

THE LOST BATTLE.

("Allah! qui me rendra-")

[XVL, May, 1828.]

Oh, Allah! who will give me back my terrible array?
My emirs and my cavalry that shook the earth to-day;
My tent, my wide-extending camp, all dazzling to the sight,
Whose watchfires, kindled numberless beneath the brow of night,
Seemed oft unto the sentinel that watched the midnight hours,
As heaven along the sombre hill had rained its stars in showers?
Where are my beys so gorgeous, in their light pelisses gay,
And where my fierce Timariot bands, so fearless in the fray;
My dauntless khans, my spahis brave, swift thunderbolts of war;
My sunburnt Bedouins, trooping from the Pyramids afar,
Who laughed to see the laboring hind stand terrified at gaze,
And urged their desert horses on amid the ripening maize?
These horses with their fiery eyes, their slight untiring feet,
That flew along the fields of corn like grasshoppers so fleet--
What! to behold again no more, loud charging o'er the plain,
Their squadrons, in the hostile shot diminished all in vain,
Burst grandly on the heavy squares, like clouds that bear the storms,
Enveloping in lightning fires the dark resisting swarms!
Oh! they are dead! their housings bright are trailed amid their gore;

Dark blood is on their manes and sides, all deeply clotted o'er;
All vainly now the spur would strike these cold and rounded flanks,
To wake them to their wonted speed amid the rapid ranks:
Here the bold riders red and stark upon the sands lie down,
Who in their friendly shadows slept throughout the halt at noon.
Oh, Allah! who will give me back my terrible array?
See where it straggles 'long the fields for leagues on leagues away,
Like riches from a spendthrift's hand flung prodigal to earth.
Lo! steed and rider;--Tartar chiefs or of Arabian birth,
Their turbans and their cruel course, their banners and their cries,
Seem now as if a troubled dream had passed before mine eyes--
My valiant warriors and their steeds, thus doomed to fall and bleed!
Their voices rouse no echo now, their footsteps have no speed;
They sleep, and have forgot at last the sabre and the bit--
Yon vale, with all the corpses heaped, seems one wide charnel-pit.
Long shall the evil omen rest upon this plain of dread--
To-night, the taint of solemn blood; to-morrow, of the dead.
Alas! 'tis but a shadow now, that noble armament!
How terribly they strove, and struck from morn to eve unspent,
Amid the fatal fiery ring, enamoured of the fight!
Now o'er the dim horizon sinks the peaceful pall of night:
The brave have nobly done their work, and calmly sleep at last.
The crows begin, and o'er the dead are gathering dark and fast;
Already through their feathers black they pass their eager beaks.
Forth from the forest's distant depth, from bald and barren peaks,
They congregate in hungry flocks and rend their gory prey.

Woe to that flaunting army's pride, so vaunting yesterday!
That formidable host, alas! is coldly nerveless now
To drive the vulture from his gorge, or scare the carrion crow.
Were now that host again mine own, with banner broad unfurled,
With it I would advance and win the empire of the world.
Monarchs to it should yield their realms and veil their haughty brows;
My sister it should ever be, my lady and my spouse.
Oh! what will unrestoring Death, that jealous tyrant lord,
Do with the brave departed souls that cannot swing a sword?
Why turned the balls aside from me? Why struck no hostile hand
My head within its turban green upon the ruddy sand?
I stood all potent yesterday; my bravest captains three,
All stirless in their tigered selle, magnificent to see,
Hailed as before my gilded tent rose flowing to the gales,
Shorn from the tameless desert steeds, three dark and tossing tails.
But yesterday a hundred drums were heard when I went by;
Full forty agas turned their looks respectful on mine eye,
And trembled with contracted brows within their hall of state.
Instead of heavy catapults, of slow unwieldy weight,
I had bright cannons rolling on oak wheels in threatening tiers,
And calm and steady by their sides marched English cannoniers.
But yesterday, and I had towns, and castles strong and high,
And Greeks in thousands, for the base and merciless to buy.
But yesterday, and arsenals and harems were my own;
While now, defeated and proscribed, deserted and alone,
I flee away, a fugitive, and of my former power,

Allah! I have not now at least one battlemented tower.
And must he fly--the grand vizier! the pasha of three tails!
O'er the horizon's bounding hills, where distant vision fails,
All stealthily, with eyes on earth, and shrinking from the sight,
As a nocturnal robber holds his dark and breathless flight,
And thinks he sees the gibbet spread its arms in solemn wrath,
In every tree that dimly throws its shadow on his path!

Thus, after his defeat, pale Reschid speaks.
Among the dead we mourned a thousand Greeks.
Lone from the field the Pasha fled afar,
And, musing, wiped his reeking scimitar;
His two dead steeds upon the sands were flung,
And on their sides their empty stirrups hung.

W.D., Bentley's Miscellany, 1839.