

was still open and at full cock lying on the floorboards of the canoe. If I got out, they would see it, and surely would scramble for the prize. Every time I put my hand inside to stow the pistol away out of sight, they tried to wrench my paddle from the other hand. One hand was, therefore, needed for the paddle, but the other could not be spared from its duty of patting their wet greasy heads, which affectionate caress seemed to be an unwonted but most successful mode of propitiation.

The water mob of swimmers closed nearer and waxed larger as more crossed the river. Their curiosity was boundless, and every hand tried to undo my apron or to get somehow under the deck. Their patience was on the ebb, and while I considered what to do next, I felt the Rob Roy heaving this way and that, and then gradually, and despite all my smiling but earnest remonstrance, the canoe began to rise out of the water with all her crew inside. Loud shouts welcomed her ascent up the bank as a dozen dark-skinned bearers lifted the canoe and her captain, sitting inside, with all due dignity graciously smiling, and so they carried her fairly up the steep bank and over the smooth sward some hundred yards towards the tent of their Arab sheikh.

Having now a fair stage scene around the central figures, I came forward slowly, hat in hand, and bowed to the sheikh very low, and shook hands with him heartily, and told him I was a wandering Briton on my way to the lake, and I would rest at his tent until the sun was cooler.

The crowd was attentive and silent. Men in the rear beat off the boys, and the women went behind the tent and peered through the matting, so that a whole regiment of feminine noses was ranged over the little Rob Roy, now reclining safe on a carpet. The sheikh retired to consult with his cabinet. I asked for two men to keep order, and he gave them, and desperately tyrannical they were upon the mob. After an hour, about mid-day, the chief and his ministry came back, and ordered "silence," and said, "You cannot go to the lake." I said, "I *must*." He answered it was "impossible." I said I must go to see that. He gave me the very smallest wink that could be given by a man's eye, and I answered by one a little smaller. Then I knew he could be convinced—*i. e.*, bribed, and so finally, at any rate, I would have my own way.

The tent was cleared again. About twenty women came forward in a group, and the sheikh's wife, quite refined in manner and very intelligent. I behaved to her as if she were an English lady. She was lost in amazement when I exhibited my little bed, my lamp, compass and cuisine. She looked with kind and feminine interest upon me when I said I was losing all the fine sunshine of the day, a prisoner alone among strangers. She fetched her husband by himself, and, under cover of showing him the inside of the canoe, I managed to let him see a gold Napoleon in my open hand, and with a nudge to his elbow for emphasis to the sight. He whispered, "Shwei, shwei" (softly, quietly). I knew I had bought him then. The "council of ancients" came with their final decision, "You can not go to-day, but must have a horse to-morrow. There are reeds (rab) quite impassable." I explained how the canoe went through reeds in the lake of Hijaneh. "Yes," they answered, "but there is water in Hijaneh, now here the reeds are so," and they placed a sort of hedge of sticks at the bow of my canoe to explain.

I then began to amuse them by making sketches of men and horses; next I gave a lesson in geography by placing nut-shells at various points to represent "Sham" (Damascus), Musr (Cairo), El Khuds (Jerusalem), and Bahr (the lake of Hooleh), and at last placed one little shell at the extreme end of the tent to represent England so far away. They exclaimed loudly in astonishment at my long journey to see them. At intervals several of these men kept boring me for "bakshish." One was an old deaf, cunning fellow, who whispered the word in my ear. Another, a sharp lad, who said he had seen the "Ingleez" at Beyrout, spoke incessantly to me by signs only, and

he did it admirably. I was much interested in the clever variations of his noiseless pictures, always culminating in the same subject, "bakshish." A third applicant used no such delicate coyness in the matter, but merely roared out the hateful word before all, and louder every time.

No one had as yet offered me any food. This gross neglect (never without meaning among the Arabs) I determined now to expose, and so to test their real intentions, my cuisine was soon rigged up for cooking, and I asked for cold water. In two minutes afterwards the brave little lamp was steaming away at high pressure with its merry hissing sound. Every one came to see this. I cut thin slices of the preserved beef soup, and while they were boiling, I opened my salt-cellar. This is a snuff-box, and from it I offered a pinch to the sheikh. He had never before seen salt so white, and, therefore, thinking it was sugar, he willingly took some from my hand and put it to his tongue. Instantly I ate up the rest of the salt, and, with a loud, laughing shout, I administered to the astonished, outwitted sheikh a manifest thump on the back. "What is it?" all asked from him. "Is it sukker?" He answered demurely, "La! meleh!" (No, it's salt!) Even his home secretary laughed at his chief. We had now eaten salt together, and in his own tent, and so he was bound by the strongest tie, and he knew it.

The soup was now ready and boiling hot. They all examined my little metal spoon, and my carving-knife went round (it never came back). I gave every one of them, seated in a circle about me, one spoonful of the boiling soup, which, of course, scalded each man's mouth, and made him wince bitterly, yet without telling the next victim. Now they had all partaken of food with their prisoner. How much they relished it, I don't know. All went out, and I took this opportunity to stand near the sheikh, and try to slip the Napoleon into his hand. He was quite uncertain what to do when the gold tickled his palm. It was utterly against their code of chief and people for him to take this secret personal gift from a stranger, yet he could not resist the temptation. His hand pushed mine away, but with a very gentle indignation. Soon his fingers played among mine as the yellow coin kept turning about, half held by each of us, unseen behind our backs. Two of the sheikh's fingers were pushing it away, but then the other three fingers were pulling it in. Finally I felt the coin had left me, and I knew now the sheikh was not only bought but *paid for*. Down went his countenance from that moment, and he slunk away abashed. An hour more of palaver was spent by the seniors, during which time I ate my luncheon heartily and read the *Times*. Then all came back once more except the chief, and the women were rustling behind the mat screens, and a great bustle seemed to say that the verdict was agreed upon. The "foreman" briefly told it—"You are to go to-morrow."

This will never do—but how to reverse the sentence? I was seated on the ground at the time, and I rose very slowly and gravely, until, standing on a little eminence in the tent, and drawing myself up besides as tall as could be, and stretching up my hand as high as possible (and utterly undetermined what I was going to say, and exceedingly tempted to burst into laughter), I exclaimed with my loudest voice only three words, "Bogra?—La!—Ingleez!" (To-morrow—No!—I am English!), and then the orator sung calmly down and went on reading his paper again. In five minutes more a man came to say I might leave at once. But I was not to be shoved off in this way, so I insisted that they must carry my canoe back to the river. The procession, therefore, formed again, with the Rob Roy in the centre, and her captain walking behind, while boys and girls, and especially the people who had not already seen her on the water, all rushed in a crowd to the bank with the same hoarse shouts they had given before, and which we were now more accustomed to hear. All parties pledged their friendship in deep "salaams" of adieu, and we paddled off, rejoicing.

This extract will give an idea of the interest of the book, which we warmly commend to our readers.