as Europeans are to the drowning of inconvenient kittens.

The Dey laughed.

“Alas! my gentle one,” he said, “all powerful and despotic though I be, there are a few officers around me whom I dare not get rid of in this way—at least not just now. But it amuses me to hear thee recommend such strong measures, thou who art always on the side of mercy.”

“Truly,” said Ashweesha, with a flash in her dark eyes that proved the presence of other elements besides sweetness in her disposition, “my leanings are always towards mercy, save when you have to deal with those who possess no mercy. If you do not apply the bow-string to Hamet in good time, rest assured that he will apply it to you.”

The Dey became more serious at this, yet still smiled as he gazed in the flushed countenance of his spouse and adviser.

“Thou art right, Ashweesha,” said he, in a meditative tone, “and it is for

the purpose of finding out, if possible, when it is the right time to strike that I now take counsel with thee. What wouldst thou advise?”

“Sidi Hassan, you say, has been sent to be the British consul’s janissary?”

“Yes.”

“For what purpose?” asked the Sultana.

“Partly to keep him out of the way of the mischief which is always brewing more or less in this warlike city; partly to flatter his vanity by placing him in the service of one for whom he knows that I entertain great respect, personally, as well as on account of the powerful nation which he represents; and partly to remind him gently of my power to order him on any service that I please, and to cut off his insolent head if so disposed.”

“That is so far well,” said Ashweesha, letting her delicate henna-stained fingers play idly with the gorgeous pearls which fell like a lustrous fountain from her neck, “but it is possible that he may reflect on the propriety of trying to secure, at no distant date, a master who will reward him more liberally without conveying covert threats. But much good,” she hastened to add, observing that her lord did not much relish her last remark, “much good may result from his being placed under the British consul’s roof; for the consul’s wife is a wise woman, and may help us to discover some of his plots; for plotting he is certain to be, whether in the city or out of it, and you may be sure that a clever woman like Madame Langley will have her eyes open to all that goes on in her own palace.”

“Nay, then, Ashweesha,” returned the Dey, laughing, “thou hast studied the lady to small profit if thou dost believe her capable of acting the part of a spy on her own domestics.”

“And thou hast studied thy wife to small profit,” retorted Ashweesha playfully, “if you think I could make such a mistake as to ask her to become a spy. Does not all the city know that Madame Langley has over and over again refused the most costly bribes offered to induce her to use her influence with her husband? and is it not also well-known that if her influence is to be gained at all, it must be by touching her heart? She is so open, too, in her conduct, that her domestics know all she does. Did I not tell you, the other night, how the chief from Marocco offered her a splendid diamond ring to induce her to intreat her husband’s favour in something—I know not what,—and how she flushed with indignation as she refused it, and told the chief that all the diamonds in the world could not move her to attempt the leading of her husband from the path of duty? No, I will not ask her to become a spy, but I will lead her, in conversation, to tell me all she knows, or at least is willing to communicate, about Sidi

Hassan; and perchance some good may come of it."

"It may be so," said the Dey; "and where and when dost thou propose to meet with her?"

"Here, and to-morrow."

"How! in the palace?"

"Yes. Ask her and her little girl to come and dine with me," said Ashweesha.

"That would be a high compliment," returned the Dey dubiously; "such as has never been paid before, methinks, by a Dey of Algiers to any consul's wife."

"No matter," returned the Sultana; "you have a high regard for Colonel Langley, and have often paid him unusual compliments,—why not compliment his wife?"

"Well, it shall be done. To-morrow afternoon prepare to receive her."

Chapter Twelve.

Mrs Langley and Agnes go out to Dinner.

An agreeable surprise is something like sunshine in November; it warms up the constitution, mentally and physically.

Such a surprise did Mrs Langley receive the morning that followed the evening on which Achmet Dey and his Sultana held their private conversation on the affairs of state. "Agnes!" she exclaimed, reading a note with elevated eyebrows, "just fancy! here is an invitation for you and me to dine with the Dey's wife or wives!"

"Oh! *won't* that be delightful?" cried Agnes, coming from the court into the room where her mother sat, with such a bound, that she filled with sympathetic excitement the heart of the small negro girl from beyond the Zahara, and caused her to rock the cradle too violently.

"There, you've bumped it again; I knew you would!" said Mrs Langley, in tones of despair.

Poor Zubby's first awful glance of mingled deprecation and self-reproach was so touching that no one but a hardened monster could have withstood it; but the look, with the feelings which it implied, was short-lived. It

passed like a summer cloud, and was replaced by an expression of supreme contentment and self-satisfaction when it became apparent that Master Jim was *not* going to awake, and that Mrs Langley's despair was vanishing. Indeed, that lady's despair was at all times remarkably short-lived. She had been trained in a school of dire adversity ever since the arrival of the coal-black one from beyond the Zahara, and had learned to hope against hope in an extraordinary degree in a case which was absolutely hopeless, for, whatever others might think or hope, Zubby knew herself to be incurable! Not that she was unwilling; on the contrary, there never was a more obliging or amiable creature among the sable daughters of Ham, but she had a tendency to forget herself, (as well as her charge), in moments of sudden emotion or delight, and gave way to burstlets of action, which, if slight, were always inopportune, and sometimes, though not often, disastrous.

"We must get ready immediately," continued Mrs Langley, with a cautioning shake of the head at Zubby, as she turned to Agnes; "because, you know, we may as well take the opportunity to do a little shopping before dinner."

"What! 'shopping' in the pirate city?" we hear you exclaim, reader.

Yes, there *was* shopping there in those days, though it did not bear much resemblance to shopping in more civilised lands. There were no wide fronts or plate-glass windows in those days. Indeed, then, as now, a shop in the Moorish town might be fitly described as a hole in the wall. It was, as it were, a deep window without an interior to speak of. A square hole, six feet by six, and from four to ten feet deep, without glazing or protection of any kind from the weather, except, in some cases, an awning, was a fair average shop; one of eight feet frontage was rather a "grand shop," and one of twelve feet was quite a "bazaar."

Of course such shops were stuffed, like eggs, to an excess of fulness. They gave one the impression that the goods had been packed into smaller space than was possible, and that the introduction of another pin would infallibly explode the whole affair. A passage among the goods in each shop, just big enough to admit an ordinary man, was the scene of action in which the owner disported. This passage did not begin at the street: so much valuable space could not be afforded. A counter laden with small wares had to be leapt in order to gain it, and a rope depending from the ceiling rendered possible the acrobatic feat which was necessary to do so. Purchasers had to stand in the streets and transact business, the said streets being so narrow that there was no room for lobbies or paved foot-paths. While engaged in traffic, buyers were compelled more or less to block the

way, and had their garments scraped successively by Turks and Moors and veiled Mohammedan females, by Cabyles from the mountains, negroes from Timbuctoo, white slaves from almost every country in Europe, and donkeys of the most debased and abject type,—these latter, by the way, being quite as capable as the human—though not humane—beings who drove them of going up and down stairs. No slope short of a perpendicular dead wall appeared to be able to stop them, and no wonder, poor wretches! for no torture short of total destruction was spared them.

Ah! ye members of the “Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals” in Algiers, forgive us if we interject here the observation that there is earnest need for your activities at the present day!

Followed by the faithful though uncontrollable Zubby, with a huge triangular grass basket, Mrs Langley entered the tortuous streets of the city, and proceeded to “shop.”

Fear not, reader! It is not our purpose to drag you through the details of the too well-known process. We pass onward to matters more important.

Having traversed several streets in which Moors sat cross-legged, embroidering purses and slippers with gold, in holes in the wall so small that a good-sized bust might have objected to occupy them; where cobblers, in similar niches, made and repaired round-toed shoes of morocco leather, and the makers of horn rings for fingers, wrists, arms and ankles wrought as deftly with their toes as with their fingers; where working silversmiths plied their trade in precious metals and gems in a free-and-easy open-air fashion that would have made the mouth of a London thief water; and where idle Arabs sipped coffee and smoked the live-long day, as though coffee and tobacco were the aim and end of life—which latter they proved indeed to many of them,—Mrs Langley with Agnes, followed by Zubby, paused before a niche in which were displayed for sale a variety of curious old trinkets of a nondescript and utterly useless character. In short, it appeared to be an Algerine curiosity-shop. Here, while bargaining with the owner for some small articles, she was surprised to hear a voice at her ear say in French—

“Madame, good morning; I have great pleasure in this unexpected meeting.”

She turned hastily, and found the Danish consul standing by her side.

“Ah, monsieur,” she said, returning his salutation, “it is indeed seldom that I wander alone through this labyrinth, but necessity compels me. An English friend wishes me to send her a few characteristic articles, and I can trust no one to choose them for me. But, you look anxious.”

“Yes, excuse me,” replied the Danish consul in haste, glancing round. “I am followed, persecuted I may say. I had intended to call for your husband to-day to beg him to use his influence with the Dey in my behalf, but I cannot—circumstances—in short, will you kindly mention to him that I am in trouble because of the non-payment of the tribute due by our Government, and—”

Breaking off suddenly, the Danish consul bowed low and hurried away. Mrs Langley observed that, immediately after, a chaouse, or executioner of the palace, passed her.

This incident induced her to conclude her shopping rather quickly, and furnished her with food for thought which entirely engrossed her mind until Agnes exclaimed—

“Oh mamma, look! look! they’re going to shave a little boy!”

Mrs Langley, directed by Agnes’s finger, looked and found that this was indeed true. A little boy, between eight and nine years of age, was seated in a barber’s shop near them, with a towel about his neck, glancing timidly, yet confidently, in the face of an elderly man who advanced towards him with an open razor, as though about to cut his throat. As it turned out, however, neither throat nor chin were in danger of violation. It was the head that the barber attacked, and this he scraped quite bare, without the aid of soap, leaving only a tuft of hair on the top. This tuft, we have been informed, is meant as a handle by means of which the owner may, after death, be dragged up into heaven! but we rather incline to the belief that it is left for the purpose of keeping the red fez or skull-cap on the head.

Be this as it may, no sooner did the urchin behold Mrs Langley, than, casting aside the towel and ignoring the barber, he rushed out and exclaimed—in a compound of French, Arabic, and Lingua Franca, of which we give a free translation—

“Oh, missus, me massr, console Dansh, vants see ver moch your hosbund!”

“Thank you; I know it,” replied Mrs Langley, giving the boy a small coin and a bright smile.

Quite satisfied that he had fulfilled his duty, the urchin returned to the barber and the lady proceeded to the palace.

Here she was received ceremoniously by the father of Ashweesha, Sidi Cadua, a mild, gentle-spirited, little old Turk, who would have made a

very fine old English gentleman, but who was about as well fitted to be father-in-law to an Algerine Dey, and a man of position in the pirate city, as he was to be Prime Minister to the man in the moon.

Sidi Cadua conducted her to the seraglio, where she was heartily welcomed by the ladies, who expressed their delight at meeting her with girlish glee. Ashweesha laughingly said that she was glad to see Agnes had become a Mohammedan, on which Mrs Langley related what circumstances had caused the change, and the Sultana listened to the recital with tears of laughter running down her cheeks.

The English lady had naturally expected something gorgeous in the palace, but she was not prepared for the lavish display of wealth that met her eyes everywhere.

She found the Sultana and her six beautiful children in a room which, though not imposing in size, glittered with decoration. The ceiling and walls were rich with tessellated and arabesque work. The floor was covered with a carpet of cut velvet, with a pattern of the richest and most brightly-coloured flowers; and this carpet was strewn with costly jewels, which shone in the variegated light of the stained-glass windows above like glowing fire-flies. Around the walls were several recesses or niches, arched in the Moorish horse-shoe style. In one of these was a glass cabinet, on the shelves of which were some splendid articles of jewellery. In another recess hung a variety of swords and pistols, chiefly of Eastern manufacture, their handles and scabbards blazing with diamonds. Opposite to these stood a gilt four-post European bedstead, with four mattresses of gold brocade, and curtains of blue tiffany embroidered with gold sprigs. In fact, the apartment and its occupants were adorned with so much magnificence that the genie of Aladdin’s famous lamp would not have improved it, for, although that remarkable personage might have brought unlimited treasure to its decoration, he would not have found a spare inch anywhere on which to bestow it!

The Sultana and her children were alone, with the exception of half-a-dozen beautiful Georgian slaves, and one or two negresses, who attended on them. Of course no gentlemen were present!

“My husband is very fond of yours,” said Ashweesha, with a pleasant smile, leading her guests to a large cushion on the floor, and squatting them down beside her.

“It gratifies me much to hear you say so,” replied Mrs Langley.

They spoke in a jargon of languages, and made up their deficiencies by signs, of which we dare not attempt a characteristic translation.

“He sent you a new slave-girl lately, I believe?” said the Sultana, beginning to feel her way.

“Yes,” exclaimed the guest with animation, “it was *very* kind of him; and I find her *so* sweet and amiable, and useful too. She assists me with my dear baby so admirably, as well as with the household, that I begin already to feel as if I could not get on without her. Do you know I have set my heart on raising sufficient money to ransom her and set her free?”

“Then you will only lose her, for she will certainly go home to her husband,” observed Ashweesha, with a look of simplicity.

“Of course; I count on that,” returned Mrs Langley. “You know that we Christians differ from Mohammedans widely on the point of slavery; and I am sure,” she added playfully, “you will not think me rude when I say that I mean to take advantage of your laws, and procure the ransom of as many slaves as possible during my residence here.”

“If you had the wealth of a king,” said Ashweesha, with a smile, “you could not ransom the half of them, they are so numerous.”

“I am too well aware of that,” rejoined the other sadly; “nevertheless, that does not exempt me from my duty. In the laws of my heavenly King and Saviour Jesus Christ it is written—‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’”

The Sultana bent a keen look of interest on her guest, and was about to reply, but seemed to change her mind, and said:—

“It was Sidi Hassan, I am told, who brought in this slave-girl; and, by the way, I hear that he has become your janissary. Do you like him?”

“I have seen so little of him that I can hardly tell.—You have walked with him in the garden, Agnes, several times; what do *you* think of him?”

“I don’t like him at *all*!” answered Agnes, with powerful emphasis.

Both ladies laughed, and so did the six little daughters of the Sultana, who had maintained a dignified silence while their elders were conversing.

“My little girl is rather given to take hasty prejudices,” said Mrs Langley apologetically.

“Does your husband find him useful?” continued the Sultana, returning to the charge.

“No doubt he does, but I really cannot say, for my husband has only mentioned him casually, and I never venture to speak of his business

affairs unless called on to do so. The fact that Sidi Hassan has been much oftener in town than at our residence since he was sent to us, may account for my slight knowledge about him."

"Oh! he has been very often in town, has he?" exclaimed Ashweesha.

Before Mrs Langley could reply, an attendant announced that dinner was served in the adjoining room, whereupon the Georgian slaves were ordered to pick up the jewels that strewed the carpet. This they did, and, having locked them in the glass cabinet before mentioned, followed the party into the dining-room.

It was a somewhat peculiar dinner in many respects. There was great variety. Meat, poultry, pastry, and sweatmeats of strange kinds and forms, succeeded each other, and were done full justice to by all present. It was like a glimpse of paradise to little Agnes; for, having been brought up in the simplest of styles, and forbidden pastry and sweatmeats altogether since the day of her birth, she absolutely revelled in new sensations.

It must not be supposed that she violently broke through all restraints on this occasion; but her mother saw that if old rules were enforced, the child would be confused by the conflicting entreaties of her hostesses and the denials of her mother, while the Sultana might be offended. Mrs Langley, therefore, gave her *carte-blanche* to eat what she pleased.

The party all sat on embroidered cushions on the floor, round a small low table made of silver and mother-of-pearl. On this, each dish was placed separately; and all ate out of the same dish, after the Moorish fashion. The spoons were made of rosewood, tipped with amber, and the napkins were richly embroidered in gold, silver, and variously coloured silk on a curiously-wrought linen ground. All the vessels used were of the most elaborate and costly description, and we need scarcely add that the viands were good. Among other things there was fish, which was served and eaten with honey! but the chief among the dishes was kooskoos. This was the *pièce de résistance* of the Moorish dinner-table, the substance on which the ladies chiefly fed and flourished. To be fat was, in those days, the most desirable attribute of a wife in the eyes of an Algerine husband, therefore kooskoos was eaten in quantity. It was made largely of flour, rolled, in some mystical manner, into the form of little pellets, like small sago; this, boiled with butter and other fatty substances, with bits of meat and chicken, and other viands mixed through it,—the whole being slightly seasoned and spiced,—was deemed food fit for a Sultana.

During the meal they became very chatty, and the young people paid much attention to Agnes, who, being a sensitively good girl, felt, every time that

she experienced a new taste, as though she were breaking all the Ten Commandments, notwithstanding the permission of her mother!

Several times Ashweesha turned the conversation on the home affairs of her guests, and attempted to gain further information about Sidi Hassan's doings, but found, much to her annoyance, that Mrs Langley knew little more than she had already communicated. Her good-humour was, however, restored by that lady's unaffected admiration of the numerous lovely things by which she was surrounded. She specially praised the splendid napkins and the spoons before referred to, and when they rose from table, the Sultana presented her and Agnes with those that they had used.

After giving them coffee and making another vain attempt to extract information, Ashweesha dismissed her guests, who returned home charmed with the novelty of their reception and entertainment.

Chapter Thirteen.

Relates Something about Improvements, Surprises, and Changes in the State of Affairs.

In consequence of the opportune interference of the British consul, and of the good-will which Lucien had inspired in the breast of the Dey, a ray of light stole into the gloomy Bagnio, and tended to cheer at least two of the slaves.

This ray was conveyed by means of the Padre Giovanni, whom we have elsewhere mentioned as being the friend and benefactor of the slaves.

Previous to his visit a cloud had overshadowed the prison. Several chaouses had entered, and, after loading Castello and the other runaways with chains, had led them forth to death. It would be painful as well as unnecessary to detail the terrible tortures under which these wretched men perished. The remaining slaves knew well the nature of the fate that awaited them, and the blank caused by the disappearance for ever of their well-known faces, was fitted to restrain all thoughts of rebellion, had such existed. Some surprise was felt at first by all the slaves at the delay of punishment in the case of Francisco and Mariano, but after the first hour or two had passed, they ceased to give the matter a thought.

When, therefore, the old man Giovanni entered the Bagnio and informed these two that the Dey had reprieved them, and commanded their

attendance at the palace, their surprise was re-awakened, and speculation as to the cause of such unusual proceedings was revived.

“I am the bearer of still further tidings,” said the old man, taking a letter from a sort of wallet that hung from his shoulder, and handing it to Francisco.

“From Juliet!” exclaimed Francisco, tearing it open and reading aloud eagerly:—

> “‘Dearest Father,—It is not possible to express to you the agony that we endured on hearing that you had been taken captive by the Algerines. Oh, why are such monsters allowed to live? (“Why, indeed!” interjected Francisco, bitterly.) But take comfort. God watches over us all. Some of your old friends here have begun to collect money for your ransom, and I work hard to increase the sum—but oh! how slowly it grows! Even darling grandmamma has got some light sewing work which brings in a little. But our hearts mourn because of you. We earnestly hope that the pirates treat you well, (“Thank God they do not know anything about *that*,” muttered Francisco), and we feel almost sure that they do, because we have been told that they are careful of the slaves who, they hope, will be ransomed. I have therefore written to the Dey—how I hated him while I wrote the humble letter!—telling him that we hoped to raise the sum in a short time. Every one here is very kind and sympathises with us, besides giving a contribution to the fund.
>
> “‘This letter goes by a French vessel which is to touch at Algiers, and which conveys a priest who has a large sum of money with him to ransom Sicilian and other slaves. I entreated him to ransom you with part of it, but he smiled pitifully, and said the money had been raised by the friends of particular slaves, some of whom had been many years in captivity, and that it could not be diverted from its proper objects. How my heart sank when he spoke of some being in slavery for many years! But it was cheered again when I reflected how hard we are all working to raise the money for you and Lucien and Mariano. We send you all our dear love. —Your affectionate daughter.

“Shall I have an opportunity of answering this?” asked Francisco, eagerly.

“Yes; I am about to conduct you to the palace, where your son Lucien—

who, I may mention, is a favourite—awaits you."

"You mustn't let them know the truth, father," said Mariano earnestly.

"Would you have him tell them what is false?" asked the Padre gravely.

"No, no," replied the youth, with a laugh, "but there is no occasion to mention all that we have suffered, you know; and there is a good deal—I mean a little—that is agreeable to communicate. For instance, this very summons to the palace, and Lucien's good luck."

"Trust me, lad," said Francisco; "I won't fail to cheer them if I can, and you may be sure I won't exaggerate our misfortunes.—But lead on, old man; I am anxious to get out of this foul den as quickly as—"

"Forgive me, comrades," he added, checking himself, and turning to the slaves near him; "I am grieved more than I can tell to leave you behind. If by remaining I could lighten your sorrows, I would gladly do so. It may seem presumptuous in one who is himself a slave to say so, yet I can't help assuring you that if the Almighty is pleased to give me any power in this city, I won't forget you."

This speech was received with a kindly nod by some, and a laugh of scorn by others.

Probably the latter had heard similar sentiments before from somewhat kindred and hearty spirits, and had learned from sad experience that nothing ever came of their good-will.

Following the old man, the father and son were soon in the presence of Lucien, who received them, as may well be believed, with a full heart.

"God bless you, my son," said Francisco, "for well assured am I that it is through your influence that we are here."

"It is through the influence of the British consul," replied Lucien.

"Well, I pray for a blessing on you both, for it is useless to tell me that *you* have had no hand in it."

"I do not say that I had no hand in it. On the contrary, I wrote out the order for your acquittal; and," added Lucien, with a peculiar smile, "I also had previously written out your and Mariano's death-warrant!"

"You are jesting, lad," said Francisco.

"Indeed, I am not," returned Lucien, relating the circumstances of the whole matter to his astonished and somewhat horrified auditors.

“And now,” he continued, “I must let you know your destination. Don’t be disappointed. You must remember that we are slaves, and have just been delivered from the Bagnio. The Dey seems to have taken a fancy for me —”

“I don’t wonder,” interrupted Mariano enthusiastically, seizing and squeezing his brother’s hand.

“And,” continued Lucien, “he has permitted me to select situations for you. I have arranged that you, father, shall be my assistant in the secretary’s office, and that you, Mariano, shall be shopman to Bacri the Jew.”

Lucien looked awkwardly at his father and brother as he spoke, feeling uncertain, no doubt, as to the manner in which they would receive this information. He was therefore rather relieved than otherwise by a smile on the face of Mariano.

“Why, Lucien,” he said, “I always thought you a great original, and this last display of your powers confirms me in my opinion. Not that I deem it strange your having appointed father your clerk—for, in the circumstances, it would have been charity to have appointed him even to the office of shoe-black—anything being better than the Bagnio,—but what wild fancy induced you to make *me* shop-boy to a Jew?”

“That,” replied Lucien, “you shall find out in good time—only, pray, remember that I am not the Dey’s Grand Vizier, and have not many places to offer.”

“Well, well, be it so,” returned the other; “I am well content with what your wisdom provides.”

“And so am I,” said Francisco, cheerfully. “I suppose you will feed us better than we have been fed of late?”

“That will I, father, but there is no pay attached to your offices, for slaves, you know, get no wages.”

“They get splendid habiliments, it would seem,” observed Francisco, regarding his son with twinkling eyes. “But come, Lucien, I am all impatience to begin the work of under-secretary of state! You bear in remembrance, I trust, that I can read and write nothing save my mother tongue?”

“Yes; Italian will suffice, father; such of the duties as you fail to perform I can easily fulfil.—Now, Mariano,” he said, taking his brother aside, and speaking in a low earnest tone, “see that you act wisely in the situation I

have selected for you. The Jew is a kind, good man, despite what is said about his worship of Mammon. I would that all in this city were like him, for in that case we should have no slavery. During the short period I have held my office, my eyes have been opened to much that I may not mention. There, the very walls of this palace have ears! I have said enough. You remember Angela?"

"Remember her!" exclaimed Mariano, with a deep flush and a look of intense surprise, "how can you ask me, Lucien?"

"Well, you will hear of her from Bacri. Good bye—go!"

He rang a bell as he spoke, and ordered the slave who answered the summons to lead Mariano to the abode of Bacri; at the same time he took his father's hand and conducted him to his office or bureau.

Amazed at all that had happened, particularly at his summary dismissal by his brother, the youth followed his conductor in silence, and in a short time reached the iron-bolted door of the chief of the Jews.

"This is Bacri's house," said his guide in Italian, and, having discharged this duty, he turned on his heel, and abruptly left him.

Pausing a moment to think, and finding that the more he thought the less he seemed to be capable of thinking to any purpose, Mariano applied his knuckles to the door.

For a youth of his character it was a timid knock, and produced no result.

Mariano was one who—in peculiar circumstances, like those in which at that time he found himself—might once in a way act with timidity, but he was not the man to act so twice. Finding that the first knock was useless, he hit the door a blow that caused the old house to resound. In a few seconds it was opened slightly, and the face of a beautiful girl in Jewish costume appeared.

If Mariano had been suddenly petrified he could not have stood more rigidly motionless; amazement sat enthroned on his countenance.

"Angela!"

"Signor Mariano!"

The words in each case were followed by a deep flush, and Angela retreated.

Of course Mariano advanced.

"Excuse—forgive me, signorina," he exclaimed, taking her hand

respectfully. “I did not know—of course I could not—how was it possible that—the fact is, I came to see a Jew, and—and—”

“I’ve found a jewel,” he *might* have said, but that didn’t seem to occur to him!

“Bacri—that’s his name!” continued Mariano. “Is Bacri within? I came to see him, but—”

“Yes—Signor Bacri is at home,” said Angela, much confused by the youth’s confusion, as well as by the sudden and unexpected nature of the meeting. “But your father—and brother Lucien—Oh, I hope they are well; that they have not been treated cruelly; that they are not in that dreadful Bagnio, of which I have heard so much,” said Angela, at last finding the use of her tongue.

They were interrupted at this point by the appearance of Bacri himself, who welcomed the youth to his house, said that he had been told by Lucien to expect him, and introduced him to his wife and the other members of his family.

Thereafter the Jew took his new shopman into his private apartment, and made many strange revelations to him in regard to the affairs of the piratical city, as well as about the details of his new appointment, in regard to which we shall say nothing here; but it may be well to add that Mariano finally retired for the night well satisfied with the wisdom of his elder brother.

For some time after this, things went well with those actors in our tale in whose welfare we are chiefly interested.

Francisco proved himself to be an able clerk—when assisted by his superior!—and Mariano became a most willing and useful shopman—with the prospect before him of returning each night to bask in the sunshine of Angela’s countenance!

At the consul’s residence Paulina was as happy as was possible in her sad circumstances, for she became very fond of Mrs Langley, and was a perfect treasure in the house,—not only taking a large part of the management thereof, but keeping watchful guard over the dangerous Zubby, so that that Zaharan specimen of humanity inflicted a perceptibly smaller percentage of bumps on the head of Master Jim than in former times. Paulina’s baby, too, began to indicate signs of intelligence by crowing, knocking over whatever it came within reach of, and endeavouring to dig the eyes out of every one who permitted familiarities, especially the eyes of Master Jim, who, it is but fair to add, soon displayed

superior capacity in the same line, so that the parents agreed mutually that they would soon be sweet playmates to each other, and that they were the most delicious babes that ever were or could be born. Ted Flaggan also remained a happy inmate of the consul's abode, awaiting the arrival of a British vessel which might enable him to depart, but not at all anxious for that consummation, and, in the meantime, making himself generally useful.

Down at the Marina, too, the state of things was a little, though not much, improved. Another guardian of the slaves had been appointed,—the former one having been strangled on account of some wickedness reported by enemies to have been done by him, and of which he was afterwards found to be entirely innocent.

His successor was a man of better nature, who, although he kept the slaves hard at their toil, and did not abate the lash or bastinado, nevertheless supplied them with occasional comforts, such as an extra roll of bread when extra work had to be done, or even a glass of spirits when, as was often the case, they were called up at nights, in drenching rain and cold, to protect the shipping in the harbour, and prevent wreck, when sudden gales arose.

Thus the aspect of things in the pirate city, bad though it was, became a little brighter, and continued so for some time, until an event occurred which flung a darker cloud than usual over the ever changing scene.

Chapter Fourteen.

The Plot thickens, and Mariano's Forbearance and Courage are tested.

When the commander-in-chief of cavalry condescended to pay a visit to a Jew, it was a sign that events of considerable importance were hovering in the air. The approach, therefore, of Sidi Hamet to the residence of Bacri one night, under cover of the darkness, was regarded by the Jew with feelings of misgiving, which caused his face to become suddenly very grave, as he looked through the little iron-bound hole, or window, which commanded a view of his court.

The Aga carried no light, although the laws ordained that all who moved about after night-fall should do so; but Bacri knew him as well by his outline and gait as if he had seen his face in the sunshine.

Descending the stair at once, the Jew opened the door and let him in.

“Thou art surprised, Bacri?” said Hamet, swaggering into the skiffa, where Angela chanced to be at work at the time.—“Ha! thou hast a pretty daughter,” he added, with a gaze of insolent admiration.

“The girl is passing fair,” replied the Jew, opening the door of his study, and purposely avoiding the correction of the Aga’s mistake. “Please to enter here.”

Hamet obeyed; remarking as he passed that the girl were worthy of being the wife of a Dey, if she had not been a Jewess.

“Bacri,” he said, sitting down, while the master of the house stood respectfully before him, “thou knowest the object of my visit—eh? Come, it is not the first time thou hast had to do with such as I. The plot thickens, Bacri, and thou must play thy part, willing or not willing. Say, how much is it to be?”

“How much do you demand?” asked the Jew.

The Aga rose and whispered in his ear.

“Impossible!” said Bacri, shaking his head decidedly.

“How, dog! impossible?” exclaimed the Turk sternly. “Dost know that I can let the whole Turkish army loose on thee and thy false-hearted race?”

“My race is maligned alike by Mohammedan and Christian,” returned the Jew, with dignity. “You know full well, Sidi Hamet, that the sum you have named would ruin all the Jews in the town. If the security of my people is not to be purchased for a smaller sum, we must perish. My utmost efforts would not avail to raise more than the half thereof within the specified time. You may indeed ruin us, if you will, but it were wise to remember that if you kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, there will be no more golden eggs to lay.”

“True, O Bacri,” returned Hamet, laughing; “thou art wise, and I shall act on thy wisdom—having first, however, acted on mine own when I demanded double the sum I expected to receive, knowing thine inveterate tendency to drive a hard bargain! Now, good-night,” he said, rising and leaving the room.—“Ha! thy pretty daughter has fled. Well, we shall hope to see her again. Mean while, have a care; our plot is in your hands, but thine every movement shall be watched from this hour, and if a note of warning escapes thee, thou art but a dead man!”

Saying this, the Aga departed, and Bacri, returning to the skiffa, summoned Mariano, who had been engaged in another part of the house when Hamet entered.

“Come hither, lad,” said the Jew, while a careworn expression seemed to settle on his handsome features; “I have work for you to do which requires courage and speed. Hamet the Aga—I may say, the black-hearted Aga—has been here on an errand which I have been looking forward to for some months. You may be aware, perhaps, that in this barbarous city there is no hereditary succession of Deys. Each Dey is elected by the Turkish janissaries from among the men of their own ranks; one result of which is that various factions are kept up in the army, and the most vigorous man among them, the one who can command the greatest number of admirers and followers, generally wins the unenviable but much-coveted post. When the reigning Dey becomes unpopular, the factions begin to ferment; and, instead of waiting for him to die, they invariably strangle, poison, or behead him. The factions generally have some disturbance among themselves, but in any case, the consequence of a revolution of this kind is, that complete anarchy prevails in the city, and, until a new Dey is elected by the janissaries, the Moors and Jews are at the mercy of the rude soldiery. Of course, all who have enemies among them hide themselves and their pelf, if possible, until the anarchy ceases, which it does the moment the green standard of the Prophet is hoisted on the terrace of the palace, announcing that a new Dey is seated on the warm throne of his not quite cold predecessor.

“I tell you all this,” continued the Jew impressively, “that ye may understand what is about to happen and know how to act. It is a sharp ordeal to go through, but a short one; the scene of violence lasting usually but one day. Still, that affords ample time for irreparable injury to be done.

“It is usual, just before a revolution, for the dominant faction to make an arrangement with the persecuted Jews, so that, in virtue of the payment of a large sum, their families and possessions may be spared. Of course, we are compelled to agree to this, and even compliance does not always secure us, because when violent men are once let loose, they often become unmanageable for a time, even by those who command them. Still, the payment of this unjust tax is our only safeguard. This evening, Sidi Hamet, the commander-in-chief of cavalry, has been here to make the arrangement with me. I have long known of his designs; indeed, we Jews know nearly all the secret plots that go on around us; for gold is potent, and we have those who are willing to give us information both in the palace and in the casba. I likewise know that Sidi Omar, whom you may have seen, also aims at the throne; but he has no chance against his rival Hamet, who is a more powerful man in mind and body, besides being younger. Your old enemy Sidi Hassan has agreed to assist Hamet, who has promised to reward him with the office next in dignity to his own. I have

more than once warned Achmet of what is plotting, for he has been kinder to my people than most of the Deys who preceded him, but he is strangely slow in guarding himself. He is a bold, fearless man, and perchance trusts too much to a popularity which for some time has been on the wane—chiefly, I believe, because he is not a sufficiently unprincipled villain to please the taste of the lawless crew over whom he reigns."

"This is a dreadful state of things!" said Mariano, who had listened to the narration in silent amazement.

"It is indeed dreadful," returned Bacri, "and yet, although the European powers must be thoroughly aware of it, through their consuls, this is the state of things that they not only tolerate, but absolutely sanction by the presence of their representatives and the payment of tribute."

"Tribute!" exclaimed Mariano, in a tone of indignation, "is it possible that tribute is paid by the great powers to these miserable pirates?"

"Even so, young man," answered Bacri, with a smile, "just as we Jews pay them tribute to avoid being pillaged—only, without having our excuse. We are compelled to do it; but no one can suppose for a moment that a small power like Algiers can *compel* nearly all the maritime nations to bow before it. Nevertheless, the nations *do* submit, some of them to very humiliating terms. You saw the Swedish frigate conveying two store-ships that entered the port yesterday?"

"Yes."

"Well, these vessels contained the annual tribute due by Sweden, and that country is also bound by treaty to furnish the Dey with a person capable of directing his gunpowder factory! Denmark not only pays tribute, but is bound to pay it in naval stores, and her consul here is at present in disgrace because his country has failed to pay its tribute at the specified time. There is an American ship just now detained in port because the nation to which it belongs is also dilatory in paying up what is due by treaty, therefore the American consul is also in the Dey's black books; and I may add in regard to him that, at the time of his appointment to his office, he gave the Dey a consular present of sixteen thousand Spanish dollars. Even that notorious warrior Napoleon, who is at present turning Europe upside down, thought it worth his while lately to send to the Dey a present of telescopes and other things to the amount of four thousand pounds; and England, that great nation which styles herself mistress of the seas, cannot enter the Mediterranean with her merchant ships until she has paid toll to this exacting city."

"Now," continued Bacri, stopping abruptly in his account of these matters,

“I must not waste more time on a subject which is incomprehensible. Indeed, I would not have said so much were it not that the hour is yet too early for the undertaking which I have in view for you.

“Achmet, then, must be at once put on his guard; but to do so is no easy matter, for his enemies surround him. It would be impossible for me, or any one sent by me, to gain admittance to him. I am already under surveillance, and should forfeit my life were I to attempt it. The only method I can think of is to send to the British consul, and let him know what is pending. He is the only consul here to whom the Dey will grant an immediate unquestioning audience. You are active and strong, Mariano, and are, I believe, willing to aid me.”

“Indeed I am,” replied the youth fervently.

“I need scarcely tell you,” said Bacri sadly, “that you and your friends are intimately concerned in the safety of the present Dey, for if he falls it will go ill with all connected with him, especially with the Scrivano-Grande, your brother Lucien, and your father.”

“I guessed as much,” said Mariano, with an anxious look; “but, tell me, is there likely to be much danger to this house and its inmates?”

“I think not, I hope not, Mariano, but there is no place of absolute safety for me or mine in the city. I might indeed take refuge in the British consulate, but I prefer to remain where I am, and put my trust in God.”

“Then you and yours,” returned the youth, with hesitation, “may want the aid of a stout and willing arm. Is it well that I should leave you at this crisis?”

“Fear not; I think there will be ample time for you to go and return, if you make haste,” said the Jew.

“Then let me go at once,” urged the other.

“Not so,” answered Bacri; “we must proceed wisely as well as with caution.—Go, Angela,” he said to the maiden, who entered the room at that moment, “open the closet at the head of the terrace stair; you will find a thin knotted rope hanging there,—fetch it hither.”

In a few minutes Angela returned with the rope.

“Sit thee down, pretty one,” said Bacri kindly, “while I give this youth some directions. I will explain to you afterwards the cause of his being sent away.—This line, Mariano, is all you need. It is long enough to reach from the city walls to the ground. You will go towards the tower to the

west of Bab-Azoun gate. There is an iron spike on the wall there, on which is fixed the head of your poor friend Castello. Fasten the rope to the spike and lower yourself. The ground reached, leave the rope hanging, it will serve for your ascent on returning; then speed round the back of the town, and over the hills by Frais Vallon to the house of the British consul, tell him of the urgent need there is for his seeing the Dey and letting him know the danger which hovers over his head, and then return as fast as possible. This rope you will find suitable to its objects. An active young fellow like you can have no difficulty in re-mounting the walls with the aid of these knots, and you need not fear interruption if you exercise ordinary caution, for Turkish soldiers, like the warriors of all nations, become arrant cowards when supernatural fears assail them. Poor Castello's head will keep the nearest sentinel as far off as is consistent with his duty. No doubt they are well used to trunkless heads in this city, but there is a vast difference between the sight of such in the glare of day, when surrounded by comrades, and amid the excitement of war or an execution, and a similar head in the stillness of a calm night during the solemn hours of a long and solitary watch."

"But why not allow me to start off at once?" asked Mariano, with some impatience at the Jew's prolixity.

"Because the sentinels will not be relieved for an hour yet, and it is well to make such an enterprise as near to the relief as possible—wearied men at the end of a long watch being less on the alert than at the beginning of it. Besides, the moon will be lower in half an hour, and that will favour your enterprise."

Being constrained to wait, Mariano busied himself in making the useful preparations. He wound the rope tightly round his waist, and covered it with a thin scarf such as was commonly worn by the Moors. He also trimmed and prepared a small lantern.

"Now," said Bacri, looking at his watch, "you may go. But, stay—not in the direction of our usual passage. You could not move ten yards from my door to-night without being intercepted. Follow me; I have long been prepared for emergencies such as this."

"Good-night, Angela," said Mariano, extending his hand, as he prepared to follow the Jew.

"Oh, be careful," said Angela earnestly. "From the little I have heard it seems that there is much danger impending."

"What I can do to avert it shall be done," replied the youth, kissing his hand to the girl as he passed through the doorway and followed his master

to the terrace-roof of the house.

We have said that Algerine roofs are flat, but they are by no means regular. There are often various elevations on the same roof, and various forms, as if the architect had terminated the summits of the several walls and partitions at the dictates of a wayward fancy rather than a settled plan. In some cases a step—in others a flight of steps—formed the communication between one part of a roof and another, while division-walls varying from a foot to two yards in height, cut it up into irregular squares and triangles. Such roofs are eminently fitted for the game of “hide and go seek,” to which, doubtless, they have been applied more or less since the days of Abraham.

Issuing on the terrace of his house, then, Bacri pointed out to Mariano, by the light of the moon, which was slowly descending to its bed in the Sahel hills, that the roof of his neighbour’s house could be easily reached by a single step.

“You will cross over this roof,” he said, taking a ring from his finger and placing it on that of his slave, “and be sure that you tread with care until you come to the other edge of it, where you will be able to place yourself in the shadow of a chimney until a cloud covers the moon. My neighbour is not a friend, therefore tread like a cat. Attend well to my directions now, and obey them implicitly. You require no arms. Whatever happens to you, offer no resistance, as that will only ensure death. When the moon is clouded leap to the next roof, which you may see now in line with yonder minaret. There is about six feet between the two—which is nothing to a youth like you; only be careful, for failure will plunge you into the street, sixty feet below. That terrace gained, you are on friendly ground. Go, knock gently at the door leading to the house below, and show the owner my ring, asking him at the same time to guide you to the street, after which you know how to act; and may the God of Abraham direct you. Stay! If the owner of the house, who is a Jew, should use you roughly, heed it not. Whatever you do, be passive. Your own life, and it may be the lives of others, depends on this.”

The first part of the Jew’s caution would have availed little, for when Mariano was roused he recked little of his own life; but the reference to others reminded him of Angela and his father, so that he made up his mind to be a very model of forbearance whatever should happen.

Stepping easily from the house of the Jew to the terrace of his neighbour, he proceeded with extreme caution to the chimney pointed out to him, and took his stand under its shadow.

It was a time and situation which induced many burning thoughts and sad reflections to chase each other through the youth's brain, as he awaited impatiently the clouding of the moon. From the elevated point on which he stood nearly the whole city lay spread out at his feet, its white terraces, domes, and minarets shining like silver in the pale light, and contrasting vividly with the dark blue bay lying between it and the distant range of the Jurjura mountains. Everything was profoundly calm, quiet, and peaceful, so that he found it difficult to believe in the fierce passions, black villainy, horrible cruelty, and intolerable suffering which seethed below. For some time his eyes rested on the palace of the Dey, and he thought of his father and Lucien with deep anxiety.

Then they wandered to the hated Bagnio, and he thought with pity of the miserable victims confined there, and of the hundreds of other Christian men and women who toiled in hopeless slavery in and around the pirate city. Passing onward, his eyes rested on the light-house and fortifications of the port, and he wondered whether any of the powerful nations of the earth would ever have the common-sense to send a fleet to blow such a wasps' nest into unimaginable atoms!

At this point his thoughts were interrupted by the darkening of the moon by a thick cloud, and the sudden descent of deep shadow on the town—as if all hope in such a blessed consummation were forbidden.

Turning at once to the parapet of the terrace, he mounted, but paused a moment, as he endeavoured to gauge the distance of the opposite wall, and gazed into the black gulf below. Bacri had told him that the space was six feet. In the darkness that now prevailed it appeared twenty. He would have ventured it in the circumstances had it been sixty!

Collecting all his energies and courage, he made a bound forward that might have roused the envy of an acrobat, and cleared not only the space between but the parapet beyond, coming down with an awful crash into the midst of a certain box-garden, which was the special pride of the owner of the mansion.

Poor Mariano leaped up in horror, and listened with dread, but suddenly remembering that he now stood on what Bacri had termed friendly ground, he recovered self-possession and sought for the door on the roof. Finding it after some trouble, he knocked gently.

It was opened much sooner and more violently than he had anticipated, and a tall man springing out seized him by the throat in a grasp like a vice, and held a gleaming dagger to his breast.

In other circumstances Mariano would certainly have engaged in a

struggle for the dagger, but remembering Angela and the Jew's warning, he gave back, and said in French, as well as the vice-like grip would allow —

"A friend."

"Truly," replied the man gruffly, in Lingua Franca, "thy knock might imply friendship, but thine appearance here at such an hour requires more explanation than a mere assurance."

"Remove your hand and you shall have it," replied the youth, somewhat angrily. "Dost suppose that if I had been other than a friend I would not have ere now flung thee headlong from thine own terrace?"

"Speak quickly, then," returned the man, relaxing his hold a little.

"This ring," said the youth.

"Ha! Enough, a sure token," interrupted the Jew, in a low friendly tone, on seeing the ring, at the same time leading Mariano within the doorway. "What wouldst thou?"

"Nothing more than to be shown the nearest way to the street."

"That is soon done—follow me."

In a few minutes Mariano found himself in a narrow street, down which, after lighting his lantern and thanking the Jew, he proceeded at a rapid pace.

In the intricacies of that curious old town the youth would certainly have lost himself, but for the fact that it was built, as we have said, on the slope of a hill, so that all he had to do was to keep descending, in order to secure his final exit into the principal thoroughfare—Bab-Azoun.

Few persons met him at that hour, and these appeared desirous of avoiding observation. After passing the Bagnio with a shudder, he extinguished the lantern. And now the real danger of his enterprise had begun, because he was acting illegally in traversing the streets after dark without a light, and liable to be taken up and punished by any of the guards who should find him. He proceeded therefore with great caution; keeping close to the walls in the darkest places, and gliding into doorways to hide when any one approached. Thus he succeeded escaping observation, and had almost reached the city wall, not far from the spot where it was garnished by poor Castello's head, when he heard the tramp of soldiers. They were about to turn a corner which would in another second have brought him full into view. To retreat was impossible, and no friendly doorway stood open to

receive him. In this extremity he pressed himself into a niche formed by a pillar and an angle of the house beside him. It could not have concealed him in ordinary circumstances, but aided by darkness there was some possibility of escaping notice. Crushing himself against the wall with all his might, and wishing with all his heart that he had been a smaller man, he breathlessly awaited the passing of the soldiers.

Chapter Fifteen.

In which Ted Flaggan and his Friend Rais Ali act a Conscious Part, and a Political Storm begins to break.

There is unquestionably many a slip ’twixt the cup and the lip, but on the present occasion there was no such slip. Mariano succeeded in diminishing and flattening himself to such an extent that the janissaries passed without observing him. The moment they were out of sight he glided from his hiding-place, and soon found his way to the top of the ramparts, near the Bab-Azoun gate. The head of Castello was at his elbow; the wearied Turkish sentinel was not a hundred yards distant Mariano could see him clearly defined against the eastern sky every time he reached the end of his beat.

“If he takes it into his head to walk this way, I am lost,” thought Mariano.

It seemed as if the man had heard the thought, for he walked slowly towards the spot where the youth lay at full length on the ground. There was no mound or niche or coping of any kind behind which a man might conceal himself. The dead man’s head was the only object that broke the uniformity of the wall. In desperation, Mariano lay down with it between himself and the advancing sentinel, and crept close to it—so close that while he lay there he fancied that a drop of something cold fell from it and mingled with the perspiration that stood in large beads upon his brow!

The sentinel stopped just as Mariano was preparing to spring upon and endeavour to strangle him. He looked earnestly and long in the direction of the dead man’s head, as if in meditation on its owner’s untimely fate, or, possibly, on the unusual length and solidity of the shadow that tailed away from it!

Fortunately he advanced no further, but, turning on his heel, walked slowly away. Just then the moon shot forth a ray of light from the midst of the cloud that had covered it, as if to cheer the fugitive on his desperate adventure. Instead of cheering, however, it alarmed him, and expedited his

movements.

In a moment Mariano put a loop of his rope over the head and drew it tight on the spike close to the masonry. Another moment and he was over the parapet, down the wall, and into the ditch. Here again unusual caution was needful, but the youth's cat-like activity enabled him to overcome all obstacles. In a few minutes he was speeding over the Sahel hills in the direction of Frais Vallon.

We need scarcely say that wind and muscle were tried to their uttermost that night. In an incredibly short space of time he reached the gate of the consul's garden, which stood open, and darted in.

Now it chanced that night that the stout British seaman, Ted Flaggan, lay in a hammock suspended between two trees in a retired part of the consul's garden, the weather being so warm that not only he but several of the other domestics had forsaken their dwellings during the night, and lay about the grounds in various contrivances more or less convenient, according to the fancy or mechanical aptitude of the makers thereof.

Flaggan had, out of pure good-will, slung a primitive hammock similar to his own between two trees near him for his friend Rais Ali, in which the valiant Moor lay sound asleep, with his prominent brown nose pointing upwards to the sky, and his long brown legs hanging over the sides. Ted himself lay in a wakeful mood. He had fought unsuccessfully for some hours against a whole army of mosquitoes, and now, having given in, allowed the savage insects to devour him unchecked.

But the poor victim found it difficult to lie awake and suffer without occupation of any kind; he therefore arose and cut from a neighbouring hedge a light reed which was long enough to reach from his own hammock to that of his friend. With the delicate end of this, while reclining at his ease, he gently tickled Rais Ali's nose.

After making several sleepy efforts to kill the supposed insect that troubled him, and giving vent to three or four violent sneezes, the interpreter awoke, and, growling something in Arabic, opened his eyes, which act enabled him to observe that his neighbour was awake and smiling at him.

"Ha! yous not be for sleep, hey? Mos' troubelzum brutes dem muskitoes."

"Och! it's little I mind 'em," said Flaggan.

"W'y you no for sleep, den?" demanded Rais.

"'Cos I likes to meditate, young man, specially w'en I've got sitch a

splendid subjic' of contemplation before me as a slumberin' Moor! Won't ye go in for a little moor slumberin', eh?"

Rais turned his back on his friend with an indignant growl. He was evidently indisposed for jesting.

In a few seconds, being indifferent to real mosquitoes, the Moor was again sound asleep. It was soon clear, however, that he was not indifferent to Ted's artificial insect. Being unable now to reach his nose, the restless son of Erin thrust the feathery point of the reed into his friend's ear. The result was that Rais Ali gave himself a sounding slap on the side of the head, to Ted's inexpressible delight. When Rais indicated that he was "off" again, he received another touch, which resulted in a second slap and a savage growl, as the unfortunate man sat up and yawned.

"They seems wuss than ornar," said Flaggan gravely.

"Wuss? I nebber know'd noting wusser," replied Rais, with a look of sleepy exasperation. "Beats ebberyting. Been five-an'-twenty 'eer in de kontry, an' *nebber* seed de like."

"*Seed* the like!" echoed the seaman. "Did ye saw 'em when ye was aslape?"

"Feel um, then," replied the other sulkily; "yoos too purtikler."

"Suppose we goes an' has a whiff?" suggested Flaggan, leaping to the ground. "It's a fine night entirely, tho' a dark 'un. Come, I'll trate ye to a taste o' me cavendish, which is better than growlin' in yer hammock at the muskaities, poor things, as don't know no better."

Feeling that the advice was good, or perhaps tempted by the offer of a "taste" of his friend's peculiarly good tobacco, the interpreter arose, calmly made a paper cigarette, while Flaggan loaded his "cutty," and then accompanied him in a saunter down the road leading to the gate.

"Ally," began the seaman, making a stopper of the end of his little finger —"by the way, you ain't related, are you, to the famous Ally Babby as was capting of the forty thieves?"

"No, nuffin ob de sort," replied Ali, shaking his head.

"Well, no matter, you deserve to be; but that's neither here nor there. What I was agoing to say is, that it's my opinion that fellow Seedy Hassan ain't all fair an' above board."

Ted glanced keenly at his companion, for he had made the remark as a sort of feeler.

“W’at de matter wid um?” asked Rais carelessly.

“Oh, nothin’—I only thought you might know somethin’ about him. *I* doesn’t, only I’m a dab at what’s called in Ireland fizzyognomy, an? I don’t like the looks of him. Why, bless ye, I knows a feller by the cut of his jib directly. I could have taken my davy, now, that you were a sly, clever sort o’ chap, even before I was introduced to ’ee, d’ee see?”

Whether he saw or not remains to this day an uncertainty, for it was at that moment that, as before stated, Mariano rushed in at the gate, and, unintentionally, into the arms of Rais Ali, who uttered a loud cry and flung him off with a kick that unfortunately took effect on the youth’s shin.

Supposing that he was intercepted, afraid lest his mission should miscarry, and angered by the pain, Mariano lost the power of self-restraint which he had hitherto exercised so well that night. He rushed at the interpreter and hit him a blow on the forehead that caused him to tumble backwards violently.

The act was scarcely done when the youth found himself in the embrace of Ted Flaggan, and, strong though he was, he found it impossible to throw off, or to free himself from, that sturdy tar. Still he struggled fiercely, and there is no saying what might have been the result, had not Rais, recovering from the blow, hastened to his friend’s aid.

Between them they succeeded in securing Mariano, and, with a handkerchief tied his hands behind him.

“Now then, young feller,” said Flaggan, taking the youth by the arm, “you’ll have to go before the British couns’l an’ give an account of yerself. So come along.”

Of course when Mariano was taken into the presence of Colonel Langley, and had whispered a few words in his ear, the seaman and his friend Rais Ali were dismissed with the assurance that all was right—an assurance, by the way, which was not quite satisfactory to the latter, when he reflected on and tenderly stroked the bump, about as large as a pigeon’s egg, which ornamented the space between his eyes!

“Never mind, Ally Babby,” was his friend’s consolatory remark as they left the house and returned to their hammocks; “it can’t damage your good looks, an’ ’ll prove a mighty source of amazement to the muskaities.”

Meanwhile the consul accompanied Mariano a short way on his return to town, so that the latter might not be delayed.

“I hope there is no fear of an outbreak occurring before I can get into town

to-morrow," said the consul, as they were about to part. "It is impossible that I can demand an audience of the Dey before breakfast without creating suspicion. Tell Bacri, however, that he may depend on my doing my utmost without delay to avert the evil. And now, how do you mean to return to him—for it occurs to me that although you may scale the walls easily enough, you won't be able to retrace your way to the house of the Jew who favoured your escape?"

"Bacri had foreseen that," replied the youth, "and has arranged to meet and guide me from a street leading south from the Bagnio, which is known to both of us."

"He runs great risk in doing this," said the consul; "however, he knows the outs and ins of the city well. Good-bye, and God speed you on your way."

Mariano, who was impatient to return, at once darted away like a deer, and was soon lost to view among the aloes and cactuses that clothed the slopes of the Sahel hills.

Not long afterwards the grey light of day began to tip the domes and minarets of the pirate city, and with it began the soft hum of a general awakening—for Mohammedans are early risers, and even pirates deemed it consistent with their calling to commence the day with formal—not to say ostentatious—prayers. Any one traversing the streets at that early hour might have seen men at the fountains busy with their prescribed ablutions, while elsewhere others were standing, kneeling, or prostrating themselves, with their faces turned carefully in the direction of Mecca, their holy city.

It must not be supposed, however, as we have already remarked, that all the men of the town were pirates. That the town existed by means of piracy, and that all its chief men from the Dey downwards were pure and simple robbers, is quite consistent with the fact that there were many honest enough traders and workmen whose lot had been cast there, and whose prayers were probably very heartfelt and genuine—some of them, perchance, being an appeal for deliverance from the wretches who ruled them with a rod of iron—indeed, we might almost say, a rod of red-hot iron. Whatever the nature of their prayers, however, they were early in presenting, and remarkably particular in not omitting, them.

Down at the Marina there was a group of Christian slaves who were not behind their task-masters in this respect. In an angle of the fortifications the Padre Giovanni was kneeling by the side of a dying slave. The man had been crushed accidentally under a large piece of the rock with which the bulwarks of the harbour were being strengthened. He had been carried to the spot where he lay, and would have been left to die uncared for if

Blindi Bobi had not chanced to pass that way. After administering such consolation as lay in a little weak wine and water from his flask, the eccentric but kind-hearted man had gone off in search of the Padre, who was always ready to hasten at a moment's notice to minister to the necessity of slaves in sickness. Too often the good man's services were of little avail, because the sick slaves were frequently kept at work until the near approach of death rendered their labours worthless; so that, when Giovanni came to comfort them, they were almost, if not quite, indifferent to all things.

On the present occasion he was too late to do more than pray that the dying man might be enabled, by the Holy Spirit, to trust in the salvation wrought out—and freely offered to sinners, even the chief—by Jesus Christ.

While the spirit of the poor slave was passing away, Sidi Omar approached the spot. Blindi Bobi, remembering a former and somewhat similar occasion, at once glided behind a projection of the walls and made off.

"He is past your help now, Giovanni," said Omar to the old man, for whom he, in common with nearly all the people of the town, entertained great respect, despite his Christianity, for the Padre had spent the greater part of a long life among them, in the exercise of such pure, humble philanthropy, that even his enemies, if he had any, were at peace with him.

"His spirit is with God who gave it," replied the old man, rising and contemplating sadly the poor crushed form that lay at his feet.

"His spirit won't give us any more trouble, then," returned Omar, as he regarded the dead man with a stern glance; "he was one of the most turbulent of our slaves."

"And one of the most severely tried," said Giovanni, looking gently in the face of the Minister of Marine.

"He had all the advantages and comforts of other slaves; I know not what you mean by 'tried,'" retorted Omar, with a grim smile.

"He was wrenched, with his family, from home and friends and earthly hope, twenty years ago; he saw his children perish one by one under cruel treatment; he saw his wife sold into slavery, though he did not see her die—as I did—of a broken heart, and he suffered all the torments that ingenuity could devise before his spirit was set free."

Giovanni said this slowly and very gently, but two bright red spots on his pale careworn cheeks showed that he spoke with strong emotion.

“Well, well,” returned Omar, with a sinister smile, “that gives him all the better chance in the next life; for, according to the faith of you Christians, his sufferings here go to make weight in the matter of his salvation. Is it not so?”

“Men who call themselves Christians,” said the Padre, “do not all hold the same faith. There are those who appear to me to wrest Scripture to their own destruction; they find in one part thereof a description of true faith as distinguished from a dead, false, or spurious faith, which reveals its worthlessness by the absence of ‘works,’ and, founding on that, they refuse to accept the other portion of Scripture which saith that ‘by the works of the law shall no man living be justified.’ I, with many others, hold that there is no merit in our simply suffering. The sufferings and the obedience of Jesus Christ in our stead is all the merit on which we rest our hopes of salvation.”

“It may be so, Giovanni,” returned Omar carelessly, “but I profess not to understand such matters. The slave is dead, and thou hast one less to care for.”

With this sentiment, accompanied by a smile of pity and a shake of his head, the Minister of Marine left the Padre, and directed his steps towards the town. On his way he met the court story-teller or jester.

“Thou art early astir, Hadji Babi,” he said. “Is there aught in the wind?”

“There is much in the wind,” answered the jester gravely; “there is oxygen and nitrogen, if philosophers be right—which is an open question—and there is something lately discovered which they call ozone. Discoveries in time past give ground for expectation of discoveries in time to come. There is much in the wind, methinks.”

“True, true,” rejoined Omar, with an approving nod; “and what sayest thou as to the atmosphere of the palace?”

The jester, who had strong suspicions as to the good-faith of Omar, yet was not sufficiently in the confidence of the Dey to know exactly how matters stood, replied with caution—

“It is serene, as usual; not disturbed by untoward elements, as the air of a palace ought to be.”

“That is well, Hadji Baba,” returned Omar, in a confidential tone; “nevertheless thou knowest that the atmosphere in palaces is not always serene.—By the way, hast seen Sidi Hamet of late?”

“Not I,” replied the other carelessly.

“He is no friend of thine, it would seem,” said Omar.

“No,” answered the jester shortly.

“Nor of mine,” added Omar.

Each eyed the other narrowly as this was said.

“Wouldst do him a service if you could?” asked Omar.

“No,” said Baba.

“Nor I,” returned Omar.

“I owe service to no one save the Dey,” rejoined Baba. “If it were possible, I would for his sake put a bow-string round the neck of a certain Aga—”

“Ha!” interrupted Omar; “hast thou then seen aught to justify such strong measures? Come, Hadji Baba, thou knowest me to be thy master’s true friend. Tell me all. It shall be well for thee. It *might* be ill for thee, if thou didst decline; but fear not. I am thy friend, and the friend of Achmet. It behoves friends to aid each other in straits.”

The jester felt that he had committed himself, but at the same time conceived that he was justified in trusting one who had always been the intimate friend and adviser of his master. He therefore revealed all that he knew of the plot which was hatching, and of which he knew a great deal more than the Minister of Marine had expected, in consequence of his having been kept well informed by a negro girl, called Zooloo, whose capacity for eavesdropping was almost equal to a certain “bird of the air” which has been in all ages accredited with the powers of an electric telegraph.

In consequence of the information thus received, Sidi Omar made instant and formidable preparations to thwart the schemes of his adversary, in doing which, of course, he found it advantageous to uphold the Dey.

Achmet also made energetic preparations to defend himself, and was quite cool and collected when, about the usual breakfast hour, he received the British consul, and thanked him for the timely warning which he brought.

But the precautions of both were in vain, for Sidi Hamet was a man of vigour beyond his fellows.

Suddenly, when all seemed profoundly peaceful, some of his followers rushed upon the palace guards, disarmed them, and hauled down the standard. At the same hour—previously fixed—the port, the casba, and the gates of the city were surprised and taken. The lieutenants employed to

accomplish these feats at once announced that Sidi Hamet was about to become Dey of Algiers, in proof whereof they pointed to the naked flag-staff of the palace.

The janissaries, most of whom were indifferent as to who should rule, at once sided with the insurrectionists. Those who favoured Sidi Omar were cowed, and obliged to follow suit, though some of them—especially those at the Marina—held out for a time.

And now the reign of anarchy began. Knowing that, for a few hours, the city was destitute of a head, the rude Turkish soldiery took the law into their own hands, and indulged in every excess of riot, entering the houses of Jews and Moors by force, and ransacking them for hidden treasure. Of course, Sidi Hamet attempted to fulfil his engagement with Bacri, by placing guards over the houses of the more wealthy Jews, as well as giving orders to the troops not to molest them. But, like many other reckless men, he found himself incapable of controlling the forces which he had set in motion.

Many of the Jews, expecting this, had sought refuge in the houses of their friends, and in the British consulate, where the consul, finding himself, as it were, caught and involved in the insurrection, deemed it wise to remain for a time.

Chapter Sixteen.

Tells of Riot and Revolution in the Pirate City.

At the first sound of tumult, Achmet—who was seated at the time on his accustomed throne of judgment, ready to transact the ordinary business of the morning—sprang up and roused his pet lion to a sudden and towering pitch of fury by thrusting the point of his dagger into it. The result was that when the door burst open the huge creature sprang into the midst of the insurgents with a tremendous roar.

A volley of balls laid it low for ever, but the incident diverted attention for a moment from the Dey, and afforded him time to escape from the audience-chamber. Darting up a staircase, he gained the palace-roof, from which he sprang to a neighbouring roof and descended hastily to the street, throwing off some of his brilliant apparel as he ran, and snatching up a common burnous in which he enveloped himself.

Every avenue to the palace had been carefully secured by Sidi Hamet, but

it chanced that the one which Achmet selected was guarded by a young soldier, towards whom at some previous time he had shown acts of kindness.

On seeing the Dey hastening towards him the soldier lowered his musket, but appeared undecided how to act. Achmet, at once taking advantage of his hesitation, went boldly up to him, and reminding him of what he had formerly done for him, attempted to bribe him with a magnificent diamond ring; but the soldier refused the ring. Placing his left hand on his eyes he said hurriedly—

“Your servant can neither hear nor see.”

The Dey at once took the hint and passed on, but the delay proved fatal, for a band of Janissaries who were traversing the narrow streets in search of him came suddenly round a corner. Achmet instantly turned back and fled, hotly pursued by the yelling soldiers. They were quickly joined by others, and ere long a surging crowd followed the footsteps of the fugitive as he darted from one to another of the intricate streets. The Dey was a cool and courageous as well as an active man, and for some time eluded his pursuers, whose very eagerness to take his life caused them to thwart each other by getting jammed in several of the narrow passages.

At last Achmet gained the entrance to the palace of his wives. The door was already shut and secured, as well as guarded by two of the insurgent janissaries. Rendered desperate and savage by the hopelessness of his case, he cleft the skulls of these men with his sword, and was about to dash himself violently against the strong door, in the vain hope of bursting it open, when he was checked by hearing an appalling shriek inside. Next moment the door was flung wide open, and his faithful wife Ashweesha appeared with a dripping dagger in her hand.

No word was uttered, because none was needed. The Dey leaped in and shut the door violently, just as his infuriated pursuers gained it, while Ashweesha, with cool precision, shot in the heavy bolts, and let down the ponderous bars.

Achmet sank exhausted on one of the couches of the vestibule, regardless of the din which was made by the mob outside in their vain endeavours to batter down the strong oaken door.

“Do not give way,” said Ashweesha, falling on her knees beside him, and resting his head tenderly on her shoulder, “there are many who love you in the city. Escape over the terraces to the house of Jacob the Jew. He has many hiding-places, and will assuredly aid you.”

“I will try, for *your* sake, Ashweesha,” said Achmet, starting up; “I have little hope, it is true, for my enemies are too strong for me, but it were cowardly to fail for want of an effort. Allah bless thee, my wife!”

He kissed her, and immediately made for the staircase that led to the terrace.

Gaining the roof, he looked over the parapet, and the first glance was enough to convince him that he must bid adieu to hope. The palace was completely surrounded by the insurgents, who set up a fierce shout on observing him, and fired a volley of balls from many directions, all of which, however, passed harmlessly over his head.

“Thou seest, Ashweesha,” he said, with a sad smile, as the Sultana followed him to the terrace, “my time has come. It is fate. Allah has willed it so—there is therefore no possibility of averting it.”

“Say not so,” cried Ashweesha earnestly; “the terrace of Jacob is easily gained; once there you can descend to some of the back streets where no one looks for you.”

“I will make the attempt,” said the Dey, sternly casting his eyes over the city.

It was a sight that might well lull him with sad thoughts, for the roofs or terraces everywhere were covered with affrighted women—the houses of the Jews being especially distinguishable by the frantic manner in which the Jewesses wrung their hands, and otherwise displayed their grief and alarm.

A plank thrown from the parapet of his palace to that of the nearest house enabled Achmet to escape from those of his enemies who had gained an entrance below, but it was only a momentary respite; while they were searching for another plank to enable them to follow him, he attempted to cross over to the house of the Jew above mentioned. He was at once observed, on the frail bridge that supported him, and a shout of anger rose from the populace like a hoarse roar.

During the whole time in which the Dey was thus endeavouring to escape, his proud spirit fought against him, urging him to turn and dare his foes to do their worst. At the moment when their roar burst upon his ear, all desire to escape seemed to vanish. He stopped suddenly, drew himself up with his wonted look of dignified composure, and from his perilous and elevated position looked down almost reproachfully on those who had been wont to bow at his footstool.

The act was followed by another roar. A hundred muskets belched forth their deadly fire, and Achmet Dey fell headlong into the street.

The shattered body was instantly seized by the soldiers, and the head, severed from the trunk, was carried off to the palace, there to be presented as a trophy to Sidi Hamet, the new Dey of Algiers.

So soon as the green standard of the Prophet was run up on the flag-staff of the palace, announcing that a new ruler had seated himself on the throne, the period of recognised anarchy came to an end, and order began to be in some measure restored. Still, most of the wealthy inhabitants kept in close retirement, having, of course, hidden away most of their valuables and cash. The Jews, especially, were very chary of showing themselves in public, and those of them who had fled for refuge to the British consulate remained quiet, and were hospitably entertained for several days.

Among the first who fled to that shelter was the valiant Rais Ali. He entered with a trembling frame and pale visage about the time the incidents we have described were being enacted, and found Colonel Langley, with the aid of Ted Flaggan, engaged in preparing the various rooms of the building for the reception of those who, from past experience, he expected to require them.

“Why, Rais! what ails you?” demanded Colonel Langley in surprise, not unmingled with anger, for he had, on leaving home, placed the interpreter in charge of his family in his suburban villa.

“Oh! mass’r,” said Ali piteously; “yous no know wat dangers me hab if de janissary cotch me. Life not wuth wone buttin.”

“Rascal!” exclaimed the Colonel, “did I not charge you to guard my household? How dare you forsake your post? Are you not under my protection?”

“Ah! yis, yis, mass’r; but—but—yous no know de greatness of me danger —”

“Go, scoundrel!” exclaimed the Colonel, losing all patience with him; “return to your duty as fast as your horse can carry you, else I shall hand you over to the janissaries.”

“You hears what yer master says, don’t ’ee?” said Ted Flaggan, who viewed the infidelity and cowardice of the interpreter with supreme disgust, as he seized him by the nape of the neck and thrust him towards the door. “Git out, ye white-livered spalpeen, or I’ll multiply every bone in yer body by two.”

Rais Ali went with extreme reluctance, but there was no resisting the persuasive violence of Ted's powerful arm, nor the emphatic kick of the muscular leg with which he propelled his Moorish friend into the street. He did not wait, however, to remonstrate, but immediately drew forward the hood of his burnous and hurried away.

Just then Bacri entered, conducting a number of women and children who sought sanctuary there.

"Some of my people have need of the British arm to protect them," said the Jew, with a sad smile.

"And they shall have it," said the consul, taking Bacri by the hand.—"See them attended to, Flaggan," he added, turning to the seaman.

"Ay, ay, sir.—This way, my dears," said Ted, waving his hand with a fatherly air to the group of weeping women and children, and conducting them to one of the large chambers of the house, where Mrs Langley and Paulina had already spread out bedding, and made further preparations for a large party.

"Do you think, Bacri," said the consul, as the other was about to depart, "that there is much chance of Hamet succeeding?"

"I do," answered the Jew. "Achmet is now become very unpopular. He is too kind and generous to suit the tastes of the soldiers, and you are aware that the janissaries have it all their own way in this city."

This was indeed the case. The Turkish soldiers were extremely insolent and overbearing, alike to Moors and Jews, one of the privileges they claimed being to enter the gardens of the inhabitants whenever they pleased—not excepting those of the consuls—and eat and destroy fruit and vegetables at will.

"Achmet's party," added Bacri, "is not strong, while that of Hamet is not only numerous but influential. I fear much that the sands of his glass are nearly run out."

"It is a woeful state of things," observed the Colonel, while a slight flush mantled on his cheek—possibly at the thought of his having, as the representative of a civilised power, to bow his head and recognise such barbarians. "And you, Bacri, will you not also stay here?"

"No. There are others of my people who require my aid. I go to join them. I trust that Hamet's promise—if he succeeds—will sufficiently guard me from violence. It may be that they will respect my position. In any case I stay not here.—Farewell."

When the Jew had left, the consul turned to superintend the arrangements of his house, which by this time had assumed the appearance of a hospital or prison—so numerous and varied were the people who had fled thither for refuge.

Chief among the busy ones there was the ebony damsel from beyond the Zahara, whose tendency to damage Master Jim and to alarm Jim's mamma has already been remarked on more than once. Zubby's energies were, at the time, devoted to Paulina, in whom she took a deep interest. She had made one little nest of a blanket for her baby Angelina, and another similar nest for Master Jim, whose head she had bumped against the wall in putting him into it—without awaking him, however, for Jim was a sound sleeper, and used to bumps. She was now tearfully regarding the meeting of Paulina with her sister Angela. The latter had been brought to the consulate by Bacri, along with her mistress and some other members of the Jew's household, and the delight of the two sisters at this unexpected meeting afforded the susceptible Zubby inexpressible—we might almost say inconceivable—joy, as was evidenced by the rising of her black cheeks, the shutting of her blacker eyes, and the display of her gorgeous teeth—front and back—as well as her red gums.

"Oh! I'm *so* glad," exclaimed Angela, sitting down on a mat beside her sister, and gazing through her tears.

"So am I, darling," responded Paulina, "and so would baby be if she were awake and understood it."

Zubby looked as if she were on the point of awaking baby in order to enable her to understand it; fortunately she thought better of this.

"But I'm *so* frightened," added Angela, changing rather suddenly from a smile to a look of horror.

"Why, dearest?" asked Paulina.

"Oh! you've no idea what awful things I have heard since I went to live with the Jew, who is *very* kind to me, Paulina. They said they were going to kill the Dey."

"Who said, dear?"

"The—the people—you know. Of course I don't know who all the people are that come to see us, and I don't like to ask; but some of them are bad—oh, *so* bad!" she looked appallingly solemn here—"and then Mariano—"

"Ah! what of Mariano and Francisco and Lucien?" asked Paulina with increasing interest, while Zubby became desperately intelligent.

“Oh, he was sent on *such* a dangerous expedition,” continued Angela, blushing slightly, and more than slightly crying, “and when he was coming back he was caught in the streets, and carried off to that dreadful Bagnio, about which he has told me such awful horrors. So Bacri told me on his return, for Bacri had tried to save him, but couldn’t, and was nearly lost himself.—But what is all the noise about outside, sister—and the shooting off of guns?”

The noise referred to by the pretty Sicilian was caused by a party of rioters who, returning from the slaughter of the Dey, were hurrying towards the house of Bacri, intent on plunder. They were led by one of those big blustering men, styled bullies, who, in all lands, have a talent for taking the lead and talking loud when danger is slight, and modestly retiring when it is great.

Waving a scimitar, which already dripped with blood, this man headed the rushing crowd, and was the first to thunder for admittance at the Jew’s door. But no one answered his demands.

Shouting for a beam, he ran to a neighbouring pile of timber, and, with the aid of some others, returned bearing a battering-ram, which would soon have dashed in the door, if it had not been opened by Bacri himself, who had returned just in time to attempt to save his house from being pillaged.

For a few seconds the rioters were checked by surprise at the cool, calm bearing of the Jew. Then they dropped the beam, uttered a yell of execration, and rushed upon him, but were unexpectedly checked by one of their own number suddenly turning round, and in a voice of stern authority ordering the crowd to stand back.

The young janissary who acted thus unexpectedly was a tall handsome man of resolute bearing, but with a frame that rather denoted activity than strength. As he held a glittering sword threateningly in his right hand, his order was obeyed for a few seconds, and then it was observed that he held in his left hand a rope, which was tied round the neck of a Christian slave. This slave was none other than our unfortunate friend Francisco Rimini.

“Who art thou that issues commands so bravely?” demanded the bully, stepping forward.

“You must be aware, comrades,” said the young soldier, addressing the crowd rather than his interrogator, “that Sidi Hamet—now Dey of Algiers—has given strict orders that the houses of the Jews are to be respected. I am here to see these orders carried out.”

“And who art thou? again I demand,” said the bully, observing that his

comrades showed a tendency to waver, “that dost presume to—”

“I am one,” cried the young soldier, with a whirl of his gleaming blade so close to the man’s nose that he staggered back in alarm—“I am one who knows how to fulfil his duty. Perchance I may be one who shall even presume some day to mount the throne when Hamet Dey is tired of it—in which case I know of a bully whose head shall grace the highest spike on Bab-Azoun!”

The quiet smile with which the latter part of this speech was delivered, and the determined air of the youth, combined to make the soldiers laugh, so that the bully felt himself under the necessity of retiring.

Sheathing his sword with a business-like air, and rudely pushing his prisoner into the house, whither Bacri had already retired, the young soldier entered and shut the door.

“Lucien!” exclaimed Bacri in surprise, as he grasped the hand of the young janissary, “thou hast managed this business well, considering that thou art no Turk. How didst thou come to think of it?”

“I should never have thought of it, had not my worthy father suggested the idea,” replied Lucien, with a smile, as he removed the rope from the neck of his sire.—“Forgive me, father, if I have played my part too roughly—”

“Too roughly!” echoed the bluff merchant, with a laugh; “why, boy, dost think that thine old father has lost all his youthful vigour? I trow not.—You see, Signor Bacri, we have had information of what was impending for some days past, and although we could do nothing to avert the catastrophe, we thought it possible that we might manage to avoid the massacre at the palace. Knowing from report that the janissaries ran riot at such times, and being aware that my son Lucien—who is a noted linguist, Signor Bacri—spoke their language almost as well as a native, I suggested that he should procure a uniform and personate a janissary, while I should act the part of a runaway slave. Being a favourite with poor Achmet, as you know, Lucien had much influence among the domestics, and easily procured the disguise. The moment the insurrection took place we fled from the palace, and, as you see, here we are!”

“But why came you hither?” asked Bacri, with a troubled look.

“To whom else could we flee for shelter?” returned Lucien. “You are the only friend we have in the city—except, indeed, the Padre Giovanni, who has no power to save us.”

“Alas!” returned the Jew, leading his friends into the skiffa, and seating

himself on the edge of the fountain that played there, “you lean on a broken reed. My power is not sufficient to protect myself. Even now the soldiers might have taken my life, and robbed my house with impunity, had it not been for your courage, Lucien. My predecessor was shot in cold blood by a man who for the murder was only transported. If he had slain the poorest Turk, or even a Moor, he would have been strangled. We are a despised as well as persecuted race, and our influence or power to protect you is very small. Indeed, if it were known that I had given you shelter, my life would be forfeited, as well as yours. I have already placed it in great jeopardy in order to save Mariano—”

“Mariano!” exclaimed Francisco, turning an anxious gaze on the Jew; “is he, then, in danger?”

“He is captured by the Turks,” replied Bacri, “and is now in the Bagnio.”

“Where they will doubtless bastinado him to death,” said Francisco, grinding his teeth and clenching his hands with suppressed passion. “Bacri, I feel that in me which makes me long to run a-muck among these Turks.”

“I understand you not,” said Bacri.

“Why, I will take the first opportunity that offers to cut the throats of as many of these fiends as possible before they manage to cut mine. They say that vengeance is sweet. I will taste it and try,” said the merchant, with a grim smile.

“‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,’” returned Bacri slowly; “says not your own Scripture so?”

“It may be so, but man’s power of endurance is limited,” retorted Francisco gloomily.

“But God’s power to aid and strengthen is *not* limited,” returned the Jew. “Believe me, no good ever came of violence—at least from revengeful violence. No doubt a violent assault at the right time and with a right motive has often carried the day; but violence given way to for the mere purpose of gratifying the feelings is not only useless, it is hurtful and childish.”

“Hast never given way to such thyself, Bacri?” demanded Francisco with some asperity.

“I have,” replied the Jew with humility, “and it is because I have done so that I am enabled to speak with some authority as to the results. Your desire, I suppose, is to save Mariano. If you would attain that end, you

must learn to curb your passions and use the powers of judgment with which your Maker has endowed you."

"Well, well, we will let that point hang on its peg in the meantime," returned Francisco impatiently; "but what wouldst thou advise? we are at your mercy."

"I will do what I can to prove that a Jew is not ungrateful," answered Bacri. "If they leave us unmolested here till night-fall we may find a way of escape for you, at all events from the city, but it is only such as desperate men would choose to take."

"We *are* desperate men," said Lucien quietly.

"Once outside the walls," continued the Jew, "you must keep perfectly close and still by day, for a diligent search will be made for you, and only at night will you be able to creep out from your place of hiding to steal what you can for food, and to attempt to gain the coast, where your only chance of escape lies in seizing one of the small feluccas in which the piracies of the Algerines are carried on, and putting off to sea without provisions,—with the certainty of being pursued, and the all but certainty of being overtaken."

"Such risks are better than death or slavery," answered Francisco. "We think not of danger. The only thing that gives me concern is how we are to get my poor son out of the Bagnio."

"I will manage that for you," said Bacri, "for my gold is at least powerful with menials; but in order to do this I shall have to leave the house for a time and must conceal you in a cellar."

"Do as you will, Bacri," said Francisco; "we are in your hands and place implicit confidence in you."

"Well, follow me!" said the Jew.

Rising and leaving the skiffa, he conducted them down a staircase into a small cellar, which was almost too low to admit of their standing erect. Here he pointed out a shelf on which were a pot of water and a loaf, also a bundle of straw on which they might rest when so disposed. Having described carefully to them the manner of Mariano's escape over the roof of the house and by the city wall, and having given them the rope that had been used on that occasion, he said—

"Now I leave you. I must lock the trap-door that leads to this dungeon, and carry away the key, because if rioters were to break in and find the key in it, they would at once discover your refuge."

“And what if you be killed, Bacri, and we be left here without a soul in the world who knows of our whereabouts?” said Francisco, with a look of anxiety. “I’d rather be bastinadoed to death than be buried alive after all.”

“If it goes ill with me, as may well be the case,” answered the Jew, “you have only to make use of this crowbar and wrench off the lock of the door. But if rioters enter the house, be careful not to do it until some time after they are gone, and all is quiet. When free, you must use your own wisdom and discretion.—Farewell!”

Bacri ascended the trap-ladder and shut the door, leaving his friends in darkness which was made visible but not dispelled by a small lantern. They listened intently to his receding footsteps until the last faint echo left them in total silence.

Chapter Seventeen.

Francisco and his Son in Danger.

For several hours Francisco and his son sat on the bundle of straw listening intently to every sound, being naturally filled with anxiety as to the success of Bacri in his efforts to aid Mariano. At last they heard a loud knocking at the street door, which, after being repeated impatiently once or twice, was followed by a thunderous noise, as if the house were being entered by violence.

“The janissaries have returned,” said Francisco, with a serious look.

“We had better put out the light,” suggested Lucien, as a crashing sound announced the bursting in of the door.

“Do, lad.—Stay, let me get hold of this crowbar; it is better than nothing if it comes to—. Now, out with it!”

A moment more and they were in total darkness, while the trampling of feet overhead and the shouts of many voices told that the mob had entered the Jew’s dwelling.

Every moment the two prisoners expected to see the trap-door of their retreat wrenched open, but no one seemed to have discovered it, and they were beginning to breathe more freely, and to hope that they should escape, when there came a sudden and violent stamping just overhead. Then there was a sound of breaking timber, and presently the edge of the trap-door began to lift and creak under the pressure of some powerful

instrument. Another moment and it flew open and a man looked in, but of course could see nothing. Descending the steps, he called loudly for a light, and one of his comrades brought a lantern, with which he was about to descend, but, missing his footstep, he fell to the ground and extinguished it.

At that moment Lucien and his father drew back into the darkest part of the cellar, in the shadow of a small projection.

“Fetch another light!” shouted the soldiers.

“Now’s our time,” whispered Lucien, grasping his scimitar and preparing for a dash.

“Not yet,” replied his father, laying a strong grasp on his arm.

It was well that Lucien was restrained, for, while the soldiers were clamouring for a light, their comrades above gave a shout as though something new and surprising had been discovered. Full of curiosity, the soldiers in the cellar darted out.

“Now!” whispered Francisco.

Lucien at once sprang up the ladder, but looked out cautiously; for the sudden change in the sounds above apprised him that the robbers had left the apartment.

He saw them busy ransacking a cupboard in which the Jew had placed a large quantity of plate, a little of which was solid, and a large portion showy, but comparatively valueless. It had been arranged by him in such a way as to make a superb show of wealth, in the hope that it might tempt any who should take a fancy to rob his house to expend much of their labour and energy on that horde, thereby creating an important diversion from much more valuable deposits made elsewhere.

So busy were the plunderers that they left the room above the cellar quite unguarded.

“The coast is clear,” whispered Lucien, looking back. “We must act out our part of janissary and slave, father. Quick! Shoulder this small chest.”

Francisco obeyed almost mechanically, laid down the crowbar, threw a light chest that chanced to be near at hand on his shoulder, and followed his son silently up the staircase to the entrance-hall of the house, where they found two janissaries guarding the door.

“Pretend to stumble, father,” whispered Lucien, on observing them.

Francisco not only pretended to, but, in his zealous obedience, actually did stumble with such good will that he fell with a heavy crash on the marble pavement, sending the chest violently out at the door into the street, much to the amusement of the two sentinels.

“Scoundrel!” cried Lucien furiously, in Turkish, at the same time flourishing his scimitar and bestowing on his submissive parent a most unmerciful kick. “Up, out with you, and shoulder it! See that you mind your feet better, else the bastinado shall make them tingle!”

He brushed so savagely past the sentinels that they had not time to stop him, even if so disposed, then turning suddenly back, said—

“Your lantern, friend; one will serve you well enough, and I shall need the other with so awkward a slave.”

“Here it is, comrade,” replied the man; “but who and what hast thou got there?”

“Waste not your time in questions,” said Lucien hastily; “they have discovered heavy treasure inside, and require the aid of one of you. Surely it needs not two to guard a Jew’s door!”

He hurried off without awaiting a reply.

In perfect silence they traversed several narrow streets without meeting any one. It was nearly dark at the time, and it was evident that the rioters had been restrained by the new Dey, for their shouts were now heard in only two or three of the main thoroughfares.

During his service as scribe to Achmet, Lucien had visited all parts of the town, and was familiar with its main outlines, if not with its details. He therefore knew how to avoid the frequented parts, and yet take a pretty direct course for Bab-Azoun. But he was sorely perplexed as to how he should now act, for it was much too early in the night to make an attempt to get over the city walls.

In this dilemma he retired into the deep shadow of an old doorway, and covered up the lantern, while he held a whispered consultation with his father.

“It seems to me, my son,” said Francisco, sitting down on the chest which he had hitherto carried, “that we have only got out of the frying-pan into the fire; for it is not reason to expect that all the janissaries we chance to meet will let us pass without question, and I fear that you have no sufficient ground of excuse for wandering about the city at such hours in disturbed times in charge of a slave on whose countenance submission sits

with so bad a grace."

"True, father," answered Lucien, much perplexed; "perhaps it would be well to remain where we are till a later hour. If any one seeks to enter this dismal staircase, we can easily avoid observation by getting into one of its dark corners, and—"

He was interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps, and immediately retired with his father into one of the corners referred to.

"It is only two streets further on," said a low voice, which sounded familiar in the ears of the listeners. "There you shall be safe, for Jacob Mordecai is a trusty friend, and I will go see how it fares with our—"

"'Tis Bacri," whispered Lucien, as the voice died away in the distance.

"We must not lose sight of him," said Francisco, darting out.

Lucien outran his father, and quickly overtook Bacri and another man, who was completely enveloped in the folds of a burnous, such as was then, and still is, worn by the Bedouin Arabs.

On hearing the footsteps in pursuit, Bacri and his companion had commenced to run, but perceiving that only two men followed them, they turned and stood in an attitude of defence. He who wore the burnous flung back the hood, and, freeing his sword-arm from its folds, displayed to the astonished gaze of Lucien and Francisco the face and form of Mariano.

"Father!" he exclaimed; "Lucien!"

"Mariano!" cried Francisco, throwing his arms round his younger son and giving him a hearty kiss on each cheek.

"Hist! be quiet," said Bacri, seizing Francisco by the arm in his powerful grasp and dragging him along.

The interference of the Jew was not a moment too soon, for several soldiers who were patrolling the streets at the time overheard the sound of their voices and hurried towards them.

They ran now, in good earnest, and quickly reached the door of Jacob Mordecai's house, which Bacri opened with a key, and shut gently after letting his friends pass, so that the soldiers lost sight of them as if by a magical disappearance.

"Your house is plundered," said Francisco to Bacri, after Jacob Mordecai had conducted them to the skiffa of his dwelling.

"I guessed as much. But how came you to escape?" asked Bacri.

Lucien related the circumstances of their escape, while his father dipped his head in the fountain, for the purpose, as he remarked, of cooling his brains.

“And what is now to be done?” asked Mariano, with a look of perplexity. “Bacri has been kind enough to get me out of that horrible Bagnio just in time to save me from torture of some sort; but here we are in the heart of a city in a state of insurrection, with almost every street-corner guarded, and bands of men, that appear to me to be devils in turbans, going about seeking for subjects on whom to exercise their skill.”

“The insurrection is over—at least *this* one is over,” said Jacob Mordecai sadly, “though it may well be that another insurrection shall follow close on its heels; but it is probable that there will be some degree of peace now for a time, and the guarded condition of the town will favour your escape.”

“How so, Signor Mordecai?” asked Francisco; “it has hitherto been my belief as well as experience that a town in a state of siege was the reverse of favourable to anything implying freedom of action.”

“Thou art right, friend,” returned Jacob, with a smile, “and that absence of freedom will keep the streets clear of all who might otherwise interrupt thee, while, as to the guarded corners, my brother Bacri knows a variety of passages above and under ground, through which he will guide you past them to the city wall.”

“Then let us be gone without delay,” urged Francisco, “for, good sirs, my neck has for some time past felt sundry twinges, as though the bow-string were already around it.”

“Half an hour must elapse ere we can venture forth with safety,” said Bacri. “’Tis well that you have brought the knotted rope with you. Mariano knows how to use it. He will explain the mode of escape which you must follow, while I hold private converse with my brother.”

So saying the kindly Jew bowed his tall form to his friends with the air of a king, and accompanied Jacob Mordecai into an inner room.

At the end of the time specified—which had appeared an age to the impatient trio—Bacri returned to the skiffa with two coarse burnouses similar to the one worn by Mariano. He directed Francisco and Lucien to put these on, after exchanging their varied habiliments for the jacket, short drawers, and red fez or cap, worn by Moors of the middle class. He then produced some brown ochre, with which he stained their hands and their legs below the knee—these latter parts being usually uncovered in Moors who did not belong to the wealthy classes.

“Why not paint our faces too?” asked Mariano, amused at the figure they cut, despite the dangers which rendered the disguise necessary.

“Because neither the painting of your faces,” replied Bacri, “nor the shaving of your heads—which latter would be essential to the converting of you into genuine Moors—would constitute any disguise were your voices to be heard or your features to be scrutinised. You must be careful to pull the hoods of your burnouses well forward on your faces. All that you can hope to gain by your costume is to avoid attracting the attention of any whom you should chance to meet, or whom you may have to pass at a distance. If any one speaks to you after you reach the open country, refuse to answer. If he should insist on it, you must either run or fight, for which latter purpose I provide you with these short swords, which you will find better suited to your hands than the curved weapons of the Turks.”

“Signor Bacri,” said Francisco, examining the straight short weapon handed to him, “I thank thee for all thy kindness to me and my boys—especially for these swords, for assuredly unless thou canst also furnish me with a pair of young and active legs, I am like to have more of fighting than running hereafter. However, let us not waste more time in speech, for, as I have said, my neck already itches most uncomfortably.”

In deference to Francisco’s anxiety to be out of the city, which he was wont to style with great emphasis the Pirates’ Nest, Bacri hastened his preparations, and soon led them to the roof of the house of Jacob Mordecai, from which they scrambled to that of a friendly neighbour, and crossed over, with the care of burglars and the quiet steps of cats, to the other side. Here a difficulty met them, in the shape of a leap which was too long for Francisco’s heavy person to venture.

He might, indeed, have taken it with ease on level ground and in daylight; but, like his son Mariano on a somewhat similar occasion, he felt it difficult to screw up his courage to the point of springing across a black chasm, which he was aware descended some forty or fifty feet to the causeway of the street, and the opposite parapet, on which he was expected to alight like, a bird, appeared dim and ghostly in the uncertain light.

Twice did the courageous man bend himself to the leap, while the blood rushed with apoplectic violence to his bald head; and twice did his spirit fail him at the moment of need!

“Oh, Bacri!” he said in a hoarse whisper, wiping the perspiration from his brow, as he stood on the giddy height, “if there were only a damsel in distress on the opposite side, or a legion of Turks defying me to come on, I

could go over, methinks, like a rocket, but to be required to leap in cold blood upon next to nothing over an unfathomable abyss, really—. Hast never a morsel of plank about thee, Jacob?”

Fortunately for all parties, Jacob had a flower stand on his roof, to which he returned with Mariano, who wrenched a plank therefrom, and brought it to the point of difficulty.

After this they met with no serious obstruction. Sometimes descending below the streets and passing through cellars, at others crossing roofs or gliding along the darkest sides of dark walls and passages, they traversed the town without being challenged, and gained the southern wall near the point at which Mariano had crossed it on a former occasion.

Here the Jew bade them God-speed, and left them.

“I hope thou art sure of the road, Mariano?” said Francisco anxiously.

“Trust me, father; I know it well. Only have a care that you tread lightly and make no noise.—Come.”

Leading them to the point on the ramparts where poor Castello’s head still stood withering in the night-wind, Mariano bade them remain in shadow while he attached the rope to the spike.

The sentinel could be dimly seen, for there was no moon, pacing to and fro within two hundred yards of them. They watched and lay still while he sauntered towards them, and glided noiselessly and quickly to the rope while his back was turned.

Thus one by one they descended the wall, crossed the ditch, ascended the slope on the other side, without having been observed, and, ere long, were safe among the rocks and fastnesses of the Sahel hills.

Chapter Eighteen.

In which Soles are beaten and Men are sold—With Plots and Counterplots.

Comfortably ensconced in the palace of the Deys—elected by a majority of his comrades—the Aga Hamet proceeded to enjoy his high position, and to exercise the authority of ruler of the pirate city.

The day after his ascension of what we may call the dangerous throne, he sent for Hadji Baba the story-teller.

“Thou art a witty fellow, it seems?” said the Dey, when Baba made his appearance.

“So it has been said of me, and so I once thought,” replied the jester humbly; “but I have come to doubt the worth of my own wit, since it has led me to dwell in a palace.”

“How so, knave? What mean you?”

“In truth, I know not,” replied Baba. “My wit is scarce sufficient to make my meaning plain even to myself. Only I feel that the brilliancy of the wit of those who dwell in palaces is too much for me. ’Twere better, methinks, if I had remained on my shoemaker’s bench.”

“’Twere indeed better for thee to have done so, good fellow, if thou canst say nothing better than that,” replied Hamet angrily, for he was a stupid as well as an ambitious man. “Let’s have something better from thee, else the bastinado shall drive sense from thy heels into thy head.”

“Nay, then, it is hard,” returned Baba, with a smile, “to be asked to talk sense when I was hired by thy late master—”

“*My* late master!” roared the Dey.

“Surely I said ‘*my* late master,’ did I not?” returned Hadji Baba, rubbing his forehead as if he were confused—as, in truth, the poor fellow was, by the terrible scenes that had lately been enacted in the palace. “As I meant to say, then,—it is hard for me to talk sense when *my* late master hired me expressly to talk nonsense.”

“H’m, yes, very true,” replied the Dey, looking wise. “Let me, then, hear some of thy nonsense.”

“Ah, your highness, that is easily done,” said Baba, with sudden animation. “What shall be the subject of my discourse?—the affairs of state?”

The Dey nodded.

“Let me, then, make a broad statement of a nonsensical kind, which, in its particular applications may be said to be endless. A throne won by treachery, violence, and bloodshed cannot stand long in—”

“Villain!” shouted the Dey.

“Nay, I do but jest,” said Baba, with a look of simplicity.

“Jest or no jest, thou shalt smart for it,” cried the Dey, whose anger had been greatly roused.—“Ho! seize him and give him the bastinado, and

afterwards bring him hither again."

Two chaouses, who were in attendance in a neighbouring room, at once entered, and, seizing the unfortunate story-teller, hurried him down to an apartment in the palace which was reserved for punishments of various kinds, including strangulation. Here they stripped off Baba's embroidered shoes and white hose.

"We have long been fellow-servants under this roof," said Hadji Baba, as they were about to begin.

"That is true," replied one of the chaouses sternly.

"*I* shall be forgiven, and depend on it *thou* shalt not be forgotten," said Baba quietly.

The executioner, who knew that the story-teller had been a man of influence and power in the previous reign, hesitated.

"We have our orders, Hadji Baba," said he, remonstratively, "and you know that it is as much as our lives are worth to fail in our obedience."

"I bid you not to fail in the performance of your duty, but I counsel you to lay on lightly," returned the jester, with a grim smile.

"And how if the Dey should expect to hear thy cries, and afterwards to see thee limp into his presence?" asked the man in a tone of indecision.

"Depend on't he shall both see and hear," exclaimed Baba, with a laugh. "Thinkest thou that my head is not equal to the saving of my feet? Lay on *lightly*, so that there may be somewhat to show; but see thou dost not over-do it. I will engage to let the tyrant hear on the deafest side of his head, and will limp into his presence with most unfeigned sincerity."

"Well, then, I begin," said the man, applying a few strokes with a lithe rod to the soles of the jester's feet.

Baba was true to his word. He suddenly gave vent to a yell so appalling that the very executioner, accustomed though he was to such sounds, quailed for a moment, and said anxiously—

"Did I hit you too hard?"

"Hard!" echoed Baba, mingling a roar of laughter with his next yell. "Fear not, good comrade; go on, do thy duty—ha! ha!—ho–o–o! Stop! Why, it is worse than I had imagined," he added, as the man delivered a cut that was rather sharp. "But go on," cried Hadji Baba, with another yell; "I must have *something* to show, and *he* shall smart for it."

He followed up this remark with a series of amateur shrieks and howls so terrible that the hardened chaouses, being accustomed only to the genuine display of suffering, were overcome, and entreated him to desist.

The excitement of the exercise, the conflict of varied feelings, the smarting of his soles, the indignation of his soul, and the absurdity of the deception, had such an effect on Hadji Baba's spirit, that he experienced no difficulty whatever in limping like a confirmed cripple, and trembling like an aspen leaf when led into the presence of the tyrant.

"Ha!" exclaimed the Dey, "I think I have cured thee. Thou wilt talk no more nonsense, I warrant."

"Not a word, your highness, not a syllable," exclaimed the jester, falling on his knees, as the executioners retired. "Even though your highness were to hold the reins of power with a hand of gentleness and benignity, which I doubt not you will, I would not repeat such nonsense for the world."

"Gentleness and benignity," laughed the Dey, catching at the words, and paying little regard to what followed; "truly that were a novel feature in my character, as thou knowest well.—Now, listen, rascal: as thy feet are in good walking trim, I have an errand for thee. Go, tell Sidi Hassan that I want him, and see thou find him quickly, else another beating awaits thee."

"Your highness shall be obeyed," said the jester, with a profound obeisance, as he turned and limped out of the room.

Sidi Hassan had left the service of the British consul, without leave, just before the insurrection, and was seated in his own town mansion, sipping a cup of coffee, and conversing with Rais Ali, when the message reached him.

"Thou art but a cowardly fellow, a weak villain after all," said Hassan to some remark of the interpreter. "The man who plays fast and loose is sure to be brought low sooner or later. Why not leave the British consul's service now that a chance offers? It will be to thy advantage, for I can speak a good word for thee with the new Dey."

"Because," said Rais Ali anxiously, "although I have not a sensitive conscience, I cannot prevail on myself to betray my old master."

"Very good," said Hassan; "continue to vacillate until thy head is shaken off. Adieu. I must not keep his highness waiting."

So saying, he hastened to the palace, congratulating himself on the expected fulfilment of the promises which the late Aga Hamet had so lavishly made to him.

Like many other sycophants, Sidi Hassan had mistaken his man. The new Dey was well aware that Hassan was a turbulent, ambitious character, and thought that it would be best for his own interests to appoint him governor of a distant province of his dominions. Like many other coarse, though energetic, characters, Hamet also mistook his man. He did not know that Hassan would be content with nothing short of the position of second in command. When, therefore, he handed him, with many compliments, the paper containing his commission to the governorship of the province alluded to, he was greatly surprised to behold his former friend fly into a violent passion, tear the paper to pieces, and fling it on the ground, as he turned on his heel and left the room abruptly.

So suddenly and vigorously was the act done that Hamet's wonted coolness failed him for a moment, and Hassan had passed out into the street before he gave orders, in a voice of thunder, to have him arrested and brought back.

There is no doubt that in his present temper the Dey would have had his late colleague strangled on the spot, but, fortunately for himself, Sidi Hassan, instead of returning to his own house, went straight to the Marina, without having any definite object in view, save that he thirsted for vengeance, and meant to have it if possible.

On his way down he met the sapient interpreter, Blindi Bobi.

"Well, Bobi," he said, making an effort to look calm, "any probability of a rising among the slaves?"

"Not much," replied Bobi, in Turkish, shaking his head; "slaves don't like to have their heads cut off and their skin torn away in bits."

"True!" returned Hassan, smiling grimly. "Do you know where Sidi Omar is?"

"There," said Blindi Bobi in reply, pointing to the individual in question, and sidling rapidly away.

"Something ails you, methinks," said Omar, with a keen glance, as Hassan approached.

"Ay, the new Dey ails me," returned Hassan, with a feeling of desperation, for he felt that he was committing himself in thus speaking to one whom he knew to be his enemy—but anger often leads men into unwise speech.

"Has he deceived you?" asked Omar, with a quiet smile.

"Truly, yes. Had I known him better he should not have had mine aid. My

party followed *me*, not *him*. I could have led them otherwise, and still can."

"It may not be too late," said Omar pointedly, as he began to suspect that Hassan's thirst for revenge would carry him to any length.—"Are these sbirros in search of *you*?" he added on observing several of the officers of justice issue from the town gate.

Hassan turned pale.

"Your regrets come too late," said Omar significantly.

"My hand and party," said Hassan quickly, "are with you, Sidi Omar, if—if—"

"Step in here," said the Minister of Marine, pushing open a small side-door which led into his house.

Hassan obeyed, the door was shut, and he felt that he was now completely in the hands of one whom he had hitherto regarded with suspicion and dislike.

Of course the Minister of Marine understood this as well as himself, but he was too wily to let him read his thoughts by his looks or words.

"Hassan," he said, leading him into a small chamber in the seaward ramparts, which was lighted by a very small and strongly-barred window, "you are safe from immediate danger. We may here talk over our plans—for plans I at least have. The Dey fears me too much, as you know, to permit me to remain here as Minister of Marine. He is also so savage and hasty that I do not expect him to restrain his hand for more than a day or two. But I do not mean to give him a chance. My friends are already in possession of the casba—"

"Already!" exclaimed Hassan in surprise.

"Ay, and they hold other places besides. You and your party are of course doomed."

Hassan started to his feet.

"Nay—*were* doomed," said Omar, with a smile; "but what you have said just now alters the case. Give me your aid, and that of your party, and you shall have from *me* the post which Hamet has failed to give you. You know me to be a man of my word."

Whether Hassan was much comforted by the last remark is a point of uncertainty; but, feeling that he was now entirely in Omar's power, and

knowing that although the soldiers whom he styled his “party” were not nearly numerous or influential enough to place him on the throne, he willingly fell in with Omar’s views.

“When do you strike?” he asked.

“To-night,” said Omar.

“So soon?”

“The sooner the better. Come, we have time to go together to the casba. There thou wilt assemble thy chief men, and in my presence give them instructions.”

“You do not trust me,” said Hassan reproachfully.

“I *have* trusted you with my secret and my life,” replied Omar, “it is but fitting that thou shouldst give me some sure guarantee of thy friendship—though I doubt it not.”

“Be it so,” said Hassan, as he rose, and, following the conspirator into the street, hurried up to the citadel.

When Hamet Dey issued the order to have Sidi Hassan arrested, as already related, Hadji Baba, having returned to his wonted place in the lobby of the palace, heard the order, and, being a bold man, ventured into the audience-chamber after the Dey had left it. There he found the pieces of the torn commission. Picking them hastily up, he retired to his own apartment, put them together, and very soon guessed the nature of the quarrel between his new master and Sidi Hassan. Rightly concluding, from the insolent violence of Hassan’s exit and the extremity of the Dey’s rage, that the breach was irreparable, and knowing that Hassan was a man of some weight with the army, he resolved to ascertain the views of that worthy, and, in the event of his designing mischief, to aid him.

With this end in view he hastened out to search for Hassan, but, like the officers of justice, failed for some time to find him. He met, however, with two of the searchers in the persons of the chaouses who had so recently administered the bastinado in a mild manner to himself.

“Well met, comrades,” he said, with a nod; “we have no chance of finding Sidi Hassan, I fear, for when fools are abroad, wise men stop at home.”

“Thou hadst better get thee home, then,” retorted the executioner gruffly.

“Not badly thrust,” said the jester, laughing; “but have patience with me, comrade. I am no fool to-day. For once in a way I mean to act the wiseacre. You see,”—here he became confidential—“what the household

of the palace may expect from our new master."

"I see nothing," replied the man testily, "except that whatever master rules there is always plenty of work for me and my chum here to do; and let me tell you, Master Baba, that I am no revolutionist—I mind my own business."

"Very good, comrade," returned Baba lightly; "thou wilt play the fool to-day and change places with me. But bear in remembrance that a chaouse may have to be beaten as well as a jester, and that it would not be difficult to find others to take thy place. I might even be tempted to do so myself in case of necessity. It would be a rare jest to have a chaouse beaten by a jester, would it not?"

"If it ever comes to that, I hope you will prove grateful and lay on lightly," returned the man, with a grim smile.

"That will depend on thy behaviour. If thou art resolved to play the fool *now*, I must of necessity be in earnest *then*."

"What mean you?"

"This," said Baba, with sudden gravity, "that those who stand by a falling man must e'en fall along with him."

"But Hamet Dey is not falling. He has only just risen!" said the chaouse, with a perplexed look.

"He is not the first who has risen to fall," replied Hadji Baba gravely. "I would not stand in his slippers for all the treasure in the casba. Be wise, and take advice from a fool. Sidi Hassan did not quit the palace to-day to go and smoke his pipe. He is a man of power and a malcontent. There are other men of power who are also malcontents and more popular than Hamet. When this is so, it behoves the like of you and me to look carefully after our necks, to say nothing of our soles!"

As he said this an exclamation from the elder chaouse drew his attention to the fact that Sidi Hassan himself had just turned the corner of the street in which they had been conversing, and was at that moment so earnestly engaged in conversation with Sidi Omar, that the two approached without at first observing the officers of justice.

The instant Hassan's eye alighted on them, he stopped and became visibly paler. Omar also stopped, but pretended not to observe the change in his companion's countenance, nor its cause, as he continued the conversation.

"Hist!" whispered Hadji Baba to his companions, "when enemies become

sudden friends, we should know how to act."

It was evident from the look of anxiety and uncertainty depicted in the visage of the elder chaouse that he did not by any means know how to act. With the stern resolution of a bull-dog nature, however, he suddenly made up his mind to do his duty.

Advancing quickly toward Hassan, he was about to lay hold of him, when Hadji Baba stepped abruptly before him, and said with an affable air and smile—

"His Highness the Dey has sent these good fellows to arrest Sidi Hassan, and I have taken upon my own shoulders the weighty responsibility—being, as is well-known, a fool—to offer our united services in the reversal of the decree by the arrestment of the Dey instead."

"A bold jest, good fellow, and one that may cost thee thy life, for the present Dey understands not a jest."

"It is no jest," returned Baba, with a keen glance at Omar, whom he knew to be a plotter in the state; "my soles tingle now with what they have already received, and my thoughts tingle with what is yet to come. If you have need of friends in the palace here are two—good and true," said Baba, turning to the chaouses, who stood mute with amazement at the man's impudence, "and I am one, which makes three, according to the rules of arithmetic. If we are not wanted, then these men must do their duty, for Sidi Hassan is wanted, and we may as well go blithely to our doom together."

"Fellow," said Omar sternly, "dost know that I have power to have thee flayed alive without consulting thy master?"

"Nay, not without consulting my master," said Baba, bowing respectfully, "for my master is before me!"

"In sooth thou art a very impudent knave," returned Omar, smiling in spite of himself; "and were I the vile plotter thou imaginest, I should be afraid of having such a changeable friend in the palace."

"Am I changeable for preferring the kind master who was slain to him who slew him?" said Baba simply.

"That is true, Hadji Baba," returned Omar, suddenly changing his tone. —"Sidi Hassan, fortune is favourable to us. We will trust these men. They dare not play us false even though they would, because their own lives would be forfeited.—Hadji Baba, it may be well for thee to know that, while we avail ourselves of thine aid and that of thy friends, we are quite

independent of it, because it happens that the train is already laid, and nothing that thou couldst do, not even the instant alarm of the palace guards, could prevent it from being fired, I believe thee faithful, but this information may help to increase thy fidelity. Go, and, hark ’ee, be very careful to have the guards well placed and looked after to-night at *the hour of nine*.”

Chapter Nineteen.

Describes an Important Event in the Pirate City.

“Madman!” exclaimed the elder chaouse, after Omar and Hassan had left, “you have put the bow-string round our necks as well as your own.”

“True,” answered Baba, with a bland smile, “and if we would not have it drawn tight, we must e’en obey the commands of Omar the Dey.”

“I suppose we must,” returned the chaouse gloomily; “but it is hard enough to be compelled to spend our days in strangling, thrashing, burning, beheading, flaying, and tormenting other men, without the addition of having our own necks put in jeopardy.”

The injustice attaching to themselves and their office seemed to weigh heavily for some time on the minds of both the executioners, notwithstanding the sallies and remonstrances of Hadji Baba, but before reaching the palace they had gone through the not difficult process—to a Turk—of setting the whole matter down to the decrees of Fate, and washing their hands of all guilt.

That evening, as the hour for action drew nigh, Hadji Baba and his colleagues began to grow rather uneasy—all the more so that the Dey was in a particularly bad humour.

Being an ignorant and uneducated man, he had found the work of gathering up the reins of government a very difficult task, notwithstanding the boldness of his heart and the determination of his will. True, he had simplified several knotty matters by bastinadoing and cutting off the heads of all concerned, but this left a multitude of matters which could not be disposed of in that summary fashion.

Among other things, he had been thwarted in his resolution to get possession of Angela Diego, whom he intended to have made a slave of the palace. Finding that she had taken refuge with the British consul at his country house, he sent a peremptory order to have the girl returned

immediately, and, pending the result of that order, had locked Bacri up in a dungeon, with threats of the bastinado, and even death, in the event of any difficulty being thrown in the way.

After this he called for his coffee and pipe, his tame gazelle, chief executioners, and story-teller, resolving to throw the cares of state aside for the night and enjoy himself.

It was nearly eight o'clock when this order was given, to the consternation of Hadji Baba and his confederates, who were thus deprived of the power of rendering, in the guard-room, any assistance to the insurrectionists. There was, however, no alternative,—obedience was imperative.

"Sit down," said the Dey to the unfortunate jester, when he entered the presence, limping with much apparent difficulty. "We will extend clemency to thee, in the hope that thou wilt redeem thy character. I am fond of marvellous stories. Thou mayest sit on that carpet. Now, look behind thee."

Hadji Baba obeyed, and observed his two friends standing mute and motionless, like statues, ready at a moment's notice to do their master's bidding.

"Knowest thou these men?" asked the Dey.

"Your highness's slave knows them but too well," replied Baba, with a well-feigned shudder, which changed into a real one on his observing that a gorgeous time-piece opposite pointed to the hour of eight.

"Proceed, then, and acquit thee well, else thou shalt come to know them still better ere long."

Thus admonished, the story-teller cleared his throat, wished intensely for a draught of water, and taxed his fertile brain to the uttermost. At last under a feeling of absolute desperation, he began—

"Once upon a time—"

The Dey nodded, as though he thought that not a bad beginning.

"Once upon a time," continued Baba, and then, checking himself—"Your highness wishes a *very* marvellous story, I believe?"

"Yes, *very* marvellous," said the Dey, not quite pleased with the interruption.

"Your highness shall have it—a very marvellous story, and, what is more, it shall be a true story."

Hadji Baba said this with so much energy and fire that the Dey again nodded his approval, and sent two thin clouds of tobacco-smoke through his nostrils, as he patted the gazelle which crouched at his feet, resting its head on his knee, and gazing affectionately at the tyrant with its magnificent eyes.

“Once upon a time,” resumed the story-teller with sustained vigour and fluency, as he glanced at the clock, “there was a poor shoemaker who dwelt in a certain town, and was noted among his friends for his powers of song. One day the Sultan of the country chanced to hear of this man’s talent, and sent for him to the palace. He was so pleased with him that he made him his chief musician. This shoemaker possessed magical gifts.”

“Villain!” exclaimed the Dey, “didst thou not say that the story should be a true one? How can that be, when thou speakest of gifts which do not and never did exist?”

“Your highness’s slave,” replied Baba, “refers to those powers of *legerdemain*, or pretended magic, with which some men are gifted.”

“Go on,” returned the Dey.

“Well, one day the shoemaker offered to amuse the Sultan by mesmerising his guards.”

“Mesmerising!” interrupted the Dey, “what is that?”

“Throwing them into a sleep, your highness, against their will.”

“Well?”

“Well, the Sultan did not believe him, so he said, ‘If thou shalt put these guards into sleep against their wills, I will give thee my daughter in marriage.’ The shoemaker was well pleased to hear this, for the Sultan’s daughter was virtuous and very beautiful. So he begged the Sultan to order in his guards, which he did. Drawing them up in a line, the man began at the first, and made the passes or signs which are necessary to throw men into the mesmeric state. The first man winked very much, and smiled a little, but did not fall asleep.

“‘Ha!’ cried the Sultan, on seeing this, ‘thou art deceiving me, it seems!’

“‘Not so, your highness,’ replied the shoemaker; ‘it is not every man who can be thus subdued. Permit me to go on, and I will find one who is susceptible.’

“So the shoemaker went on and made the passes and signs which were necessary, until at last he found one who at once fell asleep, and then, one

after another, they all fell asleep, and no one could awake them except the shoemaker! I could not have believed this, your highness," said Hadji Baba, "if I had not been told it by the shoemaker himself, who also taught me the mysterious power of thus throwing men in to sleep, which in some languages is signified by the term 'throwing dust into their eyes.'"

"How!" exclaimed the Dey, "dost mean to tell me that thou couldst really do as that shoemaker did, and put my guards to sleep before mine eyes?"

"Your highness's slave presumes to answer emphatically—yes."

"By the beard of the Prophet, thou shalt prove it," said the Dey, whose curiosity was aroused.—"Ho, there! order the guard into my presence."

"Hold!" exclaimed Hadji Baba; "they must appear absolutely unarmed. In order that men should be brought under the influence of this power, it is necessary that they should divest themselves not only of all ordinary weapons, but also of the defensive armour of common-sense. That is the reason why the exercise of the power is so difficult. But, once accomplished, the effect is unquestionable and very amazing."

"Let them leave their arms behind them, then," said the Dey; "only see that two are left to keep the gates."

"Would it not be well," suggested Baba humbly, "that, considering the recent riots, more than two should be left to guard the palace gates? It is true, the more men that are brought under my influence the more likely is my influence to be effectual, but these chaouses might for a few minutes supply their place."

"Be it so!—Thou hearest?" said the Dey, turning to his executioners.

The chaouses went out as the men of the guard entered unarmed, and drew up in a line before the Dey.

"Now, show thy power, Hadji Baba."

"Your highness will, I trust, have patience for a few minutes," said Baba, observing that the clock still indicated ten minutes short of the appointed hour, "while I perform the curious, but necessary, motions which are essential to a happy result."

Saying this he advanced to the first guard in the line, and, throwing himself into a vigorously picturesque attitude, pointed with two fingers of the right hand at his eyes, trembling violently the while, as though he was exerting some tremendous but subtle energy.

The first guardsman gazed at him in mute amazement, but would as soon

have cut off his own head as have objected to the operation in such presence. He opened his eyes very wide with surprise, then looked at the points of Baba's fingers, which caused him to squint horribly, and finally smiled in spite of himself; whereupon the thought of having been guilty of such undignified conduct caused him to turn deadly pale with terror, all of which symptoms being regarded by the Dey as indications of coming success, were highly satisfactory.

Suddenly sweeping his hands in front of the man's face, and making a noise with his feet to distract attention, Baba whispered, "Shut your eyes if you would escape death!" and terminated the whole operation with a low growl.

The terrified man instantly shut his eyes, and Baba proceeded to operate on the next.

He had operated thus on about six of the men when there was heard a sudden crash and shouting in the guard-room. The disarmed guard at once made a rush towards the door, but were driven back by the chaouses, who sprang in and cut down two of the foremost with yataghans which were already blood-stained.

"Traitor!" shouted the Dey, drawing his scimitar and leaping furiously on Hadji Baba, but that worthy, being as active with his body as his brain, parried the cut with a cushion, and running in on the Dey seized him round the waist. It would soon have gone hard with him, however, Hamet being a much more powerful man, had not Sidi Omar, with a band of his janissaries, dashed in and secured him.

"But for enemies within thou hadst not overcome me thus easily," said the Dey bitterly, as two of the soldiers held him fast, while others bound his arms behind his back.

"Very true, Hamet," returned Omar, with quiet indifference of manner; "and now it remains with thee to choose thy death, for that must be speedily accomplished.—Ho! there, fetch the cup!"

A silver cup, filled with poison, was brought and presented to the unhappy Hamet by his former friend, Sidi Hassan.

"My undoing has been caused by leniency to dogs like thee," said the Dey, with a dark scowl; then, clearing his brow, and drawing himself up with dignity, he turned to Omar, and added, "I decline to take part in mine own death. If I must die, let me be led forth to the place of public execution. I would die as I have lived: with my face to my foes, and in the sight of my comrades."

“Be it so, we are ready,” returned Omar; “let the torch-men lead the way.”

As Omar truly said, they were indeed ready, for in a few seconds the front of the palace was lighted up with blazing torches, a procession was formed, and Hamet was led forth to the Bab-Azoun gate, and there strangled in the midst of an overawed and silent populace, who probably cared very little as to which of the unruly Turkish pirates who held them in subjection should misrule the unfortunate city.

Whether it was a touch of pity on the part of Omar, or the lateness of the hour, we know not, but from some cause or other Hamet was spared the too common cruelty of being twice revived with a glass of water during the process, before the final deed of strangulation was accomplished.

Thus was the undesirable throne of Algiers again emptied, and immediately afterwards Sidi Omar ascended it,—the third Dey within forty-eight hours!

Chapter Twenty.

Describes a Retreat among the Hills.

Let us turn now, good reader, to a scene more congenial—namely, the garden in front of the British consul’s country residence.

One evening, two weeks after the event just narrated, Ted Flaggan and Rais Ali chanced to meet at the gate.

“Ye’ve got stirrin’ times of it here intirely. Mister Ally Babby,” said the tar, whose familiarity almost verged on impudence; “what betwane you an’ the 40,000 thieves—more or less—in the town, I find it rare entertainment.”

“Yoos complimentary dis marnin’,” returned the interpreter, with a smile.

“It’s always the way with me. I howld that purliteness is chape.—Ye’ve heard the noos, I s’pose?”

“W’at noos?” demanded Ali.

“W’y, the noos that the war betwane this Raigincy of Algiers an’ Tunis is goin’ on raither favourable, and that forty mules were brought in this morning loaded with human heads.”

“Oh yes, I heers dat,” replied Ali carelessly, as he filled his pipe from

Flaggan's tobacco-pouch. "I sees all de hids as I comes up de road dis marnin'. Twinty more mule hims 'xpec' for come in de morrer mornin'."

"You don't mane it!" said Ted. "They seem to be free of their heads away at Tunis.—But there's more noos than that," continued the seaman, calmly scanning the seaward horizon, as he filled his pipe. "Have 'ee heard that the Dey Omar has cut off the head of Sidi Hassan for nothin' worse than a touch of imperliteness?"

"No, I not heers dat," answered Ali, with a look of interest. "I's werry glad."

"Glad! why so?"

"'Cos Sidi Hassan hims gib me reason to 'xpec' hims cut off *my* hid soonerer or laterer."

"It's my opinion," said Flaggan, with a peculiar smile, "that if ye go cutting away at one another like that, soonerer or laterer you'll all be like the converse o' the Kilkenny cats, and have nothin' left of 'ee but your heads stickin' on spikes above your gates and walls."

"Pr'aps so," was Ali's complacent reply.

At this point the conversation was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Angela and her sister Paulina, who carried in her arms the little Angelina. Following them at some distance came the amiable Zubby, bearing aloft on her shoulder—as being the place of greatest safety—Colonel Langley's youngest hope. Master Jim's back-bone had not at that time attained sufficient stiffness to warrant the position, but Zubby never thought of that; and Master Jim consequently complained in a series of yells and wry faces; but Zubby, being ignorant of the state of his feelings, did not mind that. Master Jim soon became purple in the visage, but Zubby, looking up at him, and supposing the effect to be the result of an unusual flow of spirits, rather enjoyed that than otherwise.

"Pr'aps I may be excused for the observation," said Flaggan, removing his pipe for a moment, and gazing over Paulina's shoulder, "but if that youngster ain't being strangulated he looks oncommon—"

A scream from Paulina, as she rushed back and bestowed on Zubby a box on the ear cut short the seaman's observation.

"Have I not told you again and again, girl, *never* to put the child on your shoulder?"

"Oh, mim, me forgit," exclaimed the penitent Zaharian.

“That will keep you in remembrance, then,” said Paulina, giving her another slap.

Her own little one woke up at this point and crowed, being too young, we presume, to laugh.

“Oh, Signor Flaggan,” said Angela earnestly, while her sister entered into converse with the interpreter, “have you heers yit ’bout de Signors Rimini?”

Angela had already acquired a very slight amount of broken English, which tumbled neatly from her pretty lips.

“Whist, cushla, whist!” interrupted the seaman, leading the girls slowly aside; “ye mustn’t spake out so plain afore that rascal Ally Babby, for though he’s a good enough soul whin asleep, I do belave he’s as big a thafe and liar as any wan of his antecessors or descendants from Adam to Moses back’ard an’ for’ard. What, now, an’ I’ll tell ’ee. I *have* heerd about ’em. There’s bin no end a’ sbirros—them’s the pleecemen, you know miss —scourin’ the country after them; but don’t look so scared-like, cushla, for they ain’t found ’em yet, an’ that feller Bacri, who, in my opinion, is the honestest man among the whole bilin’ of ’em, he’s bin an’ found out w’ere they’re hidin’, an—” here the seaman’s voice descended to a hoarse whisper, while his eyes and wrinkled forehead spoke volumes—“an’ he’s put me in commission to go an help ’em!”

“Dear man!” exclaimed Angela.

“Which,—Bacri or me?” asked Flaggan.

“Bacri, o’ course,” returned Angela, with a little laugh.

Flaggan nodded significantly.

“Yes, he *is* a dear man w’en you go to his shop; but he’s as chape as the most lib’ral Christian w’en he’s wanted to go an’ do a good turn to any one.”

“And yoo sure,” asked the girl, with rekindled earnestness in her large black eyes, “dat *all* Rimini safe—Francisco an’ Mar—”

“Ah, all safe,—Mariano inclusive,” said the sailor, with an intelligent nod. “I sees how the land lies. Depend on it that young feller ain’t likely to part with his skin without a pretty stiffish spurt for it.”

Although much of Flaggan’s language was incomprehensible to the pretty Sicilian, it was sufficiently clear to her sharp intelligence to enable her to follow the drift of his meaning; she blushed, as she turned away her head

with a queen-like grace peculiarly Italian, and said—

“When yoo go hoff—to seek?”

“This werry minit,” answered the sailor. “In fact I was just castin’ about in my mind w’en you came up how I could best throw Ally Babby off the scent as to w’ere I was goin’.”

“Me manages dat for yoo,” said Angela, with a bright significant smile, as she turned and called to the interpreter.

Ali, who was rather fond of female society, at once advanced with a bow of gracious orientality.

“Com here, Ali; yoo most ’xplain de flowers me bring hom yiserday.”

The polite Moor at once followed the pretty Italian, leaving Ted Flaggan with her sister.

“You’ll excuse me, ma’am, if I bids you raither an abrup’ good marnin’. It’s business I have on me hands that won’t kape nohow.”

Leaving Paulina in some surprise, the blunt seaman put his hands in his pockets, and went off whistling in the direction of Algiers. Turning aside before reaching the town, he ascended the Frais Vallon some distance, meeting with a few Arabs and one or two soldiers, none of whom, however, took much notice of him, as his stalwart figure and eccentric bearing and behaviour had become by that time familiar to most of the inhabitants of the town. It was known, moreover, that he was at the time under the protection of the British consul, and that he possessed another powerful protector in the shape of a short, heavy bludgeon, which he always carried unobtrusively with its head in the ample pouch of his pea-jacket.

As he proceeded up the valley, and, gradually passing from the broad road which had been formed by Christian slaves, to the narrow path at its somewhat rugged head, which had been made by goats, he grew more careless in his walk and rollicking in his air. At last he began to smile benignantly, and to address to himself a running commentary on things in general.

“You’ve got a fine time of it here all to yersilf, Mister Flaggan. Ah, it’s little the Dey knows what yer after, me boy, or it’s the last day ye’d have to call yer own. Well, now, it’s more like a drame than anything I knows on. What wid Turks an’ Moors an’ Jews, an’ white slaves of every lingo under the sun, I can’t rightly make out to remimber which it is—Europe, Asia, Afriky, or Ameriky—that I’m livin’ in! Never mind, yer all right wid

that blissid cownsl at yer back, an' this purty little thing in yer pokit."

He became silent, and seemed a little perplexed at this point, looking about as if in search of something.

"Coorious; I thought it was here I left it; but I niver had a good mimory for locality. Och! the number of times I was used to miss the way to school in Ould Ireland, though I thravelled it so often and knowed it so well! Surely an' it worn't under this rock I putt it, it must have bin under a relation. Faix, an' it was. Here ye are, me hearty, come along—hoop!"

Saying this, he gave a powerful tug at something under the rock in question, and drew forth a canvas bag or wallet, which had the appearance of being well filled.

Slinging this across his shoulder, Ted Flaggan pursued his way, moralising as he went, until he came to a rugged hollow among the hills, in which was a chaos of large stones, mingled with scrubby bushes. Here he paused again, and the wrinkles of perplexity returned to his brow, as he peered hither and thither.

Presently he observed a sharp-edged rock, which, projecting upwards, touched, as it were, the sky-line behind it. Moving to the right until he brought this rock exactly in line with another prominent boulder that lay beyond it, he advanced for about fifty yards, and then, stopping, looked cautiously round among the bushes.

"It must be hereabouts," he muttered, "for the Jew was werry partikler, an' bid me be partikler likewise, seein' that the hole is well hid, an' wan is apt to come on it raither—hah!"

Suddenly poor Ted fell headlong into the very hole in question, and would infallibly have broken his neck, if he had not happened to descend on the shoulders of a man who, crouched at the bottom of the hole, had been listening intently to the sound of his approach, and who now seized his throat in a grip that was obviously not that of a child!

The British tar was not slow to return the compliment with a grasp that was still less childlike—at the same time he gasped in much anxiety—

"Howld on, ye spalpeen, it's after yersilf I've come, sure; what, *won't* ye let go—eh?"

It was quite evident, from the tightening of the grip, that Mariano had no intention of letting go, for the good reason that, not understanding a word of what was said, he regarded the seaman as an enemy. Feeling rather than seeing this, for the hole was deep and dark, Flaggan was under the

necessity of showing fight in earnest, and there is no saying what would have been the result had not Lucien suddenly appeared from the interior of a subterranean cavern with which the hole communicated.

Lucien understood English well and spoke it fluently. One or two of Flaggan's exclamations enlightened him as to the true character of their unexpected visitor.

"Hold, Mariano!" he cried; "the man is evidently a friend."

"What's that ye're saying?" cried Flaggan, looking up, for he was still busy attempting to throttle Mariano.

"I tell my brother that you are a friend," said Lucien, scarce able to restrain laughter.

"Faix, then, it don't look like it from the tratement I resaive at yer hands.—Howsoever," said the seaman, relaxing his grip and rising, while Mariano did the same, "it's well for you that I am. Bacri sent me wid a few words o' comfort to 'ee, an' some purvisions, which I raither fear we've bin tramplin' about in the dirt; but—no, here it is," he added, picking up the wallet, which had come off in the struggle, "all right, an' I make no doubt it'll be of use to 'ee. But it's a poor sort o' lodgin' ye've got here: wouldn't it be better for all parties if we was to go on deck?"

"Not so," said Lucien, with a smile, as he fell in with the seaman's humour. "'Twere better to come to our cabin; this is only the hold of our ship.—Follow me."

So saying he went down on his hands and knees and disappeared in an impenetrably dark hole, not three feet high, which opened off the hole in which they stood.

Mariano pointed to it and motioned to the sailor to follow.

"Arter you, sir," said Ted, bowing politely.

Mariano laughed and followed his brother, and Ted Flaggan, muttering something about its being the "most strornar companion hatch *he'd* ever entered," followed suit.

A creep of two or three yards brought him into a cavern which was just high enough to admit of a man standing erect, and about eight or ten feet wide. At the farther extremity of it there was a small stone lamp, the dim light of which revealed the figure of stout Francisco Rimini sound asleep on a bundle of straw, wrapped negligently in his burnous, and with a stone for his pillow. Beside him stood an empty tin dish and a stone jar of the

picturesque form peculiar to the inhabitants of the Atlas Mountains; the sword given to him by Bacri lay within reach of his half-open hand.

Neither the scuffle outside nor the entrance of the party had disturbed the old man.

“My father is worn out with a fruitless search for food!” said Lucien, sitting down on a piece of rock and motioning to the seaman to do likewise. “We can venture out in search of food only at night, and last night was so intensely dark as well as stormy that we failed to procure anything. Our water jar and platter are empty.”

“Then I’ve just come in the nick of time,” said Flaggan, proceeding to unfasten his wallet and display its much-needed contents.

Chapter Twenty One.

Social Intercourse in the Cavern.

“Here you are,” cried the sympathetic Irishman, enlarging on the nature of the viands, as he spread them temptingly before the hungry men; “here’s food fit for a Dey, to say nothin’ of a month. Here’s a loaf—ain’t it?—about a fut an’ a half long an’ three inch thick. Coorious to look at, but a good un to eat I make no doubt—that’s a foundation for ’ee—there, cut ’im up an’ fire away; ye can’t listen properly to me discoorse till you git yer jaws to work. This here is a pie o’ some sort, I shud say, havin’ regard to the shape, only that ain’t the sort o’ wittles a Jew would send ’ee, is it? P’raps it’s wild-boar, for I’ve seed no end o’ them critters in the market. Maybe it’s lion, for they do says there’s lots o’ the king o’ beasts in the mountains hereabouts, though I can’t say I’ve heerd ’em roar yet. Hows’ever, wotever it is, here it is, so go ahead.—Hallo!” exclaimed Flaggan remonstratively, as he cast a glance at the sleeping man beside him, “you’ve begun without the ould man. Don’t ’ee think it ’ud be but filial-like to wake him up an’ start fair?”

“No, we’ll let him sleep on,” answered Lucien, as he began to eat with right good-will, in which he was ably seconded by his brother. “My father needs rest quite as much as food at present. He shall eat when he awakes.”

“Well, you knows best,” returned the seaman, taking out his pipe and tobacco-pouch; “it’s wan comfort anyhow that the wittles can’t get colder than they be now, and there’s overmuch for ’ee to ait the whole consarn at one bout, so the ould man’ll git his grub, though I must own it’d have

liked to have seed ’im start fair.—Hand over the glim, plaise.”

Lucien passed the small lantern to Flaggan, whose hard good-humoured features were for a few seconds suffused with a ruddy glow as he put the light close to it, and drew the flame vigorously into the bowl of his very black little pipe. Then, setting it down beside him, he smoked in silence and in much satisfaction, as he contemplated the hearty manner in which the young men enjoyed their meal.

When he had finished, Lucien bowed his head for a few seconds in silent thanksgiving, and Mariano paused respectfully while he did so. Then, taking a long draught from the earthenware bottle; the elder brother expressed his gratitude to the Jew for the opportune relief.

“That seems to be good stuff to judge be the way ye smacked yer lips,” observed Ted, removing his pipe and wiping his mouth with the sleeve of his coat.

“Try it,” said Lucien, handing him the bottle with a smile.

“Got no smell,” remarked the tar, as he put the bottle to his mouth —“wather!” he added contemptuously, as he put it down and resumed the pipe.

“The best of drink for man and beast,” said Lucien, laughing.

“May be so,” returned Flaggan shortly, “but I ain’t used to it.”

“Is it long since you came to this country?” asked Lucien, while he and Mariano rolled up two of those neat little cigarettes with which the denizens of Algiers at the present day are wont frequently to solace themselves.

This question called forth from the seaman the greater part of his recent history, in return for which Lucien, drawing forward the hood of his burnous, and resting his elbows on his knees, briefly related that of himself and his kindred.

“But why are *you* staying here, since, being a British subject, you are free to go when you please?” asked Lucien.

“Bekaise,” answered Flaggan, “it ain’t every day that a British ship calls in at this piratical nest, and I’d raither go off in a man-o’-war if I could manage it. There’s a merchantman came into port yesterday, I’m towld, an’ the cownsl advised me to go away with it; but it seems the Turks have made some difficulty about her, so I’ll wait. I’m in no hurry. The Flaggans, as a race, have been noted since the time of Adam—if not earlier—for

takin’ life aisy.”

“Then the Flaggans must be nearly related to the Arabs, for they take life easier than any race I ever met with,” said Lucien, laughing.

“I shud doubt that, ’cause they’re lazy, and *we* ain’t.—Talkin’ o’ that, sir,” said the seaman, as a sudden thought struck him, “I’m towld that you are learned in lingos an’ histories: could ye tell me who was the first people that got howld o’ this country? ’cause I’m coorious to know, having had a stiffish argiment on that pint with Rais Ali. He howlds that it was the Moors, an’ I’ve heerd say it was the Arabs.”

“You are both partly right,” replied Lucien; “for the Arabs were among the first conquerors of the land, but you are wrong in supposing Moors and Arabs to be altogether different races. When the Arabs came into the land some of them took to the plains inland, and continued their wild wandering idle style of life—half predatory, half pastoral; others took up their abode on the coast, became more mingled with the people of other sea-faring tribes, built towns, and came at last to be known as Mauri or Moors, from which the part of the land they dwelt in was known of old by the name of Mauritania.”

“But the aborigines,” continued Lucien—

“The abor-what? sir,” asked Flaggan, removing his pipe.

“The aborigines—the original inhabitants of the land—”

“Ah, I see, sir,” returned Ted; “them as was at the *werry* beginnin’, just arter Adam and Eve like; ’zactly so—fire away!”

“Well, I’m not quite sure,” replied Lucien, with a laugh, “that they came here immediately after the time of Adam, but at all events they came before the time of an authentic history, for our earliest historians record the fact that before any other nation invaded the northern shores of Africa, the country was in possession of a very warlike race, who, although overcome and driven from the plains by the more civilised and better-armed nations that successively attacked them, remained in the fastnesses of the Atlas Mountains absolutely unconquerable, and the descendants of these original inhabitants, known as Kabyles, remain a free and independent people at the present day, having successfully defied the might of Romans, Vandals, Arabs, and others, since the beginning of time.”

“You don’t say so, sir,” remarked Flaggan, blowing a thin cloud of admiration into the air; “well, an’ how did things git along arter the abridginal inhabitants was fust druv back into the mountains?”

“They did not get along quite so quietly as might have been desired,” said Lucien.

“The early history of the northern shores of Africa, now known as Algeria,” he continued, “is involved in the mists of antiquity.”

“Arrah! now, don’t misremimber,” said Ted, with a quiet grin, “that I ain’t bin edicated quite up to *that*.”

“Well, the beginning of it all,” said Lucien, returning the grin with a smile, “is rather foggy.”

“Ah! that’s plain enough. Heave ahead, an’ whativer ye do, steer clear o’ jaw-breakers,” murmured the seaman.

“The region,” said Lucien, “was first known as Numidia and Mauritania; Numidia being so named by the Greeks, who styled its wandering tribes *Nomads*. They were pastoral in their habits and thievish in their propensities, without laws or government worthy of the name. The Mauri, or Moors, devoted themselves to more settled pursuits, became traders and inhabitants of towns, and were a mixed race, although originally springing from the same stock as the *Nomads*, or Arabs. These were the early inhabitants, who lived during the foggy period.

“The Medes, Armenians, and Persians afterwards founded a colony, and traded with the natives of the interior. Then the Phoenicians landed, and began to build towns, of which Carthage, founded B.C. 853, was the chief. The Punic wars followed; Carthage, the city of Dido, fell, and Mauritania was annexed to Rome. For hundreds of years after this the country was a scene of frequent and bloody warfare, in which many great historical names figured, and many great armies were swept away to gratify human pride, ambition, and cupidity on the one hand, and to defend hearth and home on the other, until the Roman power extended far and wide, from the Libyan desert to the Atlantic, and from the Mediterranean to the Zahara. Near the time of our Saviour, (B.C. 46), Sallust was established by Julius Caesar as governor of Numidia, where he collected materials for his history of the Jugurthine wars, and at the same time enriched himself by the plunder of the now highly civilised and prosperous country.”

“Trust ’em, they’re all sure to do that, the haythens!” said Ted, whose pipe, by its varying cloudlets, became a pretty fair index to his feelings.

“Roman remains are now to be found,” continued Lucien, “all over the land, even in the wildest regions of the Atlas Mountains, although the Romans utterly failed to subdue the hardy prehistoric natives of these mountains, who rose against them at frequent intervals, despite temporary

defeats, and successfully defied all the various races who assailed them. During this Roman period the country was so well cultivated that it became, and was styled, ‘the granary of the Roman Empire.’ Christianity was also introduced, and became so wide-spread that at one time there were no fewer than a hundred and sixty bishoprics in northern Africa. Unquestionably there were then, as there always were and will be, some who were imbued with the peace-loving spirit of Christianity, including among them such men as Augustine, Tertullian, and Cyprian—whom, I dare say, Signor Flaggan, you never before heard of,—but it cannot be doubted that a vast majority possessed nothing of our religion but the name, for they constantly resorted to the most bitter warfare and violence to maintain their views.

“Towards the decline of the Roman Empire, Boniface, the proconsul, revolted against the Emperor Valentinian. The latter asked the aid of Genseric, king of the Vandals. Genseric most willingly agreed, went to Africa with 90,000 of his stalwart light-haired ‘barbarians’ of the north, was joined by the natives, and conquered the whole of Barbary, not for the Romans, but for himself! This was in the year 428, and the Vandals held the land for a hundred years.

“The Romans, in the year 533, again invaded northern Africa, re-took Carthage, and finally regained the country from the Vandals, but for only a short time, for the Moors constantly harassed them, until the land became desert in many places, owing to the decreasing population.

“Then came the followers of Mohammed, about the year 645, from across the Eastern deserts, enforcing religion by their favourite means, the sword; and in half a century they swept completely over the land to the Atlantic, causing the Crescent to supplant the Cross.

“But the Arabs did not stop here. About 711 they crossed over the sea, and carried the Crescent into Europe, under the bold and daring General Tarick, (Gebel-el-Tarick), from whom the spot where they landed came to be called Gibraltar. Hosts of Moors followed the Arab conquerors, and the Spaniards, confounding them, styled them all Moors.

“Barbary was for a long time after this under the rule of Emirs, appointed by the Caliphs; but they found little rest in Africa, for the Berbers and others harassed them continually.—It would weary you to go over the whole history of the wars and disputes which tore the wretched country to pieces during hundreds of years after this; but it may interest you to know that this city of Algiers was founded in the year 944 by Ziri, governor of Aschir, who established a hereditary throne for his race. But his dynasty came to an end in course of time, and so did that of others. Race rose

against race, and tribe against tribe, conquering and re-conquering; only a few of the coast towns being able to maintain their position as independent powers, and supporting themselves by piracy.

“By degrees the pirates of the Barbary coast began to be very formidable and daring, insomuch that from time to time various nations sent expeditions against them, with more or less success, but without materially checking their depredations. They were greatly strengthened in numbers at the time of the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. An expedition was fitted out against them by Ferdinand in 1501, and in 1505 the Spaniards made themselves masters of some of the chief Barbary towns, including Algiers.

“About this time two famous pirates ravaged the coasts of the Mediterranean—the brothers Barbarossa, sons of a fisherman. They were ambitious scoundrels, and aimed at a throne. An opportunity ere long presented itself. The Algerines invited them, in 1510, to come and free them from the Spanish yoke. They went gladly, defeated the Spaniards, and then the elder Barbarossa proclaimed himself king, after beheading Hassan, another famous corsair, killing the king, and committing fearful excesses on the inhabitants. This villain was slain by the men of an expedition sent against the Algerines by Charles the Fifth, but the Turks made his brother Hayradin king in his stead. In 1518 Hayradin Barbarossa sought recognition by the Sultan of Turkey. He was made Pasha, and from that time till now Algiers has remained a nominal dependency of Turkey; —a pest to the civilised world, and a disgrace to humanity.”

“Well, now,” observed Ted Flaggan, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, and refilling it; “there are more surprisin’ things in the history of this here world than I was aware of. It’s my unwarnished opinion—”

The expression of the seaman’s opinion was here cut short by the sudden awakening of the elder Rimini, who immediately sat bolt upright and stared at the stranger with eyes like those of an owl in sunshine.

Lucien hastened to explain, and to spread the food sent by Bacri before his father.

Feeling sensations like those of a starved wolf, Francisco merely smiled, nodded, and shook hands with the sailor, and then, seizing the remains of the loaf and the pork,—“wild-boar,” or “lion,” pie, commenced with infinite gusto to his unexpected meal.

Chapter Twenty Two.

Shows how the Pirates were wont to treat Men of Note.

When his hunger was appeased, Francisco Rimini turned to Ted Flaggan and asked him, through Lucien, to go over again in detail the course of action which Bacri advised him and his sons to adopt in order to effect their escape out of the country. “For,” said he with emphasis, “I’m neither a lion nor a rabbit, and cannot therefore make up my mind to spend the rest of my days in a hole.”

We will spare the reader Mister Flaggan’s repetition of the details referred to, merely remarking that they embraced careful directions as to when and where a boat would be found on the coast ready to carry them out to sea, and that they contained many earnest cautions to be wary, as nothing short of death by slow torture would be their fate if recaptured—this being their second attempt at escape.

Meanwhile circumstances were transpiring which gave a new turn to the state of affairs in the pirate city.

We have elsewhere remarked on the amazing fact that the great powers of Europe and America tolerated the system of barefaced piracy which was carried on by the Algerines against all nations that did not pay them “black-mail,” but it must not be supposed that this disgraceful submission was the result of fear or of indifference. The truth is, that the great powers were so busily engaged in throttling each other that they had no time to give proper attention to the Algerine wasps that stung them, and the wasps themselves were so besottedly ignorant of European affairs and of their own relative insignificance, so puffed up indeed by their supposed greatness—a delusion which was shamefully fostered by the action towards them of the great powers themselves—that they wilfully proceeded to extremities which a very little knowledge of other nations would have convinced them was the certain way to bring about their own ruin. The immense sums raised year after year by various European nations, and given to the pirates for the redemption of thousands of Christian slaves, proved that they were not indifferent to the scourge of the Mediterranean.

But in the midst of this disgraceful forbearance of the nations, there was an occasional growl from one and another, and a fierce side-glance at the wasps, which might have let them see that their nest was in danger.

For instance, in 1804 Admiral Nelson menaced the town with a large fleet, and not long afterwards the Americans absolutely declined to pay their “black-mail,” and sent a squadron to procure, or, if need were, to compel a

favourable treaty of peace with the Algerines. Other clouds arose here and there and overhung the doomed city, but the infatuated pirates remained blind as bats and insolent as monkeys.

Thus matters stood when the Dey Omar ascended the throne, and for some time afterwards.

One morning the English consul was summoned to attend the divan of the Dey, in connexion with a vessel which had lately been brought in as a prize by one of the Algerine corsairs.

The consul had previously presented himself at Court—as did all the other consuls—to pay his respects to the new Dey, and on a subsequent occasion had made an effort to press a point which had always been a matter of deep interest with him, namely, the bringing about of peace between the Algerines and the Portuguese. There were many Portuguese slaves in the town and neighbourhood at the time, and several officers of that country dwelt there, exempt from the duty of labouring like beasts of burden at the works on the walls and about the harbour, solely in virtue of annual tribute being paid by their friends. The former Dey, Achmet, had declined to oblige his friend Colonel Langley by making peace with Portugal, on the ground that he could not forego the advantages resulting from a state of warfare. The new Dey, Omar, was still less capable of being influenced by considerations of humanity.

“What would you have?” he said, when Colonel Langley spoke to him on the subject; “my people are brigands, and I am their chief! If I make peace with Portugal, it will be absolutely necessary that I should declare war with America, merely to keep my people employed!”

This was at all events candid, and the consul felt that it would be vain to press the matter he had so much at heart as long as Omar occupied the throne.

On his way down to the Marina, where the divan referred to was to be held, he met Blindi Bobi looking rather disconsolate. Having an hour or more to spare, he resolved to have a chat with him.

“Well, Bobby, my boy,” said the consul kindly, for the eccentric interpreter was a favourite, “you seem sad. Nothing wrong, I hope?”

“Not wi’ me, nohow,” responded Bobi, shaking his head. “Nuffin never wrong wi’ me. Always too well. Health to the mast-head—more nor I knows wat to do wid. Wishes I could die, I do—sometimes.”

“I grieve to hear that,” said the consul earnestly, for he saw that the man

was in no jesting humour. “Let me know what distresses you.”

“Sidi Cadua,” said Bobi.

“What! the father of poor Ashweesha, widow of my late friend Achmet Dey?” said the consul.

“Yis. Hush! Omar Dey—de divl,” growled Bobi in a low tones, “gits the berry stones to listen an’ reports wat peepil say.”

“Never fear,” returned the consul, smiling, “they dare not report what *I* say. Come, tell me about it.”

“Oh! it shockable,” said Bobi. “Come an’ see.” So saying, the poor man hurried off in the direction of a low-lying part of the town, closely followed by the consul. Here, seated on a plain mat in an empty cellar, which was destitute of furniture and almost of light, they found the father of the late Sultana. His gentle, kindly spirit seemed, like his frail old body, to be bowed to the very dust.

“My dear friend,” exclaimed the consul, almost overwhelmed with grief at the sight, “has the villain robbed you of all your wealth?”

“He has,” replied the old man, taking the consul’s proffered hand and pressing it warmly; “but he has done worse than that—”

“What! has he dared to—”

Sidi Cadua interrupted and answered the question by quietly removing the lower part of his robe, and exposing his feet, which were dreadfully swollen and scarred with the bastinado.

“Even that is not the worst of it,” said the old man, re-covering his mutilated feet; “my daughter, my sweet, tender Ashweesha, has been cruelly bastinadoed for—”

He broke down here, and, covering his face with his withered hands, groaned aloud.

For a few moments Colonel Langley could not speak.

“But why,” he said at length, “why such cruelty?”

Recovering himself, Sidi Cadua slowly related the circumstances. An enemy, he said, had accused him to the Dey Omar of having hidden away a large amount of treasure, and he had been put to the torture in order to force him to disclose the truth; but the truth was that he had never concealed treasure, and had no confession to make. Believing that his silence was the result of sheer obstinacy, and that the truth might perhaps

be extorted from his daughter, the cruel monster had the gentle Ashweesha dragged from her apartments and subjected to the bastinado.

“Dreadful!” exclaimed the consul. “Where is she now?”

Sidi Cadua silently pointed to a ragged old burnous in a dark corner of the little cellar, under which a human form lay crouched up and motionless.

“Not dead?” asked the consul anxiously.

“No, not dead,” replied the old man, with an upward glance of gratitude.

“Sidi Cadua,” exclaimed the consul, rising hastily, “excuse my leaving you now. I have to attend the divan. You shall hear from me soon. You—you,”—looking round—“have no other house than this—no food?”

“Nothing!” said the old man in a low voice, as his white head sank on his bosom.

“Listen, my man,” said the consul earnestly, as he hastened down to the Marina.

“Yis, Signor,” answered Bobi.

“Can you find time to go out to my house just now?”

“Yis, Signor.”

“Then, go—go as fast as legs or horse can carry you. See my wife; tell her what we have seen; let her send Rais Ali into town with other servants—separately, not to attract attention—with baskets—full baskets, you understand?”

“Yis, Signor, full to bustin’,” answered Bobi, with glittering eyes.

“Full as they can hold of all that is needful—she will understand that.—There, be off—lose no time,” said the consul, thrusting a quantity of silver into the man’s hand.

“Kurnul Langley,” said Bobi, with enthusiasm glowing in his solitary eye, as he turned to go; “you—by the beard of the Prophet!—you’re the ace of trumps!”

With this strong, if not elegant expression of his sentiments, the sympathetic Bobi hurried away, and Colonel Langley entered the divan, where were assembled the Dey and the chief officers of state.

The discussion on that occasion was conducted warmly, for the pirates believed that they had made a good and legitimate prize in the shape of a Greek vessel, which was owned by a Mr and Mrs de Lisle, who, with their

little son, were also captured.

Colonel Langley claimed these as British subjects, and the vessel as British property.

In this case the pirates had taken a precaution which, they had hoped, would save them all trouble. On boarding the vessel they had demanded all Mr de Lisle's papers and passports, which, when delivered up, were torn into atoms and thrown into the sea. Thus they sought to destroy all evidence of the nature of the prize.

Mr de Lisle was a native of Guernsey, and therefore an English subject. Early in life he had entered a commercial house in Holland, and been naturalised there. Afterwards he was sent to a branch of the same house in Naples, which at that time was occupied by the French. Amassing considerable property, he resolved to return to his native land, and hired a Greek vessel, as being a neutral one, to convey him. On his way, he fell into the hands of the Algerines.

At the divan the British consul claimed that Mr de Lisle and his family and property should be delivered up to him.

The Turks, with whom Colonel Langley was out of favour now that his friend Achmet was dead, were furious. How could he be an Englishman, they said, when it was well-known that the French would not have permitted one of their chief enemies to remain at Naples?

"And besides," added Omar, with a touch of sarcasm, "where are his papers to prove that what he says is true?"

The consul had made his demand with unusual firmness and dignity, for the memory of poor Sidi Cadua was strong upon him, but this latter remark somewhat perplexed him. Fortunately, at the moment, de Lisle himself, who was present, started up and said in English, across the divan —

"If I am permitted to go on board my vessel, I can still bring satisfactory evidence of my nationality."

The Turks were extremely unwilling to concede this, but when the consul turned and said to the Dey, "I trust your highness will not refuse so reasonable a request," he was permitted to go. In a short time he returned with the certificate of his marriage, which proved that he had been married in Guernsey, and was a British subject, to the inexpressible rage of the divan, who were compelled, however, to give in.

"Nevertheless, Monsieur le Console," said the Dey sternly, "if it shall be

proved, even twenty years hence, that you were wrong in this matter, you shall have to answer for it."

From that time the British consul and the Dey became open enemies, which was a matter of gratulation to the consuls of some of the other powers, who had been rather jealous of Colonel Langley's influence with the late Dey, Achmet.

Not long afterwards they would have been glad if his influence could have been restored; for Omar, being soured by what had occurred at the divan, as well as by many other things that crossed his imperious will, commenced to act in such an outrageous manner that the various consuls felt not only their independence but their lives in jeopardy.

Sending for the Danish consul one morning, Omar told that unfortunate man that his government had already been warned more than once to pay the tribute which was past due, and that he was going to stand their neglect no longer. He therefore ordered him to be put in chains, and sent forthwith to work in the stone-quarries.

The order was at once obeyed. A chaouse, at a signal from the Dey, seized the Danish consul by the waist-band, thrust him out of the palace, and along the streets to the Bagnio, there loaded him with chains, and led him forth to work with the slaves!

The consternation of the other consuls was of course extreme. The instant Colonel Langley heard of it, he ordered his horse and galloped into town, accompanied by Rais Ali and Ted Flaggan, the latter having constituted himself a sort of extra aide-de-camp or special attendant of the consul, in order to gratify the more easily an insatiable thirst for knowledge as to all that took place around him.

They went direct to the residence of the Danish consul, where they found his poor wife and children in the deepest grief and alarm at what had occurred, for it had been reported to them that Omar had said he would order the wife and children of the Danish consul to be put up for sale in the public slave-market if the tribute due by Denmark were not paid without further delay.

"Trust me, madam," said the Colonel with indignation, "we shall not suffer this barbarian to carry out his threats, and we will, moreover, see instant justice done to your husband."

Hastily writing several notes requesting a meeting with his brother consuls in the residence of the Dane, he despatched them by his two satellites, and very speedily the whole were assembled.

“Gentlemen,” said Colonel Langley, after some conversation, “it is imperative that we should act at once, unitedly and with decision. Anything like vacillation at such a crisis will encourage these barbarians to proceed to extremities which may end in our ruin. Need I call to your remembrance the recent case of the unhappy Dutch consul, who had dwelt twenty-three years in this city, and who, although an old and infirm man, was loaded with irons of sixty pounds’ weight, and marched out to labour with the other slaves, from which treatment he soon after died—all, forsooth, because his government had delayed to send the accustomed annual ‘present’ to the Dey at the appointed time? It concerns us all, gentlemen, that we should act promptly. We must proceed in a body at once—within this hour—to the palace, and demand that our brother consul shall instantly be set at liberty. For this purpose, if you agree with me, we must elect one of our number to be spokesman.”

At this point the other consuls interrupted the Colonel, by begging him to accept the office, and to lead them out at once.

“I accept it with pleasure,” said the Colonel, turning to Rais Ali, who stood at his elbow.—“Rais, you will accompany me to interpret—”

“Oh, Monsieur!” exclaimed Rais, who had not many minutes before been boasting to his friend Flaggan that he was a brave English tar as good as himself, but who now turned very pale; “oh no, no! Please, Monsieur, demand me not to go dis time for interprit. For certain the Dey hims kill me—hims kill all of us.”

“Well then, Rais,” replied the Colonel, somewhat amused at the man’s undisguised terror, “we shall all die together, and you will at least have the comfort of falling in goodly company.”

“But, master,” supplicated Rais, “I’s not a Turk; me dare not defy the Dey to hims visage. I’s only a craulie!”

By which the unhappy man meant to explain that he was only the son of a Turk by an Algerine mother, and that as such he could expect no mercy if he aided in bearding the Dey in his den; but the Colonel was inexorable, and poor Rais Ali was obliged to submit.

At this time, the English and French being at war, there existed a somewhat natural feeling of estrangement between the representatives of the two nations at Algiers. Colonel Langley thought the present a good opportunity to effect a better understanding between them. He therefore offered his arm to the French consul, who accepted it politely, though with feelings of surprise. Thus they walked out two and two into the street, and marched down the principal thoroughfare, across the great square, and

straight into the palace.

The amazement of the Algerines at this sight was great, for they were well aware of the bad feeling which had for many years existed between the leading couple in this little procession, or rather between their predecessors, some of whom had taken undignified, not to say disgraceful, methods of displaying their jealousy.

“Allah!” exclaimed the Algerines, turning up their eyes, “the English and French consuls walking together! Surely the old prophecy is about to come true, ‘When Christians are at peace among themselves the downfall of Algiers is decreed!’”

It is said that there really does exist a very old prophecy to this effect among the Mussulmans of Algeria, and certain it is that the prophecy was ultimately fulfilled, but at the time of which we write it was only anticipated.

Demanding an immediate audience, the party were admitted into the presence-chamber, where they created feelings of great surprise in the breasts of the pirate-king and his piratical courtiers.

When Rais Ali had tremblingly translated the demand which had been made with stern dignity by his master, the Dey flew into a towering rage, and actually foamed at the mouth, as he replied—

“Why art thou not glad that I thus punish your old enemy? Was not England lately at war with Denmark?”

“I am not glad,” answered the British consul, “because it is against the spirit of Christianity to cultivate feelings of revenge, and the fact that we were not long since at war with Denmark is no doubt the very reason why the Danes have found it difficult to pay, at the exact time, the debt which they will unquestionably discharge before long; but if your highness continues to act thus to their representative, in despite of his inviolable character, and in defiance of treaties wherein it is specified that the persons and families of consuls are to be held sacred, you may rest assured that no civilised nation will continue to treat with you.”

“What care the Deys of Algiers for the persons of consuls, which you deem so sacred?” said Omar savagely. “Hast thou not heard that in time past we have blown the consuls of refractory nations from the months of our cannon?”

“I have,” replied the Colonel calmly, “and I have also heard that Algiers has been several times bombarded, and nearly reduced to ashes. I do not

presume to use threats to your highness," added the consul firmly, though respectfully, "but I am here as spokesman of these representatives of various powers, to assure you that if you do not release the consul of Denmark immediately, we will all write to our respective governments to send vessels of war to remove us from a court where the law of nations is not respected."

Omar attempted to bluster a little more, but had sense enough to perceive that he had already gone too far, and at length consented to grant the consuls' demands. The condemned consul was immediately set at liberty, and his brethren returned to his residence in the same manner as they had left it, with this difference, that the French and English consuls walked in front, with the representative of Denmark between them.

This incident, as may be imagined, did not improve Omar's temper. Immediately after it, he issued some stringent decrees in reference to the slaves, and ordered the execution of six chief men of the State, whose presence in the city had been a source of danger to the consolidation of his power. Among other things, he made some stern laws in reference to runaway slaves; and, having his attention drawn to the fact that the scrivano-grande of the late Achmet, and his assistant secretary, had not yet been discovered, he not only ordered the search for them to be continued with increased diligence, but took the unusual method of offering a reward to any one who should find or bring news of them.

This caused the matter to be widely talked about, and among others who heard of the proclamation was a little Moorish girl named Ziffa.

Now this Ziffa was the only daughter of Hadji Baba, the Court story-teller, who, like the Vicar of Bray, managed to remain in office, no matter who should come into or go out of power.

We are sorry to have to record the fact that Ziffa was a bad child—a particularly naughty little girl. She told lies, and was a little thief, besides being fond of that despicable habit styled eavesdropping. She listened behind doors and curtains and at key-holes without feeling a particle of shame! It is probable that the child's attention would not have been arrested by the proclamation of the Dey, if it had not chanced that, during a visit which she was asked to pay to the garden of the British consul for the purpose of playing with Agnes Langley, she overheard Rais Ali and Ted Flaggan mention the name of Lucien Rimini. The seaman had found it necessary to take Rais into his confidence, and little Ziffa, in the exercise of her disgraceful vocation of eavesdropper, had overheard a little of their conversation about the Riminis. She did not, however, hear much, and, having no interest in the Riminis, forgot all about it.

On hearing the proclamation, however, she bethought her that something might be made out of the matter, if she could only manage to get her little friend Agnes to play the part of spy, and find out about things for her. Opportunity was not long wanting. She had an engagement that very day to go out to the consul's garden to spend the day with Agnes, and a faithful old negro servant of her father was to conduct her thither.

Ziffa was extremely fond of finery. Just as she was about to set out, her eye fell on a splendid diamond ring which lay on her father's dressing-table. Hadji Baba was very fond of this ring, as it had been a gift to him from Achmet, his former master, and he never went abroad without it, but a hasty summons to the palace had, on this occasion, caused him to forget it. As it was made for the little finger of Hadji Baba, which was remarkably thin, it exactly fitted the middle finger of Ziffa which was uncommonly fat. Seizing the ring, she thrust it into her bosom, resolving to astonish her friend Agnes. Then, running down-stairs to the old servant, she was soon on her way to the consul's garden.

"Agnes," she said, on finding herself alone with her friend, "I want you to do something for—"

"Oh what a lovely ring!" exclaimed Agnes, as Ziffa drew it out of her breast and put it on.

"Yes, isn't it pretty? But I must not let my old servant see it, lest he should tell my father, who'd be very angry if he knew I had taken it."

Agnes was taken by surprise, and remained silent. She had been so carefully trained to tell her father and mother everything, and to trust them, that it was a new and disagreeable idea to her the thought of doing anything secretly.

"Well, this is what I want," continued Ziffa; "I want you to listen to the talk of Rais Ali and the sailor who lives with you, when they don't know you are near, and tell me all that they say about a family named Rimini—will you?"

"Oh, I can't do that," said Agnes decidedly; "it would be wrong."

"What would be wrong?" asked Mrs Langley, coming out from a side-walk in the garden at that moment to fetch the children in to lunch.

Agnes blushed, looked down, and said nothing. Her mother at once dropped the subject, and led them into the house, where she learned from Agnes the nature of her little friend's proposal.

"Take no further notice of it, dear," said her mother, who guessed the

reason of the child's curiosity.

Leaving the friends at lunch in charge of Paulina Ruffini, she hastened to find Ted Flaggan, whom she warned to be more careful how he conversed with his friend Rais.

"What puzzles me, ma'am," said Ted, "is, how did the small critter understand me, seein' that she's a Moor?"

"That is easily explained: we have been teaching her English for some time, I regret to say, for the purpose of making her more of a companion to my daughter, who is fond of her sprightly ways. I knew that she was not quite so good a girl as I could have wished, but had no idea she was so deceitful. Go, find Rais Ali at once, and put him on his guard," said Mrs Langley, as she left the seaman and returned to the house.

Now, if there ever was a man who could not understand either how to deceive, or to guard against deception, or to do otherwise than take a straight course, that man was Ted Flaggan, and yet Ted thought himself to be an uncommonly sharp deceiver when occasion required.

Having received the caution above referred to, he thrust his hands into his coat-pockets, and with a frowning countenance went off in search of Rais Ali. Mariner-like, he descried him afar on the horizon of vision, as it were, bearing down under full sail along a narrow path between two hedges of aloes and cactus, which led to the house.

By a strange coincidence, Agnes and her friend came bounding out into the shrubbery at that moment, having finished their brief luncheon, and Ziffa chanced to catch sight of the stout mariner as he hastened to meet his friend.

With the intuitive sharpness of an Eastern mind she observed the fact, and with the native acuteness of a scheming little vixen, she guessed that something *might* turn up. Acting on the thought, she shouted—

"Wait a little, Agnes; I will hide: you shall find me."

Innocent Agnes obediently waited, while Ziffa ran down the wrong side of the cactus hedge, and kept up with the seaman—a little in rear of him.

"Ho! Ally Babby," shouted Ted Flaggan, when he was within hail—it might be a hundred yards or so—of his friend, "what d'ee think? that little brown-faced chip of Hadji Baba has been up here eavesdropping, and has got to windward of us a'most. Leastwise she knows enough o' the Riminis to want to know more—the dirty little spalpeen."

“Thank you,” thought Ziffa, as she listened.

When Flaggan had varied his remarks once or twice, by way of translating them, Rais Ali shook his head.

“That bad,” said he, “ver’ bad. We mus’ be tremendous cautious. Ziffa’s a little brute.”

“Ha!” thought Ziffa.

“You don’t say so?” observed Flaggan. “Well, now, I’d scarce have thought we had reason to be so fearful of a small thing, with a stupid brown face like that.”

“Brute!” muttered Ziffa inaudibly.

“Oh! she werry sharp chile,” returned Rais, “werry sharp—got ears and eyes from the sole of hers head to de top of hers feets.”

Ziffa said nothing, either mentally or otherwise, but looked rather pleased.

“Well,” continued Rais, “we won’t mention the name of Rimini again nowhars—only w’en we can’t help it, like.”

“Not a whisper,” said Flaggan; “but, be the way, it’ll be as well, before comin’ to that state of prudent silence, that you tell me if the noo hole they’ve gone to is near the owld wan. You see it’s my turn to go up wi’ provisions to-morrow night, and I hain’t had it rightly explained, d’ye see?”

Here Rais Ali described, with much elaboration, the exact position of the new hole to which the Rimini family had removed, at the head of Frais Vallon, and Mademoiselle Ziffa drank it all in with the most exuberant satisfaction.

Shortly afterwards Agnes Langley found her friend hiding close to the spot in the garden where she had last seen her.

That night Hadji Baba made an outrageous disturbance in his household as to the lost diamond ring, and finally fixed, with the sagacity of an unusually sharp man, on his old negro as being the culprit.

Next morning he resolved to have the old man before the cadi, after forenoon attendance at the palace. While there, he casually mentioned to Omar the circumstance of the theft of his ring, and asked leave to absent himself in the afternoon to have the case tried.

“Go,” said Omar gravely, “but see that thou forget not to temper justice with mercy.—By the way, tell me, friend Hadji, before thou goest, what

was the meaning of that strange request of thine the other day, and on which thou hast acted so much of late?”

The story-teller turned somewhat pale, and looked anxious.

The strange request referred to was to the effect that the Dey should give him no more gifts or wages, (in regard to both of which he was not liberal), but that instead thereof he, Hadji Baba, should be allowed to whisper confidentially in the Dey’s ear on all public occasions without umbrage being taken, and that the Dey should give him a nod and smile in reply. Omar, who was a penurious man, had willingly agreed to this proposal, and, as he now remarked, Baba had made frequent use of the license.

“Pardon me, your highness,” said Baba; “may I speak the truth without fear of consequences?”

“Truly thou mayest,” replied the Dey; “and it will be well that thou speakest nothing *but* the truth, else thou shalt have good reason to remember the consequences.”

“Well, then, your highness,” returned Baba boldly, “feeling that my income was not quite so good as my position at Court required, and desiring earnestly to increase it without further taxing the resources of your highness’s treasury, I ventured to make the request which I did, and the result has been—has been—most satisfactory.”

“Blockhead!” exclaimed the irritable Dey, “that does not explain the nature of the satisfaction.”

“Your slave was going to add,” said Hadji Baba hastily, “that my frequent whispering in your ear, and your highness’s gracious nods and smiles in reply, have resulted in my being considered one of the most influential favourites in the palace, so that my good word is esteemed of the utmost value, and paid for accordingly.”

Omar laughed heartily at this, and Hadji Baba, much relieved, retired to have his case tried before the cadi, taking his daughter with him, for she had assured him that she had seen the old servant take it.

The old servant pleaded not guilty with earnest solemnity.

“Are you quite sure you saw him take the ring?” demanded the cadi of Ziffa.

“Quite sure,” replied the girl.

“And you are sure you did *not* take it?” he asked of the negro.

“Absolutely certain,” answered the old man.

“And you are convinced that you once had the ring, and now have it not?” he said, turning to Hadji Baba.

“Quite.”

“The case is very perplexing,” said the cadi, turning to the administrators of the law who stood at his elbow; “give the master and the servant each one hundred strokes of the bastinado, twenty at a time, beginning with the servant.”

The officers at once seized on the old negro, threw him down and gave him twenty blows. They then advanced to Hadji Baba, and were about to seize him, when he cried out—

“Beware what thou doest! I am an officer of the Dey’s palace and may not be treated thus with impunity.”

The cadi, who either did not, or pretended not, to believe the statement, replied sententiously—

“Justice takes no note of persons.—Proceed.”

The officers threw Baba on his face, and were about to proceed, when Ziffa in alarm advanced with the ring and confessed her guilt.

Upon this the cadi was still further perplexed, for he could not now undo the injustice of the blows given to the negro. After a few minutes’ severe thought he awarded the diamond ring to the old servant, and the two hundred blows to the master as being a false accuser.

The award having been given, the case was dismissed, and Hadji Baba went home with smarting soles, resolved to punish Ziffa severely.

“Spare me!” said Ziffa, whimpering, when her father, seizing a rod, was about to begin.

“Nay, thou deservest it,” cried Baba, grasping her arm.

“Spare me!” repeated Ziffa, “and I will tell you a great secret, which will bring you money and credit.”

The curiosity of the story-teller was awakened.

“What is it thou hast to tell?”

“Promise me, father, that you won’t punish me if I tell you the secret.”

“I promise,” said Baba, “but see that it is really something worth knowing,

else will I give thee a severer flogging."

Hereupon the false Ziffa related all she knew about the hiding-place of the Rimini family. Her father immediately went to the palace, related it to the Dey, and claimed and received the reward.

That night a party of soldiers were sent off to search the head of Frais Vallon, and before morning they returned to town with Francisco and his two sons, whom they threw into their old prison the Bagnio, and loaded them heavily with chains.

Chapter Twenty Three.

In which Danger looms very Dark in and around the Pirate City.

About this time four vessels entered the port of Algiers. One was a French man-of-war with a British merchantman as a prize. The other was an Algerine felucca with a Sicilian brig which she had captured along with her crew of twenty men.

There were a number of men, women, and children on board the Frenchman's prize, all of whom, when informed of the port into which they had been taken, were thrown into a state of the utmost consternation, giving themselves up for lost—doomed to slavery for the remainder of their lives,—for the piratical character of the Algerines was well-known and much dreaded in those days by all the maritime nations. Newspapers and general knowledge, however, were not so prevalent then as now, and for a thousand Englishmen of the uneducated classes who knew that the Algerines were cruel pirates, probably not more than two or three were aware of the fact that England paid tribute to Algiers, and was represented at her Court by a consul. The crew of the prize, therefore, were raised from the lowest depths of despair to the highest heights of extravagant joy on hearing that they were free, and their gratitude knew no bounds when the consul sent Ted Flaggan and Rais Ali to conduct them from the Marina to his own town residence, where beds and board, attendance and consolation, were hospitably provided for them. We might add with truth that they were also provided with amusement, inasmuch as Ted Flaggan allowed the effervescence of his sympathetic spirit and wayward fancy to flow over in long discourses on Algerine piracy and practice in general, in comparison with which the "Arabian Nights" is tameness itself.

With the poor Sicilian captives, however, the case was very different, for the felucca which brought them in brought also a report that the Sicilian

government had behaved very brutally to some Algerines whom they had captured. The immediate result was that all the Sicilian captives then in Algeria were ordered to be heavily ironed and put to the severest work at the quarries and on the fortifications, while some of the most refractory among them were beaten to death, and others were thrown upon the large hooks outside the town-wall, or crucified.

To the latter death Francisco Rimini and his sons were condemned, and it is certain that the sentence would have been carried into immediate effect —for legal processes among the pirates were short, and judicial action was sharp—had not an event occurred which arrested for a brief period the hand of piratical justice.

This event was the arrival of a Sicilian priest, who was commissioned to treat for the exchange of prisoners and the ransom of a certain number of Sicilian slaves. The ransom of these slaves varied much according to their position, but a very common price demanded and paid was from 200 pounds to 400 pounds sterling. Of course noblemen, bankers, wealthy merchants, etcetera, were rated much higher than others, but not too high to render their ransom impossible, for the Algerines were adepts at this species of traffic, having been engaged in it more or less for several centuries! As the settlement of these ransoms, and the ascertaining as to who were the fortunate ones whose friends had succeeded in raising the necessary funds, required time, the execution of the Riminis and other Sicilians was, as we have said, delayed.

When Paulina and her sister heard of the arrival of the priest, they flew into each other’s arms, never doubting that the husband of the former must have at last raised the required sum for their ransom, but on being reminded that the priest was commissioned to redeem only captives of Sicily, they sat down and relieved themselves by giving way to floods of tears. Paulina, however, soon comforted herself by kissing her baby, and Angela consoled herself with the reflection that, at all events, Mariano and his father and brother would be ransomed, which, she naturally argued, would enable the first to move heaven and earth in order to effect the ransom of herself, and sister also. She did not know, poor girl, of the dreadful fate to which her lover was already doomed, for the consul, although aware of it, could not prevent it, and had not the heart to tell her.

Previous to this event the British consul had endeavoured to use his influence to bring about peace between the Algerines and Sicilians, but the former, having no desire for peace, made the terms such as could not be agreed to, namely, that the Sicilians should pay them 450 pounds before any negotiations for peace should be entered on. The rejection of this

proposal did not, of course, facilitate the arrangements that were now being made, and when Omar demanded that, in cases of exchange of prisoners, *two* Algerines should be returned for each Sicilian slave set free, it was seen that the prospect of a speedy termination of hostilities was not bright.

After some days spent in useless discussion, the worthy priest was obliged to return home without accomplishing his mission.

One good result, however, followed. Those captives who had been condemned to death, and for whom ransoms had been offered, were reprieved; nevertheless, they were treated with cruel severity. Of course the unfortunates for whom no ransom had been offered were treated with the utmost rigour, and the sentences of such as had been condemned to die were ordered to be carried out. In the case of poor Mariano the sentence was altered, for that headstrong youth had in his despair made such a fierce assault on his jailers that, despite his chains, he had well-nigh strangled three of them before he was effectually secured. He was therefore condemned to be buried alive in one of the huge square blocks of concrete with which the walls of a part of the fortifications were being strengthened.

While these things were pending, very different scenes were taking place at the French consulate, for great preparations were going on for a mask-ball which was about to take place there.

It may, perhaps, appear strange to some readers that any one could have the heart to engage in gaieties in the midst of such horrible scenes of injustice, cruelty, and death, but it must be remembered that human beings have a wonderful capacity for becoming used and indifferent to circumstances the most peculiar—as all history assures us—and it must also be borne in remembrance that the unfortunate Sicilian captives, whose sorrows and sufferings we have tried to depict, were a mere fraction of the community in the midst of which they suffered. It is probable that the great body of the people in Algiers at that time knew little, and cared less, about the Riminis and their brethren.

Since the reconciliation of the English and French Consuls, at the time when the representative of Denmark was rescued, the Frenchman had displayed great cordiality to the Briton—not only accepting the invitations which before he had refused, but drinking with apparent enthusiasm to the health of the English king, on the occasion of a dinner given in celebration of that monarch’s birthday at the British consulate.

The mask-ball was a very great affair indeed when it came off—which it

did at the country residence of the French consul. The mansion, which was Mauresque in style, was splendidly decorated with flags of various nations, and the skiffa, with its sparkling fountain and graceful palmettas, was a perfect blaze of variegated lamps. These hung amid the foliage of the creepers that twined round the curved marble pillars, and their red garish light contrasted powerfully with the clear purity of the star-lit sky, which formed the natural roof of the skiffa.

The grounds around the consulate were also decorated and lighted up with the taste for which the French are peculiarly noted.

Of course all the consuls were invited, with their respective families, and were present, with the exception of Mrs Langley, who happened to be indisposed, and Agnes, who stayed at home to nurse her mother. As an affair of the kind involved a good deal of laxity of what may be styled domestic discipline, many of the superior servants were also permitted to stroll about the grounds in fancy costumes. The consuls themselves appeared in their proper uniforms, but some of the members of their households displayed themselves in forms and aspects which we find it difficult to describe, while others of the guests habited themselves in the skins, and gave themselves the airs, of wild beasts of the forest.

There were wild-boars from the Jurjura Hills, overgrown monkeys from the gorge of “la Chiffa,” lions from Mount Atlas, and panthers from the Zahara, besides other nondescript creatures from nowhere. But these were a mere sprinkling in the gay scene of richly dressed ladies and gentlemen, among whom, strange to say, were not a few Christian slaves! These last were Italian and Portuguese officers who had been captured by the Algerines at various times. Had they been taken by civilised peoples, they would have been deemed prisoners of war, and treated as such, but the pirates styled them slaves, and would certainly have treated them as beasts of burden—as they treated hundreds of their countrymen—but for the fact that they had friends at home who paid an annual sum to purchase for them exemption from such drudgery. Having nothing to do, and no means of escaping, these unfortunate men did what they could to mitigate the woes of their brethren—though they were not allowed to do much—and entered more or less into the society and amusements of the city. Hence, though liable at any moment to be put in chains, or sent to the quarries, or even slain by their savage captors, they were to be found waltzing at the fancy ball of the French consul!

Among those who cut a very conspicuous—we may venture to say a beastly—figure that night was our friend Ted Flaggan. The eccentric tar, desiring to enjoy the ball under the shelter of a mask which would

preserve his incognito, had, with the aid of Rais Ali, provided himself with the complete skin of a wild-boar, including the head with its enormous tusks, and, having fitted it to his person, and practised a variety of appropriate antics, to the delight of Agnes, who was the only person besides Rais admitted to his secret, he felt himself to be quite up in his part —almost fitted to hold converse with the veritable denizens of the forest.

Flaggan had arranged that he was to put on the boar-dress in the town residence of Rais Ali. Being unwilling to attract the attention of the populace by passing through the streets, in broad daylight, he determined to postpone his advent to an advanced part of the evening.

It was a clear, calm night when he left the country residence of the British consul, with a crescent moon to light him on his way. He had just issued from the garden gate, when an old man, clad in a half-monkish robe, advanced, towards him with strides that would have done credit to a dragoon.

“I’ve me doubts that yer not so ancient as ye look, owld feller,” he said, eyeing the man keenly as he drew near, and moving the head of the thick stick, which, as usual, rested in his pocket, as if to hold it in readiness for instant action.

“Be the Breetish consul at home?” said the old man in broken English and in breathless haste.

“Not at present,” answered the seaman quickly, for he now saw that the man was really old, and that anxiety had given him strength to exert himself beyond his ordinary powers, “but I’m goin’ to meet him—bein’, if I may so spake, his edgedukong. Av you’ve anything in the world to say to his Excellency I’m your man to carry the message.”

“You are Breetish sailor, I zee,” returned the old man, sitting down and heaving a deep sigh, as if unable to recover breath. “You will onderstan’ when I say your Lord Exmouth do come quickly for bombard de city!”

“Onderstand you—is it?” exclaimed Ted, with sudden excitement. “Faix do I, but I don’t belave ye.”

“Man!” said the other, with an earnest look, “doos you tink I come here like dis for tell do Breetish consul a lie!”

“Shure yer right, an’ I’m a goose,” exclaimed the tar, becoming still more excited; “but are ’ee sure yer not mistaken, owld man?”

“Quite sure. Listen. Go, tell consul dat one boat come shore at Pointe Pescade, find me dere, capture me—carry me off. It was fishin’ boat in

Breetish pay. Dey find out who I be. Give leave to go shore again, and warn Breetish consul to look out, for Turk ver' savage when him hear of dis. Lord Exmouth, wid large fleet come straight to Algiers, for delivrin' all slaves, an' blow up de city."

"Hurrah!" shouted Flaggan, in a subdued voice, while he unpocketed the cudgel and twirled it over his head. "Good luck to 'ee, owld man. I'm off to tell the consul. Go in here an' they'll give 'ee some grub. Say I sent 'ee. —But, hallo!" he added, when on the point of starting, "what's yer name?"

"The Padre Giovanni," replied the old man.

"Och! it's mesilf has heard of 'ee," cried the seaman, as he turned and dashed down the road leading to the city. So energetic was he in his motions, and so quick was his pace, on reaching Bab-el-Oued gate, that the guard—a young soldier, lately arrived from Turkey—became suspicious, and ventured to intercept him.

Flaggan was in no humour to be stopped, or even spoken with. He made an attempt to force past, which caused the soldier to present his piece at him. Hereupon Ted drew forth his cudgel, hit the Turk a Donnybrookian whack over the skull that laid him flat on the ground, and took to his heels.

The rest of the guard, who saw this little incident and recognised the now well-known seaman, instantly gave chase; but Ted was too active for them. He doubled down a narrow street on his left, and in five minutes was beyond their reach. He knew now that nothing but prompt action could save him from immediate arrest and probable castigation. He therefore went straight to Rais Ali's house, and was admitted by an old negress.

Arraying himself in the skin of the wild boar, he attempted to cover himself with an Arab burnous, but, do what he could, he found it impossible to draw the hood over him in such a way as to conceal the head of the boar, and after his recent escapade with the guard, he felt that it was not safe to venture forth again uncovered. He therefore resolved to keep the boar's head exposed, and to venture boldly forth, despite the attention it was sure to attract.

To his great relief Rais himself came in just as he was about to start, and after relating his adventure, that worthy suggested that he should join half a dozen of the French consul's own servants, who were about to set out for the scene of festivities.

Agreeing to this plan, he passed through the streets without attracting much more attention than did his somewhat wildly-habited companions, and soon reached the French consul's residence, which was not more than

half a mile beyond the southern gate of the city.

The blaze of light and buzz of musical noise that reigned here immediately swallowed them up, so that Ted felt himself, for the time at least, to be safe. His grotesque figure did indeed attract some attention at first, for he was an exceeding tall and sturdy boar, but there were so many other notabilities from the forest and desert around him that he quickly sank into comparative insignificance.

Some of the other creatures referred to gave him a little uneasiness by their curiosity and desire to claim acquaintance, if not kindred, with him, but by humouring some, frightening others, running away from several, and tumbling a few into the bushes, he managed to push through the crowd of domestics unrecognised, and made his way into the outer lobby of the mansion.

Here, seated under the shadow of a Moorish arch way, drinking lemonade, in default, as he said, of better tipple, Ted resolved to bide his time, but his time seemed rather long of coming. He therefore boldly entered the magnificent skiffa in search of Colonel Langley.

His appearance was greeted with a shout of delight by several children who were present, and the French consul, willing to amuse them, went up, and, shaking hands with the boar, begged of him to join in the dance.

Poor Ted would have given anything to have known what was said to him, but, being utterly ignorant of French, shook his head and bowed with an air of profound respect, which piece of politeness caused his short and rather ill-fitting tail to stick straight up in the air for a moment, and drew roars of laughter from the company.

“Dansez, dansez-vous,” said the Frenchman, with more emphasis.

“Och! it’s that ye want, is it?” said Ted, much relieved; “sure I’ll do it with all the pleasure in life.—Clear the deck, boys!”

And without more ado the lively tar began to whistle a sailor’s hornpipe, and to dance the same with an amount of vigorous dexterity that had in former years made him the favourite of the forecastle.

The surprise soon merged into admiration, for our hero danced exceedingly well, and all eyes were attracted to him. Among others the British consul came forward to look on with much interest and curiosity, for his ear was perhaps the only one present to which the tune whistled was familiar.

Dancing close up to him, Ted Flaggan suddenly slipped, and, staggering as

if about to fall, flung his arm over the consul's shoulder.

"Take care!" said the latter, catching him.

"Och!" gasped Ted, sinking down and almost dragging the other after him, "spake to me av ye love me."

Amazed by this tender appeal, and suddenly suspecting the personality of the boar, the consul bent down while the rest of the onlookers crowded round,—and said in a low voice—

"Why, Flag—"

"Whist! whist! blood an thunder! it'll rain scimitars an' grape-shot av ye say a word! Mate me in the gardin' dear, *under the palm*."

This was said in the midst of a writhing and growling which would have done credit to a lunatic boar, if such there were!

"Not hurt, I hope?" said the French consul, coming forward.

"Not at all," replied Colonel Langley, rising with a smile, "the fellow is one of my domestics, and has almost over-acted his part. He will be all right in a minute if some one will be kind enough to fetch him a glass of water—"

"An' brandy, ochone!" exclaimed the boar, with another tremendous growl, that again sent the children into shouts of delight.

The brandy and water was brought, and Ted making a polite bow to the company, passed down the room with a slight tremor of the hornpipe in his legs, and a faint trill of the tune on his lips, both of which melted gradually into a boarish grunt and roll as he reached the lobby and passed out into the garden.

Hastening to a stately date-palm, of which there happened to be only one specimen in the garden of the French residence, the heated seaman pushed off his head, wiped his brow, drank the brandy and water, and threw away the tumbler, after which he sat down on a root, mechanically pulled out his pipe, and was in the act of filling it when Colonel Langley came hurriedly forwards.

"Why, Flaggan," he asked, "what's wrong? for something must be, to induce your strange conduct."

"Lord Exmouth, sir," replied Ted, rising up with an air of dignified importance which the elevated snout of the boar tended sadly to impair, "is in the offing with fifty sail o' the line, more or less, comin' to blow this

precious city into the middle of next week."

"Come, Flaggan, let us have it without jesting," said the consul gravely.

Thereupon Ted related in as serious a tone as it was possible for him to assume all that had been told by the Padre Giovanni.

"Our position will indeed be critical if this be true," muttered the consul, with a look of anxiety. "Omar is a man who fears nothing, and has unbounded faith in his men and fortifications. Moreover, he is utterly regardless of consequences, and has no mercy when once roused. My poor defenceless wife and children!—if—"

"You may depend upon *me*, sir," said Ted, seeing that he hesitated; "I'll stick to 'em, I will, through—"

"I have no doubt of that, my man," interrupted the consul, with a sad smile, "but your aid in this case will be useless. The fact is that the preservation of your life will be a more difficult matter for me to accomplish than my own. If Lord Exmouth really arrives and proceeds to extremities, I and my family will be in the greatest peril from these irate corsairs, but you, my poor fellow, are doomed whatever happens, seeing that you have laid violent hands on the Turkish guard of the gates."

"Sure, an' small blame to me," said Ted.

"I do not blame you, but the Turks will, and they will do more,—they will strangle you for a certainty the moment they get hold of you, and no power that I possess can save you, so that your only chance lies in making your escape from the city, either by land or sea."

"An' that won't be aisy, sur," said the seaman, with a perplexed look.

"Indeed it will not. You may be sure that the Turks are even now searching for you, and as they know that I am here, and that you belong to my household—"

"By your lave," said Ted suddenly, "it sames to me that it's time for Ted Flaggan to look after his owld bones. I'm grateful to 'ee, sur.—Good-night."

He pulled his boar-head down without awaiting a reply, and went hastily off in the direction of a small outhouse where Rais Ali was enjoying himself amid a circle of the French consul's domestics.

Dashing forward, he seized his friend by the arm and dragged him out by main force, to the amusement of the domestics, who thought it was a practical jest.

“Arrah! don’t stare like that, but come along wid ye,” said Ted, hasting to a neighbouring thicket, into the very heart of which he penetrated before halting.

“What be go wrong?” exclaimed Rais.

“They’re after me, lad. Don’t waste time spaikin’. You’ve got your burnous here, haven’t ye?”

“Yis!”

“Go, fetch it, an’ sharp’s the word.”

Flaggan’s tone and actions were such as to instil a spirit of prompt unquestioning obedience into his friend, who instantly went off; and in a few seconds, (which seemed years to Ted), returned with his burnous.

While the seaman quickly but quietly divested himself of the boar-skin, and put on the burnous with the hood well drawn over his face, he related to his friend the incident at the gate, without, however, mentioning the true cause of his behaviour.

“An’ wat for you go be do now?” asked Rais Ali anxiously.

“To make me escape, sure,” said Ted, holding the head of his cudgel close up to his friend’s nose; “across the mountains or over the say, by hook or crook, or through the air, escape I will somehow, even though I should have to jump out at me mouth an’ lave me body behind me, for depind upon it that all the Turks an’ Moors an’ boors an’ naigers in the Pirates’ Nest ain’t able to take Ted Flaggan alive!”

“Unposs’ble!” exclaimed Rais decidedly.

“I manes to try, anyhow,” returned Ted; “so give us your flipper, owld boy; I’ve a sort o’ sneakin’ regard for ’ee, tho’ ye haven’t much to boast of in the way o’ pluck.”

“Unposs’ble!” again ejaculated Rais Ali, with greater decision than before.

“Well, good-bye to ’ee—I’m off.”

“Stay. *I* will save you.”

“How?” asked Ted, pausing with some impatience.

“Stay. Hold. Stop,” cried, the Moor, seizing the arm of his friend. “You be mad. Unposs’ble I say?—no, yes, poss’ble anuf for you ’scape without your body. But me save bof. Me knows hole in de rocks; come take you dere,”—here the Moor became emphatic, and lowered his voice to a

whisper,—“no boddy do knows it. All dead w’at know’d it vonce. Me was a—what you call?—pirate vonce. Hah! nebber mind, come ’long. Queek, no time for d’liberazhun.”

“Git along then, old feller,” said Flaggan, thrusting his companion through the thicket very unceremoniously. “Don’t palaver so much, but take the helm; an’ wotiver ye do, clap on all sail—ivery stitch you can carry—for the case is desprit.”

Rais Ali did “clap on all sail,” steered his friend through the brightly-lighted grounds and laughing throng of revellers, through numerous lanes between hedges of aloes and prickly pear, over the Sahel hills, and away to the northward, until they reached the neighbourhood of Pointe Pescade, which lay about three and a half miles on the other side of the town.

“It’s a purty big raigion hereaway,” said Flaggan, during a brief halt to recover breath; “why shouldn’t I steer for the Great Zahairy, an’ live wi’ the Bedooin Arabs? I s’pose it’s becase they’ll always be doin’ somethin’ or other that they’ve got the name.”

“’Cause they’d robb an’ kill you,” replied Rais.

“Umph!” ejaculated Ted, as they descended to the bold rocky coast, where the celebrated pirate of old was wont to mount guard over the Mediterranean.

“Betterer for you trust to de sea,” said Rais.

“True for ye, boy—seein’ that I’m a say-farin’ man,” returned Ted.

Proceeding cautiously down a wild and almost invisible pathway among the cliffs, Rais Ali reached the base at a part where the sea ran under the overhanging rocks. Stepping into a pool which looked black and deep, but which was only a few inches at the edge, he waded slowly into the interior of a cavern, the extremity of which was quite dry. It was dark as Erebus, but flint and steel soon produced a light.

“There vas vonce a torch here,” said Rais, looking about hastily, while the vault above was lighted for a few seconds by the bunch of dry grass which he had brought with him, “but it long since me be—ah, here it is; dis am de torch.”

He lighted it, and showed his friend the form and size of the cave, reiterated that it was known to no one but himself—at least so he thought—advised him to remain close all day and keep a good look-out seaward at night, promised to return with food the following evening, and finally left him to his meditations.

A Moor named Geronimo was, about the beginning of the seventeenth century, converted to Christianity by a captive. The reigning Pasha ordered him to recant, and gave him *twenty-four* hours to make up his mind. On his refusal, the Pasha caused Geronimo to be buried alive in the mud which was being poured into moulds and dried into blocks, for the purpose of building fort Bab-el-Oued. In this block the poor martyr was built into the wall of the fort, which was thereafter named the "Fort of the Twenty-four Hours." The incident was soon nearly forgotten. Two and a half centuries afterwards, (in December 1853), the French, while carrying out their improvements in the town, destroyed the ancient "Fort of the Twenty-four Hours," but were warned, by one who was well read in the history of the place, to be careful on razing a certain part of the walls to examine them well. They did so, and found the body of Geronimo—or, rather, the *mould* formed by his body, which latter, of course, had crumbled to dust. A plaster cast was taken from this mould, and this cast—which gives an almost perfect representation of the martyr lying on his face, with his hands tied behind his back—is now in the museum of the library of Algiers.

Chapter Twenty Four.

The Dark Clouds begin to thicken—A Rescue attempted—Master Jim plays a Conspicuous Part.

In the course of a few days the rumour reached Algiers that England was in right earnest about sending a fleet to bombard the city, and at the same time Colonel Langley learned, through information privately conveyed to him, that the report of Padre Giovanni was to some extent incorrect. The old man had misunderstood the message given to him, and represented the fleet as being in the offing, whereas it had not at that time left England.

The caution, however, was useful, inasmuch as it put the British consul on his guard.

It was at the end of one of the Mohammedan festivals when the news reached the Dey's ears. He was engaged at the time in celebrating the festival, surrounded by his courtiers and those of the consuls who chanced to be in favour. The tribute due by Denmark and Spain not having been paid, their respective representatives were not present, and the Dey was debating in his mind the propriety of sending them to work in irons with the slaves.

Among other entertainments there was a wrestling match about to take place in the skiffa of the palace. Before proceeding to the skiffa, Omar had shown his guests his menagerie, which contained some remarkably fine specimens of the black-maned lion, with a variety of panthers, jackals, monkeys, and other animals. This was rather a trying ordeal for the nerves of the timid, because the animals were not in cages, being merely fastened by ropes to rings in the walls—all save one, called the “Spaniard,” who was exhibited as the roarer of the tribe, and had to be stirred up to partial madness occasionally to show his powers of lung; he was therefore prudently kept in a wooden cage.

Entering the skiffa, the Dey took his seat on a throne, and ordered the wrestlers to begin.

In the centre of the court was a pile of sawdust, surmounted by a flag. At a given signal two naked and well-oiled Moors of magnificent proportions rushed into the court and scattered the sawdust on the floor, after which they seized each other round their waists, and began an exciting struggle, which ended after a few minutes in one—of them being thrown. Another champion then came forward, and the scene was repeated several times, until one came off the conqueror, and obtained from the Dey a purse of gold as his reward. The unsuccessful athletes were consoled by having a handful of silver thrown into the arena to be scrambled for. It seemed as if more enjoyment was got by the spectators from the scramble than from the previous combats. After this a quantity of food was thrown to the athletes, for which another scramble ensued.

In the midst of this scene an officer of the palace was observed to whisper in the ear of the Dey, who rose immediately and left the skiffa, bringing the amusements to an abrupt close.

Thus was sounded the first clap of the thunder storm which was about to descend on the city.

The effect of it was great, and, to some of the actors in our tale, most important.

All the executions of slaves which had been ordered to take place were countermanded, except in the cases of one or two who had rendered themselves particularly obnoxious, and a few others who were unfit for labour. This was done because Omar determined to put forth all his available power to render the fortifications of the place as strong as possible. All the slaves were therefore set to work on them, but those who had been under sentence of death were kept from too great a rebound of spirits at the reprieve, by being told that the moment the work was finished

their respective punishments should be inflicted. Our poor friend Mariano was thus assailed by the horrible thought, while working at the blocks of concrete, which he mixed from morning till night, that in one such block he should ere long find a living tomb.

We need scarcely add that the thought drove him to desperation; but, poor fellow, he had by that time learned that the violence of despair could achieve nothing in the case of one on whose limbs heavy irons were riveted, and whose frame was beginning to break down under the protracted and repeated tortures to which it had been exposed.

Ah! how many wretched men had learned the same bitter lesson in the same accursed city in days gone by—whose groans and cries, though unrecorded by the pen of man, have certainly been inscribed in the book of God's remembrance, and shall yet be brought into a brighter light than that of terrestrial day!

Omar Dey was a man of energy and decision. The instant it became known to him that England was at last stirred up to resent the insults which had been heaped upon her and other nations by the Algerines, he set about making preparations for defence on the vastest possible scale.

It was a sight worth seeing—though we cannot afford space to describe it in detail—the hundreds of camels, horses, mules, and donkeys that trooped daily into the city with provisions and *matériel* of every kind; the thousands of Arabs who by command flocked in from the surrounding country to defend the city, and the hundreds of Christian captives who, collected from the quarries, as well as from the fields, gardens, and stables of their respective owners, were made to swarm like bees upon the already formidable walls.

Some of the slaves were fettered; most of them, having been tamed, were free. Some were strong, others were weak, not a few were dying, but all were made to work and toil day and night, with just sufficient rest to enable them to resume labour each morning. It was a woeful sight! A sight which for centuries had been before the eyes of European statesmen, but European statesmen had preferred that European peoples should go on cutting each other's throats, and increasing their national debts, rather than use their power and wealth to set their captive brethren free; and it was not until the nineteenth century that England, the great redresser of wrongs, put forth her strong hand to crush the Pirate City.

While these busy preparations were going on, a terrible gale arose, which did a good deal of damage to the harbour and shipping of Algiers, and, among other peculiar side-influences, inscribed the name of the French

consul in the Dey's black book. Indeed, nearly all the consuls had their place in that book now, for Omar had been chafed by the cloud of little worries that surrounded him, not having been long enough on the throne to regard such with statesman-like equanimity.

The gale referred to had the effect of driving several Moorish vessels close under the walls of the town, just in front of the mosque Djama Djedid. During its progress a French privateer, (in other words, a licensed pirate!) which chanced to be in port at the time, unintentionally fouled a Moorish vessel, and sank it.

Next day a divan was held, at which Omar demanded payment of the French consul. Not feeling himself bound to pay for the misdeeds of a privateer, the consul refused, whereupon the privateer was seized, and all her crew sent in chains to work at the fortifications.

It chanced, about the same time, that news came of an English frigate having seized an Algerine vessel, and carried her off to Gibraltar. This sent Colonel Langley still deeper into Omar's black book, so that he felt himself and family to be in great danger of being also put in chains and sent to the Marina, if not worse. He therefore hastened the secret packing of his valuables, intending to avail himself of the first opportunity that should offer of leaving the city.

Such an opportunity soon occurred, at least so thought the consul, in the arrival of the "Prometheus," a British war-vessel of 18 guns, but Colonel Langley found, as many have discovered before him, that "there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," for the Dey suddenly took a high position, and absolutely refused to allow the British consul to depart.

Captain Dashwood, the commander of the "Prometheus," on his first interview with the Dey, saw that there was no chance whatever of getting off the consul by fair means, for Omar treated him with studied hauteur and insolence.

"I know perfectly well," said he, at the conclusion of the conference, "that your fleet, which report tells me has already left England, is destined for Algiers. Is it not so?"

"I have no official information, your highness," replied Captain Dashwood. "If you have received such news, you know as much as I do, and probably from the same source—the public prints."

"From whence I have it is a matter of no moment," returned the Dey, as he abruptly closed the conference.

Immediately after, Captain Dashwood informed the consul of his intention of sending a boat ashore next morning, with the ostensible motive of making final proposals to the Dey, but really for the purpose of carrying out his plans, which he related in detail.

Accordingly, next morning, the captain proceeded to the palace, and kept the Dey in complimentary converse as long as was possible with a man of such brusque and impatient temperament.

While thus engaged, several of the men and midshipmen of the "Prometheus" proceeded to the consul's house. They did so in separate detachments, and some of them returned once or twice to the boat, as if for some small things that had been forgotten, thus confusing the guards as to the numbers of those who had landed.

When Captain Dashwood again returned to his boat there were two more midshipmen in it than the number that had left his ship—one being the consul's wife, the other his daughter Agnes! Master Jim, however, had been left behind, owing to the arrangements not having been sufficient to meet his requirements. Poor Mrs Langley had left him with agonised self-reproach, on being assured that he should be fetched off on the morrow. Colonel Langley was of course obliged to remain with him.

When the morrow came another boat was sent ashore with baskets for provisions. One of these baskets was taken to the consul's house. It was in charge of the surgeon of the ship, as Master Jim required the services of a professional gentleman on the occasion.

All went well at first. The boat was manned by several men and midshipmen, who went innocently to market to purchase provisions. The surgeon, a remarkably cool and self-possessed individual, went to the consul's house, with a Jack-tar—equally cool and self-possessed—carrying the basket.

"Now then, let's see how smartly we can do it," said the surgeon, on entering Colonel Langley's nursery. "Is your child tractable?"

"Very much the reverse," replied the Colonel, with a smile.

"Umph! can't be helped.—Set down the basket, my man, and come and hold him."

Now the Zaharian Zubby, not having been let into the secret of the mysterious proceedings that followed, became a source of unexpected danger and annoyance to the surgeon and his friends. She watched the former with some interest, while he mixed a small powder in the family

medicine-glass, and when he advanced with it to Master Jim, her large eyes dilated so that the amount of white formed an absolutely appalling contrast with her ebony visage. But when she saw Master Jim decline the draught with his wonted decision of character, thereby rendering it necessary for the nautical man to put powerful restraint on his struggling limbs, and to hold his nose while the surgeon forced open his mouth and poured the contents of the family glass down his throat, and when, in addition to all this, she beheld Colonel Langley standing calmly by with an air of comparative indifference while this hideous cruelty was being practised on his son and heir, her warm heart could stand no more. Uttering a series of wild shrieks, she ran at the nautical man, scored his face down with her ten fingers, seized the choking Jim in her arms, and thrust her fore-finger down his little throat with the humane view of enabling him to part with the nauseous draught which he had been compelled to swallow.

Master Jim had convulsed himself twice, and had actually got rid of a little of the draught, before the surgeon could recover him from the irate negress.

“I hope he hasn’t lost much of it,” remarked the surgeon, looking anxiously at the howling boy as he held him fast. “I brought only one dose of the drug, but we shall see in a few minutes.—Do stop the noise of that screeching imp of blackness,” he added, turning a look of anger on Zubby, whose grief was, like her mirth, obstreperous.

“I wish as some ’un had pared her nails afore I comed here,” growled the nautical man.

“Hush, Zubby,” said Colonel Langley, taking the girl kindly by the arm; “we are doing Jim no harm; you’ll bring the janissaries in to see who is being murdered if you go on so—hush!”

But Zubby would not hush; the Colonel therefore called his black cook and handed her over to him—who, being a fellow-countryman, and knowing what a Zaharian frame could endure, carried her into an adjoining room and quietly choked her.

“He’s going—all right,” said the surgeon, with a look and nod of satisfaction, as the child, lying in the nautical man’s arms, dropt suddenly into a profound slumber.

“Now, we will pack him.—Stay, has he a cloak or shawl of any kind?” said the surgeon, looking round.

“Zubby alone knows where his mysterious wardrobe is to be found,”

replied the Colonel.

“Then let the creature find it,” cried the surgeon impatiently; “we have no time to lose.”

Zubby was brought back and told to wrap her treasure in something warm, which she willingly did, under the impression that she was about to be ordered to take him out for a walk, but the tears which still bedimmed her eyes, coupled with agitation, caused her to perform her wonted duty clumsily, and to stick a variety of pins in various unnecessary places. She was then sent to the kitchen with some trivial message to the cook.

While she was away, Master Jim was packed in the bottom of the vegetable basket, and a quantity of cabbages, cauliflowers, etcetera, were placed above him. The basket was given to the nautical man to carry. Then the surgeon and the consul went out arm-in-arm, followed by two midshipmen, who were in attendance in the hall. Robinson—so the nautical man was named—brought up the rear.

They proceeded along the street Bab-el-Oued for some distance, and then, passing the mosque near the slave-market, descended the street that led to the Marina, and the place where the boat of the “Prometheus” lay in waiting.

The consul and surgeon affected to talk and laugh lightly as they approached the gate, and were permitted to pass, the guard supposing, no doubt, that the British consul was exercising his wonted civility in conducting his friends down to their boat. But fate, in the form of Zubby, was unfavourable to them. Either that loving damsel’s finger had been more effective than was at first supposed, or the pins were operating with unwonted pungency, but certain it is, that just as Mr Robinson was passing under the gateway, Master Jim awoke from his profound slumber. Feeling, although not naturally dyspeptic, that the cabbages weighed heavy on his stomach, he set up such a howl, and struck out so violently, that the lid of the basket was forced up, and sundry vegetables rolled before the eyes of the astonished Turks.

Of course Master Jim and his bearer were taken prisoners, but the evil did not stop here, for the officer of the guard at once ordered the arrest of the consul himself, as well as the surgeon, the midshipmen, and the boat’s crew of the “Prometheus,” and the whole were thrust into the dungeons of the common prison—the consul, by special order of the Dey, being loaded with iron fetters.

The dismay of poor Mrs Langley and Agnes when they heard of the fate of the consul and his child may be imagined. It was however mitigated in

some degree when, next morning, a boat came off to the “Prometheus” containing Master Jim himself, in charge of the faithful Zubby!

Whether it was that Omar deemed the child a useless encumbrance or a valueless article, or was visited by one of those touches of compunction which are well-known to assail at times the breasts of even the worst of pirates, we cannot tell; but no such clemency was extended to Jim’s father. The Dey positively refused either to give him up or to promise his personal safety, nor would he listen to a word respecting the officers and men whom he had seized.

This was the news with which Captain Dashwood left Algiers, and which, some days later, he delivered to Lord Exmouth, when he met the British fleet on its way to the city, with the view of bringing the pirates to their senses.

Chapter Twenty Five.

The Coming Struggle looms on the Horizon.

The barbarians of Barbary had roused the wrath of England to an extreme pitch in consequence of a deed which did not, indeed, much excel their wonted atrocities, but which, being on a large scale, and very public, had attracted unusual attention—all the more that, about the same time, the European nations, having killed as many of each other as they thought advisable for *that* time, were comparatively set free to attend to so-called minor affairs.

The deed referred to was to the effect that on the 23rd of May 1816 the crews of the coral fishing-boats at Bona—about 200 miles eastward of Algiers—landed to attend mass on Ascension Day. They were attacked, without a shadow of reason or provocation, by Turkish troops, and massacred in cold blood.

Previous to this Lord Exmouth had been on the Barbary coast making treaties with these corsairs, in which he had been to some extent successful. He had obtained the liberation of all Ionian slaves, these having become, by political arrangement, British subjects; and having been allowed to make peace for any of the Mediterranean states that would authorise him to do so—it being well-known that they could do nothing for themselves,—he arranged terms of peace with the Algerines for Sardinia and Naples, though part of the treaty was that Naples should pay a ransom of 100 pounds head for each slave freed by the pirates, and

Sardinia 60 pounds. Thinking it highly probable that he should ere long have to fight the Algerines, Lord Exmouth had sent Captain Warde of the ‘Banterer’ to Algiers to take mental plans of the town and its defences, which that gallant officer did most creditably, thereby greatly contributing to the success of future operations. By a curious mistake of the interpreter at Tunis, instead of the desire being expressed that slavery should be abolished, England was made to *demand* that this should be done, and the alarmed Tunisians agreed to it. Taking the hint, Lord Exmouth made the same demand at Tripoli, with similar result. At Algiers, however, his demands were refused, and himself insulted. Returning to England in some uncertainty as to how his conduct would be regarded—for in thus “demanding,” instead of “desiring,” the liberation of slaves, he had acted on his own responsibility,—he found the country agitated by the news of the Bona massacre, of which at that time he had not heard.

The demands, therefore, which he had made with some misgiving, were now highly approved, and it was resolved that they should be repeated to the barbarians in the thunder of artillery.

A member of the House of Commons, stirred to indignation by the news from Bona, got up and moved for copies of Lord Exmouth’s treaties with Algiers for Naples and Sardinia, and all correspondence connected therewith. He strongly condemned the principle of *treating at all* with states which presumed to hold their captives up to ransom, as by so doing virtual acknowledgment was made that these pirates had a right to commit their outrages. He was given to understand, he said, that the Dey, pressed by dissatisfied Algerines for limiting their sphere of plunder, had pacified them by assuring them that a wide field of plunder was still left! Treaties of peace made with them by some states had only the effect of turning their piracies into other channels, as was already beginning to be felt by the Roman states. He then described the wretched condition of the slaves. He cited one instance, namely, that out of three hundred slaves fifty had died from bad treatment on the day of their arrival, and seventy more during the first fortnight. The rest were allowed only one pound of black bread per day, and were at all times subject to the lash of their brutal captors—neither age nor sex being respected. One Neapolitan lady of distinction, he said, had been carried off by these corsairs, with eight children, two of whom had died, and she had been seen but a short time ago by a British officer in the thirteenth year of her captivity. These things were not exaggerations, they were sober truths; and he held that the toleration of such a state of things was a discredit to humanity, and a foul blot upon the fame of civilised nations. It is refreshing to hear men speak the truth, and call things by their right names, in plain language like this!

The House and the country were ripe for action. An animated debate followed. It was unanimously agreed that the barbarians should be compelled to cease their evil practices, and Lord Exmouth's conduct was not only approved, but himself was appointed to accomplish the duty of taming the Turks.

A better or bolder sea-lion could not have been found to take charge of Old England's wooden walls on this occasion—ironclads being then unknown. He was a disciple of the great Nelson, and a well-tried sea-warrior of forty years' standing. He went to work with the energy and promptitude of a true-blue British tar, and, knowing well what to do, resolved to do it in his own way.

Many naval officers considered the fortifications of Algiers impregnable. Having seen and studied them, Lord Exmouth thought otherwise. Lord Nelson, founding probably on erroneous information, and not having seen the place, had said that twenty-five line-of-battle ships would be necessary to subdue it. Our Admiral, with Captain Warde's correct plan in his pocket, knew that there was not room for even half that number of ships to be laid alongside the town. The Admiralty strongly urged him to take a powerful fleet. Lord Exmouth agreed to that, but decided that it should be a small one. To the surprise of their Lordships he fixed on *five* liners, with a few smaller craft, as a sufficient number for the work he had to do. He said—

"If they open fire when the ships are coming up and cripple our masts, we shall have some difficulty, perhaps, and the loss will no doubt be greater, but if they allow us to take our stations, I am sure of them, for I know that nothing can resist a line-of-battle ship's fire."

It was usually thought by naval men that a ship could not be thoroughly effective until she had been a considerable time in commission. Doubtless the thought was correct, and founded on experience; nevertheless, Lord Exmouth proved himself an exception to ordinary naval rulers. He commissioned, fitted, and manned a fleet, and fought and won a great battle within the incredibly brief space of two months! But more of that hereafter.

Meanwhile the pirates prepared briskly for the coming struggle, and wrought hard at the batteries, while Christian slaves swarmed and toiled night and day on the ramparts of Algiers.

Chapter Twenty Six.

In which Rais Ali and Ted Flaggan play a Vigorous Part.

When Colonel Langley's star descended, as has been described, his household was, of course, scattered to the winds. Those who were slaves, meekly—or otherwise—awaited their orders, which were various, according to their condition. Some of them were sent to toil at the fortifications, others to carry material into the town. Those who were free betook themselves to their kindred, and their favourite employments. A few members of the household joined the army of defence.

Among these latter was our friend Rais Ali, who, being a Moor, and having been a pirate, and still being young and strong, was deemed a fit subject to defend his hearth and home.

His hearth, by the way, was defended pretty well by the Moorish lady whom we introduced at the beginning of this volume, with the able assistance of a small negro whom Rais had purchased for a few shillings in the slave-market.

It must not be supposed that Rais Ali was a willing defender of his home. If he could have delegated that duty to others, he would have preferred it. Had it been possible for him to have retired into a distant part of the Zahara, and there dwelt at ease, while daily telegrams were forwarded to him of the progress of events, he would have considered himself supremely happy; but such was not his fortune, and, being of a philosophical turn of mind, he wisely succumbed to the inevitable.

It was so fated that Rais Ali was ordered to serve as a gunner at the Fish Market battery, just in front of the mosque Djama Djedid. Bravely did our interpreter proceed daily to his duties, and intensely did he hope that there might never be any occasion for his services.

But whatever fate might decree for him, Rais Ali had a peculiar knack of decreeing a few things for himself which neither fate nor anything else appeared to be able to deprive him of. One of these decrees was that, come what might, he should have his morning cup of coffee; another, that he should have a daily shave; a third, that he should have a bath at least once a week.

As one of the occasions on which he fulfilled his destiny and carried out his own fatal decrees bears on our tale, we will follow him.

Having begun the day, at a very early hour, with his cup of coffee, he proceeded in a leisurely way to a certain street in the town where was kept a Turkish bath. This was not an Anglified Turkish bath, good reader, but a

real one; not an imitation, but the actual thing itself fresh from Turkey, managed by Turks, or Moors who were at least half Turks, and conducted in accordance with the strictest rules of Turkish etiquette.

Approaching the door of the bath, he observed a tall dignified and very powerful Arab sauntering in front of it.

Rais Ali seemed troubled by the sight of him, paused, advanced, halted, and again advanced, until the tall Arab, catching sight of him, stalked forward with solemn dignity and held out his hand.

“What for yoo comes here?” demanded Rais rather testily.

The tall Moor slowly bent his hooded head and whispered in his ear —“Faix, it’s more than I rightly know mesilf.”

“Yoo’s mad,” said Rais, drawing the tall Arab into the porch of the bath, where they could avoid the observation of passers-by. “Did not I tell yoo for to keep close?”

“So ye did, Rais Ally,” said Ted Flaggan, for it was he, “and it’s close I kep’ as long as I cu’d, which was aisy enough, seeing that ye brought me purvisions so riglar—like a good feller as ye are; but body o’ me, man, I cudn’t live in a cave all me lone for iver, an’ I got tired o’ lookin’ out for that British fleet that niver comes, so I says to mesilf wan fine evenin’, ‘Go out, Ted me boy, an’ have a swim in the say—it’ll do ’ee good, and there’s not much chance of any wan troublin’ ye here.’ No sooner said than done. Out I wint round beyont the Pint Pescade, an’ off wid me close an’ into the say. Och! but it *was* plisint! Well, just as I was coming out, who should I see on the rocks above me but a big thief of an Arab? I knew at wance that if I was to putt on close he’d guess, maybe, who I was, so I came out o’ the wather an’ ran straight at him naked—meanin’ to frighten him away like. An’ sure enough he tuk to his heels like a Munster pig. I don’t know how it is, but I have always had a strong turn for huntin’. From the time whin I was a small gosoon runnin’ after the pigs an’ cats, I’ve bin apt to give chase to anything that runned away from me, an’ to forgit myself. So it was now. After the Arab I wint, neck an crop, an’ away he wint like the wind, flingin’ off his burnous as he ran; but I was light, bein’ naked, d’ye see, an’ soon overhauled him. For a starn-chase it was the shortest I remember. When I came up wid him I made a grab at his head, an his hake—is that what ye calls it?—comed away in me hand, leaving his shaved head open to view, wid the tuft o’ hair on the top of it.

“I laughed to that extint at this that he got away from me, so I gave him a finishin’ Irish howl, by way o’ making him kape the pace goin’, an’ thin stopped and putt on the hake. By and by I comes to where the burnous

was, and putts it on too, an faix, ye couldn't have towld me from an Arab, for the bare legs an' feet and arms was all right, only just a taste over light in colour, d'ee see? Thinks I to mesilf, Ted, me boy, ye cudn't do better than remain as ye are. Wid a little brown dirt on yer face an' limbs, yer own mother wouldn't know ye. An' troth, Rais, I did it; an' whin I lucked at mesilf in a smooth pool on the baich, it was for all the world as if somebody else was luckin' at me. To be short wid ye, I've bin wanderin' about the country for the last three or four days quite free an' aisy."

"Nobody see yoo?" asked Rais in great surprise.

"Och! lots o' people, but few of 'em tuk a fancy to spake to me, an' whin they did I shuck me head, an' touched me lips, so they thought I was dumb."

"But why you comes to town?" asked Rais Ali, in a remonstrative tone.

"Just bekaise I'm hungry," replied the seaman, with a smile. "Ye see, Ally Babby, the gale of day before yesterday sint a breaker into the cave that washed away all the purvisions ye brought me last, so it was aither come here and look for 'ee or starve—for the British fleet has apparently changed its mind, and ain't goin' to come here after all. I meant to go d'rec' to yer house, but knowin' yer fondness for baths, and rememberin' that this was yer day, I thought it betther to cruise about here till you hove in sight."

While Ted Flaggan was relating all this, his friend's countenance expressed alternately doubt, disapproval, anxiety, amusement, and perplexity.

When he had finished, Rais informed him that instead of the fleet having changed its mind, there was great probability of its sudden appearance at any moment. He also mentioned the arrest of the British consul and the boat's crew of the "Prometheus," and explained that the most energetic measures were being taken to place the city in a state of defence.

"Oho!" exclaimed Flaggan, in a low tone, "that clears up wan or two things that's been puzzlin' me. I've bin thinkin' that the ship I saw lave the port was British, but the weather bein' thick I cudn't quite make out her colours. Then, I've been sore perplexed to account for the flocks of armed Arabs that have bin steerin' into the town of late, an' whin I passed the gates this mornin' I was troubled too, to make out what was all the bustle about. It's all clare as ditch-wather now.—But what's to be done with *me*, Rais? for if the cownsl an' the British gin'rally are in limbo, it's a bad look-out for Ted Flaggan, seein' that I'm on the black list already."

Rais Ali appeared to ponder the case for a few seconds.

“Come an’ have one bath,” he said, with sudden animation; “after that we go brikfast togidder.”

“Av we cud ‘brikfust’ *fust*, Ally Babby, it would be plisinter,” returned the hungry seaman; “but, I say, I dursn’t go into the bath, ’cause what would they think of a man wid dark-brown arms, legs, an’ face, an’ a pink body? Sure, they’d take me for a spy or a madman, an’ hand me over to the p’leece!”

“Wash here, fust,” said Rais, leading his friend to a small fountain in a retired angle of the court. “Ebbery body here too bizzy ’joyin’ theirselfs to look to yoo. An’ des corner dark. Me stan’ ’tween you an’ dem.”

“But who ever heard of a white Moor?” objected Ted.

“Oh, lots of ’em—’alf-castes, almost white as you,” said Rais.

“But I ain’t got a shaved skull with a top knot,” returned the seaman, still objecting.

“Nebber mind; sailors of France, Denmark, an’ odder places what hav consuls here, when waitin’ for ship carry dem home comes here for fun—”

“Ay, but they don’t come disguised as Moors,” said Flaggan, “and I niver was inside a Turkish bath before. Don’t know more nor a child what to do.”

“Yoo don’ go in bath dressed—go naked,” returned Rais, growing impatient. “Do noting in bath, only let ’em do what dey pleases to yoo.”

“Very good, plaze yersilf, Ally Babby,” said Ted, resignedly plunging his arms into the cistern; “only remimber, I give ye fair warnin’, av the spalpeens attempts to take me prisoner, I’ll let fly into their breadbaskets right an’ left, an’ clear out into the street, naked or clothed, no matter which,—for I’ve said it wance, an’ I means to stick to it, they’ll niver take Ted Flaggan alive.”

“All right,” returned Rais Ali, “yoo wash yours faces an’ holds your tongue.”

After removing as much as possible of the brown earth from his visage and limbs, the seaman drew the hood of his burnous well over his face, and—having assiduously studied the gait of Moors—strode with Oriental dignity into the outer court, or apartment, of the bath, followed his friend into an unoccupied corner and proceeded to undress.

“Musha! it’s like a house-full of Turkish corpses,” whispered Ted as he surveyed the recumbent figures in white around him.

There were some differences between this genuine Turkish bath and our British imitation of it which merit notice.

The court or hall in which the friends unrobed served the purpose of a drying-chamber as well as a dressing-room. Hence those bathers who entered to commence the operation of undressing had to pass between rows of the men who had gone through the bath, and were being gradually cooled down. They were all swathed from head to foot in white sheets, with large towels or pieces of linen tied turban-fashion round their heads, and as they lay perfectly straight and still, their resemblance to Turkish corpses was disagreeably strong. This idea was still further carried out in consequence of the abominable smell which pervaded the place, for Algerines were at that time utterly indifferent to cleanliness in their baths. Indeed, we may add, from personal experience, that they are no better at the present time than they were then! A few of the corpses, however, possessed sufficient life to enable them to smoke and sip tea or coffee.

This outer court was the immediate vestibule to the bath, or stewing-room —if we may be allowed the name. There was no passing, as with us, from a private undressing-box, through a mild cooling room, and thence into the hot and the hottest rooms. The Moors were bold, hardy fellows. The step was at once made from the cooling into the hot room, or bath, and in taking the step it was necessary to pass over one of the open sewers of the town—to judge from the smell thereof. But this last was a mere accidental circumstance connected with the bath, not an essential part of it. Thus it will be seen there were but two apartments in the establishment, with an outer lobby.

When the two friends had unrobed and wrapped a piece of striped calico round their loins, they were led by a young Moor in similar costume towards the stewing-room.

“Don’ be frighted,” whispered Rais Ali; “it’s pretty hottish.”

“I’ll *try* to be aisy,” replied the seaman with a quiet smile, “an’ av I can’t be aisy I’ll be as aisy as I can.”

Although he treated the idea of being frightened with something of contempt, he was constrained to admit to himself that he was powerfully surprised when he stepped suddenly into a chamber heated to an extent that seemed equal to a baker’s oven.

The apartment was octagonal, and very high, with a dome-shaped roof,

from which it was dimly lighted by four small and very dirty windows. Water trickled down the dirty dark-brown walls; water and soap-suds floated over the dirty marble floor. In the centre of the floor was a mass of masonry about three feet high and seven feet square. This was the core of the room, as it were—part of the heating apparatus. It was covered with smooth slabs of stone, on which there was no covering of any kind. There is no knowing how much lurid smoke and fire rolled beneath this giant stone ottoman.

It chanced that only two men were in the place at the time. They had advanced to a certain stage of the process, and were enjoying themselves, apparently lifeless, and in sprawling attitudes, on the hot sloppy floor. The attendant of one had left him for a time. The attendant of the other was lying not far from his temporary owner, sound asleep. One of the Moors was very short and fat, the other tail and unusually thin; both had top-tufts of hair on their shaven crowns, and both would have looked supremely ridiculous if it had not been for the horrible resemblance they bore to men who had been roasted alive on the hot ottoman, and flung carelessly aside to die by slow degrees.

“Do as I doos,” said Rais to Flaggan, as he stretched himself on his back on the ottoman.

“Surely,” acquiesced Ted, with a gasp, for he was beginning to feel the place rather suffocating. He would not have minded the heat so much, he thought, if there had only been a *little* fresh air!

Rais Ali’s bath-attendant lay down on the slab beside him. Flaggan’s attendant looked at him with a smile, and pointed to the ottoman.

“Och, surely,” said Ted again, as he sat down. Instantly he leaped up with a subdued howl.

“W’y, what wrong?” asked Rais, looking up.

“It’s red-hot,” replied Flaggan, rubbing himself.

“Nonsense!” returned Rais; “you lie down queek. Soon git use to him. Always feel hottish at fust.”

Resolved not to be beaten, the unfortunate Irishman sat down again, and again started up, but, feeling ashamed, suddenly flung himself flat on his back, held his breath, and ground his teeth together. He thought of gridirons; he thought of the rack; he thought of purgatory; he thought of the propriety of starting up and of tearing limb from limb the attendant, who, with a quiet smile, lay down beside him and shut his eyes; he thought

of the impossibility of bearing it an instant longer; and then he suddenly thought that it felt a little easier. From this point he began to experience sensations that were slightly pleasurable, and a profuse perspiration broke out over his whole body.

Evidently his attendant was accustomed to deal occasionally with white men, for he watched his huge charge out of the corner of a wicked eye for some time. Seeing, however, that he lay still, the fellow went off into a peaceful slumber.

"'Tis an amazin' place intirely," observed Ted, who felt inclined to talk as he began to enjoy himself. "If it wasn't so dirty that an Irish pig of proper breedin' would object to come into it, I'd say it was raither agreeable."

Rais Ali being in the height of enjoyment, declined to answer, but the seaman's active mind was soon furnished with food for contemplation, when one of the attendants entered and quietly began, to all appearance, to put the tall thin Moor to the torture.

"Have I to go through *that*?" thought Flaggan; "well, well, niver say die, owld boy, it's wan comfort that I'm biggish, an' *uncommon* tough."

It would be tedious to prolong the description of the Irishman's bathe that morning. Suffice it to say that, after he had lain on the ottoman long enough to feel as if the greater part of him had melted away, he awoke his attendant, who led him into a corner, laid him on the sloppy floor, and subjected him to a series of surprises. He first laid Ted's head on his naked thigh, and rubbed his face and neck tenderly, as though he had been an only son; he then straightened his limbs and baked them as though he had been trained to knead men into loaves from infancy; after that he turned him on his back and on his face; punched and pinched and twisted him; he drenched him with hot water, and soused him with soap-suds from head to foot, face and all, until the stout mariner resembled a huge mass of his native sea-foam; he stuck his hair up on end, and scratched his head with his ten nails; and tweaked his nose, and pulled his fingers and toes till they cracked again!

All this Ted Flaggan, being tough, bore with passing fortitude, frequently saying to the Moor, internally, for soap forbade the opening of his lips—

"Go ahead, me lad, an' do yer worst!"

But although his tormentor utterly failed to move him by fair means, he knew of a foul method which proved successful. He crossed Ted's arms over his breast, and attempted to draw them as far over as possible, with the view, apparently, of tying them into a knot.

“Pull away, me hearty!” thought Flaggan, purposely making himself as limp as possible.

The Moor did pull; and while his victim’s arms were stretched across each other to the uttermost, he suddenly fell upon them, thereby almost forcing the shoulder-joints out of their sockets.

“Och! ye spalpeen!” shouted Ted, flinging him off as if he had been a feather. Then, sinking back, he added, “Come on; you’ll not ketch me slaipin’ again, me honey!”

The amused Moor accepted the invitation, and returned to the charge. He punched him, baked him, boxed him, and battered him, and finally, drenching him with ice-cold water, swathed him in a sheet, twisted a white turban on his head, and turned him out like a piece of brand-new furniture, highly polished, into the drying-room.

“How yoos like it?” asked Rais Ali, as they lay in the Turkish-corpse stage of the process, calmly sipping tea.

“It’s plis’nt,” replied Ted, “uncommon plis’nt, but raither surprisin’.”

“Ha,” responded Rais.

At this point their attention was turned to the little fat Moor who had been their fellow-bather, and to whom Ted in his undivided attention to the thin Moor had paid little regard.

“Musha!” whispered Ted, “it’s the capting of the port.”

The captain of the port it was, and if that individual had known who it was that lay cooling within a few yards of him, he would probably have brought our nautical hero’s days to a speedy termination. But although he had seen Ted Flaggan frequently under the aspect of a British seaman, he had never before seen him in the character of a half-boiled Moor. Besides, having been thoroughly engrossed and lost in the enjoyment of his own bath, he had paid no attention to those around him.

“Turn yoos face well to de wall,” whispered Rais Ali. “He great hass; hims no see yoo.”

“Great ‘hass,’ indade; he’s not half such a ‘hass’ as I am for comin’ in here,” muttered the sailor, as he huddled on his Arab garments, keeping his face carefully turned away from the captain of the port, who lay with his eyes shut in a state of dreamy enjoyment.

In a few minutes the two friends paid for their bath, and went out.

“I feels for all the world like a bird or a balloon,” said Ted, as his companion hurried him along; “if I don’t git some ballast soon in the shape o’ grub, I’ll float away intirely.”

Rais Ali made no reply, but turned into a baker’s shop, where he purchased two rolls. Then hurrying on down several narrow streets, the houses of which met overhead, and excluded much of the light of day, he turned into a small Moorish coffee-house, which at first seemed to the sailor to be absolutely dark, but in a few minutes his eyes became accustomed to it, and he saw that there were several other customers present.

They were nearly all in Arab costume, and sat cross-legged on two benches which ran down either side of the narrow room. Each smoked a long pipe, and sipped black coffee out of a very diminutive cup, while the host, a half negro, stood beside a charcoal fire, in the darkness of the far interior, attending to an array of miniature tin coffee-pots, which exactly matched the cups in size. A young Moor, with a red fez, sat twanging a little guitar, the body of which was half a cocoa-nut, covered with parchment.

This musician produced very dismal tones from its two strings, but the Arabs seemed content, and sat in silent, not to say dignified, enjoyment of it.

“Eat away now,” whispered Rais to Flaggan, as they entered—“cross yoo legs, look solemn, an’ hold yoos tongue. Me goes git shave.”

Obedient to instructions—as British seamen always are—Ted took his place on one of the narrow benches, and, crossing his legs *à la Turk*, began with real zest to eat the rolls which his friend had provided for him, and to sip the cup, or thimbleful, of coffee which mine host silently, by order of the same friend, placed at his side.

Meanwhile, Rais Ali submitted himself to the hands of the host, who was also a barber, and had his head and face shaved without soap—though a little cold water was used.

During this operation a boy ran hastily into the café and made an announcement in Arabic, which had the surprising effect of startling the Arabs into undignified haste, and induced Rais Ali to overturn his coffee on the barber’s naked feet, while he seized a towel and dried himself violently.

“What’s to do, old feller?” demanded Flaggan, with a huge bite of bread almost stopping up his mouth.

“De British fleet am in sight!” shrieked Rais Ali.

“Ye don’t mean that?” cried Ted, in his turn becoming excited. “Then it’s time that *I* was out o’ the city!”

“Yis, away! go to yous cave! Only death for Breetish in Algiers—off! away!”

The Moor dashed out and hastened to his post on the ramparts, while Ted Flaggan, drawing his burnous well round him, made straight for the northern gate of the town, casting an uneasy glance at his now white legs, of which at least the ankles and beginning of the brawny calves were visible. We use the term “white” out of courtesy, and in reference to the distinct difference between the bold seaman’s limbs and those of the brown-skinned Arabs. In reality they were of a very questionable neutral tint, and covered with a large quantity of hair.

Their appearance, however, signified little, for by that time the whole town was in an uproar of active preparation and excitement.

Men of various colours—black, brown, and yellow, with every intermediate shade, and in many different garbs—were hastening to the ramparts, while anxious women of the lower orders, and frightened children, were rushing to and fro, either engaged in some duties connected with the defence, or simply relieving their feelings by violent action: while bodies of janissaries were hastening to their various stations, or came trooping in from all the outposts of the surrounding country.

In the midst of such confusion our tall Arab attracted no notice. He passed through the streets unmolested, and out at the Bab-el-Oued gate unchallenged.

It was little more than daybreak at the time, for Arabs are early risers at all times, and on the present occasion they had reason to be earlier than usual.

The moment our tar caught sight of the sea, his heart gave a wild bound of exultation, for on the horizon appeared a few white specks, like sea-mews, which he now knew to be the British fleet.

Without any definite intention as to what he meant to do, Flaggan sped along the road leading to his cave at Point Pescade, his chief feeling being a strong desire to get out of the sight of natives, that he might meditate alone on his future movements, which he felt must be prompt and decisive.

Before quite reaching his destination fortune favoured him. Coming round a rocky point of the coast, he observed a boat with one man in it rowing

close inshore.

“That’ll do,” whispered Ted to himself, as he went behind a rock and hastily smeared his face and limbs with earth.

When the boat approached he went to the edge of the sea and made signs to the fisherman, for such he was, to approach, at the same time pretending to take something out of a wallet at his side, to which he pointed with eager interest, as though he had something important to say about it.

The man lay on his oars a moment, and then pulled in, but cautiously, for he suspected the stranger. When within about four or five yards of the rocks the man again stopped.

“Arrah come on, won’t ’ee?” exclaimed the impatient Irishman, gesticulating wildly.

The fisherman had evidently seen and heard enough, for he at once dipped his oars with the intention of rowing off, when Ted made a sudden spring, and went with a heavy plunge into the water within a yard of the boat, which was a very small one.

Unfortunately for the fisherman, instead of pulling away he raised an oar with the intention of striking Flaggan when he should rise. It was a fatal mistake. He did indeed strike him, and on the head too; but that was the most invulnerable part of the Irishman’s body. Ted grasped the oar, caught the gunwale of the boat, and in a moment overturned it and its occupant on his shoulders.

Diving clear, he rose and watched for his adversary. The man also rose a moment later, and Ted, who was a splendid swimmer, went at him like a small steamboat, caught him by the neck, and half throttled him; then dragging him ashore, untwisted his turban, and therewith tied his arms and legs fast, after which he carried him into a small cave near at hand, and left him to his meditations.

This accomplished, he returned to the little boat, swam off and righted her, baled her out, shipped the oars, and rowed straight out to sea.

Chapter Twenty Seven.

Describes the Bombardment of Algiers.

When the British fleet bore down on Algiers on the morning of the 27th of

August 1816, there was barely sufficient wind to carry it within sight of the town. While lying becalmed in the *Queen Charlotte*, Lord Exmouth sent in a boat and a flag of truce with the terms dictated by England, and a demand for the immediate release of the consul and the officers and men belonging to the *Prometheus*.

About the same time a small boat was observed by those on board the fleet to put off from the shore to the northward, which, pulling right across the town, made straight for the flag-ship. It was manned by a solitary rower, who, as he drew near, was recognised by his costume to be an Arab.

A four-oared boat shot out from the mole-head as if to intercept this solitary rower, and a short but inspiriting chase ensued. It was seen that at first the Arab paid no attention whatever to the boat in pursuit, but kept up the slow regular stroke of one who felt quite unconcerned and at his ease. The boat in chase overhauled it fast, and when within shout a gunshot the Turk in the stern stood up and hailed the Arab in stern, angry tones, but no reply was vouchsafed. Exasperated beyond measure, the Turk levelled a pistol at the Arab and fired, but missed his aim, and was driven almost frantic with rage on observing that the insolent Arab dropped his oar for an instant, and kissed his hand to the ball as it skipped past.

Immediately after the Turk was heard to shout an order to his men, who thereupon redoubled their efforts to overtake the chase. At the same instant the Arab was observed to bend well forward, and almost double the length of his stroke, so that the little craft, which had hitherto skimmed over the calm sea, now began to leap, as it were, in successive bounds.

“I say, Bill, *don’t* he pull well?” exclaimed one of the tars on board the *Queen Charlotte*.

“Splendiferous!” replied Bill, in great admiration; “an’ I do believe that he’s creepin’ away from the Turk.”

This was true; the Arab was steadily increasing the distance between himself and his pursuers, until at last the latter gave up the chase, a consummation which was greeted by some of the excitable spirits in the *Queen Charlotte* with an irresistible though subdued cheer.

In a short time the Arab rowed alongside the flag-ship.

“Och! Ally ma boo hookum foldimaronky bang,” said the Arab, looking up.

“Well, now,” exclaimed a surprised Irish tar on board to those near him, “it’s often. I’ve heard that the Arabs had the brogue of Owld Ireland,

though the lingo don’t square exactly.”

“Ah then, brother, that’s ’cause ye don’t onderstand it. Sure ye might heave us a rope,” replied the Arab with a grin.

A roar of laughter greeted this speech, and in another minute Ted Flaggan stood bowing modestly on the quarter-deck of the flag-ship.

While the Admiral was closeted with this unexpected visitor—whose name and deeds, owing to some strange oversight, have been omitted from history,—a light breeze sprang up, which enabled the fleet to stand into the bay and lay-to about a mile from the town.

Meanwhile, Ted Flaggan, having given the Admiral all the information he possessed as to the condition of the city and its defences, was sent forward to take part in the expected fight, or go below out of harm’s way, as suited him best. He immediately attached himself, as a supernumerary, to one of the upper-deck guns, and, while giving his amused comrades graphic accounts of life in the pirate city, obtained from them in return a full account of the fleet, and the intentions of the Admiral, as far as these were known. He found his comrades very intelligent, and full of enthusiasm about their leader, whom one of the tars styled “one of the wery best Admirals that England ever owned arter Lord Nelson!”

Their admiration was well deserved.

We have already said that the Admiral had commissioned his fleet and got it into excellent working condition in what was deemed a miraculously short space of time. This, however, was accomplished by no miraculous means, but by the simple force of indomitable energy, rightly and perseveringly applied.

Knowing that the time was short, and that a fleet newly manned could not work well without a great deal of training, he made up for the shortness of time by not allowing a single moment of it to be lost, frittered away, or misapplied. Besides giving the men the usual and proper training while in port preparing to sail, he made several arrangements whereby he continued the training most effectively on the voyage out. Of course it was carried on daily. On Tuesdays and Fridays the ships were cleared for action, and six broadsides were fired, but this was only what may be styled parade practice. Feeling that actual work could only be done well by men of actual experience, he had a twelve-pounder gun placed on the after part of the *Queen Charlotte’s* quarter-deck, and hung a small target, with a very small bull’s-eye, at the end of the fore-topmast studding-sail boom, at which all the captains of guns practised every day, so that they acquired not only the habit of laying and working their guns according to rule, but

also the art of laying them to good purpose, and many of them became crack shots before they came within sight of the enemy.

The crews were thus kept active and elated; in good health, and filled with respect for the wisdom and knowledge of those in command, as well as with confidence in their own capacity to obey orders with promptitude, unity of action, and vigorous effect.

Half the battles of life, moral as well as physical, are gained by such confidence, founded on experience,—the other half are lost for want of it!

The fleet comprised five line-of-battle ships, two of which were three-deckers; three heavy and two smaller frigates, besides small craft. At Gibraltar they fell in with a Dutch squadron, consisting of five small frigates and a corvette, under Vice-Admiral the Baron Van de Capellen, who asked and obtained leave to co-operate.

There were the *Queen Charlotte*—110 guns—the flag-ship of Admiral Lord Exmouth, G.C.B., under Captain James Brisbane, C.B.; *Impregnable*, 98—under Rear-Admiral Milne, who was second in command, and Captain Edward Brace, C.B.; *Superb*, 74—Captain Charles Elkins; *Minden*, 74—Captain William Paterson; *Albion*, 74—Captain John Coode. Of frigates, there were the *Leander*, 50 guns; *Severn*, 40; *Glasgow*, 40; *Granicus*, 36; and *Hebrus*, 36. These, with five gun-brigs and four bomb-vessels, named respectively, and not inappropriately, *Beelzebub*, *Fury*, *Hecla*, and *Infernal*, constituted the British fleet.

The Dutch Admiral hoisted his flag in the *Melampus* frigate of 44 guns. The *Frederica*, of same size, was commanded by Captain Van der Straten. The other four vessels were smaller. There were, besides, a flotilla of fifty-five small craft, including mortar and gun-boats, rocket flats, yawls, etcetera.

Opposed to this, which the reader will bear in remembrance was deemed a small fleet, there were on the walls and batteries of Algiers about 500 guns of all sizes and sorts, behind which were inexhaustible supplies of ammunition, and many thousands of as thorough-going rascals as ever defied the strength and tried the patience of the civilised world!

Being thoroughly acquainted with the position and strength of the batteries of the city, Lord Exmouth had arranged the plan of attack, and assigned to each ship and boat its particular station some days before arriving. The addition of the Dutch fleet modified but did not materially alter that plan. Each individual, therefore, from Lord Exmouth to the smallest powder-monkey, was as well primed for action as were the guns of the fleet when the flag of truce returned.

It had been met outside the mole about eleven AM by the captain of the port, and an answer was promised in two hours.

But these pirates had never been celebrated for keeping their word. One o'clock passed, but no answer was forthcoming. Patient and long-suffering as usual—and as he always is—the British Lion delayed a full hour.

"Ah, boys, if we wait till we git a peaceful answer from them villains, we'll wait till doomsday, so we will," said Ted Flaggan to the men of the gun to which he had attached himself.

Ted had thrown off his burnous and washed himself by this time, and now, clad in a borrowed pair of ducks and striped shirt, he stood by the gun commenting pleasantly on his experiences of Algerine life, and pointing out the various buildings and objects of interest in the city to his mates.

"That big white house there," said he, "right fornint ye, with the round top an' the staple all to wan side—that's wan o' the chief mosques. It's somewhere about two hunderd year ould, more or less, an' was built by a slave—a poor feller of a Genoese—an', would you belave it, they kilt him for the shape he gave it! Ah, they're a bad lot intirely! Like a dacent Christian, he made it in the shape o' a cross, an' whin the Dey found that out he chopped the poor man's head off—so he did, worse luck! but it's that they're always doin', or stranglin' ye wid a bow-string, or makin' calf's-futt jelly o' yer soles.—What! 'Ye don't belave it?' Faix, if ye go ashore ye'll larn to belave it. I've seed poor owld women git the bastinado —that's what they calls it—for nothin' at all a'most. Ah, they're awful hard on the women. They kape 'em locked up, they does, as if they was thieves or murderers, and niver lets 'em out—at least the ladies among 'em—for fear o' their bein' runned away wid. It's true what I'm sayin'. An' if wan shud be runned away wid, an' cotched, they ties her in a sack and drowns her.—Good-lookin', is it? Faix, that's more than I can tell 'ee, for all the time I've been in the place I've never wance seed a Moorish woman's face, barrin' the brow an' eyes and top o' the nose, for they cover 'em up wid white veils, so as to make 'em look like ghosts or walkin' corpses. But the Jewesses show their purty faces, an' so do the naigresses. —'are the naigresses purty?' Troth, they may be to their own kith an' kin, but of all the ugly— Well, well, as you say, it's not fair to be hard on 'em, poor critters; for arter all they didn't make theirselves, no more than the monkeys did."

Ted Flaggan was interrupted here by the sudden exclamation of "There she is!" and the next moment the boat with the flag of truce was seen returning with the signal flying— "No answer."

Instantly Lord Exmouth signalled to the fleet, “Are you ready?” to which an affirmative reply was at once returned, and then each ship and boat bore down on its appointed station.

We have already said that the harbour of Algiers was formed by the running out of an artificial pier from the mainland to the small island of Peñon, which lies close to the town. On this island stood, (and still stands), a light-house, at the base of which was a powerful three-tier battery of fifty guns. The island itself was defended all round by ramparts and batteries of heavy guns. This was the strong point of the fortifications, and within the small harbour thus formed was collected the whole Algerine fleet, consisting of four frigates, five large corvettes, and thirty-seven gun-boats.

But besides these harbour defences, the sea-wall of the town extended nearly a mile to the southward and a considerable distance to the northward of the harbour, being everywhere strengthened by powerful batteries. The arrangement of the British Admiral was that each battery should be engaged by a special ship or ships of heavy metal, and that the smaller vessels should take up position where they could find room, or cruise about and do as much damage to the enemy as possible. While the liners and frigates were to batter down the walls, the small craft—bomb and rocket boats, etcetera—were to pour shells and rockets into the arsenal. It was terrible work that had to be done, but the curse which it was intended to do away with was more terrible by far, because of being an old standing evil, and immeasurably more prolific of death and misery than is even a hard-fought battle.

The signal to go into action being given, Lord Exmouth led the van in the *Queen Charlotte*, and the whole fleet bore up in succession, the Dutch Admiral closing in with the rearmost ship of the English line.

Truly it was a grand as well as a solemn sight to see these majestic ships of war sail quietly down on the devoted city in the midst of dead silence, for as yet not a shot had been fired on either side. And the eyes of many, already wide with eagerness, must have opened wider still with surprise, for Lord Exmouth pursued a course of action that was bold even for a British Admiral. He ran the *Queen Charlotte* before the wind, close up to the walls, and with the sails still standing let go three anchors from the stern, so as to keep her exactly in the required position, just before the opening of the mole, and with her vast broadside *within pistol-range* of the walls, flanking all the batteries from the mole-head to the light-house.

Still no shot was fired. The boldness of the act seemed to have confounded and paralysed the enemy, insomuch that a second ship of the line had

almost taken her position close to the stern of her predecessor before the battle began. The effect on the minds of the combatants on both sides was so great that they seemed to have forgotten for an instant the dread work they were about to perform. The mole was crowded with troops, many of whom, with irresistible feelings of curiosity, leaped on the parapet to see the vessel pass, while Lord Exmouth, with a strange touch of humanity, waved to them earnestly to get out of the way of the coming fire!

Having coolly lashed the ship by a hawser to the main-mast of an Algerine brig which was attached to the shore, and stoppered the cables, the crew of the flag-ship cheered.

Immediately a gun was fired by the Algerines. At the first flash Lord Exmouth gave the order to “stand by.”

At the second gun of the enemy he gave the word “Fire!”

The third was drowned in the thunder of the *Queen Charlotte’s* broadside.

The effect of such heavy metal at so short a range was terrific. The walls absolutely crumbled before it, and it is said that five hundred men fell at the first discharge. All the batteries of the city at once opened fire; the ships did likewise, as they successively got into position, and for some hours after that the roar of artillery was incessant, for, despite the irresistible fire of the fleet, the pirates stood to their guns like men. Thus, although the leading vessels succeeded in anchoring quietly, all the rest of the ships went into action under a very heavy fire, particularly that of the Dutch Admiral, who displayed great wisdom and gallantry in the part which he played. The line-of-battle ships formed in a sort of crescent round the outside of the island. The *Superb* anchored two hundred and fifty yards astern of the flag-ship; the *Minden* anchored about her own length from the *Superb*, and passing her stream-cable out of the larboard gun-room port to the *Albion*, brought the two ships together. Next came the *Impregnable*. These sufficiently engaged the batteries on the island or mole. The heavy frigates passed ahead and anchored,—the *Leander* on the port bow of the *Queen Charlotte*, the *Severn* ahead of her, with her starboard broadside bearing on the Fishmarket battery. The *Melampus* and *Diana*, Dutch vessels, passed beyond and engaged the southern batteries of the town. The smaller vessels cruised about, directing their fire where it seemed to be most needed, and the flotilla of mortar and rocket boats were distributed at the openings between the line-of-battle ships and the mole.

This admirable disposition of the force seemed to inspire the men with additional confidence, if such were possible, but ere long the dense smoke rendered everything invisible beyond a few yards’ distance from the actors

in the tremendous fight.

In a few minutes after opening fire, the *Queen Charlotte* had reduced the fortifications on the mole-head to ruins. She then brought her broadside to bear on the batteries over the gate leading to the mole and on the upper works of the light-house. Her shot told on it with fatal accuracy, crumbling the tower and bringing down gun after gun, thus proving that the ball-practice on the voyage out had not been undertaken in vain. Indeed, so expert did some of the gunners find themselves that they actually amused themselves at one part of the day in attempting to hit the Algerine flag-staff!

It chanced that, owing to some alteration in the arrangements, our friend Rais Ali was transferred from the battery on the walls, where he had originally been stationed, to that on the light-house, and when he beheld gun after gun tumbling helplessly over the crumbling parapets, his spirit fired, and he amazed his comrades by displaying a disregard of personal danger for which he had never before got credit. Whether it was that Ted Flaggan had underrated him, or that there is truth in the proverb about extremes meeting, we cannot tell, but certain it is, that when Rais Ali saw every gun of the battery dismounted but one, he rushed at that one like an enraged lion, seized the rammer from the man who wielded it, and began to load.

He might have spared himself the trouble, for before he got the charge rammed home, a shot from the terrible *Queen Charlotte* struck the parapet just underneath, burst it up, and toppled the gun over. Rais leaped on the ramparts, waved his scimitar with a yell of defiance, and, tumbling after the gun, was lost amid a cloud of lime-dust and débris.

Strange to say, he rose from out the ruin almost unhurt, and quite undismayed.

Hasting along the quay without any definite end in view, he found the captain of the port getting the flotilla of gun-boats ready for action. There were thirty-seven of them, and up to that time they had lain as snugly in the harbour as was compatible with a constant shower of shells and rockets tumbling into them. With great daring the pirates had resolved to make a dash with these, under cover of the smoke, and attempt to board the British flag-ship.

“Where go you?” demanded the infuriated Rais.

The captain of the port hurriedly explained.

“I go with you,” cried Rais, jumping into one of the boats; “it is fate—no

man can resist the decree of fate."

All the boats pushed swiftly off together, and did it so silently that they were close under the bow of the flag-ship before being observed. The *Leander* also saw them, and a few guns from her, as well as from the flag-ship, were instantly turned on them.

"Musha! look there!" cried Ted Flaggan, who chanced to be on the part of the ship nearest them.

A tremendous crash followed, and thirty-three out of the thirty-seven boats were in one moment sent to the bottom!

Of the four that escaped and put about to retreat, one came within the range of the gun at which Flaggan served. It was trained to bear.

"Fire!" said the captain.

"Howld on!" cried Ted, suddenly clapping his hand on the touch-hole, and receiving the red-hot poker on the back of it.

"What's that for, mate?" demanded the man who held the poker, as he quickly raised it.

"All right, me hearty; fire away," said Ted, as he quietly removed his hand.

Next moment the gun leaped back as if affrighted at its own vomit of shot, smoke, and fire, and a column of white foam rose from the sea, astern of the boat.

The momentary check had delivered it from destruction, and Ted Flaggan had the satisfaction of knowing that he had saved his friend Rais Ali, as he tenderly patted his injured hand.

More than an hour of this heavy firing failing to produce submission, Lord Exmouth resolved to destroy the Algerine fleet. The *Leander* was ordered to cease firing, and the flag-ship barge, under Lieutenant Richards, was ordered to board the nearest frigate of the enemy, with laboratory torches and carcass shells. This duty was gallantly performed, and so effectually, that the men of the barge had barely time to tumble over the side when the frigate was a mass of flames. The barge was received with three hearty cheers on its return. Next, the launch of the *Queen Charlotte* opened on the largest frigate in the port with carcass shells, and despite the frantic efforts of the Algerines to save her, she was soon completely on fire. From this frigate the fire spread to all the other boats and vessels in the harbour, and from these to the storehouses and arsenal, until the whole place was wrapped in smoke and flames.

Meanwhile the other ships had done terrible execution on the walls and houses immediately opposite to them, while the bomb-vessels threw their deadly missiles right over their own ships and into the town and arsenal, with tremendous effect.

Thus the work of destruction went on all the afternoon, while men, of course, fell fast on both sides—for the deadly game of war cannot be carried on except at fearful cost. Even in the secondary matter of *matériel* the cost is not small. As night approached the guns of the enemy were completely silenced, and the ships began to husband their ammunition, for they had by that time fired an immense quantity of gunpowder, and 50,000 shot, weighing more than 500 tons of iron; besides 960 shells of large size, as well as a considerable quantity of shot, shell, and rockets from the flotilla! The result was that the entire fleet of the pirates was destroyed, and the sea-defences of Algiers, with a great part of the town itself, were shattered and crumbled in ruins.

Then the fleet hauled off with considerable difficulty, owing to the absence of wind; but the pirates had not given in, for they kept spitting at their foes from the upper batteries of the town until half-past eleven at night, when the ships got out of range and firing ceased.

Strange to say, the powers of nature, which had hitherto slumbered quietly, now came into play. The breeze freshened and a tremendous storm of thunder, lightning, and rain came on, as if to mock the fury of man, and humble him under a sense of his relative littleness.

But man is not easily humbled. Next morning the pirates still showed a disinclination to give in, and the British fleet resumed the offensive in order to compel them to do so.

The gun-boats were again placed in position, and Lieutenant Burgess was sent ashore with a flag of truce to demand unconditional surrender.

Chapter Twenty Eight.

The Last.

In a dimly-lighted cell of a massive stone building not far from the palace of the Dey, sat Colonel Langley, Francisco Rimini and his two sons, Bacri the Jew, and the officers and men belonging to the *Prometheus*—all heavily ironed. The Padre Giovanni was also there, but not, like the others, a prisoner.

He was attending to his self-imposed duty of comforting the sick and dying. Among the other prisoners was an Italian slave, a nobleman, who had broken down on the ramparts and rebelled, and was sent to prison as being the most convenient hospital where he might be kept until the pirates should find leisure to flog him into submission or to death. But Death had a mind to do the work according to his own pleasure. The slave felt himself to be sinking, and, through the influence of Bacri with the jailer, he had been permitted to send for Giovanni. Other slaves were there too, doomed to punishment, or, in other words, to various degrees of torture. They lay or cowered around the cell awaiting the issue of the fight.

It was a terrible sight to see the varied expressions of anxiety, fear, or dogged resolution depicted in the faces of these men. Some of them knew well that death, accompanied by excruciating torture, was certain to be their portion when the bombardment should be over. Others hoped that a severe bastinado might be the worst of it. None expected anything more—even though the British should win the day—than that there would be some modification in treaties which would not extend to the slaves of foreign nations.

They all—with the exception of the Padre—maintained an almost unbroken silence during the bombardment; but their restless motions and glances showed how busy their thoughts were, and a grim smile would ever and anon curl the lips of some when a chance shot struck the building and shook it to its foundation. And oh! how anxiously one or two desperate spirits hoped that a shell would enter it, and scatter sudden death among them all!

It was solemn, and strange, too, in the midst of the interminable thunder, to hear the gentle voice of the man of God quoting from the peace-speaking Word, as he knelt beside the dying man and dwelling more especially on passages in which the loving Jesus seeks to cheer His people with prospects of rest and peace, such as— “Peace be unto you;” “Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me;” “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Even the hardened among the wretched and demoralised sufferers there could not choose but hear and note the powerful contrast between the gentle voice of Almighty God that thus murmured within the prison, and the crashing voice of puny man that roared outside!

In the darkness of that night Bacri crept to the side of Mariano, and whispered hastily—

“I may not get another opportunity to speak to thee. Just before I came hither Angela and her sister were taken from my care by force. They are

now in the palace, under the care of Zara. Omar intends to keep them."

Mariano turned to reply, but the Jew had retired noiselessly as he came.

Early in the morning after the fight the prison-door opened, and a band of Turkish soldiers entered. The garish light of day, as it streamed over the dungeon floor, revealed the fact that the shattered frame of the Italian slave had found rest at last.

The soldiers looked fagged and dishevelled. Many of them wore bandages about their heads and limbs. They did not speak, but drew up in a line, while their leader advanced with a negro, who proceeded to file the fetters from off the British consul and his countrymen. In a few minutes he led them out between the soldiers, and conducted them towards the palace.

Although the Turkish officer could not, or would not, converse with Colonel Langley, the latter had little difficulty in making a pretty good guess as to how matters stood, for on his way to the palace, short though it was, he saw devastation enough to convince him that the British had gained the day. Arrived at the palace, the party were locked up in an anteroom.

Meanwhile, in the audience-hall, which was considerably damaged by the artillery of the fleet, Omar Dey held a divan. The building in which this court had been held in former times was now a ruin, and many of the councillors who had been wont to assemble in it had gone to their last account.

Omar was very pale, and moved with difficulty, having been wounded slightly in various places. Indeed, all the statesmen who surrounded him bore marks, more or less severe, of having played a part in the late action. In the midst of an eager discussion, an attendant entered, and announced the arrival of a British officer with a flag of truce.

"Admit him," said the Dey, who, although boiling over with rage and despair, had sense enough to make up his mind to bow to the power which he could not overcome.

Immediately Lieutenant Burgess was ushered into the court, accompanied by Rais Ali in the capacity of translator, and two of his boat's crew, one of whom was, by special permission, Ted Flaggan.

Without wasting time in useless ceremony, the lieutenant ordered Rais to read aloud the paper which he had been commissioned by Lord Exmouth to deliver to the Dey.

Poor Rais Ali appeared to have expended all his bravery on the ramparts,

for he trembled and grew paler as he took the paper in his hand.

“Cheer up, owld boy,” whispered Flaggan, as Ali turned to advance towards the Dey; “ye’ve got more pluck than I guv ’ee credit for. Never say die.”

Whether it was the result of these encouraging words, or desperation, we know not, but Rais immediately advanced and read the paper with considerable fluency. It ran as follows:—

> “To His Highness the Dey of Algiers.
>
> “Sir,—For your atrocities at Bona on defenceless Christians, and your unbecoming disregard of the demands I made yesterday, in the name of the Prince Regent of England, the fleet under my orders has given you a signal chastisement, by the total destruction of your navy storehouses and arsenal, with half your batteries. As England does not make war for the destruction of cities, I am unwilling to visit your personal cruelties upon the inoffensive inhabitants of the country, and I therefore offer you the same terms of peace which I conveyed to you yesterday in my Sovereign’s name. Without the acceptance of these terms you can have no peace with England.
>
> “If you receive this offer as you ought, you will fire three guns; and I shall consider your not making this signal as a refusal, and shall renew my operations at my own convenience.
>
> “I offer you the above terms provided neither the British consul, nor the officers and men so wickedly seized by you from the boats of a British ship of war, have met with any cruel treatment, or any of the Christian slaves in your power; and I repeat my demand that the consul and officers and men may be sent off to me, conformable to ancient treaties.—I have, etcetera, Exmouth.”

The terms of peace referred to ran thus:—

I. The abolition for ever of Christian slavery.

II. The delivery to my flag of all slaves in the dominions of the Dey, to whatever nation they may belong, at noon to-morrow.

III. To deliver also to my flag all money received by the Dey for the redemption of slaves since the commencement of this year, at noon to-

morrow.

IV. Reparation shall be made to the British consul for all losses he may have sustained in consequence of his confinement.

V. The Dey shall make a public apology in presence of his ministers and officers, and beg pardon of the consul in terms dictated by the captain of the *Queen Charlotte*.

The proud pirate chief did not move a muscle of his pale face, or bend his head while these terms were read to him; nevertheless, he agreed to them all. The consul and others were called into the hall and delivered up; the three guns were fired, and thereafter Lord Exmouth directed that, on the Sunday following, “a public thanksgiving should be offered up to Almighty God for the signal interposition of his Providence during the conflict which took place on the 27th between his Majesty’s fleet and the ferocious enemies of mankind.” In accordance with these terms of peace, all the Christian slaves were collected next day and delivered up.

Sixteen hundred and forty-two were freed on this occasion, and sent on board the fleet. Counting those freed but a short time before, through Lord Exmouth’s influence along the Barbary coasts, the total number delivered amounted to above 3000.

The assembling on the decks of the ships of war of these victims of barbaric cruelty, ignorance, and superstition, was a sight that raised powerful and conflicting feelings in the breasts of those who witnessed it. The varied feelings of the slaves were, to some extent, expressed by their actions and in their faces. Old and young were there, of almost every nation; gentle and simple, robust and feeble; men, women, and children. Some, on coming on board, cheered with joy, but these were few, and consisted chiefly of men who had not been long enslaved, and had not suffered much. Others wept with delight, fell on their knees and kissed the decks, or returned thanks to God for deliverance. Some were carried on board, being too ill, or too broken down, to walk. Many appeared to regard the whole affair as a dream, too good to be true, from which they must soon awake—as they had often awaked before—after their uneasy slumbers in the dreadful Bagnio. But the saddest sights of all were the men and women, here and there among the crowd, whose prolonged condition of slavery—in many cases ten, twenty, even thirty years—had rendered them callous as well to joy as to sorrow. Taken in youth, they were now old. What was freedom to them? It did indeed deliver them from the lash and from constant toil, but it could not return to them the years that were gone; it could not recall the beloved dead, who had, perchance, found their graves, sooner than might otherwise have been, in consequence of the

misery of hope long deferred, or the toil, beyond capacity, induced by the desire to raise the needful ransom of the loved ones rent from them by these Algerine corsairs. “The heart knoweth its own bitterness.” None but themselves could know or tell the awful feelings, or the still more dreadful want of feeling, that caused these wretched ones to look with glazed eyes of total indifference on the wonderful scenes that were enacted around them that day.

Among the released captives, of course, were our friends of the Rimini family.

One of these was seen going about the decks, glancing earnestly and quickly into faces, as if in search of some one.

It was Mariano seeking for Angela! He was closely followed by Ted Flaggan and Lucien.

“Depind on it, they’ve kep’ her back,” said Ted.

“I fear they have,” said Lucien.

Mariano said nothing, but went straight to the officer in charge of the deck, and demanded a body of men to go ashore and recover the Sicilian captives.

The case was brought before the chief, who at once granted Mariano’s request, and sent a party on shore.

Arrived at the palace they made a formal demand that the sisters and the child should be delivered up.

At first Omar pretended ignorance on the point. Then he suddenly recollected two female slaves who had been forgotten, and sent for them, but they were not those for whom Mariano sought! At last, seeing that there was no help for it, he gave orders that Paulina Ruffini, and her child and sister, should be given up.

Need we say that Mariano kept pretty close to Angela after that, and that Angela did not by any means object? We think not!

Besides these captives there were a few others whom the Dey endeavoured to retain, but Lord Exmouth was inexorable. He insisted on every individual being set free, and spared no pains to ascertain that none were left behind. Of course it is more than probable that some unfortunates were so carefully concealed as to escape detection, still, as far as it lay in the power of man to act, this part of the Admiral’s duty was thoroughly performed.

Thereafter, having accomplished its object, the British fleet left the stricken city, and the freed captives were ultimately returned to their homes.

Thus at last, in 1816, after the lapse of centuries of murder, rapine, and robbery on the high seas, did the Pirate City receive a fatal blow, from which it never completely recovered. It revived a little, indeed, in after years, and made a struggle to renew its old strength and resume its old practices; but, fortunately for mankind, the reigning Dey in 1827 struck the French consul on the face with his fan. The French thereupon declared war and blockaded the town, but it was not till 1833 that they set themselves vigorously to effect a conquest. In that year they landed an army in Algeria at Sidi Ferruch, and swept everything before them. The history of this conquest—and of the subsequent wars of France in Algeria—is full of the deepest interest and most romantic incidents. The barbarians did indeed show fight, and fought bravely, but they might as well have tried to drive back the sea as to check the disciplined battalions of France. In a brief but brilliant campaign they were utterly defeated, the Dey capitulated, the gates were thrown open, and the French marched in and took possession.

From that day to this they have held it, and the Pirate City is now a charming town—with a French foreground, a Moorish middle-distance, and a bright green background—in which, along with Frenchmen, Turks, Kabyles, Negroes and Moors, and amid orange-groves, date-palms, cacti and prickly pears, the invalids of Europe may enjoy summer heat in winter days, and sit outside in December dreaming peacefully, it may be almost sceptically, of other days, when the bastinado and the bow-string flourished in the land.

Less than sixty years ago the Algerine corsairs were the pest of the civilised world and the terror of the Mediterranean. Now, their city is one of our “summer retreats,” a sort of terrestrial paradise, and those who resort to it find it difficult to believe that the immediate forefathers of the fine-looking fellows who saunter about the French boulevards and Moorish streets were the ruthless pirates which history too surely proclaims them to have been.

But what of the various characters whom we have thus summoned from the “vasty deep” of memory, to play their little part in this veracious tale?

Of some we know not the end. Of others it would be almost well that we did not. A few terminated their career happily.

Poor Bacri fell a victim to the avarice of Omar, who desired to possess

himself of the Jew's wealth. Being an autocrat, he easily found means to accomplish his purpose. He invited Bacri to the palace, conversed affably for a time, and then bowed him out with a smile. On the stair, as he descended, the Jew was met by three chaouses, who seized him, and took him to the strangling-room. Bacri was, as we have said, a powerful man, and struggled long and vigorously for life. But what could he do unarmed against three stalwart men? He ultimately gave in, with the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on his lips, and perished as many a former chief of the Jews in Algiers had perished before him.

Rais Ali having given, as we have seen, incontestable proof of his courage and fidelity during the bombardment, was raised to a position of easy affluence, and for many years continued a respected and harmless inhabitant of the town. His kindly disposition induced him to forego his Mohammedan prejudices against Christians—perchance his intercourse with Christians had something to do with that—and he became a firm friend of the Padre Giovanni during the course of that good old man's career, which did not last long after slavery was abolished. The same feelings induced him to befriend Blindi Bobi, who was also a friend of the Padre.

Poor Ashweesha, and her father, Sidi Cadua, perished under the rod and the bow-string; and Hadji Baba, the story-teller, continued to tell stories and to jest to the end of his days. How the Deys tolerated him has ever remained a matter of surprise to the thoughtful. Ziffa, his naughty daughter, became a wife and a mother, in connexion with three other wives, who were also mothers, and belonged to the Turk whom we have more than once mentioned as the captain of the port.

Colonel Langley returned to England with his wife and children, inexpressibly glad to exchange the atmosphere of the Crescent for that of the Cross. Ted Flaggan was installed as butler to the family, and remained in that position for many years. It is supposed by some of his descendants that he would have continued in it to the present day, if any of the family had remained alive.

As to the various members of the Rimini family, it may suffice that we should dismiss them by drawing a slight sketch:

In a Sicilian cottage near the sea, a little old lady—some would say a dear little old lady—sits in a high-backed chair. She gazes pensively, now on the blue Mediterranean, now on a family group which consists of the dark-eyed Juliet and the earnest Lucien, who are vainly striving to restrain the violence of their youngest son; the eldest being engaged in a surreptitious attempt to pull down a map of Algiers, which hangs on the opposite wall.

Mariano, with his wonted vivacity, stands before the old lady tossing a small female specimen of humanity as near to the ceiling as is compatible with prolonged existence. Angela looks on admiringly. She does not appear to care much for Mariano now! Why she takes so much interest in the female baby we leave to the reader to discover. Old Francisco is there too, bluffer and bolder than ever, and so is Paulina, with a beautiful dark-haired girl, who is the very image of the tall handsome man engaged in conversation with Francisco.

It is no accidental coincidence this meeting. It is a family gathering, planned and carried out from year to year, in commemoration of the day when the family was delivered from slavery and sorrow.

They have just finished dinner, and there has been much earnest, thankful converse about the days gone by. They have fought their battles o'er again. They have re-told the oft-told tales, feeling as if they were almost new, and have reiterated their gratitude to the God of Love for His great and manifold mercies.

We have not space to relate all that they said, but we may give the concluding sentences.

"You're a wild boy, Mariano, as you always were," said the little old lady with the rippling mouth, as the young man plunged his little daughter into her lap head-foremost.

"And as I mean to be to the end of the chapter," replied Mariano. "How often, grandmother, have you not tried to impress on me the importance of following good examples? Have I not acted on your advice? Doubtless no man is perfect, and I am far—very far—from claiming to have been thoroughly successful in my efforts; but I have tried hard. Did I not, while in Algiers, follow the example of my dear father in exhibiting at all times a spirit of obstinacy that all but drove the pirates delirious with rage? Did I not afterwards imitate Lucien, (your pet-pattern), in getting to me the very best wife that the wide world could produce, and do I not now intend to follow your own example in remaining young in spirit until I am old in years? Taunt me not, then, with being wild—you cannot cure me."

"I fear not," replied the little old lady with a sigh which did not accord in the slightest degree with the ripples that played round her lips.

"Wildness runs in the family, mother," said Francisco, with a broad smile and a glance at Lucien's eldest hope, who had at that moment succeeded in breaking the string of the map, and pulling Algiers down on his head, "the Riminis have it in the blood and bone.—Get up and don't whimper, there's a brave fellow," added the burly merchant as the astonished youth arose; "I

only wish that one of the great Powers would pull down the real city of pirates as effectually as you have settled the map. Lord Exmouth no doubt gave it a magnificent pounding, but utter obliteration is the only thing that will do."

"That's true, father," cried Lucien; "it must be conquered by a civilised nation, and the Turks be driven out, or held in subjection, if Europe is to have peace. Depend on't they will be at their old tricks ere long."

"I should like to be commander-in-chief when the war of conquest begins," said Mariano.

"A poor job you'd make of it, my son," said Francisco.

"Why so, father?"

"Why? because hot blood and a giddy head with a revengeful spirit are not the best elements wherewith to construct a commander-in-chief."

"Ah! father, with every wish to be respectful I cannot refrain from reminding you of a certain pot which was reported once to have called a kettle black. Ha!" continued Mariano, turning towards the little old lady, "you should have seen him, granny, in the Bagnio of Algiers, when the guards were inclined to be rather hard on some of the sick—"

"No, no!" interrupted the old lady, shaking her head; "don't talk of that."

"Well, I won't, except to say that I'm thankful we are well out of it."

"It seems all like a strange dream," returned the old lady thoughtfully.

"So it does, mother," murmured Francisco, "so it does,—an almost incredible dream."

And so it seems to us, reader, now that we have closed the record of it; nevertheless it was no dream, but a sad and stern reality to those who played their part in it—to those who sorrowed and suffered, sixty years ago, in the Pirate City.