

*Afghanistan: The Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection
at the University of Nebraska-Omaha*

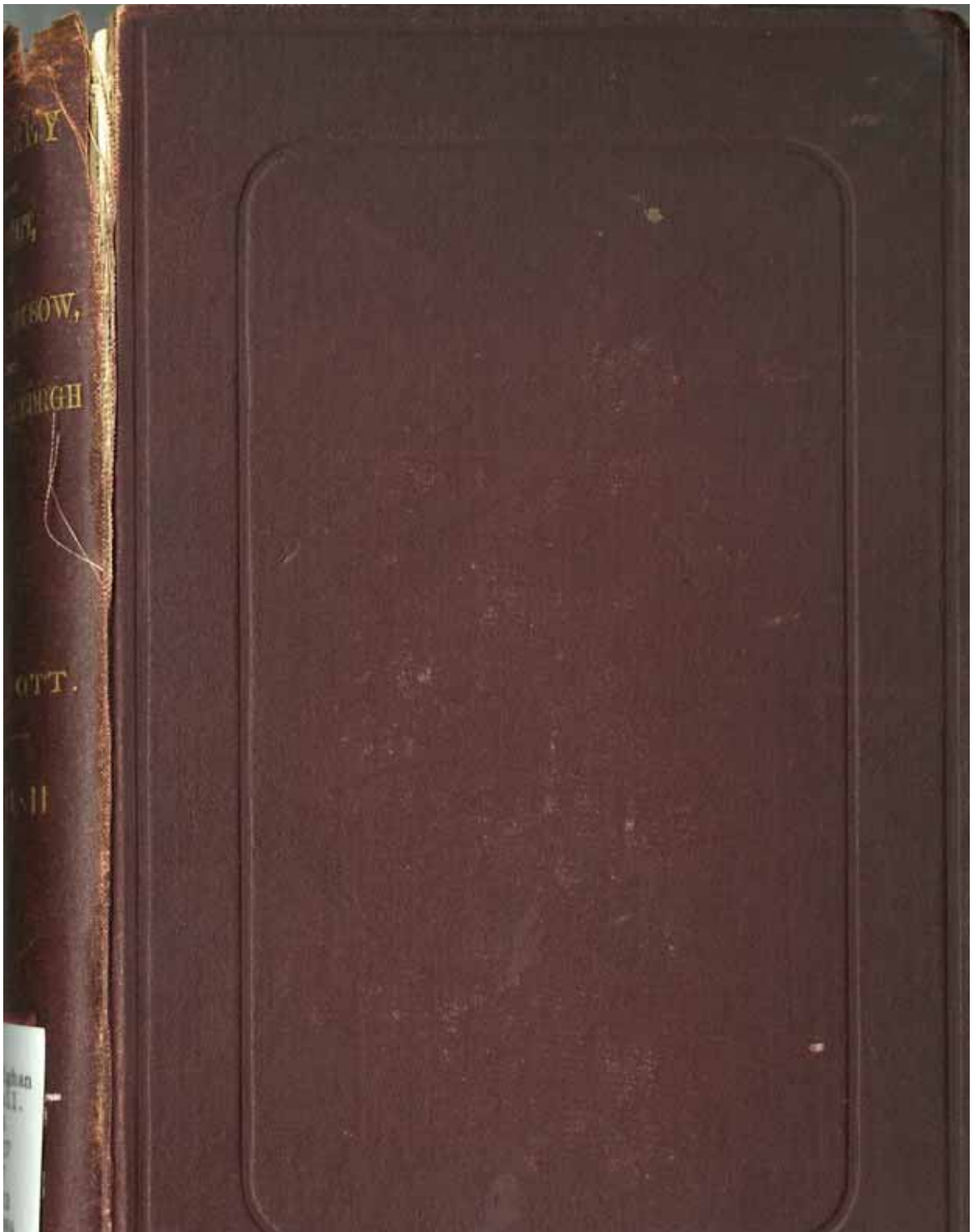
*Digitized Afghanistan Materials in English
from the Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection*

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Year 2010

Narrative of a journey from Heraut to
Khiva, Moscow, and St. Petersburg,
during the late Russian invasion of
Khiva, with some account of the court of
Khiva and the kingdom of Khaurism. V.
2. (1884)

James Abbott Sir



MY
SOW,
RIGH

OTT.

II

Lithan
11.

21160

No.

I



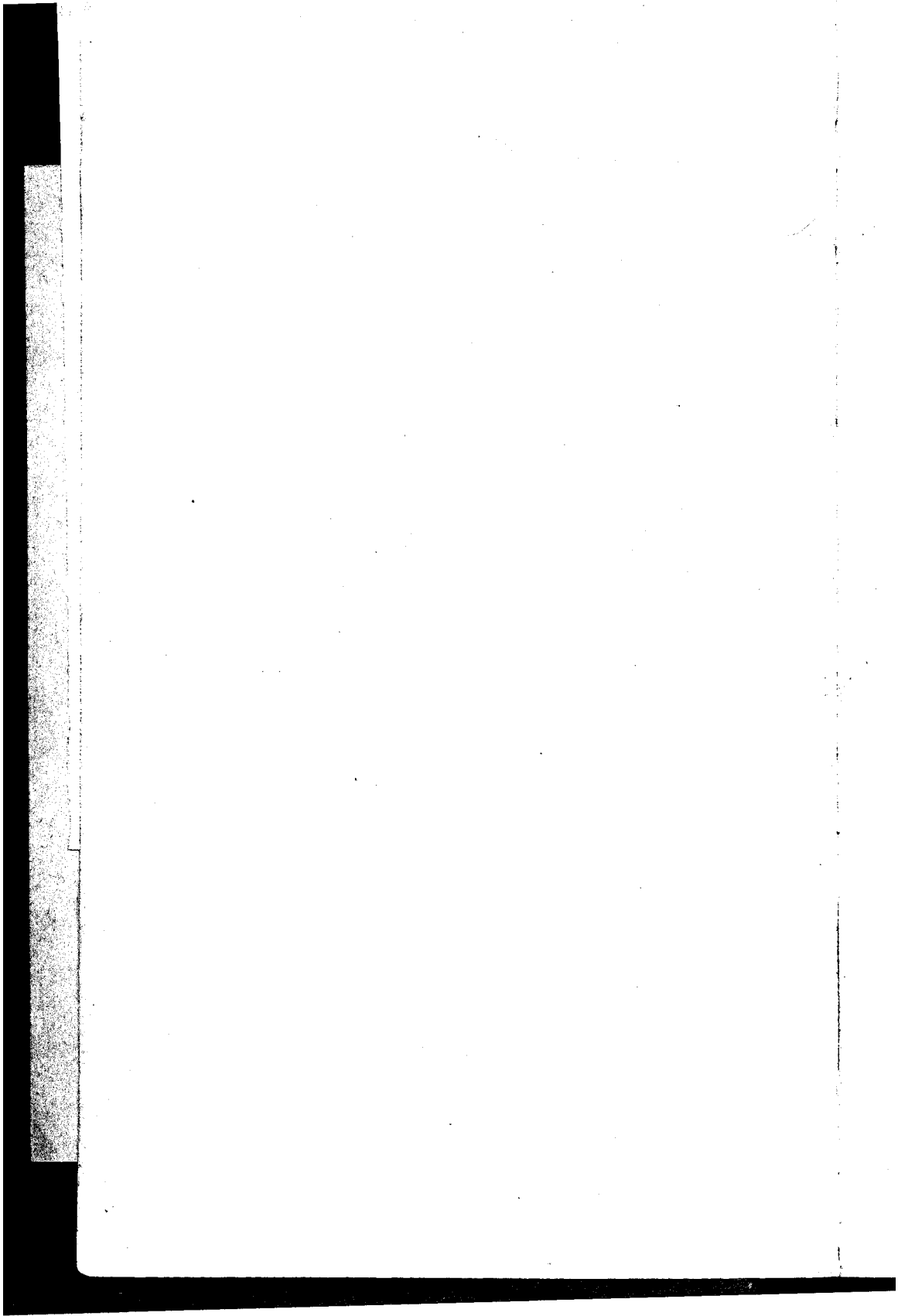
Stoke
Public

Newington
Libraries

CENTRAL LENDING LIBRARY

Barrowers
are requested to make
themselves familiar with
the Rules and Regulations
of the Library, a copy of
which may be had on
application.

METROPOLITAN SPECIAL COLLECTION
HOWARD LIBRARY



NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY
FROM
HERAUT TO KHIVA, MOSCOW,
AND
ST. PETERSBURGH,
DURING THE
LATE RUSSIAN INVASION OF KHIVA;
WITH
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE COURT OF KHIVA AND
THE KINGDOM OF KHAURISM.

By CAPTAIN JAMES ABBOTT,
BENGAL ARTILLERY,
LATELY ON A DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO KHIVA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

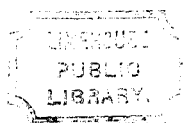
VOL. II.

Third Edition.

LONDON:
W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE,
PALL MALL S.W.

1884.

(All rights reserved.)



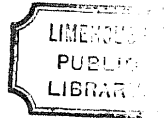
Q 28637
915-8

LONDON :
PRINTED BY W. H. ALLEN AND CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.

STOKE NEWINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES		
Library	Accon. No.	Class No.
C	21160	958.5
Vendor	Price	Date
		2/83.

958.5

497



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER XXIX.	
Uneasiness of the Kuzzauk Brothers—Preparations for Departure—Departure for Mooraud Ali's Tent—Opposition of Kuzzauk Chiefs—Yar Muhummud—Chalk Cliffs—Dismissal and Curse of Yar Muhummud—Salt Marsh—Perplexity—Bivouac—Character of Mooraud Ali—Meeting with Him—His Physiognomy—His Hospitality and Courtesy—Who is the First in Honour—Virtues of Patience—False and true Philosophy—Feringee Mysteries—Odds and Ends—Comets and Kettles	1
CHAPTER XXX.	
Yar Muhummud—A new Sauce for Ragouts—Mooraud Ali's Proffer of Service—Arrival of Khojeh Muhummud—Of Hussun Mhatoor—His Proffer rejected—Release of my Servants—Angry Debates between the Chiefs—Mooraud Ali abandons me—I am left to the Mercy of Hussun Mhatoor—Eloquence of a Shawl—Part of the Plunder recovered—The Kuzzauk Brothers	16
CHAPTER XXXI.	
Route to Dahsh Gullah—Its Difficulties—The Favourite of Hope—Resolution to pursue that Routé—Choice of my Suite—Quarrel and Affray between the Toorcumuns and Oozbegs—Pacified by Saleh Muhummud—Forced Reconciliation—Mooraud Ali leaves me to my Fate—Khojeh Muhummud—Atonement for his Father's Crime	31

CHAPTER XXXII.

Departure for Dahsh Gullah—Hussun prigs my best Horse —Saleh Muhummud—Summud Khaun's View of Things —Restoration of Property—Its Condition—Metamor- phoses—Singular Good Luck of a Table-cloth—Zone of a Shepherdess—Transfer of Gold—Pardon of the Kuz- zauks—Hussun fails in the Number of Escort promised —Route continued—Last Tent in the Wilderness— Bivouac—Expectation of our Massacre—A sweet Argu- ment—A Night of Anxiety—My Guides leave me in the Wilderness—Melancholy Position—Parting Charge of Saleh Muhummud—Hour of Suspense—First View of Dahsh Gullah	40
---	----

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Cossaq Horsemen—Message of the Commandant—Halt within Cannon-shot of the Walls—Long Suspense— Enter Dahsh Gullah—Mr. Laymann—Wariness of Com- mandant—His Physiognomy—Offer to ransom Cherkush Bae's Son—The Mystery of Abomination—Hospitality of Russians—Amputation of my Finger—Nizaum's Senti- ment thereon—Farewell of Commandant—Of Cherkush Bae—Last Effort in Favour of Latter—Leave Nuovo Alex- androfski—Russian Priest—Embark	53
---	----

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Description of Nuovo Alexandrofski—Sailing on the Cas- pian—Songs of the Cossacs—Sentiment embodied in them—Ten Days' Pilgrimage on a Voyage of 180 Miles —Misery of my People—Whether Pig begets Idol or Idol begets Pig—Mystifying Properties of a Beard— Heartless Frisks of the greedy Wave—Cossaq Soldiers —Arrival at Mouth of Oorahl—At Gorief—Houses there —Commandant—Evening Saunter—Cossaq Hospitality —Names and Surnames	64
---	----

CONTENTS.

v

PAGE.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Departure from Gorief—Vehicles—Rate of Progress—
Aspect of the Country—Chain of Posts from Orenburgh
to Gorief—Mr. Tchicatchief—His kind Attention—First
News of the Failure of the Russian Expedition—Pea-
santry—Town of Oorahlsk—The generous Major of Cos-
saqs of the Oorahl—The hospitable Cossaqs—Their
Dress 76

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Departure from Oorahlsk—Vehicles—Approach to Oren-
burgh—Orenburgh Quarters—General Perroffski, Go-
vernour of Orenburgh—The Hettman of the Oorahl—
Perroffski's Armoury—Generous Conduct of Perroffski
—The Masks—Spirits of the Mighty—The Rival Heroes 92

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Ball-room at Orenburgh—Dancing—Perroffski's Prohibi-
tion—Captives at Khiva—Effect upon them of my Arrival
—Preparations for Renewing the Invasion of Khiva . . . 104

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Departure from Orenburgh—Samara—Summud Khaun, a
Sample of the Afghaun Character—Travelling in Rus-
sia—My very limited Means of ascertaining the Condi-
tion of the People—Prisoners of Khiva—Vladimir—
Face of the Country—Forest—Arrival at Moscow—
Impressions—Trimness of Moscow 114

CHAPTER XXXIX.

General Plan of Moscow—The Kittye Gorod—The Krem-
lin—Their Architecture—Antiquity of the Kremlin—
Monstrosities—Bronze Statues of Minine and Pojarski—

	PAGE
Superstitious Observance—Great Bell—Treasures of the Kremlin—Polish Standard—How unworthily treated—Sabres—Crowns—Thrones—Jewels—Eyes—View from a Tower of the Kremlin—Kremlin	126

CHAPTER XL.

Intolerance—A Russian Church—Pictures—Reliques—Treasures—Deities—Moscow—Departure by Diligence—Roads, &c.—Peasantry—Physiognomy—Novgorod—Floating Breakwater—Approach to St. Petersburg—Arrival—Call on the British Minister Plenipotentiary	141
--	-----

CHAPTER XLI.

City of Petersburg—Cathedrals of St. Isaac and Kāsān—Paintings by Wouvermann.—Want of Busy Life—Reason of this—An Advantage rather than the contrary—Peculiarity of her System—Danger from Affectation of Foreign Airs—Her Nationality is her Strength—Necessity of Watching and Moulding her rapid Development—Beauty of her National Music—Danger attending premature Revolutions—A Despotism necessary at present to hold Russia together	151
--	-----

CHAPTER XLII.

Further Considerations of the Position of Russia—Of her principal Capital—In a Military Point of View—What would be the Effect of a Return to Moscow	162
--	-----

CHAPTER XLIII.

Review of the Imperial Guard at Krasno Celo—Infantry—Cavalry—Artillery—The Emperor's Handling of his Troops—Advance of 50,000 in Close Column—National Anthem—Use of this Display	175
---	-----

CONTENTS.

vii

PAGE

CHAPTER XLIV.

Russia's Past History and Future Prospects—Key to Russia's insane Policy of Extension at the Expense of her People's Welfare.—The Answer of Russia to those who object to the Danger of her Policy of Universal Conquest—Her singular Facilities for the same 189

CHAPTER XLV.

Farewell to Petersburg and to my friend Mr. Tchikat-chief—Summud Khaun's Opinion of Steamers.—Arrival at Hull —An Exile's Preference for his Native Land 204

CHAPTER XLVI.

An Exile's Return — The Thames — St. Paul's—Summud Khaun's Impressions—London and its Tide of Life — Summud Khaun—Thames Tunnel—Cab Horses—British Justice 207

CHAPTER XLVII.

Summud Khauniana—Fowl Murders—Summud Khaun's Popularity—Brutal Treatment—Visits the Wax Works —Industrious Fleas—Pastrycook—In Love—Boiled by Mistake — Polytechnic Gallery — St. Pancras Church —Midsummer Night's Dream—Haunts of my Childhood 218

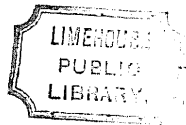
CHAPTER XLVIII.

Return to Calcutta—Summud Khauniana — Fate of Saleh Muhummud—Murder of Stoddart and Conolly—Concluding Remarks 237

APPENDICES.

Appendix A.	255
Appendix B.	256
Appendix C.—Observations on the Caspian and Aral Seas .	295
Appendix D.—Translation of a Furmaun addressed by Ullah Koolie Khaun, King of Khaurism, to Captain James Abbott, on a Mission to His Majesty's Court .	301
Appendix E.—Translation of a Treatise upon Damask Steel, by Colonel Anossoff, of the Corps of Engineers, Imperial Army of Russia, Master of the Fabric of Arms at Zlataoost, in Siberia, and reviver of the Damask .	302
Appendix F.—On the Death of Charles XII. of Sweden .	320
Appendix G.—The Will of Peter the Great	326

28697



NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY,

ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Uneasiness of the Kuzzauk Brothers—Preparations for Departure—Departure for Mooraud Ali's Tent—Opposition of Kuzzauk Chiefs—Yar Muhummud—Chalk Cliffs—Dismissal and Curse of Yar Muhummud—Salt Marsh—Perplexity—Bivouac—Character of Mooraud Ali—Meeting with Him—His Physiognomy—His Hospitality and Courtesy—Who is the First in Honour—Virtues of Patience—False and true Philosophy—Feringee Mysteries—Odds and Ends—Comets and Kettles.

THE arrival of Saleh Muhummud was evidently a cause of uneasiness or anxiety to Ahris Mhatoor. He had, perhaps, made other arrangements for my disposal, or he might fear that his own importance, and his claim upon me as my protector, might be impaired by the circumstance. Be this as it may, he stalked about with a fallen countenance. Cherkush Bae was evidently uneasy, but showed it in a different way. His constant attention to me was unaltered; excepting, perhaps, that he appeared to render it now more of constraint, or as if he thought it less acceptable than before. I endeavoured to alleviate this

feeling, as far as possible, by bestowing much of my attention upon him, and speaking to Saleh Muhummud of the important service this kind Kuzzauk had rendered me. I also called the brothers to me, and gave Ahris the letter, which I had written on a former occasion, and which made him master of all the property he could recover from the Kuzzauks, and deprecated the anger against him of Mooraud Ali and others. I assured him, in front of an assembly of his friends, that I held to the agreement I had made with him and his brother, when my fortunes were at the lowest ebb. That, on conveying me and my people in safety to Khiva, the aforesaid property became his and his brother's; or, if he preferred it, I would purchase it with gold. That I still desired him and his brother as my escort, whatever arrangements Mooraud Ali might make. That, in short, as the English acknowledge but one God, so have they but one word, and abhor a breach of promise.

That night I lay down to rest under different feelings. Saleh Muhummud insisted upon sleeping near me, his sabre carefully laid at his side. Ahris' little daughter took up her position on my other side: I fancied, from some kindly feeling, in the prospect of so soon parting from me for ever. The looks of Ahris Mhatoor were unusually gloomy, and his countenance, under such circumstances, was portentous.

The ensuing morning, the camels and horses were brought, and Ahris Mhatoor assembled all his relatives and friends to hear read, and see delivered to him, in my presence, the Toorkish letter which gave him right to all property of mine he could recover from the Kuzzauks, upon my safe arrival with him and his brother at Khiva. In this assembly again appeared

a messenger from Hussun Mhatoor, entreating me to come to the tent, to which he was hastening; and making a thousand protestations and promises. I replied, that if Hussun Mhatoor had anything to say to me, he must wait upon me; and that I marvelled he could not have contrived to do so already, as two of his messengers had reached me. I was much annoyed to find Ahris urging me to comply with this invitation.

After much delay, owing to a quarrel between Cherkush Bae and some neighbours, the cattle were pronounced to be in readiness, and I took leave of the two families, whose tents I had so long shared. The brawny daughter of Cherkush Bae came and blubbered over me. I kissed the children, and shook hands with the women, and, mounting Saleh Muhummud's horse, at his especial desire, started with my four servants, mounted in various ways. The two brothers and two of their servants attended. Ahris was in the fidgets to persuade me to proceed to Hussun Mhatoor's rendezvous. I felt convinced that Hussun must have gained him to his own views. Cherkush said nothing, but walked on, leading one of the camels. He was out of spirits, and the minds of all were more or less saddened; for we were plunging anew into difficulties and danger, without the means of resisting like men, or of making any preparation for overcoming difficulty. All of us, excepting Saleh Muhummud, were unarmed; and I rode with difficulty, from the pain occasioned by the motion of the horse, which brought the ends of the severed bone in constant friction together. Half a dozen children, mounted upon jackasses, had ridden down our whole cavalcade.

We had not proceeded many minutes up the valley

when we met eight Kuzzauk horsemen, four of them chiefs, and *all* my bitter enemies. They saluted me, and said they were come to beg me to meet Hussun Mhatoor at a neighbouring camp, where measures were in progress for the recovery of my property. I replied that I had made over to Cherkush and Ahris all recoverable property, and should proceed straight to the tent of the Yuze Baushee, Mooraud Ali. Finding persuasion vain, they tried intimidation, assuring my people, with menacing gestures, that they would not suffer me to proceed, would seize me, and sell them, etc., etc., etc. One of these chiefs was the cool fellow who had before threatened to exchange me for Kuzzauk prisoners at Dahsh Gullah. They placed themselves in our path, and by all possible means endeavoured to obstruct our progress. I every instant expected they would have proceeded to violence, and had some apprehensions that Saleh Muhummud, being armed, might resent their insolence. I warned him strictly against this. The scene was very exciting. These men had unlimited power over us, backed as they were by the villain Hussun. How long their reluctance to any open violence to their king's guest might last, it was impossible to say; but a feather's weight would have turned the scale: for my return to Khiva must have seemed to them their certain destruction. They entangled Ahris in long discussions. Several times he seemed about to yield: but Cherkush pressed resolutely on, and beckoned me to do the same. As we continued, the whole valley turned out to see, to follow, and to throng us. Numbers of them placed themselves in our path, and strove, by expostulation and threats, almost by force, to persuade me to follow the path which, branching

to the right, led to Hussun's tent. They even instructed the guide to lead us there, and he had actually taken advantage of the divergence of the paths, to act according to instruction, when I discovered the treachery, and altered our course accordingly.

A clump of about thirty horsemen followed, or accompanied us. A man, in a red bonnet, sat with a companion upon a camel, following me, but at some distance. Whenever I turned, he hid his face, which excited my suspicion. I therefore pulled up, and suffered him to pass me. In spite of his efforts to conceal his features, I recognised Yar Muhummud, the man who had wounded me, and had subsequently been most active toward my destruction. The presence of this creature, miserable as he was, boded me no good; but, as others were gradually falling off, and taking the road to Hussun Mhatoor's tent, I hoped he would speedily follow their example. In this I was disappointed. At the foot of the cliffs we were approaching, nearly all the horsemen diverged from our path: but Yar Muhummud continued to haunt me. He kept aloof from me, and dared not meet my glance. Heaven had sent me, however, an antidote in the bright, never-doubting, ever-hoping spirit of Saleh Muhummud, which was like a wave of sparkling water dashed upon the care-soiled mirror of my mind.

I constantly summoned him to my side. His very voice was full of hope. He seemed to have been born under some happier aspect of the heavens; to live in some current, inaccessible to others, where trouble and care were unknown terms. He pointed out to me the course he had taken over the desolate

steppe, where the only landmark is an occasional tomb; where man is less than a drop in the ocean; because for that drop there is society and kindred; whilst man is here an outcast, disowned of all he sees.

After proceeding about twelve miles, we arrived at the brink of some lofty chalk cliffs, formerly the binding of some strait of the Caspian. Cherkush Bae was very anxious to halt in this spot; but I would not listen to the advice, as it seemed to me certain that we should be pursued during the night by some of Hussun Mhatoor's horse, and that our sole chance of safety lay in reaching, ere morrow, Mooraud Ali's tent. We therefore descended the cliffs by a path narrow and broken, steep and difficult, where a stumble or careless step of horse or camel would have launched the rider into eternity. It was a dreary ride, which I shall not soon forget. How different from our last flight, when, nevertheless, death pressed us hard.

The continued presence of my cowardly enemy, Yar Muhummud, was very irksome. At the foot of the cliffs I drew up my horse, and called Cherkush Bae to my side.

"Cherkush Bae," I said, "you have more than once saved my life. Are you now in league with my enemies? Do you not know that Yar Muhummud has ever sought my destruction? Will you throw away the gratitude you have purchased?"

"Yar Muhummud," he replied, "*was* your enemy; but now he seeks to make you forget the wrongs he has done you by the service he shall render. Some of these camels are *his*."

"But what is he doing here? Does he think I like

the sight of him? You have laid me under many obligations, Cherkush. Carry us through the present difficulty, and you will find my promises less than the reward which awaits you."

"Upon the life of my only son, by all that is sacred, I am and will be true to you. If you like, I will dismiss Yar Muhummud."

"Do so! His presence here is not needed."

He accordingly ordered Yar Muhummud to be gone, and that worthy was slowly and reluctantly obeying, when Ali Muhummud, who, in common with all my suite, had an especial hatred to him for his share in my misfortunes, took this opportunity of being uppermost to vent upon him some of his pent-up wrath. The torrent poured from his lips with a violence quite astonishing, aided and eked out by the execrations of Summud Khaun and Nizaum in pure Persian. It seemed as if all the wrongs Ali had endured, as a slave to cannibals for sixteen long years, were concentrated and expressed in the bitterness of his vituperation. I tried repeatedly to stem the torrent, but in vain. For I think there is nothing so unmanly as abuse; so humiliating as the impotent wrath, which has not sufficient self-dignity for concealment. Yar Muhummud was borne down and alarmed by it.

We were now up to our horses' and camels' knees in a salt marsh, which stretches for miles, at the foot of these cliffs, and is about half a mile in breadth. It is a stratum of mud, iced to the thickness of an inch with salt, in a continuous crust. The salt yielded, like brittle ice, to the feet of the cattle, and the mud beneath rendered the passage toilsome and tedious. On emerging from this we ascended by a slope, the steppe covered with wormwood, and showing here

and there a wild flower, the sight of which was a refreshment. Cherkush Bae urged earnestly that I should not deviate from the direct route to Khiva, for the sake of visiting Mooraud Ali, whose tent was said to be far away to the right, near a distant cliff. It was evident that he feared this chief; whether on account of the diminution in his presence, of his own and his brother's importance, I knew not. I was, however, of opinion, that our only chance lay in securing Mooraud Ali's good offices; for Hussun Mhatoor was to us, what the falcon is to the wounded deer. He could, on the instant, outstrip and destroy us. I therefore persisted.

A new difficulty arose; on meeting another Kuzzauk, we were directed for Mooraud Ali's tent, in the very opposite direction from that first indicated, viz. in the direction of Khiva; and Cherkush Bae advocated the new course, saying that even should we fail of our object, we should be making headway to the capital, and that he and his brother would protect us, without other aid. This I knew to be impossible; and as Yar Muhummud, who was now a mile ahead of my cavalcade, had spoken to the second messenger, I gave his word no credence, but followed the first indication. Night fell upon us in this difficulty, and at ten o'clock we found ourselves at a Kuzzauk tent, still many miles from Mooraud Ali. I was, therefore, obliged to permit a halt, much against my inclination. But the fact was, that in the darkness of the night, with only a general direction as to the spot where Mooraud Ali had lately been encamped, any further wandering would surely exhaust the cattle, which had already been ten hours on the road, but would not as certainly bring us nearer to our object.

We therefore purchased a sheep of the Kuzzauks ; for Ali had, on the idea of being a servant of the Ghoosh Beegie of Khiva, been allowed to retain the money found upon him ; and Nizaum once more, to his great delight, found himself frying meat for his master, a process unknown in Kuzzauk land. We slept upon the steppe that night, without alarm, although the previous symptoms had been questionable ; and before daylight next morning I awakened the people, and started once more in search of the Yuze Baushee. Passing a Toorcumun on the road, I enquired the character of Mooraud Ali. He replied—

“ He is a sordid and miserly wretch. In his house are many camel-loads of corn (as if in England one should say of ‘ turtle ’) yet his very daughter, and she an only daughter, lives in the house of starvation.”

This was the first hint I received of the bitter enmity, subsisting between Mooraud Ali and the Toorcumuns of these parts. It gave me little comfort ; for although evidently the speech of an enemy, it was all I knew of the Oozbeg, upon whom I was about to cast myself for protection. After advancing some miles farther, a large cavalcade of horsemen appeared in the distance, advancing towards me. These, I learned, were Mooraud Ali and his retinue. On a nearer approach, I perceived the chief himself, and observed that nearly all his attendants, amounting to 150 horsemen, were Kuzzauks.

We met, and saluted by shaking hands, without dismounting. He paid a few compliments ; said that some time ago he had heard of my approach, and had killed a horse and a young camel for my entertainment ; but that, finding I was escorted by his enemy,

Hussun Mhatoor, he had abandoned his intention of riding out to welcome me; that he was only just now apprized of the evil which had befallen me; that now I was his guest, and, with God's blessing, my troubles should end.

Accustomed for some time past to read my fortunes and my fate in the countenances of men whose language was strange to me, I took a sharp survey of Mooraud Ali. He was a small, spare, meanly-dressed man, with hard features, high cheek-bones, a hawk nose, and a quick and wild eye. He wore the usual Oozbeg cylindric cap of lambskin, but it was small and mean, and his old green cloak, of coarse broad-cloth, was desperately shabby. But he rode a fine and fiery Toorcumun horse, and delighted to arouse its action, and display his entire command over it. He was such a figure as I could imagine, at the head of a hundred thousand horse, riding down the kingdoms of the East. The shabbiness of attire on such a spare, hard figure, lighted up by such a restless eye, would have been more readily attributed to indifference than to meanness; yet it did not *contradict* the verdict of the Toorcumun, and was no encouragement to one needing his hospitality. His eldest son, a soft-looking youth, of one and twenty, rode beside him. He embraced Saleh Muhummud as an acquaintance, and both commenced in Persian a conversation, from which I learnt, that Saleh had met him whilst in search of me, and had been kindly entertained by him, and directed in his further search. I, of course, expressed to him my thanks for the service he had rendered.

Mooraud Ali called Muhummud Ali, my interpreter, aside, and conversed earnestly with him, until

we reached the spot of encampment. When we reached the selected spot, I found Mooraud Ali more polite than before. He had learned of my interpreter the nature of my relations with Khiva, and knew better what was due to me than he could have conjectured from the shattered state of my fortunes and the shabby figures of myself and retinue. On reaching the spot selected for encampment, he dismounted, spread a carpet for me on the earth, and begged me to select the spot upon which he should pitch a tent for my accommodation. The tent soon appeared, and was pitched accordingly, and I invited Saleh Muhummud and my people to partake it with me. We had not long enjoyed this new position, when Mooraud Ali and his son reappeared, bearing in their hands trays of sugar-candy and dried fruits, apricots, raisins, almonds. These, in spite of my expostulations, he presented with his own hand, remaining in attendance upon me, or leaving his son, when himself obliged to be absent. This graceful courtesy he never could be persuaded to forget for an instant. His reply to my entreaty, to leave our attendance to his servant, was quite worthy of the hospitable and generous conduct which illustrated it.

“I myself have been a prisoner, and know what are the feelings of the captive. I myself have been an ambassador, and know what is due to that high office. I myself have been delivered from bondage, and know how sweet is liberty to the ransomed. I was sent by the late king, Madreheem Khaun, on an embassy to Tehraun. Abbas Meerza seized and cast me into prison, where I remained seven years, and then sold me for 80 tillas (about 48/). At length the Khaun Huzurut forgot in my sufferings

the indignity offered him, and sent to ransom me for 1000 tillas."

"But," I insisted, "complete your kindness by sitting beside me. You have done me much honour; complete it by honouring me with your society."

He was, with difficulty, persuaded to sit at the farthest corner of the carpet, and to eat one morsel of the food with which the trays were covered; to us the most delicious of dainties.

"The blessed Muhummud, peace be to him," he said, "was asked by the blessed Ali, whom he was to consider the most honourable amongst men? The Prophet, without hesitation, answered, 'Your guest.'"

"It is an excellent saying," I replied, "and if there can be any greater than a guest, it is he who knows, and practises what is due to a guest."

"You," said the Oozbeg, "are more than a guest, for you are guest of the Khaun Huzurut, whose slave I am. I never can render sufficient honour to one, whom my sovereign regards in that sacred relation."

"Ool-humm'd-ool-illah," shouted Summud Khaun, stroking his beard with both hands. "It is a good thing to wait God's will. It is a good thing to trust God. Didn't I tell you, Sir, when you were wasting your mind with thought of what was to be done, that it was good to wait?"

"Very true, patience is good. But it is also good to employ the faculties bestowed upon us. If a swimmer fall into the sea, it is good for him to trust God: but it is also good that he should strike out lustily, or the chances are, that God will let him go to the bottom. Wait awhile, and let us see the end of all

this; for it is unwise to rejoice in the sight of fruit, until we know the tree on which it grows. I have lived long enough to judge of things rather by their end, than their beginning."

In spite, however, of this sordid caution, I felt my spirits rise, as I looked around the little circle, enjoying, after so many privations, the repast most congenial to their taste, the dried fruits of their native land; and heard the word, "Shookr," (thanks) resounding from every mouth. In fact, it is bad taste, and unsound philosophy, to let slip the present, because the future may not correspond. And I could not, just then, afford to be a man of false taste, or an imperfect philosopher.

I had not enjoyed above a taste of the dainties before us, when I missed Cherkush Bae and Ahris Mhatoor, and my heart smote me, that I should for a moment have forgotten them. I spoke to my kind host, but found, from his reply, that he would not be pleased at their introduction to my circle. "I will spare their lives," he said, "since you command it. Otherwise, everyone that had lifted a hand against you, should forfeit his head."

"You must do more than that, in justice, as well as for my sake. The Kuzzauks are wholly innocent of this matter; a Toorcumun told them that I was a Russian spy, and that the Khaun had ordered my destruction; and they did what appeared to them their duty, in attacking me. The Kuzzauks must, therefore, come to no harm on my account, excepting always the guides, who knowing exactly who I was, and being my guests at the time, for they were fed from my table, deliberately betrayed me. For these men I have nothing to say. But he that would show

me honour, and command my regard, must protect and cherish Cherkush-Bae and his brother, and I must have your promise to this effect."

Mooraud Ali promised, but I thought with reluctance. He sent for the brothers, however, and told them, that as I had interceded for them, he forgave them their share in the violence offered his sovereign's guest. I feared to make him their enemy, by insisting upon their joining us at meals, but sent them out a Benjamin's portion of good things, with a message, explaining the restraint under which I laboured.

Saleh Muhummud, as may be supposed, exhibited on this occasion the highest spirits. After lavishing upon me the most respectful and affectionate attention, he talked of Heraut and Todd Sahib, and his (Saleh's) father, the old villain who attempted my ruin at Khiva, and by degrees, settled upon his own home.

"Are *you* married, Sir?" he inquired.

"No."

"Is Todd Sahib?"

"No!"

"Login Sahib?" meaning Dr. Login, in medical charge of the mission.

"No!"

"No! and isn't Sanders Sahib?"

"No!"

"Nor Shakespear Sahib, nor North Sahib?"

"No!"

It was some time before he could quite recover his astonishment. Indeed, I have observed, that in Central Asia, none of our mysteries of steam, telescopes, alchemy, coat tails, cock's feathers, freemasonry, bare heads, air-guns, detonators, smooth chins, cropped

horse-tails, unveiled women, and boys* with one leg: no! not the magic lanthorn itself, so bewilders and impresses the fancy of Muhummedans, as, that an article made in pairs, should constantly be found separated; like the disunited legs of a pair of compasses, or a gross of boots for the right foot. It is vain to argue the point with them, and talk of tin kettles and wandering comets: for it is so easy they think, to have a wife at each important city, and thus be equally at home, whatever the clime. And to die without issue is regarded by them as an especial mark of the displeasure of Heaven.

When Saleh had at length recovered from his amazement, he exclaimed, "What a pity it is, that you have no wife. I have such a sweet one, I cannot tell you how happy I am in her."

"Indeed; and how long have you been so?"

"Only two years, and my wife is so beautiful, so graceful, and so good."

"You are indeed happy, and in a happiness which my wandering destiny must ever deny me."

"Oh! I'll get you such a nice wife, when we return to Heraut."

* When the Indian mission was journeying through Persia, several of the Serjeants' wives travelled on horseback, in the usual riding dress of English women. They created no little wonder and speculation. As women in Persia travel close-veiled, it seemed clear to the natives, that these beardless folk were boys; and as both male and female ride there astraddle, the astonishment was extreme, at finding no leg on the off side. After staring awhile, the children would run round the near side, to see how matters stood there, and finding only one broad leg-covering, would scamper, agape, into their houses, shouting, "O! Mammy, Mammy, come and look at the one-legged boys."

CHAPTER XXX.

Yar Muhummud—A new Sauce for Ragouts—Mooraud Ali's Proffer of Service—Arrival of Khojeh Muhummud—Of Hussun Mhatoor—His Proffer rejected—Release of my Servants—Angry Debates between the Chiefs—Mooraud Ali abandons me—I am left to the Mercy of Hussun Mhatoor—Eloquence of a Shawl—Part of the Plunder recovered—The Kuzzauk Brothers.

MOOAUD ALI now entered into arrangements for liberating my enslaved servants, and for the collection of the property that had been plundered. In the group of rude faces collected round the tent, I saw the hyæna eyes of Yar Muhummud, peering from behind a crowd of Kuzzauks. He was evidently in great perturbation, and my people were anxious to point him out to the Oozbeg as an object of vengeance. This, however, I would not suffer. I summoned the coward in front, and made Ali interpret my words to all present, as I explained to them, that having fled from me, when he was backed by five armed horsemen, he had afterwards wounded me when I was struggling with three men; that he was unworthy of my vengeance, and that I forgave him.

At about 11 o'clock my kind host entered, and placed before me a delicious pilau of young camel's flesh, the most dainty and expensive of dishes

amongst the Tartars. It may be supposed that we all greatly enjoyed it after our long diet of sour curds. He and his son still waited exclusively upon me, in spite of all my remonstrances; and nothing could persuade either to share in the banquet. Let those who disbelieve in the happiness which sensual gratification is capable of conferring, try a diet of sour curds, diluted with snow water, in quantity sufficient to leave the stomach ever humming for more; and, having kept up the abstinence for a month or so, sit down quietly, under a blue sky, to a pilau of young camel's flesh, dressed by Mooraud Ali's cook, probably his fair daughter. The remembrance of it has haunted me ever since. It makes my mouth water after dinner; and yet I am one who have generally no relish for dainties, and who have always lived upon the simplest fare. Undoubtedly, the sense of deliverance sweetened the repast, as Harvey himself, or Tapp, never could have seasoned it.

After dinner, Mooraud Ali entered the tent to consult with me upon my affairs. I produced the Khaun Huzurut's letter, in which the purport of my journey is set forth. I explained minutely the extreme importance of my mission, and proved to him, that the injury I had sustained in property and person was a mere joke, in comparison with the mischief which might, in consequence, result to his master.

He replied, that he deeply regretted the injury and interruption I had sustained, and was ready to assist me in whatever manner I might dictate, either by escorting me to Dahsh Gullah, or to Khiva; or that, if I preferred awaiting there the Khaun Huzurut's further instructions, his tent, and all it contained, were my own.

Earnestly bent as was my mind upon the fulfilment of my mission, even should I prove to be too late to arrest the Russian advance, there was strong temptation to try the Dahsh Gullah route. But it was necessary first to ascertain the possibility of reaching that fort, which the Kuzzauk brothers, our truest friends, had denied; although their hope of the release of Cherkush's son, a prisoner there, was a powerful temptation to the contrary view. The route to Khiva, under Mooraus Ali's escort, was quite secure. Without abandoning all hope of the Dahsh Gullah route, I deemed it wise at present to set my face, as for Khiva, until we could take soundings of the other passage. I knew that I could always take the Dahsh Gullah route should it seem feasible. I replied, therefore, that I would thankfully accept his escort back to the capital. That then, if the Khaun Huzurut thought fit, I would ride post to the Russian frontier.

"You accept *my* escort, then?"

"I do, with all my heart."

In the evening, he again entered the tent, and said, "Hussun Mhatoor will be here to-morrow. Will you go with *him*, or with me?"

"Can you enquire? Have I not already suffered enough from his arrangements?" I was careful not to betray my knowledge of his direct treachery. "I will take your escort at every risk, unless you have repented your offer."

"Well, then," he said, "leave all to me. Hussun Mhatoor will threaten and bluster. You will hear much uproar; give it no heed, but stretch out your legs, and take your ease."

Next morning, the arrival of the Yuze Baushee,

Khojeh Muhummud, was announced, son of Hussun Mhatoor. I have already mentioned the high character borne by this young man.* He now entered the tent, a tall, handsome young fellow, of dark complexion, with regular features and fine eyes, which were ever bent upon the earth. He evidently paid much attention to his personal appearance, being the best-dressed Toorcumun I had seen. He wore a vest of crimson silk, over that a red silk cloak, and over all, a cloak of blue broad cloth, trimmed with otter's fur. His belt was a leathern thong, passing twice round the waist, studded with stars of massive silver, each of which, being perforated, formed an eye to the hook by which the belt was drawn. His head-dress was the Oozbeg cap of black lambskin, and several finely-carved, and richly-mounted knives and poniards depended from the belt beside his sabre.

I would not rise to receive him, but allowed him to take my hand between both of his, and signed him to be seated. He expressed regret at my misfortunes, and that he had not been at Mungh Kishlaur, to escort me in person to Dahsh Gullah. I replied, that when at Mungh Kishlaur, I had anxiously looked for his appearance, as almost the only reasonable hope of safety; but that his movements seemed so uncertain, that I could not wait in the prospect of a meeting;

* Sir R. Shakespear, upon whom this young chief attended after my departure, took a much less favourable view of his character. I was guided wholly by the reports of him which my servants had received from his father's domestics and slaves, and from some Kuzzauks of the steppe. His down look was scarcely prepossessing, and he was probably not much better in moral character than other Toorcumun chiefs. But there must have been some strongly-redeeming quality in his natural disposition to make him so great a favourite with the servants and slaves of his father's household.

that, had we met, my misfortunes had never overtaken me, for that, having the highest opinion of his honour, I should have been guided implicitly by his advice.

He thanked me, dropped his eyes to the earth, and was silent. At length, he said, "But what is the cause of your enmity to Hussun Mhatoor?"

"Have I ever expressed such a sentiment? Have I ever treated him otherwise than with the highest distinction?"

He was again silent, but at length resumed, "Why did you quit Mungh Kishlaur? Did not my father send a man after you, to tell you that the Russian boats had arrived there, and to bid you return?"

"The man he sent declared solemnly that he had not even seen your father. If boats were really there, why did your father not send someone whom I had seen about him, one of his own Toorcumuns? Why was he ashamed to acknowledge the message?"

He again dropped his eyes, sighed, and was profoundly silent, sitting more than an hour in that posture, in a corner of the tent. I was disappointed that he should seem to favour the forgery his father had attempted to pass upon me. Still, it was but the duty of a son to screen his father's faults.

Towards evening, Hussun Mhatoor was announced. He came attended by no less than three Yuze Bau-shees, including his son, and had beside a considerable retinue of Toorcumuns. I had always, even when most disgusted with this villain's misconduct, treated him, from policy, with marked consideration; with more a great deal than was due, considering our respective rank and office; rising to receive him, offering him the first cup of tea, etc. His age freed

me from embarrassment in this. I had since fallen from my high estate ; he was here a little sovereign. I felt, however, prouder now than before, and continued sitting when he entered, scarcely allowing him to take my hand, and pointing him a seat considerably below me. But when Mooraud Ali immediately afterwards entered, I rose, a motion which all were, by etiquette, obliged to imitate ; and although he was a far less person than Hussun Mhatoor, I pressed him to take a seat above my own, addressing him as my benefactor. Nothing could persuade him to this, but my purpose was sufficiently manifest, and Hussun Mhatoor felt it.

He looked at my bandaged hand, and pretended a world of grief at my suffering. "I own," he said, "that I have committed a great error ; I should have sent my own son and a party of horse to escort you ; I hope you do not suffer much pain ?"

"I suffer whatever it has pleased Heaven to allow," I replied, cutting him short. He was disconcerted. At length, after long silence, he resumed.

"I have collected much of your property. The rest will be recovered in a few days. Forgive me what is past ; I will do whatsoever you command me."

"You have come too late ; I have made a solemn agreement with my kind host, Mooraud Ali, to benefit by his escort to Khiva."

"If *he* conducts you thither, the Khaun Huzurut will slay me and my whole family. I have made the utmost haste to your assistance, but, unfortunately, you would not wait for me. What is my crime ? When I was with you, did you ever lose so much as the value of a whip ?"

"No; the fear of the Khaun Huzurut was all powerful."

A long silence ensued, which was at length broken by Hussun. "Why will you not prosecute your journey, since it is of such importance to the Khaun Huzurut? The Khaun ordered you to embark at Mungh Kishlauk."

"The Khaun Huzurut gave me no *orders*, because I am the ambassador of a greater Government. He gave me permission, but declined giving me orders. When he gave me that permission, I was an envoy. Now I am a cripple. How can I tell whether he will wish his letters to be borne, himself to be represented at foreign courts, by a cripple. I will see him and ascertain his wishes."

"You might write, and await his answer here."

"But I *will* not."

"Then let me or my son conduct you to his presence."

"When, at Mungh Kishlauk, I desired your escort to Dahsh Gullah, you replied, that the Khaun's orders were only to conduct me to Mungh Kishlauk, and you made me over to robbers. Have you any fresh instruction from the Khaun Huzurut, that you would now conduct me to Khiva?"

"I will swear upon the Koraun."

"The guide you gave me swore fearful oaths upon the Koraun, when I was his guest, sleeping amongst his children, and afterwards sold me to robbers."

After a long visit, and many vain attempts to shake my resolution, he left me. A stormy debate ensued, which lasted until late that night, and was renewed the following day. Mooraud Ali came to me at night to enquire after me; and it seemed to me

that he was beginning to vacillate in the solemn covenant between us.

Meanwhile, measures had been taken to release those of my suite who were still in slavery. Hajji was brought back, then Yakoob, and at length Maimood. There was no end to the embracings between them and the others. Hajji had fallen to the lot of a stern master who treated him harshly. One day Kooch Muhummud, the Yuze Baushee, arrived at his master's tent, and had shown some kind attention to poor Hajji, which I resolved should be repaid whenever I should possess the means. This little incident came in aid of my preconceived notion, that Kooch Muhummud had in him something more of honesty and worth than the others, and might perhaps be relied on, could we separate his interests from those of his chieftain, Hussun. Yakoob and Maimood had both been kindly treated. The women of one of the families showed the captive a thousand attentions, and resisted all his offers to assist in tending the cattle. They constantly lamented, that a son of their house should have been concerned in an assault upon the Khaun Huzurut's guest. In short, the result of my knowledge of this rude race was very favourable to them. The return of my people, and our re-union, was a great gratification to us all. My solicitude for them had been so constantly excited, that I had almost forgotten their character of domestics in affectionate concern for their welfare.

The debates between Hussun Mhatoor and Mooraud Ali became every hour more stormy; and every time I saw the latter, his resolution to protect me seemed more shaken. I was never present at these debates, but Ahris and Cherkush, who were constantly in at-

tendance upon me, brought me word, from time to time, of the nature of the discussion. This was extremely disheartening, for it was evident that Mooraud Ali had already repented his proffered aid. Once the brothers came with tears in their eyes to say, "They have resolved to bind you hand and foot, and cast you on board a boat at Mungh Kishlauk."

"Who have?"

"Hussun and the Toorcumuns."

"And will Mooraud Ali permit it?"

"He has no power to resist it. The Toorcumuns are too strong for him."

"And the Kuzzauks, will they not back Mooraud Ali?"

"They are too much in awe of Hussun Mhatoor, who has long oppressed them." This was melancholy intelligence, but I was now hardened to encounter vicissitudes.

That night, Mooraud Ali came to my tent, and said, that Hussun Mhatoor had determined to be my guide.

I replied, "You have promised me your protection, have solemnly agreed to escort me. I am your guest. You will not now betray me."

"I promised to conduct you to Khiva, *only* if Hussun Mhatoor should decline. He, however, insists upon guiding you, and the Khaun Huzurut gave him you as a guide. I have no plea for interference."

"You have abundant plea. You know perfectly well, that Hussun will never guide me thither. You know, how nearly I have been murdered already, and that the Khaun Huzurut's despatches have been almost lost. Will you abandon your guest?"



“I will send with you my son, he will be sufficient security.”

He left me, and I was obliged to seek means of turning to the best account, an arrangement that threatened my destruction. All night I lay awake, discussing with Saleh Muhummud, the perplexities of my position.

The next day, Hussun Mhatoor, and the Yuze Baushees, Mooraud Ali, Sobut Beeg, Khojeh Muhummud, and Kooch Muhummud, accompanied by their followers, waited upon me. Hussun Mhatoor commenced by stating, that should anyone but himself conduct me to Khiva, the Khaun Huzurut would destroy him (Hussun), and all his house : that he trusted, therefore, that I would employ his services. That he was ready to conduct me, or to depute his son to conduct me, whithersoever I pleased ; to Mungh Kishlauk, where we should find boats in attendance, or to Dahsh Gullah, or even to Khiva.

I had already made up my mind upon this subject, and being as utterly in the villain's power as a bird in the fowler's net, and having no longer hope of the protection of Mooraud Ali, put the best grace possible upon my compliance ; saying, that I would accept his offer, provided that his son, Khojeh Muhummud, and the Yuze Baushee, Kooch Muhummud, were placed in command of my escort, and that Mooraud Ali's son, and the Kuzzauk brothers should attend.

To this he readily assented, and the two Yuze Baushees were evidently flattered by my preference. Hussun, however, pressed strongly upon me, a choice between the routes to Mungh Kishlauk and Dahsh Gullah ; but, as I did not believe there were any boats

at the former place, or that he would ever convey me in safety to the latter, I insisted upon a return to Khiva, with which he very reluctantly complied.

The rest of the day Khojeh Muhummud was constantly near me, and Saleh Muhummud, whose handsome dress had struck his fancy, was lavish of his praises of British liberality. The shawl around his waist, was the gift of the British Envoy. Its value being explained, it had become an object of admiration and envy. "Oh!" said Saleh Muhummud, "this is nothing to the benefits conferred constantly by the British Envoy upon the nobles and people of Heraut. At the last festival, every officer of the State was handsomely apparelled, not by the king, nor by the Vuzeer, but by the British Government, whose agent the Kuzzauks have so barbarously treated. You ask me why I am so warm in my praises of the English, why I love strangers whom my fathers never knew. Is it not enough to say, they have redeemed my country, that they are rebuilding my nation. That they feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter those who have no home. That they have raised at Heraut an hospital, in which our sick are cured and supported. That they have a troop of some thirty children of Heraut, rescued from slavery by Captain Pottinger, whom they feed and clothe, whom they educate in the faith, in which those children were born? Is it strange that I should love the English? or that *any* of my nation should be willing to give his life for them? I wish you could come to Heraut, to see what the English are. All that is good and noble proceeds from them. The evil is from our own rulers."

Whilst he ran on, in this way, with glistening eyes,

I perceived that he had no indifferent audience. Khojeh Muhummud examined constantly the Cashmere shawl, and began to hint at the possibility, of his accompanying me to Heraut. Difficult and inconvenient as this might be, I could not prudently damp any hope, offering security to myself and people. I bade Ali Muhummud whisper to the other Yuze Baushee, Kooch Muhummud, that I had heard of his kindness to one of my suite, lately in slavery. That kindness to them, was in a tenfold degree, kindness to myself, and should never be forgotten. I told him, that Saleh Muhummud had orders from me, to give him thirty ducats on reaching Khiva. That I expected him to stand by me, in case of treachery on the part of Hussun Mhatoor, and that I could promise him, in return, the gratification of his most extravagant hopes. He replied, that all was right, and that he was, heart and soul, in my interest. This man, in spite of his bearish manners, had something about him of rude honesty, which I was disposed to trust; although, well aware of the fallacy of physiognomical impressions in a country, where the moral degradation of all classes, is never to be wholly resisted, by the happiest natural dispositions.

During the whole of that day, articles of my property were brought back, generally in a ruined condition. The horses, especially, had become mere anatomies, and I plainly perceived, that they could never drag the weight of their own bones a fourth part of the distance, severing us from Khiva, and that fresh horses or camels would be indispensable. This was no longer a formidable difficulty, for Saleh Muhummud, although he kept profoundly secret the

possession of a sum of money for me, yet had no fear in declaring, that he was provided with sufficient for my expenses to Khiva. The sabres were all more or less damaged. I pointed out one of them, of a serpentine figure, to Cherkush Bae. "Oh!" he replied, "that is easily remedied;" and forthwith commenced straightening it, on his knee. The money was brought in much more reluctantly, in mighty small quantities: but this was now of no vital consequence. One of the brigands, the youth who had appalled himself in my uniform, and played a very distinguished part in the triumph over us, was led up to me between two Toorcumuns, who were lashing him with their heavy whips, to make him yield up his portion of plundered gold. Khojeh Muhummud finding every effort for this purpose vain, prepared to make an example of him; and drawing his dagger, whilst the Toorcumuns pinioned him, was about to plunge it into his throat, when I threw myself between them, and commanded Khojeh to desist, saying, that if he desired my favour, he must prevent injury being done the Kuzzauks, on my account, for that I had pardoned them; that an Englishman had but one God, and one word; and that my honour was now concerned, in preventing injury to the pardoned.

Khojeh Muhummud slowly and reluctantly sheathed his dagger. "If," he said, "you interfere in this way, we shall never be able to collect your property. Until one or two of these rascals are slaughtered, the others will not give up the gold. Inshallah! when the Khaun Huzurut hears what has happened, he will order a Chuppao (foray) upon the Kuzzauks, and we will carry the head of every Kawfur,

concerned in the assault, upon a spear-point, to Khiva."

I explained to him, that it was of more importance in the eyes of the British, that the word of their Agents should be inviolate, than that they should recover, by its forfeiture, a few miserable pieces of gold. And that I should really regard as the enemy of my honour, any who molested the Kuzzauks on my account; excepting always the guides, who had betrayed us.

At Hussun Mhatoor's request, I furnished a list, in Toorkish, of the missing articles, such at least as could be remembered: omitting carefully all that were in Ahris' and Cherkush's possession. It was very evident, that whatever property I should leave unclaimed, would fall into the hands of Hussun Mhatoor: my agreement, therefore, with Ahris was for the present null and void: but I determined, that it should be virtually, if not actually fulfilled, on my arrival at Khiva; when the Khaun Huzurut's protection could be secured, to the two brothers. I explained this to them, and they perceived that I was without the means, at the moment, of securing to them even the property they possessed. They continued with me, Cherkush still dressing my wound. Other persons, who pretended skill in surgery, were brought for my service, but I would suffer none but Cherkush to touch it, meaning to make this an excuse for conveying him to Khiva, and rewarding him there. Both brothers were much out of spirits, and in evident dread that Hussun Mhatoor would visit upon them, the kindness they had shown me. It was now my constant care to comfort and show them attention. The tables had been strangely re-

versed ; yet, although I once more held up my head, and was treated with marked respect, my real power was a shadow, and I was in reality a prisoner in the hands of the traitor Hussun.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Route to Dahsh Gullah—Its Difficulties—The Favourite of Hope—Resolution to pursue that Route—Choice of my Suite—Quarrel and Affray between the Toorcumuns and Oozbegs—Pacified by Saleh Muhummud—Forced Reconciliation—Mooraud Ali leaves me to my Fate—Khojeh Muhummud—Atonement for his Father's Crime.

UP to this moment, I had steadfastly adhered to my first proposition of return to Khiva. I had not given anyone the slightest reason to think I could be persuaded to change my apparent purpose. But my heart was travelling in the other direction, and I waited only the appearance of a possibility, to determine my steps towards Dahsh Gullah. The difficulty of this route seemed increased tenfold, by the loss of Mooraud Ali's protection. There lay, between the inhabited steppe of the Mungh Kishlauk district, and the Russian fort, about forty miles of steppe, utterly destitute of inhabitants; and although the undoubted property of the Khaun, and time out of mind, an integral portion of Khaurism, yet under the fear of the Russians, since their erection of a fort in the Khaun's territory. The Kuzzauks, indeed, are less in fear of the Russians, of the garrison, whose interest it is to encourage them to dwell in the neighbourhood, and from whom they purchase, in exchange for sheep and hides, all the few luxuries and conve-

niences they are acquainted with; than they are in dread of the Chowdoor Toorcumuns, who make such dealings a pretence for plundering them. Nevertheless, the steppe is utterly abandoned, and he, who enters it, has taken leave of Khaurism, and is supposed to be within the power and influence of Russia. Whatever, therefore, should befall me, in that portion of the wilderness, neither Hussun Mhatoor, nor the Kuzzauks could well be called to account for. And, as both had weighty reasons of interest and of fear to prevent my arrival at Dahsh Gullah, it seemed extremely improbable, that they should ever suffer me to pass this waste territory in safety. For my own share of the peril, I had no thought. But my people had become dear to me, by our peculiar position. They had already suffered much on account of a government which had no claim upon their services. They were pining for a return, and in terror of a farther advance. It required nerve almost greater than I possessed, to place them in fresh and extreme peril. If I should depart without them, they might, in the event of my safe journey, return to Khiva. But should I perish, they would certainly be sold into captivity, or murdered. These considerations weighed most painfully upon my mind, and allowed me neither rest nor peace.

Saleh Muhummud perceived my constant heaviness of spirit, and entreated to share my confidence. I laid before him the cause of my anxiety. The necessity, stronger than death, urging me to complete my mission, however fruitless it might prove; and my perplexity on account of my people. He took, as usual, the bright and hopeful view of the question; he argued and assured, and although the arguments

were nothing in themselves, they assumed force on the lips of this favourite of hope. They gave me, what I sought at that moment, a plea for considering my onward course, not utterly irrational. As for my servants, he would conduct them back to Heraut in safety. There was no cause of apprehension for them. He would himself see me safe to Dahsh Gullah, and then return. No one, now, would dare to molest us. I had seen how little the Khaun Huzurut's authority was worth in these parts; and as that authority was probably much weakened by the advance of the Russian invasion, I could not allow the justness of his confidence, although delighted with it. Hope is a contagious sentiment, and I was strongly inoculated.

I wished, however, first to learn all that could be learned of the question; and summoning Summud Khaun, asked him what he thought of the route to Dahsh Gullah. He replied, "You are master, Sir; but I overheard a Kuzzauk say, that an army of Russians was encamped at Dahsh Gullah. It is, therefore, impossible that Hussun should venture within sight of that fort. The route to Khiva is the only one that affords a hope of safety."

"Such being your view of the case, Summud Khaun, I entreat you, and the rest of my servants, to return with Saleh Muhummud to Khiva and Heraut, for I am bent upon fulfilling my mission."

"No, Sir," replied Summud Khaun, "I will follow you at any risk. I made a solemn resolution to this effect on leaving Heraut, and I will not shrink from it. But it is rank madness to attempt the onward route. I have often heard Ahris and Cherkush say, that neither the Kuzzauks nor others would ever suffer

them to take you to the Russian fort ; and the arrival there of an army renders it doubly hopeless. I give you solemn warning, Sir, that you have but one path of hope, and that is, the return to Khiva ; all others are desperate. You remember I warned you not to trust Dāna Bae to guide you to Dahsh Gullah. Had you taken my advice, we might still be safe."

"Had I taken your advice, we should either have starved at Mungh Kishlaur, or have been murdered there by Hussun Mhatoor. The case was desperate, and the path of my duty lay onward. But so far from desiring my servants to accompany me, I shall be infinitely obliged to them to leave me, for they cannot aid me, but may add to my sufferings. Therefore call them together, and state the case fairly to them."

Summud Khaun did as I desired, and the next day informed me of the result. All, he said, with one accord, preferred sharing my fate, whatever it might be. I called them before me, and reasoned with them ; said that I would accept no hasty resolution, but hoped they would believe my assurance, that I had at heart their return to Khiva, and should feel infinitely relieved, if they preferred quitting me here. I then asked each in turn. Summud Khaun replied, as before, that he would share my fate, whatever it might be. The Meerza thought the Dahsh Gullah route the only one recommended by reason. Poor creature ! I believe he never could have reached Khiva, so prostrated was his strength from the injury of his brain. Ali Muhummud declared that, in purchasing the freedom of his child, I had purchased him, soul and body. I would not hear of this. The child's ransom had cost me nothing, and Ali's presence could be of no use to me. He persisted, however, and all the rest

declared that they had already determined that, if we were to suffer, it should be together. Nizaum, I thought, showed some reluctance. He spoke of his mother, and I strongly insisted upon his return to her ; but he was, perhaps, ashamed to be the only defaulter, and joined the general resolution.

I then ascertained what each wished done at Heraut, etc., on Saleh Muhummud's return with regard to his family, and dictated to Saleh accordingly. Ali Muhummud, whose wife was a slave that had been forced upon him, wished a little pocket money to be given to his child privately, without the mother's knowledge, who, he said, would seize it for herself. I bade Saleh give the boy five gold tillas. Khojeh Muhummud, who was present, was very much struck with this ; and Saleh Muhummud begged him to remark that this was no solitary instance of our liberality ; that whilst others, even in their gifts, defeated the intention by their unhandsome and niggardly spirit, the English always did the thing handsomely, or not at all. I did not intend the act to be political, but it proved of consequence to our interest, by showing my disposition to remember, and my power still to reward, faithful service.

That day the controversy between Hussun Mhatoor and Mooraud Ali was renewed with fresh violence ; and, in answer to some insinuation of the former, Mooraud Ali called him an infamous old scoundrel. Khojeh Muhummud, Hussun's son, resented this warmly, rose, seized a stick, and attempted to reach Mooraud Ali, but was held back by the sturdy Yuze Baushee, Kooch Muhummud, who threw his arms around him. Words, however, waxed high, swords were drawn, and blows exchanged. The confusion

spread throughout the camp. I endeavoured to keep my people apart from the affray, but Saleh Muhummud's mercurial temperament would not suffer him long to be still. He rushed upon Khojeh Muhummud, who was bearing down upon Mooraud Ali with a drawn sword, and, winding his arms around him, withheld him from his purpose by expostulations and by force. This probably saved Mooraud Ali's life, who was unarmed and ill supported; but it did not prevent a youth of fourteen years, brother-in-law of Khojeh, from reaching Mooraud Ali with a naked sabre, and aiming several blows at his head. Our shouts warned Mooraud Ali in time. He turned, avoided the first blow, and closing with his antagonist, prevented the remaining blows from taking effect, and, in spite of the struggles of the youth, wrenched the sword out of his grasp. The other combatants were restrained in a similar manner, and no serious wounds were received.

Saleh Muhummud, entering Mooraud Ali's tent, reasoned with him long and earnestly; at length, persuaded him to come over to my tent, entreating him there to be reconciled to Hussun Mhatoor. "I had rather drink his blood," he replied; "but if my guest," turning to me, "insists upon it, I will obey, as in duty bound. He has insulted me beyond forgiveness, but a guest is entitled to command in all things."

My situation was embarrassing; I had no right to abuse his hospitality, by forcing him to forgive a deadly insult; at the same time, he being so much the weaker party, I feared he might be massacred during the night, unless some reconciliation were effected. I therefore led Mooraud Ali by the hand to Hussun Mhatoor, and insisted that both should embrace, in

token of reconciliation. They did so, but, as their faces met, Hussun muttered "Kawfir" (infidel), and when their persons sundered, it was evident that the enmity was irreconcilable. Saleh in fact had carried his interference too far. Such forced reconciliations but inflame the wounds of enmity.

The commotion just recorded, had naturally delayed the appearance of dinner, and night fell ere any symptoms of that necessary ceremony were displayed. Whilst sitting in my tent, pondering my perplexed and unhappy position, I heard a fresh uproar outside, and sent to inquire its cause. I was informed, that the Toorcumuns had prepared, or were preparing me a feast, and that they were driving away from my tent some of Mooraud Ali's servants, who wished to bring me dinner from the Oozbeg's kitchen; insisting that I was their guest, and not his. This was most embarrassing: for should I refuse to be the guest of the Toorcumuns, Mooraud Ali could not protect me from their resentment. And should I yield to them, I should give Mooraud Ali a plea, which I believed he would think welcome, for washing his hands of my concerns.

In this extremity, I sent for Khojeh Muhummud, and explained to him my position, saying, that I could not in honour be the guest of any but him, whose roof sheltered me. That I must continue with Mooraud Ali that night, at least, and would enter *his* tent the ensuing day. After much opposition, he agreed to this arrangement, and Mooraud Ali soon after appeared, bringing me dinner. Kooch Muhummud happened, just then, to be sitting in my little circle, and I persuaded him to partake with us, of the fare. Two hours afterwards, to my great annoyance,

Khojeh Muhummud brought, with his own hand, another dinner, and insisted upon our eating of that also. To tell the truth, our stomachs were in that bustling humour, that they thought not much of such an exploit, and ate with abundant relish the second meal, and were quite ready for a third, an hour after it was discussed. But I feared this incident would be seized by Mooraud Ali, as an excuse for entirely forsaking me; a disposition that was sufficiently evident, induced by fear of the formidable power of Hussun Mhatoor.

In the morning, I removed my few articles of dress from Mooraud Ali's tent, to the tent of the Toorcumuns; and seeing that Mooraud was striking his tent for a move, went to take leave of him. We embraced, and I thanked him most warmly for his handsome and hospitable conduct, assuring him that he had made me his debtor for ever.

He replied, "I would willingly guard you through all your difficulties, but Hussun Mhatoor is too strong for me, here, backed by his Toorcumuns, whilst my people are far away. I must leave you, and he can do with you as he pleases. I shall now hasten back to the Khaun Huzurut, and lay matters before him; for it is impossible that Hussun Mhatoor and myself should live upon the same earth."

"You promised that your son should accompany me. Are you prepared to make this arrangement? He would be of the greatest service, for they would not dare act treacherously whilst he was in company."

"I dare not trust my son with them; you have seen yesterday to what lengths they will go. There were no safety for him, in their company."

We parted, and I never again saw him: but the remembrance of his kindness will ever be fresh in my heart; and should it be my lot to cross his path, I shall lose no opportunity of thanking and honouring him. The motives of Asiatics will rarely bear scrutiny. It is better, sometimes, to be contented with the deed, without rigidly investigating the cause. I believe, however, that Mooraud Ali's conduct to me, was greatly dictated by that fine, hospitable pride, which, if it had ever existed more extensively, has almost perished from Khaurism; and more than this I will not inquire

The remainder of this day, and the whole of that which ensued, were spent in the tent of Khojeh Muhummud, who served me with his own hand, but whom I always persuaded to eat from the same dish with me. The circumstances under which I was placed, as the guardian of the lives and liberties of my people, rendered it a sacred obligation on my part, to neglect no means of their safety. I felt, also, deep sympathy for Khojeh Muhummud, the honourable son of so infamous a father. I scrupled not to accept his overtures of brotherhood, respectfully, but affectionately urged upon me; and for his sake, blotted from my heart the vengeance recorded there, for the villainy of Hussun Mhatoor.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Departure for Dahsh Gullah—Hussun prigs my best Horse—Saleh Muhummud—Summud Khaun's View of Things—Restoration of Property—Its Condition—Metamorphoses—Singular Good Luck of a Table-cloth—Zone of a Shepherdess—Transfer of Gold—Pardon of the Zuzzauks—Hussun fails in the Number of Escort promised—Route continued—Last Tent in the Wilderness—Bivouac—Expectation of our Massacre—A sweet Argument—A Night of Anxiety—My Guides leave me in the Wilderness—Melancholy Position—Parting Charge of Saleh Muhummud—Hour of Suspense—First View of Dahsh Gullah.

THE next day, at about eleven o'clock, I perceived arrangements in progress for a move. The weather was very gloomy, and my feelings accorded. We rode to water our horses, at the neighbouring brackish wells, and then proceeded. I was mounted upon my own horse, which had been recovered from Yar Muhummud. He was not such a mere skeleton as the others, for Yar Muhummud being a man of wealth, had assigned him a daily allowance of milk, in addition to the scanty pasture of the steppe, upon which the rest of the horses had depended. Nizaum's beautiful Toorcumun had been returned: but Hussun Mhatoor had set his eye upon it, and it was carried off by one of his emissaries, during the night. The rest of my people were variously mounted upon camels, Kuzzauk geldings, and our own steeds. We

cut a shabby figure, having barely sufficient clothes for decency, and those the oldest and the worst.

Hussun Mhatoor, in quality of guide, rode in front, closely attended by several Kuzzauk chiefs, one of whom was father to one of my assailants. In a hollow of the steppe we came upon about fifty more, but for what purpose collected I could not learn. Many of them joined our party, staring hard at me. Kooch Muhummud rode once or twice near me. Khojeh Muhummud was not present. Saleh rode always close in rear of me. Being handsomely mounted and equipped, his deference for me, which he never forgot, was of great consequence to me at that eventful hour. The presence of this young man was an inestimable blessing to me. Hussun Mhatoor treated me with marked respect ; but mingled with it might be seen symptoms of his sense of absolute power over my life and fortunes. I was obliged, in return, to treat him with civility, for more than my own life was at stake in the question ; and, indeed, having been compelled by circumstances to grant him forgiveness, I made it my business to quench the fire of vengeance, whenever it showed itself in my heart.

To encourage my rose-coloured fancies, I overheard Summud Khaun holding forth, in his consequential voice, to my other followers—

“ The Sahib is mad, infatuated, clean daft. Heaven has been at the trouble of delivering us, once, from the hands of these cannibals, and we are walking again into their very jaws. Well! it's our fate. But how often Heaven will be pleased to interfere, I cannot conjecture. I've done my duty, that's one comfort. I warned him once at Mungh Kishlauk, not to proceed to Dahsh Gullah with that imp of Satan, Dāna Bae,

and I have again warned him not to attempt it now. But he is infatuated. When Heaven blinds a man, he cannot see. It's our destiny, that's what it is. Had we returned to Khiva, we should have ridden in triumph, every man's son of us. But by this route Hussun Mhatoor will not, and could not if he would, carry us in safety."

I heard this with a strong mixture of mirth and uneasiness.

After ascending the chalk cliffs, by a steep and broken path, we struck over the high plain in the direction of my former place of captivity, *i.e.* to the southern point of the inlet Kara Soo. I found that the object of this move was to take up a bivouac, favourable to the collection of the stolen goods. At evening we encamped on the brink of the cliffs, my old prison walls; and here again fragments of my property were brought in by slow and reluctant degrees. I insisted upon the necessity of recovering a suit of regimentals, as without them the Russians might refuse to believe me a British officer. These were brought me in atoms, the embroidery having been cut off, and the buttons melted down, under the supposition that they were gold. Hussun asked me what they were worth, in order that he might have excuse for plundering the Kuzzauks, and could scarcely be made believe they had been only copper gilt. A Kuzzauk shepherdess was sent for; some coarse string and a small knife were placed in her hands, and by means of this needle and thread she contrived to tack together the full-dress coat of a Captain of the Indian army.

Hussun Mhatoor sat at my side, watching every article, as it was brought in and delivered to me, with

blood-red eyes. When the Cashmere shawl, which had so narrowly escaped an unmentionable fate, re-appeared, he clutched it in both his hands, as if he could, by the intense energy of his avarice, have changed the relative value of the pronouns *meum* and *tuum*. I whispered to Saleh Muhummud, with a glance at the shawl, "Lost, lost;" and I was persuaded that he never would have the courage to relinquish the grasp, which continued glued to it until he fell asleep. The fate of several of the articles excited our mirth. The chintz table-cloth, upon which my dinner had been spread daily during the last two months, had become a pair of female inexpressibles, bluff in the bows and mighty in the beam. We held them up to the light to consider them at leisure. We pondered the delicate dimensions of the Kuzzauk shepherdess. That rag had had its share of the good things of the earth, the shrine alternately of conviviality and of beauty. It was no easy matter to shape for it a future equal to the past. To fill up the full measure of its capacity was manifestly impossible. The least I can do is to make a banner of it, to be carried by the rampant unicorn who prances above the shield of my fathers.

My military cloak, spoiled of its plaid lining, had made an entire wardrobe for another fair thing. My white muslin turbans had, of course, been cut into a variety of articles, the exact application and office of which were above the comprehension of any but a Kuzzauk lady's milliner; cotton socks made admirable purses; and a black silk stock, with an extra strap of half-tanned horse-skin, figured away as zone to the sheep-skin mantle of a Kuzzauk shepherdess. The state of my arms, etc., has already been described.

Whenever any article of greater utility than ordinary appeared, I said to it with a bow, "Khoosh Aumudeed" (you are welcome).

Hussun Mhatoor began now to talk about the Toorcumun horse which he had stolen. He said that search had been made far and near, but no tidings could be learned of it. What was he to do with it, should it ever be recovered? I replied that he would, of course, send it for me to Khiva.

He said that a long space must elapse ere it could be fit for such a trip, and in fact, intimated his wish that I could give it him. It was his by nine-tenths of the law, and this was no season for irritating him; I therefore replied that, on receipt of my letter from Dahsh Gullah, reporting safe arrival, the horse was his: in default of this, it remained mine, as before. I was glad to recover the blade of the beautiful little dagger which I had used the night of the attack, for it now had a history of its own. I had purchased it for ten guineas from one of the royal family of Heraut; it was fashioned and worked as only the first sword-cutlers of Persia can make such weapons. The massive handle of hippopotamus tooth had been shattered by the sabre cut.

I endeavoured, by every argument in my power, to hasten our onward progress, begging that the property, if collected, might be collected after my departure. But I found Hussun as obstinate as ever, and was detained in this spot two days. I believe I have omitted to mention that the announcement to Hussun of my determination to proceed to Dahsh Gullah instead of returning to Khiva, was received by him with the greatest possible satisfaction, and that he readily promised me a guard of himself, his

son, and a hundred Toorcumun horse to within sight of the fort. Khojeh Muhummud added that, if I liked, he would accompany me within the walls ; but this I, of course, objected to, bargaining only that he should bring me within sight of the place, and watch my movements until I should approach within protection of the walls, for neither myself nor any of my suite were in a condition to resist the least formidable of onsets.

As this was now the last night I was to enjoy the shelter of a tent, I awakened Saleh Muhummud at midnight, and bade him make over to me the gold, which he still wore around his waist. This was an operation of extreme delicacy. The chink of one piece against another would have been the death-knell of the whole party. With infinite difficulty, owing to the inflamed state of my hand, I contrived to extract two handfuls of gold, which I returned to Saleh, for his expenses to Heraut, and for the fulfilment of one or two commissions which I had given him. He was anxious to count out the money in due form, but this was not to be thought of for an instant. I then secured the leathern belt around my waist, next my skin, where the buckle and strap continued, for weeks afterwards, cutting their way into my flesh, and raising painful blisters. The second day I wore it, indeed, the pain was so great that I was obliged for a while to dismount, and lie on the ground on the plea of sickness ; and several times my secret was almost discovered, as some officious Toorcumun chief caught me in his arms on dismounting, or insisted upon lifting me into my saddle.

Hitherto Cherkush and Ahris had been constantly in attendance, and their presence was always some

comfort, because I believed the former to be sincerely attached to me, and that the interests of Ahris were separate from those of the Toorcumuns. I exerted my influence amongst the latter race in behalf of the brothers; assuring the Yuze Baushees that I should regard anyone as my friend who should protect them, and should look upon any injury they might receive as an unpardonable insult. I also declared once more, that I forgave all the Kuzzauks who had injured me, excepting always Dāna Bae and his son, for whom I had nothing to say; that I should not, indeed, myself prosecute them as they deserved, partly because they were beneath my anger, partly on account of the misery which their innocent children would suffer from their destruction; but that I regarded in so heinous a light the crime they had committed against the most sacred of human laws, that I should not interfere with the just vengeance of the Khaun Huzurut upon them. I have never learned the fate of these men. They were probably screened by Hussun Mhatoor, who first incited them to their treachery.

The day that we quitted this spot to proceed to Dahsh Gullah was naturally fraught with anxiety. In spite of all our precautions, the two brothers were obliged to render up all their share of the plunder. I offered to restore it them at once; but they objected, saying, it would be impossible for them to keep it from the search of Hussun Mhatoor and his Toorcumuns, who had entered the brothers' tent during their absence, and, after seizing all they could find, had frightened the women and children into an acknowledgment of all that was concealed. All therefore I could do, was to beg Saleh Muhummud

to pay them the value of what they had lost, when he should reach Khiva.

When on starting I perceived the smallness of my escort, which amounted to about a dozen Toorcumuns and five or six Kuzzauks, I enquired of Hussun where my hundred Toorcumun horsemen were, and whether, with so many enemies as his injustice had made him, and my misfortunes had procured *me* amongst the Kuzzauks of those parts,—not to mention the hostility of the Russian Kuzzauks, whose haunts we were approaching,—he was about to separate himself from all support of his tribe, backed by a dozen guards. He replied that he could not collect a larger number of Toorcumuns at present; that Kuzzauk guards would be more likely to turn upon us than to help us, and that he would proceed warily. I confess I thought the Kuzzauks, whom he had been plundering and maltreating for his own crime, would be great fools if they neglected this opportunity of cutting him off, either by an ambush of their own, or by sending intelligence of his motions to the Russian garrison.

We put up that night at a Kuzzauk tent, out of which the luckless owners were driven for our accommodation; being then obliged to kill a sheep for our entertainment. I contrived, however, to reward them secretly.

This was the last human habitation, and we were still distant from Dahsh Gullah about forty-five miles, which were to be made during the ensuing day and night. All night Hussun was awake, talking earnestly with Kuzzauks and Toorcumuns, who entered from time to time. Kooch Muhummud brought me some Toorcumun cheese, being small masses of pressed curd, discoloured by the whey, in which it is allowed

to lie. It was very delicious to my palate ; but for some time I imagined I was eating the flesh of fowls. Saleh Muhummud had recovered some loaf-sugar from his camel stores, and was constantly feeding me with it. I had entered my second childhood, and was as much pleased as an infant at the bits of hard biscuit and loaf-sugar which, by an impartial division of good things, fell to my lot.

In the morning, we again started, and found the country, as before, a high steppe covered with wormwood, which being here unbrowsed, is much more plentiful than elsewhere. The party scattered over the country, to take a better survey of the land. At night, we sat down for a few hours, and afterwards resumed the march ; halting at midnight within about fifteen miles of Dahsh Gullah, and by the side of a well of the purest water, a rare thing in the steppe. And here Hussun Mhatoor declared that he dared proceed no farther. That he should halt here, and send his son with me. Here was an old ruffian, about sixty-five years of age, deliberately shielding his miserable remnant of existence, beneath the life of his eldest son.

We sat down to refresh ourselves.

Nizaum had been very sulky the day before, and I fancied he wished an excuse for returning to Heraut. I had, therefore, insisted upon his not following me farther, but returning with Saleh Muhummud. His conduct had vexed me, for he had been lying at his ease, on pretence of a head-ache, whilst the Toorcumun Yuze Baushees were pitching my tent. I now gave him my last instructions, and my hand falling upon a lump of sugar, which Saleh had slipped by stealth into my pocket, I divided it with him. This

little incident touched the strange being more than all the care I had bestowed upon him and his fortunes. He got up, and swore that he would never forsake me, and entreated me so earnestly to allow him to accompany me, that at length, I was obliged to consent.

I now changed my eastern attire for a military uniform. Hussun Mhatoor came to bid me farewell, and insisted upon embracing me. It was no time to insult the old traitor, so I complied. He commended me solemnly to the care of God, and under these evil auspices, I departed. We continued to proceed due north, in complete silence, and again pulled up. Again there was a pause; and, to our minds, everything appeared suspicious. The giant, Ahris Mhatoor, kept close to Nizaum and Maimood, wielding, as if it had been a rod, a huge Russian hatchet. I say wielding. For this man was never an instant at rest; and the hatchet, which another man would have carried at his belt, was flourished constantly in his hand. His countenance, always hideous, was now under an excitement, of which I knew not the nature. We sat upon the wet earth, whilst our unlucky horses browsed upon the wormwood; and after half an hour, during which messengers came and went, speaking always in whispers, we remounted, and proceeded in dead silence: for it was supposed we were near the fort. An hour, however, passed, and morning at length dawned upon a night that seemed interminable—a night of anxiety, which it is difficult even to shadow upon any imagination.

When the morning had fully broken, a wide desert plain stretched around us, precisely similar to that

which had accompanied us for about seven hundred miles. My guides, Khojeh and Kooch Muhummud, rode up to a cairn of stones, and dismounted, saying that the fort was in sight, and that they dared not accompany me farther. The Kuzzauk guard put this resolve into immediate effect, by riding back toward the region we had left. I desired to be shown the fort; they pointed toward the horizon on the north, but there, nothing was visible, excepting the irregular grey line of the steppe meeting the monotonous grey of the cold morning sky. We strained our eyes in vain, until they seemed bursting from their sockets. Had they said, "The fort is in that direction, but we cannot see it at this distance," I could have believed them. Here, then, we were to be abandoned, without guide, chart, or compass, in a land where every living thing was athirst for our blood. The sea on one side, the desert on the other. Our cattle dropping from fatigue, ourselves and they unsupplied with sustenance for a single day. I remonstrated against the cruelty of this conduct. I reminded our guides of their solemn covenant, to bring me within sight of Dahsh Gullah. They said, indeed, that it was in sight, but neither myself nor any of my suite could see it. Should they have mistaken their bearings, we were lost.

All remonstrances were in vain. They swore solemnly that we were in sight of the fort, and that they dared proceed no farther. I, therefore, embraced Khojeh Muhummud, and took a farewell of all. Saleh Muhummud was the last. I took him apart. He wished to follow me, but I would not suffer it. He asked what were my views respecting



the arch-villain Hussun Mhatoor. I replied, that my word had been extorted by circumstances, but that it must be sacred. He must not suffer on my account. Tell the Khaun Huzurut this, and that all I ask, for all that I have suffered in his service, is, that he will cherish and protect Cherkush and Ahris, forgive Hussun, and not visit upon the innocent Kuzzauks, the sins of that old traitor. Dāna Bae and his son I leave to their fate, whatever it may be. I have nothing to say for them, or to injure them.

We embraced, and parted. Ahris Mhatoor was standing irresolute. "Am I to accompany you?" he inquired. I begged him to do so; for, should we not be near the fort, we should need his guidance thither, or back to his own tents. He complied very reluctantly. A Toorcumun, named Khidr, also accompanied us. I was very reluctant to this man's company, but Hussun Mhatoor had insisted upon it, declaring that he could not trust any Kuzzauk to bear back my letter for the Khaun Huzurut, upon which Hussun's own safety depended. We urged our cattle to their utmost speed, a shambling walk. I myself, the Meerza, Summud Khaun, and Ali Muhummud were mounted upon horses and ponies, the rest of my suite upon camels. The Toorcumun and Ahris Mhatoor rode ponies. We formed, it may be believed, a wretched and ragged cavalcade. It was of consequence to traverse, at best speed, this neutral ground; where all alike would prove our foes, and none bear the blame. Yet we rode a full hour ere we saw the slightest indication of a fort, or other human habitation.

At length, from a rising ground, we caught the

distant view of a line of works, which at first perplexed me; but which, as we drew nearer, I recognised as a line of defences, surmounted by the pent roofs of European houses. The sight afforded such relief as it were not easy to describe.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Cossaq Horsemen—Message of the Commandant—Halt within Cannon-shot of the Walls—Long Suspense—Enter Dahsh Gullah—Mr. Laymann—Wariness of Commandant—His Physiognomy—Offer to ransom Cherkush Bae's Son—The Mystery of Abomination—Hospitality of Russians—Amputation of my Finger—Nizaum's Sentiment thereon—Farewell of Commandant—Of Cherkush Bae—Last Effort in Favour of Latter—Leave Nuovo Alexandrofski—Russian Priest—Embark.

WE had scarcely caught sight of Dahsh Gullah, the object of so many anxious hopes and fears, when, on the other side, we saw galloping down upon us, two Kuzzauk horsemen; and as they neared us, I perceived by the excellence of their horses and superiority of their equipment, that they must belong to the Russian garrison. We made as much way as possible whilst they approached: for there was no safety from such gentry, at a distance from the fort. When they had come within reach of a carabine, they unslung their rifles; and I made such of my people as were armed, stand upon their guard. Although we outnumbered them, I had seen enough of the prowess of my people, rather to hope they would let us alone. As for myself, having no spurs, and my right arm being in a sling, I could not urge my jaded horse to a walk without the aid of my servants, and could, therefore, neither fight nor flee, had the

latter suited my office. They placed themselves in our path; and, as I wore an European uniform, I halted my party, and was riding to meet them, when Ahris Mhatoor begged me to allow him to be spokesman; and, putting in motion his shaggy galloway, and brandishing his formidable hatchet, met and saluted them. It was an anxious moment. The Cossacs held their rifles in readiness, and, mounted as they were, might have galloped around us, and have picked us off man by man. And, although on foot, or equally mounted, neither would have stood an instant before the powerful axe and fiery courage of Ahris Mhatoor : yet their fire-arms placed him entirely at their mercy. The scene was full of romance. I could appreciate, though not enjoy it. Ahris, even in his present position, could not keep his person still. From his gestures, and the flourishes of his axe, anyone might have supposed he was challenging the Cossacs to fight. After some parley, he returned, and informed me that these horsemen belonged to the garrison, and had been sent out for intelligence. That my misfortunes were known at Dahsh Gullah, and that they would gallop on, and give news of my approach, which they accordingly did.

We therefore hastened our progress in the same direction, and saw, at every minute, the features of the still distant fort grow upon us, until all was intelligible and plain. When we had approached almost within cannon-shot of the defences, the horsemen again met us, and commanded us, in the name of the governor, to halt. We did so. I dismounted, and seated myself upon the plain. After the lapse of half an hour or more, two horsemen issued from the fort

and approached us; the one in plain clothes, the other a dragoon. They halted an arrow's flight from my party, and beckoned to us. I therefore sent Ali Mu-hummud with a flag of truce, *i.e.*, a white muslin turban spread upon a Cossaq spear: instructing him to say that I was a British officer from Heraut, who had business at St. Petersburg, and craved permission to shelter in the fort, and there embark for Astrakhan.

After a quarter of an hour's parley, the horsemen returned to the fort, and Ali to me. They had questioned him strictly concerning me, and the state of the country we had left. He had delivered my message, and a letter in French, for the governor, scrawled with my left hand. They had desired us to wait further advice. A long interval ensued, and then four horsemen issued from the gates and approached us. We parleyed as before, and they returned, giving us not a hope of admission.

I did not know at the time, that the governor was employing this interval, to strengthen the posture of his garrison; and was loading and preparing all the guns of his fort, to blow me, should I prove desperate, over the great wall of China.

After another weary and melancholy interval, the four horsemen again approached. One, a confidential servant, whom, from his dress, and the lead he took in the business, I supposed must be some civil functionary; the second, an adjutant of a Cossaq regiment of the garrison. I addressed them alternately in French, English, Latin, Persian, and Hindustani: but they shook their heads in reply. They intimated however, through my interpreter, that I was at liberty to enter the fort; and I mounted accordingly and

proceeded with them. At the gate of the fort a black tent was shown me, where my servants were to be accommodated ; but I was told, that I myself might enter the fort. I rode in, and was ushered into a small wooden house, where I found Mr. Laymann, a German naturalist, the only one of the garrison acquainted with French, and like myself now called upon, for the first time in his life, to speak it. He received me kindly and hospitably. Informed me, that no ships sailed from that port to Astrakhan, but that vessels were about to convey the relieved garrison to Gorief, at the mouth of the Oorahl river, whence he thought I had better proceed to Orenburg. In fact, he said, the Emperor had ordered all who might arrive from Khiva to be sent thither, so that he thought the governor would feel obliged to obey the mandate literally, in my case. My object in going to Astrakhan at this moment, was to place my servants on board a vessel bound to Astrabad. To carry them all with me to St. Petersburg, was out of the question ; and at Orenburgh, they would have no means of return to Heraut.

Mr. Laymann informed me, that the governor had been told to expect me at the head of 10,000 Toorcumuns ; the number of that race who accompanied me to Mungh Kishlaur, having been multiplied by one thousand only. He described the hardships the Russian army of invasion had experienced, as almost incredible, and allowed, that they had lost much cattle by the intense cold. He did not inform me, that the army had been recalled, owing to its disasters. The commander of the garrison, a captain in the Russian army, he described as an excellent man, and a brave and wary soldier. Of his wariness I cannot

have a doubt, as it had nearly blown me to Peking. I was not, however, aware at this time, what precautions had been taken, for the reception of a wounded stranger. Mr. Laymann sent for the doctor to dress my hand, and I felt great relief from an operation, which invested the wound in clean dressings. He told me, that the middle finger must come off, and appointed the next day for the operation. After some further conversation with my host, he took me through the fort, to the quarters assigned me. The sight of houses of European structure filled me with unutterable sensations of delight; which contrasted strangely with the very natural disgust of Mr. Laymann, at the horrors of a petty garrison on the confines of Tartary.

The commandant soon after called upon me.* A stout, round-faced, red-nosed, yellow-haired Russian; with a grey eye, cunning to detect ambushments, epaulettes on his shoulders, and a thousand bows at the service of a friend. He apologized for the meanness of my quarters, and for the coarseness of the food he must offer me; assuring me, that each was the best he could command. He was scarcely seated, ere he left me in haste, I suppose to provide against some threatened invasion of my ten thousand Toorcumuns. The food he sent me seemed the most exquisite of dainties. In fact, the sturgeon is never to be despised, even by the epicure of civilized lands, and here it forms the staple provision. I was, however, a little bewildered by the contents of a bottle, labelled "Madeira of prime quality," and had a hearty laugh over the sour brew. It proved to be quass,

* He is said to have been a kind-hearted and worthy man, and I doubt not this estimate of him.

the national drink ; an acid tippie, made by fermenting water, in which coarse bread has been soaked. I never acquired the taste necessary to relish this, nor could conceive the use of spoiling so much good water and bad bread. I was served in silence, for not a creature could speak a word of any language familiar to me ; and when Mr. Laymann was absent, I was utterly cut off from means of communicating with my fellow-creatures. My quarters overlooked the line of works on the sea side. It was delightful at length to gaze upon that sea, as a road, and not a tomb. The wind, blowing from the sea, forbade the idea of present departure. It continued thus, unless I have lost my dates, about eight days, to my vexation.

When I found means of calling upon the commandant, my first object was to procure the release of Cherkush Bae's son, which I had already intimated to him, through Mr. Laymann. The answer was, that the young man had been taken in rebellion against the Russian Government, and that his release was impossible ; and the spirited attack, made by the Toorcumuns upon the Russian boats and the custom-house, was spoken of as a heinous crime. I replied, that even if it were true, as I was certain it was not, that the youth had been engaged in that act of gallantry, he was only doing the duty of a good subject, in assailing his invaders. That prisoners of war were always subject to ransom. That I had heard he, the commandant, had placed a price of two hundred sheep upon the youth's head ; that I would gladly pay this, or any sum not exceeding the contents of my purse, for his liberation. I had the fullest knowledge that his liberty *had* been offered at a certain

price. The commandant declared the thing was impossible, and unheard-of ; that he must wait orders from Orenburgh, as to the disposal of this youth, and of others concerned in the late heinous rebellion. I urged, that to attack the invaders of one's country is no rebellion ; that the youth in question had not even done this, being too young for such enterprises ; that he had been delivered up to the garrison by the treachery of an enemy, when he had come to purchase flour ; that to detain him was unjust, but to detain him when the price set upon his head was forthcoming was still worse. I was sure the commandant would let me pay this, and liberate the only son of a man who had repeatedly saved my life. He seemed softened, and said he would consider of his release.

Poor Nizaum came to me at night, with a countenance of misery. "What animal is that, Sir," he inquired, "which I see in the fort?"

"Do you mean that, which has two epaulettes and a red nose?"

"No, Sir ; it goes on four legs."

"A dog, I suppose."

"No, Sir ; it is longer in the back, and thicker in the body."

I immediately conjectured what animal he alluded to, and begged him not to press me for an answer.

"It can't be the Unclean One, Sir."

"Say as little of it as possible, Nizaum. What do you think of its looks?"

"It is very horrible, Sir. What do the Russians do with it? What can be the use of it?"

"You must ask *them*; I am in their country for the first time."

I dined with the commandant. In spite of the limited nature of the supplies, the dinner was excellent, and the wines corresponded. Indeed, although the cost of Madeira and other foreign wines in Russia, and especially in the remote districts, is enormous, I found, at every house of any consideration, the very best supplies, to which the guest is made more than welcome. I have observed the master of a house quite vexed, that my slender appetite and water-drinking habits, and still more my delight at finding myself once more in the company of the fair sex, prevented me from doing justice to his excellent cheer. I lost no opportunity of urging the release of Cherkush Bae's son; and the commandant promised, that after a while he should be set free, without ransom.

The position of this fort is singularly desolate. On one side, the Caspian, opening access to only two considerable ports of Russia, Durbund and Astrakhan, and those, frontier towns; on the other side, a steppe, generally without inhabitant, and when inhabited, occupied only by dealers in human flesh—savages dressed in skins, the enemies of Russia. The garrison itself, of 300 men, affords, of course, scarcely any society; for the lower grades cannot afford to marry, and a captain is the highest there. It is only when a colonel in charge of a corps, that a Russian officer is provided with a reasonable income. The Cossaq officers there called upon me. Their manners were manly and quiet, courteous and good; but as we had no language in common, I could not explore their minds.

A morning had been appointed for removing my half-severed finger. I acquiesced in the wisdom of

this ; for it had been hanging on for a month, without any symptoms of uniting, or of the rest of the wound closing. The ends of the bone were just sufficiently in contact to rub together at every motion of the horse, and I had ridden in that state about 130 miles. The operation was very painful and tedious owing to the inflamed state of the wound.

As soon as the doctors had left me, Nizaum brought me the finger, carefully swaddled in a handkerchief. "I thought, Sir," he said, in a sentimental tone, "you might like to have a last look at it."

I was still suffering considerable torture from the stump, which the sight of the finger did not by any means allay ; but I could not help a disposition to mirth at poor Nizaum's sentiment. He handled the finger as if it had been a dead baby, and I its mother. I, however, took a farewell look of the faithful and useful companion of many years, and Nizaum carried it away. When he returned, I said, "I hope you didn't toss it out into the street ?"

Nizaum was horrified. "Oh no, Sir ; I have buried it, buried it deep." He had not words for the horrible thought, which had suggested this precaution ; but his looks were all eloquent of the unclean beast, the long-backed mystery of abomination that haunted him day and night. "The other finger, Sir, I buried on the field of strife. I dug a deep hole for it with my knife."

I thought that not every servant, at such a moment of peril, would have thought of this affectionate precaution.

Eight miserable days I was detained by contrary wind in this fort. The relieved garrison was then embarked, my people were sent aboard, and I was

escorted also to the vessel. The commandant, however, first came to take leave. I reminded him of his promise to release Cherkush Bae's son, and set free also Cherkush and Ahris, whom he had imprisoned for no cause that I could imagine, excepting that they had saved a Christian's, and what was worse, a Briton's life. He affected not to know that they were confined, and then, to confound them with some prisoners charged with the late attack upon the Russian boats. I, however, pointed them out, and begged that Cherkush might attend me, as I had money to give him. He said that he hoped I would give it in presence of witnesses whom he would send, in order that there might be no after misunderstanding. To this I consented, without seeing its necessity; and Cherkush and the witnesses entered the room. Cherkush rushed forward on seeing me, threw his arms around my neck, and wept as he kissed my cheeks and my hand. Poor fellow! I was overwhelmed with anxiety on his account. His son was then brought in, and I pleaded his cause with the commandant. The latter was touched, and said that he found this youth was not one of those concerned in the late rebellion, and would therefore release him immediately. I then counted out to Cherkush the sum I had originally placed in his hand on the battle-field, and added to it the price of a variety of articles, which he had been obliged to yield up. I would have given him much more, but for the witnesses. I feared that his own people and the Toorcumuns would get scent of his gold, and perhaps destroy him, to make themselves heirs to it. I therefore trusted that one of the brothers might still reach Khiva in time to profit by the instructions I had given, concerning them, to

Saleh Muhummud. The parting from this true-hearted and affectionate creature was very painful. It was doubly so, owing to the forlorn position in which I left him, and my inability to render him any return for the benefits I had received at his hand. He had offered, indeed, to quit his country and his people to follow my fortunes; and, in spite of the disparity of our education, I should have delighted to honour and cherish him as the friend to whom I was indebted for life. But my wandering fate rendered this impossible; and I knew too much of the nature of happiness to tempt him to a step which would be regretted by him, once and for ever.

I descended the cliffs by a good road to the quay, and sat in the custom-house whilst a boat was sent for. A Russian priest, whom I had seen in the garrison, entered; a remarkably handsome man, in the graceful robes of his order, and wearing his long and beautiful hair inviolate. There is something singularly pleasing in this custom, so different from the barbarous fashion of shaven crowns. He kissed my cheek when we parted: a Russian mode of salutation which I was not yet broken in to. I stepped into the boat and rowed to the ship, a double-masted merchantman, where the only cabin was placed at my disposal.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Description of Nuovo Alexandrofski—Sailing on the Caspian—Songs of the Cossacs—Sentiment embodied in them—Ten Day's Pilgrimage on a Voyage of 180 Miles—Misery of my People—Whether Pig begets Idol or Idol begets Pig—Mystifying Properties of a Beard—Heartless Frisks of the greedy Wave—Cossaq Soldiers—Arrival at Mouth of Oorahl—At Gorief—Houses there—Commandant—Evening Saunter—Cossaq Hospitality—Names and Surnames.

THE wind sprang up, and we spread our sails. But as I may have no further opportunity of introducing the subject, it may be as well here to offer a brief sketch of the little fort of Nuovo Alexandrofski, or as the Toorcumuns call it, Dahsh or Tahsch Gullah (the stone fort).

Nuov Alexandrof is a small Russian fort, built about eight years ago to protect the fisheries of the Caspian, and, doubtless, also with a view to the future invasion of Khiva, from which it is distant about 400 miles. For all other objects, it is as ill situated as it is ill constructed; being shut up by the ice during the months of November, December, January, February, and March; and approached and left during the remainder of the year with the utmost difficulty, owing to the shallowness of the water and the intricacy of the navigation. It will be seen that I was ten days on this little voyage of 180 miles. Three days is considered a very favourable passage, and the

average, perhaps, is four or five. The cause of this delay is found in the improbability of being favoured, at each fresh turning of the very devious course, with the exact wind requisite to propel the vessel. As, however, soundings are to be had throughout, the anchor may always prevent the vessel from drifting.

The country adjacent to Nuov Alexandrof is a high steppe of clay, covered with wormwood, camel thorn, and another thorny shrub. Its desolate condition, and the causes thereof, have already been noticed. The fort is a square, with bastions, flanks, and curtain; but neither ditch, outwork, nor glacis. The hardness of the soil has, perhaps, prevented the digging of a ditch. It stands upon the brinks of the lofty cliffs, which are here, however, quite accessible. I was rather amused at hearing one of the gentlemen of the garrison describing it as unassailable from that side. He would be astonished, could he see what sky-built fortresses the English have carried in India, by a *coup de main*. On the three sides that join the steppe, it is certainly less formidable. The stone wall, of eight and a half feet, well supplied with light field artillery and some 300 bayonets, is an ugly obstacle; but could always be surmounted at a certain sacrifice of life; and, had the Toorcumuns any courage to face artillery, and other fire-arms, it had long since been stormed and taken. A species of palisade, formed of pointed slabs of stone, set upright, renders an approach to these walls difficult to horsemen. This fort has no water, but is dependent for that needful article upon a spring half-way down the cliff.

The houses and church of this little port are all of wood: constructed at Astrakhan and brought hither in vessels. They are sufficiently neat, and built

after Russian models, having a stove and chimney of masonry in the centre, by which the whole house is warmed in the winter. Want of vegetables, and probably some peculiarity of the atmosphere, subject the garrison to severe visitations of scurvy. The garrison, of course, are almost prisoners in their own walls, for they cannot venture forth, excepting in armed parties; and the steppe offers little excitement to curiosity. Mr. Laymann, however, the naturalist, whose enthusiasm for his profession is backed by talent and a store of information, has discovered in that apparently lifeless steppe, and along those waste and desolate shores, many additions to the known varieties of insect and vegetable world. Let me here take leave of him, with thanks for his kind offices and for the enjoyment of his society, at a moment when manners far less amiable, and a mind far less accomplished, would have been hailed by me with gratitude.

The sails were spread, and I found, with an exultation quite indescribable, that we had left the dismal region of Muhummudanism, and were bounding over the blue waves of the Caspian. The very name of that sea is full of music; it had ever been a mine of poetry in my fancy. How large a share it was to have in my destiny, I could not foresee.

As the wind of the Caspian piped through the shrowds, and curled the waves around us; the crew broke forth into one of their national anthems, the most plaintive, the most melancholy, the most beautiful ever tossed by rude voices over the ruder billow. Well may the Russians say that the song of their Tartars is the music of the desert wind—the desert wind, blowing at night over a waste shrowded in snow. The spirit that poured out that plaintive measure,

must have felt the spell of loneliness, in its sublimest mood. He must have been driven to companionship with the tameless winds, the rolling planets, the meteor streaming upon the void of night. He must have drunk with Ossian at the selfsame fount of inspiration; have poured out his soul, like him, to things delighting in the wild, unmeasured chord; and indulged, like him, in the luxury of woe.

Some of these songs I had heard at Nuov Alexandrof. Mr. Laymann had translated the sentiment of one or two. They were full of poetry and strains of pure and genuine love. These people are passionately fond of music, a recreation unknown amongst the Kuzzauks of Khiva, and almost equally so to Toorcumun and Oozbeg. The former, indeed, have their bards, who, to a rude accompaniment on the guitar, chaunt poems to their chiefs; but I never heard an air or song played by them. This national anthem, which I heard afterwards in every village, until I had passed Moscow, I tried in vain to fix in my memory. The difficulty lay in separating the air from its various accompaniments: for no two voices were singing the same notes. The effect was singularly suited to the occasion, and no less in accord with the tone of my own sensations. Unless my memory deceives me, I was informed, that this is the chaunt used by the Cossaq, when returning after absence to their homes. Whenever I heard this music rise, it was a token that the wind was fair, and the Cossaq soldier was speeding, full of hope, toward his welcome home.

Ten weary days were we beaten back by the wind, until we had nearly expended the last drop of fresh water. We were always in soundings, nine and ten

feet the average. A heavy sea, in such water, would endanger even the smallest vessel. We dropped anchor when the wind was foul, and put the best face upon the matter. Many fishing-vessels of two masts were in sight. These sometimes sent their boats to us with sturgeon, and a fish resembling the carp. Salmon is found in the Caspian, but I saw none, and was informed that it was then out of season. The sturgeon lives at the very bottom of the sea, a habit which gives a certain clue for his capture. One of these fish was brought alive into the vessel. A piece of wood was thrust into its mouth, and it was then drowned by submersion in the sea. It was immediately cut open; the roe was extracted, rinsed with water, to free it from blood, and immediately spread upon bread, and eaten as a great delicacy. After having seen this process, I had no fancy for fresh caviar: but when it had been kept some time, I could look at it without disgust, and it is certainly a very agreeable addition to the coarse bread of the villages. I could not persuade any of my people to eat fish, which they had never before seen, and of which they knew not the spiritual properties, whether to bless or damn their souls. Summud Khaun was at the head of the orthodox party; I believe, most of the others might have been persuaded to garnish bread, hard as a brickbat, blacker than ink, and sourer than verjuice, with certain tit-bits of these questionable sea-monsters, had he not held forth against the practice. I procured them, with great difficulty, a bag of parched peas: for the adjutant had pocketed a liberal supply of money allowed by Government for their support, and had actually laid in no provisions for them. This, and the aforesaid black bread, soaked in water to make

it soft, was all the nourishment the poor fellows had, on this their first miserable taste of a sea voyage; and the peas were not procured without heavy bribery.

A number of little images of the Virgin Mary were stuck up on deck, and to these the crew and the soldiers resorted morning and evening, to bow and cross themselves. My Muhumudan servants were a good deal scandalized, at what they were silly enough to mistake for idolatry; and I fear I was not very successful in explaining to them the precise shade of difference, between the images of the Hindoo and of the Greek churches, respectively. They had hitherto attributed all the hardships experienced, since our arrival in civilized Europe, to the effect produced upon the constitution, mental and physical, by absorption into the human veins of the juices of the unclean beast. They were now bewildered in the attempt to distinguish cause from effect. Whether a taste for the Unclean One resulted naturally from bobbing before pictures: or whether the essence of hog had any tendency to make men reverence images. But each taste was alike subject of their holy abhorrence; and to each they exclaimed, stroking their beards, "La hôl! La hôl!" (Avaunt! Avaunt!)

There was on board this vessel a respectable old Tartar Moola, who understood a few words of Persian, and could speak Toorkish and Russian with equal facility. I scraped acquaintance with this gentleman, and as I was engaged in reading a Persian work, the Huzzarr Misl, I gave him occasional lessons in the same. This, my abstinence from pork, my long beard, the respect with which I always mentioned the names of Moosulmaun worthies, (objects of reverence to my

new acquaintance) and my neglect of the images of the Virgin, quite mystified the adjutant and doctor, and one of them sent a secret deputation to my servants, to ascertain whether I was a Soinnie or a Sheah. I was amused at this, and of course gave them no aid in solving the question.

I mentioned, in a previous chapter, that my servants had swallowed the gold, which I had divided amongst them. Poor Nizaum, after suffering much torture, and nearly dying from the golden pills, had been relieved. But Summud Khaun entered Nuov Alexandrof in a condition, which appeared to me sufficiently desperate. It was in vain, that I purchased of the doctor promise after promise to attend to the case of my servants. They were utterly neglected by him, and I dared not inform him of the contents of their stomachs ; not from any distrust of the means he might take for the extraction of the gold ; but simply, because I am a cautious fellow, and have not solved, as yet, the Promethean problem. I now questioned Summud Khaun as to his condition. "Are you any better, Summud Khaun?"

"Shookkur," (thanksgiving) he replied, hanging his head, and looking anything but thankful.

"You were relieved, I trust, before you came aboard."

His face grew long, and he hung his head lower than ever, fixing his eye gloomily upon the waves, that were frisking and frolicking about, heedless of the heart they had broken. The subject was always a sore one ; he had been completely outwitted. Six and twenty golden ducats, the lion's share of the spoil.

My poor people, in the most gloomy state of mind,

generally remained below deck, suffering miserably from sea-sickness, and tormented by the colonies they had brought with them from Kuzzauk land. I went on deck in the afternoon, when the fervour of the sun was abated, and seated myself under an awning, which had been spread for the purpose. There was little, it may be believed, to break the monotony of those ten days. The doctor spoke a few words of Latin, with an accent that rendered it for the most part unintelligible to me. Mine in return, from the same cause, was difficult to him. The Moolla knew a little Persian, and this was our sole means of communicating with the Russians.

The soldiers returning to their duty were fine, well-built, hardy, athletic fellows, of middle height; the Cossacs being the largest of the Russian soldiers. They are imperfectly drilled, but for any duties that require passive courage and endurance, they are surpassed by none in the world. They are also cheerful and tractable, and their food is the poorest that human creatures can exist on; being little superior to the nourishment required by the vegetable world. They frequently wear beards; the beard being a distinction, to which the Old Russians cling, as to part of a religion, differing slightly from that of modern Russia.

Just as we were seriously uneasy, at the low state of our supply of fresh water, a fair breeze sprang up, and bore us to the mouth of the river Oorahl, and up the current, to the port of Gorief. The town itself is some six miles distant, and to this we proceeded, after some little delay; first in row-boats up a canal, and then in cars to Gorief. These were the first specimens of the carriages, I had so often de-

scribed to my people, and wretched specimens they proved. The horses, however, set off at a gallop, and carried us at that pace to Gorief, over the low grassy plain intervening.

As we approached it, the small deep river showed to advantage: but there was a want of bushes, gardens, and trees, that would have defeated all pretensions of the handsomest town, to interest, and had nothing of compensation to look for in the wood-built houses of the little fishing town of Gorief. I was conveyed to the market place, where a very nice apartment was allotted me, in a good house; my people, excepting Nizaum, were conveyed to another house, where I paid them a visit.

The commandant called to see me: a gentlemanly, and I believe a worthy man.

The room I occupied faced the market-place. It had double windows, which, like the doors, showed excellent carpentry. The furniture was of some white wood, having a beautiful satin gloss. It was either poplar or plane, but I could not distinctly understand which, and the floor and wainscoat were neatly planked. An excellent bed (barring its contents) was in one corner; and there were large mirrors in frames of mahogany, and wardrobes of the same material. I was astonished to find so much of comfort and luxury in an obscure fishing town, upon the remotest frontier of Russia; but this was not to be the last of my marvels.

The next day, I called upon the commandant, whom I found in a house handsomely furnished and fitted up. He promised me the means of prosecuting my journey next morning toward Orenburgh. In the evening I wandered with the doctor along the

banks of the Oorahl. The twilight, falling upon objects belonging to civilized life, impressed me with feelings of delight which, on consideration of my position, may be comprehended. The houses, picturesque as wooden houses ever are, stood sufficiently distant from the river to allow of a decent road between. The river flowed in alternate light and gloom, reflecting, in long wavy lines, the fires lighted on its banks. The boats slumbered in deep shadow; and whilst all betokened the hour of repose, there was enough of life to speak of the enjoyment of hours, rescued from the grasp of industry and toil. The inhabitants might often be seen, seated on their terraced porticoes, enjoying their potations, whether tea or grog, and whiling away the time, in chat. One of these was hailed by my companion, and returned the halloo, with the lungs of a Silenus; commanding him by all the powers that watch over hospitable rites, to surrender himself for the evening. Instantly afterwards, down came the jovial Cossaq, and the two ran into one another's arms, slobbering, this the beard, that the smooth chin of his friend, with kisses. I narrowly escaped a like fate; for the hearty old boy was advanced to about fourth sea's point, and saw a friend in every face. He made us be seated, in spite of a hundred excuses, and sent for refreshments. I saw his daughter, a rosy girl of eighteen, busied in these arrangements: but, to my disappointment, none of the fair sex appeared: a symptom of our lingering proximity to Asia, and its degrading laws.

Trays were brought in, salted fish, caviar, sandwiches, and sweetmeats of various kinds, flanked by bottles of excellent wine and potent spirits. My green wound was fortunately a valid excuse, backed

by the authority of the doctor. But the Cossaq, who had now reached dancing point, in the mysteries of Bacchus, was almost in despair at my abstinence. He had served in the army it appeared, and had now retired to a snug competency, in the shape of a private fortune. We broke away from him with difficulty; and mounting a long-backed vehicle, which admitted of four on each side, *dos à dos*, cantered off to the new doctor's abode, which he entreated me to enter. Having entered, wine and spirits were again pressed upon me, and the doctor was evidently pleased, at the notice I took of his neatly furnished apartment. Finally, I reached my quarters in good time, and fell asleep, in spite of a fresh set of hospitable attentions, from three different races.

I must not forget a characteristic anecdote. The commandant, on making out my passport, desired to know my name. I replied, "Captain James Abbott."

"Yes," said the aide-de-camp, "but all we want is your baptismal name and that of your father."

"My baptismal name is James, my father's Henry Alexius."

"Very well then, you are James Henry Alexio-witz," and he was writing accordingly.

"If you insist upon writing that, of course, you are welcome," I observed; "but to tell my Government that there has arrived at Gorief one James, the son of Henry, will be to tell them nothing; for in London alone there may be a 100,000 Jameses, sons of Henry; whereas, if you call me Captain James Abbott, Bengal Artillery, everyone will understand who I am."



SURNAMES.

75

I am not sure which plan was adopted ; but our Foreign Office would be much edified by learning of the movements of one James, son of Henry. In Russia only great families retain the patronymic ; the others have only Christian names.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Departure from Gorief—Vehicles—Rate of Progress—Aspect of the Country—Chain of Posts from Orenburgh to Gorief—Mr. Tchicatchief—His kind Attention—First News of the Failure of the Russian Expedition—Peasantry—Town of Oorahlsk—The generous Major of Cossacs of the Oorahl—The hospitable Cossacs—Their Dress.

NEXT morning, the arrangements for my progress were completed. Some four or five cars were in waiting for my suite, and a species of chariot, without springs, was to bear me the first stage, after which I was to mount a car. We went off at a gallop, a couple of Cossaq horsemen, with long spears attending me, and four more guarding my servants. These guards, the commandant explained, were not to prevent me seizing the empire by a *coup de main*, but entirely to show me honour. These cars have a low awning of wood, which serves the threefold purpose of excluding the sun, breaking the traveller's head, and multiplying the noise *ad infinitum*. The cars have no springs, and they are borne by three horses abreast, at a hand-gallop, over every obstacle, whether canal, ditch, or only broken ground. If the reader will conceive himself seated in a large drum, tied to the tail of a wild bull, engaged in a steeple-chase, he will form some notion of the jolting and the horrible, stunning noise of these primitive vehicles.

If he remember that my wounded hand was still so sensitive as to bear with difficulty its pressure upon the sling: he will not envy me the gallop. More than once the wooden axles caught fire from the friction, and two of the cars suffered wreck from their tireless wheels severing in the centre; which precipitated some of my servants through the air. Nevertheless, there is something exhilarating in the dash of Russian driving. Our Jehus were common peasants; the cars, vehicles used to carry fish, &c. from station to station. Whenever one attempted to pass another, a race ensued; the trot is a pace despised by Russians, and nothing but a headlong gallop will serve them. So long as tackle holds, roads are smooth, and horses keep their feet, this is satisfactory enough. But on a subsequent occasion, in descending at a gallop the Oorahl Mountains, the leaders of my team fell, and the post-boy was fearfully wounded.

I have talked of galloping over ditches and canals. I am not speaking figuratively. Whenever the banks shelved sufficiently, it was done at a dash, and on one occasion the car was inundated, as we sank with a splash into the deep water, and the horses, after themselves floundering up the precipitous bank, strove in vain to stir the car, which was extricated with much difficulty by the bank it had descended. The road fortunately at this season was excellent, passing over the fluvial soil of the river Oohral; not made, but merely marked out by high posts, painted in alternate bands of black and white; the black indicating the track in winter, and the white in summer nights. Of course, when rain falls, it is scarcely passable, and when the snow melts, is still worse; but wet weather

is rare in Russia, and in dry weather, her unmade roads are always her best. On reaching villages, the hoof-prints made by the cattle where the clay was soft, and now hardened ineffaceably by the sun, render the road the most rugged that can be conceived ; and I always suffered more from the hundred yards or so at the entrance to villages than from the rest of the entire stage.

The soil is a rich, dark, vegetable clay ; water is at the surface, and the level of the river is depressed not many feet below the soil, so that irrigation is the simplest thing possible. But the people of these parts, having still abundant room for wandering, are not easily reclaimed from their immemorial pastoral habits ; and the utmost encouragement of Government has induced but a trifling proportion of the population to settle in villages and cultivate the soil. Even these villages, as is testified by their extensive folds for cattle, are rich in flocks and herds to an extent quite unknown in more civilized districts. On entering one of these villages, and considering its entire want of those adornments and comforts of gardens, trees, fruits, and flowers, which accompany a more advanced state of society,—that it is in fact but a standing camp, a position always regarded as a nuisance by wanderers,—we are not at a loss to comprehend the reluctance of the Tartar shepherd to forego his clean, open residence upon the grassy steppe for the mud and abominations of a village ; to exchange his sense of freedom for the constant presence of masters and superiors, and his luxurious and indolent occupations for the severe labours of a husbandman. In fact, scarcely a village would exist upon this road, but that the Government found it

necessary to erect some barrier along the river Oohral against the depredations and incursions of the Kirgheez, whose territory lies south of the stream.

This barrier is generally supposed by us, to be a chain of forts, or entrenched camps : but is really a line of peaceful villages and post-houses, connected by the road aforesaid ; and thus affording a safe and easy communication between Orenburgh, (the headquarters of the district,) and its southernmost limit. At each post-house, a guard of four or five horsemen is stationed, furnished by the Cossacs, whose tribute is military service. These horsemen, better armed and mounted than the Kirgheez,* and animated by a higher spirit, are a most effectual protection to the frontier. The villages are seldom more than eight miles apart, and have already a flourishing appearance. The houses are constructed of wood, the gables turned to the street ; which gives the village the aspect of a camp. They are in themselves picturesque objects, but require the contrast of foliage to do them justice. On the right bank of the Oorahl, which the road occupies, scarcely a tree is found from Gorief to Orenburgh : but upon the left bank, bushes, and afterwards trees, appeared, which sometimes thickened into woods.

We occasionally came upon herds of galloways and horses. The former larger and finer than the Kuz-

* Kirgheez, a name given by the Russians to distinguish the hostile and Muhummudan Kuzzauks from their own Christianized Cossacs. The name is unknown to Asiatics, and seems to be adopted in Russia, from the word Khurgah, "a felt tent." This word again seems to be a Persian pun upon their enemies the Tartars—Khur being "an ass," and Gah, "a place"—the compound signifying "an ass's fold."

zauk galloway; the latter, not large, but sometimes beautiful. My people had never seen so rich a country, and marvelled at the neglect of such a soil. At the outset, the soil was still covered with wormwood; but as we progressed, this gave place gradually to grass, until we saw around us, limitless pastures of the richest herbage, in which the wild flowers were beginning to open; and to my great delight, I once more followed a road, upon the sides of which, weeds and grassy tufts found encouragement to spring. This was to me the most assured sign of a transition from Asia to Europe: for from Agra to the north of the Caspian, such an appearance is utterly unknown.

The peasantry of this part of Russia are chiefly clad in the chogah, or cloak of Bokhara. Their head-dress alone savours of Europe. Even the women have a Tartar dress: but, as we progressed, these were gradually mixed with the costume of Europe. Twice a day we halted for an hour, to discuss the rude fare of the peasants. I could not ascertain, what place we held in their abodes, whether guests or intruders: but I strongly suspected, that these houses were no castles, against anyone wearing an epaulette. Several times, Tartar peasants of Moosulmaun persuasion brought my starving servants a supply of their best food, clotted cream, the most delicious curds in the world (even by the confession of my people), and coarse, but good bread.

We were now approaching Oorahlsk, a considerable town on the Oorahl. I was eating some dinner with the doctor in the post-house, when in walked a tall, handsome man, of dark complexion and regular features, whom I should have pronounced a Spaniard, had he not addressed me in pure English by name,

and introduced himself to me as Mr. Tchicatchief, travelling toward Astrakhan ; who having just left the kind and hospitable Hettman of the Cossacs of the Oorahl, had been commissioned by that officer to apologize for the inconveniences and hardships I had experienced ; to lay them at the door of the commandant of Nuov Alexandrof, who had thought the leader of ten thousand Toorcumun horse a most dangerous person, and upon the wretched accommodation for comfort, which fishing towns and Tartar villages could afford. He himself, the Hettman regretted, was summoned to Orenburgh by General Perroffski, the governor : but he would leave such orders as should ensure me more respect and attention, for the remainder of my journey.

It is not possible to give the reader an idea of my delight, in once more listening to my native tongue. I hung on the speaker's words. I would not believe, would not suffer him to be anything but an Englishman. I questioned him of his appearance. It seemed to me, as if a second Saleh Muhummud had been sent to me, in my need. He spoke English better than I had ever heard it spoken by a foreigner ; without hesitation, without introduction of foreign idiom, with only the slightest accent in the world ; sufficient, but no more, to have made him pass for a Northumbrian. Even the tone of his thoughts and his manner were English. He accounted for this, by saying that he had been brought up amongst English, and had travelled in America. He sent for some supplies from his carriage ; but the delicious white bread could not tempt me to forego a word of my native tongue. I was intoxicated with the sound. Let anyone, who would accuse me of extravagance, think first of all that

I had suffered, since last I had heard these sounds ; that I had also been seventeen years an exile, and that the appearance of this kind friend, for such he proved, was like the first native bird which flies aboard the vessel of one who has wandered, without compass or chart, at the mercy of the winds.

Mr. Tchikatchief insisted upon driving me in his carriage my next stage. I objected to a motion which proposed to carry him back a stage, and be to him the loss of two ; but he would not listen to my remonstrance. We sat talking some time longer, then mounted his carriage and pursued my route. The relief from the stunning clatter and jolting of the car, was most grateful. I felt as a fish might feel, who is suddenly jerked back into the water, by the overthrow of the market cart. I seemed literally gliding through a smoother and happier element.

I now, for the first time, learned, that the Russian army of invasion had been recalled to Orenburgh ; owing to the losses sustained in baggage cattle, from the severity of the winter. Mr. Tchikatchief himself had been, as a volunteer, on the expedition. He described the sufferings of the troops as very great, owing to the intensity of the cold, which froze their brandy. The thermometer was at 40° Reaumur. The snow in many places five feet deep. I am not certain, that I detail these facts as Mr. Tchikatchief narrated them, because I have heard many accounts of the expedition subsequently, and was not in a condition to take notes, during my residence in the Orenburgh district. I must, therefore, decline making him my authority, for the precise letter of this account. Through snow so deep and so feathery, it was, of course, impossible for laden cattle to advance.

Equally impossible was it, that they should reach the pasture of the steppe. The troops, therefore, were arrested at the severest portion of the journey; the highlands between the Caspian and Aral seas, or rather a little north of that point, and near one of the streams of the river Yem or Ember; and there the camels died in such numbers as to render the prosecution of the invasion, for the time, impracticable. Mr. Tchicatchief, however, said that it must, and would, as a matter of course, be resumed, and carried through; and his opinion I found confirmed, not only by the impression which was general in the district, but by the measures actually in progress on the field of operations. He spoke of Perroffski in the glowing terms, which I had anticipated from previous inquiry. He considered him entitled to the epithet, "noble," which I had heard many apply to him. He knew no one of whom he could so unreservedly say, that he was thoroughly honourable. This was to me most welcome information.

He spoke of Moscow as being peopled with the *élite* of Russia, and thought I should observe a marked difference on approaching that capital, in favour of the features and general appearance of the people. He promised me an introduction to the Governor of the Kremlin. How short appeared that stage. How miserable to my eye was the sight of the next village, as it gradually grew from the soil. He detained me long at the next post-house, pressing upon me every article of comfort or luxury he had brought with him, and afterwards writing me letters to the kind and accomplished Hettman, to a Major of Cossacs, at Oorahlsk, whose name, I blush to say, I must reserve for a succeeding edition, but whose kindness is graven

on my heart; to Mr. Khanikoff at Orenburgh, and to the Governor of the Kremlin, Moscow. We then parted, and I rejoiced to learn, there was some hope of my meeting him at St. Petersburg. His departure was felt in proportion to the happiness I had derived from that fleeting interview.

In passing through villages on this journey, I found that news of my approach had always preceded me, by the Cossaq sent ahead to prepare post-horses. The consequence was, that the villages were lined on either side with their inhabitants, almost exclusively women and children: the men being absent with the cattle, or engaged in the fields, or employed in military service. The dress of these women was singularly picturesque and neat. My impression, from this glimpse of the peasantry of Russia, was most favourable. They are not, indeed, handsome, they are seldom comely. But the men are robust and athletic; and the women decent. They are fond of colours, and of colours that harmonise; scarlet, crimson, white, and light blue. The complexion is high. The eyes are grey. The features in no way remarkable. A beautiful woman I did not see between Gorief and Oorahlsk; and a slovenly woman had been equally a rarity. Often we found them enjoying, in the evening, their national music. At one village, I persuaded them to dance before me. A young woman stepped into the circle, and began a *pas seul* to a merry tune. A young clown, after much encouragement, was persuaded to join her. The two confronted one another, the youth making desperate love, with eyes and gesture, whilst his feet were rapidly moving, and the lass turning her back just as his hopes had reached their highest. The performance was admirable. The

wit and spirit of the parties was maintained to the last. This was the first specimen I had of the humour of the Russians, which is perhaps not to be surpassed.

At one of the better houses of a Cossaq of the old religion, I found hanging up a page of prayers, in the character still retained by this people, and which, without being Greek, resembles the Greek character more nearly than does the more modern character of Russia. Every house has its images in a corner, to which my attendants bowed and crossed themselves. The good people of this house were in great tribulation, because the doctor was smoking a cigar; as they account the practice an abomination; a sentiment in which I heartily concur. I observed that the doctor and adjutant laughed heartily at a religion which employed in its sacred books a character different from their own. My poor Moosulmauns were more charitable; they glanced at the gods and goddesses, stroked their beards, and sighed, "Lah hôl!" but that was all. The vast numbers of the unclean beast,—that unmentionable abomination, alarmed as well as astonished them. They knew not where it was to end. Already Summud Khaun, leader of the orthodox, had put his teeth under a severe quarantine. He smelt pork in every aliment, and would eat nothing but milk and black bread. He was one day expressing to me his wonder at the numbers of the grunting tribe, "What can they, Sir, do with so many?"

In an evil hour, I answered him jocosely, "Isn't the milk very fine?"

"Lah hôl!" exclaimed Summud: and the next day I found he had left off milk, lest he should be nourished upon what he called "essence of pig." I

reasoned, argued, remonstrated with him; assured him that pig's milk was an elixir, unknown even to the Feringee. That I had been joking, in the assurance that he understood a joke. It was all useless, Summud Khaun hunched his shoulders, and declared that if he *must* go to the devil, it should not be upon a current of pig's essence. Summud Khaun abstained religiously from milk until he reached England.

We now saw rising upon the horizon, the spires of the fair town of Oorahlsk. I was unprepared for so extensive a town. With eyes, so long accustomed to the miserable domestic architecture of the Hindoo and Moosulmaun, I was, perhaps, no right judge of the beauty of European cities, considered as such. I was, indeed, delighted with Oorahlsk, and my people were wonderstruck. To them it was all enchantment. The wide, free, clean street, the elegant houses, the least a palace in their eyes. The beautiful women, dressed in a costume quite new to them, and elegant in the eyes of the most fastidious, walking unveiled in the streets, yet without any other appearance of immodesty; all struck Nizaum, my more immediate attendant, as a page from the volume of Paradise. The women of Oorahlsk are famous for their beauty. I myself was allowed no opportunity of judging; for in only one case, on entering a house, was I introduced to the lady of the establishment. Some remnant of Asiatic prejudice seems to cling even to the Oorahlskians. It was much lamented by one, to whom the principal charm of civilized society is the presence, at all social intercourse, of the fairer and better sex.

Apartments were assigned me in a good house,

well situated. The staff officer waited upon me, and desired me to call upon the officer commanding. Although I thought he might have paid me the first visit, I did not object to this. A drôshki was placed at my disposal, and I soon found myself in a house elegantly furnished, and in presence of a gentlemanly man. He gave me a seat; but, by a barbarous system of etiquette, kept all his officers standing. After the usual compliments, he began to question me of my journey, and gradually of my purpose. Perceiving that the conversation was assuming the air of a cross-examination, I inquired whether his Emperor had commissioned him to put these questions; if not, I should defer answering them until put by His Imperial Majesty's order. He bowed, made a thousand apologies, and dropped the cross-examination.

Dinner was served at an early hour of the afternoon. Now, at least, I hoped the fair ones would appear. I was disappointed. A first-rate dinner was produced in the French fashion, but exhibiting several national dishes; one of which is a species of soup, in which raw herbs are mingled, and with which salt fish is eaten, I never was reconciled to this dish, which always appeared to me the dropsy of a bad salad. Another and a better dish is fish soup. But I cannot imagine it would answer made from any fish but the sturgeon, which abounds in gristle and other gelatinous substances. Of the wines, I neglected all for the delicious wine of the Don, which is only inferior to champagne; but which is despised in Russia, because it can be drunk by men of moderate fortune. A red wine, the growth also of the empire, was shown me. I thought it quite worthy of companionship with the Donski. So far as I recollect, it

comes from the Crimea, and resembles a sweet claret. There are few regions of the world, that can boast two such wines. The finer of the Don wine is grown from some cuttings, which the famous Hettmann Platoff brought with him from the Rhine. The kind-hearted Colonel pressed his good cheer heartily. Hospitality is a Russian virtue, and one that is welcome to strangers. As for me, ever since my arrival in Russia, I had been devouring bread in quantities not to be computed. I now found a fresh luxury in the potato; and these two simple cates were more delicious to my palate, than the *chefs d'œuvres* of the cuisine. I learned from the Colonel, that Perroffski was about to visit St. Petersburg, and that Rikkasowski was on his road to join the governor previous to his departure. That the latter would pass through Oorahlsk next day, when I should probably see him.

Accordingly, next morning a *drôshki* was brought to the door, and an aide-de-camp entering, summoned me to visit him. I found him attended by the officers of the station, a tall, plebeian, unmilitary figure. He led me into a private apartment, and questioned me of my mission. I begged to inquire, whether he had commission to this effect from his Emperor, as my business was with the Court. I had heard, I said, that Perroffski was governor of this district. He said I could reply to Perroffski if I pleased, and that there was no necessity for my answering his queries. He should meet me at Orenburgh, and should be happy to be of service to me. He spoke French fluently, but with an accent that was quite unintelligible. I was equally embarrassed to understand him, and to answer in my own imperfect French. Our conference, therefore, was not productive of much

enlightenment on either side. I met him afterwards at Orenburgh, where I found him, under different auspices, a much more polite member of society.

After leaving him, I went to call upon the head of the Police, and here, for the first time, was introduced to a Russian lady. She is daughter of one of the most celebrated historians of the empire. She brought in her daughter, an exquisite little thing of about eight years, a creature that will some day bewilder and ensnare.

Taking leave of this lady and her beautiful daughter, I sought out the residence of the Major of Cossacs, to whom Mr. Tchicatchief had given me an introduction, and who had indeed called upon me that morning, with truly Russian hospitality, to make me a proffer of his services and of his purse. I found him a tall, stout, gentlemanly man, having the frank manly bearing of his brethren in arms. On the table of the room into which I was ushered were certain signs that the fair sex *had* been there; but they were there no more. I found that Mr. Tchicatchief had begged the Major to procure me some kind of carriage for the continuance of my journey to Orenburgh. He assured me I was most welcome to his. I objected to the inconvenience I was putting him to, and said I should much prefer purchasing a vehicle, if he knew of any for sale. He assured me there were none procurable at Oorahlsk, and would not hear of any possible inconvenience to him by the arrangement he suggested. I had too little fluency in the French tongue to fight a good battle. In fact, the offer was so kindly made, and my acceptance would so evidently gratify the worthy Major, that I accepted it with many thanks. There is no instance

in which I regret more the loss of a name than the present ; for on reaching Orenburgh, I was recommended to send back the carriage by the adjutant, who was to return to Gorief. He was lingering at Orenburgh when I went on a trip into the district ; and when I returned the carriage had been taken back to Oorahlsk, without any note of acknowledgment from me. Most fully did I purpose sending such a letter by the post, but the extreme difficulty of scrawling with the left hand my miserable French, which, having been neglected some seventeen years, was quite unfit to appear on paper, and my only companion's ignorance of the Major's name, always disconcerted my intention. It is not everyone who would volunteer to a stranger the loan of his carriage for a journey of several hundred miles over country roads ; nor have we met many who would press upon a stranger, whom he might never again see, the free use of his purse.

Wine and other refreshments were brought, and the conversation took that jovial turn in which the merry warm-hearted Cossacs delight. "You will go away," they said, "and report of us, that we are uncivilized. You shall not add, that we do not love the stranger. We are a rude race, and have little to offer an Englishman that can be acceptable to the inhabitant of so luxurious a land. But what we have is heartily at his service, and we will add our best wishes that his affairs may prosper."

I replied, and I now repeat it, that I rejoiced in an accident that had made me acquainted with so estimable and warm-hearted a people. That the name of Cossaq, which heretofore had awakened only ideas of the courage, hardihood, and gallantry of an uncul-

tured nation, would henceforward be inseparably linked with courtesy, hospitality, and worth; that polish had been carried as far in their case, as was healthful; it had improved their natural advantages, without effacing the features of their character; that I could honestly say of them *good* alone; and that I was sure they never could have cause to regret the visit of any traveller, who would truly report upon them; that, as we had been comrades in the last European war, so I trusted we should ever continue friends and allies. One of the staff-officers, who was perfectly familiar with French, acted as my interpreter. Should this page ever meet his or their eye, I hereby greet most heartily the kind Cossacs of the Oorahl. The dress of this battalion is that of a regular cavalry corps. It is peculiarly neat and gentleman-like, being blue throughout, with a narrow white girdle. The sword is of the fashion used in Circassia; it has no guard to the hilt, is nearly straight, but made for cutting as well as thrusting. The handle is half buried in the velvet scabbard, and the pommel is cleft, as a rest for the rifle. It is slung by a single thong, so that the wearer, when on his knee, can bring it in front of him, and set it upright, as a rest for his piece. The want of a hilt is a serious defect. I did not see any of this corps under arms, so cannot speak of them as horsemen.

The distance from Gorief to Oorahlsk is about three hundred and ninety miles, and from Oorahlsk to Orenburgh, about one hundred and ninety miles, making a total of five hundred and eighty miles.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Departure from Oorahlsk—Vehicles—Approach to Orenburgh—Orenburgh Quarters—General Perroffski, Governor of Orenburgh—The Hettman of the Oorahl—Perroffski's Armoury—Generous Conduct of Perroffski—The Masks—Spirits of the Mighty—The Rival Heroes.

IN the evening, our preparations for departure were complete, and the carriage was in attendance. The body of these vehicles is that of a barouche. They have no springs, properly so termed, but rest upon two elastic shafts, which again rest upon the axle-trees, fore and aft. Although, therefore, far less easy than English carriages, they are infinitely more so than the miserable, bone-breaking cars, in which, hitherto, I had with much torture travelled. This was indeed luxury and repose, and a hundred times I blessed the kind Cossaq Major, who had deprived himself, perhaps for months, of this convenience, to administer to the comfort of a stranger, whose only claim upon him was his helplessness.

We proceeded as before, tracking the right bank of the Oorahl, of which we never were long out of sight. The villages and small towns were precisely like those hitherto seen. The wooden houses with their broad eaves, and ornamented gables, in themselves highly picturesque, but wanting the accompaniment of foliage. The churches we met with were always

ugly ; indeed, I have seen but four decent churches in Russia, of which one is at Moscow, and three are at St. Petersburg. The horses used in travelling are Cossaq galloways. Excepting in the immediate vicinity of villages, the steppe continued unbroken, until, ascending the high bank of the Oorahl, Orenburgh was seen in the distance. We then descended to the river Sakmara, which was crossed on a raft, and pursued our journey through woods and thickets, of oak, beech, fir, etc., which cover the low land between this river and the Oorahl, and, on emerging from the valley, found ourselves close to the gates of Orenburgh.

The site of this capital, for such it is to a district more extensive than many kingdoms, is upon a plateau overlooking the river Oorahl, and, at some distance on the north, defended by the river Sakmara. It retains the wall and ditch, which formerly rendered it a stronghold, and which might still resist the desultory attacks of the savages, whom alone it has to fear. It is almost exclusively a military post. Yet hither resorted, in times of peace, the caravans from Bokhara and Khiva, and, in order that the merchants of those countries might be kept separate from the inhabitants of Orenburgh, a large warehouse was built for them beyond the walls. General Perroffski, the governor of the entire district, has a house and garden in the English style, near the western gate. The country around is steppe.

On my arrival, I was shown to some particularly nice apartments of a house in the main street. I looked around in surprise, for we were still severed from Tartary (where houses are unknown, and the inhabitants of the steppe dress in skins), by the

slender stream of the Oorahl alone; and here I found the house of an ordinary gentleman hung with beautiful paintings,* and large mirrors, and having furniture that would have been considered handsome in London.

Soon after my arrival a young officer of the staff corps entered, and introduced himself to me as Lieutenant Pekoffski, aide-de-camp to General Perroffski, who desired to see me. This young man, who was my companion during the remainder of my residence in Russia, spoke English fluently. I was delighted at the *rencontre*, and accompanied him to Perroffski's palace, where I was ushered into the study of the General.

Perroffski was the friend and companion of Nicholas ere he became Emperor; and his high talents, and noble qualities, have enabled him to retain his place in the regard of his sovereign. I had seen many likenesses of Perroffski in passing through his district. I now found that they were generally correct, and I keenly examined the original. The countenance was shrewd, and very intelligent; yet I confess, that had not my own experience borne out the testimony of others, I should not have argued from it all the worth and high honour which characterise the man. He was in fullest dress, and wore his orders. He told me he was running up, immediately, to St. Petersburg, but would take care that I should want for nothing during my detention at Orenburgh, and pending the

* I have since heard that the secret of the possession by Russians of so many paintings of merit is the wonderful facility with which Russian artists copy pictures by the masters. If those I saw were copies, as, from the circumstances, seems not improbable, they reflect great credit upon the copyists. The furniture is probably veneered, and from America.

answer of the British ambassador there. Meanwhile, the services of Lieutenant Pekoffski were at my disposal, if I chose to employ them; but he mentioned this solely for my accommodation, and had no desire to attach anyone to me, contrary to my inclination. He trusted to my honour not to hold intercourse with Tartars during my stay in the districts. I returned to my new quarters, happy in having, at length, found one whose conduct did not fall short of his high reputation.

The ensuing day Perroffski called upon me, but in so different a dress, and with so little ceremony, that I had pressed his hand ere I was aware it was he. He made a thousand obliging offers; and every hour that he remained at Orenburgh, he discovered some new method of administering to my comfort. He hoped to see me that day at dinner, and regretted that his absence would prevent his seeing me as his guest daily. Accordingly, at about three o'clock, I rendered myself at his palace, and found assembled there all the principal officers of the station. His saloon was fitted up with every article of luxury and elegance. He took me apart, and told me, that fearing I might find Orenburgh dull, he would afford me the means of visiting the curiosities of his district. At the same time, as this was done on his own responsibility, he must beg I would not publish the result.

Perroffski's manners are manly, plain, and unaffected. But he preserves the strictest etiquette amongst the officers who surround him. Rikkasowski, who had treated me rather cavalierly on a former occasion, was now all smiles and bows to him whom it pleased Perroffski to honour. The kind and gen-

tlemanly Hettmann of the Oorahl came and introduced himself to me. He bears his character in his countenance. He regretted that he had been prevented considering me his guest, by my falling into the hands of a higher authority ; but still, should be delighted to render me any service I might please to command. Unfortunately, he said, Perroffski was not likely to leave anything for him to supply.

Dinner was served in the French style, but still some national dishes appeared. Perroffski asked many questions about India, and our late expedition. One of the general officers present asked, whether I had ever dined off elephant's heels: he had heard it was a common delicacy. I replied, that I was not rich enough to pay £100 for a single dish, and had never heard of any portion of the elephant being eaten, excepting by the wild people of the forest.

After dinner, we adjourned to the armoury, where Perroffski has one of the rarest private collections in the world, of ancient and modern arms. I took no notes of these, and therefore cannot particularly describe them ; but, having seen many collections, I do not praise this at random. Amongst the blades were several, the recent fabric of Zlataoost, in Siberia. Without telling me their history, he asked my opinion of their water. I told him that it was fine, but of a peculiar character. That the grain resembled that of blades forged at Siroee and Lahore, which, though keen-edged, I had generally found brittle. He said that the blades before me were perfectly elastic. That Colonel Anossoff, an engineer officer of great genius and merit, had discovered the art of damascening, and was daily improving upon the discovery. That he employed cast steel, to which he contrived

to give an elasticity that could not be surpassed ; and that every blade was subjected to severe proof ere issued from the fabric of Zlataoost. He took down an elegant ataghan, of fine water, and silver mounted, and begged my acceptance of it, as a specimen of Russian manufacture. In his judgment upon the water of sabres, I did not always agree with him. I have long and attentively studied the subject. The collection of daggers was singularly rich and curious.

He marvelled that my hand should be so long in healing. Had himself lost the tip of one of his fingers by a sabre cut ; but the wound was healed in a fortnight, whereas mine had been nearly two months open. He insisted upon sending me his own physician, Dr. Rosenburgh. I took leave, and returned to my quarters, where he had sent me a supply of his own linen, which was very welcome.

The next day Perroffski again called, to see that I was comfortable, and to take leave of me. Our relative position was singular. He called me his enemy ; and circumstances had given him a right to hold me as such. Yet he treated me with the generosity and never-slumbering attention of a friend. I told him, I felt more honoured in one such enemy, than in a hundred ordinary friends. He said, that if he caught me at Khiva he would slay me. I replied, that if I suffered him to get there, I should deserve death. He placed at my disposal his cattle and equipages, and assured me he would never forgive me if I wanted for anything that Orenburgh could supply. I parted from him with a regret, which the reader will readily comprehend. I account it no slight honour to have known Perroffski, and to have been deemed by him worthy of his friendship.

In the evening, I found that my noble host was not satisfied with all the attentions he had lavished upon me. He had called Pekoffski to him, and strictly cross-examined him as to any possible or probable want. He by this means discovered that I had attempted, without success, to procure a map of Russia, and he now sent me a magnificent map of the empire, insisting that I must accept it, as he had another. He had also found out that I had no watch, and begged of me to wear one of his, until I should arrive at St. Petersburg. It was a beautiful time-piece, which never required winding! the motion of the wearer's body winding it up. It was the first of the kind that I had seen. He inquired whether there was any other way by which he could contribute to my comfort or convenience. I replied, that he might crown all his kind and generous attentions by a gift which I should value more than all, a lithograph of himself. He had none; but sent me, instead, a present almost too costly to be accepted, yet one that, under the circumstances, it was impossible to refuse. It was a pair of bronze casts from the masks (taken immediately after death) of Peter the Great and his rival Charles XII. of Sweden. There were but two casts made from the original masks. The Emperor of Russia has one. I assured Perroffski, in thanking him for these most precious relics, that the Russian empire contained no gem that I valued so highly. That they should be preserved in my family as a sacred memento of the friendship and hospitality of Perroffski.

At night, these masks were lying upon a chair in my sleeping apartment. I lay down to rest, but the shades of the heroes hovered over me. A feeling of

awe, too sacred to be disturbed, took possession of my mind. The spirits of the departed *had* taken a visible form in times past, if traditions were worthy of credit. There was, at least, no doubt, that the eyes of the Living had seen images, which deceived them into the belief that the Deceased stood before them. Often in my loneliness, in the darkness of the night, upon the hill side, the declivity of the chasm, or the rayless chamber of the tomb, I had imagined my fancy quite capable of such a flight, and almost expected to view the shapes of those whom the grave had severed from my side. Sometimes I had shrunk from the ordeal, and at other times had calmly awaited it. Now, I longed for it with earnest desire. I fancied that the sufferings I had undergone had, in a manner, given me the privilege of admission into the society of the mighty ones of other days. I was, at least, capable of appreciating their greatness, and of reverencing more deeply the tattered pall, which droops over their dust, than the banner which had waved at the head of their thousands. The sublimity of those moments is not to be expressed in words. I scarcely breathed, lest that muscular action should disturb the train of my thoughts; and when the impressions waned upon my fancy, I arose, opened the shutters, and let in upon the masks a stream of bright moonlight, by which, as I hung over them, I long and earnestly perused those awful lineaments.

Oh! what were all the pomp of the ermined, and sceptred, and crowned monarch, compared with the silent majesty of those lifeless traits, which no passion shall again ruffle, no enthusiasm again kindle, no hope again illumine. The spirits of the heroes have entered upon a new stage of being; they have plunged amid

the throng that preceded them to the unknown shore. No longer are their powers to be estimated in conflict with minds, the growth of their own narrow cycle, but the great names of other days will be thrown into the balance; they will meet there with the glowing genius of Greece, the stern unconquerable will of Rome, the Punic champion, the Mogul hero, the uncounted host of the wise and valiant, scattered over a hundred climes. They have entered upon this new arena with no fortuitous advantages. The crown is fallen from their brows; the wand they grasp is no longer a sceptre, which millions watch with awe. The ground they tread is no longer elevated above the level of the minds around them; but they find themselves confronted with the obscure philosopher, the unsuspected patriot, the hero whose powers have been wasted upon the drudgery of the plough. Who shall say where their grade may be? Who can contemplate this second infancy of a mighty mind, without the intensest interest; or avoid, for the moment, identifying his own being with that of the adventurer in such a career.

The countenance of the Czar is massive, and full of power. The profile is great, though not noble. The nose aquiline, the mouth compressed. The forehead is high, ample, sinuous; one of the grandest developments I have ever seen. Let phrenologists comfort themselves with the assurance, that the organ of constructiveness, which taught Peter to mould into form this magnificent empire, is on a gigantic scale. A smile of firmness is upon the lips—the smile of one superior in genius, as in station, to fellow men. In this posture did they settle for ever. In this frame did the great architect of a nation enter upon the

untried world. My emotions almost overpowered me, as I gazed fixedly upon those lineaments, silently illumined by the lamp of night. This was not the sculpture of the living monarch, it was not even Peter in the hour of repose; but the Genius of the North, as death had surprised him, closed his eye and folded his wing. It was the mighty in the hour of his weakness, the conqueror at the moment of his overthrow. The strong in his languor, the proud in the vanity of his feebleness. The hero, the patriot, the legislator, the tyrant, resolved into a scanty heap of miserable dust.

And who is that beside him? Who would presume to approach his presence, or share with him the pillow of repose? He who taught him, by defeat, the path to victory. The dauntless, the magnanimous, the indomitable Charles. It is only possible to equal the contrast of these two masks by contrasting the minds of the rival kings. The face and head of Charles are smaller than those of a woman. It is difficult, at first, to believe they could ever have belonged to a man. The features, also, are not prominent; and the sole mark of power is in a compression of the lips, which is more than firmness, and amounts to obstinacy. All besides is smooth and delicate; and the countenance promises no more than intelligence, firmness, and promptitude.

I confess I was disappointed in this mask. Charles had been the idol of my boyish enthusiasm. His fearlessness, his spirit, his brilliant success, his love of hardship, his contempt of luxury, his heroic achievements, his indomitable spirit, lent a fascination to the page of his memoirs, which I found in no equal degree in any other. Now, as I placed the masks of the

rivals in equal light, they would not bear comparison. I perceived, at a glance, that mind had triumphed over matter, animated by strong animal instinct. *That self-denial*, which at first sight appears so noble, dwindles, as we gaze upon the features, into mere indifference, a want of animal appetite. *That courage*, with which he sustained such utter reverse, into want of sensibility. The spirit with which, as a youth, he set at defiance so many powerful monarchs, appears rather the consequence of a want of foresight, of capacity to understand the stake he was playing, than of a mind which rises superior to anticipated danger, and beards the lion with open eyes. The difference in size of the two masks is so great, that when Charles's is placed within Peter's, it is literally swallowed up. Yet Charles was, I believe, above six feet in height. The countenances are essentially national. Peter could not be mistaken for any but a Russian, nor Charles for other than a Swede or a Dane.

There is one particular in the mask of Charles which invests it with a solemn interest. The impression of his death-wound is there : that mysterious wound, still doubtfully attributed to friend or foe. I have not the masks here ; but unless my memory deceive me, it is above the left temple. I gazed on it at that moment with thrilling emotion. It had not altered a line of the countenance. No languor, no convulsion was visible there. *There* was the firmness, *there* the intrepidity ; they had not yielded to the power of death. I looked upon it, and discarded the report that attributes it to a companion in arms.*

I again lay down to rest, but I had placed the masks where I could view them from my pillow. It

* See Appendix.

was not possible to be occupied long with that of Charles while Peter's lay beside it. I was now in the empire of this wonderful man; the stronghold of his glory, the spot of all the universe over which, if permitted, his spirit would still preside. I had entered it,—for what purpose? Would he stand in my path? Was his awful shade indeed present with me there, though unseen, inspiring emotions seldom experienced in equal degree? These were questions that I loved to leave in doubt. I felt nothing wanting to the sublimity of that hour; not even the visible presence of the mighty genius to whose great representative my errand was addressed. I slept and I awoke. My dreams had been a chaos of great elements, but the genius of the spot had not appeared.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Ball-room at Orenburgh—Dancing—Perroffski's Prohibition—
Captives at Khiva—Effect upon them of my Arrival—Pre-
parations for Renewing the Invasion of Khiva.

RIKKASOWSKI, we have seen, was all attention to him whom it pleased Perroffski to honour. He now invited me to dinner ; and, for the first time since my arrival in Russia, I found myself at table with one of the fair sex. My delight was very great ; for the lady of the house was really a charming person, and did the honours with much grace and propriety. On my expressing my weariness at so long a separation from such social intercourse, she promised to show me the beauty of Orenburgh ; and accordingly, two days subsequently, I found myself at a ball, at which attended the greater number of the fair ones of the place. My wound prevented me from dancing, but there was sufficient enjoyment in contemplating a scene, to me the most fascinating in the world. I sat myself in a corner, and indulged in comparisons of the present with the past. I thought of the filthy black tent, the sheep-skin garments, and their colonies, the buxom old lass of ninety-five, and

her bon-bons ; and again I fixed my eyes upon some graceful young creature, dressed like a lily flower, and moving like a breeze of spring, scattering delight wherever she came ; and I asked myself, if these were indeed a reality, or some vision sent to tantalize me with the promise of impossible happiness. So slowly do fashions circulate from Paris through our Indian empire, and so long had I been banished from civilized society, that I mistook the dress for some Russian costume, and gave it my warmest admiration. In good sooth, I was dazzled as much as I was delighted ; and although, I doubt not, my outward bearing was sufficiently demure, my heart laughed exultingly at the change which it had pleased Heaven to effect in my condition in the space of a few short hours.

The Englishman was, of course, rather a monster at Orenburgh. One or two of my acquaintance were anxious to know my opinion of all I saw, and whom I considered the most lovely of the group. Not reflecting that the judgment of a stranger on such occasions becomes authority, I incautiously gave utterance to mine. In an instant it was buzzed from ear to ear, until it reached her at whom it pointed, and who, I thought, did not lose anything of her charms for the blush with which she rewarded it. The circumstance was the more vexatious, because she was a married lady, whose fortune was made, and a very lovely girl was present, to whom, by all laws of courtesy, such a compliment was due. The ladies had no prudery, but were ready to converse without introduction, justly considering, as is too little considered in England, the presence of any gentleman at the house of their entertainer, sufficient guarantee for

his respectability. I was unfortunately too little aware of this circumstance to profit much by it. The quadrilles, as is too generally the case in Calcutta, were played in jig time. The effect, of course, was very miserable. The grace of a Thalia would not stand the test of such barbarism. To me there is something so poetical, so harmonising, so heart-expanding (Dil kooshaud) in the graceful movements of the dance, that, were I a legislator, I would cultivate and encourage the recreation, as the vehicle of moral refinement. But the dance should not be a slovenly crowd of indifferent and ungraceful shamblers ; the one half too conceited, and the other too clumsy, to thread the mazes of the figure with decorum. Neither should the sounds which set them in motion be such as are played to parched peas for a similar purpose ; they should be harmonious and in measured time, so that the mind and the feet should be swayed by the same impulse, and the dance, instead of fatiguing, should refresh and exhilarate both soul and body ; and each performer, as he looked at the other, should behold the most noble of the works of his Creator in the most amiable and beautiful of its aspects.

A day was now fixed for my visit to the district. The carriage of Peroffski was placed at my disposal, in spite of many a desperate effort of mine to purchase ; and had I permitted it, the same generous hand had paid all the expenses of my journey. Thus did the noblest and most generous of opponents (for I had come to traverse and disconcert the whole system of his ambition) lavish upon me the affectionate attentions of a brother. Much do I regret, that he prohibited the publication of the particulars of this

trip ; for I have nothing to say, but that which reflects honour on his country and people. And the gold and platina mines, and the fabric of arms at Zlataoost, in Siberia, are objects of curiosity and interest to the whole world. Yet, despite this prohibition, must I for a moment dwell upon the graceful attentions, the frank hospitality, the kind offices of the Russians whom I met with in this journey ; and the proof afforded me, that Russia has in the hearts of her children, even in the wilds of Siberia, ores more precious than the gold and platina of her Oorahlian mines. I would a moment linger, in remembrance of the heartfelt happiness, which, wounded, dispirited, worn out with suffering, mental and bodily, I enjoyed in my Siberian home. And, if the families of Anossoff and Niesteroffski, can at all forgive this public mention of their names, they will, I trust, pardon also the faintness of the tribute. The name, indeed, of Colonel Anossoff,* is public property, and well known in the world of science, which is under important obligations to him.

The few days I spent with these friends, have become an epoch in my existence. I wandered with them through the beautiful woods, that overshadow their artificial lake ; I drove with them through the wide valleys of the Oorahl ; where the rich green of the grass was almost lost, in the brighter tints of the wild flowers of Siberia. I explored with them the mineral treasures of the mountains, and I returned to their happy and peaceful abode, to learn the sports

* Colonel Anossoff, of the engineer corps of the imperial army, and master of the fabric of arms at Zlataoost, is the reviver of the art of damascening cast steel.

and amusements of Russia, or to hang breathless upon her rich and exquisite melodies, or to admire the strain of genuine poetry, which forms the burthen of her songs. And the Englishman, the stranger, became in a few hours an adopted member of the family, and each endeavoured to make him forget past suffering, and weary banishment, by the most graceful and affectionate attentions. My heart, in the abundance of its bliss, grew young once more. It resumed its existence at the point last marked, by the presence of kindred and the privilege of home.

In the midst of all this enjoyment, my heart rebuked me for lavishing so much emotion upon any soil, but that of my birth. I felt a species of regret, that the freshness of the contrast between barbarous, and civilized existence should be taken off, ere I could reach England.

The unsettled life I led in Russia, prevented me from collecting, as I had desired, any number of her gems of music and poetry. The state of my hand did not admit of notes or of transcripts : so that my store is meagre and ill-selected. I shall insert here but one translation of a ballad, the music of which has often enchanted me. I will not do it the violence of a versification, and must apologize for any errors, into which my ignorance of the Russian tongue may have betrayed me—

When o'er the blue Ocean, mists are falling,
And melancholy broods o'er the gay heart,
Can Ocean shake off his cloudy mantle,
Will the mist vanish from the breast?
'Tis not a star, that shines o'er the wold,
On the plain a fire is burning,
At the blaze is spread a silken carpet;
On the carpet a Warrior reposes.

With a kerchief he presses his mortal wound,
 And staunches the life-blood of a hero :
 By the hero stands a stately horse ;
 With his hoof he is pawing the damp turf ;
 He surely is addressing the hero.

“ Rise, rise, thou noble knight ;
 Saddle, saddle, thy faithful steed,
 I will serve thee with zeal and truth ;
 I will bear thee to our land,
 To the father, the mother, the clansmen,
 To the lovely infants, the young wife.”

Deeply sighed the noble warrior ;
 Heaves his broad chest ;
 His pale hands are falling ;
 His mortal wound bursts open ;
 Out gushes the hot blood :—
 And thus he his war-steed addresses.

“ My steed, my steed, my noble steed,
 Companion of my fortunes,
 Sharer of my wanderings,
 Depart thou alone, to our country ;
 Give greeting to my father, my mother,
 My sweet children, my clansmen ;
 And say to my young widow,
 That I have espoused another wife.
 With her I have received in dowry, the wide field,
 The keen sabre was our go-between,*
 And the temper'd arrow laid me at rest.”

From this very imperfect and unworthy translation, some idea may be gathered of the spirit of the ballads of Russia, expressed in a masculine yet melodious language, and married to some of the most touching of the daughters of song.

What follows is not Russian, and perhaps requires some apology for insertion at this place. But, it is always easy to skip over poetry if it be unwelcome, and the prospect before me does not afford much hope of leisure or opportunity for the collection and publication of such trifles, in the usual form of a separate volume. I rather publish it here, because I gave away a copy of it in Russia.

* Srakhal, a negotiator of marriages.

To ———

I see thee, when my soul is glad,
 All radiant in thy youth's array .
 A sun-gleam in a fairy glade,
 Unfolding each coy flower of May :
 And as thy fairy footsteps play,
 And at their touch, peace, promise spring,
 I hear my raptur'd spirit say,
 Oh! Beauty is a joyous thing.

Living, moving, thinking, feeling,
 As beauteous Creatures move, feel, live :
 Like a sweet chord of melody, stealing
 O'er drooping hearts, fresh life to give ;
 And grace from Discord's self derive,
 And sunshine o'er despondence fling :
 Ah! Fame may flatter, Power deceive,—
 But Beauty is a blissful thing.

I see thee, in another hour,
 When, o'er my soul dark shadows grow,
 A fair, but ah! how fragile flower,
 Bent, e'en by gales that gentlest blow.
 O'er all, Decay his dust shall throw :
 O'er Bright and Dark shall gloom Death's wing ;
 And thou?—Avaunt dire shapes of woe!
 Oh! Beauty is a mournful thing.

I see thee, when Death's thrall to end,
 The snow-drop coy, Hope's flow'r, is springing ;
 When streams their icy fetters rend,
 And to the crash, rocks, woods are ringing :
 And Hope, o'er Death her anthem singing,
 "A balsam blooms for every sting!"
 Time's wither'd arm the dart is flinging ;
 But *Beauty* is a deathless thing.

I see thee, when the Voice of Night
 O'er the hush'd gale is fainting, dying :
 Then gushing, with a fountain's might ;
 The echoes of past joys replying :
 And o'er her first-born's urn is sighing
 Young Hope :—and stars delight to fling
 Their tender beams, around *thee* vying :—
 Oh! Beauty is a hallowed thing.

And ah! in visions of the night
Whom, whom doth Fancy paint, but thee?
Least mortal then: thy Beauty's light
Like Hesper's, o'er the empurpled sea
Of Siren-haunted Italy!—
Lend, lend, sweet Dreams, your spirit-wing!
Of Heav'n ye breathe; to Heav'n ye flee!
And Beauty is a heavenly thing.

On returning from this journey amongst beautiful scenery, and objects of extreme curiosity and interest, I found a letter from Perroffski to General Rikkasowski, begging me to hasten to the capital. I was not tired of Orenburgh; yet, it may be readily believed, was not sorry to resume my route northward. I had sent through Perroffski a letter to my friends in England, briefly narrating my escape and well-being, and this letter providentially reached them before any of the reports of my death, with which, immediately afterwards, the public prints were filled. My most embarrassing concern regarded the disposal of my people. As my return to Orenburgh was extremely improbable, I wished them to be sent to Astrakhan, and there embarked for Astrabad; and Perroffski had promised so to dispose of them; but his absence rendered the measure for the present impracticable; as in the thousand distractions which occupied him at his departure, he had forgotten to issue the necessary orders; and the hearts of my unhappy people died within them. Their position at Orenburgh was extremely irksome and disheartening to them. They were not allowed to converse with Asiatics. They understood neither the habits nor the language of Russia, nor had an idea of the geography of that part of the world. To leave them under such circumstances was very miserable. To take them all to St. Petersburg was impossible. I

had not funds for the purpose, and it would have rendered their return to their homes doubly difficult. Nothing could now be done: for Rikkasowski could not act without distinct orders from Perroffski. I therefore gave each a sum of money sufficient for all expenses back, and desired Summud Khaun to divide amongst them whatever had escaped the hands of our spoilers, or been since returned.

Their quarters lay at some distance from mine, and next door to a large building, in which upwards of a hundred of the captives of Khiva were confined. These men, by some means, got intelligence that I had come to Russia to effect their release: so that, as I passed their prison, they thronged the windows and doors to gaze upon me and salute me. My promise to Perroffski prevented me from even returning their greeting with a look; but my servants sometimes met them, and then much courtesy was interchanged. Poor fellows! my hope of effecting their deliverance was not very sanguine, but I had no cause for despair, and their interest in my movements would have inspired me with fresh zeal, had I needed it.

Of the buildings of Orenburgh generally, I have little to say: many are of wood. The finest is the staff office, which occupies a side of the principal square. The square, on Sunday evenings, presents a delightful spectacle—the entire female population of Orenburgh in holiday attire. The effect is that of an immense flower-garden, every blossom of which is instinct with life. The town is generally neat; far beyond the usual pretensions of towns so distant from the capital. The population has been estimated at 2,268.* I should have made it three times that

* Schnitzler, "Tableau Statistique."

amount. Its position, on a very unsettled frontier, is important, and it is one of the avenues of commerce with Tartary. I found that every preparation was on foot for a renewal of the invasion the ensuing year. Reconnoitering and surveying parties occupied the ground to be passed, and troops were marching down to supply casualties in the army. At the same time, not much reliance was to be placed upon the information I could collect; ignorant as I was of the language, and instructed as were all I met, to give me a particular view of the subject. The utmost estimate of the late invading force did not exceed 10,000. But at Orenburgh, arrangements were doubtless made for following up this vanguard, and taking possession of the country, as it was conquered. The idea of my mission succeeding was derided by the most intelligent. It had become, they said, an imperative necessity to complete what had been begun. Otherwise, the Kirgheez of the southern steppes, the Bâshkirs of their own territories, an unsettled Muhummudan tribe, and several other disaffected clans would rise against the Government. I had my own thoughts, but said nothing. I found here an English civil engineer, setting up a steam engine for supplying the town with water. Several others are buried in the eastern parts of the district. It is a custom of the Russians to employ Englishmen to set up their engines; and when these are set in motion, to discard the English for a German engineer, who receives smaller wages.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Departure from Orenburgh — Samara — Summud Khaun, a Sample of the Afghaun Character — Travelling in Russia — My very limited Means of ascertaining the Condition of the People — Prisoners of Khiva — Vladimir — Face of the Country — Forest — Arrival at Moscow — Impressions — Trimness of Moscow.

TAKING leave of Orenburgh, I once more mounted the travelling carriage, with young Pekoffski as my companion. General Perroffski had volunteered to permit his services, and sundry reasons induced me to approve of the arrangement, although not fond in general of travelling in company. In the first place, I esteemed and liked Pekoffski, and knew that I was pleasing him, in carrying him with me; and in the second place, being aware of the cautious system of the Russian Government, I thought that Perroffski might incur censure if he suffered me to travel alone. The country from Orenburgh to Samara is a steppe, covered with the richest pasture; the ground slightly undulating. It afterwards becomes a little more diversified; but as I could not take notes, my remembrance of features is not very distinct. At Samara

we crossed the magnificent Volga, which, take it all in all, though far less grand than some of our Indian streams, is the most beautiful river I have seen. It is here of great breadth, about half a mile, although Samara is 800 miles from its estuary. The colour of the water is a dull red, such as it might receive from iron clay. The right bank rises into woody hills; on the left, stands the white and pretty town of Samara, with a variety of small craft anchored at its foot. The depth of the water was considerable, and I observed no symptoms of great and sudden increase or diminution of volume, such as the banks of Indian rivers exhibit.

The Volga is, in one respect, the most wonderful river in the world; for it is navigated from its very source to its termination, *i.e.* a distance of about 3,000 miles, connecting St. Petersburg by the most magnificent of highways with Astrakhan and Durbund; so that sturgeon are caught at Oorahlsk, floated down the Oorahl and up the Volga, and landed alive in the capital for the Imperial table; having travelled a distance of about 4,000 miles.

Samara was the first town upon this road, in the space of about 250 miles. I put up at the principal inn, where I was entertained by a musician, playing upon a species of lute having a dozen or more strings, and formed like the Seringa of India, although played by the fingers, and not by the bow. Nizaum had, until leaving Orenburgh, been constantly with me, and had accompanied me in my perambulation of the district; I thought it imprudent to carry any of my suite farther. But when I went to take leave of them, I found them so utterly disheartened at their forlorn position, in a land of strangers, that, after

many objections, I yielded to their earnest solicitation, that one of them should accompany me. They thought I should be thus less likely to forget them. To take Nizaum, was inconvenient in the extreme. He contrived to sleep so soundly on the coach-box, that the Russian servant who sat with him, and who owed him a grudge, threw overboard all his clothes one after another, and he returned in the most forlorn predicament. I thought, too, that he had had his share of sight-seeing; and that Summud Khaun might, if I could arrange it, return from St. Petersburg, with an order from Government, and convey the whole party back to Heraut. Summud, although utterly useless to me as an attendant, excepting in guarding my despatches, when I for a moment removed them from my person, could take much better care of himself, and had his wits always on the alert. He proved to me a most vexatious accompaniment, and an enormous expense; but his strongly marked character, his immovable prejudices, his novel and ingenious estimate of causes and effects, afforded at times great amusement to others as well as to myself. And then Summud Khaun had the manners, and the feelings of an Afghaun gentleman of the lower class. And although he could not read, his mind was stored with anecdote, and quotations from the Persian poets, which he could apply with much effect.

He was an Afghaun, as true a child of Israel as can to this day be found in Jerusalem. The same his pride in family and nation, his inveterate prejudice, his obstinacy, his self-sufficiency, his abstract love of noble sentiments, his want of disinterestedness to give them application. He was one of those who had stood

in Heraut a siege of ten months, against an army of 40,000, and a powerful artillery, something of an approximation to the siege of Jerusalem. And he was one of that nation, who are to this day, after fifty contests, less subdued than ever, yet of whom any one can be bought, by golden arguments, to sell his brother or his king.

Travelling in Russia, to one careless of food and luxury, is pleasant enough. The sky above, is generally serene in summer; the heat is seldom excessive. The roads in summer are oftener good than bad, and, although the carriages are not so easy as our post-chaises, yet the horses get over the ground in better style than the horses of France. There are some especial annoyances, however, and one of these is detention at the post-houses, which often exceeds an hour; the other is the system of harnessing horses three, four, or five abreast, by lashing a pole on either side to the splinter bar. Of course the outer horses amuse themselves throughout the journey, with sending into the traveller's face, huge clods from their heels, of clay, mud, dung and other raw materials, of which the carriage is chock full at the close of the stage. If the road be very dry, dust is the principal of the donations. Now, as I had four persons in the vehicle, beside luggage, I could not get on with fewer than five or six horses, which were harnessed three abreast, and thus, on reaching the dusty and more beaten road, I was obliged to alight at every post-house to wash away the dust of that stage. The vehicle also being open, extremely long in the pole, and low in the wheel, the dust of the front wheel, when the body reached it, was just high enough in the air to curl into the vehicle. It will be readily

believed that I do not speak of this portion of the road when I couple it with pleasure. It was scarcely endurable, but, in a chariot, I should have escaped nearly all this pillory. I am rather alluding to my excursion into the district, over smooth roads, little travelled, and generally moistened by showers.

At the entrance of each Russian village, stands a large cross, often bearing the effigy of Jesus Christ. The cross has, at the point where the feet were nailed, a small cross-bar, which is fixed obliquely. The Russians believe, that one foot was elevated above the other. There is often, in addition to this cross, a kind of altar, or covered stand, containing images of the Virgin Mother, etc., and also standing on the road side at the entrance.

On entering the village, a stranger is struck with a number of little pictures, of which each house has one at the corner, of some implement for extinguishing fire; one is a hatchet, another a bucket, a third a hook upon a pole, a fourth a ladder, etc. Each house is bound to keep up, and supply on demand, the instrument of which his house bears the picture, and the most illiterate can tell, by a glance at the picture, what he is to demand of the owner of each several house. This precaution is the more necessary, that the houses are constructed almost universally of wood; towns alone containing buildings of masonry. These wooden houses are sold in the market, ready made; I mean, that they are carried bodily thither for sale, all the parts being numbered. The walls are of trunks of trees, squared inside, and planed at their junction, piled one above the other, and braced together where the ends cross. No material affords so wide scope for picturesque effect in architecture as wood.