

tage that standeth firm, than the tower which tottereth to its fall. Will, then, my brother hear reason?—cast away the cross from thy breast—bind the turban upon thy brow—and behold! thou shalt be as a prince among our people.”

“Peace, blasphemer!—I spit at thee—I despise—I defy thee!—I, a worshiper of the living Jehovah, shall I debase myself to the camel-driver of Mecca? Peace! begone!” He turned his face to the wall, folded his arms upon his chest, and was silent. No entreaties, no threats of torment, no promises of mercy, could induce him again to open his lips. After a while the Imaum arose, quitted the cell—and the warrior was again alone. But a harder trial was before him: the prison opened, and a form entered—a flower bowing its graceful head to the breath of evening—of a gazelle bounding over the unshaken herbage—of a dove gliding on the wings of the morning! In truth she was lovely. Her jetty hair braided above her transparent brow, and floating in a veil of curls over her shoulders—her large eyes swimming in liquid languor, and, above all that charm,

“The mind, the music breathing from her face,”

her form more sylph-like than the maids Europe can boast yet, combined to make up a creature resembling rather an houri of Mahomet’s paradise, than

“One of Earth’s least lovely daughters.”

For a moment the Templar gazed, as if he doubted whether he was not looking upon one of those spirits which are said to have assailed, and almost shaken, the sanctity of many a holy anchorite. His heart, for the first time in many years, throbbed wildly—he bowed his head and prayed fervently; nor did he again raise his eyes, till a voice, as harmonious as the breathing of a lute, addressed him in the *lingua Franca*. “If the sight of his hand-maiden is offensive to the eyes of the Nazarine, she will depart as she came, in sorrow.”

The soldier lifted up his eyes and saw her bending over him with so sad an expression of tenderness, his heart melted within him, and his answer was courteous and even kind—“I thank thee, dear lady, I thank thee for thy good will, though it can avail me nothing; but wherefore does one so fair—it may well be, so happy—as thou art, visit the cell of a condemned captive.”

“Say not condemned! Oh, say not condemned! Thy servant is the bearer of life, and freedom, and honor. She saw thy manly form, she looked upon thy undaunted demeanor, and she loved thee—loved thee to distraction—would follow thee to the ends of earth—would die to save thee—*has* already saved thee, if thou wilt be saved! Rank, honor, life, and love—”

“Lady, listen! For ten long years I have not lent my ear to the witchery of woman’s voice! Ten years ago I was the betrothed lover of a maid; and, I had well nigh said, as fair as thou art. She died! and left me desolate. I have fled from my native land; I have devoted to my God the feelings which I once cherished fondly for your fair sex. I could not give thee love in return for thy love—nor would I stoop to feign that which I felt not, although it were to win, not temporal, but eternal life!”

“Oh! dismiss me not!” she sobbed, as she threw her white arms around his neck, and panted on his bosom. “Oh, dismiss me not thus! I ask no vows; I ask no love. But be mine; let my country be your country, my God your God, and you are safe and free!” Slowly she turned away, wailing as if her heart would burst—long after the last being who would show a sign of pity for his woes, or of admiration for his merits, had gone forth never again to return. All night the heartfelt prayer of the Crusader ascended to the throne of his master, and often a petition for his lovely, deluded visitor. Morning came at last, and the rude tribes of the remotest regions, Arab and Turkoman, mounted on steeds of matchless symmetry, mingling their dark baracans with the brilliant arms and gorgeous garbs of the Soldan’s Court, were marshaled across the valley in front of the Crusader’s dungeon, and on the slopes at either side, and he was led forth by his guards to meet his fate. In this amphitheater stood the scathed trunk of a thunder-stricken palm tree. To this natural stake was the captive led. One by one his garments were torn asunder, till his muscular form and splendid proportions were revealed in naked majesty to the wondering multitude. Once, before he was attached to the fatal tree, a formal offer of life and liberty and high office in the Moslem Court was tendered to him, on condition of his embracing the faith of the prophet—and refused by one contemptuous wave of his hand.

He was bound firmly to the stump, with his hands secured far above his head; at fifty paces distant stood a group of dark fierce warriors, with bended bows and well-filled quivers, evidently waiting for the signal to pour in their arrows on his unguarded body. He gazed upon them with a countenance unmoved and serene. His eyes did not long dwell on the unattractive sight; some minutes had elapsed when the shrill voice of the muezzin was heard, proclaiming the hour of matin prayer in his measured chant: “There is no God but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet!”