

ing on receipt of the two first blows ; I yelled at the third, roared at the fourth, and moaned at each successive one until too weak to utter another cry. Though unable to raise my eyelids the slightest sound was distinctly audible, I did not lose a word of what was said around me. One young brigand said to the king: "He is dead, why further fatigue these men?" Hadgi-Stavros replied: "Do not be afraid, I received sixty blows and danced the *Romaïque* two days after."

Suffering had well nigh paralysed me. They lifted me off the litter, untied the cords and enveloped my feet in compresses of cold water, and, as I was suffering from intense thirst, they made me drink a glass of wine. Wrath and indignation returned simultaneously with consciousness. The feelings of outraged dignity and violated justice breathed into my feeble body a swelling of hatred, revolt and vengeance. Forgetful alike of interest, prudence, future, I gave utterance to all the truths which were stifling me ; a perfect torrent of abuse poured from my lips ; indignation lent me a sort of savage eloquence for the space of a quarter of an hour. I told the King of the Mountains everything that could outrage a man in his pride, in his love, in his dearest sentiments. It would be impossible to repeat all I compelled him to hear, but in vain I watched for any signs of emotion. His behaviour exasperated me. I rose on my wounded feet, and catching sight of a pistol in the belt of one of the brigands I seized, aimed, and fired it off, then fell backwards exclaiming : "I am avenged !"

The king himself raised me. I gazed at him stupefied as profoundly as if I had seen him emerge from the lower regions. He did not appear moved, and smiled tranquilly as an immortal. And yet my ball had hit him, but whether the weapon had been badly loaded, or the powder bad, or whether the shot had slipped on the bone of his skull, it only left a mark on the skin.

The invulnerable wretch seated me gently

on the ground, stooped towards me, and pulling my ear said : "Young man, why do you attempt the impossible? I told you I was ball-proof, and I never lie. Did they not relate to you that Ibrahim had me shot by seven Egyptians and yet did not get my skin. I owe you no grudge, and forgive your little burst of anger. Seeing, however, that all my subjects are not ball-proof, and that you might feel tempted to give way to some other imprudent act, we will apply to your hands the same treatment your feet have just undergone. Nothing hinders us from beginning at once, but in the interest of your health we will wait until to-morrow. Thoughts of the coming event will occupy you meanwhile. Prisoners never know how to employ their time; it was idleness which put these wrong ideas into your head. Let your mind be at rest however, I will heal your wounds so soon as your ransom arrives."

Shaking my fist in the old villain's face, I shrieked : "Miserable man, my ransom will never be paid, *never* ! I asked money from no one ; you will only get my head, and that is valueless. Take it now if it seem good to you ; it will be rendering us both a service, it will spare me two weeks' torture and the disgust of seeing you."

He smiled, shrugged his shoulders and replied : "Tut, tut ! the English ladies will pay. I understand women though I have been living out of the world so long."

"Ah ! you believe that the English ladies paid you ! Yes, they paid you as you deserve to be paid !"

"You are very kind."

"Their ransom will cost you eighty thousand francs, do you hear? Eighty thousand francs out of your own pocket !"

"Do not speak in that way ; any one would think the cane had struck your head."

"I speak nothing but the truth. Do you recollect your prisoners' name?"

"No, but I have it in writing."