

The

Daughter

of

Smyrna

By

HALIDA EDIB KHANUM

*Famous Turkish Novelist & First Education Minister, Angora*

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH

BY

MUHAMMAD YAKUB KHAN

*Editor, The "Light", Lahore (Pakistan)*



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AHMADIYYA BUILDINGS

LAHORE (Pakistan)

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*A story of the rise of modern Turkey on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire—the Turk's revolt against Western domination, his thrilling adventures, sufferings and sacrifices in the cause of national honour and independence.*

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## TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

اسلام زندہ ہوتا ہے ہر کربلا کے بعد

**B**EFORE the Great War, Turkey was considered "the sick man of Europe." Hardly a decade passed but, thanks to the machinations of the Foreign Offices of Europe, some slice or other was cut off from her European territories. If she still enjoyed a lease of life on the soil of Christendom, it was due to the mutual jealousies of the European Powers which could not agree upon the distribution of the booty. The Great War came as the last nail in her coffin. The mighty Ottoman Empire, once the dread of Europe, shrank to the walls of the city of Constantinople. The Sultan and the Khalifat-ul-Muslimin was a virtual prisoner in the hands of the Allies and the Sheikh-ul-Islam issued edicts at foreign dictation declaring Ghazi Mustafa Kamal and his band of gallant patriots as rebels, outlaws and *kafirs* who might be shot dead at sight. The "sick man" was now in his last gasps. The centuries-long struggle between the Cross and the Crescent was now over. The Crescent was no longer to "pollute" the sacred soil of Christendom. And as the British Prime Minister declared at the fall of Jerusalem, the Allies had accomplished what the Crusaders had failed to.

Man, however, can only propose ; it is for God to dispose. While the last nail was being driven into his coffin, the Turk, animated by a miraculous spark of life, burst open the coffin, turned at bay and manfully faced the world. Out of the jaws of death, there sprang a nation far more virile, far more formidable.

*The Daughter of Smyrna* or the *Fiery Shirt*, as it is called in the original Turkish, is a story of this re-birth of the Turkish nation. Not content with driving the Turks bag and baggage out of Europe, the Allies let loose the Greek scourge upon their homes and hearths on the Asiatic soil. This "scum of Europe" left no indignity, no barbarity which he did not inflict upon the Turk. The sanctity of homes was violated. Venerable grey-bearded men, innocent babes, defenceless women were shot dead in cold blood. They carried fire and sword wherever they went. But out of evil cometh good. This very national humiliation roused the Turk to a new life. A wave of indignation swept over the length and breadth of the land and the whole nation—men, women and children—was burning with the passion to vindicate national honour. In the words of the story "the nation had donned the crown of thorns. This was guarantee enough that everybody would rally to its succour."

Aysha is the central figure, the heroine of the story. In Smyrna, her sweet little babe

is shot dead in cold blood by the Greeks. Burning with a passion for the freedom of her motherland, Smyrna, she kindles the same spark in the bosoms of young officers and soldiers who take a solemn vow at her hand that in the defence of motherland, they would shed the last drop of their blood. Thereafter they plunge in the thick of the struggle and in common share and enjoy the thrills, dangers and hardships of warfare.

The name of Halida Edib Khanum, the writer of this most thrilling story of the re-birth of the Turkish nation, stands in need of no introduction. The most gifted novelist of modern Turkey, she undoubtedly occupies a place of honour in the band of patriots who are responsible for the liberation and creation of modern Turkey. In fact, under the garb of Aysha, she depicts her own patriotic fervour and her own adventures during the Turco-Greek War. During those dreary days when every inch of Anatolia was infested with danger, Halida Edib Khanum in person ran from one theatre of war to another and braved all dangers. After the war, she was the first person to hold the portfolio of Education in the Cabinet of Ghazi Mustafa Kamal.

The story is put in the mouth of a Turkish officer, Biyami, who has received a bullet in his head in the battle of Sakariya and lying in a precarious condition in the military hospital at Angora. Two of his thighs have already been

amputated and the bullet is yet to be extracted. Being on the point of death, he wishes to record his own adventures from the end of the Great War up-to-date. This book is thus the memoirs of this wounded officer.

Needless to add that I venture to present to the public this English version of the patriotic fervour, sufferings and sacrifices of our Turkish brothers and sisters in the cause of national freedom and national honour in the hope that it may kindle something of that noble spark in the bosoms of the sons and daughters of India which is just now passing through the travail of a re-birth.

LAHORE (India).

M. Y. KHAN.



## CHAPTER I

My story begins when I was yet holding a petty appointment in the Foreign Office. One day as I was seated in my drawing-room my mother broke to me the news that the Bulgarians had concluded peace with the Allies. A thunderbolt could not have caused me a greater shock. I was plunged in grief and felt deeply agitated. In the bewilderment that overtook me, I paced up and down the room, now sitting in one chair, now in another, again all of a sudden, springing to my feet. My mother had furnished the house in the European style. Costly carpets had been spread on the floor and cushioned chairs and sofas tastefully arranged. All this was thrown into disorder as I frantically moved about these articles of decoration. My mother had something more in her mind to tell me. But I was in no mood to listen.

My convulsion over the news was all the more strange because I was a convinced pacifist. I looked upon peace as a blessing and had all along deplored and condemned the curse of warfare in which hundreds of thousands of men took part and spilt the blood of their own fellow-men. The participation of Turkey in the World War, in particular, appeared an ominous blunder to me. The war had been going on for a

number of years bringing in its wake the inevitable miseries. Thousands of helpless poor people went without a single meal a day and without a meal spent sleepless nights. Our own household, however, had felt no such pinch of the war. My mother was one of the richest persons in Smyrna. She had been brought up in Constantinople in the lap of luxury. The produce of her fields were plentiful and so we did not in the least feel the effect of the war.

When my mother saw how agitated I felt over the news she had communicated to me, she lighted a cigar and with perplexity writ large on her face, stretched herself on one of the sofas. I rang up the hotel to send me a cup of coffee and in the meanwhile began to smoke my golden cigar. This was just to run away from and forget my inward restlessness. Presently the cup of coffee was brought in and along with it came the news of the arrival of Jamal.

It was evident that when my mother informed me of the peace of Bulgaria, she also wanted to tell me something about Jamal. But just then I cared not a hang for Jamal. The appearance of the Kaiser himself could not have taken away my mind from the sweet delight that the puffs at my golden cigar afforded me. Jamal was a cousin of my mother and had served as an officer on the various theatres of war. Many a time no doubt he had got wounded but almost every time he came to Constantinople

for treatment, I happened to be in Germany. Even if at home, I did not much relish the idea of cultivating deep relations with him. Whenever I thought of his sister, forthwith the idea flashed across my mind how twelve years ago my mother had wished to join me in wedlock to her and for that express purpose had sent for her to Constantinople. She was a girl of Smyrna, Aysha by name. As soon as I came to know about the trap to entangle me in matrimony, at once I packed up and bolted straight off to Europe. Six months later, I heard that Aysha was married to one Muqbil Bey, a relation of my father. Feeling safe now, I returned to Constantinople. My mother thought I was a fool to reject the hand of a wealthy lady like Aysha. Gradually, however, she got over the incident. In her heart of heart, she herself had not much of liking for a rustic village girl. She wished me to marry in some up-to-date fashionable Europeanized family. I was then a youth of 24.

On the day of the peace of Bulgaria when Jamal visited us, his sister had already been married a number of years. I fancied that she must have grown older. Her husband, Muqbil, had resigned service in the Foreign Office and was sojourning at the farm-house of his wife. He had been devoting his fullest attention to trade in grapes and figs.

Jamal kissed my mother's hand and I was yet thinking to offer him a formal salutation in

order to keep up appearances, when he stepped forward, extended his hand and gave me such a vigorous shake that I had perforce to attend to him.

Jamal was a man of bluish eyes which, under dark brows, reflected a ripe and sober judgment. He had a small oval face upon which a gentle ripple of smile always seemed to play. His lean and light body betokened the graceful strength which he had acquired through braving many an arduous and perilous action. Whenever he came face to face with anyone whom he must salute, with a brisk and sharp movement, he would pull himself up to military erectness, his heavy military boots at the same time striking automatically against each other with a smart click. In conversation his tone was positively captivating. When he let go the grasp of my hand, he pushed back his military hat and pulling out a handkerchief from his pocket, he passed it over his forehead as if to remove perspiration.

“What makes you rub your forehead?” I remarked. “Certainly you are not perspiring.”

This brought a sad smile to his face and seating himself in a chair he lighted his cigar.

“As I was coming along this way,” he said, “I met a friend in the tram-car. We had a rather long discussion about the peace of Bulgaria and that is why I feel a bit tired.”

All of a sudden, he assumed a tone which showed a real sense of danger ahead. Fixing his pair of blue eyes on me, with childlike simplicity, he put me the question :

“ Bulgaria has signed peace. This means she has realized her weakness. What is to be our policy now? You must certainly be in the know of it through the Foreign Office.”

I can not recollect just now what exactly I told him in reply but one impression that I got on this occasion will not leave me all my life. Affection for Jamal sank deep into my heart and he was the first man who gave a turn to my hitherto aimless life. He also informed me that his sister Aysha and Muqbil were also thinking of coming over to Constantinople but their baby Hasan was too weak to stand the strain of the journey. This piece of information had a magic effect on me.

For the first time in my life I cultivated the friendship of a man who, notwithstanding his robust physique, was exceedingly modest, humble and the very personification of sincerity. I could not for one moment bear to part from him. In the afternoon at 4 o'clock, he would daily pass by the Foreign Office and together we would go to the Mussarat Hotel where we had a *tete-a-tete* with other military officers. They were all well-built, fine-looking stalwart youths but Jamal stood conspicuous among them all. There was

something in his personality which cast a spell on my heart.

Constantinople presented the appearance more of a battle-field these days. Not a day or a night passed when British aeroplanes did not hover over our heads and shower bombs on us. This caused great commotion among the populace. The military officers who met in the Musarrat Cafe, discussed the topics of peace and war and the causes that led to the participation of Turkey in the war. One blamed Anwar Pasha. Another denounced Germany. A third would loudly shout that the Turks had lost the capacity to do anything with steadfast devotion. Defying all these pessimists, Saifi, an enthusiastic military officer, still stuck to his guns and vehemently declared that Turkey was bound to win. He narrated to the company the wonderful exploits of the battles of the Dardenelles and the Sinai.

I will never forget one of the earliest days of this period of revival. Jamal would daily go towards the Academy of War and one day he called on me to take me along with himself. "The weather is so glorious and delightful," he said. "Let us walk along towards the Bayazid Park."

Jamal was feeling particularly depressed this day. He was ruminating over the causes of the calamities that had afflicted our nation. And at last, addressing me, he broke out: "Turkey

would not have seen this evil day, had she been a Republic."

There sounded something delightfully strange about these words that dropped almost spontaneously out of the lips of Jamal.

"You must be on your guard," I observed. "If you blurt out your democratic views before your comrades of the Academy of War, who belong to the Royal family, you know what it would mean."

As we came up in front of the Foreign Office, we stopped to wait for a military officer who was coming towards us from the War Office. He was a resident of Istanbul, with a smart light body, close-clipped moustaches and a slightly slanting hat. As he came up to us, he quietly pulled off his gloves and stretched his right hand towards Jamal. As usual Jamal clicked his heels, stretched himself to military erectness and shook the new-comer by the hand.

"Where are you coming from, Ihsan?" he asked.

"From the 3rd Division," replied Ihsan.

Jamal then introduced me to Ihsan. We had hardly been there a few minutes, talking over the Bulgarian peace when both these officers pricked up their ears and were all attention to a distant sound.

“British aeroplanes!” they said, calm and composed. “Let us at once quit this zone of the War Office.”

We hurriedly moved along and so did everybody in the locality, so as to get out of this danger area. Many had done shopping and were coming back, carrying their packages along. There were many ladies hustling along with their children. It was an hour of extreme danger. The weak and the strong all were seized with consternation and took to their heels. All of a sudden, the confusion and lamentations of the populace became louder. When I looked up I saw five aeroplanes from which bombs dropped like snowfall on the mob below. In a short while we found ourselves enveloped in a regular cloud of smoke and dust. People were frantically running about. The road was hardly visible and people fell on one another. My knees seemed to give way and I felt as if my backbone had become hollow. Presently I opened my eyes and all I saw was a scene of wholesale devastation. Houses and shops lay demolished. The roadside was strewn with human limbs—broken thighs, detached arms, shattered legs and so forth. One poor woman who was rushing along with her sweet child was now standing and bewailing. The ground in front of her was besmeared with blood and the last gasps of life were all that came out of the mouth of the dear little one. An aged Armenian woman who wore a black shawl over her grey hair was lying on



the road, weltering in her blood. The upper part of her body was blown asunder from the lower. This was the first time that my eyes fell on a scene of bloodshed.

There were no signs of panic or distress on the faces of Jamal and Ihsan. One of them knelt by the body of the old woman; the other attended to the wounded. For me, the horrid spectacle was too much to bear and I betook myself aside and seated myself with eyes closed. A short while afterwards I felt the hand of Jamal on my shoulders. "Get up, Biyami," he said, "you are soiling your clothes."

I opened my eyes and saw Ihsan also coming towards us. His face beamed with satisfaction mingled with determination. I confessed I was terror-struck. "And so do I," put in Jamal.

This candid confession on the part of Jamal only enhanced my respect for him. I knew enough of human psychology to understand that one who is very loud in shouting his courage and daring is at heart the most cowardly of cowards. Both these soldiers offered me their hands and I got up to my feet. Thereafter we were passing through the jaws of death, as it were. We got into a car which brought us to the Musarrat Cafe. Here the waiters and others looked with amazement at my two soldier companions; for, contrary to the scene around, their faces radiated with triumph.

## CHAPTER II

JAMAL was the first to receive the news of the Greek invasion of Smyrna. He heard it with astonishing determination and equanimity of mind. But for good many days he had heard nothing about his sister, Aysha which made him uneasy. Daily would he go to the telegraph office and come back empty-handed. Five days thus passed when one early morning, Ihsan suddenly entered my bed-room. He had sent me no previous information of this call. His face was furious with rage as he thus broke the news to me: "Ah brother! The Greeks have torn Muqbil Bey's body to pieces and shot dead his child, Hasan. Aysha is reported to be wounded. I have got this news through a young officer who has just come from Smyrna. How shall we break it to Jamal?"

Forthwith I jumped out of my bed and rushed towards the door to close it, lest Jamal should come in just then. Then lighting my cigar, I pondered what to do. "We must quit this house," said I after a couple of minutes, "before Jamal wakes up. I would much rather have Jamal hear this tragic news from some other lips than ours."

At nightfall, I removed Jamal's bed to

my own bed-room and I did not let any one come near me, not even my mother and the domestic servants. I did not wish Jamal to be seen in the present state of distress and depression, the full depths of which I did not myself know. As I looked at him I found his lips drooping down, his eyes devoid of light and his nose, like old people, margined by deep wrinkles. It was midnight and Jamal was lying listless as if he was fast asleep or under the intoxication of *hashish*. Then all of a sudden, he broke his silence but he said not a word of Muqbil Bey or his martyr child. He was plunged deep in grave apprehensions.

The forebodings that seemed to haunt him, though he did not express them, could be well guessed from his talk. To dispel these I consoled him saying, "Jamal! Have no fear! Aysha is not the sort of woman who would submit to such ignominy. She would much sooner die than allow herself to be dishonoured. I can swear for that as if I am just now by her side." Fortunately a telegram came the same evening from Smyrna intimating Aysha's arrival in Constantinople within three days. She was due on Thursday while on Friday was to take place the huge national demonstration in the Sultan Ahmad Park.

On Thursday morning we went to the docks along with Jamal to receive Aysha. There was a mammoth crowd of people on the

quay. The whole atmosphere was charged with bitterness, grief and despair. We mixed up with the crowd. My eyes fell on Ihsan who, I knew, had purposely gone away from us. I advanced towards the ship when presently I heard Jamal thus call out to me, "Biyami! Here is Aysha!" I turned towards Jamal and saw by his side a woman with a bandaged arm, dressed in black from head to foot.

"The Daughter of Smyrna has come!" I said to myself. Aysha extended her long, white hand towards me. After shaking hands, she quietly moved along with us. Her large, black eyes were, like the city of Smyrna from which she came, full of the deepest grief and anguish. Not a tear, however, was visible on her face and notwithstanding the crushing calamities that had afflicted her, her face showed no signs of distress. She seemed to be plunged deep in thought. We had hardly gone far when we saw a carriage coming along, Ihsan walking in front of it. Ihsan pointed towards the carriage and wished to slip away when Jamal's eye fell on him and in a trembling voice called out to him. Then he introduced him to his sister Aysha. Aysha extended her hand towards him and Ihsan imprinted a warm kiss on her white fingers. My mother who was in the carriage received Aysha with a cordial embrace and kissed her on the cheeks. Then getting into the carriage we reached the flat that had been reserved beforehand for Aysha. We accommo-

dated her and her brother Jamal in the same room. When in the evening Aysha came downstairs, she was clasping her brother by the hand, as if they were just two children. Their eyes were red-shot and swollen. When Aysha's eyes met those of Jamal, they bubbled with tears and her grief deepened. When, however, she looked at Ihsan's bluish eyes, all her inner anguish evaporated. They radiated with manly determination mingled with fraternal affection.

The following day, Friday, was the day of the historic demonstration. A sort of significant silence reigned in the streets. The Muslim population had assumed extreme silence. And the Christians felt restless and undecided whether they should interfere with the programme of the Muslims and mock their policy or should keep aloof. As a matter of fact, of all the cuts in the body of this land, the deepest is the one inflicted by the Christian population. At the instigation of Britain and France they have always been stabbing their fellow-countrymen in the back. From the moment we got into a tram-car at Usman Bey Station, we saw a huge sea of humanity on all sides. We could not, however, watch the details, as we had Aysha along with us whose arm was fractured. Aysha was in fact a symbol for us, of the whole of the nation in mourning. When we got down from the tram-car at Aba Sufiya, we had a great difficulty in

making way through the crowds for Aysha, till we reached the Park of Sultan Ahmad. As we looked around, we found the tram-routes all flowing with human rivers, as it were. The buildings round about the Park were thronged with dense crowds of an eager and groaning populace. What struck me as the most remarkable about all this was that notwithstanding this sea of humanity surging on all sides, there reigned perfect silence. All the noise that could be heard was that of the myriad footfalls. This was the first occasion that I saw Turkey in her true colours. For in Constantinople lies the secret of national existence. That was a day of universal commotion in the town. The populace thronged to the Park. Old men and women, so far leading their lives in patience and seclusion, also dragged themselves along to participate in this national mourning. And as they witnessed the pathetic scenes of national woe at the demonstration, they cried like children and tears trickled down their grey beards. Likewise the old women, with shawls on their shoulders, could not control their feelings. Tears chased one another on their venerable, old wrinkled faces. Their eyes were red-hot and on their faces was writ the fury of the women who at the time of the French Revolution had stormed the Royal Palace. Whithersoever the eye turned, it met a surging sea of humanity. The minarets of the Sultan Ahmad Mosque and the prison building were also

packed with people. Even the tall trees within the Mosque compound had been utilized and clusters of eager youths hung on the branches as so many human bunches. Black flags waved all around.

Just watch yonder woman reclining against the railing of the Park, loudly bewailing. Old age has left hardly any tooth in her mouth or a ray of light in her eyes. Her face is furrowed deep with wrinkles. Yet there she is, stricken with grief and crying her old heart out over this national calamity. But why single her out? Every one, man or woman, who enters the Park and finds the Ottoman Flag in black, bursts into tears. Even the youthful damsels who are very particular about their paint and powder cannot control their tears which flood down their cheeks and wash these precious decorations off.

With great difficulty, we waded through the thick crowds and ascended the pavilion erected as a memorial in honour of the Kaiser's visit. From here we expected to be able to listen to the speeches. Presently we saw a gangway being made to escort the wounded officers and soldiers. Some had their legs amputated and wooden ones substituted instead. Some had lost their arms, some their eyes. As these heroes of the nation marched past, their heads bent low in keeping with the sad and solemn occasion, repeated soul-stirring shouts of

Allah-o-Akbar went up to the skies and electrified that huge mass of humanity.

We could not catch the voice of the speakers from where we stood, nor could we recognise them. Every now and then, however, a lady would get up and give out a shrill cry. I could recognise only one of the speakers, Muhammad Amin Bey whose head was snow-white on account of old age. While speaking, he was leaning towards the officers and soldiers whose broad and wounded breasts were now trembling, though they knew no trembling when they were facing the enemy guns. To-day they were, like so many children, loudly crying, their heads thrown low. Such was the state also of Jamal and Aysha by my side. When I looked up at them, their faces reflected the deepest of grief and anguish. From the long back eyelashes of Aysha, tears flowed in rapid succession, forming a crystal bead-string hanging down her cheeks.

Ah! my sweet mother-land! This Park has witnessed the pomp and splendour of many a royal procession of princes and princesses. They watched displays of horsemanship and reviews of troops and made their exit. But never before had this Park been made halo by the tears of a nation. The scenes of national pride I witnessed this day eclipsed all the magnificence of the Byzantium and Ottoman. What is it that has filled the nation



with these new sentiments? Is it due to those noble and deep forces that have given birth to modern Turkey, or is it due to the bloody storm that swept over the lovely town of Smyrna and which carried sword and fire over the emerald hills and through her green luxuriant orchards—storm which may now overrun this capital town?

Everybody at that mammoth national demonstration was moved to the deepest depths of his soul. It was a most impressive spectacle. A whole nation was in mourning. All eyes were rivetted on the wounded war heroes in the centre and all ears strained to catch the soul-stirring tales of national woe. In the meantime, two British aeroplanes appeared and began to hover around over the huge demonstration. Nobody, however, took any notice of them. The worst they could do to us was to shower down death on the multitude below, but we were faced with something worse than death—the consciousness of national death. Not an eye therefore looked up to cast a glance at this demonstration of force.

Aysha's eyes, from which trickled down tears after tears, were aglow with a sort of electric flash. And so was the condition of the fifty thousand veiled daughters of Turkey assembled at that national demonstration. When the function was over, and the crowds dispersed, we felt within us an unspeakable sense of satisfaction

and confidence fill our hearts. Mingled with the vast sea of humanity we moved along. As we came up near the Musarrat Cafe, we met the young officers who were my friends. Their names were Khairi, Salim and Ahmad Saleem. On their oval faces played a strange ray of light, which, in fact, was evident on the faces of the whole multitude. This was the ray of confidence and hope. Apparently there was no reason for this new-born feeling. There was, however, one thing which filled every bosom with hope. The nation had donned the crown of thorns. This was guarantee enough that everybody would rally to its succour. It was this new-born sense of national suffering that inspired confidence.

The three young officers took the hand of Aysha and imprinted a respectful kiss on it. Obviously they had come to know about the life-infusing incident which, like the black national flags fluttering over the minarets, had made of Aysha a symbol of national calamity. Her broken arm was a constant reminder of the bloody ignominy and painful tortures that had afflicted the nation.

### CHAPTER III

ON the fifth or sixth day after the national demonstration we were all taking tea—myself, Ihsan, Jamal, Aysha and my mother. Aysha would often get up and help round at the tea table with her strong muscular hand. This was the only hand that she could help with. Ihsan got up, relieved her of this work and putting her in her chair, put before her a cup of tea and a cake which he sliced with his own hand. Jamal had done with tea and, seated in his chair, was mingling the smoke of his cigar with that of the samovar. Just then there was a tap at the door and presently Syeda Salma, dressed in the richest gold-laced costume, came pompously moving along towards us. To myself and Ihsan, she attached but little importance and would turn her face away from us. She thought much of my mother, knowing the position of importance her house occupied in the locality. She was therefore anxious to enlist her support. Jamal was on the most intimate terms with her. So she lavished the fullest of her attention on him. Thereafter she was introduced to Aysha. After exchange of courtesy, she cast a full glance at her. "Unfortunate victim of the sins of the Unionists!" she ejaculated. Aysha, however, was unmoved, as if she was unconscious of the very presence of Syeda Salma. This was

a peculiar habit with her. She would freely move about among those who frequented my mother's house and would even entertain them. But she always took care to avoid familiarity. This was due to her extreme sincerity. Syeda Salma could not gauge the depths of her looks and put her down as a simple woman who could not talk in foreign languages. And a woman who could talk neither French nor English did not weigh much in the eyes of this aristocratic visitor.

Syeda Salma put in a few words as to the tragic fate of Muqbil Bey and looked with inquisitive eyes at Aysha. Aysha's face, however, was as unmoved as the deep sea, perturbed neither by a ripple nor a breeze. Presently she added, "Dear Jamal! Just now a correspondent of an English newspaper is on a visit here collecting first-hand information as to the state of our country. We told this man that the Unionists have now not a single supporter left and all the people are with the English. The invasion of Smyrna by Greeks has heavily told on us. A respectable lady has just now arrived from there whose husband and child have been brutally assassinated by the Greeks. She has herself sustained an injury. We would just go and bring this correspondent down here so that he may hear the whole story of Greek barbarities from Aysha's own lips."

*Aysha*: "Syeda! It is beyond my power to

relate anything before him."

*Salma* : "Never mind! Do send for him. You just relate what took place in Smyrna in Turkish and I will act as your interpreter in English."

This sent a wave of red blood over the whole body of Aysha who said: "I do not wish anything to be reported on my authority."

These outspoken words from the lips of Aysha alarmed Jamal as to their consequences. Up he rose from his chair and cast a restless and anxious look at Aysha and this cooled her down as if by magic. "Well," she added, "if Jamal should wish it, I may sit among the guests along with you."

Syeda Salma was enraged. "Beg your pardon! Aysha," she said. "But after all, it is Beys and Pashas like your husband who are responsible for these evil days of Turkey so that now we must somehow seek the mercy of the civilized nations and, getting into their good books, try to get rid of these miseries."

*Aysha* : "Syeda! I am no politician. But this much I know that never never will Aysha live to beg the good graces of foreigners."

The interview came. This British journalist will ever evoke in me the feeling of extreme

anger and hatred. He was seated in the room and assumed airs as if there was nobody else about there. His long legs and knees could be seen from underneath his trousers and he was moving his long nimble feet. His thin-haired head resembled the hawk that has been stripped of its feathers. He had a big aquiline nose, and small blue eyes, destitute of the least ray of light or grace. His marked feature was his pair of protruding whiskers which fell over his lips. No one who looked at him could say with certainty whether what came out of his hidden mouth was laughter or ridicule. What, however, struck one the most prominent about his face was his meagre yellow axe-like teeth. Of British imperialism, he was a living embodiment and a true type. He looked down on all other men with unconcealed contempt. In the flush of victory, he trampled under his feet the inhabitants of the conquered territories whom he contemptuously called natives.

Side by side with him also sat Colonel Hashmat, the type and standard of a dignified soldier. One of the men present, a Pasha, was talking about the fourteen points of President Wilson. Syeda Salma, who had nothing for us but a haughty overbearing look, cringed before this overbearing Britisher whom she looked up to as the biggest man in the world. To conciliate him, she had adopted a tone of extreme politeness and humility. She even resorted to flattery. Jamal quietly listened and

it seemed as if his sincere and patient eyes were capable of unbounded forbearance. Aysha was seated a little farther off. She had a black covering over her head and it seemed as though she did not understand anything. This was the first time that she took the white bandage off her broken arm and gave it a pose that nobody may take it as broken. She hated the idea that others should pity her or have sympathy for her.

Ah, what a day of nonsense, absurdity, pang and anguish! The relentless British newspaper man would now and then grow gentle and condescend to acknowledge the solicitations of Syeda Salma with a nod of head and his ominous lips would thus open in French: "Syeda! You are trying in vain. Britannia will never forgive your fault. You shed the blood of 60,000 Britishers at the Dardenelles."

*Salma*: "Mr. Cook! This was the work of the Unionists. We were against war. Now we are prepared to pay any price for British friendship."

To this, Hashmat objected with calm dignity, saying: "Syeda! The Unionists were not alone to fight the country's battles for defence." This brought a cunning look to Mr. Cook's eyes. "Colonel!" he said: "Do you mean to tell us that you are not one of the Unionists? But the fact is that from the womenfolk up to the Pashas, you are all one. Where were you when

war was declared? You ill-treated the British prisoners of war. You assassinated the Armenians. Then, what made you stand against a big nation like the British and why all this time did you waste their life, property and energy? England can not possibly forgive your fault."

*Hashmat*: "Mr. Cook! I never thought I was here as a criminal before a court which England had appointed to try me. We are here just to remove a misunderstanding. Syeda Salma told us that you wanted to see us and so we are here."

*Mr. Cook*: "Of course so, Colonel! It is necessary to come to an understanding. It is advisable that the curtain should be rung down on the past and you should arrive at an understanding with us. The support of Britain . . ."

Mr. Cook had not yet finished when there was a knock at the door and Ihsan was shown in along with four of fellow officers. Mr. Cook continued:

"British support must be your foremost concern to secure. Just look at India. What peace and prosperity they enjoy! Those millions of people beseech Almighty God day and night most vehemently never to deprive them of the protecting hand of the white man's rule. Whether Britain would accede to this request of yours and take this heavy burden on



her shoulders, I can not say. But that is the sole cure for your present ills. Then if you express sincere regret for what you have done, it is just possible, Britain may forgive you the blood of the 60,000 Britishers you have slain at the Dardenelles."

Pin-drop silence reigned in the hall as Mr. Cook uttered these words. I could not bear the sight of the faces of the soldiers there. Syeda Salma's face, however, flushed red and in the same pitiable tone she went on: "Ah sir! We will certainly prevail upon Britain to forgive us that fault."

Just then, however, there came a loud voice:

"England may forgive those who care to ask forgiveness of her."

At this I was suddenly overtaken with fear. Ihsan stepped towards Aysha, for he thought she must have done it and thereby imperilled herself. For no living being did Ihsan cherish such affection as for Aysha. Hashmat and the young officers also went up to Aysha. It was indeed she who had uttered the perilous words. But she moved not an inch from her position, nor did her face show any signs of fear or distress. She had great faith in the righteousness and strength of her opinion and quite independent of the environment went on to say:

*Aysha* : “ The day we fought at the Dardenelles we were no rebels nor were we slaves. We fought you like a noble foe in which we killed your people and you ours. Is it just to call a vanquished foe an assassin ? ”

*Mr. Cook* : “ Do you mean to say that British blood is the same as Turkish blood ? ”

*Aysha* : “ I have not seen British blood with my own eyes and so I can not say whether it is red like ours or blue. But I know Turkish blood too well. It is red and hot like a live coal. ”

*Mr. Cook* : “ Righto, Madam ! I meant no insult to Turkish blood. All I meant was that somehow you must prevail upon the British to forgive and forget. ”

*Aysha* : “ And what about those who have slain my child—the sweet little darling whose chest was made the target of a bullet and who expired while tears in his black eyes had not yet dried up. They lodged a bullet into his chest and, as a complaint against their inhuman barbarity, his innocent lips had not even so much leisure as to utter Mum ! Mum ! ”

I can not say whether it dawned on Mr. Cook that at times the oppressed become more powerful than the oppressors. Nevertheless he

did feel that the atmosphere in the hall had grown too dangerous for him. With peculiar coolness and dignity he got up and in a snake-like hissing sound said: "Well, thank you for the talk of the Daughter of Smyrna you have made me listen to-night." So saying he made his exit and along with him went out Syeda Salma. Nobody offered him a parting hand. I saw him off to the door and on my return I saw the young officers kneeling before the chair of Aysha. They as well as Hashmat Pasha and the aged Sabri Pasha had all drawn and presented their swords to the Daughter of Smyrna. And, in a firm voice, Ihsan said: "In the defence of Smyrna we will not cease to fight. Our swords shall not go back into the scabbards so long as there is one single drop of blood left in us."

Aysha who was till now the personification of strength and daring was so impressed with these words of devoted officers that she wept like a child. "What makes you weep, Aysha?" said I. "There are more of peace-lovers amongst us than those who will bear the sword. The war has come to a close and we have known the cost of a social peace with Mr. Cook. Come! Have a cup of tea."

To this day I am filled with shame at these words. I know they were due to my association with the office papers. Now, lying in this hospital with both thighs amputated, I declare

from the bottom of my heart :

“ Aysha ! Aysha ! Daughter of Smyrna ! My sword shall know no sheathing until I have one limb left to amputate. The streams of tears that thy eyes shed have now dried up, but thou hast not known that I have lost both my thighs. Nevertheless I still possess two arms to carry on the fight. Aysha ! Just open thy eyes ! I am in no way behind those martyrs who are lying in eternal repose by thy side. Shortly, for thy sake, I will once more carry on the *Jihad* and will know no rest until all my limbs have been amputated.”

## CHAPTER IV

AFTER that night neither Mr. Cook nor Syeda Salma was seen at our meeting. Our officer brothers were growing impatient to leave for Smyrna and the atmosphere of Constantinople was charged with a peculiar enthusiasm. People were longing to take part in the Smyrna struggle and were on the look-out for some sort of opportunity that might help in the realization of this desire. Interest in such methods of publicity as interviews with newspaper correspondents or tea-parties was confined only to school-boys and women. Otherwise there was but one cry that resounded all over—*the defence of Smyrna!* This magic expression attracted everybody.

While this was going on, my domestic life was on the verge of a new change. Syeda Salma and her friends cut themselves off from our house. This caused much grief to my mother. And on the top of it came the news that British agents were shadowing our house. This added to her distress. We feared that any moment the power in occupation may put us under arrest and deport us to Malta with the rest of the Unionists. Nevertheless my mother consoled herself in the thought that our activities were moderate and the bold and daring line of action

which had just been inaugurated was due to the presence of Aysha. Though she never expressed her inward fear and restlessness, secretly she would enquire how long Aysha and Jamal would stay at our house and she began even to tease me on this account.

At last my mother's patience was exhausted. Hardly a week had passed since the interview with Mr. Cook at which the latter had bestowed on Aysha the epithet of the Daughter of Smyrna, when my mother made a clean breast of the whole thing to myself and Ihsan. Jamal was gone out at the time while Aysha was in her room in the upper storey. My mother gave us a long discourse on the problem of freedom and told us that no line of action involving bloodshed would go to the interest of our country. She did not wish in that old age to make her house the centre of a disturbance, nor could she bear the idea that her position in the Sicilian society should sustain any loss and respectable people should refuse to visit her house. She went so far as to say: "This country-woman who is my aunt's daughter has hypnotized the senses of all of you and I am afraid this programme of action would throw us farther off from our objective of freedom."

I do not know how and why on this day my mother took Ihsan in her confidence, as though he were a member of our own family. It seems his Istanbul cut of dress and demeanour gave my

mother the impression that he hated disturbance more than we did. This is what seems to have made her open her heart to him. Once she addressed Ihsan saying: "My boy! Just consider this! Admitting that Aysha's fields have been burnt, she still has enough of the cash. Let the brother and the sister hire a house of their own, otherwise it is dead sure Biyami would be deported to Malta." I wanted to talk to her about it but had hardly opened my lips when the door opened and Aysha stepped in. Ihsan was silent but his face showed that he felt impressed. He quickly got up to turn to Aysha.

Since the day the officers had taken oaths at the hand of Aysha, she had not seen Ihsan. Drawing close together, their eyes met and forthwith both seemed instinct with a new life. It seemed as if the whole room was one dazzling resplendence, the moment they shook each other by the hand. When Ihsan and Aysha took their seats, face to face with each other, their hearts were overflowing with a surging tide of love. I am not positive whether this sentiment was reciprocal and Aysha's heart was as full of love as that of Ihsan. There is, however, not a shadow of doubt about the fact that ever since the day Ihsan opened the door of carriage for Aysha near the Koperi, his eyes were filled with her love, so that thereafter she and she alone dwelt therein. It is just possible that Aysha might have detected the change in my mother's attitude, because as soon as she entered, dead

silence reigned in the room. From this she must have plainly seen that we were discussing a topic in some way related to her which we wanted to keep back from her. But the mysterious affair that had already started between Ihsan and Aysha the moment their eyes met diverted Aysha's attention from trying to find out our topic.

A month afterwards three great events came about. Aysha shifted to a double-storeyed building in Kadak Pasha's block which caused separation between her and my mother. Secondly, the officers who had taken oaths on the night of the interview with Mr. Cook at the hand of Aysha, left one and all for Smyrna. Ihsan was the only one left behind. Before departure, they stood in need of cash. At the instance of Aysha it was decided that a portion of her deposit money in the bank should be withdrawn and distributed among these officers. Consequently, three thousand pounds were withdrawn and each of the ten officers, thus supplied with 300 hard cash, set out on a life and death enterprise.

The third great event was that a strange sort of feeling seemed to take possession of my mind—a feeling which even Aysha could not but detect. Every time that a departing officer would approach Aysha, he made it a point to kiss her left hand. This was the hand which the Greeks had broken and this was the hand which these young officers had made an emblem



and a symbol of this war of independence. This broken hand of Aysha filled their hearts with the dare-devil devotion of the historical plain of Karbala. Each heart was burning for the crown of martyrdom. Whoever imprinted a kiss on her left hand, she would shower on him the same sweet bewitching looks she had showered a month ago on Ihsan. Strange lustre seemed to play on Aysha's face and her eyes were radiant with the fire of hope. When I cast my eyes on her I felt the same thoughts surge within my mind as I had experienced a month ago and which had kept me restless all this time. These were the questions I put to myself: "Is Ihsan a member of the imaginary army which is shortly to wage war for the sake of the rich fertile fields of Smyrna, for the sake of Aysha, and for the sake of the black-eyed sweet little child whose chest the Greeks have riddled with bullets? Is it not possible that I may be wrong in my conjecture? Anyway I was in no doubt as to the sentiment that swelled the bosom of Ihsan. The candle that shone in his eyes was certainly none other than Aysha and this candle shone only when his eyes were fixed on her.

## CHAPTER V

EVERY day as I left office I would take the road to Aysha's house situated in the Kadak Pasha Street. In the Sicilian block and in our own house, Aysha was absolutely forgotten. My mother had given out that she had left for Smyrna and she never worried to find out her whereabouts nor did I ever mention her name to her. As for myself, I had taken a vow that day that I would make Jamal and his sister my brother and sister and I was true to my word.

Every new day that came revealed Aysha to me in an absolutely new colour which could not but command the meed of love and adoration from me. She was the self-same lady who ten years ago struck me as a plain country woman and I had to run away to Europe lest I should be wedded to her. Now her personal virtues dawned on me which none of our Unionist women had. She had her intellect and wits cultivated on the simple and sound principles of hard experience free from any shadow of doubt or ambiguity. Besides, she was well-educated and could freely talk in foreign languages.

Aysha's mode of life was the most striking feature about her. She lived alone in a double storeyed building and Zainab, the green-groceress,

was the only person in the locality she knew. Her black dress was patched here and there and she was busy with her needle work. Now she would do knitting work. Again she would prepare clothes for the children of the Smyrna warriors. She lived on the earnings from her handicraft or coaching-fee. Whatever of cash she possessed was reserved for the question of Smyrna and as far as possible she did not spend a penny on anything else. In this connection she went on a round of visits to several houses for coaching purposes but at none of these houses the inmates could get any inkling of the mystery that enveloped her.

People took Aysha for the widow of some officer killed during the Great War and as she preferred simplicity to ostentation, her ways and manners did not attract public notice. Notwithstanding these private engagements, she took full part in the Smyrna movement and rendered help to Jamal and others who in their leisure hours sent messages to Aysha.

Aysha was possessed of all those virtues that go to make a patriotic woman. She was an embodiment of vigour, determination and smartness, sincerity of purpose and spirit of self-sacrifice. She combined these with the important habit of regularity. Notwithstanding all these virtues, however, she had the attraction of children which won her the devotion of the people and inspired them with sympathy

and support. Her distinguishing trait was that she scrupulously eschewed picking holes in others.

Ihsan remained in Constantinople. His brothers considered it useful for him to stay in the town. Aysha had great expectations of the disaffected tribes. She loved the youths of Smyrna and the tribes that were keeping up warfare in the hills. But Ihsan looked at it from a soldier's point of view and would say: "A regular and organised army alone can successfully tackle this problem and such an army can overwhelm even the English, to say nothing of the Greeks." Aysha, however, considered the mobilisation of a regular army as nothing short of a miracle. Nevertheless the irregular forces would at least cripple the Greeks for a retreat into Anatolia. Aysha felt sceptical about a regular army but Ihsan would smilingly reassure her, saying that, as soon as conditions called for it, these very people who were now directing the tribal disturbances would form themselves into a regular army. Was it not a fact that these disturbances were engineered by the military people? As Ihsan thus assured Aysha, his eyes reflected his intense longing to follow her as well as his grief at the thought that an officer of his rank and experience should be made the head of an irregular rabble. To Aysha, however, this did not matter in the least. To her all workers in the cause of Smyrna were equal.

We daily went out for a stroll, Ihsan and myself. This grave dignified soldier had palish cheeks, sparkling eyes and a breast aglow with the fire of freedom. As I pondered over these feelings that swelled in his bosom and looked at the emblem of War Office stuck on his collar, it seemed to me as if underneath his uniform he was wearing a shirt made of flames. I knew how these flames consumed the whole of his inner being. For, like Ihsan, I too had a shirt of flames around my body and it was a habit with Aysha to fan the flames of this mysterious shirt, so that the spark of independence within the hearts should not get extinguished nor should the storm of restlessness in the bosoms subside. This was a shirt which banished all exhaustion and all indolence and besides Ihsan there were many who were to wear that fiery shirt. The pair of a woman's eyes which attract men with the strong ropes of love and scatter them in all directions may at times even fling them into the raging flames of Hell.

Such was the state of things till the beginning of March. The Anatolian movements came to be known as the "nationalist movements" and these had even found a leader to direct them. The centre of these movements was the nucleus round which the scattered forces of unrest and freedom coalesced. Aysha did not know the leaders of these movements. A section of the people there undoubtedly

was which kindled the fire of disturbance, then recklessly and heroically jumped into its gigantic flames. Aysha was a member of this organization.

## CHAPTER VI

ON MARCH 25, I was taken seriously ill. The doctors said it was Spanish fever. I was already feeling extremely depressed. The thought that I had Spanish fever, together with the anxiety on account of Aysha's loneliness, greatly distressed me. This was, however, a short-lived distress. I soon lost all consciousness. As a matter of fact I was suffering from typhoid.

During this state of unconsciousness, I had a strange experience. I felt as if some aeroplane had taken off with me and was at a tremendous speed whirling me round and round in space, over Constantinople. This greatly horrified me and I tried to close my eyes. My head seemed to pierce through the white clouds and what added still more to my terror was that in these clouds I saw the bald pate of Mr. Cook, the British press representative, with the same long drooping moustaches and the same big pale teeth. With his small eyes which were now bloodshot, he cast a threatening glance at me, so that, even in my unconsciousness, I gave out a shriek and heard my mother say: "Ah Biyami! Ah my son!" After some time, when I regained consciousness, I came to know that all this fearful experience was just a hallucination

due to unconsciousness. I saw my mother seated by my side and keeping my head cool with cold water. "What is the date to-day?" I asked her. "March 26, my dear boy," came the reply.

Just then the physician informed me that the English had occupied Constantinople, the Assembly of Deputies had been closed and most of its members exiled to Malta, including some women. This was a bolt from the blue. I felt giddy once more not only at the thought of my own helplessness but also at the distress that this must have caused Aysha. I could not possibly confide this feeling to my mother. Lately, when she was feeling apprehensive of arrest owing to Aysha's presence, I had told her that she had left for Smyrna. The only persons whose assistance I could seek to get into touch with Aysha was the physician. To see whether this was at all advisable to do, I looked at his face and closely scanned it. And when I asked him as to when I might leave my bed, he smiled and my mother's face seemed to say, "Ye, hot-blooded youths! It is all due to you!"

My physician did not consider it desirable to add to my mental worry and so he did not tell me the details of the occupation of Constantinople and kept me in the dark as to the events there. My brain was already upset and I was feeling much depressed. So he



would not tell me anything. I felt, however, that unless I got some news of Aysha, I must once more take a lift upward in an aeroplane of unconsciousness, this time perhaps never to descend from it.

In the beginning of April, I sent word to Ahmad Agha of the Foreign Office asking him to come and see me. One day he came along and managed to find out my whereabouts. I knew that he was a bitter enemy of all foreigners. He had given fight to the Armenian and Russian troops when they advanced towards Turkish territory. I told him all about Aysha—the fate she had met in Smyrna, how she was busy doing propaganda against the oppressors of Turks and how she had inspired officers, young and old alike, to serve her. I asked him to find out how and where she was and let me know. He returned the following morning and in breathless tones informed me that he could not trace her in the Kadak Pasha Street which was full of Armenians and Greeks. "Don't you worry," he added; "I will go tomorrow or the day after and see Zainab, the green-groceress. She may know about her."

Ahmad Agha was not long in keeping his word. He duly turned up as he had promised, his face beaming with joy. "Here are some letters for you," said he, pulling out some papers from underneath his cloak. "I

understand that Aysha is absconding. She left these with Zainab with the instruction to hand them over to you, when you call on the latter to ask about her. She had even called at this house but she was disposed of with the word that you were ill."

I eagerly seized at these letters. One of these was written on a note-paper. All the rest were on yellow sheets of paper from exercise-books which students use in schools. These letters relate to Aysha and I think I must reproduce them in this narrative before I bid my servant to consign them to flames, so that never more should mortal eyes fall on the handwriting of Aysha who is now lying in eternal rest in the cemetery of Kokaja Minar.

### Aysha's First Letter

"KADAK PASHA

"*March 18.*

"DEAR BIYAMI,

"Not a word about you for the last couple of days. At first this made me anxious, but then it came to my mind that auntie must have forbidden you to leave the house and a man like you must implicitly obey his mother. Nevertheless I could not help wondering why in these critical days you are breaking away from me. This does not look like you.

"Constantinople, too, had to go through the same fate for a couple of days as did

Smyrna. When on Tuesday, March 16, people woke up in the morning, they found the metropolis present a strange spectacle. The streets were not actually deserted by the people but every face reflected the deepest anguish and distress. Perfect silence reigned and there was not a pair of lips that moved. Constantinople had witnessed such a scene of ominous silence only once before—viz., on the Demonstration Day. Leaving my house, I was winding my way through the narrow, dark lanes leading to the tram-car road, when I came upon a scene which touched me to the marrow of my bones.

“ At the door-steps of a house there lay a cradle. A young woman wearing a shawl was standing by, with a lovely suckling in her lap. You may recollect I often talked to you about this little house. Till yesterday it sent out sweet strains of the guitar. Sometimes one would hear the music of the rocking cradle there or the soothing lullaby of the mother who would pat the baby to sleep.

“ Before the English took possession of it, it was the happy home of a loving youthful pair. When I approached the young woman to speak to her, from above came the strains of English music. She informed me that her husband who was a young officer, had joined some irregular army as a volunteer and gone. She was left alone. One of her uncles was

living in Askadar. I helped her in finding out a cab for her and procured the necessary things for the child who would not cease crying. It was a bonny baby with deep dark eyes which reminded me of the dark eyes which were now cold in death and motionless. Ah, my sweet child, how it was made the target of a bullet! I accompanied this woman to the steam boat "Ihsania" and we both got on board. When the ship whistled and smoothly glided away with us, we noticed war-boats lying at anchor in the Bosphorus with their guns turned on Constantinople.

"I had a mind to catch the first steam boat back from Askadar and call at your house, even at the risk of upsetting auntie. I simply could not help it. Yours was the only house where I could safely put up or I must spend the night on some public thoroughfare. Things, however, turned off differently. When I reached the plane of Dokhanjilar I saw Saifi clad in simple rustic clothes, running along towards me. Relieving me of the bundle of clothes I was carrying in my hands, he told me that he was just thinking of calling at my place. His eyes shone like two torches. He was putting up at a house far removed from the frequented quarters. He suggested that I should accompany him there. Many brothers, he said, would be coming there, for that had been fixed as the rendezvous for all those who were anxious to emigrate to Anatolia.

“Soon after I found myself at a yellow wooden house, standing under a cyprus tree by the side of a cemetery. A human hand from above pulled up the rope, the door opened and we entered the courtyard. The house consisted of two rooms on the first floor. The master of the house had a young and noble wife whose spotless heart sparkled like a diamond. His mother was also there, a woman of pure soul and neat habits. I spent the night with her in one of the rooms and told her the whole of my tale of woe in Smyrna.

AYSHA.”

### Aysha's Second Letter

“ *March 20.*

“ DEAR BIYAMI,

“I sent my first letter to Zainab to hand it over to you. I understood she could not see you. What is wrong with you? Are you feeling unwell? Saifi is thinking of crossing over the Koberi to the other side and there find out about you. He cannot take the risk of coming over to the Sicilian quarter.

AYSHA.”

### Aysha's Third Letter

“ *March 25.*

“ DEAR BIYAMI,

“On ascertaining it has been discovered that you are bed-ridden. Saifi sent Zainab to your house but she was not admitted in. She was told you were unwell. I am feeling quite at home where I am now putting up. Saifi's friends from

all quarters come to see him and we get news through them. Just opposite to our house there stands a big old building by the side of the cemetery and a garden. The gardener is a dirty-looking fellow, wearing loose dress, with a Haidari robe pulled all over. All the day long he keeps watering the garden. At the mid of night when I sat crouched near the pathway, I beheld the forms of some men in front of the deserted building. One of them was gently tapping the door. Up through the window above protruded the head of the dirty-looking gardener and cast searching glances at the men below. When he accosted them, they simply replied: "The secret of the night." At these pass-words, the man in the window pulled back the rope and the door flung open. The mysterious men were lost in the dark inside.

"I mentioned this strange incident to Saifi. He told me this happened every night. The men I had seen were the volunteers on their way to Anatolia. They are trying to take away Hashmat as well to-morrow. The following night I sat by the pathway as usual and closely watched the men that passed by. I could, however, see among them none answering to the stature and build of Hashmat. Coming back home, I enquired of Saifi whether Hashmat had gone. Saifi has also made up his mind to run off. I am anxious to start at once but I am waiting for you, so that we may go out together. Your illness is drawing rather too long.—AYSHA."

**Aysha's Fourth Letter.***" April 1.*

"DEAR BIYAMI,

"Last night I had a talk with Saifi and the young officers who are thinking of stealing off to Anatolia. They informed me that the Barusa Railway was closed for public traffic. I wish I could get some word from you. But lately the thought is holding my mind that we must not depend on it that gradually you would join our activities. Saifi will take me to Ihsan who is roaming about in the region of Azza Bazar and it is said that Jamal has also arrived there from Smyrna. Anyway, it will be possible for me to do some work only if I manage to get to Anatolia.

**AYSHA."**

## CHAPTER VII

When I read Aysha's last letter I felt greatly distressed. What would become of me if Aysha left for Anatolia, leaving me behind? The thought greatly worried me. I wrote her a long letter and most humbly implored her not to leave me behind. I assured her that I had no other desire but to lead the life of Jamal and Ihsan and devote myself to the same sort of activities. I was kept back only by my illness. I asked her to let me know her whereabouts, so that I might join her as soon as possible. I further hinted that young as she was, she must not plunge into some bloody line of action without the company of a devoted brother.

I left the letter with Zainab and patiently waited for the reply a couple of days but I heard nothing in reply. Saifi had called at Zainab's and even taken away the letter but he never returned. Like an offended child I knocked about the roads and streets. News from Anatolia came pouring in thick and fast, and some very distressing and heart-rending things also appeared in the papers. I wondered how far these were true and whether Ihsan was still in Azza Bazar. In the first week of April, I took a train for Stanboul and met Ahmad Agha. He shook his head and said that contact between Zainab and



the workers in Askadar had been cut off and none of those men had since visited her.

A week later I got a yet more distressing news. Ahmad Agha came to me, much upset and downcast. He had come to know through a friend in the police service that the Government had come to know of the presence in Askadar of a woman who acted as a post office between Constantinople and Anatolia. She also issued directions. She was described as doing tuition work in private houses. The Government was much anxious to trace her. I was convinced it must have been Aysha and the Court-martial must have passed death-sentence on her or at least penal servitude for ten years. A number of other women had already been so condemned.

It was just possible, I said to myself, that she had not gone to Anatolia simply on my account. She was perhaps waiting till I should recover and join her. Where could I look for her? Perhaps Saifi might be able to tell me. Aysha wrote that she had seen him near Doghanjilar. So he must be somewhere thereabout. But it was just possible warrants for his arrest might also have been issued and he might have absconded. I did not know what to do and how to trace Aysha. This day I realized as never before that I was really wearing the fiery shirt. I daily roamed about the dark and narrow lanes of Askadar and eagerly stared at every passing woman. I had even to pocket some quite harsh snubs

from some women. "May your eye burst off," came the curse from one woman. "You must be a British spy."

This was a most trying week. At length I went to the Askadar docks to get on board. To my great surprise I saw in the light of the lamps Saifi running towards me. Like a drowning man I caught hold of him by the neck. We walked along towards Askadar but his neck was still in my grip. "Let the grip go," he whispered. "This would attract public attention." I was loath to do so, for his neck was to me the skirt of Aysha. He was the only means of approach to her. Anyway we safely reached Saifi's house. Saifi had ceased visiting Zainab because he was also wanted by the police. The police had also come to know the features and habits of Aysha. As I entered the house, I found Aysha seated on the carpet making coffee for Saifi's mother. I imprinted a vehement kiss on her hand and wetted it with tears. I also kissed the hand of Saifi's mother, whom my tears moved to weeping. Aysha was also much moved but she did not weep. Her eyes dilated but she controlled her tears. Of all those present there, she stood most calm and firm.

Now the business before us was to run away from this house as quick as possible. The strategem we hit upon was that we should purchase a bullock cart and a couple of bullocks from the peasants. Saifi, Aysha and myself, all three

should put on peasant dress and under this guise start for Azza Bazar. Only if we could manage to get to Samandira, all would be well. We would then enter the zone of influence of our brother officers and their armies. It was impossible for Aysha to take the route of the Barusa Railway where the detective police, now well-acquainted with her features, would be on the look-out for her.

I still recollect the black piece of cloth with which Aysha covered her head. This she carefully concealed underneath her peasant dress—a rose-coloured cheque handkerchief which wrapped her head down to the chin. Now and then her pair of turquoise blue eyes began to revolve out of a sense of danger. But this she did with no greater concern than that of a year or two old babe. As a matter of fact she was now in the midst of danger the very thought of which made Saifi and myself shudder. Her black eyes emitted wonderful rays, mingled with dignity, wisdom and an iron resolve. The heat of the sun had lent her cheeks a bronze complexion. She was a model of a fine peasant girl. Her father was a big landlord and she was thus feeling quite at home at this new job. Her past experience stood us in good stead and she smartly handled the cart and the bullocks. Thanks to her skill we had a most pleasant journey, notwithstanding the heat of the sun or the dim light of the stars or the desolate wilds

through which we had to pass. At times, no doubt, lovely green fields fell on our way. We passed by towns but we had made it a rule to stay away from towns in the open. Our clothes and other necessaries of life we had stuffed into two bags. At the top of these we had put a little charcoal. Aysha and myself made for ourselves a bedding of hay inside the cart and all the three of us took rest or kept guard by turns. We were hemmed in by grave dangers. Our very lives were in the balance. Nevertheless we looked upon ourselves as the happiest and luckiest trio under the sun. Were we not out on the noblest and proudest mission that a mortal could set before himself—the liberation of Fatherland from the yoke of the foreigners? What were three lives worth compared to this high ideal of national independence? National slavery meant the daily death and degradation of the whole nation. No sacrifice was too great for the redemption of national life and honour. Cheered up by such sentiments which surged within our bosoms, the perils with which we were beset at every step sank into insignificance before our eyes. Now and then, as I looked up at Aysha's face, it seemed as if it was melting before the scorching rays of the sun. At times, she would take off her heavy country shoes and like children rush to a way-side stream of cool water and dip her feet therein. As we reached the point where our route deflected from the sea-coast, we stopped and standing by the side of our bullocks cast wistful glances at the blue

waters moving in the direction of the white city of Constantinople in the distance. The scene moved Saifi and myself to tears but Aysha's eyes radiated flames of fire instead of tears. Then we bowed to that small section of the sea, kissed the coast soil of those sweet home waters and casting a last glance at dear old Constantinople, jumped back into the cart and started on our weary journey, in quest of a nation's freedom. It dawned on me at this moment that Aysha's will-power was my sole guide. Her fiery shirt was on my body and her fiery whip was driving me on.

After a few days' journey we found ourselves in safe territory. The nationalist movement had a great hold on the masses here and wherever we went, we found that the names of the heroes of this movement and their exploits were household talk. Many refugees, men and women, had passed through this territory before us, in motor-cars. Constantinople was now under British occupation and the victim of afflictions.

On the way, we came across some strange spectacles. A soldier was seen carrying a bag of ammunition. All of a sudden a gang of armed men would appear from behind the cover of the hills. After a talk with the solitary soldier, they would all disappear again behind the hills. At a distance we would see an Istanbulian cavalcade but presently it would

also disappear. Besides, we came across a number of officers riding on horses with wooden saddles and rope-bridles. Several country people went along the same way. We, however, kept aloof from others and talked to none.

After three days' journey we reached the first zone of the free and saw with our own eyes something of this new nationalist disturbance. People were fully equipped with arms. Swords and six-chambered revolvers were stuck in their belts. They moved about with wonderful agility. It seemed as if they had springs fixed under their feet. Now they would carry their guns on their shoulders, again they would brandish them over their heads. There were men of all trades and pursuits among them as well as of all ranks and stations in life. One thing was common to them all. The eyes of one and all flashed with sparks of fire. Among them were also veterans of the irregular army who had for years engaged the Bulgar rebels in the mountains of Thrace and Macedonia.

When Aysha first met these people, she was surprised at their state and ways but soon she grew familiar with them. We could not long afford to conceal her identity. We were compelled to reveal that she was the sister of Jamal and had escaped as a fugitive from the English. Her peasant dress gave her a younger and prettier look but whoever listened to her tale of woe was forthwith inflamed with the

fire of enthusiasm and freedom. These people came to look upon her as a standard of war for Smyrna.

We were yet a stage from Azza Bazar and passing by a village in the district of Qandira when we came across a band of the brothers who were stationed in Anatolia. They were on horsebacks and fast galloping towards us. They were eight in number and all of them were clad in black. A young officer was riding in the van. First they passed us by but soon turned back and stopping by us saluted. Aysha was smiling. All the eight stood around their officer who enquired of us if we had seen a woman and two men who had fled as fugitives from Constantinople. They even mentioned the name of Aysha. This brought a bewitching smile to Aysha's face which was now blossoming like that of a bonny child. "I am Aysha, brothers," she said.

The horsemen were astonished at the prim and proper manners of Aysha. All kissed her hand. They belonged to the wing of Ihsan's army which was fighting at Kiwa. Ihsan had sent them to receive us. The very first thing we did was to procure three horses for ourselves and bullocks for our luggage. It took us another three days to reach Azza Bazar, and these were the most comfortable days of our journey.

We passed through a valley that lay between high, overhanging hills. Aysha was on horseback.

Our friend Ahmad Rafqi, the young officer, was chatting along with his black-clad comrades-in-arms. On the way, we came upon a stream of deep water. We were yet making ready to enter the stream when from the thick bushes and thorny grass on the other bank, came a bullet whizzing by my head. Instantaneously, Ahmad Rafqi's men rushed to the small stones and entrenched themselves behind these. The young officer himself leapt towards Aysha and snatched her away from horseback to a place out of harm's way. We all did the same. Stretching ourselves behind stones, we turned our guns towards the thick bushes and the thorny grass. It was there that we suspected danger. Presently, through these bushes and grass there protruded the muzzle of a gun turned on us, accompanied by a hoarse, ugly voice: "Throw off your guns and lie down!" Ahmad Rafqi roared back saying, "You mean fellows! Capture us if you can." The ugly voice thereupon sent down a volley of abuse on us. "You, accursed dogs! Get ye gone", shouted Ahmad Rafqi, "or I will get you all flayed." And the threat was followed by a volley of bullets. Firing started on both sides thick and fast. And as this was going on, presently Ahmad Rafqi was heard shouting, "Syeda Aysha! Be careful! Don't raise your head!" At last we saw that our bombardment had its effect. The men behind the bushes were seized with consternation. Taking advantage of this, we sallied forth from behind the stones and dashed down on them with



a loud roar. The enemy fled leaving one killed in the bushes. On our side one was wounded. Aysha ran towards her bag and fetched her bottle of tincture iodine, cotton and plaster and properly bandaged the wound. At this all the men of our party gathered around her and they began to cherish deep love for her. Then we helped our wounded comrade to horseback and slowly moved on. When we passed by the dead man, all looked up at Aysha's face but there was not a trace of fear on it. This dauntless courage of Aysha made a deep impression on the comrades of Ahmad Rafqi. Whenever we passed by a village on our way, some of our party would run down to fetch eggs, milk and other nice things for Aysha. Every one would offer his cigarette box to her. She would close her eyes, stretch her hand towards these boxes and take a cigarette from the one on which her hand chanced to fall. This filled the lucky owner with unbounded joy. They were a simple and happy lot and told us stories of their bloody enterprises. The incident we had just met was nothing serious to them. They were used to brave the greatest possible dangers. Their rising was based on a plain and just cause. They believed that under the cover of armistice, a gang of foreigners had betrayed the Turks and unjustly entered their territory. They were determined to face any risks and perils in the defence of Fatherland and fight on to the bitter end, no matter what difficulties they might have to encounter in finding out munitions of war.

## CHAPTER VIII

A quarter of the night had passed when we reached the zone of Azza Bazar. The disturbed state of things here changed daily, rather hourly. It had become a cock-pit for the irregular forces which kept skirmishing among themselves. The country people also frequently fought against one another and whoever got the upper hand, became, for the time being, the "monarch of all he surveyed." When defeated he was divested of all powers. Ahmad Rafqi related to us the stories of those people. The greatest danger, he said, lay in the peasants who jumped in an affray, brandishing their axes. The people of Azza Bazar were given to highway robbery. They lay in ambush for the way-farer.

About the latter part of the night we reached the cafe. Azza Bazar was only an hour's journey from here. We despatched one of our men on foot towards the town. The cafe was rectangular in shape, awfully dark, dingy and stinky. The inmates, in order to light up the place, had kindled fire. They all looked tired. In a corner of the cafe they were drinking some white stuff from a glass vessel. Aysha's face showed that never before had she come across a scene like this. Saifi burst out in a furious voice: "These

fellows are no good. They can't defend the country. The army alone can do it." To this Shawesh, a veteran soldier, who had fled from Constantinople and joined the forces of freedom added: "If they just see three men of the gendarmerie, they would take to their heels."

At these words, the fellows in the cafe all turned pale and cast angry looks at us. Were it not for Aysha, they would have kicked up quite a row with Saifi and Shawesh. In a loud voice full of emotion she said, "What? Are not these people themselves the army? And who else are the gendarmes who oppose these people but the English and the Greeks? They are all members of the forces of freedom. Nay, they are the vanguard of that army." Aysha's words worked magic on these people. They all came up to her and offered their devotion with pride and pleasure.

Ah! Dear Smyrna! Ah blood-showering volcanic Smyrna! Is it thy splendour that we behold in the person of Aysha? Is it for thy sake that so many of us are ready to plunge in fire? Or we shed our red blood for thee, because in the lap of thy hills and dales has Aysha been brought up?

With much care we set the table before Aysha and served her with milk and boiled eggs. She took her seat and helped herself with the simplicity and unceremoniousness of children.

The inmates of the cafe squatted on the ground in a semi-circle in front of her. Ahmad Rafqi occupied a small chair opposite her. Now and then, he would lift his head, turn back and thus remark: "Aysha is now not the Aysha she used to be—a silent picture of gloom and grief. Now she is a flame of fire. Her heart is filled with extraordinary determination." On one side the flames of fire flared up in the grate. On the other, six black hands holding cigarette cases went up towards Aysha. Ahmad Rafqi reclined against the table and a gentle smile played upon his red face. Just at this moment, the door opened. Besides footfalls, there came a click of spurs. We all turned towards the new-comer, "Ihsan Bey! Ihsan Bey!" we all shouted. The brave officer, followed by two of his soldiers advanced towards us. His body was full of dust. His fine delicate face was sun-burnt and looked so fierce as if he had just been through a terrible fight. The inmates of the cafe, as soon as they caught sight of him, hopped up like so many fleas in order to make good their escape. Ihsan stepped forward and imprinted a kiss on the hands of Aysha with the fervour and respect with which he had kissed those hands at Constantinople docks when Aysha had just come back from Smyrna.

After a chat and discussion, it was decided that Aysha should go ahead of Azza Bazar and put up at a house near Dughanchai. A small dispensary had been opened there. She would

take charge of that and attend to the wounded soldiers of Ihsan's army. The difficulty, however, was how to take Aysha there without passing through Azza Bazar. Ihsan was of opinion that I should keep by her side and that we should both retain our peasant dress. Ahmad Rafqi and his eight men insisted that the expedition of escorting Aysha must be entrusted to them. If needed, they were prepared to fight. "Ihsan Bey!" said Rafqi, "let it be our privilege this time to get wounded and be nursed by Aysha." At this a flush came up to Ihsan's face and he cast an inquisitive glance at Aysha to find out her mind about it. She seemed to favour the idea that the whole party should proceed. "What do you say, Biyami," said Ihsan, turning towards me. Aysha interrupted, saying: "Am I not the Medical Officer of your forces? It is your duty to fix up the time of departure at once. You must not forget the strong connection between woman and her natural weakness. However educated she may be, in point of strength and martial spirit she is just a child." This put an end to all further discussion. Our plan was made. We must start immediately and pass through Azza Bazar in the darkness of the night. Soon we were in our saddles. Aysha was in the protection of Ahmad Rafqi and Ihsan. Two horsemen rode in advance to act as our vanguard. In case of danger they would fire in the air to apprise us. Aysha rode between Ahmad Rafqi and Saifi. Ihsan kept the rear.

I will never forget the marshy plain of Azza Bazar and its thorny bushes. What, however, I would remember yet more vividly is that as I rode along by the side of Ihsan, I could hear the very beat of his heart. He was overwhelmed with anxiety and distress. As we thus passed in the dark through mud, our lips were sealed but our limbs trembled. Whenever we crossed water, Ihsan would put his horse ahead of that of Aysha in order to guide it. When the day broke, I and Ihsan were the first whose eyes fell on Aysha whose peasant dress looked specially fascinating in that morning freshness. We were passing a very narrow pathway hedged on either side by rows of trees. Ihsan in a low voice cautioned us to be on the alert. Then he ordered that Ahmad Rafqi should lead the van and all the rest should form a circle around Aysha, so that if some surprise shots came from some ambush, they might serve as a shield for her.

At noon time we approached our destination. In front of this small town, there was a lovely park with beautiful trees. The roads were awfully dusty. At the gates, there stood some women, shading their eyes with their hands against the glare of the sun, in order to watch us in the distance. After a while they all ran away towards their houses. The whole village resounded with the cry, "Danger! Danger!" The people began to scatter. Women and children ran about in terror and even the geese and hens fluttered their wings as if to take to

flight. The dogs barked. The whole place was seized with consternation. When we saw a stream of women and children move fast by the town, Ihsan put his horse to a gallop and reaching near the people shouted :

“ Don't be afraid! We belong to the army of Ihsan.”

This was enough to restore confidence. The women rushed towards Ihsan, their garments flying behind in the air as if they were so many fairies. They all assembled around Ihsan, and held his horse by the reins. Some reclined against his spurs, cast adoring looks at his face and chatted freely and friendly with him. The storm of terror was over and the whole village was calm once more, except a couple of hens which still furiously fluttered their wings and filled the atmosphere with dust. Ihsan dismounted and went along on foot, followed by the men, the women and the children. At first they mistook us for foreigners or there would not have been so much of consternation.

One of these women specially arrested my attention. She was wearing a red trousers and a long sheet covered her head. She had blue eyes and she would not part from Ihsan for a single moment. While all the other village women met and embraced Aysha, this young woman stood by the bridle of Ihsan's horse, gazing and gazing at his face. Presently Ihsan aroused her

from this stupor. "Kizban!" he shouted. "Why are you standing there? Come and kiss the hands of sister Aysha!" At this the young woman advanced towards Aysha who was so overwhelmed with the village women's expression of affection. With the love of an elder sister, Aysha warmly kissed Kizban on both her cheeks.

The hospital was located in a white two-storeyed house. A stream of cool water flowed by it whereas on the other side grew green cane trees. Aysha duly took charge of it. Dressed in white, with up-turned sleeves, she would move up and down the place. She always looked cheerful and mixed with the people who, with bandoleers slung around their shoulders and their rifles by their sides, frequented these cane trees. Aysha would give them herbs and medicines and on the slightest derangement they would come and seek advice. Ahmad Rafqi was one of those who daily visited Aysha. Ihsan would also appear sometimes in the midst of the cane trees, riding on his black horse. Kizban who also kept there was usually the first to notice his arrival. She would bring milk, curds and sometimes fruits for Ihsan and insist that he should take them. She was a wonderful young woman, energetic and full of the passion of freedom.

As the days passed, the freedom movement gained in velocity. We heard about the



struggles that took place between this and the anti-freedom forces. The flames of this conflict at last approached the town where we were putting up. Ahmad Rafqi would for days together keep away from the town. Ihsan was so busy with warfare that he had no time even to pay us a visit. He would send one of his sergeants to enquire how Aysha was faring. Many wounded men were brought to her hospital, so that Aysha could not cope with the work and had to take my assistance. These were most trying days. There was such a rush of work on the one hand whereas on the other anxiety on account of Ihsan and Ahmad Rafqi greatly oppressed her. At last came the fateful day which I will never forget.

One day, as I was seated under the cane trees in front of the hospital, I saw Ihsan suddenly appear. Dismounting, he handed over his horse to his men and advanced towards us, eagerly looking for Aysha. This time he took no notice even of Kizban who had been anxiously waiting for him and went straight up towards Aysha. "I must apologize to you, Aysha," he said. "I have not been able to visit you. I have been so very busy. Now the idea is that you should leave for Askisher."

"Why? Is there any danger about here which has forced you to the idea?" asked Aysha.

"Your brother Jamal is in Askisher,"

replied Ihsan, "and....."

Ihsan had not yet finished when all of a sudden Aysha got up, rushed down the stairs, ran towards the cane trees, had a few words with one of Ahmad Rafqi's horsemen and jumping up to the back of Ihsan's horse, rode along with the horseman. We rushed after her too and overtook her with some difficulty. "What is the matter, Aysha?", we asked anxiously. Aysha was dumbfounded. The whole of her frame was trembling. The horseman in a low whisper said: "Our general is wounded."

It seemed to me that Ihsan was now feeling ashamed of the jealousy he was so far harbouring towards Ahmad Rafqi. Jealousy in him now gave place to a feeling of emulation. How he longed now that he were wounded too, so that he might have won the same place of sympathy and honour in the heart of Aysha! We soon arrived at the scene. Ahmad Rafqi lay in the dusty road under a tree. Though a bullet had pierced his heart and he was gone to eternal sleep, a sort of smile still played upon his lips. Aysha was the first to reach him. She picked him up in her hands as if he were a child and began to call him: "Rafqi Bey! Rafqi Bey!" Then she unbuttoned his jacket and what I saw I will not forget all my life. This martyr in the cause of the freedom of nation had not even a shirt underneath his jacket. His pant was in several places patched up with woollen pieces.

We prepared a cane stretcher, laid the body of this soldier of freedom on it and, with our eyes streaming with tears, moved on.

Aysha kept a whole night's vigil by the body of Ahmad Rafqi. We were now certain that we could not long maintain our position in this zone, unless we received reinforcements. Ihsan decided to remove me and Aysha from that place at once. But Aysha refused to move until with her own hands she had laid the body of Ahmad Rafqi in the grave. Ihsan had therefore to keep guard the whole night, lest a surprise attack should come. In the morning we buried Ahmad Rafqi while Aysha cried like a child under the cane trees.

Having laid the freedom martyr to eternal rest, we made ready to quit the place. Aysha's eyes were red and swollen, owing to excessive weeping. The villagers were much distressed to see us depart. The women came and embraced Aysha in tears, just as on the day of our arrival they had embraced her in smiles. We procured a separate carriage for Aysha and with a heavy heart left the place. I cannot tell exactly how far we must have gone when, from behind in the distance, we heard the shrill cry of a woman. Looking back, we saw a young woman running after us, waving her hand and crying. I at once saw who she was. "The foreigners have killed my father", she said, as she arrived. "I have neither a mother nor a grandfather. With whom

are you leaving me behind here? ”

Ihsan politely explained to Kizban the dangers of the situation and told her to go back. She was not satisfied. “ I don’t care ! ” she said. “ Do you mean to say I can not use the rifle well ? Have not women mustered strong from all corners of the country to fight the battles of freedom ? Shall I sit still doing nothing in the very scene of action ? ” Her blue eyes glowed with all the fiery ambitions of youth and I felt sure this young woman, like the rest of the freedom soldiers, had in her the stuff to strike a blow in the country’s cause. The more Ihsan insisted on her going back, promising to return to take her, the more distressed she felt. With tears sparkling in her eyes, she pathetically prayed: “ Do take me along with you, please. I will go where you go. I will serve you and even nurse the wounded like this town woman.”

## CHAPTER IX

AT Kiwa we were the guests of Ihsan, Aysha and myself. It was a rural type of house with only a couple of rooms. Ihsan ran up to his own room and made it tidy for Aysha. While she was removing the dust of the journey from off her body, changing and toileting, we sat in the front room, discussing that Aysha must leave for Askisher by the train leaving Lafka the following evening. Ihsan informed me that Jamal had written to him to say that his sister should be sent there.

The region where we were putting up was ablaze with hellish flames of warfare. The village of Kiwa was the centre of this region. Ihsan was, therefore, apprehensive of the safety of Aysha. The flames of the disturbance had already reached the walls of Kiwa. Never before had I seen symptoms of such inward distress on the face of Ihsan. Her safety demanded the immediate removal of Aysha. The thought of separation made Ihsan look a picture of gloom.

“I trust Aysha wouldn't like to go”, said I, just to console him.

“It will be so nice”, said Ihsan, “should we get here in Kiwa some safe corner for Aysha.

But it seems to me you are mistaken. Now that Ahmad Rafqi is no more, she does not think much of our army."

These words betrayed his inward anguish and he looked somewhat offended when in reply I said: "Ahmad Rafqi was the greatest freedom-lover of Azza Bazar in the truest sense of the word. Is there a daughter of Smyrna who wouldn't feel moved at the sight of such a splendid young man—young man who fought and fought and fought in the cause of freedom till he was buried underneath dust while on his body there was not so much as a shirt? Ah! Where is the head which under the lonely tree along the dusty road grew cold in the hands of Aysha! Ah! Where is that gash which in his white naked breast shone like a red star? Ah! How these things have all vanished from my mind, as if like a bird they have taken to their wings. Ah! How long would this blood flow! How long would these calamities last! Ah! When shall we come in possession of the sacred soil for which we spend the blood of our youths and the tears of our eyes so cheap!"

Just then a soldier entered. "Aysha wants you, sir," he said.

Ihsan jumped to his feet.

"Not you, sir," said the soldier, "but Biyami Bey."

It was now I who jumped to my feet and went in. Aysha had again put on the black dress she used to wear in Constantinople. A small lamp was suspended by the wall and she was on a stool in front of it. With looks heavy with weariness and anxiety, she looked up to me. "Brother," she said, "take a seat. I must have a word with you." I obeyed.

"Do you know," she asked anxiously, "if I can stay on with the army of Ihsan in the capacity of a medical attendant?"

"Do you realize," I said, "what it would mean? You would be exposing yourself to great dangers." "Dangers!" rejoined Aysha. "Why can't I face the dangers which Ihsan can? Besides, if Jamal were in Smyrna, it would have meant something to go over to him. What shall I do at Askisher?"

"Anyway, Ihsan is anxious to see you out of harm's way", I replied. She resented the suggestion and in a stern voice retorted, "Look here, Biyami! I hate the man who should try to save me and think of me as if I were something just to loll in a soft silk bed. It is true I can not fire a shot for Smyrna nor can I put to flight the soldiers who have occupied it. Yet it is enough for me that I should shed a tear over those who die for the sake of dear old Smyrna, away from their homes and without even a shirt to cover their bodies—those who, while they meet

their death, have not so much as a cigarette to smoke nor a piece of bread to eat. It is enough of consolation for me that I should keep by their side, serve them, nurse them when sick or wounded and, like loving sisters, close their eyes when dying. I long to share the sufferings of these heroes of Smyrna. Why should Ihsan stand in my way? I hate the man who wishes my safety and comfort. I love the man who should catch me by the hand and for the sake of Smyrna hurl me into the flames of dangers. There are flames within me and the man who fans those flames of freedom is my true friend and well-wisher. Ah, dear old Rafqi! Every time that he would go out on some perilous enterprise, he would ask me to throw off the apron of a nurse, take hold of a rifle and brave all the dangers by his side. But here you are, you fellows, always anxious to see me lodged in safety and comfort. Did we not see the other day a girl of twenty from Istanbul, bearing a gun on her shoulder wending her way towards Smyrna side by side with her husband? Kizban said the same thing when she pleaded to be taken along with the army and given a rifle. But you fellows grudge me even so much honour as to dress wounds and nurse the wounded!"

Having thus delivered herself, Aysha, like a petulant child, put on a frown of dissatisfaction. I did not know what to do. At last I found tongue and said, "If this is your sole



ambition, let me go and bring Ihsan here right now and you speak out your mind to him."

"No! No!" replied Aysha. "So long as Ihsan does not banish from his heart the impression that I have not enough of spirit to lead a life of dangers in their midst, it is no use. I wouldn't stay here. I must catch the first train for Askisher and from there I will find a way to Smyrna."

When night came, we sat to our dinner together. Ihsan's eyes were sunk in his clouded forehead. He was so engrossed with the thought of Aysha that he forgot all about Jamal's letter and Aysha's departure for Askisher. Aysha also sat prim and proper and, without raising her eyes from the plate before her, asked: "When is the departure of the train for Askisher?" This came as a bucket of cold water on Ihsan who thought that perhaps she would insist on staying there.

"Tomorrow night," he said, startled. "If you leave here tomorrow morning, you will reach Lafka Railway Station tomorrow evening."

"Will you then get ready a carriage for me?" rejoined Aysha.

"Just as you please", said Ihsan.

When this childish storm was over, Aysha felt a sort of inward satisfaction. But it was not an unmixed satisfaction. Casting a cold glance at Ihsan she further asked, "What about Biyami? What work shall he get in Anatolia?"

*Ihsan*: "Is he not going to escort you?"

*Aysha*: "Poor Biyami! He did not take the trouble of coming to Anatolia in order to look after his cousin. He has come here to fight as you fight for the liberation of Smyrna. He must at once join the combatant ranks."

Personally, I felt much flattered at this. After all, Aysha thought high enough of me to bear arms for the sake of Smyrna.

*Ihsan* (smiling): "Aysha, you are right. We would send him to the Military College at Angora, to be trained as a Military Officer. But it is necessary that for some time he should stay with me. You may rest assured I will see that your cousin keeps at a safe distance from death."

*Aysha*: "Since when has fear of death become a trait of soldiers?"

*Ihsan*: "What you say, Aysha, is right."

Intervening, I said: "Don't you quarrel

like children. I will take Aysha to Jamal and come back."

*Ihsan*: "I will send Shawesh Ahmad with her. Aysha does not like that anyone should accompany her with the idea of protecting her."

Just then I could not see whether Ihsan sent Shawesh along with Aysha because the latter could take better care of her than myself or because he did not relish the idea of my being with Aysha. But later on I found out that the poor man kept me behind because he derived some solace from the company of those in any way associated with Aysha.

## CHAPTER X

AYSHA'S departure kindled within me a strange flame of the love of freedom. I came to realize that indeed I had not come to Anatolia simply to look to the safety of Aysha. To tell the truth, however, it was certainly my most cherished desire that I should win from her the loving glances with which she rewarded every warrior in the cause of Smyrna. It was my ambition to make her acknowledge that I was no longer a clerk in the Foreign Ministry but a gallant soldier on the field of battle. And it was not without a sense of rivalry and humiliation that I listened to all her stories of the daring adventures of her brother Jamal, and the encomiums she purposely lavished on these. Now that she was gone, I began to accustom myself to this separation from her and tried to cultivate, like all other brother soldiers, the friendship of my horse and gun.

In order to be trained in the use of arms, I was put under the charge of Shawesh Ahmad. This man was a veteran of many wars. He had taken part in quelling the insurrection of the Bulgars. In Macedonia too, he had seen much bloody fighting. It had become a firm creed with him that all foreigners lay in ambush for the Muslims and were

on the look-out for an opportunity to annihilate them. He was also against the Sultan and was of opinion that the nation should seize power in its own hands. He was, however, not much clear on the point as to what section of the people could be properly called the "nation" and how should they seize power. Anyway he did not include in the term "nation" anyone who could not bear arms.

Shawesh told me wonderful stories about his personal exploits. He said he had even crossed into India through the Khyber in company with some Pasha. He was dreaming of some day marching triumphant into Athens, the capital of Greece, along with Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha and he would fondly revolve in his mind all the details of this glorious event of his imagination. Entry into Constantinople was another of his ardent desires. He had views of his own on the form of Government for the Turkish territory. In his opinion it was the duty of the non-combatant section of the population to look to all the needs of the combatants. When they would share in the fruits of warfare, *i.e.*, freedom, why should they not share in shouldering the burden? They must supply food and clothing to the soldiers. Whenever he saw Ihsan pay for the articles he purchased he would grow furious. "Where do you get your cash from?" he would ask. "Doesn't it come from the nation? Where is the use of levying taxes? The best way would be to commandeer all necessary articles of food

as long as the war lasts. When the war is over we would each take up some work to earn our own living." It is strange, however, that a man with such principles concerning taxation was never seen to take anything from the peasants, except tobacco, even if he had to face starvation.

When the Greeks captured Barusa, the people in the vicinity of Kiwa also rose in revolt. The rebels had bombs with which they threatened us. Ihsan's army was detailed to proceed against these rebels. But we had run short of ammunition. One morning Ihsan sent for Shawesh and myself and said: "I have come to know that the munition brought by the nationalists in the beginning of the freedom movement is lying buried somewhere in one of the districts of Qandira. I can not tell the exact spot. There is a young officer, Captain Safwat, in that part who has been working for the cause of freedom ever since and has been arranging the despatch of emigrants from Constantinople to Anatolia. You go there to see him and with all politeness make an agreement with him and with his help bring the buried munition over here, so that the national warfare on this front may continue with vigour."

We soon got ready, Shawesh and myself, jumped on our horses and set out for the region of Qandira. Shawesh had a dreadful appearance. His conic cap bulged out at the top to the right so as to look like a regular horn. Lying on the

ground his eyes would scan the skies and he kept his gun hugged to his breast as if it were his child. If the earth had split asunder and from out of the chasm popped up a dreary giant, its head could not have been more frightful than that of Shawesh nor its eyes more fiery.

The noble young men of Anatolia were specially dear to Shawesh. Coming out of their mountain homes, they had bared their breasts and borne the brunt of the battle in the defence of the sacred soil of motherland. All the Anatolian popular songs and stories centred around these young men. When the wrathful knock of Europe came crashing down on our heads and we were seized with consternation and despair seemed to hover all around, these worthy young men were the first to raise a pathetic cry. The first hand in the Eastern world that rose against Western tyranny, the first soul that roared in protest against these cruelties, was the hand and the soul of these youthful heroes of Anatolia. They formed the first rank of *Jihad*. Against the shower of shot and shell, against the roar of cannon and against never-shaking perils, these daring sons of Islam made a stand so firm and so gallant that the tales of their daring spread far and wide beyond Anatolia. Thus did Shawesh enthusiastically talk of the youth of Anatolia as we went along. When he finished, I asked him how the first warriors of freedom had managed to get munitions. This brought a happy look to his face, as if some sweet old memories revived

within him and began to speak to me in the gruff tone of Anatolia. The freedom warriors, he informed me, had managed to pinch forty carriages of munitions.

All along the way we discussed how to trace and see Captain Safwat. As we approached the river Sakaria, things became so perilous that Shawesh had once to hide himself in a stack of hay. The emigrants from Macedonia rendered the greatest help to the national army, for they realized the full extent of the Anatolian danger. The enemy had taken possession of their territory and they were driven out of their paradise-like green fields. Rose bunches where the nightingale sang her sweet strains, white villas which were once the homes of bliss and plenty and whose floors were dyed red in the blood of their near and dear ones—they had said good-bye to all these. These beautiful houses that rose in green fields had also witnessed the slaughter of their white-bearded elders and their newly-married brides. These refugees from Macedonia had not forgotten that the storm which sent fire and sword through their homes and hearths was brought by two black clouds from the West. Those same black clouds of bad omen were now hovering over the horizon of Anatolia, foreboding death and desolation. The people of Anatolia on whose soil no foreigner had ever before set foot, were at first somewhat terror-struck. But soon they woke up and made the world wonder with mouth wide-agape at their daring and devotion in the



cause of freedom of the sacred soil of their birth.

Crossing the Sakaria, we reached the town of Qandira where we put up with a chief of the place, Mursil Agha by name. He had one of his best rooms furnished for us and together with his two sons, placed himself at our service. The disturbance and warfare round about seemed to worry him a good deal but he never risked an opinion about it. Perhaps he was a believer in the policy of "wait and see." He had a white beard and a pink turban covered his huge head. Now and then he would cast a smiling glance at others which came out of the depths of his mind. This gave me the impression that he was in the know of some important secrets which we did not know and so he looked at us as if we were so many children.

Mursil Agha's sons were stalwart Anatolian youths with oval, chubby faces and big tiger-like heads. Unlike other youths of Anatolian nobility, they did not wear loose, laced trousers. They put on smart tight fitting European pantaloons, patched here and there, but by no means ugly-looking. When they turned up their sleeves they did it so gracefully. Nor did they bind kerchiefs around their caps but they did it in a fashion which gave them the look of Metropolitan soldiery. When I mentioned this to the father, he smiled and there came before me a young man on whose face played a grace of the Sultan's bodyguard.

When we parted from these people and went out in quest of the hidden store of munitions, we were beckoned from a hill-top by the wayside by one of the sons of Mursil Agha. He waved his handkerchief from the distance to ask us to wait and listen to him. On arrival he warned us against the danger that lay ahead. In the village inhabited by the Shirkasi people, there were some suspects from Constantinople. We must therefore be well on our guard while passing through it. Safwat Bey, he further informed us, lived in disguise in the village of Qaiwaz and we might come across him if we safely crossed the village Aikzja.

As we proceeded on our way, seized with curiosity and anxiety, our host turned back to his own village. "This man must be one of the nationalist movement," said I to myself, "or he would not have known of our mission." For the whole night we travelled through a valley full of thick thorny trees. The sky was cloudy and not a ray of moonlight could reach us. Our horses had great difficulty in penetrating this thick wood. Our hands and faces were perforated with thorns. As we advanced, moonlight grew dimmer and dimmer. It disappeared altogether by the time we got to the highest hillock. Now we had crossed the thorny forest, and as we looked back from this high point, the trees seemed to embrace one another. It was pitch dark and nothing could be seen save the white foam of a stream on the bank of which some one had kindled fire.

At the sight of these flames, we were alarmed and turned our steps towards the village where white minarets could be dimly seen. We thought we must quickly pass by this village. As, however, we reached the outskirts of the village, the clouds thinned and beautiful rays of moonlight, filtering through these thin layers, spread a silvery sheet over the whole village. It presented such a fascinating scene. The buildings were white and majestic. Towards the left of the village, slowly moving along the wide pathway, we saw a man with a tall stature and broad shoulders, wearing Shirkasi shirt. As he thus stealthily stepped along, he cast his alert looks round about. At our end of the pathway there stood a building with a gallery running all around it. In the gallery we saw seated reclining against the green iron railing a fair coloured young woman of exquisite beauty. In this scene of stillness and the mellow rays of moonlight, her looks seemed to travel long distances in all directions. The sight threw me in a philosophic mood and I thus mused within myself :

“ Why should we be furious if a handful of Shirkasis have deserted the national cause? Is there none among us who should convince them that the promises of self-rule held out to them in this our land are all empty talk? Are there not among us men of the Shirkasi race who are members of the freedom movement and are seen in the front ranks of those who sacrifice themselves at the altar of national freedom? Is it

not a fact that even now in the ranks of our enemy there are a number of our own ungrateful brothers, Turks, who cut the throats of their own brother Turks, while there were times when these very men fought shoulder to shoulder with us in the defence of motherland?"

My heart was filled with love for the white figure in the gallery and the man walking along the wide pathway. I wished I had arms strong enough to fight in the ranks of these handsome brothers and shed my blood. I wished I were in their ranks on the day they rose for the restoration of their rights and laid the foundation of a free motherland on the peaks of the Caucasus.

While thus lost in those sweet thoughts, I turned my horse towards the wide pathway in order to reach the beautiful buildings of the village. "Are you mad?" shouted Shawesh, alarmed. "Don't you see what you are doing?" I heeded him not, however, and went along. All was still. The foot-falls of our horses were the only sounds that disturbed that perfect stillness. In the village itself, as we reached it, there was no sign of life yet, save a few dogs that barked. Then we came upon a vast open space in which stood a magnificent mosque. Moonlight was gone again and our horses had to grope their way in the dark. Nothing could be seen about us. All we felt was that the pathway was rough and difficult to go along. The clouds seemed to hover around the surface of the earth and even a

few drops settled on our hands and faces. I could neither see nor hear anything. But Shawesh all of a sudden jumped down from his horseback. I automatically imitated him, knowing nothing as to the cause of it. We let go hold of our horses and fell down on the ground behind a heap of earth. I dilated my eyes to see what the danger was. All I could see was a thick block of darkness move at the foot of the hill, followed by a loud threatening voice, "Who is there?"

My heart trembled with fear. Lest Shawesh should hear my heart thus violently beat and discover my inward fear, I assumed an air of dauntlessness and shouted back, "And who are you? Not a step forward or you will be a dead man."

At this the thick block of darkness moved still forward. "Reply quick or I fire," came the challenge. "Who are you?"

I hastily stretched my hand towards my gun but Shawesh pulled it back, as if satisfied that there was no danger.

"We are just two wayfarers," he replied.

"If you are wayfarers," demanded the thick block, "then be up and come here!"

We obeyed.

The thick block turned out to be a tall man with a hat on his head. "Where are you coming from, brothers," he enquired. "From Kiwa," we replied.

"Do you belong to the nationalist army?" he asked.

"Decidedly," said Shawesh.

"Then, are you Shawesh Muhammad?" asked the stranger.

"Undoubtedly, O Bey," rejoined Shawesh.

The tall stranger then stepped towards me and warmly shook me by the hand. "I beg your pardon," he said. "I took you for the enemy. May I know your name?"

"I am Biyami," said I, "and may I know yours?"

"I am Captain Safwat," replied the stranger.

## CHAPTER XI

FINDING myself face to face with the mysterious Safwat and under such odd circumstances, I involuntarily burst into laughter. "Safwat Bey," said I, "you have given us some fright. The two men tramping these wilds about in quest of you had almost fallen victims to your bullets."

"You come from Istanbul, I guess?" said Captain Safwat.

I told him that we were under the orders of Ihsan and explained our mission to him.

"I have been in the same quest for a week and am trying to procure munitions for him," rejoined Safwat. "Come along," he added, "we will be chatting on the way. This night we are dining at Aikzja."

*Shawesh* : "But isn't that village supposed to be dangerous?"

*Safwat* : "We have got our own men there. So there is no danger."

Hearing this I was elated with childlike joy. Safwat took us into a fine house in the village. The landlord who was a respectable-looking man

with a black beard and Shirkasi dress, warmly greeted us. Getting into the light in the house, I looked at Safwat. Dressed in a sporting suit, with a greenish shirt and a red neck-tie, he had a big tarboosh on his head. There was nothing about his person to indicate that in the fastnesses of mountains this man was holding the command of the nationalist forces. His eyes were a trifle pale and his white teeth constantly sparkled in a gentle smile which seldom left his face. When he offered me his cigarette case I saw that he had fine sparkling fingers. In brief, this youthful officer who had given the hell of a time to the Greek rebels and of whom it was said that not a single bullet of his went amiss, was as jolly as if he were out on a sporting trip in these wilds. He was out on a game of freedom.

Just then Safwat turned to me saying, "You must leave to-morrow evening with the munition. See that you travel by night and at daybreak carefully hide the munition!"

"How many cart-loads must it be?" I asked.

"Some thirty," came the reply.

This man, Safwat, filled my heart with wonder and awe and for the first time I came to know what dare-devil men were there in the freedom movement. For the past six days I had



been fondly revolving in my mind the idea that on getting back to Kiwa, I would proudly relate the adventures of the expedition to Ihsan. I would impress on him, I thought, that I did not care for these dangers. I would also send an account of it to Aysha. Safwat Bey's adventurous career, however, opened my eyes and all these thoughts seemed childish to me. I now felt inspired with something of his spirit. Here was this man hemmed in by enemies on all sides, internal as well as external, but he had not more than a dozen comrades about him.

The following day in a moonlit night we stood face to face to say good-bye to each other. Safwat looked at me and I looked at him and each seemed to ask himself the question, "Let us see which of us hears the death news of the other first."

The carts started. The whole night long the monotonous creak of the wheels was all that fell in our ears. Every morning, we would remove the bullet boxes to some out-of-the-way place and securely bury them in the ground. At nightfall again, we would unearth these boxes, carry them on our backs to the carts and travel the whole night. We kept constantly changing our route and adopted other similar precautionary measures. In the dark stillness of the night, Shawesh would in his gruff Anatolian accent recount how heaps of munitions had been smuggled out of Constantinople by the nationalists.

When we reached the village Sarelar, we decided after a thorough discussion between ourselves that the munition boxes should be concealed in a cave at the back of the village. We bade the cart-men go away and at night come back with their carts. We did not know whether Ihsan was still encamped there or gone elsewhere. The first thing to do therefore was to trace his camp, and I deemed it advisable to start the search from the village Sarelar. So getting on our horses, we set about asking the farmers as to the whereabouts of Ihsan and his men, till we reached the grove of cane trees in front of which there used to be the nursing home of Aysha. When I looked at the dear old building, my heart leapt within me and it seemed to me as if its white-robed occupant would presently appear on the white balcony to look down at us. I was so lost in this sweet dream that I forgot all about myself and the surroundings. I was unconscious even of whither my horse was carrying me, when all of a sudden a young woman reclining against one of the cane-trees caught my eye. It was a familiar face. I had certainly seen her before somewhere, said I to myself. Her eyes were fixed on the same house which had entranced me. "Hallo Kizban! What are you doing here!" I exclaimed, thereby breaking the sweet spell she was in.

Promptly, Kizban jumped to her feet, rushed to my horse and held it by the reins. Hardly a month had elapsed since the day when on the

dusty road Ihsan had sternly turned down her ardent supplication to accompany the army and she had in tears retraced her steps to this village. Nevertheless she was a changed woman. She was no longer the young girl she then looked. She was already a full grown-up woman. At my sight, the whole of her soul seemed to focus in her eyes. My voice revived in her all her dearly-cherished dreams which a month ago had melted away under the harsh tone of Ihsan.

“Me-seems,” she broke out, puffed up with joyous hope, “the Commandant (Ihsan) has sent for me. Isn’t it so? Yesterday I went to the village Alak and a woman informed me there that women are now being recruited for the army. How wonderful to carry a gun and clear the sacred soil of motherland of foreigners!”

I had no mind to shatter her fond hopes which now seemed to kindle her glittering eyes.

“Kizban,” said I, “we will soon take you to the camp. But just now I am not coming from the Commandant. Rather I want to know where his camp is.”

Kizban informed us that Ihsan was encamped somewhere in the vicinity of Doghanchai. Then she related her own story how she had been to Doghanchai, at a distance of some four hours’ journey from Sarelar and, on her return, her aunt had given her a good beating.

"I have even my elder brother in Ihsan's army," she continued, "and so there could be no harm if I joined, too. When other women are freely taken into the army, why should I be refused admission? Since my brother has joined the army and I am left alone, my aunt treats me all the more harshly. I cannot get even a full meal unless I work with my own hands. I am left alone and my only wish is to fight the foreigners who have killed my father and left me without a home, without bread, even without dress to cover my body."

Just then, as Kizban was relieving her breast of her tale of woe, there rang out across the trees a rough grating voice.

"What the devil are you doing there, O wretch?" said the voice. "What have you got to do with soldiers?"

In a meek voice Kizban replied, "Aunt! Here, I am coming," and turning to me she added, "you will wait for me a while. Wouldn't you?"

So saying she disappeared. I turned my bridle towards Shawesh.

"Before this young woman should return," said I, "I must be off to Doghanchai. As soon as I find the camp out, I will send you word. But try to leave this place before the return of

this young woman. Should the Commandant (Ihsan) see us enter the camp along with her, we will get into serious trouble."

Without waiting for a reply from Shawesh I put the spur in the side of my horse and was off.

Ihsan was encamped in the vicinity of Doghanchai in the midst of trees. On arrival there I was told that the Commandant had left for the front where fighting was on. I observed that the element of regulars in the army was distinctly on the increase. They were overwhelming the irregulars and were fighting under the old Turkish colours, though with much greater enthusiasm.

We expected Ihsan back the following day. I wished therefore that the munition must reach him by mid-day. I slept only for three hours that night and at the first streak of dawn I was out in the direction of Doghanchai to meet the munition carts which I met about noon. Shawesh was leading the van of the party which included, besides the cart-men, a young handsome lad, wearing black trousers. He absorbed my attention. As yet he could not very well handle his gun which showed that he was a novice. His face looked familiar and I thought I had certainly seen him somewhere, but I could not recollect where. When Shawesh came up to me, I could read on his countenance clear symptoms of anxiety and distress. All along the way he

harped on the one topic that the irregular forces included women as well. In his own peculiar accent, he eulogized the daring and bravery displayed by women in the Bulgarian War. He waxed specially eloquent when he recounted the exploits of such women warriors in the cause of national freedom as Rahima, Aysha and Atiyya. He presented before me a glorious picture from the biographies of these patriotic daughters of Turkey. The first had already met a glorious death on the field whereas the latter two were still in the trenches. For a good while, I could not at all make out why on earth Shawesh conceived such sudden admiration for the women fighters, so as to talk of nothing else all the while.

When Ihsan returned, we missed his usual harshness on his face. It looked a bit emaciated and his eyes sparkled with light. When Shawesh and myself got near him in order to give information about the arrival of munitions, he cast an indifferent look at us. I had not the courage to address him. He cast an angry look at Shawesh. At first I thought his anger was meant for Shawesh alone but, later on, I discovered that Ihsan was angry with all men of his class—*viz.*, irregulars. His looks seemed to say: "The day is drawing near when I will put an end to all those who are members or supporters of the irregular army."

Ihsan was yet in such a mood when Shawesh asked him: "A person from the village Sarelar

who has accompanied me wants to join as a volunteer. What are the orders about it ?”

Ihsan was playing with his six-chambered revolver with his unwounded hand. Casting a cold glance at Shawesh, he thus gave his order : “ There is no harm provided the person you speak of is neither a woman nor an under-age man. Take him to Mohsin Bey who will enrol him.

Shawesh Muhammad's eyes waxed all the more reddish. His face put on a frown of extreme displeasure. For men of his type who were now used to look upon their officers more as fellow-brothers than officers, it was rather hard to submit to stern military discipline.

When Shawesh went out, I caught hold of Ihsan's hand. He was leaning over the table and writing something. This brought a rather bitter smile to his lips and he said : “ Yesterday we put down an unruly village. The expedition was in a way on the lines of irregular forces. When the spirit of military discipline based on implicit obedience to authority is once more re-established among us, I will teach a lesson to those who listen to orders with arrogance and make an example of them.”

I had a mind to tell him that these irregulars were after all not so bad as the gendarmes but with a mocking glance and a threatening

nod, he stifled the thought within me. I had no sleep the whole night. My tent was by the side of Ihsan's. We had tea together at night and with painful bitterness revived the memories of Constantinople. Ihsan sought consolation in talking about himself. For the first time, I heard him say about himself, "I have ever been a man of military spirit as at present. But at first, I was a simple youth. Thereafter I became fond of European ways and the pretty things of civilization had great fascination for me. Now I have no place in my heart for these things. Now I am of opinion that for the defence of the country it is not enough that we should drive the enemy out of Anatolia. It is our duty that just as our enemies are masters of the rule in their own lands, so must we be masters in ours. Till now we have kept aloof from the people. Now the need is that we must become one with them. Biyami! you will soon see that the army we are preparing will install the people in the position of the rulers of the land."



## CHAPTER XII

IN these days there was apprehension of a general Greek advance. On the other hand the gulf between our regular and irregular forces was growing wider and wider. We were hemmed in by thousands of dangers, internal as well as external. The Anatolian army was but a small one. Ihsan, however, was talking in the spirit of an officer of an army, which, he imagined, would spring up from rocks and hills, would have no parallel in purity and tenacity and would cheerfully face all dangers that might confront it. When I saw that Ihsan's eyes were rivetted, his cheeks grew red, and like a feverish man, he was lost in thought, I retreated to my own tent.

I was overwhelmed by sleeplessness and like children, I succumbed to fear and despair. I felt sure I would not be able to have a wink of sleep that night. I was therefore thinking of leaving my bed when from the neighbouring tent, Ihsan's voice dropped in my ears. "What are you looking for?" he said in a tone of anger mingled with kindness.

I sat down in the darkness and began to overhear the conversation that passed between the two. One was a gentle sweet voice and it

seemed as if a small girl was weeping. Ihsan's voice also became more subdued. Whenever, however, he said something, the weeping of the girl grew in pain and disappointment. I became very restless and wondered who this woman or girl could possibly be. At any rate, it was evident, she had got into Ihsan's tent without the latter's knowledge. At first Ihsan was angry with her and talked harshly to her. Gradually his voice grew lower and gentler and he persuaded her to leave the tent with much kindness. It struck me that perhaps it was Kizban. But how could she be there, I wondered. She was not in our camp. In my bewilderment at all this, I could no longer control myself and came out of my tent.

It was a dark night. Stillness reigned all round. The sky was overcast with clouds. I began to look at the trees in front and I do not remember how at all I came to know that in that darkness of night, there was another man besides myself, standing near-by. I lighted a match and saw a man with a long rifle in his hand, standing at a distance of thirty yards from Ihsan's tent. He was all ears, listening with deep interest and impatience all that was going on inside the tent. It should take a whole volume by itself to describe the appearance and psychology of this man. It was Shawesh. I quietly went up to him and in a natural unconcerned tone said: "Hallo Shawesh! Is it you? What are you after?"

“Hallo Biyami! Is it you?” came the reply.

Shawesh related to me the whole story. When he left the village Sarelar, Kizban followed him and implored him to bring her to the camp as a volunteer. He could not resist her entreaties and allowed her to accompany him in male guise. He had also told her that he could influence Ihsan. On entering Ihsan's tent, however, events took an unfavourable turn and he failed to get Kizban enrolled as a volunteer. She thereupon made up her mind to make personal entreaties to the General. In the meanwhile, Shawesh fell in love with the girl and even implored her hand. Kizban, however, paid no attention to him. In case Ihsan was not moved by her requests and rejected her as a volunteer in the national army, she made up her mind to plunge in the river and commit suicide rather than go back. Shawesh suggested to her to go to the General's tent in the dark of night and implore him. This is how she came to be there. Himself, Shawesh kept guard outside the tent, rifle in hand, lest she should come to any harm.

We waited outside Ihsan's tent till the cock's crow at early dawn but Kizban was not back. This put all sorts of thoughts and suspicions in the heart of Shawesh. I assured him that Ihsan was an honourable man and he was kind to Kizban simply because she happened to

be the daughter of a soldier who had laid down his life for the nation. Shawesh, however, shook his head in doubt. He was not prepared to believe that a man of the regular army could have any sympathy with one of the irregulars.

"Perhaps she has gone to the cart-shed," I suggested. "You had better go there and tell her not to come out to-day. I will see Ihsan about her and prevail upon him to accept her as a volunteer. Then we will celebrate your wedding."

"Ihsan or no Ihsan," rejoined Shawesh smiling, "I have taken an oath that the girl must be mine, dead or alive."

I returned to my tent and was waiting for Ihsan to wake up. Things were becoming serious and Shawesh must be conciliated as soon as possible. At noon, Ihsan woke up and began to discuss with an officer the distribution and despatch of munitions to the front. I was waiting for this man to leave the tent when I would go in. Before, however, the officer left, Shawesh entered the tent. It was evident from his appearance that Ihsan had sent for him. His face shone with the rays of hope and when he saw me by his side, his afflicted heart was soothed all the more. Ihsan's face, however, was, as usual, harsh. He ordered Shawesh to proceed to Kiwa to make certain purchases where he was to stay for the night as well.

At the same time Ihsan kept his eye on the face of Shawesh. For the first time, I saw that even a man of Shawesh's wounded heart could conceal the storm that was raging within him. He listened to the General's order with perfect calm. And when he departed, Ihsan shouted back from behind: "The sister of your comrade Mustafa has come to the camp with the munition carts. Her name is Kizban. Tell Mustafa to send her back to the village along with the carts. If ever hereafter anyone dare bring her here, I will see that he swings by the rope. *Do you understand?*"

When we were left alone, Ihsan and myself, I made up my mind to speak to him on this matter. His piercing looks, however, were at once at me and seemed to say: "We are on the eve of a most terrible war. It is not time for such childish talk."

The same day, Ihsan detailed me also for a hard job and I had no time to open my lips about Kizban, although the affair was making me so restless. Ihsan took an early supper and jumping to his saddle, left at the head of a detachment, promising to return the following morning. In the meantime it had rained. The atmosphere was full of moisture and the soil was emitting delightful scent. The stars were twinkling with unusual dazzle and their rays which pierced through the green foliage of the trees in front added a glamour to the scene.

Seated at my tent's door, I was wondering whether Kizban had left. I was longing for the return of Ihsan when I should tell him the whole story. Thereafter sound sleep fell upon me. Having kept a vigil the night before, I slept to my heart's content.

I was yet asleep when the sound of footfalls woke me up. I opened my eyes. The rays of the waning moon which had appeared late were dimly falling in through my tent holes. I heard a voice: "Biyami! Biyami!" I did not know who it was.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"A stranger," came the reply.

"Come closer, so that I may see who you are," I continued.

On lighting the lamp, I saw before me a figure full of fear. This was the boy whom I had seen with the munition carts the day before. When underneath "his" black Fez, I looked at "his" pale cheeks, I at once recognized her to be Kizban.

"What do you want, Kizban?" I asked. At this she began to weep in a moving tone. It was with great difficulty that she was able to tell me what had brought her there. She told me the whole of her tale of woe and all about

her interview with Ihsan the preceding night.

At dawn, Shawesh met Kizban and worried her with his speeches. Kizban saw that things were drifting towards a catastrophe, which may also involve Ihsan. She was terribly afraid of Shawesh and called him a bugbear. Nevertheless she pretended to accept his entreaties, so that he might do no injury to Ihsan. She promised him that she would shortly go to the village and marry him. In her heart of hearts, however, she was on the look-out for an opportunity to make good her escape.

Kizban did not make good her promise with Shawesh. The cartmen left but she still remained behind. She was anxious to make a last appeal to Ihsan. Coming to me she said, "Is there any harm if before going back to the village and falling into the hands of this bugbear, I shall have a last look at the General's tent"? This greatly moved me. Lest the sentry should stop her, I approached him, saying, "Here are some official papers which I want to send to the General by this boy. Let him go in." "Very well, sir!" said the sentry. Putting a bundle of papers in Kizban's hands, I said, "Now quick! Take these papers to the General and be back at once!"

Kizban was, however, not back at once. She stayed there very long. In order to ascertain what detained her, I went in and

found her as usual imploring the General to allow her to join the national army as a volunteer. I held her by the hand and pulled her out, in order to take her out of the camp boundary.

Side by side, we passed by the tents. Kizban kept her eyes fixed on the ground as if she was dreaming a dream. When we were far out of the camp, we found ourselves near Doghanchai and now she could find her way home alone. I therefore said good-bye to her. Before departing I wished to give her some cash. She would not have it. Putting her back against a tree, she went on saying, "I wouldn't take it. I wouldn't." I tried to press her to accept the money and wanted to thrust it in her little palm when I heard a shot and felt a sort of electric shock in my arm. Thereafter, something like water dripped from it on the ground. Kizban was perplexed and rushed to and fro. Just then from behind the trees appeared Shawesh, bounding like a leopard towards us and holding Kizban by the waist, roared:

"You wretch! You promised to meet me in the village. I in vain looked for you there. You have been false to me. You will soon hear that I have lodged a bullet in the heart of this fellow as well as of Ihsan."

With his hand around Kizban's waist,



Shawesh disappeared in the darkness of the night. Never thereafter was I destined to have a look at them. In fact, these two figures are the missing link of my story, the burnt page of my memoirs. When the reconnaissance party heard the report of the rifle, they ran in my direction. I told them it was just some stray bullet which had come from far off and hit me in the arm. They brought some bandages and rendered me first aid.

When the following day Ihsan returned, he informed me that the friction between the regular and irregular forces had greatly increased and there was now only one way left for the preservation of the army—*viz.*, that the irregular forces must be thoroughly crushed. Thereafter the officers, their General, Ihsan, and the regular army—all looked upon the irregulars as much of enemies as the Greeks. As regards myself, Ihsan insisted that for the treatment of my wounded arm and rest I must at once leave for Iskisher.

## CHAPTER XIII

WHEN I glance back at the story of my life, it appears to me more like a drama than a story. We led a sort of life as if we were so many actors on the stage. Now we were standing; now we were on the move day and night; again we talked and yelled and yet, again, we rose from one place to fall at another and breathe our last.

The man who with a bandaged arm alighted at the railway station of Iskisher was no other than myself. I fondly dreamed all the while how Aysha would look at my wounded arm. Straightway I made for the Red Crescent Office. I thought I would find her there or else the men there would know where she might be.

When I came out of the station compound, the road was all blocked by the regular army which was marching to the battle-field. It consisted of stalwart, stripling youths. The band played in the front. In my childhood when we lived in the Sicilian quarter of the capital, I would rush to the door of my house, whenever I heard that the troops were marching along. Now that at Iskisher, I stood watching our new army march on, those early sentiments revived in me and once more swelled my bosom.

Aysha was standing at the door of the hospital, clad in snow-white dress, with a black head-cover. She was so engrossed in the soldiers that she seemed oblivious of all else. Approaching her, I said, "Aysha! I have come."

*Aysha* : "Hallo Biyami! Is it you? Just see! All these warriors are out to fight for Smyrna. We have after all got up an army. But what is the matter with your arm? Where did you get the wound?"

*Biyami* : "It was just a stray bullet that did it. It was a slight wound but I neglected it and it became bad. I have come here for proper treatment after which I am proceeding to Angora to join the Military College there. By the way, where is Jamal?"

*Aysha* : "He is also here. We are dining together to-night. You are also dining with us. Now come in and just tell me about Ihsan."

*Biyami* : "Ihsan is busy putting down the rebels."

*Aysha* : "Ah! Poor Ihsan!"

At night we all sat at the table in the Tawiya Hotel. Jamal saluted me like deep friends and gave me such a vigorous shake that

I was afraid it might dislodge my arm from my elbow. Like real brothers, he imprinted a warm kiss on my cheeks. But as we quietly chatted over our dinner, I perceived that something was weighing down on his heart. Later on, I came to know what it was that so depressed him. In the vicinity of Smyrna, the Greeks had overpowered our irregular troops. The people were submitting to them. They had imprisoned Jamal and his brothers and, bringing them one by one out of the jail, made them the targets of bullets. Jamal had given fat bribe to his warders and with wonderful cleverness managed to escape from the prison and reach Iskisher.

Jamal had not yet joined the regular army. Nevertheless, he was one of those heroes who, before the birth of such an army, had dedicated the whole of their energies to the cause of national emancipation. He was carrying his life on the palm of his hand and his only fear was that when the regular army comes into being and into conflict with the Greek army, his name might be missing from the roll of honour of that national struggle. Aysha, however, as usual put in a word for the irregular forces. "They are both the same," she said, "the regular and the irregular armies. Whatever differences exist between them at present are no more than the differences between brothers. As soon as the bugle of war is sounded, they will all rush to the post of duty." Then turning to her brother, Jamal, she said, "Go to the

General. He was here yesterday to inspect the hospital. His face reflected manliness and cheerfulness. He knows you from childhood. Tell him frankly all about yourself and assure him that in the defence of motherland, you will all stand shoulder to shoulder."

Aysha's inspiring words filled the whole atmosphere with hope and cheer. We were yet at the table when from outside came the clanging sound of the spurs of an officer. He opened the door and entered. It was Hashmat Bey, carrying a whip in his hand and martial awe as usual playing on his face. He kissed Aysha's hand and placing his hand on Jamal's shoulder began to take tea with us and partake of the sweets. He even cut a joke at my wounded arm and looked thoroughly jolly. I found that he was very intimate with Aysha and Jamal. Aysha told him of Jamal's idea to go to the General and join the regular army. He said he was thinking of doing the same. We left the hotel. Aysha saw us off to the hospital and then we all three said good-bye to her.

## CHAPTER XIV

DURING these days a thick curtain intervened between myself and real life. All those old comrades were behind this curtain. It was about this time that the first battle of Ainuni took place and the War Office deputed me on a special expedition to Ainaboli. For a time I was put in charge of intelligence work. Truly speaking, it was hardly worth the name of work. It consisted mainly in scrutinizing newspapers and similar clerical work. When from the field of battle, I returned to Angora, I did not find myself much impressed with the splendours of Anatolia. My mind was much too engrossed with the thoughts of the friends who had been separated from me. Whatever information I gathered about the battle of Ainuni was solely through Aysha. This is how her first letter ran :—

“ Dear Biyami,

“ The second battle of Ainuni came and passed off. Not a word from you all this while ! I understand you are away. This first battle of Ainuni overwhelmed me with a feeling of exhaustion, physical as well as mental. When, however, the second battle came, it bucked me up once more and never before was I in such high spirits.

The first battle of Ainuni was the first organized fight that Anatolia put up for Smyrna. Though the first attempt, our army displayed wonderful pluck. At this battle we had no arrangement in our hospital for surgical operations. The second battle found all these defects removed and our hospitals were equipped with all up-to-date surgical instruments. Patients very dangerously wounded joined these and were thoroughly cured. At the second battle of Ainuni I had the opportunity to meet a large number of soldiers. If another engagement with the Greeks should come about, I must try to accompany the regular army. The regular army is undoubtedly a great force. It is free from the stink both of wine and the gun-powder, nor is there heard the rowdy uproar and filthy words of the irregular army. There is not much of show about it but the regular army is a wonderful power. Ah! This brings poor Ahmad Rafqi to my mind.

“Most of my time is taken up by the operation room. In addition to this I have to supervise a whole ward of the wounded. Ever since the Medical Department has installed new beds, my heart keeps restless within me. ‘Let us see what poor fellows come to occupy them,’ I say to myself.

“I wish you were here the day the first batch of the wounded arrived at Iskisher railway station. The platform presented a scene of Doomsday. We put them on stretchers and

they looked as if they were the denizens of the higher regions. The following day another batch came. This filled our hospital to its utmost capacity. Even the compound and the garden were occupied.

“At sunset we stop all surgical operations. I go round the main ward and make acquaintance of the soldiers. They are mostly sergeants of whom there is a strong and awe-inspiring element in our army. Never does a word of complaint come to the lips of any of them. Highly fastidious and well brought-up, they are an exceeding proud lot. When a soldier complains to them about his wounds, he gets from them a harsh rebuff. ‘Shut up, boy,’ they growl. ‘It is not soldier-like to grumble.’ When I enter their ward they try to get up from their beds and enquire in a pathetic tone, ‘Any news of war, sister?’ When battalions march past the hospital, such of them, whose legs can carry them, scramble to the gateway. Just this morning I saw two young men in front of a marching battalion who simply entranced me. One was a Macedonian. He would sing a verse and the whole battalion would repeat it. As he was a Macedonian, the verse he devised was : ‘On ! On ! Let us attack Macedonia !’ Who knows what slice of his heart lay buried in Macedonia ? The other was an Anatolian. He was taller than his fellow and his cap on which the crescent and the star proudly twinkled, rose quite an ace above those of the rest of the soldiers. He had sparkling



eyes and a handsome face. Holding a red flag in his stout hands, he went on singing in Turkish a verse which meant, 'Ye, flag of honour! May thou ever flutter over our heads and may our hands ever bear thee aloft. We will rout the foe and lay down our lives around thee.'

"As he thus marched singing and the whole battalion repeated it, my heart was filled with the love of the red flag and like children, my eyes trickled tears.

"I have received a letter from Jamal. Hashmat's wound has healed up. Do write now and then.

"AYSHA."

When I went through Aysha's letter I was surprised that it contained nothing more than a mere reference to Ihsan. "Has the affair of Ihsan after all become so insignificant to Aysha?"—I wondered. Nor was there any mention of Hashmat therein, although he was wounded. The letter was full of accounts of the soldiers and sergeants. "Are not these two generals worth as much as these soldiers in the eyes of Aysha?"—I said to myself. After this I read the other letter from Aysha which had been written from the Kotahiya front. This convinced me that Smyrna and nothing but Smyrna was now pervading the whole of her being and everything else had ceased to occupy any place in her heart. In one short note she said :

“I went to Angora. I stayed there for a couple of nights and came back. Jamal was there just then and I was told that you were about to set out on some mission. On my return I chanced to meet Ihsan and I came to know that Angora suited his health. He had his relations there too, and relations are the chief source of one's happiness. Ihsan put up with them for a few days and when he was all right, he went back to join his Division.

“At Angora I was laid up with fever and kept in bed for several days. Sometime I get well, sometime again fall ill. Madame Tawiya has put me under her own treatment. There are signs on the horizon indicating that another bloody war is imminent. I am far from well but if a war does come I would be the first to get to work, even as impatiently as the General's horse begins neighing when the bugle is sounded.

“When the army marches past the hospital, Madame Tawiya comes up to the window and with tearful eyes watches the whole thing. ‘Ah! How many mothers are doomed to shed tears,’ she goes on saying to herself. ‘How handsome all these young men! Ah! What for should they be so charming?’ “AYSHA.”

Aysha's last letter from Bolawi runs thus:—

“We encountered many hardships at the

battle of Kotahiya. But don't be afraid! I am not disappointed. When I posted my last letter to you the war came. I was still bed-ridden owing to high fever. My heart burst within me that I was not able to rush forthwith to the front. My temperature was very high and it seemed that, in an hour or so, all would be over with me. In my stupor I felt as if I went up and down the hospital stairs, that under my room there was the operation hall in which the surgeons amputated the arms of some and the thighs of others or opened heads, chests or abdomens in order to extract bullets. I seemed to hear these surgeons call to me saying, 'Aysha! Fetch some cotton! Fetch some *hasheesh*! Just lower the head of the patient!' and so on. In this state of delirium, I fancied that the whole army was wounded and passing down my bedroom. It also seemed to me that a large number of young officers had their breasts bare and red with blood. Hardships and calamities had drawn deep furrows on their faces. We stretched these stalwart bodies and set to amputating here and there.

"Biyami! You might recollect that whenever in Constantinople you got displeased with your Anatolian servant, you would rail at him saying, 'You log of oak!' Biyami! Experience has convinced me that that is the truest description that can apply to these Anatolian youths. The only difference is that you meant it in a contemptuous sense, whereas to me, they are just

like oak logs for their physical and moral strength and steadfastness. Indeed, Biyami, the army of Anatolia is a thick oak wood which knows no bending even before the fiercest winds.

“ We the people of Smyrna are different in our ways and habits from those of the people of Eastern and Central Anatolia. The Smyrmites have brown faces, blue eyes and slender bodies. They are like pine trees. The people of Istanbul are fairer in complexion and more handsome. When you graft the pretty delicate pine tree on the strong sturdy oak tree, you get the tree which partakes of the virtues of both. This is the man of Istanbul. He is both tough and slender. Our army is like a big wood where some trees are oaks and some pines. Such a wood is ever-green. Its trunks are unshakable and their boughs bear the fruit of Hope—fruit which cures all dangers. It seems as if the whole world, axe in hand, is out to cut this wood down. But the seeds thus falling to the ground, germinate and the result is a more luxuriant crop of trees.

“ Such were the fantasies that flitted across my mind’s eye in my delirium when it seemed to me that I was shouting at the top of my voice: ‘ This new wood is bound to enter Smyrna ! ’

“ One night I had a horrible dream. A gang of drunken Greek soldiers were storming Madam Tawiya’s hotel. Their black and dirty locks

were hanging over their ears. Their eyes were blood-hot. As they did so, they kept yelling and playing on the harmonium and the piano. I heard cannon shots and it seemed to me as if the very walls of the hotel were shaken. This woke me up and on rushing towards the stairs, I found the poor old Tawiya staggering up the stairs towards me. She told me that the enemy aeroplanes had attacked us. The Medical Department had shifted some patients elsewhere and decided to evacuate the town. She had come to seek my assistance. I instantly dressed and ran up to the hospital. On the way, I saw that the Railway Station was illumined with electric lights. Transport soldiers were leading the mules. They had carts as well which bullocks with drooping heads pulled along. It was a full moon and silvery moonlight dispelled the dark of the night. On the way I also came across marching battalions, raising cloud of dust to the sky. Apparently, there was nothing about them to indicate that evacuation was on. But I could not resist the feeling that in the path of Smyrna we were taking a step backward. Probably this was the feeling with these soldiers too; for a solemn silence brooded over these marching oak trees. One thought, however, still kept up my spirits. These oak trees, the soldiers of Anatolia, I said to myself, could be broken; they could be burnt; but they knew no softening or bending. This drove one conviction home to me. Whether we enter Smyrna sooner or later, one thing is dead certain. The fight must go on till

we have captured Smyrna.

“When I entered the hospital I found the compound crowded with patients and the stretchers of the wounded. Electric lamps were shedding lurid light on the scene. Dignified soldiers, clad in khaki and donning be-crescented and be-starred *tarbouches* lay on the stretchers. Some had their arms broken. Some had their faces bandaged. The hospital men brought in two more stretchers, carrying what appeared pieces of meat. From these came a gentle voice which hardly resembled that of man. Perfect silence reigned in the hospital compound. The eyes of these wounded new-comers reflected some deep inward anguish which showed that something more painful than their wounds was gnawing into their hearts.

“I met the doctor on the stairs. His white apron and white cap were both besmeared with blood. Drops of perspiration trickled down his forehead. ‘Just in time’, he said, as his eyes met mine. ‘Just in time, sister Aysha! you are badly needed. Come upstairs quick!’

“Step by step I slowly went up the stairs. I was afraid weakness might overwhelm me and I might fall senseless. Then I said to myself: ‘Am I not one of the trees of this oak wood? Like the rest of the trees, I must be strong, unbending and unconquerable.’

“ In the operation room, two of the wounded were administered *hasheesh* and no sooner this was done than they were dead. They were like two lions. I closed their eyes with my own hands. Taking their big, brownish hands, now cold in death, into mine, I said: ‘God-speed, children of motherland! We will soon overtake you on the way to Smyrna—*Insha Allah.*’ Thereafter, I addressed myself to the operation of officers. The doctor amputated the arms of two of them as if he were just sawing two branches of trees. One soldier, when he was put in the bed, beckoned to me. When I approached him, he began to move his lips. He wanted to confide to me some dear secret of his heart or perhaps a parting message to some dear one. But he could not utter a single word. And when he saw his voice fail him, he tried to explain his meaning with his eyes. I could understand nothing but feeling that he was deeply pained at his own helplessness, I tried to convince him that I understood him all right. I put my ears close to his mouth and though I could not control my tears, I managed to put on a kindly smile and thus reassured him: ‘Very well, dear brother. I will do all you have told me.’ No sooner my words dropped into his ears than he closed his eyes. He was no more. I looked up at the doctor. Tears were trickling down his cheeks. Then we heard a soldier all of a sudden burst into a shrill cry. ‘This young man,’ he shouted, ‘was the only son of his mother. When we were in Constan-

tinople she had entrusted him to my care. Ah! what shall I say to her now!

“I left the operation room and slowly stepped down the stairs. I was feeling extremely weak. I saw the hospital attendants feed such of the wounded who were a bit better. And they did it with tenderness that outdid even the natural gentleness of women. I joined them too and with motherly affection spoon-fed the wounded with rice. One of them was lying with his face downward. When I moved him, he turned his big black eyes towards me. ‘Sister,’ he said, ‘I have fractured my left shoulder. I can’t move.’ Then we entered into a chat. ‘What town do you come from and are you fresh in the army?’ I asked him. ‘I have been eight years in the army and I was one of those who fought at the Dardenelles.’ Then he told me that he was a resident of Siwas. He had a daughter, Kausar by name. He had three other children too. But of all, he loved Kausar the best. His body seemed to me like a dilapidated palace. As he went on talking, I felt much sympathy for him. ‘Kausar,’ he said, ‘is pretty like an Istanbulian girl and when I go back, I will educate her.’ This man, I said to myself, is in such a distressed condition and yet there is still so much of vitality in him. In fact, he is typical of the vitality of the great Turkish nation. Then he requested me to put him in the same ward with his own townsmen. In their midst, he said, he would quickly recover.



“ In the meantime an incident took place in the hospital. A wounded Angora man came running from the adjoining ward. His head was bandaged and his dress was white. Owing to high fever, his brain was in a state of ferment and he had lost his head. ‘ Send me to Angora,’ he would say at the top of his voice, addressing me. ‘ Tell the doctor to send me to Angora.’

“ The hospital soldiers caught hold of him and with much difficulty took him away. In the delirium of fever, he kept shouting, ‘ Send me to Angora! Send me to Angora!’ He had the strength to throw down half a dozen men. When he thus yelled, it struck me that the rest of the wounded must be feeling pained on his account and it seemed to me as if from their midst arose a low, painful groan which, though inaudible to my ears, went straight into my heart.

“ When presently I went out of the hospital, I saw young maid-servants sob, reclining their heads against the wall. On enquiry I was told that the sight of the wounded Angora man had terrified them. When I went a little away from the hospital, I sat down in a corner and burying my head in my hands like an old woman of Anatolia, I thus soliloquized :

‘ How long, O Lord, will these calamities last? Is there another race on the face of the earth, O Lord, which has been visited with such

hardships as we have been? Or is it because out of Your people, You have chosen us for Your favour and as such are trying us with boundless calamities and ceaseless tears?’

“For the first time in my life I felt to-day that my troubles in the path of Smyrna were proving too much for my fortitude. I do not know how long I remained lost in this thought when all of a sudden, there fell in my ears a voice which was at once invigorating, emboldening and painful. This was the voice of Hashmat Bey who said to the doctor, ‘Perhaps she is gone to Madame Tawiya’s hotel. I am going there to see her. You may now be back, Doctor. Thank you for the trouble.’

“As soon as I heard Hashmat Bey’s familiar voice, I got up and turned towards him. When his eyes fell on me, he caught hold of both my hands and pressing them said, ‘How do you do, sister Aysha! From that very day I have been looking for you.’ I reclined my back against the wall, but could not summon strength enough to utter a word. Hashmat again went on in a kindly and sympathetic tone: ‘What is the matter with you, Aysha? Has your courage failed you? Those who had taken oath on your hands are not dead yet. They will soon enter Smyrna and you too will enter it by their side. But how is it that now you neither possess your usual red crescent nor have you your usual love for the firing line?’

"When I heard this talk, my heart was filled with strength notwithstanding the tide of grief and calamities that was sweeping me away. And I thus replied to him, 'Come! Take me to the firing line just now! I cannot handle arms properly but I will dress the wounds of those fighting in the path of Smyrna. I will relieve some bit of their pain and distress and will die with them any time that it should please God.' 'I will attach you to my Division when we get to Bolawli,' said Hashmat. 'Jamal will also be with us.'

"At this moment, I felt so intoxicated with courage that the greatest fight in the world could not depress my spirits. I cried like a child and this for two reasons. Firstly, I came to know that the spring of my life which I thought was giving way, was, as a matter of fact, so strong. Secondly, just then the thought of Ahmad Rafqi flashed across my mind. His blood-stained naked chest came up before my mental eye and it seemed to me as if he stood in front of me and was thus bidding me, 'Sister Aysha! Come with us, so that we may fight the ignoble Greeks!'

"At midnight, I got into a spacious compartment along with the wounded and reached Bolawli. On the way I made friends with these soldiers. We resumed the talk we had started in the hospital compound and it was so sweet that we could not have too much of it.

“ In early days, my thoughts were greatly taken up with the memory of Ihsan. And when Hashmat informed me that he was peacefully encamped at Syed Ghazi, I began to feel angry with him. But if it were he with me now instead of Hashmat, he would have put me at the rear of the army and taken good care to keep me away from the front ranks. He looked after me as if I were just a year old child. The wrong he thus did me in keeping me away from danger-points still lingers in my mind.

“ And what about you, Biyami ? When do you intend to march out on the path to Smyrna ? You have buried yourself in dusty office leaves, so that you have not a thought left for your comrades and friends.—AYSHA.”

## CHAPTER XV

*December 8, 1921* :—This morning both my thighs were amputated. This brought back to my mind the day when I received Aysha's last letter in which she had reproached me for burying myself in dusty office leaves and not marching out on the path to Smyrna. At that time my hands were trembling and my heart was violently beating out of pain. I wished it could somehow come to Aysha's knowledge that in the path of Smyrna, I was losing my two thighs. Alas! This could not be. Aysha does not know even this much that I have taken a solemn vow to fight on in the cause of Smyrna, even though shots and shells have left nothing of me but my head and hands.

Last night I had a dream that I was looking for Aysha in the cemetery of Kokja Minar so that I might tell her about myself. Those who, forming a circle around her chair, had taken vows, those who have won the glory of the Ghazi or those who have drunk of the cup of martyrdom—each one of them has had his name inscribed in the annals of heroism in letters of gold. But the blood that has fallen from my body in the path of Smyrna is confined like my self-imposed vow, to the nook of obscurity.

The day I was struck with a cannon-ball on

the bank of the river Sakariya which blew my thighs off my body and I found myself stretched in an empty ambulance car in which there was no Aysha, Hashmat Bey came up to me and good-humouredly whispered into my ears: "Permit me to bury your thighs in the cemetery of Kokja Minar." To this I replied in touching words: "Such sentimental things find no place in my life. What are my two thighs compared to the hardships and dangers I have encountered in the path of Smyrna?" This was what I said then to Hashmat but how I long now that, standing by the green tomb of Aysha in the Kokja Minar cemetery, I should relate to her the whole of my tale of woe.

When the national army was on the other side of the Sakariya river, I was busy with my work in the War Office and trying my utmost to go to the front. I had a burning longing for the field of action. But I had no access to influential circles through which I might reach there. My present work was military only in appearance. In reality it was not so. I was therefore fed up with this mode of life and was impatient to join active service. An opportunity at last came. One day a certain chief sent for me and said: "I understand you know Greek and are also good at drawing." I promptly replied that I did. "Well then," said the chief, "the Intelligence Office of the Western Front needs a man who can render Greek into Turkish and who may also know drawing. As you know both, you must

be packing to leave by the evening train to-morrow."

I was intoxicated with joy when leaving the War Office. And the following night I entrained at Angora railway station. On the way I had three officers and one assistant officer for my fellow passengers in the same compartment and never in my life had I seen soldiers so reserved and taciturn. Each one looked the very embodiment of determination and was bent on carrying on the advance till the last moment. Early in the morning we reached the terminus. The camp was a couple of hours' distance from here.

I will never forget the soul-stirring scene when in the silvery light of the full moon, a detachment of khaki-clad soldiers set to work to remove the animals and the goods from inside the train. Not a lip moved. The horses, of course, began loudly to neigh and prance about as soon as they got out of the train. At the back of the station were three men on horsebacks. One, it was said, was the Commander of the advance battalions of a particular Division. From his mouth dropped orders so domineering and awe-inspiring as if they were so many boulders. The detachment moved about according to these orders. Now the soldiers would disperse, now instantaneously they would fall in and form themselves into various diagrams of geometry. Then I heard the clatter of his horse's hoofs and

forthwith came the thundering order, "March!" And the atmosphere reverberated with the echo of the footfalls of soldiers. When this detachment got a long way off from us and we could no longer hear the Commander's thunderous orders, I began to find some sort of conveyance for myself and my three fellow passengers. Soon we were on the move over the brown plain, winding our way to the camp along its obscure roads.

One of my three officer companions was Zehni Effendi. This man was employed in the same office where I was now going to join. A thin, lean fellow, he had a Macedonian accent and there was a manly cheerful ring in his talk. I became familiar with him and went along by his side. None of us talked much. As we sped on, the clatter of horses fell in our ears. It came from a great distance but as the wind was direct, it could reach us. The wind was chilly and blew so fast that all the dust from the ground was blown on us. On the way, we saw a grove of trees and when I was told that there was a camp dispensary there, my joy knew no bounds. On enquiring of my companions the whereabouts of Division No.—, I found that the hospital where Aysha worked was a long way off. For full two hours we went along towards the camp. I had completely lost my will power and even forgotten my own identity. I took delight in regarding myself as a tiny drop in that sea of khaki-clads.



After traversing a number of hills and dales we came upon a patch of land rich in verdure, lying in the midst of hills. In this plain, we were told, there were a few farm houses. As descending down the hill, we were making towards this valley, we could spot in the dim light in the distance, the tents as well as the sentinels. The foot-falls of soldiers and barking of dogs were the first signs of life that came to us from this small habitation. We passed in front of a house at the door of which two sentinels stood at guard, a red military flag fluttering in the air overhead.

Our office was located in a spacious house close by. We had a small tent between ourselves, Zehni Effendi and myself and we both slept therein. On reporting at the office, we were told that the head of the office was occupied with the General. I stood before my tent and cast a glance over the mysterious village. The General, we were informed, was in the house with the two sentinels. It was a low-roofed building. In front of the General's room, stood the brownish hill over which tents were pitched. In the centre of these tents was a wireless pillar which, in the moon-light, looked like a long needle.

I knew this village was the cradle of the new Turkish nation and as soon as the struggle of Sakariya was over, we would open a new chapter of our national history. For this reason,

I have a vivid memory of the deep impression it made on me. War news and military reports were transmitted to these small tents by telephone. The orders that went forth from this place also left a deep impression on my mind. Never in my life have I heard words more stirring than the words of Aysha: "*To the trenches of Katranji and Jalbakli!*" Before the main attack of Sakariya, these two words had hardly escaped the lips of the General when they reached the farthest ends of that valley and the contending armies encamped themselves opposite each other like two stout wrestlers. That day I memorized many such like expressions which were transmitted on the telephone to the Commander-in-Chief in order to acquaint him with strategic points. When after studying these messages, the commander located the exact spot of action, in a thunderous voice he would roar the order: "To the trenches of Katranji! To the trenches of Katranji!"

I thank my star that the General consented to put me in this fierce war. The whole day long I would do translation of Greek articles and at nightfall, would attend the High Command office for duty or take down the daily orders as to the movement of troops. At times I would keep a night-long vigil at the telephone. Lights in the High Command and other local war offices were not put out the whole night and activities were kept on unbroken. The War Minister stood at the telephone and throughout

the night kept in touch with the Divisional Commanders. His official orders breathed firmness and resolution. I was told that the General had not so much as a wink of sleep and when I saw the blue light in his room always on and couriers going in and out till daybreak, I was convinced of it.

In the War Office, there was a long platform behind which stood a line of young officers, commissioned as well as non-commissioned whose faces sparkled with the light of faith. These were the men who had vowed that until Smyrna had been purged of the foreigners, their swords would not go back into their sheaths. The whole thing here was like a chess-board with human pawns and a grim game of offence, defence, arrangement and concentration was on.

When the second week came, the cannons roared more furiously, showering heavy shells. The telephonic messages heard at night indicated greater determination. Sometimes a few horsemen would come to the War Office, stay there till past mid-night and then disappear in the darkness. Like Katranji and Jalbakli, the names of two other villages also gained frequent currency. Names of mountains and caverns were often mentioned on the 'phone and when I recollect these names, I seem to be reading some tragedy.

Close by my tent was another tent reserved

for motor-drivers. This had a distinction of its own. When these drivers had nothing to do and yet did not want to go to sleep, they would sit together to read a novel. One of them would read out the whole to the others. They spent most of their time in singing and games. They tried to give a happy appearance to the dangerous times. Like their Anatolian brothers, they displayed their firmness, recklessness on such occasions, and drowned the dangers of life in the roars of mockery and daring.

Every morning I would turn my ears towards these neighbours, in order to find out what the news was. My servant, Salam, however, was more alert and in case of good news, he would come to me and say, "Master! All is well, as these fellows are singing." When however, some distressing news came, he would keep quiet and look up towards heaven. At evening, I would get up the hill close by and from its height, watch the little village, which was now the birth-place of a new nation. At times cannon roars were heard in the crimson clouds to the left of our tents. I would look towards the War Office and would see the head of Ismat Pasha in the dim light casting glances of satisfaction and earnestness towards far-off places. The General would point with his finger towards the hills on the horizon and I felt sure that they were discussing the spots of action. This was all that I could see of these two great commanders. But I could hear nothing of what they said nor even

could I have a less distant look of them. I dared not step anywhere near them. Was not I, Biyami, only an ordinary Assistant Officer ?

By the time the second week was out, languidness and despair weighed on both the contending armies. Eyes emitted sparks of fire and soldiers waded knee-deep through blood. While such was the state of things, I put myself the question : " Which of the two sides is stronger ? Which side is going to take the head of the enemy before it should feel giddiness in its own head and darkness before its own eyes ? " The answer was not long to come. On September 9, when I was fast asleep, Zehni Effendi came and violently shook me to wake me up. " Get up, Biyami, " he said, as he did so. " Get up ! We are going. " And with eyes yet half closed I enquired : " Whither ? " " To the front ! To the front ! " came the reply. " The whole camp is going to the front. "

At these words I sprang to my feet like a spring which is let loose after being pressed down. And we heard our neighbours, the motor-drivers thus loudly sing : " To the oak tree have I tied my horse. Take my *salaam* unto Aysha, the black-eyed. " At this I remarked that it would have been better if she had blue eyes. " What are you talking, man ? " rejoined Zehni Effendi, not knowing. At this I burst into a peal of laughter like a schoolboy and popping my head out of the tent shouted to Salam to come

with coffee.

The sun was now up above the horizon. A bank of clouds also seemed to overspread the skies on one side. Ammunition and provision carts creaked along by us. Our brother officers stood bare-headed in front of their tents. From sparkling jugs, soldiers poured water on their hands with which they washed their faces. They were all loudly cracking jokes with one another and uncontrolled laughter pulled their lips back into their cheeks. The boughs of trees, it seemed to me, which covered the tents to hoodwink the bombers from the air and which were by now all dry, became fresh and green again in sympathy with the joy and rejuvenation that permeated the whole of our camp. As I hurriedly dressed myself, I shouted for joy and talked garrulously. This was the first time that Zehni Effendi saw me so full of joy and talk. And in this fit of joy I said to Zehni: "Do you know Zehni, what is my heart's desire just now?"

*Zehni*: "What is it, friend?"

*Biyami*: "Oh! How I long to have the privilege of presenting some papers to the General just for once."

*Zehni*: "Have you never been to him?"

*Biyami*: "Never! Whenever I went up to

him with some papers to put up before him, his A. D. C. took them from me."

*Zehni*: "Well! I have had that privilege good many times."

*Biyami*: "For heaven's sake, do tell me something about him."

*Zehni*: "Well, he always has before him a small table, with heaps of maps and atlases. Over these he keeps constantly pouring and holds a gold pen in his hand and he is always absorbed in thought, drawing lines with his pen. Now and then he lifts up his head and fixes a stare."

*Biyami*: "And what did he tell you?"

*Zehni*: "When I went up to him for the first time, he cast an angry glance at me. Perhaps it was due to the fact that he had not seen me before or to some other reason. Then he asked me: 'What news? Good or bad?' I felt much upset and I mumbled: 'Here is the report of such and such a battalion.' 'What I want to know,' said he, 'is whether it contains good or bad news.' To this I replied 'My lord! It contains good news.' 'Well, let me see it,' demanded the General and he began to go through it carefully. When he had done so, he raised his eyes and said in an angry tone, 'You could not understand it. It contains bad news.'

When I went to him a second time, he recognised me and asked: 'Well, good news or bad?' I replied that it was mid-way between the two, neither good nor bad. 'Well, let me see it,' he said, and to my humiliation it turned out to be a very good news. 'Zehni,' he rebuked me. 'You don't understand what you read.' Then he explained to me how the report was good. Last night, too, I went to him and with trembling hands, put up the report before him. He put me the usual question. I replied that the first part of the report was bad but the last part was hopeful. He took the report and scanned it. Then he discussed things with Ismat Pasha who was leaning over the maps before him. Then he turned to me and signed the papers. I was anticipating a rebuke but I got a smile instead. 'Here, dear son,' he said, handing back the papers to me and from this I understood that the report contained happy tidings. From lengthy reports our General draws conclusions we can not dream of."

*Biyami*: "And do you ever go to Ismat Pasha?"

*Zehni*: "Often."

*Biyami*: "I have not had even that privilege so far."

*Zehni*: "But is it at all proper that every translator or draftsman should interview big Generals?"



*Biyami*: "But I draw the paintings of officers and very often they present me with a signed copy."

In thus talking to Zehni Effendi, I did indeed unburden my heart of one of its deeply cherished desires but in my heart of hearts I realized that I was expecting something too much. Was not I a mere clerk in the previous War Office and only a deputy officer in the present one? How could a man of my humble position aspire to have an interview with the General?

## CHAPTER XVI

ON September 9, we once more traversed the plain in front of the village. The golden rays of the sun were playing on the green hills as a detachment of us consisting of 200 young horsemen marched towards the Sakariya river. At sunset we reached the second camp on the railway line and we stayed inside the railway compartments. On arrival there, my chief anxiety was that I should be put in the same compartment with Zehni Effendi. It came about even as I had wished and when military bands began playing in our compartment, I bent towards Zehni and asked him in a whisper: "Are you asleep, man?"

*Zehni*: "What do you want?"

*Biyami*: "I wish to know whether the camp dispensary attached to our Division is somewhere near about."

*Zehni*: "What have you got to do with the dispensary?"

*Biyami*: "I have a mind to get wounded."

*Zehni*: "Then just run towards it. It is only 10 minutes' run from us."

There was a pause. After a long interval, I reopened the conversation. "Zehni!" "Zehni!" I called out.

*Zehni*: "What is it, man? Arn't you gone to sleep yet?"

*Biyami*: "Can you tell me how to get myself transferred to No.—Division."

*Zehni*: "But the question is whether you are needed there."

There was a pause again. After a while he called out: "Biyami! Biyami!"

*Biyami*: "What is it?"

*Zehni*: "I just recollect that our Chief has to-day received a communication from No.—Division."

*Biyami*: "What does the communication say?"

*Zehni*: "They want on the field a man well-conversant with Greek."

*Biyami*: "You are well-known to the General. Would you please talk to him about it?"

*Zehni*: "The General never rejects my

request. Just wait and I will let you know to-morrow."

In the pitch dark of the night which enveloped me, I was on my way towards the Commandment of Division No.—, in order to present to him the official order under which I had been put under him. When I looked up and cast a glance at the camp, I found the camp lights illumining the entire valley right up to the hill-side. They looked like so many big fire-worms. In the light of the fire-places could be seen the forms of a few persons whose shadows moved to and fro with the flames of fire. The dispensary had a wide courtyard and was the most illumined of all other places. Though I could not tell what exactly was going on inside the hospital, I could clearly make out the figure of Aysha, moving up and down and dealing comfort and consolation to the sick and the wounded with her healing hand.

On reaching the village gate, I enquired of the soldier on duty where the office of the Chief of Staff was. "Straight on", he pointed with his finger, "then first turning on the left". As I passed through the village, I found it was a Tartar habitation. The houses had long galleries. At the other end I came at a house which was illumined with lamps, with a sentinel standing at the door. "Is the Chief of Staff here?", I asked. "Yes, sir," came the reply. "He is in this room". On entering the room, I saw Ihsan

dressed in a gown, bending over the table, writing something. His face was pale and wore visible signs of exhaustion. He went on with his writing, and did not raise his head. At last I spoke out: "I am Biyami of the Intelligence Department of the Western Front. My instructions are to report to you for work."

No sooner my name fell in his ears than Ihsan jumped to his feet and with unusual warmth shook me by the hand. "Hallo, Biyami! Is it you?", he said. "I am just preparing papers; for tomorrow morning I will put the office in charge of my assistant."

"But where are you going?" I asked impatiently. "It was your presence that attracted me here."

"The Commander of Regiment No.—has been killed," replied Ihsan. "And on my own request, the High Command has put me in command of that division. I am impatient to be somewhere near fire. Things are becoming too cold. You see I am wearing a gown here inside the room."

"Wouldn't you take me along with you?" said I, approaching nearer and affectionately putting my hand on his shoulders. "I am feeling cold too and wish to be somewhere near fire."

"But, Biyami," rejoined Ihsan, "you must know that fire at times consumes one's hand or thigh and at times the whole of man."

"I know," said I.

Ihsan sent for some officers and gave them instructions and when he had finished he put on his gloves. "Come along, Biyami," he said. "Let us have a walk to the hill-side."

During the stroll which dragged on for hours, Ihsan unfolded the deepest sentiments of his heart to me. From the very beginning, he recounted with burning passion the whole of his love story, how Aysha had consumed the whole of his being, how she had become his sole driving force. "As, however, I plunged into the thick of the war", he went on, "the mania for Aysha subsided for the time being. When, however, after the terrible war of Ainuni, I resumed my charge at Kiwa, the mania re-asserted itself. I gave myself up to a life of eat, drink and be merry. But this too was of no avail. Aysha-fever knew no abating. She had become to me something unfathomable, something unnameable, something intangible, visionary. At last, I made up my mind to lead the life of a hermit and plunge myself in my official duties. When the second battle of Ainuni came, I offered myself for a bullet. And in one skirmish on a hill, I felt that death had fallen on my chest like a lightning. I fell unconscious

and it seemed to me to be the end of my life."

"I was brought to the hospital," Ihsan continued. "I was subject to frequent fits of unconsciousness. My head constantly reeled. When they removed me to the operation room, I again fell senseless. All I felt was the touch of a few fingers which put a cold piece of cloth on my head, cold drops of water into my lips and sweet scent into my nose. It seemed to me I was familiar with these fingers which had touched me before as well. Biyami! you know Aysha's fingers. Is it not so? Her long fingers contain a wonderful charm. Their touch infuses strength into the weak and soothing sensation into the invalid. When I opened my eyes, I felt within me an inexpressibly sweet sensation, when, in the midst of white-aproned hospital officials, I saw the stately figure of Aysha, wearing a snow-white apron with a black scarf covering her head. She cast at me looks which were full of the deepest affection such as a fond mother has for her child and it seemed to me that dissolving her whole frame, she concentrated the whole of her being in her eyes and through her eyes, she was sinking into my heart."

"When after some time", Ihsan went on, "I was able to speak, I began to talk to Aysha of the happy day when together we would march triumphant into Smyrna. With the eye of imagination, we enjoyed the scene when the vanguard of our army, on hearing the bugle,

would march into the streets and lanes of Smyrna and reaching the coast of the Mediterranean which had been flooded with the blood of our soldiers, would fix the red flag there. While we were thus revelling in the sweet thought, something hidden startled Aysha and all of a sudden she got up. The flame of the lamp that was burning grew dim before the sparkle of her eyes. Her red lips quivered and the whole of her frame was shaken as if by some electric wave. Her heart was at this moment overflowed with a surging tide of love but this love was the monopoly of Smyrna. The very mention of that name sent a thrill through her being and a state of sweet ecstasy overtook her. The most famous women of history can present nothing of this deep passion which filled Aysha's heart at the thought of Smyrna. When she got up, I held her by the hand and said: 'Aysha! I promise you that my Division will be the first to enter Smyrna. At any rate, the soldier who will be the first to raise the national flag of Turkey in that town will be none other than myself. If I fulfil my promise, will you promise to accept my hand?

"At this Aysha began to shiver and my hand which was in hers felt something like an electric jerk. She awakened from her sweet reverie and fixing me with her eyes thus accosted me: 'The man who enters Smyrna first of all—I can refuse him nothing in the world that he may ask for. But I can not marry him. Ihsan! You may suppose that I have been afflicted with



plague which has cut me off from all human society and which has sundered all my worldly ties except the one tie of Smyrna.'

"This greatly upset me. Like a mad man I thrust my fingers into the bandages of my wounds and tore them off. Blood began to gush out of my breast. When Aysha saw this madness, she ran up to me and catching hold of my hand said: 'Ihsan! When we have entered Smyrna and celebrated the memory of those heroes who have laid down their lives in the cause of lovely Smyrna, I will live with you wherever you may like me to. Now I beseech you to take a vow that until we have entered Smyrna, your heart will harbour no other longing except to see the National Flag flutter over Smyrna.' 'I do promise,' replied I, 'if that is your wish.'

"Thereafter my convalescence was wonderfully rapid. On recovery I went on a holiday to Angora. On the expiry of my leave I had, under the orders of the High Command, to resign the command of my Division. The wound I had received rendered me unfit for active service. I was made the Chief of Staff of Division No.—."

By the time Ihsan had gone so far in his story, it was already a late hour of the night. Casting a glance towards the village we saw that all lights except those of the moving columns were out. Ihsan stopped. "Biyami!" he said, "I am feeling cold. Let us be back". Soon we

were in Ihsan's room. Taking a chair in front of the glowing embers in the fire-place and lighting a cigar, he resumed his love story in the same passionate tone. Once more he was lost in the thought of Aysha and for hours together he went on recounting all the little incidents in any way connected with her. When he finished his story, a cock was already raising its early morning crow outside his room. He lighted another cigar and turning to me, said: "Biyami! Now it is my time for work. Friend! You must now be going to your bed. In the morning, I will present you to my assistant before leaving for the detachment which has been put under my command."

"But don't forget to take me along with you," said I.

"Well, Biyami!" rejoined Ihsan. "It seems, like myself, you too are anxious for a fire hotter than the fiery shirt you have on your body".

## CHAPTER XVII

*December 20, 1921.*

For several days past, my strength has been failing and it seems that but for my brain, life is extinct in the whole of the rest of my body. From the doctor's looks and movements I can see that in a couple of days the operator's knife will be upon me. My only fear is that when they tear open my skull, they may discover all the sweet thoughts that I have kept as the most dearly cherished secrets. To-day, I will relate the adventures of the last day of the Black Hill before the surgeon's knife should cut the golden thread of my life.

Ihsan put another man in charge of the Staff Office and started for the firing line, taking me along with him as his A. D. C. From that day onward, I never again saw a smile on his face. He was no longer the self-same man who, at Kokja Minar, had lifted for me the steel curtains that hid the deepest secrets of his heart. When he assumed charge of his new command, his routine was to spend his leisure hours in the midst of soldiers. He would take the recruits to the brown plain behind the camp and there give them military training. Ah! What a wonderful sight it was! Even now with the eye of imagi-

nation I can picture the soldiers in khaki, Ihsan, dressed in blue officer's uniform, standing aside, and communicating his orders with smart movements of his hands as if he were a sergeant. At night-fall, Ihsan would retire to his tent. All the night long, he would write and issue orders.

One day I made up my mind to go and see Aysha. I was sure she loved Ihsan. It was impossible that within a year she should break her promise and refuse to marry him. It was however necessary that I should properly obtain leave before I should quit our camp. I went to Ihsan and with significant murmur in my tone, asked his permission to go and see Aysha. Ihsan's face showed no symptoms of change; he kept engrossed in his work and in a stern official growl said: "You are given one hour's leave." Having said so, Ihsan turned towards a sergeant, a burly horseman who was waiting for orders. On my way to the moving column in order to see Aysha, I rehearsed, addressing the dry grass along the pathway, the little speech that I was going to address Aysha. "Ihsan's agony", I said, "is assuming serious proportions. He is simply dying for you" and so forth. And as I addressed these words to dry grass, my heart was so moved that I actually began to weep. I had little doubt in my mind that as soon as I communicate these touching sentiments to Aysha, she would cry like a child and implore me to be instrumental in joining their hands and hearts.

When I had finished rehearsing the speech I

was going to address to Aysha on behalf of Ihsan, another wish cropped up in my heart. I must also tell her that I too. . . . But my heart began to beat violently and I stifled this thought there and then.

It was already sunset and the valley was alit with a myriad camp lights. Soldiers lighted fires and were seated around them in numerous little bands. And it seemed to me that before hiding their faces behind the darkness of the night, those tufts of dry grass had said to me some strange things in reply. The thought tickled me to laughter.

Thus lost in these sweet musings, I at last reached the place where the moving column was encamped. In order to take breath, I stopped for a while behind the tents. After taking a little rest, when I had recovered from these reveries, I proceeded till I was at the door of Aysha's tent, which smelled of alcohol and tincture iodine. Inside the tent lay a number of stretchers with the sick and the wounded. Seated by the pole of the tent, Aysha was pouring cold water on the head of a stout soldier. One of the wounded soldiers enquired if the Greeks had really fled.

*Aysha* : " Indeed, Ahmad, they are flying. Within another three days this territory will be purged of their dirty feet. The wound in thy breast has not been in vain."

*Another soldier*: "Sister Aysha! Please give me a little water!"

*A third soldier*: "Sister Aysha! I am feeling pain in my leg. When is the doctor coming?"

*A fourth soldier* (crying aloud): "Ah! My dear mother! My dear mother!"

*A fifth soldier*: "Sister! Will you give me a lemonade?"

I longed to take part in meeting these various demands. So I called out: "Aysha! Just a moment, please."

"Is it you, Biyami"? replied Aysha. "I will be with you in a minute".

Instructing sergeant Mustafa to look to the wounded, Aysha ran up to me. We stood at the tent door. Her face, though wheatish, was illumined with a strange glow of light. Her eyes were darkish. "Is the Greek retreat genuine? I hope it is no ruse," she enquired.

"No! It is no ruse", I replied. "They are actually flying."

*Aysha*: "The detachment of Hashmat and Jamal will take part in the action tomorrow".

*Biyami* : " And so that of Ihsan."

*Aysha* : " Are you off your head, *Biyami* ?"

*Biyami* : " Don't you know Ihsan has been put in command of Division No—? "

*Aysha* : " I met him three days since. But he told me nothing about it. Where is his camp? "

*Biyami* : " In this very zone."

*Aysha* (smiling) : " Then, all the three of them will set out on the path to Smyrna tomorrow."

After a moment's pause, she continued : " And have you too joined the Division, *Biyami* ? "

*Biyami* : " I am A. D. C. to Ihsan ".

*Aysha*'s eyes went wide open at this pleasant surprise and she began to say :

" Tomorrow, you will all join the swarm of fire-worms and circumambulate around fire. It means I alone am left behind ! "

Just then the cries " Ah Sister ! Ah Sister ! ", came from inside the tent.

“Biyami! It is Hassan”, said Aysha. “He has a bullet wound in his arm and yet he insists on rejoining the firing line. At Iskisher he got an inflammation of the inner membrane. He is still under my treatment; but he thinks he is all right now and says that he must plunge in the thick of the battle again and not come out of it until he has received at least nine wounds.”

I noticed symptoms of inward agitation visibly play on Aysha's face. “Ihsan will be marching to the firing line tomorrow”, said I. “Wouldn't you like to see him before that? The Battle of Sakariya is a most fierce battle and has already sent to Heaven a large number of Generals, Commanders and Ghazis.” Turning her back on me, Aysha began to scan the far-off horizon. After a while she again turned towards me. It being pitch dark, I could not see her face. All I could see was that affectionately stretching her hands out to me she said: “So, you are all going in for it, tomorrow, you, Jamal and *he*. May be, Hassan also goes out. It is no good preventing these days any one from joining the battle. The whole army will be marching out in the path of Smyrna and I will be with you too. God-speed, Biyami! You must be going now. I must look after the patients”.

*Biyami*: “May I convey your *salaam* to Ihsan?”



*Aysha*: "Just give him this much message from me that I am praying for victory to his arms."

All the night long I was lost in the thought of unravelling this most baffling riddle that *Aysha* was. At mid-night, *Ihsan* entered and without even taking off his boots and spurs, stretched himself on his bed. It was biting cold and the sentinel was pacing up and down outside the tent. "Shall I disclose the affair of *Aysha* to him?" I said to myself. His face, however, was too forbidding and I dared not open my lips. He flung his cap on to the table and putting his hands underneath his head, began to gaze at the upper part of the tent. For half an hour, I kept quiet. Then gathering courage, I was about to speak to him when I heard him shout in his sleep: "Sons of Fatherland! Fire towards the hill! Towards the hill, I say! There you are! The enemy is already taking to heels."

He was breathing hard and panting. Obviously, rifle in hand, he was leading in his dream an attack on the hill. This electrified me with special enthusiasm. I felt proud that the following day, for the first time in my life, I would join the most bloody action and would be counted as one of the band of national heroes who voluntarily offered themselves for death. In the eyes of *Aysha* and others, I would no longer be one of an inferior class of men.

Early next morning, when I woke up, I saw Ihsan reclining against the tent-pole and sipping his coffee. Immediately I sprang to my feet and within my heart I perceived the ray of joy one feels at the dawn of 'Id-day. Shots and shells were falling thick and fast. Nevertheless all was still and serene. Seeing me up, Ihsan's lips opened in a smile for the first—and the last—time.

From outside came the buzzing of Greek aeroplanes. They had evidently located our camping ground. Ihsan went out and looked up towards the sky as if he were just a child enjoying the sight of kites flying about. I was greatly alarmed. His life was in danger. The planes dropped a few bombs here and there but nobody took any notice of them. The soldiers kept going about. They had in their hands baskets of food which they carried to the army. Presently, the cannonade grew more furious and the balls fell quite close to us. Ihsan was exceedingly impatient. The scene of action had turned back from the foot of the hills in front of us and drawn as near as Akmat-ut-Du'a which was only a small distance from us. Column after column detached from the mobile force and clad in khaki dashed onward till they reached the last extremity of the hills before us. For a while they halted there. But being in high spirits, they soon pressed forward and were out of sight. Beyond that was the firing line. As I gazed at this

spectacle, my heart throbbed within me at the thought that we too would presently be treading along the same path. Each minute, each moment, however, seemed to drag on into a year. The stillness was weighing heavily on us and it seemed as if assuming a visible tangible form it had completely enveloped us.

When the army had taken the morning meal, it made ready to plunge into the battle. Commandant Hashmat Bey invited Ihsan to breakfast. When after an hour, he returned from him, he summoned the Commanders of various battalions before his tent and gave them necessary instructions. Just at the moment, however, when we were duly in our saddles and about to advance, the detachment of Jamal dashed out. With rivetted eyes, Ihsan followed the march of the moving force and when the last of Jamal's soldiers had crossed our line of horizon and vanished in the distance, he reluctantly turned his eyes from that direction and, as if to conceal from us that his heart was tied to that force, he observed: "Jamal's detachment has advanced ahead of all."

Presently, there was another commotion on the face of the earth. The columns of our force began to march towards the battle-field. The sound of their foot-falls was reverberated by the surrounding hills. When the vanguard of our column crossed the farthest extremity of the

valley and was entering the firing zone, we were still in the middle of the valley. This was followed by another detachment. Ihsan, firmly seated in his saddle, kept by our side and issued orders right and left. The roar of cannon and the clatter of horses' hoofs were all that filled the atmosphere.

The valley was surrounded on all sides by hills. Right across it there lay a pathway surcharged with dust. Cannon-balls now fell on one hill, now on another and wherever they dropped, they raised a whole cloud of dust. The soldiers were completely enveloped in the dust along the pathway. And the whole face of the valley was strewn with human beings who looked as a huge swarm of ants. The zone in front of us had a pathway across it which led towards Bolawly and ended in a narrow pass. The farm towards the right of this pass was the target of a furious bombardment. But our path lay right through this farm and we had therefore to cross it. Balls fell right and left but we took no notice of them and steadily proceeded till we were in sight of the black hill on the other side of Bolawly. It was this black hill, rising like the pyramids, which we had to reach and capture. Everyone had to obey orders and it was therefore not for us to question how on earth we were going to cross this belt of fire.

It took us about an hour to cover this distance. Just then, a motor-car dashed past

us, bringing orders from the High Command. Thereafter a mounted officer appeared and saluting Ihsan, communicated the orders to him. With great difficulty we pulled up the reins of our horses. When the officer departed and we resumed our march, a ripple of joy came to Ihsan's face. "Biyami!", he called out to me. "It is the centre that shall lead the attack and we are to fire the first shot". "Then it is indeed 'Id-day for us", I rejoined. "Let us send for the choicest sweets and make merry".

I ran briskly up and down, carrying the Commander's orders to column after column. The upshot of all these orders was how to cross the firing zone with the minimum possible loss of life. Just then a ball came roaring down and blew two of our soldiers. They were the first instalment of our sacrifices in this engagement. After crossing the narrow pass, we came upon another hill which compelled us to change our route. Presently we were overtaken by nightfall and along with it by most biting cold. A violent storm began to blow over the ranks of the army and it seemed as if death was playing over our heads. Between ourselves and the farthest extremity of the valley, there lay a black ditch which was immune from bombardment. Taking this as a temporary base, we dressed and bandaged the wounded. From here was the final charge to be directed. The plain that intervened between us and the black hill was made the target of heavy bombardment by the enemy.

Our commander deemed it advisable to survey this part of the valley before dark. He therefore ordered a halt and taking one man along with him, stealthily climbed up the black hill, till he reached the highest peak. The fading twilight was fast receding before the enveloping darkness. The Greeks wanted to prevent us from crossing the valley before nightfall. So they started a heavy bombardment.

From the top of the hill, Ihsan surveyed the valley from end to end. He discovered all the natural routes and also watched where exactly the cannon-balls fell in the valley. Coming back to the base in the ditch, he summoned the battalion commanders and consulted them. It was decided that somehow or other we must gain the top of the hill under the cover of night. No sooner it was dark than we resumed our march and by mid-night we were already at the foot of the black hill. It seemed as if some black tapering living object stood before us. The search-light rays from the Greek camp revealed a strange spectacle. Those who were stealthily creeping up the hill-side in order to gain possession of it would now show under the red and green light of cannon balls and now hide again. The bombardment smashed these men to smithereens as if they were so many trees. Nevertheless the battle went on with unabated fury. The Greeks were lying in ambush behind the boulders on the hill-side. Our vanguard had crossed their line of defence and the rear ranks

were as yet approaching them when they killed the commanders of both the wings. At times it seemed to me that perhaps our men were dispirited; they had already lost full one half of their total strength. After sometime the moon appeared on the horizon and began to shed its silvery light on this horrid scene. Shot and shell rained like a hail-storm and I could hardly hear the voice of Ihsan. At last he assumed command of the third column and led the van. The tracks were so narrow and dreadful that some of them were impassable even for goats. Ihsan displayed wonderful firmness and resolutely pressed his way upward towards the hill-top. This filled the men in the rear with a new hope, and a new determination. Perfect silence reigned. Not a murmur was heard. The shriek or groan of one who fell was all that broke this hush. I saw bullets whizz right over Ihsan's head. Shots fell on his right and shots fell on his left. He was, however, not in the least perturbed. Rifle in hand, he pushed his way upward and upward.

I felt that we were somewhere near the top and heard Ihsan loudly cursing the Greeks. He detested these men who had polluted the sacred soil of his motherland from the bottom of his heart. The Greeks shouted back worse abuses and tried to repulse the onslaught with hand-bombs, stones and guns. Those of our men who survived the scuffle, got to the top of the hill and fell on the very strongholds of the

Greeks. A most dreadful hand-to-hand fight ensued. They grappled with one another and charged with sabres and bayonets. Ihsan shouted at the top of his voice: "To the top, comrades! To the top!" A flash of searchlight illumined the scene. We saw Ihsan reclining against a cliff and looking for some way to get higher still. Our soldiers dashed onward over the bodies of their dead and wounded, unmindful of the guns and revolvers which made easy targets of them. Their hearts burned with just one passion. They must wipe off the Greeks who had violated the sanctity of their motherland. I felt as if I was drunk with some sort of intoxication and like the rest, I also went on shouting and cursing the Greeks.

Presently, as we looked up, we beheld a spectacle which sent a thrill through our whole frames. Ihsan had after all made his way up the cliff and was standing erect on the highest pinnacle of the hill. The moon which had by now travelled considerably above the horizon was shedding lurid rays and spreading its silvery sheet over the scene. He had hardly been a moment there when the Greeks sent volleys of shots at him and in the twinkling of eyes, he tumbled and rolled down to the spot where we were standing. He resembled a tree pulled out by the roots and flung away. We stretched our hands to receive him and when he was in our arms, I called out to him: "My brother Ihsan! My brother Ihsan!" In a faint murmur he



acknowledged my call, " O Rab ! O Rab ! "

It was evident the Greeks had left their position and fled. There was no firing from their side. I picked Ihsan up in my arms. The soldiers helped me in doing so and as they did so they called out " commander ! commander ! " Everybody was anxious to get as near him as possible and satisfy himself that he was alive. Just then a sergeant with long bristling moustaches whose face was black with powder and from whose head and breast blood gushed out, shouted : " Comrades ! Come, join me and we will avenge the death of our commander."

Shouting at the top of their voices the soul-stirring war-cry of Islam, Allah-o-Akbar, this band of devoted soldiers dashed on over the cliffs, sending a storm of bullets down the flying enemy. As for myself, I turned downwards taking Ihsan in my arms. As we came farther and farther down, the shouts and fires of this handful of heroes grew less and less audible till they altogether died out. When I got to the foot of the cliff, I wetted Ihsan's lips with water. He had a deep gash in his chest. His shirt was full of blood. His head, no longer firm and erect, was hanging down over his shoulders. His eyes were closed and in a low murmur, he was heard now and then to utter the words, " O Allah ! O Allah ! "

It was with great difficulty that we

managed to take him to the ditch we had chosen for the dressing of our wounded. Putting him in a palanquin, we carried him on till at the foot of the hill we come across an ambulance car. We put him in there and all the while as we moved on I kept calling out, "Ihsan! Brother Ihsan!". He tried to acknowledge my calls but he could only sob. At about four in the morning we reached the military hospital. I rushed into a tent where a young doctor was dressing the injuries of the wounded. "We have brought Commander Ihsan," said I. "He has got wounded. Isn't sister Aysha here?" The young doctor shouted to the nurses to take us to the tent of Aysha. Arriving there, I asked the doctor in charge where Aysha was. He told me she was gone to the firing line along with the ambulance corps. "But don't you mind," he went on. "Her presence would be no use. Another half an hour and it will be all over."

This made me all the more restless. I almost lost my temper and felt enraged with Aysha. Was Ihsan going to be deprived even of the privilege of a last touch from her fingers which might at least close his eyes in death? With bended knees I sat on the floor with my head on his bed and began to weep at the thought that in another few minutes, Ihsan would be no more. Taking hold of his cold hand, I pressed it within mine. He tried to press mine in return but it was so faint that I could hardly perceive it. Poor man! He was

all eyes and ears, as though every moment he was looking for the appearance of some one. "I wish", I said to myself, "I could somehow catch hold of Aysha and bring her to Ihsan's death-bed."

From outside the tent came the cackling of a hen. We could now also hear the foot-falls of people going about. Soldiers were loudly chatting. The hush that reigned in the early dawn was gone. Just then some one shouted: "The Greeks have retreated from the black hill and they are flying from every front." This was followed by a dreadful voice, saying, "Take the palanquin up and put it aside!" To see what it was I looked out and found another palanquin coming towards the tent. No sooner my eyes fell on it than a shriek escaped me. "Aysha! Aysha!! Is it Aysha? Has she got wounded too?"

Softly I lifted the scarf off Aysha's face. There indeed she was with her beautiful cropped locks. Her white shirt was drenched in blood. She was stretched on her right side. On her left eye-brow there was a frightful gash which had burst it in two. Her eyes were closed and the blood that oozed out of the wound froze on her eye-lashes. Her face was like that of a wax-doll. Her lips were motionless. I asked the ambulance soldier how she got wounded. Between sobs and tears and in a broken voice, he replied: "A piece of a bomb hit her and she expired instantaneously.

She had heard that the commander had been killed. Taking a palanquin, she hastened towards him. On the way she came across a wounded soldier. She had just sat down to dress his wounds, when a bomb exploded. A portion of it struck her and without a word, a shriek or a groan, there and then, she dropped dead." I bade the soldier bring Aysha's palanquin nearer and put it alongside that of Ihsan. And when he had done so, I addressed Ihsan, saying: "Brother Ihsan! Just open your eyes! Aysha is your side."

At first sight it seemed to me that the body of Ihsan now cold in death actually moved at these words. When, however, I looked more closely, Ihsan appeared to be cross with Aysha. He had his back on her and his face too which showed signs of grief, was removed from her. Aysha's face had the look of a child who feels ashamed for some of its fault. The blood-drops that oozed out of her wound and got frozen on her eyes and face were, so to speak, so many tears of blood with which she was now trying to implore and reconcile Ihsan. And it seemed to me as though in a moment she would spring to her feet and with both her arms clasp him in a warm embrace. Addressing them, in a painful tone, I observed, "Have you at last joined in wed-lock? Have you entered Smyrna?"

And it dawned on me that though not in body, in soul they had actually married. In the

morning, covering their bodies with red national flags and putting them in the same carriage, we buried them in the same grave in the village cemetery. Hashmat had with his own hands to cover their last common resting abode with dust. Jamal was also standing. He had swollen his eyes with tears. And as for me, I thought my duty was done. Had not I at last joined Ihsan and Aysha in wed-lock who were now reposing by each other's side under the same grey dust ?

Having said good-bye to Aysha and Ihsan to enjoy their honey-moon in the cause of the honour and liberation of motherland, we returned to the camp. My strength failed me. Hashmat Bey held me by the hand, as we went along. "Biyami !" he called out to me, "Biyami come ! We will give chase to the Greeks and will drive them on till we reach Smyrna, the sweet dream-land of Aysha." I was however utterly oblivious of my existence. After an hour when I came round I saw myself in a room in a small village between Hashmat and Jamal.

Just then a sweet thought flashed across my mind which made my heart violently beat. I must try, I said to myself, to enter Smyrna first of all, then go to the cemetery of Kokjamar and standing by her grave, convey the happy news to Aysha. She had promised Ihsan that she would marry him if he should enter Smyrna first. I was sure she had given him her word not because she was in love with him. She was in

love with none. Smyrna was her only love, the honour and liberation of her sweet homeland her only passion. She loved everyone who offered his life for the freedom of motherland. Just then, however, I recollected that Hashmat was also fired with that ambition and he will do his utmost. "But never mind," I said to myself, laughing, "I will beat him and none shall plant the red national flag on the port of Smyrna before me."

\* \* \* \*

*December 27, 1921.*

This morning, I had a quarrel with my doctor. He wanted to prevent me from writing and put me back into my bed. They have fixed the operation for tomorrow. But what use is it, even if it succeeds and I survive? I have no friend left alive. Dear old Jamal, like my two amputated thighs, is lying deep down into the earth. As regards Hashmat Bey, with my own hands I put him to rest in the cemetery of Kokja Minar. He has embarked on an eternal march on the path of Smyrna. Ah! Dear Aysha! Just behold these stumps of thighs left on my amputated body. As yet I possess two stout arms and I have taken a vow that so long as one single limb of my body is left I will go on fighting in the path of Smyrna. Rest assured of that! Wipe those blood-tears off your face! Never, never shall a land which has given birth to

daughters like yourself be a land of slaves !

Aysha ! The personification of national honour, liberator of thy motherland, do pray, wipe thy sweet face of those blood-tears? Till one child of the soil is left, the fight for Smyrna shall go on till national honour is vindicated and this sacred soil of home-land purged of the dirty feet of foreigners! Aysha ! Thou hast shown us the way to national freedom and national honour. In life have I followed thy glorious footsteps and so will in death I follow thee too. Aysha ! Just reserve a small strip of land at thy feet ! It is only another twelve hours or so. Tomorrow I may be coming too in thy footsteps. To lie at the feet of those who are weltering in their blood, so that their motherland may be free, so that their nation may live in honour and self-respect, so that the sanctity of our homes and hearths may no longer be violated by the foreigner -- ah, what could be a greater glory ! That, O Aysha of the blood-stained eyes and blood-stained face, *that* is my last wish on earth.

THE END

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