

CAPTURE OF THE PASHA'S HAREM.

BY LIEUT. COL. ODELL.

In 1823, the Greeks, in one of their marauding expeditions, captured the entire Harem of the celebrated Cherchid pasha. The instant this affair was made known to Sir Frederick Adam, he sent to negotiate with the captors for their prize, and ransomed them for 10,000 dollars. With the kindest and most delicate attention, Sir Frederick had a house fitted up expressly for the reception of these fair infidels, and had them conveyed to Corfu, and landed in the night unseen by the curious inhabitants. During their residence, the strictest privacy was observed with regard to them: not an individual in the island was allowed to see them, except Lady Adam, and a very few of the ladies of the garrison.

Sir Frederick lost no time in communicating with the pasha, and informed him of all he had done, and the scrupulous care which had been observed respecting the privacy of the ladies of his Harem. The pasha returned the most profuse acknowledgements to Sir Frederick for his kindness and attention, stating the satisfaction he should have in paying the ransom, and requesting Sir Frederick to oblige him by sending them to Lepanto as speedily as possible. Sir Frederick Adam engaged the first merchant brig he was able, and had her fitted up for the reception of its fair freight with such care, that none of the people on board could, by any possibility, catch a glimpse of their passengers. Many of these interesting creatures had ingratiated themselves wonderfully with the ladies, who were allowed to visit them, by their entire artlessness and unsophisticated notions of the world and its ways. One was the favourite of the pasha, and was said to possess great influence over him. She was a native of Circassia, and was called Fatima, and possessed a greater profusion of ornament and rich clothing than the others. Lady Adam described her as the most decidedly beautiful creature she had ever beheld. She had large dark eyes, with a peculiarly soft and pleasing expression, which could not fail to interest any one who looked upon her: her eyelashes were very long and black: her complexion was of the purest white, and her teeth like ivory. She was not more than eighteen years of age, and Lady Adam could not refrain from tears at parting with one so young and so beautiful, about to be secluded forever from a world which she might, under happier circumstances, have adorned.

When the brig was ready for their reception, they were put on board without having been seen by a single individual, excepting the ladies already mentioned, Capt. Anderson, in the Redpole, acted as convoy, and Capt. Gilbert. A. D. C. was sent from Sir Frederick Adam with despatches for the pasha, and to receive the ransom money. I had been

cruising for some time with Anderson, and therefore accompanied him.

We had a most delightful trip from Corfu up the Gulf of Lepanto, where we had orders to deliver up our interesting charge. Some of the Turkish authorities, charged with the orders of his highness, the pasha, were there to receive them. They reiterated the pasha's acknowledgements for the kindness and care with which the ladies had been treated; and the ransom money was told into buckets of water to prevent contagion. The beautiful Fatima, at parting, left two handsome shawls as a remembrance, one for Capt. Anderson, and the other for Captain Gilbert. They were conveyed from the brig so closely enveloped, that not even a figure was discernible; and on their landing were surrounded by a troop of blacks, or guards of the Harem, and conveyed in closed litters to the town.

The Redpole then sailed for Zante, whither Sir Frederick and Lady Adam had gone, to whom the captain gave an account of his mission; and truly delighted they were to hear that their *protégées* had been so kindly received. On our return to Corfu, the following most distressing intelligence awaited us. Scarcely had the two vessels sailed from the Gulf of Lepanto, when the ruthless monster of a pasha, placing no faith in the honour of British officers, and deaf to all remonstrance, caused the whole of these unfortunate creatures, the beautiful and interesting Fatima among the rest, to be tied in sacks, and drowned in the waters of the Gulf! The horror and indignation with which this shocking intelligence was received at Corfu can hardly be described. Not a man but would have gladly volunteered to have burnt Lepanto to the ground, and have hung the dog of a pasha by his own beard. But we were powerless; we had no right to interfere, and were to smother our indignation as we best could. There was many a wet eye in Corfu for the fate of poor Fatima and her luckless companions. But judgment speedily overtook the perpetrator of this most wanton deed of butchery, though it is strange how noble were the last moments of this man of blood!

By some means Cherchid Pasha had incurred the suspicion of the Porte. There is but one way among the Turks of explaining these matters. A Tartar shortly arrived at the head-quarters of the pasha, bearing the imperial firman and the fatal bowstring. The pasha no sooner read the fatal scroll than he kissed it, and bowed his forehead to the earth in token of reverence and submission.

"Do your instructions forbid me to use poison instead of submitting to the bowstring?" calmly asked the pasha of the Tartar.

"His highness may use his own pleasure," answered the Tartar. "I have with me a potent mixture, which, with his highness' permission, I will prepare."