

take a part in our council, you would be first to advise me to spare his life, and forego so expensive a vengeance."

He hesitated a moment and I drew my breath.

"But," resumed the king, "I will endeavour to reconcile interest with justice, and chastise the guilty without risking the capital. His punishment will be the finest ornament of your obsequies, and from the height whither your soul has flown you will contemplate with delight the expiatory torment."

I was at a loss to divine what punishment the king had in store for me; my teeth chattered with fear, and the old scoundrel refused to enlighten me as to the torment he destined for me. He had so little sympathy with my anguish that he even compelled me to be present at his lieutenant's funeral.

The corpse was first carefully washed in the stream. The king and his *cafedgi* proceeded to attend to his toilet; they dressed him in a fine linen shirt, cambric shirt, and embroidered silk vest. His damp hair was covered by a cap, and his legs were encased in red silk gaiters and Turkish slippers of Russia leather. In all his life poor Vasile had never been so clean or so well-dressed. During all this time the brigands' orchestra was playing a lugubrious air.

Four brigands set about digging a grave on the site of Madame Simons' tent, on the very spot where Mary Anne had slept. Two others went in search of tapers, which they distributed among the by-standers, I receiving one along with the others. The priest began singing the funeral service, Hadgi-Stavros reciting the responses. When the last prayer had been offered, the king solemnly approached the litter on which the body lay, and kissed it on the lips. One by one the brigands followed his example. I shuddered at the thought that my turn must come, and hid behind such as had already played their part, but the king perceived me

and said: "It is your turn now; proceed, you surely owe him that mark of respect."

Approaching the litter I gazed upon the face whose open eyes seemed to mock me; I stooped and touched his lips. A facetious brigand pressed his hand on the nape of my neck, and my mouth was flattened against those cold lips; I felt the contact of the icy teeth, and rose filled with horror. When the body was lowered into the grave they threw in flowers, a loaf of bread, an apple, and some drops of *Egina* wine, and then filled it hastily. One of the brigands observed that they would require two sticks to form a cross, whereupon Hadgi-Stavros replied: "Be easy, the milord's sticks will be placed on his grave. Then he made a sign to his *chibougdi* who ran to the offices, and returned with two long switches cut from the laurel tree. The king, reading in my eyes an interrogation full of fear and anguish, turned towards me saying:

"For the last few days you have evinced a mania for escape, but I trust that after having received twenty blows on the soles of your feet you will no longer require a guard, and your love of travelling will be calmed for a time. I know the torture of this punishment, to which the Turks subjected me in my youth; it does not kill, but Vasile will hear your shrieks in his grave and be comforted."

On hearing this speech my first idea was to make use of my legs so long as they were still at my disposal, but ere I could put one in front of the other I was seized, bound, and deprived of shoes and stockings. I cannot say how my feet were supported, or how hindered from being drawn to my head after the first blow. I saw the switches turning in the air and closed my eyes. Assuredly I had not to wait the tenth part of a second, and yet I had time to send a benediction to my father, a kiss to Mary Anne, and ten thousand curses to be shared between Madame Simons and John Harris. My courage was sufficient to prevent my scream-