

and the absurdity of any attempt at defence. Having nothing better at command, I commenced a long speech from the *Cid*, accompanied with the appropriate gestures. They listened—they smiled—I watched. So then, with a concluding flourish, I dismounted, and walking straight to the oldest and ugliest of the party, shook him by the hand most cordially. He received my approaches as an ill-tempered cur the pattings of a stranger. But I had stepped into their good graces. They crowded round—the hand-shaking was repeated. They were dining, it seemed, when I came upon them. Re-seating themselves, I was invited to join the repast. God only knows its composition; I was too hungry to be particular. My voracity was so great as to make them merry. One in particular—a one-eyed, and most truculent looking fellow—bestowed uncommon attention upon me. He seized handfuls of every thing before him, and placed them on my platter, grinning like an ugly baboon as he saw them disappear. At last, in derision, he tore the entire shoulder from a roasted lamb, and set it before me. I smiled and winked, after the manner of the *variétés*, and was rewarded by a shout of laughter. A large jar was now produced, containing very tolerable wine. This was handed about, and drunken in such quantities as speedily produced intoxication. Songs were sung, and a scene of wild and violent merriment closed the day. To this I contributed in no small measure: my *chansonnettes* were received with the most unbounded applause. One by one my entertainers dropped at last asleep; to which, after tethering my horse, I at last also gave way.

“On the morrow a kind of council was held. They came to the resolution of questioning me, but the difficulty was to understand each other. Many languages were tried without effect—Turkish, Persian, Tartar; at last Russian. This I understood sufficiently to answer, ‘Was I Russian?’ Two or three dozen dark eyes flashed on me in a most unmistakable manner. ‘No,’ I answered, ‘but an enemy to Russia—a prisoner escaped from their hands.’ ‘Who was I then?’ ‘A Frenchman.’ Here was a pause. At length, ‘a Frenchman’ was repeated in a great variety of tones on all sides. They had never heard of France; but I was an enemy to the detested Russians, that was enough. By great effort and expenditure of words, I contrived to convey some dim ideas to them of our Emperor; and I learned in return, that an enemy of Russia was with them always a friend. It appeared they were about to commit some forage or other on the nearest settlements of that power. I was therefore dismissed for the time, and turned back, with their families and some old men, to the upper valleys of the mountains from which they had emerged.

“By wild, intricate, and all but impassable ways, we slowly ascended. It seemed to me, that none but the wolf or the