

way he ventured to try that; but he had not uttered more than two or three words when one of the robbers drove the butt of his rifle into his side.

They had proceeded for some five minutes and in a direction at a right angle to the road when one of the captors cried:

'Giavor, bend your head lest it may strike against the rock.'

He obeyed. By the immediate echoing of their footsteps, and the close, damp air that struck against his face, my friend knew that they were entering a cavern. He clinched his teeth, and made a desperate but hopeless attempt to free himself, but the bonds held firm. The harsh, threatening voice of one of the robbers brought him to his senses. He raised his head, and in so doing he struck it sharply against the low hanging rock. He writhed with the sudden pain.

'Ho, giavor,' one said; 'that is not a good way to be killed. Leave that matter to us. No need to fracture your skull. I swear by the tomb of Mohammed that we will not make you suffer so. We know a better way than that. Stop! let me untie your eyes.'

My friend opened his eyes, and shuddered inwardly. The flame of a candle threw a dim light to a little distance, beyond which impenetrable darkness yawned. One of the robbers, who looked graver and more savage than the rest, and who had the appearance of being their chief, took possession of the saddle-bags. He removed the tobacco, and, holding them upside down, poured the money out upon the ground. At sight of the copper, silver, and shining gold coins of various size and value they looked at one another exultantly, while the owner of them all shuddered with silent, hopeless horror as the grim meaning of his fearful situation crept over him.

The chief set about dividing the money into four piles. The task was a long and tiresome one, and for some time he engaged in it silently, while the other three attentively watched his hands lest he should make a false division. When half through his work, the chief paused and sat erect to take a moment's rest, and ordered one of his comrades to bring him a little water. His thirst satisfied, he put the empty cup to one side and cast a careless glance upon the victim's face. A look of surprise swept over his own. He stretched his neck and scrutinized the captive carefully, then recoiled with an involuntary cry.

His comrades, astonished beyond measure at this strange behaviour, stared speechlessly from him to their prisoner and from the prisoner to the heaps of coin. My friend could make nothing of either the chief's conduct or their glaring looks. He looked askance now at the leader, now at the other three.

At last the chief broke the silence with words still more astounding:

'Comrades, put the money in the saddle-bags again.'

The three robbers looked blankly at each other.

'What for?' asked one, puzzled and not a little loath to obey.

'Shall you not divide it now?' asked another.

'Do what I say; make haste,' rejoined the chief gravely. 'I have reasons of my own.'

Silently they went about doing as he bade them. The money was returned to the bags, and the tobacco was placed on top. Then the chief took out his knife, advanced to the prisoner, and swiftly cut the cords that had bound his ankles, saying as he did so:

'Rise, my friend; take your money and your horse; and go in peace. I am sorry that we treated you so roughly. Forgive us. I wish that I had looked at your face before.'

The young man could not believe in the evidence of eyes or ears.

'What do you mean?' inquired he finally.

'Let the money and the horse be yours; only spare my life, that is all.'

'Stop!' said the chief; 'do you not recognize me? Do you not remember that five days ago you gave a 'guftè' to a man in Bagdad? That 'guftè' now saves your money, your horse, and your life. We are robbers. We do not shrink from plundering and killing; but neither do we repay the kindness of others with ill treatment. I am the man to whom you gave that 'guftè.' I was hungry then; it served me well. I will now return kindness for kindness. May Allah protect you!'

The comrades of the speaker, who had been unwilling to give up a booty that amounted to a small fortune, now heartily agreed to all their chief had said, declaring that in his place they should have acted similarly.

My friend looked searchingly at the chief in a vain endeavor to recognize him; and finally said:

'I remember that five days ago I gave to a man standing by, one of my 'guftès'; but I do not recognize him in you.'

'But I recognize you very well. The Koran tells that a thankless man's punishment will be the greatest. May Allah forbid us showing such a spirit! It is against the commands of Mohammed and against the honor of the robbers.'

The young man showed no further surprise after being assured of the reason of the kindness. He expressed his utmost gratitude, and urged them to have at least a part of the money; but this they steadfastly refused. At last he pressed them to take the tobacco for themselves, and this they finally agreed to.

The chief rose, and, turning to his comrades, said:

'Be quick; let us mount and escort this young man to the town where he is going, lest he be captured again and robbed. There are many bandits on the way. Once there, he can join a caravan and journey on in safety.'

Accordingly the robbers accompanied their late prisoner until he reached the outskirts of the next town. There they bade him farewell, and with friendly wishes departed. As they disappeared in the gloom, my friend muttered to himself the words of the ancient sage:

'Cast thy bread upon the waters,
For thou shalt find it after many days.'

*'Guftè': A popular dish in Turkey and Persia, round in shape, made principally of ground wheat and chopped meat.

Be as careful of the books you read as of the company you keep; for your habits and character will be as much influenced by the former as by the latter.—Paxton Hood.

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The Member That was not Dropped.

(Elizabeth Patterson, in 'Wellspring'.)

'I move we drop the following names from our roll,' and the secretary read off four or five names, pausing a moment after each.

'I second the motion,' came from somewhere in the rear of the room.

But at that moment a boy near the door rose impetuously. 'Wait just a minute,' he said; 'we don't want to make any mistake. Suppose we drop the first four, as they have moved away, and hold on to Lem Briggs a while longer.'

'He hasn't attended a meeting in over two months,' objected the secretary; 'and the last time he was spoken to by a look-out committee, he said he didn't know as he cared to come any more. We can't carry names that way.'

'But I think there must be some mistake, or —or misunderstanding,' insisted the boy near the door. 'Lem Briggs isn't one to speak so slightly of our meetings. I know him a little. He was in my class at school before he got a job in the factory. Sometimes I think we are not quite cordial enough. The mill-district fellows feel that we do not treat them as we do the rest of the town, and I—well, I believe they are half right. This ought not to be. In the society we should drop everything like that. I believe Lem Briggs is a fellow we ought to know better, to be proud of, to be glad to associate with,—and I believe that if he can be brought into touch with us, he will help the society. He supports his mother and the children now, and he is working hard for an education. Even if it were different, if he were shiftless and weak, it would be our duty to try and lift him up. That's what our society is for, not to thrust out, but to draw in. That a fellow is obliged to live in a cheap place and work should not influence us, nor the fact that he has not had our advantages for an education. I move that we hold on to Lem Briggs a while longer, and that some of us go to him not to warn him that he will be expelled if he does not attend, but to convince him that we really want him to come.'

'I second the motion,' came from the same voice in the back part of the room.

'And I move that our friend Bert be the one to see Lem Briggs,' added the secretary.

Bert Gardiner was very busy at this time, for, hoping to be able to enter college in the fall, he was giving all his spare moments to a few special studies in which he felt himself deficient. But the next day he arranged to borrow a couple of hours from himself and to make it up by extra-hard study.

He did not know exactly where Lem lived, only that it was in one of the cheaper tenements of the mill district. From there he hoped to be directed to the mill in which Lem worked.

He was especially fortunate, for as he went down one of the narrow alleys, he met the object of his quest face to face. Lem was in his shirt sleeves, his arms bare, and there were dark streaks upon his hands and face from the machines, among which he had been working. In his hands he carried a case of bobbins. Evidently he was on his way from one mill building to another. When he saw Bert he flushed slightly, and stood aside to let him pass. But Bert stopped also.

'Hello, Lem!' he exclaimed, cordially; 'you are just the fellow I want to see. You remember those books on mathematics you wanted to buy from Philips, and he asked too much? Well, I've got a set that I'm just through with, and some more on the same subject. If you can find use for them, you are