

slaves in Barbary, in which they make a sort of an affidavit, that such a one, a renegade, is an honest man, and has always been kind to the Christians, and has a mind to make his escape on the first occasion. Some there are who procure these certificates with an honest design, and remain among Christians as long as they live; but others get them on purpose to make use of them when they go a pirating on the Christian shores; for then if they are shipwrecked or taken, they show these certificates, and say, that thereby may be seen the intention with which they came in the Turks' company; to wit, to get an opportunity of returning to Christendom. By this means they escape the first fury of the Christians, and are seemingly reconciled to the church without being hurt; afterwards they take their time, and return to Barbary to be what they were before.

One of these renegades was my friend, and he had certificates from us all, by which we gave him much commendation: but if the Moors had caught him with those papers about him, they would have burnt him alive. I knew that not only he understood the Arabic tongue, but also that he could both speak and write it currently. But yet before I resolved

to trust him entirely, I bid him read me that paper, which I had found by chance. He opened it, and was a good while looking upon it, and construing it to himself. I asked him if he understood it; he said, Yes, very well; and that, if I would give him pen, ink, and paper, he would translate it word for word. We furnished him with what he desired, and he went to work. Having finished his translation, he said, "All that I have here put into Spanish is word for word what is in the Arabic; only observe, that wherever the paper says *Lela Marien*, it means our Lady the Virgin Mary." The contents were thus:

"When I was a child, my father had a slave, who taught me in my tongue the Christian worship, and told me a great many things of *Lela Marien*.¹ The Christian slave died, and I am sure she went not to the fire, but is with Alla, for I have seen her twice since; and she bid me go to the land of the Christians to see *Lela Marien*, who had a great kindness for me. I do not know what is the matter; but though I have seen many Christians out of this window, none has appeared to me so much a

¹ See Appendix, Note 4, Chapter XIII., Book IV.

gentleman as thyself. I am very handsome and young, and can carry with me a great deal of money, and other riches. Consider whether thou canst bring it to pass that we may escape together, and then thou shalt be my husband in thy own country, if thou art willing; but if thou art not, it is all one, Lela Marien will provide me a husband. I wrote this myself; have a care to whom thou givest it to read; do not trust any Moor, because they are all treacherous; and in this I am much perplexed, and could wish there were not a necessity of trusting any one; because if my father should come to know it, he would certainly throw me into a well, and cover me over with stones. I will tie a thread to a cane, and with that thou mayest fasten thy answer; and if thou canst not find any one to write in Arabick, make me understand thy meaning by signs; for Lela Marien will help me to guess it. She and Alla keep thee, as well as this cross, which I often kiss, as the Christian slave bid me do."

You may imagine, gentlemen, that we were in admiration at the contents of this paper, and withal overjoyed at them, which we expressed so openly, that the renegade came to under-

stand that the paper was not found by chance, but that it was really writ by some one among us; and accordingly he told us his suspicion, and desired us to trust him entirely, and that he would venture his life with us to procure us our liberty. Having said this, he pulled a brass crucifix out of his bosom, and, with many tears, swore by the God which it represented, and in whom he, though a wicked sinner, did firmly believe, to be true and faithful to us with all secrecy in what we should impart to him; for he guessed, that by the means of the woman who had writ that letter, we might all of us recover our lost liberty; and he, in particular, might obtain what he had so long wished for, to be received again into the bosom of his mother the church, from whom, for his sins, he had been cut off as a rotten member. The renegade pronounced all this with so many tears, and such signs of repentance, that we were all of opinion to trust him, and tell him the whole truth of the business. We showed him the little window out of which the cane used to appear, and he from thence took good notice of the house, in order to inform himself who lived in it. We next agreed that it would be necessary to answer the Moorish lady's note. So, immediately the

renegade writ down what I dictated to him, which was exactly as I shall relate; for I have not forgot the least material circumstance of this adventure, nor can I forget them as long as I live. The words then were these:—

“The true Alla keep thee, my dear lady, and that blessed Virgin, which is the true mother of God, and has inspired thee with the design of going to the land of the Christians. Do thou pray her that she would be pleased to make thee understand how thou shalt execute what she has commanded thee; for she is so good that she will do it. On my part, and on that of the Christians who are with me, I offer to do for thee all we are able, even to the hazard of our lives. Fail not to write to me, and give me notice of thy resolution, for I will always answer thee; the Great Alla having given us a Christian slave, who can read and write thy language, as thou mayest perceive by this letter; so that thou mayest, without fear, give us notice of all thy intentions. As for what thou sayest, that as soon as thou shalt arrive in the land of the Christians, thou designest to be my wife, I promise thee on the word of a good Christian, to take thee for my wife; and thou mayest be assured that the

Christians perform their promises better than the Moors. Alla and his mother Mary be thy guard, my dear lady.”

Having writ and closed this note, I waited two days till the bagnio was empty, and then I went up on the terrace, the ordinary place of our conversation, to see if the cane appeared, and it was not long before it was stirring. As soon as it appeared I showed my note, that the thread might be put to the cane, but I found that was done to my hand; and the cane being let down, I fastened the note to it. Not long after the knot was let fall, and I, taking it up, found in it several pieces of gold and silver, above fifty crowns, which gave us infinite content, and fortified our hopes of obtaining at last our liberty. That evening our renegade came to us, and told us, he had found out that the master of that house was the same Moor we had been told of, called Agimorato, extremely rich, and who had one only daughter to inherit all his estate; that it was the report of the whole city that she was the handsomest maid in all Barbary, having been demanded in marriage by several bassas and viceroys, but that she had always refused to marry. He also told us, that he had learned she had a Christian

slave who was dead, all which agreed with the contents of the letter. We immediately held a council with the renegade, about the manner we should use to carry off the Moorish lady, and go altogether to Christendom; when at last we agreed to expect the answer of Zoraida, for that is the name of the lady who now desires to be called Mary; as well knowing she could best advise the overcoming all the difficulties that were in our way; and after this resolution, the renegade assured us again, that he would lose his life, or deliver us out of captivity.

The bagnio was four days together full of people, and all that time the cane was invisible; but as soon as it returned to its solitude, the cane appeared, with a knot much bigger than ordinary; having untied it, I found in it a letter, and a hundred crowns in gold. The renegade happened that day to be with us, and we gave him the letter to read; which he said contained these words:—

“I cannot tell, sir, how to contrive that we may go together for Spain; neither has Lela Marien told it me, though I have earnestly asked it of her. All I can do is to furnish you out of this window with a great deal of riches.

Buy your ransom and your friends' with that, and let one of you go to Spain, and buy a bark there, and come and fetch the rest. As for me, you shall find me in my father's garden out of town, by the sea-side, not far from Babasso gate, where I am to pass all the summer with my father and my maids; from which you may take me without fear, in the night-time, and carry me to your bark; but remember thou art to be my husband, and if thou failest in that, I will desire Lela Marien to chastise thee. If thou canst not trust one of thy friends to go for the bark, pay thy own ransom and go thyself; for I trust thou wilt return sooner than another, since thou art a gentleman and a Christian. Find out my father's garden, and I will take care to watch when the bagnio is empty, and let thee have more money. Alla keep my dear lord.”

These were the contents of the second letter we received. Upon the reading of it, every one of us offered to be the man that should go and buy the bark, promising to return with all punctuality; but the renegade opposed that proposition, and said, he would never consent that any of us should obtain his liberty before the rest; because experience had taught him,

that people once free do not perform what they promise when captives; and that some slaves of quality had often used that remedy, to send one either to Valencia or Majorca, with money to buy a bark, and come back and fetch the rest; but that they never returned, because the joy of having obtained their liberty, and the fear of losing it again, made them forget what they had promised, and cancelled the memory of all obligations. To confirm which he related to us a strange story, which had happened in those parts, as there often does among the slaves. After this, he said, that all that could be done, was for him to buy a bark with the money which should redeem one of us; that he could buy one in Algiers, and pretend to turn merchant, and deal between Algiers and Tetuan; by which means, he being master of the vessel, might easily find out some way of getting us out of the bagnio, and taking us on board; and especially if the Moorish lady did what she promised, and gave us money to pay all our ransoms; for, being free, we might embark even at noon-day; but the greatest difficulty would be, that the Moors do not permit renegades to keep any barks but large ones, fit to cruise upon Christians; for they believe that a renegade, particularly a Spaniard, seldom

buys a bark, but with a design of returning to his own country. That, however, he knew how to obviate that difficulty, by taking a Tagarin Moor for his partner both in the bark and trade, by which means he should still be master of her, and then all the rest would be easy. We durst not oppose this opinion, though we had more inclination every one of us to go to Spain for a bark, as the lady had advised; but were afraid that if we contradicted him, as we were at his mercy, he might betray us, and bring our lives to danger; particularly if the business of Zoraida should be discovered, for whose liberty and life we would have given all ours; so we determined to put ourselves under the protection of God and the renegade. At the same time we answered Zoraida, telling her, that we would do all she advised, which was very well, and just as if Lela Marien herself had instructed her; and that now it depended on her alone to give us the means of bringing this design to pass. I promised her once more to be her husband. After this, in two days that the bagnio happened to be empty, she gave us, by the means of the cane, two thousand crowns of gold; and withal a letter, in which she let us know, that the next Juma, which is their Friday, she was to go to

her father's garden, and that, before she went, she would give us more money; and if we had not enough, she would upon our letting her know it, give us what we should think sufficient; for her father was so rich that he would hardly miss it; and so much the less, because he entrusted her with the keys of all his treasure. We presently gave the renegade five hundred crowns to buy the bark, and I paid my own ransom with eight hundred crowns, which I put into the hands of a merchant at Valencia, then in Algiers, who made the bargain with the king, and had me to his house upon parole, to pay the money upon the arrival of the first bark from Valencia; for if he had paid down the money immediately, the king might have suspected the money had been ready, and lain some time in Algiers, and that the merchant for his own profit had concealed it; and, in short, I durst not trust my master with ready money, knowing his distrustful and malicious nature. The Thursday preceding that Friday that Zoraida was to go to the garden, she let us have a thousand crowns more; desiring me, at the same time, that if I paid my ransom, I would find out her father's garden, and contrive some way of seeing her there. I answered in few words, that I would do as she

desired, and she should only take care to recommend us to Lela Marien, by those prayers which the Christian slave had taught her. Having done this, order was taken to have the ransom of my three friends paid also; lest they, seeing me at liberty, and themselves not so, though there was money to set them free, should be troubled in mind, and give way to the temptation of the devil, in doing something that might redound to the prejudice of Zoraida; for though the consideration of their quality ought to have given me security of their honour, yet I did not think it proper to run the least hazard in the matter; so they were redeemed in the same manner, and by the same merchant, that I was, who had the money beforehand; but we never discovered to him the remainder of our intrigue, as not being willing to risk the danger there was in so doing.