

sure we won't wait long. We are ready to move as soon as I get back to camp with these women, and to-morrow we'll be far away."

"How many are there of you? I suppose you must be a hundred, for it would take that many *giaours* to capture a brave man like Hassan Agha. Ah! you Christians are cowards."

"It took only two men to capture and bind Hassan Agha," replied the other, nettled by the remarks of the lad. "The rest of us stood by and laughed. Let the women come along, but do you stay there by that tree and raise your arms, like that. And if you lower them once, my friend over there will shoot." And as he spoke he pointed to a man arrayed like himself who stepped out of the bushes ten yards beyond.

Again the women started on. They were strangely quiet and they did not seem to be overjoyed at their release. Perhaps they did not know into whose hands they had fallen. He would tell them. And so their new guide spoke.

"Women, why don't you speak? We are Armenians; you are among friends again. Lower your veils, for you are free from Moslem rules. Let us see your faces for we have suffered much to set you free. What, no answer? Are you dumb? Are you possessed by a devil? Who of you is Torkom's betrothed? He is waiting for you. No answer still. Then I'll find out for myself." And so saying he stepped up to the last woman in the row and attempted to remove her veil. She held out her arm to urge him off, but curiosity overpowered all other feelings in him. He seized her arm roughly, then dropped it in amazement. It was the sturdy arm of a man. Seizing the robe he dragged it off and there stood revealed a man, fully armed, carrying in one hand a dagger and in the other, by its long hair, the head of a woman. Taken so completely by surprise the Armenian guard was not prepared for the dagger thrust that the other gave, and he fell to bleed to death. At once a sharp report came from the knoll above the path, and the Turk fell also. The others, seeing that their ruse had been discovered, cast off their disguise and came upon the other guard who was hastening up the path. But at the very moment that they fired a gun at him a dozen reports were heard from the knoll and four more Turks fell. The others jumped into the bushes on the other side of the path, but seven of the eight surviving Armenians rushed from their concealment upon the Turks and fought with them fiercely hand to hand. And as they fought the Turks cast in their midst four more heads, the heads of their Armenian slaves.

Having the advantage of numbers and preparedness the Armenians quickly beat down their enemy, leaving a third companion dead. And now as his companions dragged the dead bodies deeper into the underbrush Torkom carefully examined the five faces which he had hoped so long to look upon. He raised by its long black hair the head of his betrothed. He gazed in silence upon the staring eyes and the lips forever still, and then upon the blood that still dropped from the severed neck. Then he bade his men give these five heads Christian burial. But he himself climbed back to the spot where lay his prisoners bound. He drew out his short sword and with a madman's grin upon his face, cut the