

The Story of the Greek Slave

By Captain Marryat

The pacha called for coffee, and in a few minutes, accompanied, as before, by Mustapha and the armed slaves, was prowling through the city in search of a story-teller. He was again fortunate, as after a walk of half an hour, he overheard two men loudly disputing at the door of a small wine-shop, frequented by the Greeks and Franks living in the city, and into which many a slave might be observed to glide, returning with a full pitcher for the evening's amusement of his Turkish master, who, as well as his betters, clandestinely violated the precepts of the Koran.

As usual he stopped to listen, when one of the disputants exclaimed: "I tell thee, Anselmo, it is the vilest composition that was ever drunk: and I think I ought to know, after having distilled the essence of an Ethiopian, a Jew, and a Turk."

"I care nothing for your distillations, Charis," replied the other, "I consider that I am a better judge than you: I was not a monk of the Dominican order for fifteen years, without having ascertained the merit of every description of wine."

"I should like to know what that fellow means by *distilling people*," observed the pacha, "and also why a Dominican monk should know wine better than others. Mustapha, I must see those two men."

The next morning the men were in attendance, and introduced; when the pacha requested an explanation from the first who had spoken. The man threw himself down before the pacha, with his head on the floor of the divan, and said: "First promise me, your highness, by the sword of the Prophet, that no harm shall result to me from complying with your request; and then I shall obey you with pleasure."

"Mashallah! what is the Kafir afraid of? 'What crimes hath he committed, that he would have his pardon granted before he tells his story?'" said the pacha to Mustapha.

"No crime toward your state, your sublime highness; but when in another country, I was unfortunate," continued the man. "I cannot tell my story, unless your highness will condescend to give your promise."

"May it please your highness," observed Mustapha, "he asserts his crime to have been committed in another state. It may be heavy, and I suspect 'tis murder; but although we watch the flowers which ornament our gardens, and would punish those who cull them, yet we care not who intrudes and robs our neighbour—and thus, it appears to me, your highness, that it is with states, and sufficient for the ruler of each to watch over the lives of his own subjects."

"Very true, Mustapha," rejoined the pacha; "besides, we might lose the story. Kafir, you have our promise, and may proceed."

The Greek slave (for such he was) then rose up, and narrated his story in the following words.

I am a Greek by birth; my parents were poor people residing at Smyrna. I was an only son, and brought up to my father's profession, that of a cooper. When I was twenty years old, I had buried both my parents, and was left to shift for myself. I had been for some time in the employ of a Jewish wine-merchant, and I continued there for three years after my father's death, when a circumstance occurred which led to my subsequent prosperity and present degradation.

At the time that I am speaking of, I had, by strict diligence and sobriety, so pleased my employer, that I had risen to be his foreman; and although I still superintended and occasionally

worked at the cooperage, I was entrusted with the drawing off and fining of the wines, to prepare them for market. There was an Ethiopian slave, who worked under my orders, a powerful, broad-shouldered, and most malignant wretch, whom my master found it almost impossible to manage; the bastinado, or any other punishment, he derided, and after the application only became more sullen and discontented than before. The fire that flashed from his eyes, upon any fault being found by me on account of his negligence, was so threatening, that I every day expected I should be murdered. I repeatedly requested my master to part with him; but the Ethiopian being a very powerful man, and able, when he chose, to move a pipe of wine without assistance, the avarice of the Jew would not permit him to accede to my repeated solicitations.

One morning I entered the cooperage, and found the Ethiopian fast asleep by the side of a cask which I had been wanting for some time, and expected to have found ready. Afraid to punish him myself, I brought my master to witness his conduct. The Jew, enraged at his idleness, struck him on the head with one of the staves. The Ethiopian sprung up in a rage, but on seeing his master with the stave in his hand contented himself with muttering, "That he would not remain to be beaten in that manner," and reapplied himself to his labour. As soon as my master had left the cooperage, the Ethiopian vented his anger upon me for having informed against him, and seizing the stave, flew at me with the intention of beating out my brains. I stepped behind the cask; he followed me, and just as I had seized an adze to defend myself, he fell over the stool which lay in his way; he was springing up to renew the attack, when I struck him a blow with the adze which entered his skull and laid him dead at my feet.

I was very much alarmed at what had occurred; for although I felt justified in self-defence, I was aware that my master would be very much annoyed at the loss of the slave, and as there were no witnesses, it would go hard with me when brought before the *cadi*. After some reflection I determined, as the slave had said, "he would not remain to be beaten," that I would leave my master to suppose he had run away, and in the meantime conceal the body. But to effect this was difficult, as I could not take it out of the cooperage without being perceived. After some cogitation, I decided upon putting it into the cask, and heading it up. It required all my strength to lift the body in, but at last I succeeded. Having put in the head of the pipe, I hammered down the hoops and rolled it into the store, where I had been waiting to fill it with wine for the next year's demand. As soon as it was in its place, I pumped off the wine from the vat, and having filled up the cask and put in the bung, I felt as if a heavy load had been removed from my mind, as there was no chance of immediate discovery.

I had but just completed my task, and was sitting down on one of the settles, when my master came in, and inquired for the slave. I replied that he had left the cooperage, swearing that he would work no more. Afraid of losing him, the Jew hastened to give notice to the authorities that he might be apprehended; but after some time, as nothing could be heard of the supposed runaway, it was imagined that he had drowned himself in a fit of sullenness, and no more was thought about him. In the meantime I continued to work there as before, and as I had the charge of everything I had no doubt but that, some day or another, I should find means of quietly disposing of my incumbrance.

The next spring, I was busy pumping off from one cask into the other, according to our custom, when the *aga* of the *janissaries* came in. He was a great wine-bibber, and one of our best customers. As his dependents were all well known, it was not his custom to send them for wine, but to come himself to the store and select a pipe. This was carried away in a litter by eight strong slaves, with the curtains drawn close, as if it had been a new purchase which he had added to his harem. My master showed him the pipes of wine prepared for that year's market, which

were arranged in two rows; and I hardly need observe that the one containing the Ethiopian was not in the foremost. After tasting one or two which did not seem to please him, the aga observed, "Friend Issachar, thy tribe will always put off the worst goods first, if possible. Now I have an idea that there is better wine in the second tier, than in the one thou hast recommended. Let thy Greek put a spile into that cask," continued he, pointing to the very one in which I had headed up the black slave. As I made sure that as soon as he had tasted the contents he would spit them out, I did not hesitate to bore the cask and draw off the wine, which I handed to him. He tasted it and held it to the light—tasted it again and smacked his lips—then turning to my master, exclaimed, "Thou dog of a Jew! wouldst thou have palmed off upon me vile trash, when thou hadst in thy possession wine which might be sipped with the Houris in Paradise?"

The Jew appealed to me if the pipes of wine were not all of the same quality; and I confirmed his assertion.

"Taste it then," replied the aga, "and then taste the first which you recommended to me."

My master did so, and was evidently astonished. "It certainly has more body," replied he; "yet how that can be, I know not. Taste it, Charis." I held the glass to my lips, but nothing could induce me to taste the contents. I contented myself with agreeing with my master (as I conscientiously could), "that it certainly had more *body* in it than the rest."

The aga was so pleased with the wine, that he tasted two or three more pipes of the back tier, hoping to find others of the same quality, probably intending to have laid in a large stock; but finding no other of the same flavour, he ordered his slaves to roll the one containing the body of the slave into the litter, and carry it to his own house.

"Stop a moment, thou lying Kafir!" said the pacha, "dost thou really mean to say that the wine was better than the rest?"

"Why should I tell a lie to your sublime highness? am not I a worm that you may crush? As I informed you, I did not taste it, your highness; but after the aga had departed, my master expressed his surprise at the excellence of the wine, which he affirmed to be superior to anything that he had ever tasted—and his sorrow that the aga had taken away the cask, which prevented him from ascertaining the cause. But one day I was narrating the circumstance to a Frank in this country, who expressed no surprise at the wine being improved. He had been a wine-merchant in England, and he informed me that it was the custom there to throw large pieces of raw beef into the wine to feed it; and that some particular wines were very much improved thereby."

"Allah Kebur! God is great!" cried the pacha. "Then it must be so—I have heard that the English are very fond of beef. Now go on with thy story."

Your highness cannot imagine the alarm which I felt when the cask was taken away by the aga's slaves. I gave myself up for a lost man, and resolved upon immediate flight from Smyrna. I calculated the time that it would take for the aga to drink the wine, and made my arrangements accordingly. I told my master that it was my intention to leave him, as I had an offer to go into business with a relation at Zante. My master, who could not well do without me, entreated me to stay; but I was positive. He then offered me a share of the business if I would remain, but I was not to be persuaded. Every rap at the door, I thought that the aga and his janissaries were coming for me; and I hastened my departure, which was fixed for the following day—when in the evening my master came into the store with a paper in his hand.

“Charis,” said he, “perhaps you have supposed that I only offered to make you a partner in my business to induce you to remain, and then to deceive you. To prove the contrary, here is a deed drawn up by which you are a partner, and entitled to one-third of the future profits. Look at it, you will find that it has been executed in due form before the *cadi*.”

He had put the paper into my hand, and I was about to return it with a refusal, when a loud knocking at the door startled us both. It was a party of janissaries dispatched by the aga, to bring us to him immediately. I knew well enough what it must be about, and I cursed my folly in having delayed so long; but the fact was, the wine proved so agreeable to the aga’s palate that he had drunk it much faster than usual; besides which, the body of the slave took up at least a third of the cask, and diminished the contents in the same proportion. There was no appeal, and no escape. My master, who was ignorant of the cause, did not seem at all alarmed, but willingly accompanied the soldiers. I, on the contrary, was nearly dead from fear.

When we arrived, the aga burst out in the most violent exclamations against my master. “Thou rascal of a Jew!” said he, “dost thou think that thou art to impose upon a true believer, and sell him a pipe of wine which is not more than two-thirds full—filling it up with trash of some sort or another. Tell me what it is that is so heavy in the cask now that it is empty?”

The Jew protested his ignorance, and appealed to me: I, of course, pretended the same. “Well, then,” replied the aga, “we will soon see. Let thy Greek send for his tools, and the cask shall be opened in our presence; then perhaps thou wilt recognize thine own knavery.”

Two of the janissaries were dispatched for the tools, and when they arrived I was directed to take the head out of the cask. I now considered my death as certain—nothing buoyed me up but my observing that the resentment of the aga was levelled more against my master than against me; but still I thought that, when the cask was opened, the recognition of the black slave must immediately take place, and the evidence of my master would fix the murder upon me.

It was with a trembling hand that I obeyed the orders of the aga—the head of the pipe was taken out, and, to the horror of all present, the body was exposed; but instead of being black, it had turned *white*, from the time which it had been immersed. I rallied a little at this circumstance, as, so far, suspicion would be removed.

“Holy Abraham!” exclaimed my master, “what is that which I see! A dead body, so help me God!—but I know nothing about it—do you, Charis?” I vowed that I did not, and called the Patriarch to witness the truth of my assertion. But while we were thus exclaiming, the aga’s eyes were fixed upon my master with an indignant and deadly stare which spoke volumes; while the remainder of the people who were present, although they said nothing, seemed as if they were ready to tear him into pieces.

“Cursed unbeliever!” at last uttered the Turk, “is it thus that thou preparest the wine for the disciples of the Prophet?”

“Holy father Abraham!—I know no more than you do, aga, how that body came there; but I will change the cask with pleasure, and will send you another.”

“Be it so,” replied the aga; “my slave shall fetch it now.” He gave directions accordingly, and the litter soon reappeared with another pipe of wine.

“It will be a heavy loss to a poor Jew—one pipe of good wine,” observed my master, as it was rolled out of the litter; and he took up his hat with the intention to depart.

“Stay,” cried the aga, “I do not mean to rob you of your wine.”

“Oh, then, you will pay me for it?” replied my master; “aga, you re a considerate man.”

“Thou shalt see,” retorted the aga, who gave directions to his slaves to draw off the wine in vessels. As soon as the pipe was empty, he desired me to take the head out; and when I had obeyed him, he ordered his janissaries to put my master in. In a minute he was gagged and bound, and tossed into the pipe; and I was directed to put in the head as before. I was very unwilling to comply; for I had no reason to complain of my master, and knew that he was punished for the fault of which I had been guilty. But it was a case of life or death—and the days of self-devotion have long passed away in our country. Besides which, I had the deed in my pocket by which I was a partner in the business, and my master had no heirs—so that I stood a chance to come into the whole of his property. Moreover—

“Never mind your reasons,” observed the pacha, “you headed him up in the cask—go on.”

“I did so, your highness; but although I dared not disobey, I assure you that it was with a sorrowful heart—the more so, as I did not know the fate which might be reserved for myself.”

As soon as the head was in, and the hoops driven on, the aga desired his slaves to fill the cask up again with the wine; and thus did my poor master perish.

“Put in the bung, Greek,” said the aga, in a stern voice.

I did so, and stood trembling before him.

“Well! what knowest thou of this transaction?”

I thought, as the aga had taken away the life of my master, that it would not hurt him if I took away a little from, his character. I answered that I really knew nothing, but that, the other day, a black slave had disappeared in a very suspicious manner—that my master made very little inquiry after him—and I now strongly suspected that he must have suffered the same fate. I added, that my master had expressed himself very sorry that his highness had taken away the pipe of wine, as he would have reserved it.

“Cursed Jew!” replied the aga; “I don’t doubt but he has murdered a dozen in the same manner.”

“I am afraid so, sir,” replied I, “and suspect that I was to have been his next victim; for when I talked of going away, he persuaded me to stay, and gave me this paper, by which I was to become his partner with one-third of the profits. I presume that I should not have enjoyed them long.”

“Well, Greek,” observed the aga, “this is fortunate for you; as, upon certain conditions, you may enter upon the whole property. One is, that you keep this pipe of wine with the rascally Jew in it, that I may have the pleasure occasionally to look at my revenge. You will also keep the pipe with the other body in it, that it may keep my anger alive. The last is, that you will supply me with what wine I may require, of the very best quality, without making any charge. Do you consent to these terms, or am I to consider you as a party to this infamous transaction?”

I hardly need observe that the terms were gladly accepted. Your highness must be aware that nobody thinks much about a Jew. When I was questioned as to his disappearance, I shrugged up my shoulders and told the inquirers, confidentially, that the aga of the janissaries had put him in prison, and that I was carrying on the business until his release.

In compliance with the wishes of the aga, the two casks containing the Jew and the Ethiopian slave were placed together on settles higher than the rest, in the centre of the store. He would come in the evening, and rail at the cask containing my late master for hours at a time; during which he drank so much wine, that it was a very common circumstance for him to remain in the house until the next morning.

You must not suppose, your highness, that I neglected to avail myself (unknown to the aga) of the peculiar properties of the wine which those casks contained. I had them spiled underneath, and, constantly running off the wine from them, filled them up afresh. In a short time there was not a gallon in my possession which had not a *dash* in it of either the Ethiopian or the Jew; and my wine was so improved, that it had a most rapid sale, and I became rich.

All went on prosperously for three years; when the aga, who during that time had been my constant guest, and at least three times a week had been intoxicated in my house, was ordered with his troops to join the Sultan's army. By keeping company with him, I had insensibly imbibed a taste for wine, although I never had been inebriated. The day that his troops marched, he stopped at my door, and dismounting from his Arabian, came in to take a farewell glass, desiring his men to go on, and that he would ride after them. One glass brought on another. and the time flew rapidly away. The evening closed in, and the aga was, as usual, in a state of intoxication; he insisted upon going down to the store, to rail once more at the cask containing the body of the Jew. We had long been on the most friendly terms, and having this night drunk more than usual, I was incautious enough to say: "Prithee, aga, do not abuse my poor master any more, for he has been the making of my fortune. I will tell you a secret now that you are going away—there is not a drop of wine in my store that has not been flavoured either by him, or by the slave in the other cask. That is the reason why it is so much better than other people's."

"How! exclaimed the aga, who was now almost incapable of speech. "Very well, rascal Greek! die you shall like your master. Holy Prophet! what a state for a Mussulman to go to Paradise in—impregnated with the essence of a cursed Jew! —Wretch! you shall die—you shall die."

He made a grasp at me, and missing his foot, fell on the ground in such a state of drunkenness as not to be able to get up again. I knew that when he became sober, he would not forget what had taken place, and that I should be sacrificed to his vengeance. The fear of death, and the wine which I had drunk, decided me how to act. I dragged him into an empty pipe, put the head in, hooped it up, and rolling it into the tier, filled it with wine.

Thus did I revenge my poor master, and relieved myself from any further molestation on the part of the aga.

"What!" cried the pacha, in a rage, "you drowned a true believer—an aga of janissaries! Thou dog of a Kafir—thou son of Shitan—and dare avow it! Call in the executioner."

"Mercy! your sublime highness, mercy!" cried the Greek. "Have I not your promise by the sword of the Prophet? Besides, he was no true believer, or he would not have disobeyed the law. A good Mussulman will never touch a drop of wine."

"I promised to forgive, and did forgive, the murder of the black slave; but an aga of janissaries!—Is not that quite another thing?" appealed the pacha to Mustapha.

"Your highness is just in your indignation—the Kafir deserves to be impaled. Yet there are two considerations which your slave ventures to submit to your sublime wisdom. The first is, that your highness gave an unconditional promise, and swore by the sword of the Prophet."

"Staffir Allah! what care I for that! Had I sworn to be a true believer, it were something."

"The other is, that the slave has not yet finished his story, which appears to be interesting."

"Wallah! that is true. Let him finish his story."

But the Greek slave remained with his face on the ground; and it was not until a renewal of the promise, sworn upon the holy standard made out of the nether garments of the Prophet, by the pacha, who had recovered his temper, and was anxious for the conclusion of the story, that he could be induced to proceed, which he did as follows:

As soon as I had bunged up the cask, I went down to the yard where the aga had left his horse, and having severely wounded the poor beast with his sword, I let it loose, that it might gallop home. The noise of the horse's hoofs in the middle of the night aroused his family, and when they discovered that it was wounded and without its rider, they imagined that the aga had been attacked and murdered by the banditti when he had followed his troops. They sent to me, to ask at what time he had left my house; I replied, an hour after dark—that he was very much intoxicated at the time—and had left his sabre, which I returned. They had no suspicions of the real facts, and it was believed that he had perished on the road.

I was now rid of my dangerous acquaintance, and although he certainly had drunk a great quantity of my wine, yet I recovered the value of it with interest, from the flavour which I obtained from his body, and which I imparted to the rest of my stock. I raised him up alongside of the two other casks; and my trade was more profitable and my wines in greater repute than ever.

But one day the cadì, who had heard my wine extolled, came privately to my house; I bowed to the ground at the honour conferred, for I had long wished to have him as a customer. I drew some of my best. "This, honourable sir," said I, presenting the glass, "is what I call my aga wine: the late aga was so fond of it, he used to order a whole cask at once to his house, and had it taken there in a litter."

"A good plan," replied the cadì, "much better than sending a slave with a pitcher, which gives occasion for remarks: I will do the same; but, first, let me taste all you have."

He tasted several casks, but none pleased him so much as the first which I had recommended. At last he cast his eyes upon the three casks raised above the others.

"And what are those?" inquired he.

"Empty casks, sir," replied I; but he had his stick in his hand, and he struck one.

"Greek, thou tellest me these casks are empty, but they do not sound so; I suspect that thou hast better wine than I have tasted: draw me off from these immediately."

I was obliged to comply—he tasted them—vowed that the wine was exquisite, and that he would purchase the whole. I stated to him that the wine in those casks was used for flavouring the rest; and that the price was enormous, hoping that he would not pay it. He inquired how much—I asked him four times the price of the other wines.

"Agreed," said the cadì; "it is dear—but one cannot have good wine without paying for it: it is a bargain."

I was very much alarmed; and stated that I could not part with those casks, as I should not be able to carry on my business with reputation, if I lost the means of flavouring my wines, but all in vain; he said that I had asked a price and he had agreed to give it. Ordering his slaves to bring a litter, he would not leave the store until the whole of the casks were carried away, and thus did I lose my Ethiopian, my Jew, and my aga.

As I knew that the secret would soon be discovered, the very next day I prepared for my departure. I received my money from the cadì, to whom I stated my intention to leave, as he had obliged me to sell him those wines, and I had no longer hopes of carrying on my business with success. I again begged him to allow me to have them back, offering him three pipes of wine as a present if he would consent, but it was of no use. I chartered a vessel, which I loaded with the rest of my stock; and, taking all my money with me, made sail for Corfu, before any discovery had taken place. But we encountered a heavy gale of wind, which, after a fortnight (during which we attempted in vain to make head against it), forced us back to Smyrna. When the weather

moderated, I directed the captain to take the vessel into the outer roadstead that I might sail as soon as possible. We had not dropped anchor again more than five minutes when I perceived a boat pulling off from the shore in which was the cadi and the officers of justice.

Convinced that I was discovered, I was at a loss how to proceed, when the idea occurred to me that I might conceal my own body in a cask, as I had before so well concealed those of others.

I called the captain down into the cabin, and telling him that I had reason to suspect that the cadi would take my life, offered him a large part of the cargo if he would assist me.

The captain who, unfortunately for me, was a Greek, consented. We went down into the hold, started the wine out of one of the pipes, and having taken out the head, I crawled in, and was hooped up.

The cadi came on board immediately afterwards and inquired for me. The captain stated that I had fallen overboard in the gale, and that he had in consequence returned, the vessel not being consigned to any house at Corfu.

“Has then the accursed villain escaped my vengeance!” exclaimed the cadi; “the murderer that fines his wines with the bodies of his fellow-creatures: but you may deceive me, Greek, we will examine the vessel.”

The officers who accompanied the cadi proceeded carefully to search every part of the ship. Not being able to discover me, the Greek captain was believed; and, after a thousand imprecations upon my soul, the cadi and his people departed.

I now breathed more freely, notwithstanding I was nearly intoxicated with the lees of the wine which impregnated the wood of the cask, and I was anxious to be set at liberty; but the treacherous captain had no such intention, and never came near me. At night he cut his cable and made sail, and I overheard a conversation between two of the men, which made known to me his intentions: these were to throw me overboard on his passage, and take possession of my property. I cried out to them from the bung-hole: I screamed for mercy, but in vain. One of them answered, that, as I had murdered others, and put them into casks, I should now be treated in the same manner.

I could not but mentally acknowledge the justice of my punishment, and resigned myself to my fate; all that I wished was to be thrown over at once and released from my misery. The momentary anticipation of death appeared to be so much worse than the reality. But it was ordered otherwise: a gale of wind blew up with such force, that the captain and crew had enough to do to look after the vessel, and either I was forgotten or my doom was postponed until a more seasonable opportunity.

On the third day I heard the sailors observe that, with such a wretch as I was remaining on board, the vessel must inevitably be lost. The hatches were then opened: I was hoisted up and cast into the raging sea. The bung of the cask was out, but by stuffing my handkerchief in when the hole was under water, I prevented the cask from filling; and when it was uppermost, I removed it for a moment to obtain fresh air. I was dreadfully bruised by the constant rolling, in a heavy sea, and completely worn out with fatigue and pain; I had made up my mind to let the water in and be rid of my life, when I was tossed over and over with such dreadful rapidity as prevented my taking the precaution of keeping out the water. After three successive rolls of the same kind, I found that the cask, which had been in the surf, had struck on the beach. In a moment after, I heard voices, and people came up to the cask and rolled me along. I would not speak, lest they should be frightened, and allow me to remain on the beach, where I might again be tossed about by the waves; but as soon as they stopped, I called in a faint voice from the bung-hole, begging them for mercy’s sake to let me out.

At first they appeared alarmed; but, on my repeating my request, and stating that I was the owner of the ship which was off the land, and the captain and crew had mutinied and tossed me overboard, they brought some tools and set me at liberty.

The first sight that met my eyes after I was released was my vessel lying a wreck, each wave that hurled her further on the beach breaking her more and more to pieces. She was already divided amidships, and the white foaming surf was covered with pipes of wine, which, as fast as they were cast on shore, were rolled up by the same people who had released me. I was so worn out, that I fainted where I lay. When I came to, I found myself in a cave upon a bundle of capotes, and perceived a party of forty or fifty men, who were sitting by a large fire, and emptying with great rapidity one of my pipes of wine.

As soon as they observed that I was coming to my senses, they poured some wine down my throat, which restored me. I was then desired by one of them, who seemed to be the chief, to approach.

“The men who have been saved from the wreck,” said he, “have told me strange stories of your enormous crimes—now, sit down, and tell me the truth—if I believe you, you shall have justice—I am *cadi* here—if you wish to know where you are, it is upon the island of Ischia—if you wish to know in what company, it is in the society of those who by illiberal people are called pirates: now tell the truth.”

I thought that with pirates my story would be received better than with other people, and I therefore narrated my history to them, in the same words that I now have to your highness. When I had finished, the captain of the gang observed:

“Well, then, as you acknowledge to have killed a slave, to have assisted at the death of a Jew, and to have drowned an *aga*, you certainly deserve death; but, on consideration of the excellence of the wine, and the secret which you have imparted to us, I shall commute your sentence. As for the captain and the remainder of the crew, they have been guilty of treachery and piracy on the high seas—a most heinous offence, which deserves instant death: but, as it is by their means that we have been put in possession of the wine, I shall be lenient. I therefore sentence you all to hard labour for life. You shall be sold as slaves in Cairo, and we will pocket the money and drink your wine.

The pirates loudly applauded the justice of a decision by which they benefited, and all appeal on our parts was useless. When the weather became more settled, we were put on board one of their small *xebeques*, and on our arrival at this port were exposed for sale and purchased.

Such, pacha, is the history which induced me to make use of the expression which you wished to be explained; and I hope you will allow that I have been more unfortunate than guilty, as on every occasion in which I took away the life of another, I had only to choose between that and my own.

“Well, it is rather a curious story,” observed the pacha, “but still, if it were not for my promise, I certainly would have your head off for drowning the *aga*—I consider it excessively impertinent in an unbelieving Greek to suppose that his life is of the same value as that of an *aga* of janissaries, and follower of the Prophet; but, however, my promise was given, and you may depart.”

“The wisdom of your highness is brighter than the stars of the heaven,” observed Mustapha. “Shall the slave be honoured with your bounty?”

“*Mashallah!* bounty! I’ve given him his life, and, as he considers it of more value than an *aga*’s, I think ’tis a very handsome present. Drown an *aga*, indeed!” continued the pacha, rising.

“But it certainly was a very curious story. Let it be written down, Mustapha. We’ll hear the other man to-morrow.”