

Humanity in Algiers: or, the Story of Azem.

Prepared by Duncan Faherty (Queens College and the CUNY Graduate Center) and Ed White (Tulane University).

The author of *Humanity in Algiers* is unknown, but it may be possible to extrapolate from the novella's printer, Robert Moffitt, active in the Troy, New York region from 1796 until his death in 1807. While Moffitt's primary publishing venture appears to have been the successful regional newspaper *The Northern Budget*, he also published (first under his sole name, later with Zebulon Lyon, then with Oliver Lyon) a number of Baptist writings. These included the *Minutes of the Shaftsbury Baptist Association* (from 1800 to 1806), the records of a large consortium of churches in the area where New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont intersect; Matthew Adgate's *A Northern Light; or A New Index to the Bible* (1800); the narrative of the travels of Baptist missionary Lemuel Covell (1804); the hymns of Joshua Smith and Samson Occom (1803); Cornelius Jones's *History of Baptism* (1801); and a medically-oriented study of electricity with strong theological inflections. *Humanity in Algiers* appeared in 1801 in that denominational context, and its subscribers' list was drawn from many communities in the Shaftsbury Baptist Association region. (Among these subscribers was the prominent African-American minister Lemuel Haynes, active in the Rutland, Vermont, area.)

It appears, too, that the political orientation of this reading community was "Republican," emerging from New York's antifederalists (among whom Matthew Adgate was

prominent) and linked with the national Democratic-Republican party of Thomas Jefferson: within New York state politics, Moffitt appears to have been aligned with a broadly democratizing trend among upstate New York farmers against the concentration of mercantile and banking power in New York City. We might also speculate that this reading community was somewhat local. We have been unable to find advertisements for the novel outside of the region of the Shaftsbury Baptist Association, and copies were still on sale in Rutland, Vermont in 1805 and in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1811, apparently from the original Troy printing. As with many publications of this time, copies may not have circulated far out of the region, or perhaps outside of the cultural community.¹

Keeping the scope of the novella's audience in mind helps us think about its possible significance in the growing abolition movement. In 1794, a Philadelphia convention tried to bring together delegates from a number of abolition societies. Its small size and narrow reach aside, the aspiration for a national-level movement—and political solution—was clear, though practical advances were largely won at the state and local levels. Many abolition groups had a denominational orientation, meaning that abolitionist arguments were couched in spiritual and theological terms and often linked with institutional practices and pressures. In addition, they were typically gradualist in orientation, arguing for the long-term, phasing out of slavery to

¹ The tri-state area was relatively populous though. For example, while Troy's 1800 population was around 5000 people, significantly less than major coastal cities like New York (~60,500), Philadelphia (~41,000), Baltimore (~26,500), or Boston (~25,000), it was nonetheless on a par with cities like Albany, Savannah, Richmond, New Haven, and New London (all cities of 4500 to 6000 people).

minimize its economic impact upon slave-owners. In *Humanity*, the character of Omri (who is given perhaps the most Hebraic name) seems to demonstrate these tendencies, developing a rhetorical strategy to argue for manumission within his social community.

At the same time, three important trends converged around the Algerian (“Algerine”) setting. First, Algiers was notorious as the primary North African site of slavery for white North Americans. Thousands of sailors, generally Europeans and North Americans, experienced slavery in Islamic coastal sovereignties in the southern Mediterranean, with several publishing popular captivity narratives: these have come to be known as Barbary captivity narrative after the Barbary (or Berber) coast of northern Africa. This captivity phenomenon allowed abolitionists to imagine African slavery in reverse: whites unjustly kidnapped, torn from families, to languish in servitude. At the same time, this adversarial contact with Algiers and other Muslim states meant that Algerians sometimes figured as compelling cultural Others looking at the new United States. In 1787, Peter Markoe, for example, had published an account of the United States from the point-of-view of an “Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania.” Finally, a growing body of ethnographic literature was appearing describing African societies as complex, historically rich cultures. If these works often paved the way for European imperialists, they were also counter-deployed by abolitionists in works like (most famously) Anthony Benezet’s *That Part of Africa Inhabited by the Negroes, and the Manner by Which the Slave-Trade is Carried On* (1762, and frequently cited and reprinted). As a result, a literature about slavery began to appear drawing variously on these tendencies. In 1790, for example,

Benjamin Franklin published an ironic defense of the enslavement of Christians in the voice of a Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, “a member of the Divan of Algiers.” And 1797 saw the publication of the abolitionist poem “The American in Algiers, or the Patriot of Seventy-Six in Captivity” as well as Royall Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive*, a two-volume novel exploring white enslavement. *Humanity in Algiers* marked a slightly later attempt to imagine the dynamics of abolition within a foreign context, and interestingly without the usual anti-Islamic rhetoric of many discussions.

Suggestions for further reading: Perhaps the first critic to take note of *Humanity in Algiers* was Henri Petter, who described it as a tale “designed to illustrate the hardships endured by slaves, whether Americans in Algiers or Negroes in the United States”; see, Petter, *The Early American Novel* (Ohio State University Press, 1971), 294. James R. Lewis briefly mentions *Humanity*, in conjunction with Royal Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive*, as deploying a narrative “strategy of using Barbary slavery to condemn North American slavery”; see Lewis, “Savages of the Seas: Barbary Captivity Tales and Images of Muslims in the Early Republic,” *Journal of American Culture* 13:2 (1990), 83. Robert Allison groups *Humanity* among a number of Barbary captivity themed antislavery tracts, and concludes that that the novel “offered Americans a choice in redeeming their souls and nation”; see, Allison, *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 95. Anouar Majid reads *Humanity* as an autobiographical account of captivity, suggesting that the narrative exposes the “hypocrisy and double standards” of the U.S. in regards to slavery by presenting “a remarkable twist of fate, a benevolent black African [who]

helps a white American regain his freedom”; see Majid, *Freedom and Orthodoxy: Islam and Difference in the Post-Andalusian Age* (Stanford University Press, 2004), 97. Timothy Marr considers how *Humanity* mimics the tropes of the oriental tale in order to present a “view of Islam as a potentially benevolent system of morality”; see Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 145. Hester Blum ranks *Humanity* alongside a number of other early nineteenth century literary works which imitate the language of captivity narratives written by sailors to underscore “the hypocrisy of white Americans” in condemning white slavery in North Africa while continuing to profit from the enslavement of black Africans in the U.S.; see Blum, *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea Narratives* (University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 56.

For more information about Barbary Captivity more generally see, Paul Baepler, “The Barbary Captivity Narrative in American Culture,” *Early American Literature*, 39.2 (2004), 217-246. For more information about religious publishing and reform movements see, David Paul Nord, “Benevolent Books: Printing, Religion, and Reform,” in *A History of the Book in America, Volume 2: An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 221-246.

HUMANITY IN ALGIERS: OR, THE STORY OF AZEM.

BY AN AMERICAN, LATE A SLAVE IN ALGIERS.

“I found them free, and free they must remain,
“Till they inthral themselves: I else must change
“Their nature, and revoke the high decree
“Unchangeable, eternal, which ordain’d
“Their freedom”—(says JEHOVAH.)

MILTON.²

TROY:
PRINTED BY R. MOFFITT & CO.

1801.

² The lines are from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, iii.124-48, though in the original this passage, spoken by God, begins “I formd them free, and free they must remain...” It is unclear if this is a printer’s error or a deliberate change to depict the European incursions in Africa (i.e., finding Africans free, leaving them free).

PREFACE.

UNCONSCIOUS of our own crimes, or unwilling the world should know them, we frequently condemn in others the very practices we applaud in ourselves; and, wishing to pass for patterns of uprightness, or blinded by interest, pass sentence upon the conduct of others less culpable than ourselves. ‘Let her be burnt,’ was the judgment given by the Patriarch against his daughter-in-law, for a crime which himself had caused her to commit.³ With the same impropriety on our part do we reprobate the Algerines. ‘A vile, piratical set of unprincipled robbers,’ is the softest name we can give them;⁴ forgetful of our former depredations on the coasts of Africa, and the cruel manner in which we at present treat the offspring of those whom we brought from thence. When the Algerines yoke our citizens to the plough, or compel them to labour at the oar, they only retaliate on us for similar barbarities.

Taught and accustomed from infancy to think our own religious creed the only mark of civilization, we can scarcely think it possible that a Mahometan should possess a feeling heart, or perform a virtuous deed. The following history (the authenticity of which may be relied on) will, however, demonstrate to every reader, that there is Humanity in Algiers.

If any excuse for want of elegance of style should be thought necessary, the long and tiresome servitude from which the Author is just relieved, must be his apology.

The AUTHOR.

³ See Genesis 38:24

⁴ The anonymous author appears to be quoting a much circulated “Essay on Negro Slavery,” which appeared in the magazine *The American Museum* in 1788, signed by “Othello” from “Maryland.” In that essay, the author spoke of the “lawless, piratical set of unprincipled robbers.”

INTRODUCTION.

TWELVE years ago, employed by a gentleman to transact some business in one of the East India islands, I embarked with Capt. O’Brien on the 10th of May, 1785.⁵ The wind and weather being fair, all hands on board were extremely happy—when, on the evening of the 20th of June, we heard several cannon fired, as we supposed, three leagues from us. We paid no attention to this.—But, Heavens! what was our surprise when the morning light appeared, and we found ourselves within cannon-shot of a corsair of Algiers!—All resistance on our part proved vain. We were taken, carried to Algiers, and sold for slaves in the market. It was my lot to be purchased by a rich planter, who carried me to his house, sixteen miles from the city.

Finding Heaven had ordained my future life to be spent in slavery, I endeavoured to reconcile myself to my condition. I considered my state no worse, if so bad, as that of thousands in my own country. My father, I knew, had a man and woman slave; and I had often heard him say they were happier than he was: and he would always be angry if any person appeared but to think he held them unjustly in bondage. ‘Have I not paid my money for them? and consequently they are of right my own,’ says my father. This same kind of right, I knew, my Algerine master had to me. I was determined, therefore, to serve him with the utmost fidelity. By these means I gained his affection, and he often spoke in my praise to others.

I had served him nine long years, when a gentleman from the city happening to pass our plantation, his horse, frightened by

⁵ The author here refers to Richard O’Brien, captain of the *Dauphin*, a ship captured by Algerine pirates in July, 1785. O’Brien was a prisoner for ten years, and eventually became the US consul to Algiers. The names of the *Dauphin* survivors are known, but we have not found any connections with this narrative.

the sudden appearance of a goat that leaped across the way, threw him from the saddle. I was at work near by; and, seeing the accident, ran to his relief. Lifting him in my arms, I carried him to my master's house. He had fainted; but, soon recovering, enquired who it was that had brought him in. My master told him it was his American slave—and added many things of my fidelity and good conduct.

The gentleman then, turning to me, said, 'Man, would you wish to be free?' I answered, that I loved, and longed to see my native country. He then told me it was in his power to grant my wishes; for he had the disposal of a legacy, which, once in every year, was to purchase the freedom of some honest slave. I replied, that, although I respected my master, I had left a wife and child in America; and that, of all blessings, to me a sight of them would be the greatest. That evening he bargained with my master, and paid him his price for me; and the next day we set out for Algiers.

On our way, he told me the whole story of Azem, whose legacy had purchased my freedom: that he had been dead for several years, and, having no heirs, had directed in his will, that the interest of his estate should yearly purchase the freedom of some honest slave.

After I arrived at the city, and the Dey⁶ had signed a certificate of my freedom, I was anxious to learn the history of my dearest benefactor. I found that Azem had been well known by many persons of note in town; and, while I waited for a passage, I collected the following account—which the reader may rely upon as facts; as I have been very careful to narrate nothing but what I had from the best authority.

AN AMERICAN.

STORY OF AZEM.

CHAP. I.

UPON the plains of Natola, near the beautiful river Tenun,⁷ Selictor, a wealthy husbandman, lived, and in quietude enjoyed all the pleasures of that delightful country. From a small beginning in the world, he had collected a considerable fortune. He had been brought up in the habits of industry, and early taught the method of business. His amiable wife, Sequida, was born and educated in Constantinople.⁸ In her youth she was handsome beyond compare; and, when advanced in years, her good sense and enlivening turn in conversation, rendered her presence welcome in every company.

Not many years after they were married, the treachery of a confidant had almost proved their ruin. They had but just began to collect an interest⁹ when this unfortunate affair took place.

In order to extricate themselves from the difficulty into which this had involved them, they were obliged to sell their patrimony. This change in their situation Selictor bore with uncommon fortitude: While Sequida, a pattern of patience, never once upbraided her husband, or found fault in his hearing. When their creditors forcibly took away their household furniture, she murmured not a word: a tear would sometimes steal a passage from her eyes, which with care she concealed from Selictor.—But when their all was sold, and found insufficient to discharge the

⁷ *Tenun, Natola*: these appear to be fictional locations.

⁸ *Constantinople*: present-day Istanbul, and in the early 19C the center of the Ottoman Empire.

⁹ *Collect an interest*: to receive the interest from a loan or investment.

⁶ *the Dey*: the executive ruler of the Algiers regency.

demands against them, and when it was told her that Selictor was confined in prison, her grief was no longer restrained within bounds. Almost distracted, she walked the room, while a chrystal torrent flowed down her cheeks. A long time she was silent; but at last, getting the better of her grief, she thus complained. 'My ever lovely Selictor! must we thus be parted? Must others give law to our meetings? Must yon iron walls be the limit of thy walks, while the cruel master within, as his pleasure or interest may suit, suffers thee to see thy wife and child? What has my Selictor done, that he is deprived of liberty, God's greatest blessing? Not one can accuse him of falsehood or crime; yet, as if guilty of all, he is forbid the enjoyment of that, without which there is nothing that will bear the name of happiness. O Liberty! without thee none can taste of joy; the honeycomb, to the wretch deprived of thee, is nauseous as the bitterest gall, and the light of morning hateful as the mantle of midnight.'

While she was thus indulging her sorrows, Selictor arrived—The generosity of a friend had set him free. No language can paint the transports at this happy meeting. Tears of joy rolled down Sequida's face. Selictor clasped her in his arms, and said, 'I grieve, my dear, that fortune has ordained such fate for thee: But if thou canst still love thy Selictor, we will retire to the country, far from the treachery and avarice of the town, and spend the remainder of our days in rural love and felicity.'

This proposal Sequida accepted with great satisfaction; and, as soon as they could collect what little was still within their power, they set off for, and arrived safe at Natola.

As they brought no money with them, Selictor was obliged to labour daily for their support, while Sequida taught a little school in the village; which, with the assistance of her needle, which she had early been taught to use, but only as an amusement, now contributed to procure for them the necessaries of life.

In this situation they lived for several years: But their income not increasing with their family, made them think of changing their manner of life. They had already two sons and two daughters. To procure employ and sustenance for these, they hired a farm upon the borders of the river Tenun; and, turning all their attention to husbandry, soon made great proficiency in the business. Selictor, with his sons, attended the business of the farm, while Sequida and her daughters performed whatever was necessary to be done within. Thus serenity crowned their days—the blessings of industry and frugality their reward.

One evening, when all the family were sitting, well pleased, around the cheerful board, some person knocked at the cottage door. It was opened—and, lo! Selin, the brother of Sequida, entered. He was a captain in the army, and, hearing of his sister's retirement, had come to visit her.—Joy sparkled in every countenance. He partook of their rural feast, and tarried all night; but early next morning, preparing to depart, he thus addressed himself to Selictor and Sequida: 'My friends, I had heard of your retreat in the country; and, in order to lessen your labour, and make your lives as happy as was within my power, I have brought you this young servant, who is mine by the most incontestible right, and, according to the custom of our country, bound to serve me during life: For, in a late battle, I took him with my own hand; and may his future usefulness recompence you for the danger I then ran! I now give him to you, desiring, that if he should outlive you, he may go to your eldest son, as a token of my love to you and him. He is young, and can be of no great service immediately: however, he may live the longer, and finally be of great use to you.'—With hearts of gratitude they acknowledged the favour. He then departed to join the army.

CHAP. II.

GREAT pleasure did both Selictor and Sequida take in their young servant, whose name was AZEM. Before he was able to labour, his mistress taught him the knowledge of letters, so that he could read any part of the Alcoran: And careful she was to teach him the faith of Mehometanism,¹⁰ and to instruct him in all the ceremonies of her religion.

Azem, by nature, was ingenious; and, by the indulgence of his master, soon made considerable progress in learning. He was brought up in their family, not as a servant, but as a child: He was intimate and familiar with their children, and was suffered to treat them more like brothers and sisters than as his superiors. They sometimes attempted to command him; but, unlearned to respect their authority, he seldom obeyed. This conduct of Azem towards the children of Selictor, gave them much uneasiness; and as he grew up it became habitual, and impossible to remove.

Azem was now grown to years of manhood; and, having never been taught to obey any other but Selictor, his habits, ideas, and love for liberty, were the same as those of his young masters. Pestoli, Selictor's eldest son, would sometimes intimate, that, upon the death of his parents, Azem was to be his servant. This Azem as often declared he would not consent to.

Thus were matters situated, when Selictor was taken sick; and, being informed by his physician that his disease was incurable, he was anxious so to settle his worldly affairs, as not to entail difficulties upon his family. How to dispose of Azem gave him much trouble and reflection. He had been informed of his refusal to serve his eldest son, and had often observed that he would not obey any other of his children. This brought him to a

¹⁰ *Alcoran*: (Quran, Koran) is the central religious text of Islam. *Mehometanism* was a common, generally antagonistic term for Islam in the west, using a variant of Mohammed's name to stress the religion's inauthenticity.

conclusion that he would sell him the first opportunity, and have the money to be divided between them.

Testador, a neighbouring farmer, no sooner heard that Selictor would sell his servant, than he came and bought him for one hundred and fifty sequins.¹¹—All this was done, and the contract finished, without the knowledge of Azem. Upon his being informed of it, sorrow more keen than ever touched his heart. He believed his master near his end, and had fancied to himself, that Selictor would give him his freedom at his death. But now finding all happiness, with the hopes of regaining his freedom, vanished, he was most wretched indeed. What to think, or how to act, he knew not. It was a new and unexpected scene to him. Without uttering one word of reply, he straight repaired, alone, to the fields, meditating with himself what was best to be done. Sometimes he was almost determined to put an end to his own existence, which had now become insupportably painful. Why, says he to himself, should I prolong a life which is doomed to perpetual servitude, and misery its attendant! Why not rather seek death, since that will be the morning of freedom and the beginning of happiness! Why should I wish to lengthen this life of despair; and, by the daily sweat of my brow, add to the riches of him who has already more than enough! Why not rather choose to die, and gain for myself the riches of Paradise! There no cruel or imperious master ever comes;—there no bloody scourges, to wound the innocent, are ever seen; but there, in common, reign the sweets of liberty.

If the dull ox, whose daily labours for his master's ease, should boldly plunge into some fatal ditch, and by one single effort end a life of painful toil, who is there but would name his conduct wise!

But, ah! through the dark gloom that hangs around my mind, a ray of hope breaks in, and prompts me still to live.—

¹¹ A sequin is one dollar and sixty-six cents. [Note in original. The *sequin* was a Mediterranean currency with origins in the Italian city-states, above all Venice.]

Others, though bound like me, have gained their freedom; and who can tell but joy like this is yet in store for me. Transported with this pleasing hope, he broke forth in the following ejaculation: O gracious God! O Universal Father of all men, who hath formed from the dust all the nations of the earth! Hear now thy creature; for thou disdainest not the works of thy hands. Thou art a God that loveth and rewardeth virtue, although found in the meanest slave; and must eternally hate and punish vice, though covered by the title of master, or the pomp of gold. Thou art a God that searcheth the heart, and respecteth not the person or colour of man; and, as a common blessing, hath bestowed on all thy children life and liberty, which no one can deprive another of, without breaking the laws of nature and his God. O Father of all! does not thy anger and indignation burn against that child, who, by force or fraud, deprives his brother of his birthright, his father's legacy, his paternal blessing!—Hasten the time, O God, when crimes like these shall no longer be found in thy family; when all the members thereof shall know and acknowledge the relation they bear to each other; when each shall do by others as he would wish that they should do by him.—O God! am I certain that freedom will be my portion, as it is now my due? Gratitude and praise to my God and Benefactor shall for ever employ my heart and tongue.

He was then silent; and, resting all his hopes on the goodness of Providence, determined to go and serve his new master. Returning from the field, he found Testador waiting to convey him away. While tears flowed down his cheeks, he sighed a faint farewell to Selector and Sequida, who could scarce refrain from shedding tears. On this occasion, deep sighs alone interrupted a long silence that ensued, which seemed to say, 'I fear we have not done right in thus disposing of this member of our family.' But a review of the money just received soon dissipated the gloom.

CHAP. III.

SELICTOR, finding his strength daily wasting, and wishing to have nothing undone which might ensure the tranquility of the family, sent for Omri, a neighbouring friend, who was likewise his physician.—Omri being come, he delivered him the bag containing the money which he had received for Azem, together with all his other interest; enjoining and requiring of him, that, after his death, he should see the whole equally divided between his wife and children. This Omri promised, deeply impressed with the importance of the trust reposed in him; and grieved to think the situation of his friend demanded such assistance.

Soon after this Selector died, lamented by all his acquaintance. Meanwhile, Azem was employed in the service of his new master: But that love of liberty which grows natural in the breast of every man, had already taken too deep root for his quiet. His situation became hourly more painful. To extricate himself from this load of misery, he was determined to make one effort, and leave the event to fate.

With this view, he arose at midnight, and deserted from Testador's house. All that night, and the next day, he fled; to his speed hope and fear lent wings: But when another night was come, his weary limbs demanded repose. Near the foot of a hill, covered only by the canopy of heaven and the branches of an oak, upon the green turf he laid himself down, and fell into a sound sleep. He had not rested long, when a voice like thunder seemed to sound in his ear. It cried, 'Return, O Azem, to thy master. Have patience, and thou shalt be free.' Startled at the sound, he sprang upon his feet, and, musing a moment upon what he had heard, soon determined to obey the voice, and trust his freedom to the care of Providence. Immediately he began his return, and before the next day's sun was set he arrived at his master's house.

Testador, transported to find that he had not lost his money, so lately paid for Azem, received him again with open arms, and put him to his usual employ, without the least correction.

After this, for several tedious moons, Azem followed his business with diligence; but, finding no relief arise, again grew disconsolate. One evening, after the labour of the day was finished, he went to the house of Omri, in whose hands was deposited his late master's interest. Omri was a man who possessed but a small property in the world; yet his feelings were tender, and his compassion as universal as the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. He had, very early in life, contracted a strong belief that all men were his brothers and his equals by nature, and that it was as great a crime to rob or refuse justice to one set or order of men as another. But, as the situations of some are irreparably wretched, he always thought it his duty to make such as happy as he could, by persuading them to contentment under their fate.

It was with this view that, when Azem, with tears in his eyes, requested Omri to pity, and, if possible, to relieve him from servitude, he made him no other reply than, 'Be faithful, be honest, and the life to come shall reward you for all your sufferings here.' This answer was far from satisfying Azem; but, unable to procure any other, he was obliged to retire without any encouragement to his wishes. In his daily labour he again employed himself, determining to wait yet longer for the fulfillment of that voice which had promised him freedom.

Although Omri had concealed his feelings from Azem, yet his bosom glowed with anxiety for his relief; and, if his own circumstances in life would have permitted, he would instantly have purchased his freedom. But now how to give him relief he knew not. For a long time after Azem was gone out he sat mute; at last he broke out in the following exclamation—"O God! what has this thy creature done, that thou hast ordained for him eternal

chains? Surely thy goodness will not punish without a cause, nor thy mercy inflict without a reason. But thy ways are mysterious, thy wisdom unsearchable, and the secrets of thy providence past finding out. I submit.'

CHAP. IV.

THE next morning Pestoli, Sequida's eldest son, called upon Omri for a part of his father's legacy, which was deposited in his hands. Omri took this opportunity to sound his feelings, and to discover his own mind to him. 'You see here,' says he to Pestoli, 'this bag, containing the money your father received for Azem: It was his request that it should be equally divided between his wife and children. Now tell me, would you not rather have one's year's service from Azem, than your share of the money?' Pestoli answered that he would. 'Then,' says Omri, 'I have this proposal to make to you: Let us return this money to Testador, and bring Azem back to your family; and, after he shall have served each of you faithfully one year, bless him, and let him go out free.' Pestoli replied, that, with all his heart, he would comply with the proposition; and, if his mother, his brother and sisters were of the same mind, they would put it in practice immediately: Adding, that he would use his utmost endeavour to persuade them, if they should not appear inclined.

Omri then went with Pestoli, to consult his mother first on the subject, as her consent obtained would make it easy to gain the approbation of the others concerned. Omri informed her of what he had been talking with her son, and requested to know her opinion in the matter. Sequida, without taking time to reflect, directly answered that she had sold him, and that he would remain a servant for ever, for ought she should do to prevent it: that he was impudent and ungrateful, and would very

probably be idle, if not commit some great crime, if he was free, and left to himself.

Omri, finding her stedfast in her mind, made no reply, but immediately retired, and gave up his plan as totally lost.

The next morning, Leandi, Sequida's youngest son, came and requested of Omri that he would visit his mother; for that she was impatient to see him, and desired him to attend her immediately. Omri, without delay, obeyed the summons; and, coming into the room where Sequida was, found her seated on a sofa, perusing a chapter in the Alcoran. When she beheld Omri, she desired him to draw near, and sit down with her upon the sofa; and, when she had commanded all her children to be present, she said, 'This night have I been troubled in my sleep, and a dream most strange hath disturbed my repose. I have as yet told it to no person; but have sent for thee, in order, if possible, to gain some assistance in finding out the meaning thereof. In my dream, I thought myself seated upon the bank of a most beautiful river, the waters of which were pure; and the winds, which gently blew, brought to my sense a most pleasant odour from a neighbouring grove of spices; and all nature seemed combined to render the scene beyond imagination agreeable. I was deeply engaged in viewing the many beauties in the midst of which I was placed; when, casting my eyes towards the fountain from whence the river flowed, I beheld a man walking apace towards me. In his countenance a ray of divinity seemed to shine; his aspect was serene, and his walk majestic. In his right hand he held what to me appeared a large branch of wormwood, and in his left an earthen vessel. As he drew near, I saw him bruise the wormwood, and fill the vessel with the juice. He came forward; it thundered—and he spake: 'Sequida, attend! I am Mahomet, the seal of all the prophets, the last messenger of God; and, by command from the Great Eternal, have come to bring thee this cup of nectar, this most delicious draught, this wine of heaven. Thus saying, he offered me the cup; but, as I thought I

knew the bitterness it contained, I refused to take thereof. He then assured me that I was ignorant of what pleasure the cup contained; adding, that if it was in reality as disagreeable as I supposed, I ought to take it, in compliance with his command, especially since he had showered so many blessings and sweets around me. I still refused to take the cup. Reflecting with myself what was best to be done, and casting my eyes across the river, I beheld Selictor, my late husband. He stood on the opposite bank, and, beckoning to me, cried aloud, as if he was anxious to have me understand him: But so great was the distance between us, that I could hear nothing that he said, except these words: 'I wish I had.' And, while I was yet attending to the voice of Selictor, I beheld, and lo! the stream that passed between us grew filthy; at the same time a furious east wind began to rise, which immediately blasted all the flowers around me. Mahomet, (who was yet standing silently by) with a commanding austerity in his looks, again offered me the cup, saying, 'Refuse not to drink this heavenly draught, and all the pleasures that so lately surrounded you shall be restored tenfold.' I then, though with reluctance, took the cup, and instantly drank of the contents; when, to my great surprise, I discerned the cup to be made of the finest gold; and, instead of the bitterness which I thought it contained, never did I taste such a pleasing cordial. Immediately the river resumed its wonted pureness, the roses upon the banks blossomed afresh, and all nature smiled like the garden of Paradise. In the midst of this happy scene, my sleep departed from me; I awoke, and behold it was a dream."

After Sequida had thus told her dream, her children expressed their surprize; and all desired to know the interpretation: When Omri, arising from his seat, thus addressed himself to them:—"My friends, God is surely to be praised, who taketh such various means to instruct us in his law, and keep our wandering steps in the path of duty. Although I have never pretended to understand dreams, or thought myself able to

explain the truths of God revealed in visions; yet methinks, at this time, I feel myself inspired, and fully equal to the task: And if I should be assured that you would listen with obedience to what may be enjoined with pleasure, I would attempt to unfold the sacred mystery.'

Sequida then replied, that she hoped Omri did not think her so far inclined to vice, as to refuse compliance with whatever might appear to be the will or law of Heaven: that if he would make known the interpretation of her dream, he should not be unrewarded; and that she should think it not only her duty, but a pleasure to obey whatever it might command. Omri replied, that he should accept of no other reward than the joy her obedience would give him; and, being now convinced of that, if they would hear him without interruption, he would attempt to explain the whole. All were silent, and Omri thus began, addressing himself to Sequida.

'The bank of roses upon which you was seated, is the plenty that now surrounds you. The river is life, which is daily passing and fleeting away. The man you saw walking towards you was indeed Mahomet, our holy law-giver. He cried, 'attend,' and offered you a cup to drink, which you ignorantly thought was filled with bitterness. By this cup is intended the liberty of Azem, which he declares you ought not only to give in compliance with his command, but because he has showered so many blessings around you, whereby you are enabled to live in plenty without the price of his freedom. But, as these motives were not alone sufficient to persuade you, he suffered you to see Selector on the opposite shore of life, anxiously beckoning to you not to let this opportunity pass, without doing what you heard him say, 'I wish I had.' And, as you did not comply with the request, the river grew filthy, and the flowers faded around you. By this you are threatened, that, if you refuse freedom to Azem, your course of life shall become troubled, and the plenty that you now enjoy shall fade and waste away. But, as all those joys were returned

when you drank of the contents of the cup, and found, to your surprise, that it contained a most pleasant cordial; so you are here taught, that, however disagreeable the thought of giving him freedom doth now appear, yet that if once done, you would be sensible of far greater heart-felt satisfaction than you ever experienced before. This is the true interpretation of your dream; be you, therefore, not unwilling to obey the voice of God, whose tender mercies continue over all his works, who heareth the young ravens when they cry to him for food, and who hath kindly taken this method to inform you of your duty, and to deliver one of his children from the bonds of servitude and distress.'

When Omri had thus explained the vision, Pestoli and his two sisters, immediately and at once, declare that they will never defile their hands with the money bought with Azem's liberty; but that if he would consent to serve them for a time, they should esteem it a privilege, but not their due. Sequida then replied, that she knew not how soon she might want her share of the money: that if he was free he might commit some crime, which he would not be liable to if kept in servitude. To this Omri returned: 'Madam, you are already far advanced in years, and the interest that you are already possessed of will, in all human probability, be more than sufficient to carry you through the world; and why will you not give that which you cannot use here, to some charitable purpose, in order to insure to yourself an entrance into the joys of Paradise? The freedom of Azem is a very important object, and has been pointed out by a vision from heaven; and your fear that he will commit some crime, if you bestow on him the blessings of freedom, is not well founded. Have you not brought him up as one of your own children? Have you not taught him to read the Alcoran, and instructed him in the moral law? And from what cause can you suppose that he would, if free, be inclined to vice? Have not freemen more motives to honestly than servants? Surely yes; they have a character to support, which a servant has not; and they have as much punishment to

fear as the meanest slave. Let us, therefore, no longer dispute the will of Heaven: For, although the cup appeared to be made of earth, and to contain nothing but the juice of wormwood, yet are we assured by our holy prophet that it is formed of the purest gold, and contains the most pleasant cordial. Hesitate no longer on the subject, lest you are suddenly called to the court of heaven, to answer for this refusal or neglect. When too late, you will cry, 'I wish I had;' and, through a long series of eternity, lament that you now omitted to do that which might have insured to yourself peace of conscience, joy in reflection, and happiness for evermore.' Here Omri ended, and tears, like torrents, rolled down Sequida's face. For a while she sat silent, not knowing what to answer: At length she clasped Omri by the hand, and said, 'My friend, my warmest thanks are due to you, for the pains you have taken in explaining to me my duty. May my God forgive my late unwillingness to obey his commands.—With pleasure I now consent to the freedom of Azem, and with joy will forego my share of the money to deliver him from servitude.'

Leandi, who had not yet spoke upon the subject, then said that he had no objection to Azem's freedom; but that he thought it reasonable that he should make them some amends for the money they must return to purchase his liberty. Omri replied, that, without a doubt, Azem would repay them in the manner he had proposed to Sequida yesterday, which was, that he would serve each of them for the term of one year—which, if faithfully done, would be more valuable than a share in the money which their father had received for him.

This proposal was immediately agreed to by all; and Omri was desired to call upon Testador, and negotiate the business for them.

Early the next morning Omri went to Testador; and, having agreed to return the money that had been paid for Azem, he sent for him into the room, and told him what was done relating to him, and that his late mistress and her children had

agreed, if he would serve each of them faithfully for one year, to let him go out free. This news was so agreeable and so unexpected to Azem, that he burst forth into tears, and for a time was unable to make any answer: At length, almost overcome with joy, he said, 'What language shall I use to express my gratitude upon this happy occasion? To you, dear Sir, I shall never be able to make such acknowledgments as your kindness to me demands, or as my heart would wish. As for my late mistress and her children, if my life should continue, they shall never have occasion to lament this act of generosity to me.'

Azem then went with Omri; and, being come to the house of his late master, his mistress met him at the door, and with looks and words declared that she was pleased with his return.

Azem then, with a satisfaction which he had never known before, began the service which was to purchase his freedom. So great was the reward promised for his labour, that he scarcely deemed it a burden. The five years seemed to him but a day.¹² How he should serve most faithfully, and render the most essential service to his mistress and family, was now his only study. He now viewed them as his friends and benefactors, and would have sacrificed his life, if necessary, to have purchased their happiness.

Two years he had thus served them, in this profitable and respectful manner, when a circumstance took place which ended in the satisfaction of all.

¹² Many US abolitionist groups advocated "gradualist" approaches to slavery, meaning the slow gradual abolition over years rather than immediate emancipation. This was the legal approach in New York and Pennsylvania, for instance.

CHAP. V.

AZEM was now in the family of Narina, Sequida's eldest daughter, who was lately married, and had removed with her husband into the country of Arabia, where Sequida had just come on a visit. Narina was very beautiful, and had drawn the attention of a young Arab, who, becoming violently enamoured, was determined to take an opportunity, and by some means, if possible, possess the lovely Narina. He had concerted many plans for this purpose; but all to no effect. At length, being informed that her husband was gone to a neighbouring town, he was determined to put in practice his violent design. In the afternoon, Narina and her mother walked out into the field to view the beauties of nature. The young Arab, who had carefully watched them all day, in order to find some opportunity to put his lustful intention into practice, soon followed them; and coming up with Narina, fell down on his knees before her, and declared his passion and love for her. Narina, surprised, expressed her indignation, and bid him begone. Her mother declared her astonishment, and exclaimed against his rudeness. But the lustful Arab, not moved nor altered in his intent by all they could say, taking violent hold of Narina, was going to execute his infernal intention, when Azem, who was at work in an adjoining field, heard the shrieks of his young mistress, and, just in time to save her virtue, came to her relief. The Arab, intoxicated with lust, did not observe his coming; and Narina, who had struggled till her strength was gone, was just yielding to her ravisher. At this instant Azem arrived, and, with one stroke of a club, broke the villain's head. He then took Narina by the hand, and lifted her up. Sequida, at the violence offered her daughter, had fainted, and was just now come to herself; when Azem, going to her, lifted her also from the ground; and,

supporting Sequida with one hand, and Narina with the other, led them to the house.

They had but just arrived when Narina's husband. Being informed of Azem's fidelity, he blest him a thousand times; and, to reward him for the service he had done, gave him free from any other servitude that was due to him—and bestowed on him two hundred sequins, that he might buy his freedom from those he had yet to serve. But, as Azem had thus endeared himself to all the family; by this virtuous act, they refused to take the money; but bade him go free, and deserve their blessing and friendship for ever.

CHAP. VI.

With how little foresight is man endowed! Engaged in the pursuit of any favourite object, he views with indifference all other considerations, and fancies to himself that he shall possess complete felicity, if he should once obtain this darling of his soul. With this conviction he overleaps mountains of difficulty and danger. The deep-gaping wave, the scorching sand, or frozen wild, he traverses with patient fortitude. Opposition but increases his desire, and confirms him in perseverance. Should a friend attempt to dissuade him from his career, by pointing out an object equally valuable, and attainable with ease, he stops his ears with inattention, or opens his mouth with ridicule, nor rests nor turns aside from his pursuit. His midnight pillow is disturbed with future plans, and every day is assiduously employed, until Heaven, to shew the folly of his anxiety, grants him full possession of that which he has so long and ardently sought for. Now ask him if his expectations of happiness are realized—ask him if his slumbers are more quiet, or his days more pleasingly employed than before? He tells you no. Some unexpected

circumstance has blasted half his joys; some latent thorn, sharp-pointed, has pricked his finger while he plucked the rose, the anguish of which disturbs the felicity of possession.

The truth of these observations were never more evident than in the sequel of this history.

CHAP. VII.

AZEM had no sooner gained his freedom, and, in this respect, had all his wishes gratified, than *Love*, that haughty sovereign of the youthful breast, began to issue his commands, and re-ignite in the bosom a spark which before had scarcely been perceived. While his mind was engaged in plans to gain his native liberty, the soft dictates of this passion were but faintly known, even to himself. But now his recollection awakes, and nature beats in every pulse.—So the gay goldfinch, once encaged, forgets his mate, and all those dear sensations that inspired his youthful breast, while he, unbounded, roved from spray to spray¹³: But if some lucky chance should break his wirey prison, how quick he springs, slides through the aperture, and gains at once his liberty and love.

CHAP. VIII.

WHILE Azem was in the service of Testador, he accidentally became acquainted with Alzina, who had also been taken from her native country, and was then a servant in a neighbouring family.

¹³ *Spray*: small or tender twigs or shrubs

Testador's house was situated upon the bank of a small stream, which, after leaving his plantation,¹⁴ unites itself with the river Tenun. The country westward upon the banks of this river, for one hundred furlongs, is pleasant beyond compare. Nature and art have here united their utmost skill, in forming a landscape suited to captivate the imagination of every beholder. Usefulness and beauty, in this place, have kissed each other. From the alcove of Testador's house, to the west, an extensive plain salutes the eye: This is divided into numerous square and well-cultivated fields, in some of which the ripening grain bends with the wind; in some, the loaded fruit-trees, the lemon and the golden orange, ripen; and in others grazing herds of horses, goats and oxen, move along the pastures, or rest reclined upon their grassy bed. The small, but neat and convenient buildings erected in each plantation, adorn the view, and tempt the beholder to give to this delightful spot the name of Elysium.¹⁵

But, if these plains are beautiful and fertile, the country beyond is no less desert and barren. Where these improvements terminate, a craggy rock, just cleft in two, admits the passage of the stream. On this shore is a rough foot-path, where goats, and sometimes the inquisitive traveller passes, until the rocks recede, and form a crescent vale, overspread with lofty trees of pine and sycamore.—To this unfrequented place Azem would often repair, and there lament aloud his wretched fate, and tell the rocks his wishes.

One evening, in the autumn of the year, the moon had risen, and, unobscured by clouds, invited him to this his favourite retreat. He had but just past the rocky footway, and was beginning to enter the vale, when, to his great surprise, not far

¹⁴ *Plantation*: in 1801, the term designated large farming estates, sometimes but not always implying slave labor.

¹⁵ *Elysium*: in Greek mythology, Elysium was the final paradisiacal resting place of gods and select human heroes.

distant he hears a human voice: He stops, and, listening with attention, distinctly hears the following pathetic exclamations.

‘O God of nature—author of my existence! hast thou, then, unalterably fixed my fate? are all my future days to be thus worn out in slavery? Which of thy great commands, O my Maker! has my thoughtless infancy violated, that thou hast ordained this life of wretchedness for me? Snatched in my childhood from the fond bosom of a tender mother, now left childless, sick and widowed to lament my loss; for my unfortunate father too was doomed to bear me company: But he, alas! determined not to survive the loss of liberty and his native country, plunged, the first opportunity, headlong from the ship, and put a period to all his sufferings with life.¹⁶ Oh! had his wretched daughter but followed his example, then should I never have known the severity of a master’s lash, urging me to tasks which my strength is unable to perform, or threatening me with violence unless I gratify his lustful passion. Oh! is it not enough that he has embittered all my days with servitude, but would he rob me of chastity, in which consists all my remains of happiness? O God! what can a feeble maid attempt? to whom can she apply for counsel or redress? Should I presume to fly this land of oppression, the laws, which ought to protect the injured, are my greatest enemies; and certain apprehension and severe punishment would most inevitably be my doom. O God! thou knowest my heart, and seest the anxiety of thy creature. O Thou, who alone givest aid and consolation to the captive! in thee I trust, in thy love and mercy.’—Here she ceased, and, rising up, was just going to return, when she beheld Azem, who had now approached within a few yards of the fallen tree on which she had been seated. The sight of a man so near, and in such a lonely

place, filled her with amazement, and she was about to fly from his presence; which Azem perceiving, requested her to compose herself, and consider him as her friend. She stood still, while he drew near, and, taking her by the hand, said, ‘Young lady, you may banish all fear and apprehension of danger, and consider me as one whom Heaven hath sent to afford sympathy, if nothing more, in your present misfortunes.’

Struck with the familiarity of his countenance, and seeming to recognize his voice, she exclaimed, ‘O my!’ and instantly fainted at his feet. Perceiving her situation, he ran instantly to the stream, and, with hands united, dipped the water and besprinkled her face. She soon recovered, and, setting upright, wept aloud. Azem, surprised, and unable to conjecture what had caused her alarm, or excited her fears, without presuming to approach, thus addressed himself to her. ‘Pardon me, madam, if I have undesignedly given you one moment of painful fear or uneasiness. I also am a servant, and, like you, deplore the loss of kindred and native country.—If our situations are familiar, let our confidence and sympathy be mutual.’

When she had heard this, hastily wiping off her tears, she arose; and, going toward him, said—‘Pray, Sir, forget my weakness: For the long grief-worn state of my heart has rendered me unable to bear any surprise with fortitude.’ He then, taking her again by the hand, requested her, as they walked homeward, to relate to him her past life and present situation. A deep sigh burst from her bosom; and she began her history, as in the following chapter.

CHAP. IX.

‘YOUNG as I am, (for I have not reached my sixteenth year) yet have I known misfortunes more in number than were scarcely ever experienced by the oldest sufferer. My father, who

¹⁶ The practice of suicide by jumping overboard was apparently common, and was frequently referenced in abolitionist literature. See Terri L. Snyder, “Suicide, Slavery, and Memory in North America,” *The Journal of American History* 97.1 (2010), 39-62.

dwelt upon the northerly bank of the river Senegal¹⁷, was king over a numerous people, who enjoyed in peace all the blessings of that luxurious country; until the frequent depredations of the nation who lived upon the opposite shore, leagued with a distant and cruel tribe of barbarians, obliged my father, after the loss of many of his people, to abandon his native fields.

‘In one of these last struggles to save his country and the freedom of his people, my only brother, then but eight years old, who followed my father to the place of action to carry arrows, in the tumult of the battle, was accidentally separated from him, and lost for ever.—How often have I heard my father recount the horrors of that day, and as often has the bosom of my mother bled with anguish at the tale!—‘Oh! could we (they would say) be certain that he was no more—that some well-aimed spear had pierced his heart—how pleasant would be the thought. But, alas! we have no such consolation. Perhaps, at this moment, he groans under the burden of some cruel master, in a strange land, among the barbarians, having no parent to assist, nor friend to comfort.’ Then, clasping their arms around me, they would thank Heaven that I was spared to alleviate their misfortunes.

‘Unable to contend with the superior skill of his enemies, my father was compelled to fly; and, accompanied by a few of his faithful people, took up his habitation upon the extremes of Zara.¹⁸

‘Here, although the means of subsistence was scanty, our days were crowned with peace, and our nights with repose.

‘Six years thus passed away; when, one fatal morning, as the day began to dawn, a horde of barbarians broke in upon our defenceless hut; and, having bound my father’s hands and mine together, compelled us to go before them. At this time my

mother was sick, and scarcely able to lift her head from the pillow: But despair and horror increased her strength; and she followed us, exclaiming, with all her might, ‘Take me, take me also!’ But, without paying the least attention to her cries, they drove us to the shore, and hurried us on board their ship.

‘The horrors of that day no tongue can tell nor heart conceive, whose bitter fortune has not exposed them to similar sufferings. When my father first found our dwelling surrounded, and beheld the enemy, despair and rage seized his mind; and, with the fury of a lion, he flung aside the door, and rushed upon them, determining to sell his liberty at the highest price. But he had scarce begun the contest, when, from behind, one of the stoutest aimed a blow and felled him to the ground: Then, like a herd of wolves upon a helpless lamb, they sprung and bound his limbs with cords.

‘While this was doing, another party seized fast on me, and dragged me shrieking to my father, whose face, besmeared and clotted over with blood, I scarcely knew. His spirits broken, and sullen in his fate, I never heard him speak until the moment he plunged into the sea; when, with a look of affection, he said, ‘I go to see thy mother: Follow me.’ This I was just about to perform, when one of the sailors drew me back, and thrust me into the hold. There, with a large number of my countrymen, of all ages and conditions, I suffered a tiresome and distressing passage, till we arrived at Tunis.¹⁹—When taken from my dungeon, I was exposed to sale, and bought by Valachus, my present master; in whose service I have, till lately, enjoyed as much satisfaction as a remembrance of my past sufferings and present servitude would admit. Rich, and unused to any restraint, his passions have surmounted his judgment; and he now solicits me to partake of his unlawful bed, and to resign in his arms all the consolations of an unspotted mind.—To avoid his pursuit, I

¹⁷ *Senegal*: a long river in West Africa; it was a primary artery for the slave trade dating back to 15C Portuguese expeditions.

¹⁸ *Zara*: a river in present day Nigeria, at a considerable distance inland from the mouth of the Senegal River in West Africa.

¹⁹ *Tunis*: the capital of modern day Tunisia, and in the early 19C an important port on the Barbary coast for the traffic of slaves.

had wandered into this unfrequented valley; and, thinking myself far from the observation or hearing of any human being, was breathing out my soul to Heaven when discovered by you.'

Here she ended her melancholy tale; and, after interchanging mutual sentiments of regard, they parted, their bosoms swollen with grief, each to their respective homes.

CHAP. X.

WITH such slow and deliberate steps did Azem approach his master's house, that the sun was risen before he entered the yard. Then, seating himself upon the threshold, waiting for the orders of the day, a summons from Testador calls him into the house. Here he sees Omri, and is informed of the happy resolution that his late master's family have taken with respect to him. Transported with these unexpected joyful tidings, his mind overflows with gratitude, and all his thoughts become absorbed with the sweet hope of liberty.

Here he quits Testador's house, and, with a new-felt satisfaction, begins his service in Sequida's family. Here he might have enjoyed a comfortable share of happiness, had he not been witness to Alzina's sufferings. His anxiety for her situation often led him to her master's house; who, observing his frequent visits, soon learned their mutual attachment, and peremptorily forbid him his house. But this injunction was less severe, as Azem was now obliged to follow his young mistress into Arabia. Here his distant situation, his assiduous attention to labour, and, above all, liberty, the prize to which his hopes aspired, absorbed his mind, and blunted all his other passions.

Unable to meliorate her situation in any respect, he endeavoured to banish all remembrance of her from his mind, and to erase, as much as possible, her image from his breast. But

no sooner had he saved Narina from her ravisher, and received his freedom, joined with the thanks and benevolence of his late mistress and her family, as a recompence for his fidelity, than Alzina's sorrows invade, and rend his bosom with redoubled poignancy. Without delay he hastens to the house of Valachus, happy in the pleasing expectation of being able to purchase her freedom with the money bestowed on him by Narina's husband. Short seemed the distance, and smooth the way, so occupied were all his thoughts with scenes of future felicity. But how great was his disappointment, when informed by Valachus that he would not, on any terms, liberate Alzina!

Thus disconcerted in the plan from which he had anticipated so much happiness, and being also forbid any personal interview or conversation with Valachus or Alzina, he retired to the house of Omri, in order to obtain the counsel and assistance of that benevolent man. Omri received him with joy, well pleased that he had so speedily gained his freedom, and rendered such eminent service to Selector's family. But when he had heard Azem's present perplexity, he declared himself unable to afford any relief: 'For,' says he, 'I know Valachus: His youth and independence of fortune render him callous to the feelings of pity, and deaf to the voice of reason. He has but just entered upon his large paternal inheritance; and, flushed with that self-importance which generally attends wealth newly acquired, will, I know, be obstinate against any argument that may be employed to alter him from what his passions may seem to dictate, or his will determine. But, however, tarry with me to day, and to-morrow, if I can be instrumental in preparing her freedom, as I have yours, I shall think my time well employed.' Omri then retired, without giving time for reply, leaving him to ruminate alone upon his present difficulties.

CHAP. XI.

THE present state of Azem's mind would be difficult to describe: Gratitude to his benefactor, disappointment, and fear, each claim an undivided share of all his thoughts, and, with a resistless load, press his swelling bosom. Agitated with the contrary impulse of these opposite passions, half distracted, he roves about the apartment.—Sometimes he reclines himself upon a sofa; then, suddenly springing up, walks to and fro across the room, venting his feelings in the following soliloquy.

'What are the pleasures of life to me! In what state am I to expect enjoyment? I, who have been from early youth constantly nursed in the school of misery, am, it seems, never to know a change of fortune! With what keen anxiety did I lately sigh for freedom! How many laborious days, how many wakeful nights, have I spent in revolving plans to acquire that (then thought) joy-giving boon; which, now obtained, proves but the source of new distress—a thorn which never would have wounded my repose in servitude! But Heaven, which was has interposed in my behalf, will not surely abandon the more deserving Alzina, but, in due time, provide means for her relief: Then will we drink together at the fountain of felicity, and drown all our former sufferings in a constant tide of transport.'

Hope and love, life's cordials, now gaining the ascendancy over his desponding soul, he determines to make another effort to move Valachus—another attempt to gain her freedom, in whose happiness his whole life centered, and without whose liberty his own heart is chained to eternal bondage. Thus animated, he wrote the following address to Valachus.

'Forbidden a personal interview, I have presumed to obtrude myself in this manner into your presence, with hopes of causing your heart to compassionate the sufferings of two wretched beings, who have nothing to fear but your rigour, and

nothing to hope for beyond your ability to give. Unbred in schools of literature, I can speak but the undisguised dictates of my own heart, in the simple language of nature, relying upon your goodness to pardon whatever may appear too warm or free in this address. For Alzina's freedom I humbly sue: That you would accept the price of her liberty from me, is our united prayer—the summit of both our wishes. Formed by nature with hearts congenial, we long to spend our days together, and together bless you as our mutual benefactor. Sensible that the laws and customs of this country are unfriendly to our suit, (I had almost said our right) we place not the least expectation of relief on them; but confide wholly in your humanity. Upon your generosity our future destiny depends: And, as you may determine upon this our request, we shall be the happiest of beings, or the most wretched of mortals. Although born in a country far from this, yet do we claim the honour of being formed by the same God of mercy, and by him endowed with the same passions, and the same sensibility to pleasure or pain, whatever early prejudices or education may have taught to the contrary. You will not, then, be surprised, if we cannot forego those enjoyments to which our natures are suited, without a sigh, or quietly give up all ground, all hope of felicity, without a struggle. Was some cruel reverse of fortune to place you in a situation like mine, would you do less to obtain the liberation of her you loved? Your feelings animated, and yourself in possession of liberty, could you behold an amiable female, a native of your own country, in servitude, and not exert every faculty, and employ every means for her relief?—And, Oh, if it be possible, surrounded as you are with every earthly blessing, to fancy yourself thus circumstanced, denied access to the object of your wishes, and your money proffered for her liberation refused, then may you conceive how wretched is my situation, and guess at the dire horrors that must haunt my future days, if unsuccessful in this petition. But when I reflect upon the benevolence of your late father, who constantly practised and

taught that sacred precept of our holy Prophet, which so expressly enjoins, that we do unto all men as we would wish them to return unto us, my spirits revive, and I feel a transport which no other earthly consideration can give. Under these impressions I must unceasingly pray for your prosperity; and, under every vicissitude of life, remain your obliged and very humble servant.

AZEM.’

CHAP. XII.

THE next morning he handed his letter to Omri, and requested him to plead his cause with Valachus. This kind philanthropist instantly undertakes the office, though impressed with many doubts of the success of his attempt.

Having found Valachus alone, Omri, as an introduction to his business, delivered him the letter, and carefully noted his countenance as he read the contents. He had scarcely finished, when, assuming a haughty, imperious air, he threw aside the paper, and demanded if he was come to interfere in his family concerns? Omri answered, ‘I have not come to give offence; but hope I shall be able to convince you, that both your duty and interest are on the side of granting this petition.’ Valachus replied, ‘My desires and my duty are one; and I shall not thank you for any trouble you may take about my interest.’ Omri returned—‘Consider the happiness which, without any expence, you can now bestow: Think what would have been the determination of my friend, your father, had a like application been made to him.’ Valachus answered, ‘My determination is fixed;’ and, frowning, left the room.

When Omri returned, Azem flew to meet him; and, with impatience, exclaimed, ‘Am I doomed to life or death?’—From the eyes of Omri a silent tear that moment stole a passage. ‘From your countenance, my generous benefactor,’ continued Azem, ‘I

learn my destiny: I read my fate in your eyes. I am a wretched being, outcast by Heaven, and am unworthy of your attention. From this hateful place I will depart this moment; this inhospitable shore shall no longer separate me from the place of my nativity. My parents may still survive, and have not yet forgot to mourn the loss of their only son. Some fortunate star may direct me to their dwelling, and enable me to render them that support and defence which the feebleness of their age must now require.’

Omri would fain have offered him some consolation; but his feelings were too big for utterance: He took him by the hand, and, with grief and sincere affection in his looks, bid him adieu.

CHAP. XIII.

QUITE disconsolate, Azem repairs to Algiers, in order to find means for putting his new resolution into practice.

He was so young at the time, and so many years having elapsed since his captivity, that all remembrance of the name and situation of his native country was entirely effaced from his memory. But, being invited by a company of merchants, just preparing to visit the Southern Continent, to accompany them in a traffic with the natives for ivory and gold-dust, he engages; and, having yet the money bestowed on him at his manumission, he resolves to venture his whole stock with them. But, previous to his departure, he wrote the following lines, and directed them, inclosed, to Omri.

FAREWELL the joys that sweet Elysium moves,
The flow’ry plains and lofty moving groves:
Farewell each friend that claims a parting sigh;
Tho’ absent from my view, you still are nigh
My breast, where friendship’s charms can never die.
Farewell to all; for I must quickly prove



Alzina's absence, and the pangs of love.
 Sighs rise, tears start, slow trembling moves my quill,
 When I would write Alzina too farewell:
 Yet come it must, though death come at the sound,
 And all my frame sink, trembling, to the ground.
 Heart-moanful, ever-poignant is the woe
 That absent friends must suffer here below:—
 But could I hope that Heav'n had yet design'd
 The joys of freedom for her spotless mind,
 'Twould sooth my mind to peace each absent hour,
 And lock my soul to love's all-sacred pow'r.
 The sun shall cease, the moon and stars shall fail,
 When I forget her sorrows to bewail;
 The firm-set hills shall, rising, soar on high,
 Before her Azem's friendship e'er shall die.
 Adieu! adieu! for I am doom'd to prove
 The pains of friendship and the pangs of love.

NOTE. *The difficulty of translating an Arabic ode into English verse, every person the least acquainted with the former language must be sensible of; and the editor hopes the reader will not be unwilling to grant him this apology for his failure of elegance in this attempt.*

CHAP. XIV.

FREIGHTED with such merchandize as they knew would be acceptable to the inhabitants whither they were going, they embarked; and, after a short and prosperous passage, anchored in the bay of Senegal.

In order to barter more advantageously, it was thought best to sail up the river, where they would be more likely to obtain in abundance the articles they wanted. This they began; and, with the next tide, ascended the river six leagues. Here they came to an anchor. Being in want of fresh supplies, they began to traffic with the inhabitants; and, finding here a great plenty of the necessaries of life, it was agreed to leave their ship at this

place, while a part should penetrate farther into the country, and inform the natives of their arrival, and the commodities they had for sale.

Azem was one appointed for this expedition, as he could (though in a broken manner) converse with the inhabitants. He found the country, for a great distance from the river, extremely fertile, and almost spontaneously bringing forth the luxuries of life.

They had finished their business, and were returning; when, entering a village, they met a company of men, driving a woman before them, who appeared to be advanced in years, and was bending beneath as great a load of their baggage as she could bear. There was something in her countenance that drew Azem's attention; and, filled with horror at their inhumanity, he approached the leader of the company, and desired to be informed why they treated that woman with so much severity? He was answered that she was their prisoner; that they were just returning from Cape Verd,²⁰ where they had offered her for sale to the inhabitants of those islands, who refused to purchase her, on account of her age; and they intended to make her carry those things till she failed, and then leave her by the way.

Struck with compassion at her cruel treatment, he immediately inquired the price of her ransom; which having paid, he bid them unload her, and give her to his charge. He then drew near to her, and informed her that she was no longer under the controul of those men, but was at liberty to go wherever she pleased.

There was something in the sound of Azem's voice which startled her with surprize; and the unexpected favour which he

²⁰ *Cape Verd*: an island off the coast of Senegal discovered—uninhabited—by Italian and Portuguese navigators in the 15C. The Cape Verde archipelago became a central link in the transatlantic slave trade, and continued to serve as a major port for circum-Atlantic trade more generally through the end of the nineteenth century.

had bestowed, produced the following reply:—‘Worn out with age and misfortunes, whether shall I go? My family, alas! is no more. I am a wretched, childless widow: My husband, my son, my daughter, all are gone!—Oh! let me follow you, and strive to recompence your kindness.’ Then, casting her eyes full upon him, for a moment she remained silent; when, springing forward, she fell upon his neck, and exclaimed, ‘Gracious God! is it a dream—or have I found my son?’ The very counter-part of that engaging form which won her virgin heart, and shared her only love, was in her eye. ’Twas himself, restored to youth, or risen from the grave: The same noble stature, the same rich glow of manly beauty, that once so charmed her in the father, was here transformed into the son: And so forcible were these impressions, that, in her mind, not a shadow of doubt remained but that she had found, in her deliverer, her much-lamented and long lost child. Azem, whose bosom glowed with filial affection, held her in his arms, and exclaimed, ‘My mother! Oh, my mother!’

When the tumult occasioned by this happy discovery had subsided, he requested to hear concerning his father, and sister, whom he but just remembered to have seen at the breast. Of these she informed him of every particular that had come to her knowledge; and added, that, although sick and feeble when deprived of their assistance, she soon recovered; and, by the kindness of a friend, had been ever since supported, until a few days since, that company, from which he had just redeemed her, entrapped her by the way, and would have sold her but for the reasons given by themselves.

CHAP. XV.

CHARGED with the pleasing task of filial duty, Azem now conducted his mother to the banks of the Senegal; and, as soon

as the commercial business of his companions would permit, he carried her on board, and hoisted sail for Algiers. No storm or misfortune happening, they were soon safe at home, with the most valuable cargo. As quick as a division could be made, and he had obtained his share, he lost no time in setting out to visit his old benefactor, and learn Alzina’s fate.

Leaving his mother provided for in the city, he hastens to Omri’s house: But what was his surprise, when, on entering the room, he sees the object of all his wishes! A sight so unexpected fixed him to the spot; but Alzina, who beheld his amazement, approached, and, taking him by the hand, bid him a most sincere and welcome return.

Omri then entering the room, and being informed of the success of his voyage, and that he had found and brought his mother with him, was not far behind the others in happiness: And, in answer to Azem’s enquiry by what means Alzina came to his house, he related as follows.

‘About six weeks after your departure, Valachus was dangerously wounded by a scorpion; and, beginning to feel the fatal effects of the poison, sent a request for me to visit him. Without delay I obeyed; and, entering the room, found him much agitated with pain, and swelled in every part. Yet rational and perfect in his senses, he desired me to come near, and sit down by his bed. Having commanded his attendants to withdraw, he thus expressed himself:—‘The abrupt manner in which I took my leave at our last interview, has occasioned me to give you the trouble of calling on me at this time; hoping, by a sincere confession of my many faults, to obtain your forgiveness, and the pardon of Heaven.’ Here he stopped; and, writhing himself about, appeared to be doubly agonized. I then assured him that he had my most cordial forgiveness. His distress seeming to abate, he continued—‘Such goodness I do not merit: But, if you will hear a dying penitent, I will unfold to you the means that have drawn down this judgment upon me.’

‘Educated by a too fond parent, indulgent to all my caprices and youthful follies, I was never learned to bridle my desires, or restrain the impetuosity of my passions: And, having lately purchased that young maid, whose liberty you would have persuaded me to sell to her lover, my heart was touched by her unaffected charms; and, expecting no opposition to my desires, boldly invited her to my bed. This, with surprise and evident scorn, she refused. I then commanded her to be treated with the utmost kindness, and employed several agents to seduce her into compliance: But all my arts were in vain; she still remained unmoved, heedless of all my promises or threats. My passion being inflamed by this unexpected opposition, and despairing of ever obtaining her consent to my wishes, I was determined to make use of my authority over her person, and by force to compel her to submit. With this intent, I ordered her to be confined in my summer-house; and, with all the eager impatience of lustful desire, was hastening thither myself; when, crossing an intervening field, I trod upon a scorpion, who turned and wounded me in the leg. I instantly perceived the effect of the misfortune, and returned to my house.

With increasing pain I have since continued; and, being fully sensible of my approaching end, and wishing to make some recompense for the fearful anxiety which I may have excited in her innocent bosom, I have this day, agreeable to the rules of our country, declared her free; and, as a dower for her virtue, do bestow on her these pieces of gold, which I wish you to take in charge; and, as you may see that she needs, administer to her relief.’

‘He then delivered me a purse, containing a thousand drachms²¹; and concluded by saying, ‘I feel myself relieved: That gnawing viper in my breast is quiet; and I dare hope that Mahomet, the favourite of God, is interceding for me, and will

shortly open the gates of Paradise to receive my ascending soul.’ Here he ceased, and soon fell into a profound sleep.

I then called his attendants, and withdrew; and meeting Alzina in the yard, informed her what Valachus had done, and invited her to come and reside at my house. She gratefully accepted the offer, and, with satisfaction to my family, has continued with us until this day.’

In the morning it was agreed that Azem should return to the city, and bring out his mother, that she might be present at the completion of his felicity, in the marriage of Alzina. Upon the wings of joy he flew to Algiers; and, having found his mother, related to her the joy-felt news. Well pleased, she consented to accompany him, and witness his happiness.

CHAP. XVI.

THE day appointed for Azem’s return was almost spent; the sun had sunk behind the distant mountains, and with a golden fringe arrayed the western clouds; when Alzina’s impatience prompted her to walk.—Some pleasing presage seemed to animate her bosom, as she moved slowly on towards the town: When, ascending a small eminence, she beheld her lover and intended husband not far distant, conducting his aged mother.

Enraptured at the sight, she seemed to mount on wings, and to fly to meet them. He perceived her coming; and, leaving the carriage, ran forward, and snatching her hand, pressed it with ecstasy in his, and said, ‘I am now the happiest of men. For all the sorrows of my past life, I have now more than ample recompence in this joyful meeting.’

His mother now arrived; and, staring wildly at Alzina, for a moment seemed to doubt her senses: Then, with the speed of youth, she sprang forward and hung upon her neck. For a short

²¹ *Drachms*: the currency of Greece.

space her tongue refused its office; but soon she cried, 'Oh! my daughter! my child! my Alzina! am I awake? and do I fold thee in my arms? or is it some phantom that has assumed thy shape? Oh, ecstasy unutterable! 'Tis true; Heaven has restored my much-lamented babe.' Alzina, no less transported, wept aloud, and kissed her aged parent.

The surprise which all parties had felt being somewhat abated, they went on to the house; and Omri, being informed of the happy discovery, thus expressed himself: 'Let our voices resound for ever with gratitude and praise to the Arbiter of all nations, who, as our holy Prophet declares, seeth in secret, but rewardeth openly.—And may every servant to whom the story of your lives shall be told, remember the reward that attended your fidelity! And upon all who shall imitate your bright example, may Heaven shower down a like measure of happiness!—And may every master, in whatever part of the inhabited globe he may reside, with cheerfulness practice that important precept of the Alcoran—'Masters, treat your servants with kindness.' So may the light of Islamism shine forth, in its full splendor, to the utmost ends of the universe! For thus saith the God of all men: 'Of one blood have I created all nations of men that dwell upon the face of the earth.'

CHAP. XVII.

THE surprise, joy and disappointment experienced by all parties on the late discovery, was unspeakable. But Azem's anxiety, which had been wound up to the highest pitch with the anticipation of spending the remainder of his days with the only object of his love and wishes, in some peaceful retreat, now entirely vanished, and produced in his mind a contrary impulse. Hymen,²² whom he thought ready to unite their hands, and aid

the completion of his happiness, now disappears and hides his head. The veil being removed, and discovering his only sister in the lovely Alzina, for whom he had spent so many tedious hours, in fruitless attempts to relieve her from bondage, he exclaimed, 'May our holy Prophet, who presides over and governs the affairs of his people, make known his will, and reveal to them, in due time, their duty; lest, by following their inclinations, they commit crimes which bring an everlasting stain on their character here, and his eternal vengeance hereafter.'

Omri invited his guests to take up their abode with him, and offered them all the conveniences his house would afford. Azem, considering Omri his only benefactor, who had rendered him such eminent services, for which he had never been repaid, could not think of accepting his proposal without making him full compensation for his former trouble and kindness. The interest he had acquired in his late voyage being very considerable, he made him a present of one half; which Omri, with great reluctance, accepted. Azem, as we have before related, discovered a strong inclination to learning, and made considerable progress therein while in the service of Seltor. But when he became acquainted with Alzina and had obtained his freedom, the clouds of misfortune hovered over his mind, and buried in oblivion, for a while, all inclination to any further pursuit of education.

Omri being a man of universal leaning, and well knowing Azem's former attachment to books, now proposed to instruct him in all the branches of literature, which might probably be of great service to him in his future life. Being yet but twenty years of age, and wishing for such an opportunity, Azem very gladly accepted the proposal; and, by three years assiduous application to study, not only acquired a competent to study, not only acquired a competent knowledge of all the different branches taught in their schools, but like-wise became acquainted with a number of different languages of the eastern nations.

²² *Hymen*: in Greek mythology the God of Marriage.

Azem now began to think of turning his attention to some profitable employment: And, being informed that the company with whom he had made his former voyage, were in want of a factor to reside on the continent, and having an inclination to return once more to that country, he was resolved to call upon them, and inform himself of their intentions. But, in the interim, his journey was retarded by the following melancholy circumstance—His mother, who was considerably advanced in years, and who had undergone hardships far beyond what her strength or constitution could support, was suddenly seized with an epidemic which prevailed at that time, and which generally proved fatal, especially to the aged and infirm. Omri, who was a son of Esculapius,²³ and thoroughly acquainted with his profession, had exerted every faculty to the utmost, for dethroning his antagonist: The conflict was severe on both sides; but the enemy had so strongly fortified himself, that he gave up all idea of conquest. She continuing in the full exercise of her reason, he thus addressed her: ‘Madam, it is with the greatest reluctance I inform you of the impossibility of your recovering from this fatal distemper. If, therefore, you wish to impart any thing to your children, or bestow on them your blessing, delay not; for a moment may deprive you of the power of utterance.’ She attempted a reply, but in vain: Her tongue faltered and refused its office, and in a few moments she breathed her last.

CHAP. XVIII.

AZEM and his sister, at the death of their only parent, were most disconsolate indeed. But Alzina’s loss was irreparable. The assistance and advice of a mother, at that time of life, she considered as the greatest of blessings. Time, however, which in

some degree effaces the memory of things, had in a measure becalmed her troubled mind, and serenity returned once more to its welcome abode.

Azem continued with Omri some time after the death of his mother; but his enterprising genius would not suffer him to remain long idle: He was, therefore, resolved to put his former plan into execution.

Alzina not having any immediate use for the money which she received from Valachus, at her liberation, delivered it to her brother, who promised to return the same, with full compensation, whenever her necessities required.

The next day was appointed for Azem’s departure; and, after taking a sincere and affectionate leave of his friend and sister, he set out for Algiers, with great anxiety to re-visit the Southern Continent before his return. Having some business to transact for his friend by the way, the day was spent before he reached the city. The road he had taken led over an extended, barren plain, at the termination of which was a large forest, said to be the haunt of a banditti. He had, however, previous to his departure, provided arms for his defence, in case of an attack. The sun was set before he entered the forest; and, preceeding on with great expedition, he had nearly cleared the thicket, and thought himself out of danger; when suddenly two ruffians darted into the road, a few steps forward of him. One of them seized his bridle, and, with an austere voice, demanded his money instantly. Azem, being determined to part with his treasure upon no other condition than at the expence of his life, replied, ‘You shall have immediately whatever it is in my power to give;’ and at the same instant drew a pistol, and lodged the contents thereof in the breast of him who held his horse, who suddenly fell, weltering in his gore. His companion, hearing the discharge of the pistol, and seeing his friend fall, retreated with the utmost precipitation into the forest.

²³ *Esculapius*: in Greek mythology the god of healing and medicine.

Azem, putting spurs to his horse, in a short time found himself out of danger, and in the suburbs of the city. Being late in the evening, he put up at the first public inn. The next morning he called on the merchants with whom he had made his former voyage, and informed them, that the interest he had acquired while in their company in the trade on the continent, and his having an inclination to lead a mercantile life, were sufficient motives, with their assistance, to induce him to commence business on a large scale.

They made several voyages to the bay of Senegal since Azem had accompanied them, and found trade on the decline, the inhabitants being chiefly drained of their most valuable articles. They had, however, determined to establish a trade upon the Calabar²⁴ coast, more to the southward, and were then fitting out a vessel for that purpose. Having a high opinion of Azem's talents and merit, he having so faithfully conducted their business on the former voyage, they very readily accepted his proposal, and it was agreed that he should sail as soon as business would permit.

In the mean time, Azem laid out his money in the purchase of such articles as he knew would insure him large profits at the place whither they were bound.

All things being in readiness, they set sail, and the second day cleared the straits, and bent their course to the southward. But the weather proving unfavourable, being sometimes extremely boisterous, they were in the utmost distress for many days. At length, however, they made the island of St. Jago,²⁵ and, with the utmost difficulty, gained the harbour. Here they were informed, that the most advantageous situation for their

commercial business was near the river Gambia,²⁶ on account of its proximity to a nation who abounded with such articles as they wished to traffic in.

As soon as wind and weather would permit, they hoisted sail; and, after a prosperous voyage, came to an anchor in the mouth of the Gambia. There was a handsome and safe harbour within the southern bank, two leagues from its mouth. Here Azem fixed his place of residence.

The Gambia, like the Nile, overflows its banks at certain seasons of the year; and the productions of nature, both mineral and vegetable, are found here in the highest perfection, and in great abundance.

The country being very populous, and the inhabitants of a peaceable and friendly disposition, and anxious for traffic, were favourable preludes to his future prosperity.

CHAP. XIX.

AZEM, in the absence of the ship, made frequent excursions into the country, bartering with the natives for their gold and ivory; the former of which they collect in small grains, being washed down from the mountains in small streams, in great abundance, after heavy rains. He often called on their king, who resided at a distance from the shore, on account of being in the centre of his people. In one of these visits, the king informed him that two of his neighbouring nations had commenced hostilities against each other, and that he had been solicited, at turns, by each power, to join in the conflict, and share equally in the spoils of the enemy: But, as he always refused taking arms except in his own defence,

²⁴ *Calabar coast*: the coastal region near the city of Calabar, in the southeast of modern Nigeria.

²⁵ *St. Jago*: the largest island in the Cape Verde archipelago.

²⁶ *River Gambia*: a major river south of the Senegal River and the central artery in modern day Gambia.

he had resolved to remain neuter, rather than contend with a power from whom he had received no offence.

In a short time, however, their wars terminated in the total destruction of the weaker nation: Those who were not killed in battle, were taken prisoners, and a general plunder of the conquered country succeeded.

It had long been an established custom among them, that whoever they took in battle, they had an indubitable right to sell for slaves. It was with this view they set out for Cape Formosa,²⁸ where the European factors resided on account of purchasing slaves.

Azem happening to fall in company with them, and observing the dejected and forlorn situation of the prisoners, and the cruel manner in which they were treated, it conspired to rouse his indignation. He entered into conversation with the chief officer, and very strongly remonstrated against such proceedings. 'Have you not conquered them,' said he, 'and obliged them to own you as their superiors; and will you thus exterminate a nation who have been unfortunate in war, and eradicate their name from the earth for ever? Be more humane, and suffer them to return to their native fields, and again enjoy their once peaceful abode.' But, deaf to all he could say, they were determined to part with them upon no other condition than a stipulated price for each person, and therefore proceeded on their way.

Azem had resided on the coast a number of years, and his success in trade had been so great, that he had collected property to a large amount for his employers, and likewise procured a handsome fortune to himself. He was, therefore, resolved to return to Algiers, and spend the remainder of his days in that metropolis. He had brought his business to a close. The vessel returning, the captain informed him that war had broke out between that government and the court of Spain, and that it had

²⁸ *Cape Formosa*: a harbor on a coastal island in present day Guinea-Bissau, just south of Gambia and Senegal.

become dangerous venturing property at sea without sufficient force for protection, being frequently captured by the enemy, whose ships were far superior to theirs.

They at length, however, resolved to risk the voyage, and departed. Nothing of consequence happened till they had passed the Canary Isles;²⁹ when, one morning, they discovered a sail to windward, bearing down upon them. It was proposed, in case it should prove an enemy, and superior to them, to surrender, on condition of retaining their liberty, rather than risk their fate, and the certainty of being made slaves if taken. The captain and Azem could not bear the thoughts of tamely submitting: They therefore encouraged their men to stand by them, and defend their property to the last.

The enemy (for so they proved) after a long chase, came within shot; and the first salutation was a broadside. Their only resource was to prevent the enemy from boarding them, and, with their small arms, to make resistance when in close contact. This they did with so good an effect, that the hopes of success began to brighten in every countenance, and filled them with fresh vigour. The battle was severe on both sides, and victory alternately wavered in favour of each; but, by some unlucky accident, and the loss of their captain, they were obliged to surrender.

Azem, finding himself in the hands of the enemy, determined patiently to submit to his fate. The Spaniards, after securing their prisoners, went to work in unloading their prize; but they had scarcely cleared it of the most valuable effects, when it went down.

Azem had received several wounds from the shot of the enemy: Being chiefly superficial, he scarcely thought of them during the battle; but, by the loss of blood, he was now unable to move. The captain, possessing a more humane disposition than

²⁹ *Canary Isles*: a Spanish archipelago off the coast of northwestern Africa.

generally falls to the lot of that class of people, suffered Azem to be treated with kindness, and attention to be paid to his wounds. In a few days he so far recovered his strength, that, with leave of the captain, he was enabled to walk upon deck.

The prize they had taken was so valuable, and being in want of a new recruit of men, the Spaniards were determined to put into the first friendly port, in order to prevent a re-capture.

Azem, in the mean time, had recovered from his wounds; and, one night, found means to get upon deck with two of his companions, and so artfully planned and executed his design, that, by the next morning, he was master of the ship and its whole crew.

He now directed his course for Algiers; and, meeting with no resistance, soon arrived in the harbour.

After the company were informed of the loss of their ship and part of its cargo, they proposed that the prisoners, together with the vessel, should be sold to compensate their loss. This proposal Azem viewed with the utmost abhorrence, and remonstrated strongly against its being adopted. 'Though they are our prisoners,' said he, 'and the laws of our country countenance the proceeding; yet the thoughts of bondage fill me with horror. Instantly will I part with all my share of the cargo, rather than such a plan should be adopted.'

Azem, therefore, as soon as he could unload, after having exacted a firm promise from the captain not to serve in that capacity any more during the war, delivered up his vessel to him, and obtained a passport from the Dey for his safe return.

CHAP. XX.

AZEM now purchased a house in that part of the city most favourable for commerce, and commenced trade by himself. He

wrote to his sister, informing her of his return, and his determination to settle in town; and requested her to come and reside with him. She read the letter with transport, and joyfully accepted the proposal. But it was with the greatest reluctance the family with whom she had so long remained, could consent to her departure.

Alzina had been solicited by gentlemen of fortune, who had made her many proffers of marriage; but she totally refused them all, and was determined to remain in a state of celibacy.

Azem's acquaintance in town, hitherto, had been very superficial, his attention having been absorbed in plans to accumulate a fortune, which, by his industry and prudence, had now become very considerable. His philanthropic disposition would not, however, like the miser, permit him to hoard up his treasure: His greatest satisfaction consisted in relieving those who had been pressed down by the hard hand of misfortune.

Azem, by his assiduous attention to business, his punctuality in trade, and benevolent distribution of money for the relief of the poor and oppressed, now attracted the attention of the rich and opulent, as well as the sincere affection and esteem of the lower class of people, from whom he obtained the name of the Friend and Father of the Unfortunate.

Azem had scarcely thought of changing his situation in life, with respect to matrimony. Since the fortunate discovery occasioned by his mother, that passion for the female world had gradually subsided as he advanced in years. There seemed, however, something still wanting to fill up that measure of happiness which he did not as yet completely enjoy.

Azem at length formed an acquaintance with Shelimah, a young widow of high birth, who possessed a noble mind and an amiable disposition. The attractive charms of innocence and beauty were here concentrated, and served to gain the attention and esteem of all her friends and acquaintance. She had been married when quite young, and had lived with her husband a

number of years; who, dying without children, left his whole estate, which was very considerable, to her benefit.

Azem perceived a growing attachment to her virtues, very different from the fluttering dictates of fancy which he had before experienced, but founded on the purest principles of benevolence and friendship. He considered Love as an arbitrary monarch, yet too fickle and fleeting to guide the helm in so important a voyage as that of matrimony: Though he would steer safely through tempestuous storms, yet would he, even in sight of port, most inevitably dash against the rocky shoals.

Their hands were at length joined in marriage; and festivity and mirth, with the acclamations of kindred and acquaintance, crowned the nuptial ceremony.

Many years endeared them to each other. At length Heaven, to reward him for his past misfortunes, blessed him with a son, the express image of its father.

Omri had died while Azem was on the continent, and left an only son, whose name was Arramel. There had been, previous to Azem's manumission, the most strict friendship subsisting between them. He was under his father's tuition at the time Azem received his education; and time, so far from weakening, had proved a firm cement to their friendship.

Arramel removed to the city soon after Azem's return. They had long premeditated a commercial tour to Barca,³⁰ which at length they commenced.

Previous to their return, they received information that the plague, which had the year before infested the neighbouring kingdoms, had already made its way into Algiers, and swept off numbers of its inhabitants. And judge, my readers, what must have been the feelings of Azem, on his return, to find his wife, sister and child, swept off by the pestilential deluge! Should I

attempt to describe them, language would be inadequate to the task.

His cup of calamities was now completely full. His health had for a long time been on the decline; and the shock he now received flung him into a raging fever, which soon reduced him so low, that he was unable to support himself, which convinced his friend that he would not long survive.

He intimated to Arramel the manner he wished to dispose of his property, and appointed him his administrator. One half of his estate he appropriated to the relief of the poor and unfortunate, and the interest of the other half for the yearly release of some honest slave.

He had hardly time to execute his will, when he bid adieu to his friends, and this troublesome world, for ever.

This Arramel was the same person who chanced to pass our plantation, and, fortunately for me, received the fall from his horse. His name, with Azem's, has ever continued to dwell on my enraptured tongue; and, while the remembrance of my relief from past misfortunes continues, they shall never cease to be adored.

I have collected this narrative as a memorial of my gratitude to Heaven, in thus releasing me from the chains of tyrannical oppression, and restoring me to my native country, and the bosom of my family.

FINIS.

³⁰ *Barca*: an ancient city in north Africa, approximately near the current city Marj in Libya.

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³² The notation indicates subscription of twelve copies; David Smith was the Rutland postmaster from 1801-1804.

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³³ Ama Whipple appears to be the only woman on this list.

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