

for there rose like a veil before the entrance the fine spray of some torrent too far below to send up more than the faintest murmur. Who had removed the bandage I know not ; but, standing sentry-wise at the entrance of the cave, was my enemy himself, still armed with his long piece, and regarding me with an Oriental mingling of fierceness and serenity—nobody who knows the East will charge me with self-contradiction.

I had no fear of murder, even though I was alone with an assassin who, I felt sure, would have the greatest possible pleasure in sending a bullet through me then and there. Were my immediate murder intended, it would have been over ; and I knew enough, by hearsay, of the manners and customs of banditti everywhere to be aware that it would cost my gaoler his own life if he allowed a private quarrel to deprive his company of their ransom. Should I treat him as an acquaintance, or should I ignore our former meeting ? On the whole, I concluded, for prudence sake, to let bygones be bygones, after the manner of Mr. Dwyer when he had knocked somebody down—though in this case things were the other way round.

“What has become of my comrade ?” I asked.

“Ask Shitan, dog of a Saxon !” was all his answer—and an odd one, seeing that I was supposed to be in a Christian land.

“Am I not to see your chief ?” I asked again, with as much good temper as the circumstances allowed.

“I told you to question Shitan—not me, he growled.