

and dog, so loath are these bullheaded Englishmen to deal with one in private, while in the field they care not for the wildest odds, to charge them soundly home if they be ten to one."

As he ceased speaking, the curtain which concealed the entrance of the cabinet was lifted, and the tall form of the stalwart chamberlain was seen, conducting with a watchful eye and his hand on the dudgeon of his broad-pointed dagger, the slight and dusky figure of the spy. "Ha! Malech, my good fellow," exclaimed the Prince, speaking in the *lingua Franca*, as the crusaders called it, a species of Patois, or Argon rather, midway between the French and Oriental languages. "Right glad am I to see you; for sure I am that you bring us news of coming battle. Speak, man, what have you in your wallet?"

The Saracen was, at first sight, as compared with the tall and bulky Europeans, a small slight man; but when you came to examine his figure and his muscular frame more closely, it was apparent that, although bare of flesh, and reduced in fact to a mere mass of bones and brawn and sinew, he was both powerfully and elastically built. He stood about five feet ten inches high, and was proportionately broad-shouldered and strong-limbed. He wore a crimson turban, perfectly plain, without embroidery or fringe, over a close white skullcap, a close-fitting jacket over a large loose shirt, with falling sleeves of coarse white silk, and muslin pantaloons, all gathered at the waist by a red sash, which, contrary to the usual custom of his people, contained neither poniard, knife nor scimitar, nor any semblance of a weapon.

On entering the chamber, he cast his eyes about him for a moment, with a quick anxious look, but it was only for a moment, and instantly assuming a quiet and even downcast look, he made a low obeisance to the Prince after the Oriental fashion.

"I have, most noble Prince," he said, as he arose from the deep genuflection,—*"I have important tidings, and such as in your wisdom you have imagined, shall lead you speedily into the field, where your own valour shall ensure you victory and glory; but,"* and he glanced a side-long look toward Wilford, the stout chamberlain, who, half distrustful, as it seemed, of the spy's real errand, kept a close watch upon his every movement, never withdrawing his hand at all from the hilt of his dudgeon dagger.

"But what?" cried the impatient Prince, as he perceived the hesitation of the messenger. "But what, man? speak—speak out, I say! Mother of God! what fear you?"

"My tidings, noble sir," answered the Saracen, "are of so grave and dangerous importance that I dare hardly trust them to the air even in your single presence, lest any passing breeze should bear them unto ears, which, should they reach, it would be death to me in tortures inconceivable, and ruin to the schemes which most would benefit your valour. Let him beware who tampers with the councils or divines the thoughts of princes. Birds of the air have spoken, nay not dumb living things alone, but stocks and stones have sometimes spoken to betray the secret traitor. Let my lord therefore pardon his faithful slave, that he may not speak into other ears but those which it alone behoves to hear his tidings."

"Wilford," said Edward, instantly, in whose bold nature doubt or suspicion had no portion, "hearest thou not the man—begone, that he may speak without fear, what he beareth it much concerneth us to know and that fully. I know the fellow very well. Begone then, my good friend, and tarry in the knights' hall, out of earshot."

But Wilford bent his knee to the ground, and obeyed not, but spoke in a low and humble voice, "Noble sir, and my right loyal prince and master, I pray you of your grace, if I have ever served you truly at any times heretofore passed—if I have ever merited any favour at your hands, pardon me that I leave you not, nor obey you. Surely my ears are as the ears of my Prince, to hear nothing that he would not have me understand, and my lips as his lips to reveal nothing that he would not have made public. Bethink thee, noble sir, how treacherous and false these infidels be ever unto us of the true faith, holding it no reproach, but honourable cunning rather, and good deed to murder under trust, with cord or bowl or dagger, whom they may not even think to cope with in the field."

"Ha! Wilford," exclaimed Edward, "dost thou fear for my safety—*mine?* and from so slight and base a caiff, as that frail shivering traitor?" and here it should be mentioned that both the baron and the prince spoke in the Norman French, which still was for the most part used as the court tongue in England, and which they believed utterly beyond the comprehension of the infidel, although it might be doubted by the quick sparkling of his small keen eye, and the scornful smile which curled