

A close-up photograph of a wooden desk. In the foreground, a rolled-up parchment scroll lies on the desk. A quill pen is positioned diagonally across the scroll. In the upper right corner, a magnifying glass with a wooden handle is visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

***FREDERICK
MARRYAT***

***THE PACHA
OF MANY
TALES***



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Frederick Marryat

The Pacha of Many Tales

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Volume One--Chapter One.

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Every one acquainted with the manners and customs of the East must be aware that there is no situation of eminence more unstable, or more dangerous to its possessor, than that of a pacha. Nothing, perhaps, affords us more convincing proof of the risk which men will incur, to obtain a temporary authority over their fellow-creatures, than the avidity with which this office is accepted from the sultan who, within the memory of the new occupant, has consigned scores of his predecessors to the bow-string. It would almost appear, as if the despot but elevated a head from the crowd, that he might obtain a more fair and uninterrupted sweep for his scimitar, when he cut it off; only exceeded in his peculiar taste by the king of Dahomy, who is said to ornament the steps of his palace with heads, fresh severed, each returning sun, as we renew the decoration of our apartments from our gay parterres. I make these observations, that I may not be accused of a disregard to chronology, in not precisely stating the year, or rather the months, during which flourished one of a race, who, like the flowers of the cistus, one morning in all their splendour, on the next, are strewed lifeless on the ground to make room for their successors. Speaking of such ephemeral creations, it will be quite sufficient to say, "There *was* a Pacha."

Would you inquire by what means he was raised to the distinction? It is an idle question. In this world, pre-eminence over your fellow creatures can only be obtained, by leaving

others far behind in the career of virtue or of vice. In compliance with the dispositions of those who rule, faithful service in the one path or the other will shower honour upon the subject, and by the breath of kings he becomes ennobled to look down upon his former equals.

And as the world spins round, the *why* is of little moment. The honours are bequeathed, but not the good, or the evil deeds, or the talents by which they were obtained. In the latter we have but a life interest, for the entail is cut off by death. Aristocracy in all its varieties is as necessary for the well binding of society, as the divers grades between the general and the common soldier are essential in the field. Never then inquire, why this or that man has been raised above his fellows; but, each night as you retire to bed, thank Heaven that you are not *a King*.

And if I may digress, there is one badge of honour in our country, which I never contemplate without serious reflection rising in my mind. It is the *bloody* hand in the dexter chief of a baronet,—now often worn, I grant, by those who, perhaps, during their whole lives have never raised their hands in anger. But my thoughts have returned to days of yore—the iron days of *ironed men*, when it *was* the symbol of faithful service in the field—when it really was bestowed upon the “hand embrued in blood;” and I have meditated, whether that hand, displayed with exultation in this world, may not be held up trembling in the next—in judgment against itself.

And I, whose memory stepping from one legal murder to another, can walk dry-footed over the broad space of five-

and-twenty years of time,—but the “damned spots” won’t come out—so I’ll put my hands in my pockets and walk on.

Conscience, fortunately or unfortunately, I hardly can tell which, permits us to form political and religious creeds, most suited to disguise or palliate our sins. Mine is a military conscience; and I agree with Bates and Williams, who flourished in the time of Henry the Fifth, that it is “all upon the king:” that is to say, it *was* all upon the king; but now our constitution has become so incomparably perfect, that “the king can do no wrong;” and he has no difficulty in finding ministers, who voluntarily impignoring themselves for all his actions in this world, will, in all probability, not escape from the clutches of the great *Pawnbroker* in the next—from which facts I draw the following conclusions:—

First. That his majesty (God bless him!) will go to heaven.

Secondly. That his majesty’s ministers will all go to the devil.

Thirdly. That I shall go on with my story.

As, however, a knowledge of the previous history of our pacha will be necessary to the development of our story, the reader will in this instance be indulged. He had been brought up to the profession of a barber; but, possessing great personal courage, he headed a popular commotion in favour of his predecessor, and was rewarded by a post of some importance in the army. Successful in detached service, while his general was unfortunate in the field, he was instructed to take off the head of his commander, and head the troops in his stead; both of which services he

performed with equal skill and celerity. Success attended him, and the pacha, his predecessor, having in his opinion, as well as in that of the sultan, remained an unusual time in office, by an accusation enforced by a thousand purses of gold, he was enabled to produce a bowstring for his benefactor; and the sultan's "firmaun" appointed him to the vacant pachalik. His qualifications for office were all superlative: he was very short, very corpulent, very illiterate, very irascible, and very stupid.

On the morning after his investment, he was under the hands of his barber, a shrewd intelligent Greek, Mustapha by name. Barbers are privileged persons for many reasons: running from one employer to another to obtain their livelihood, they also obtain matter for conversation, which, impertinent as it may sometimes be, serves to beguile the tedium of an operation which precludes the use of any organ except the ear. Moreover, we are inclined to be on good terms with a man, who has it in his power to cut our throats whenever he pleases—to wind up; the personal liberties arising from his profession, render all others trifling; for the man who takes his sovereign by the nose, cannot well after that be denied the liberty of speech.

Mustapha was a Greek by birth, and inherited all the intelligence and adroitness of his race. He had been brought up to his profession when a slave; but at the age of nineteen he accompanied his master on board of a merchant vessel bound to Scio; this vessel was taken by a pirate, and Demetrius (for such was his real name) joined this band of miscreants, and very faithfully served his apprenticeship to cutting throats, until the vessel was captured by an English

frigate. Being an active, intelligent person, he was, at his own request, allowed to remain on board as one of the ship's company, assisted in several actions, and after three years went to England, where the ship was paid off. For some time, Demetrius tried to make his fortune, but without success, and it was not until he was reduced to nearly his last shilling, that he commenced the trade of hawking rhubarb about in a box: which speculation turned so profitable, that he was enabled in a short time to take his passage in a vessel bound to Smyrna, his own country. This vessel was captured by a French privateer; he was landed, and, not being considered as a prisoner, allowed to act as he thought proper. In a short time he obtained the situation of valet and barber to a "millionaire," whom he contrived to rob of a few hundred Napoleons, and with them to make his escape to his own country. Demetrius had now some knowledge of the world, and he felt it necessary that he should become a True Believer, as there would be more chance of his advancement in a Turkish country. He dismissed the patriarch to the devil, and took up the turban and Mahomet; then quitting the scene of his apostacy, recommenced his profession of barber in the territory of the pacha; whose good-will he had obtained previous to the latter's advancement to the pachalik.

"Mustapha," observed the pacha, "thou knowest that I have taken off the heads of all those who left their slippers at the door of the late pacha."

"Allah Kebur! God is most powerful! So perish the enemies of your sublime highness. Were they not the sons of Shitan?" replied Mustapha.

“Very true; but, Mustapha, the consequence is that I am in want of a vizier; and whom do I know equal to that office?”

“While your sublime highness is pacha, is not a child equal to the office? Who stumbles, when guided by unerring wisdom?”

“I know that very well,” replied the pacha; “but if I am always to direct him, I might as well be vizier myself; besides, I shall have no one to blame, if affairs go wrong with the sultan. Inshallah! please the Lord, the vizier’s head may sometimes save my own.”

“Are we not as dogs before you?” replied Mustapha: “happy the man, who by offering his own head may preserve that of your sublime highness! It ought to be the proudest day of his life.”

“At all events it would be the last,” rejoined the pacha.

“May it please your sublime highness,” observed Mustapha, after a pause, “if your slave may be so honoured as to speak in your presence, a vizier should be a person of great tact; he should be able to draw the line as nicely as I do when I shave your sublime head, leaving not a vestige of the hair, yet entering not upon the skin.”

“Very true, Mustapha.”

“He should have a sharp eye for the disaffected to the government, selecting them and removing them from among the crowd, as I do the few white hairs which presume to make their appearance in your sublime and magnificent beard.”

“Very true, Mustapha.”

“He should carefully remove all impurities from the state, as I have this morning from your sublime ears.”

“Very true, Mustapha.”

“He should be well acquainted with the secret springs of action, as I have proved myself to be in the shampooing which your sublime highness has just received.”

“Very true, Mustapha.”

“Moreover, he should be ever grateful to your highness for the distinguished honour conferred upon him.”

“All that you say is very true, Mustapha, but where am I to meet with such a man?”

“This world is convenient in some points,” continued Mustapha; “if you want either a fool or a knave, you have not far to go to find them; but it is no easy task to select the person you require. I know but one.”

“And who is he?”

“One whose head is but as your footstool,” answered the barber, prostrating himself,—“your sublime highness’s most devoted slave, Mustapha.”

“Holy Prophet! Then you mean yourself!—Well, now I think of it, if one barber can become a pacha, I do not see why another would not make a vizier. But then what am I to do for a barber? No, no, Mustapha; a good vizier is easy to be found, but a good barber, you know as well as I do, requires some talent.”

“Your slave is aware of that,” replied Mustapha, “but he has travelled in other countries, where it is no uncommon circumstance for men to hold more than one office under government; sometimes much more incompatible than those of barber and vizier, which are indeed closely

connected. The affairs of most nations are settled by the potentates during their toilet. While I am shaving the head of your sublime highness, I can receive your commands to take off the heads of others; and you can have your person and your state both put in order at the same moment.”

“Very true, Mustapha; then, on condition that you continue your office of barber, I have no objection to throw that of vizier into the bargain.”

Mustapha again prostrated himself, with his tweezers in his hand. He then rose, and continued his office.

“You can write, Mustapha,” observed the pacha, after a short silence.

“Min Allah! God forbid that I should acknowledge it, or I should consider myself as unfit to assume the office in which your sublime highness has invested me.”

“Although unnecessary for me, I thought it might be requisite for a vizier,” observed the pacha.

“Reading may be necessary, I will allow,” replied Mustapha; “but I trust I can soon prove to your highness that writing is as dangerous as it is useless. More men have been ruined by that unfortunate acquirement, than by any other; and dangerous as it is to all, it is still more dangerous to men in high power. For instance, your sublime highness sends a message in writing, which is ill-received, and it is produced against you; but had it been a verbal message, you could deny it, and bastinado to death the Tartar who carried it, as a proof of your sincerity.”

“Very true, Mustapha.”

“The grandfather of your slave,” continued the barber-vizier, “held the situation of receiver-general at the custom-

house; and he was always in a fury when he was obliged to take up the pen. It was his creed, that no government could prosper when writing was in general use. 'Observe, Mustapha,' said he to me one day, 'here is the curse of writing,—for all the money which is paid in, I am obliged to give a receipt. What is the consequence? that government loses many thousand sequins every year; for when I apply to them for a second payment, they produce their receipt. Now if it had not been for this cursed invention of writing, Inshallah! they should have paid twice, if not thrice over. Remember, Mustapha,' continued he, 'that reading and writing only clog the wheels of government.'"

"Very true, Mustapha," observed the pacha, "then we will have no writing."

"Yes, your sublime highness, every thing in writing from others, but nothing in writing from ourselves. I have a young Greek slave, who can be employed in these matters. He reads well. I have lately employed him in reading to me the stories of 'Thousand and one Nights.'"

"Stories," cried the pacha; "what are they about? I never heard of them; I'm very fond of stories."

"If it would please your sublime highness to hear these stories read, the slave will wait your commands," replied the vizier.

"Bring him this evening, Mustapha; we will smoke a pipe, and listen to them; I'm very fond of stories—they always send me to sleep."

The business of the day was transacted with admirable precision and despatch by the two quondam barbers, who proved how easy it is to govern, where there are not "three

estates” to confuse people. They sat in the divan as highwaymen loiter on the road, and it was “Your money or your life” to all who made their appearance.

At the usual hour the court broke up, the guards retired, the money was carried to the treasury, the executioner wiped his sword, and the lives of the pacha’s subjects were considered to be in a state of comparative security, until the affairs of the country were again brought under their cognisance on the ensuing day.

In obedience to the wish expressed by the pacha, Mustapha made his appearance in the afternoon with the young Greek slave. The new vizier having taken a seat upon a cushion at the feet of the pacha, the pipes were lighted, and the slave was directed to proceed.

The Greek had arrived to the end of the First Night, in which Schezehezerade commences her story, and the Sultan, who was anxious to hear the termination of it, defers her execution to the following day.

“Stop,” cried the pacha, taking the pipe from his lips; “how long before the break of day did that girl call her sister?”

“About half an hour, your sublime highness.”

“Wallah! Is that all she could tell of her story in half an hour?—There’s not a woman in my harem who would not say as much in five minutes.”

The pacha was so amused with the stories, that he never once felt inclined to sleep; on the contrary, the Greek slave was compelled to read every afternoon, until his legs were so tired that he could hardly stand, and his tongue almost refused its office; consequently, they were soon finished;

and Mustapha not being able to procure any more, they were read a second time. After which the pacha, who felt the loss of his evening's amusement, became first puzzled how to pass away his time; then he changed to hypochondriacism, and finally became so irritable, that even Mustapha himself, at times, approached him with some degree of awe.

"I have been thinking," observed the pacha, one morning, when under the hands of Mustapha, in his original capacity, "that it would be as easy for me to have stories told me, as the caliph in the Arabian Nights."

"I wonder not that your highness should desire it. Those stories are as the opium to Theriarkis, filling the soul with visions of delight at the moment, but leaving it palsied from over-excitement, when their effect has passed away. How does your sublime highness propose to obtain your end; and in what manner can your slave assist to produce your wishes?"

"I shall manage it without assistance; come this evening and you shall see, Mustapha."

Mustapha made his appearance in the afternoon, and the pacha smoked his pipe for some time, and appeared as if communing with himself; he then laid it down, and clapping his hands, desired one of the slaves to inform his favourite lady, Zeinab, that he desired her presence.

Zeinab entered with her veil down. "Your slave attends the pleasure of her lord."

"Zeinab," said the pacha, "do you love me?"

"Do not I worship the dust that my lord treads on?"

“Very true—then I have a favour to request: observe, Zeinab—it is my wish that,”—(here the pacha took a few whiffs from his pipe)—“The fact is—I wish you to dishonour my harem as soon as possible.”

“Wallah sel Nebi!!—By Allah and the Prophet your highness is in a merry humour this evening,” replied Zeinab, turning round to quit the apartment.

“On the contrary, I am in a serious humour; I mean what I have said; and I expect that you will comply with my wishes.”

“Is my lord mad? or has he indulged too freely in the juice of the grape forbidden by our Prophet? Allah kebur! God is most powerful—The hakim must be sent for.”

“Will you do as I order you?” said the pacha angrily.

“Does my lord send for his slave to insult her! My blood is as water, at the dreadful thought!—Dishonour the harem!—Min Allah! God forbid!—Would not the eunuch be ready and the sack?”

“Yes, they would, I acknowledge; but still it must be done.”

“It shall not be done,” replied the lady:— “Has my lord been visited by Heaven? or is he possessed by the Shitan?”—And the lady burst into tears of rage and vexation as she quitted the apartment.

“There’s obstinacy for you—women are nothing but opposition. If you wish them to be faithful, they try day and night to deceive you; give them their desires and tell them to be false, they will refuse. All was arranged so well, I should have cut off all their heads, and had a fresh wife every night until I found one who could tell stories; then I

should have rose up and deferred her execution to the following day.”

Mustapha, who had been laughing in his sleeve at the strange idea of the pacha, was nevertheless not a little alarmed. He perceived that the mania had such complete possession, that, unless appeased, the results might prove unpleasant even to himself. It occurred to him, that a course might be pursued to gratify the pacha’s wishes, without proceeding to such violent measures. Waiting a little while until the colour, which had suffused the pacha’s face from anger and disappointment, had subsided, he addressed him:

—

“The plan of your sublime highness was such as was to be expected from the immensity of your wisdom; but hath not the Prophet warned us, that the wisest of men are too often thwarted by the folly and obstinacy of the other sex? May your slave venture to observe, that many very fine stories were obtained by the caliph Haroun, and his vizier Mesrour, as they walked through the city in disguise. In all probability a similar result might be produced, if your highness were to take the same step, accompanied by the lowest of your slaves, Mustapha.”

“Very true,” replied the pacha, delighted at the prospect, “prepare two disguises, and we will set off in less than an hour—Inshallah, please the Lord, we have at last hit upon the right path.”

Mustapha, who was glad to direct the ideas of the pacha into a more harmless channel, procured the dresses of two merchants (for such, he observed, were the usual habiliments put on by the caliph and his vizier in the

Arabian Nights), and he was aware that his master's vanity would be gratified at the idea of imitating so celebrated a personage.

It was dusk when they set off upon their adventures. Mustapha directed some slaves well armed to follow at a distance, in case their assistance might be required. The strict orders which had been issued on the accession of the new pacha (to prevent any riot or popular commotion), which were enforced by constant rounds of the soldiers on guard, occasioned the streets to be quite deserted.

For some time the pacha and Mustapha walked up one street and down another, without meeting with any thing or any body that could administer to their wishes. The former, who had not lately been accustomed to pedestrian exercise, began to puff and show symptoms of weariness and disappointment, when at the corner of a street they fell in with two men, who were seated in conversation; and as they approached softly, one of them said to the other, "I tell you, Coja, that happy is the man who can always command a hard crust like this, which is now wearing away my teeth."

"I must know the reason of that remark," said the pacha; "Mesrour (Mustapha, I mean), you will bring that man to me to-morrow, after the divan is closed."

Mustapha bowed in acquiescence, and directing the slaves who were in attendance to take the man into custody, followed the pacha, who, fatigued with his unusual excursion, and satisfied with the prospect of success, now directed his steps to the palace and retired to bed. Zeinab, who had laid awake until her eyes could remain open no longer, with the intention of reading him a lecture upon

decency and sobriety, had at last fallen asleep, and the tired pacha was therefore permitted to do the same.

When Mustapha arrived at his own abode, he desired that the person who had been detained should be brought to him.

“My good man,” said the vizier, “you made an observation this evening which was overheard by his highness the pacha, who wishes to be acquainted with your reasons for stating ‘that happy was the man who could at all times command a hard crust, like that which was wearing away your teeth.’”

The man fell down on his knees in trepidation. “I do declare to your highness, by the camel of the Holy Prophet,” said he, in a faltering voice, “that I neither meant treason, nor disaffection to the government.”

“Slave! I am not quite sure of that,” replied Mustapha, with a stern look, in hopes of frightening the man into a compliance with his wishes—“there was something very enigmatical in those words. Your ‘*hard crust*’ may mean his sublime highness the pacha; ‘wearing away your teeth’ may imply exactions from the government and as you affirmed that he was happy who could *command* the hard crust—why it is as much as to say that you would be very glad to create a rebellion.”

“Holy Prophet! May the soul of your slave never enter the first heaven,” replied the man, “if he meant any thing more than what he said; and if your highness had been as often without a mouthful of bread as your slave has been, you would agree with him in the justice of the remark.”

“It is of little consequence whether I agree with you or not,” replied the vizier; “I have only to tell you that his sublime highness the pacha will not be satisfied, unless you explain away the remark, by relating to him some story connected with the observation.”

“Min Allah! God forbid that your slave should tell a story to deceive his highness.”

“The Lord have mercy upon you if you do not,” replied the vizier; “but, to be brief; if you can invent a good and interesting story, you will remove the suspicions of the pacha, and probably be rewarded with a few pieces of gold; if you cannot, you must prepare for the bastinado, if not for death. You will not be required to appear in the sublime presence before to-morrow afternoon, and will therefore have plenty of time to invent one.”

“Will your highness permit your slave to go home and consult his wife? Women have a great talent for story telling. With her assistance he may be able to comply with your injunctions.”

“No,” replied Mustapha, “you must remain in custody; but, as on this occasion she may be of the greatest assistance to you, you may send for her. They have indeed a talent! As the young crocodile, from instinct, runs into the Nile as soon as it bursts its shell, so does woman, from her nature, plunge into deceit, before even her tongue can give utterance to the lies which her fertile imagination has already conceived.”

And with this handsome compliment to the sex, Mustapha gave his final orders, and retired.

Whether the unfortunate man, thus accused of treason, derived any benefit from being permitted to “retain counsel,” will be shown by the following story, which he told to the pacha when summoned on the ensuing day:—

Story of the Camel-Driver.

That your highness should wish for an explanation of the very doubtful language which you overheard last night, I am not surprised; but I trust you will acknowledge, when I have finished my narrative, that I was fully justified in the expressions which I made use of. I am by birth (as my dress denotes) a fellah of this country, but I was not always so poor as I am now. My father was the possessor of many camels, which he let out for hire to the merchants of the different caravans which annually leave this city. When he died, I came into possession of his property, and the goodwill of those whom he had most faithfully served. The consequence was, that I had full employ, my camels were always engaged; and, as I invariably accompanied them that they might not be ill-treated, I have several times been to Mecca, as this ragged green turban will testify. My life was one of alternate difficulty and enjoyment. I returned to my wife and children with delight after my journeys of suffering and privation, and fully appreciated the value of my home from the short time that my occupation would permit me to remain there. I worked hard, and became rich.

It was during a painful march through the desert with one of the caravans, that a favourite she-camel foaled. At first it was my intention to leave the young one to its fate, as my camels had already suffered much; but, on examination, the

creature showed such strength and symmetry that I resolved to bring it up. I therefore divided half of one of the loads between the other camels, and tied the foal upon the one which I had partly relieved for the purpose. We arrived safely at Cairo; and, as the little animal grew up, I had more than ever reason to be satisfied that I had saved its life. All good judges considered it a prodigy of beauty and strength; and prophesied that it would some day be selected as the holy camel to carry the Koran in the pilgrimage to Mecca. And so it did happen about five years afterwards, during which interval I accompanied the caravans as before; and each year added to my wealth.

My camel had by this time arrived to his full perfection; he stood nearly three feet higher than any other; and, when the caravan was preparing, I led him to the sheiks, and offered him as a candidate for the honour. They would have accepted him immediately, had it not been for a maribout, who, for some reason or another, desired them not to employ him, asserting that the caravan would be unlucky if my camel was the bearer of the holy Koran.

As this man was considered to be a prophet, the sheiks were afraid, and would not give a decided answer. Irritated at the maribout's interference, I reviled him; he raised a hue and cry against me; and, being joined by the populace, I was nearly killed. As I hastened away, the wretch threw some sand after me, crying out, "Thus shall the caravan perish from the judgment of heaven, if that cursed camel is permitted to carry the holy word of the Prophet." The consequence was, that an inferior camel was selected, and I was disappointed. But on the ensuing year the maribout was

not at Cairo; and, as there was no animal equal to mine in beauty, it was chosen by the sheiks without a dissentient voice.

I hastened home to my wife, overjoyed with my good fortune, which I hoped would bring a blessing upon my house. She was equally delighted, and my beautiful camel seemed also to be aware of the honour to which he was destined, as he repaid our caresses, curving and twisting his long neck, and laying his head upon our shoulders.

The caravan assembled: it was one of the largest which for many years had quitted Cairo, amounting in all to eighteen thousand camels. You may imagine my pride when, as the procession passed through the streets, I pointed out to my wife the splendid animal, with his bridle studded with jewels and gold, led by the holy sheiks in their green robes, carrying on his back the chest which contained the law of our prophet, looking proudly on each side of him as he walked along, accompanied by bands of music, and the loud chorus of the singing men and women.

As on the ensuing day the caravan was to form outside of the town, I returned home to my family, that I might have the last of their company, having left my other camels, who were hired by the pilgrims, in charge of an assistant who accompanied me in my journeys. The next morning I bade adieu to my wife and children; and was quitting the house, when my youngest child, who was about two years old, called to me, and begged me to return one moment, and give her a farewell caress. As I lifted her in my arms, she, as usual, put her hand into the pocket of my loose jacket to search, as I thought, for the fruit that I usually brought

home for her when I returned from the bazaar; but there was none there: and having replaced her in the arms of her mother, I hastened away that I might not be too late at my post. Your highness is aware that we do not march one following another, as most caravans do, but in one straight line abreast. The necessary arrangement occupies the whole day previous to the commencement of our journey, which takes place immediately after the sun goes down. We set off that evening; and after a march of two nights, arrived at Adjeroid, where we remained three days, to procure our supplies of water from Suez, and to refresh the animals, previous to our forced march over the desert of El Tyh.

The last day of our repose, as I was smoking my pipe, with my camels kneeling down around me, I perceived a herie (a swift dromedary) coming from the direction of Cairo, at a very swift pace; it passed by me like a flash of lightning, but still I had sufficient time to recognise in its rider the maribout who had prophesied evil if my camel was employed to carry the Koran on the pilgrimage of the year before.

The maribout stopped his dromedary at the tent of the emir Hadjy, who commanded the caravan. Anxious to know the reason of his following us, which I had a foreboding was connected with my camel, I hastened to the spot. I found him haranguing the emir and the people who had surrounded him, denouncing woe and death to the whole caravan if my camel was not immediately destroyed, and another selected in his stead. Having for some time declaimed in such an energetic manner as to spread consternation throughout the camp, he turned his

dromedary again to the west, and in a few minutes was out of sight.

The emir was confused; murmurings and consultations were arising among the crowd. I was afraid that they would listen to the suggestions of the maribout; and, alarmed for my camel, and the loss of the honour conferred upon him, I was guilty of a lie.

“O! emir,” said I, “listen not to that man who is mine enemy: he came to my house, he ate of my bread, and would have been guilty of the basest ingratitude by seducing the mother of my children; I drove him from my door, and thus would he revenge himself. So may it fare with me, and with the caravan, as I speak the truth.”

I was believed; the injunctions of the maribout were disregarded, and that night we proceeded on our march through the plains of El Tyh.

As your highness has never yet made a pilgrimage, you can have no conception of the country which we had to pass through: it was one vast region of sand, where the tracks of those who pass over it are obliterated by the wind,—a vast sea without water,—an expanse of desolation. We plunged into the desert; and as the enormous collection of animals, extending as far as the eye could reach, held their noiseless way, it seemed as if it were the passing by of shadows.

We met with no accident, notwithstanding the prophecies of the maribout; and, after a fatiguing march of seven nights, arrived safely at Nakhel, where we replenished our exhausted water-skins. Those whom I knew joked with me, when we met at the wells, at the false prophecies of my enemy. We had now three days of severe fatigue to

encounter before we arrived at the castle of Akaba, and we recommenced our painful journey.

It was on the morning of the second day, about an hour after we had pitched our tents, that the fatal prophecy of the maribout, and the judgment of Allah upon me, for the lie which I had called on him to witness, was fulfilled.

A dark cloud appeared upon the horizon; it gradually increased, changing to a bright yellow; then rose and rose until it had covered one half of the firmament, when it suddenly burst upon us in a hurricane which carried every thing before it, cutting off mountains of sand at the base, and hurling them upon our devoted heads. The splendid tent of the emir, which first submitted to the blast, passed close to me, flying along with the velocity of the herie, while every other was either levelled to the ground or carried up into the air, and whirled about in mad gyration.

Moving pillars of sand passed over us, overthrowing and suffocating man and beast; the camels thrust their muzzles into the ground, and, profiting by their instinct, we did the same, awaiting our fate in silence and trepidation. But the simoom had not yet poured upon us all its horrors: in a few minutes nothing was to be distinguished—all was darkness, horrible darkness, rendered more horrible by the ravings of dying men, the screams of women, and the mad career of horses and other animals, which breaking their cords, trod down thousands in their endeavours to escape from the overwhelming fury of the desert storm.

I had laid myself down by one of my camels, and thrusting my head under his side, awaited my death with all the horror of one who felt that the wrath of heaven was

justly poured upon him. For an hour I remained in that position, and surely there can be no pains in hell greater than those which I suffered during that space of time. The burning sand forced itself into my garments, the pores of any skin were closed, I hardly ventured to breathe the hot blast which was offered as the only means of protracted existence. At last I fetched my respiration with greater freedom, and no more heard the howling of the blast. Gradually I lifted up my head, but my eyes had lost their power, I could distinguish nothing but a yellow glare. I imagined that I was blind, and what chance could there be for a man who was blind in the desert of El Tyh? Again I laid my head down, thought of my wife and children, and abandoning myself to despair, I wept bitterly.

The tears that I shed had a resuscitating effect upon my frame. I felt revived, and again lifted up my head—I could see! I prostrated myself in humble thanksgiving to Allah, and then rose upon my feet. Yes, I could see; but what a sight was presented to my eyes! I could have closed them for ever with thankfulness. The sky was again serene, and the boundless prospect uninterrupted as before; but the thousands who accompanied me, the splendid gathering of men and beast, where were they? Where was the emir Hadjy and his guards? where the mamelukes, the agas, the janissaries, and the holy sheiks? the sacred camel, the singers, and musicians? the varieties of nations and tribes who had joined the caravan? All perished!! Mountains of sand marked the spots where they had been entombed, with no other monuments save here and there part of the body of a man or beast not yet covered by the desert wave.

All, all were gone, save one and that one, that guilty one, was myself, who had been permitted to exist, that he might behold the awful mischief which had been created by his presumption and his crime.

For some minutes I contemplated the scene, careless and despairing; for I imagined that I had only been permitted to outlive the whole, that my death might be even more terrible. But my wife and children rushed to my memory, and I resolved for their sakes to save, if possible a life which had no other ties to bind it to this earth. I tore off a piece of my turban, and cleansing the sand out of my bleeding nostrils, walked over the field of death.

Between the different hillocks I found several camels which had not been covered. Perceiving a water skin, I rushed to it, that I might quench my raging thirst; but the contents had been dried up—not a drop remained. I found another, but I had no better success. I then determined to open one of the bodies of the camels, and obtain the water which it might still have remaining in its stomach. This I effected, and having quenched my thirst—to which even the heated element which I poured down, seemed delicious—I hastened to open the remainder of the animals before putrefaction should take place, and collect the scanty supplies in the water-skins. I procured more than half a skin of water, and then returned to my own camel, which I had laid down beside of, during the simoom. I sat on the body of the animal, and reflected upon the best method of proceeding. I knew that I was but one day's journey from the springs; but how little chance had I of reaching them! I

also knew the direction which I must take. The day had nearly closed, and I resolved to make the attempt.

As the sun disappeared, I rose, and with the skin of water on my back proceeded on my hopeless journey. I walked the whole of that night, and, by break of day, I imagined that I must have made about half the progress of a caravan; I had, therefore, still a day to pass in the desert, without any protection from the consuming heat, and then another night of toil. Although I had sufficient water, I had no food. When the sun rose, I sat down upon a hillock of burning sand, to be exposed to his rays for twelve everlasting hours. Before the hour of noon arrived, my brain became heated—I nearly lost my reason. My vision was imperfect, or rather I saw what did not exist. At one time lakes of water presented themselves to my eager eyes; and so certain was I of their existence, that I rose and staggered till I was exhausted in pursuit of them. At another, I beheld trees at a distance, and could see the acacias waving in the breeze; I hastened to throw myself under their shade, and arrived at some small shrub, which had thus been magnified.

So was I tormented and deceived during the whole of that dreadful day, which still haunts me in my dreams. At last the night closed in, and the stars as they lighted up warned me that I might continue my journey. I drank plentifully from my water-skin, and recommenced my solitary way. I followed the track marked out by the bones of camels and horses of former caravans which had perished in the desert, and when the day dawned, I perceived the castle of Akaba at a short distance. Inspired with new life, I threw away the water-skin, redoubled my speed, and in half an

hour had thrown myself down by the side of the fountain from which I had previously imbibed large draughts of the refreshing fluid. What happiness was then mine! How heavenly, to lay under the shade, breathing the cool air, listening to the warbling of the birds, and inhaling the perfume of the flowers, which luxuriated on that delightful spot! After an hour I stripped, bathed myself, and, taking another draught of water, fell into a sound sleep.

I awoke refreshed, but suffering under the cravings of hunger, which now assailed me. I had been three days without food; but hitherto I had not felt the want of it, as my more importunate thirst had overcome the sensation. Now that the greater evil had been removed, the lesser increased and became hourly more imperious. I walked out and scanned the horizon with the hopes of some caravan appearing in sight, but I watched in vain; and returned to the fountain. Two more days passed away, and no relief was at hand: my strength failed me; I felt that I was dying; and, as the fountain murmured, and the birds sang, and the cool breeze fanned my cheeks, I thought that it would have been better to have been swallowed up in the desert than to be tantalised by expiring in such a paradise. I laid myself down to die, for I could sit up no more; and as I turned round to take a last view of the running water, which had prolonged my existence, something hard pressed against my side. I thought it was a stone, and stretched out my hand to remove it, that I might be at ease in my last moments; but when I felt, there was no stone there it was something in the pocket of my jacket. I put my hand in, unconscious what it could be; I pulled it out, and looking at it before I threw it