

# In the Service of the Sultan.

By H. L. ADAM.

Some exciting episodes from the experiences of an interesting personage—a Liverpool solicitor who, although of British nationality, is yet a high official in the service of the Sultan of Turkey, entrusted by him with many important missions in various parts of the world.



**S**HORT of stature, spare, agile of body and mind, a voluble and entertaining conversationalist both in English and Arabic, with an intimate knowledge of life in the East—such is His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam Bey Effendi, a trusted official and emissary of H.M. the Sultan of Turkey. By profession a solicitor of Liverpool, with an extensive practice, Mr. Quilliam yet contrives to devote considerable time and energy to racial differences and dissensions in the land of the Crescent. I recently had the pleasure of an interview with him in Liverpool, on behalf of THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE, when he kept me deeply interested and entertained with the recital of some of his many adventures whilst in the service of the Sultan.

Mr. Quilliam has a very high opinion of the Sultan, describing him as an extremely nice man to deal with. Although over sixty years of age, the Sultan is still very active both in body and mind. He has a habit of constantly looking askance at people out of the corner of his eyes, except in the case of a man he is called upon to trust, when he directs at him a keen and searching glance—the look of a man who for years has had to read the very minds of those about him. That his existence is not altogether a bed of roses, and that he is not by any means lacking in personal courage, the following little incident, related by Mr. Quilliam, will show. One day, while seated in the Throne Room, His Majesty perceived out of the corner of his eye that a man was levelling a revolver at him. Ere he could speak, however, the weapon was lowered. Three times this performance was repeated, but the weapon was not fired. The Sultan never even turned his head, but under his breath remarked to an

officer near at hand, "A man is levelling a revolver at me yonder; arrest him!" Immediately the man was seized and the pistol taken from him. Then the would-be assassin was brought before His Majesty. It transpired that he was an official who had been disappointed in regard to promotion.

"Why did you not shoot when you had the revolver pointed at me?" asked the Sultan.

"I tried three times," answered the prisoner. "But Allah wouldn't let me!"

The Sultan did not punish him, but gave him the promotion he had sought, and he became as strong an adherent of His Majesty as he had formerly been an antagonist. Such is diplomacy in the East.

I will now proceed to relate a couple of Mr. Quilliam's adventures much as he told them to me.

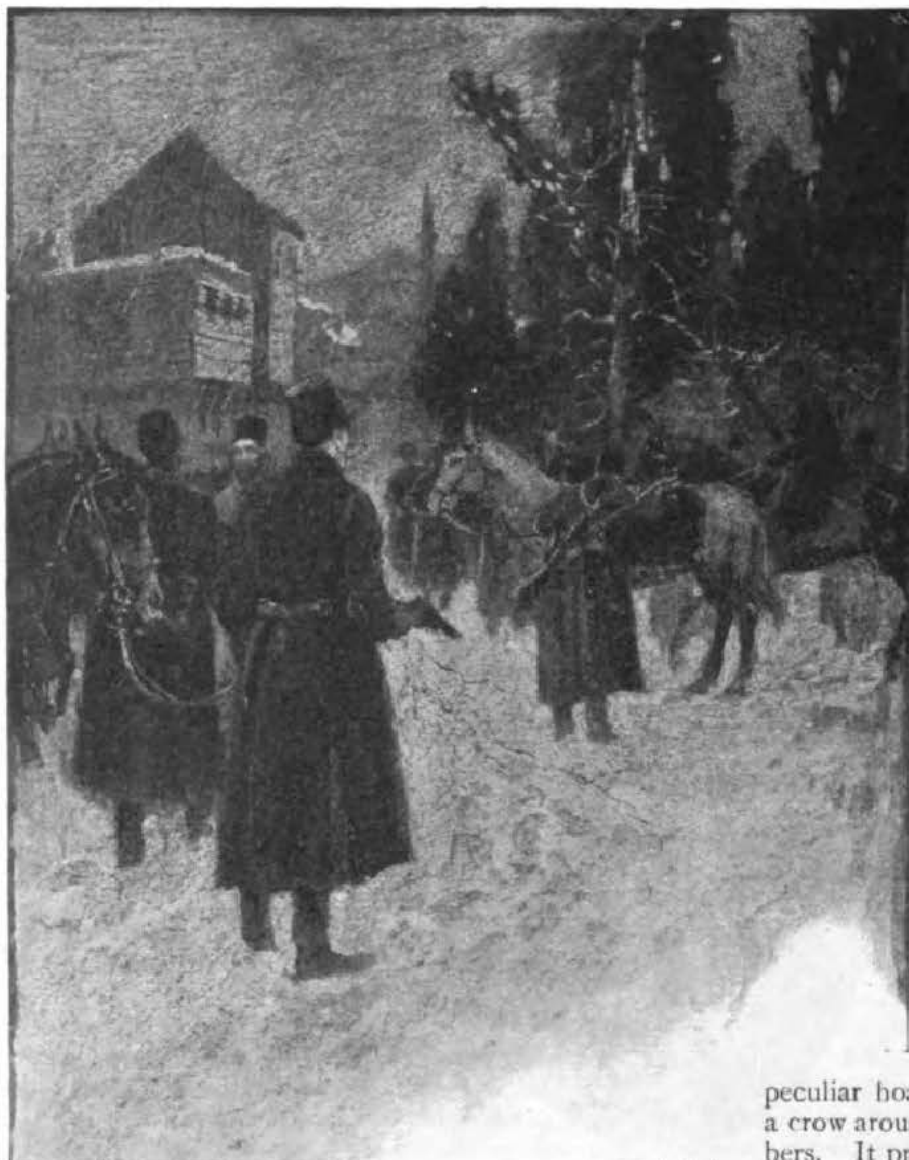


MR. QUILLIAM, AN EMINENT LIVERPOOL SOLICITOR, WHO IS ALSO A TRUSTED OFFICIAL AND EMISSARY OF H.M. THE SULTAN OF TURKEY.

*From a Photo.*

The date was the 20th of February, 1905. According to Turkish time the hour was seven o'clock in the morning—equivalent to one hour after midnight. The place was the little town of Resina, in Roumelia. The ground was snow-laden, but the snow in the

streets had been by the constant passing and re-passing of bullock wagons churned into mud and slush, which lay a foot deep. The last expiring vibrations of the chimes had scarcely died out when I, in company with a detachment of thirty mounted Turkish soldiers, took to the unpleasant road, leaving Resina behind. The soldiers were in command of Captain Zia Bey and two non-commissioned officers, and we were also accompanied by four gendarmes and a doctor. When we moved out of the Resina quarters nobody but Captain Zia Bey and myself knew what was to be our destination or our mission. As a matter of fact, we had a very serious business in hand, nothing less than the projected capture of



"THE CAPTAIN CALLED A HALT,  
AND THE SOLDIERS DISMOUNTED  
QUIETLY."

a band of brigands, including a notorious chief, who had been wanted for years, and concerning whose present whereabouts we had received intelligence. For some years, I should explain here, I have been engaged periodically in hunting down these desperadoes and the insurgent Bulgar bands who cause so much trouble.

The little company ploughed its way in single file through the semi-liquid deposit, to the accompaniment of the melancholy splash, splash, of the horses' hoofs. No other sound could be heard save an occasional growl from the soldiers. When we got out in the open country the roads improved, and we passed the little village of Jankover at a trot, three abreast. At the bridge spanning the River Cesta the commander called a halt, and, having given

some brief instructions to the non-commissioned officers, divided his troop into two companies, directing the smaller one, which was placed under the leadership of one of the corporals, to proceed along the track which followed the bed of the river; while the other, the larger one, under the direction of the commander, with whom I remained, followed the well-beaten mule track, which trended due north. Our destination was the Bulgar village of Kriveni.

It was about an hour before sunrise that we arrived at the entrance of the village. The captain called a halt, and the soldiers dismounted quietly and threw rugs over the backs of their horses. The night was intensely cold and snow lay thick all round. For the space of about ten minutes we remained still, amidst a silence profound as that of the grave. Then suddenly there arose a

peculiar hoarse sound, like the cawing of a crow aroused from his nocturnal slumbers. It proceeded from the bed of the river, and was responded to by another "caw-caw" from a human crow. It was, in fact, a signal from one company to the other. Soon after we joined hands again. Then proceeded a swift marshalling of forces. Every entrance to the village was guarded, soldiers being also stationed upon all the surrounding hills, so that nobody could possibly leave the place without being observed. Next we formed a little storming party, consisting of the captain, the corporals, four gendarmes, four soldiers, and myself, and rode into the village, taking up a position in a square in the very centre of it. A shrill blast was blown upon the bugle, and the villagers awoke to find the place in the possession of the soldiers.

Immediately a number of men came trooping from their houses, ready dressed, for the Bulgars regard it as a superfluous act to remove their clothes when retiring for the night. They seemed much alarmed, and about a score of

them, in groups of twos and threes, attempted to leave the village, but were sternly bidden by the guards to remain where they were, an admonition which in each instance was emphasized with the muzzle of a loaded rifle. Soon the square was crowded with men, while women and children peered anxiously from doors and windows in the surrounding houses. Captain Bey then proceeded to call for the chief of the village—a kind of mayor, called the *moukhtar*—and other officials to be brought before him. These were summoned and promptly attended, the *moukhtar* making a profound obeisance to the captain when the latter questioned him as to his identity.

"I have received information, sir," said Captain Bey, "that you are harbouring in this village the notorious brigand chief, Gorrshay, and some members of his band, and that both arms and ammunition are secreted here. Is that correct?"

"Oh, no, sir!" emphatically declared the official. "The man you seek is certainly not here." He then turned to the other officials and asked them if what he had said was correct, and they replied with a chorus of "Yes, yes, yes!" Then, in order further to impress their veracity upon the captain, the schoolmaster stepped forward and exclaimed:—

"The *moukhtar* speaks the truth, Captain Bey. I swear it!"

This seemed to partially convince the officer, who paused reflectively for a few moments. Then he said, slowly: "I suppose I must be mistaken, and what you have said is true. But before I leave the village I shall require you to furnish me with a written declaration that neither Gorrshay nor his associates are within the precincts of this village, nor that there are either weapons or ammunition secreted anywhere here or hereabouts. Are you prepared to sign such a document?"

To this there was a chorus of "We are!" the zealous schoolmaster further volunteering to write the declaration himself. Writing materials were at once brought, and the schoolmaster completed his task and read out what he had written. The captain, having perused the document, handed it to one of the corporals,

instructing him to read it aloud both in Turkish and Bulgar, so that all present might testify if it was true or not. When this was done, and the query put, the villagers all replied in chorus, "It is true! It is true!"

So far, everything seemed straightforward enough; but, after a few moments' hesitation, Captain Zia Bey declared that he was not satisfied with this written declaration, and that he intended to institute a thorough search of all the houses for arms, ammunition, or insurgents. "If your statement that there is no one concealed here be true," he concluded, "so much the better for you; if, on the other hand, it is false, then you must take the consequences."

He then ordered the gendarmes to proceed with a house-to-house search. In pairs they searched seventy-nine houses, and found nothing incriminating. The eightieth house was entered by two Mussulmans, named respectively Corporal Ismail and Private Zamil, one of them carrying a lighted lamp in his hand. Having searched one room without discovering anything, they turned their attention to a door which gave access to a cellar. Immediately the door was opened three shots rang out, the darkness of the cellar was pierced with three blinding flashes, and the two gendarmes fell dead upon the ground!

So much for the written declaration. Captain Bey acted with promptitude, had the house surrounded

in such a manner that nobody could escape from it, and then called for the proprietor. After some hesitation a man was pushed forward by the crowd, and it was ascertained that his name was Nordau. The captain instructed him to call upon those inside, in Bulgar, to surrender, or the soldiers would fire upon them. This Nordau at first was disinclined to do, but at length called out in a very faint voice. He was told to speak louder, and he did so, but no response came from the inside. Nordau was then told to shout, and he shouted, but still no reply came. The captain then instructed one of the corporals to call out, both in Turkish and Bulgar, which he did, and in response there came the sound of men singing,



MR. QUILLIAM IN HIS TURKISH DRESS—HIS OFFICIAL TITLE IS "HIS EXCELLENCY SHEIKH ABDULLAH QUILLIAM BEY EFFENDI."

From a Photo. by W. H. Fugh, Liverpool.





"THREE BULGARIANS DASHED OUT OF THE HOUSE, FIRING THEIR PISTOLS."

loudly and defiantly, a Bulgar revolutionary song. The corporal waited until the song was finished, when he repeated his summons, and this time a voice replied, "Are you a Turk or a Bulgar?"

"Thanks be to God," shouted the corporal, "I am a Turk."

The reply came immediately after in the form of a bomb, which was hurled through the window and exploded outside, but fortunately without doing any injury. This was quickly followed by two more bombs, which set fire to the thatch of the house. Then came further bombs, and, under cover of their explosion and the smoke from the burning roof, three Bulgarians, armed with revolvers, having rifles slung across their shoulders, dashed out of the house, firing their pistols at the soldiers. The latter promptly fired back and two of the insurgents fell mortally wounded. The third, although apparently slightly injured in the leg, took refuge in the adjoining house, closing the door behind him, and barring it with the beam which all these houses have, fitting into slots on either side of the doorway. From this position he continued to fire upon us with both revolver and rifle.

In the meantime some of the soldiers had forced an entry into the burning building and dragged out the bodies of their dead comrades. The insurgent who had taken refuge in the adjoining house had already been recognised as

the notorious Captain Gorrshay, who for six years had been the head of the revolutionary movement among the Bulgars in the north-western portion of the vilayet of Monastir. He was badly "wanted," and it was not likely that he could escape now.

He continued to keep up a brisk fire from the window of the house, however, with a view to drawing the soldiers out, but the latter very wisely kept under cover, contenting themselves by returning his fire from positions of safety, and aiming in the direction from whence his shots came.

Apparently this sort of thing was too slow

for Gorrshay, and he must have realized that he was safely trapped, for he proceeded to commit a most foolhardy act in order to release himself. He set fire to the house in which he was, thinking probably to get away under cover of the smoke. As a matter of fact, however, it made his position worse than ever. The flames shot up fiercely, and the form of the notorious brigand was clearly silhouetted against the lurid glow. Instantly half-a-dozen rifles were levelled at the figure, a volley rang out, and the wretched man dropped back out of our view. The fire crackled and sputtered, and flames roared out of the windows, licking above the eaves. Desperately the soldiers strove to effect an entry, but their efforts proved futile; the heat was too intense to be withstood. Very soon the roof fell in with a crash, and the flames shot upwards in a column of fire. So perished Captain Gorrshay, so long the terror of the district.

Upon searching the bodies of the other two brigands we found in the waistband of one of them another bomb and two revolvers. Further search of the village revealed three rifles—one a Mauser, which was recognised as the weapon taken from a Turkish soldier who had been assassinated a year before, while on sentry duty, on the railway. In the end fifteen villagers were arrested, including the mendacious *moukhtar* and the schoolmaster, and all were duly punished.



"HALF-A-DOZEN RIFLES WERE LEVELLED AT THE FIGURE AND A VOLLEY RANG OUT."

Upon another occasion I had an experience which, although embarrassing, was at the same time not without a humorous side. One Mohammed Shitta Bey had built a mosque at Lagos, West Africa, at his own expense, the building costing between five and six thousand pounds. In recognition of this the Sultan conferred a decoration upon him, and I was entrusted with the duty of conveying it to him, together with the Sultan's thanks and approval. I arranged to be present at the opening of the mosque, which was a very elaborate ceremony, and was very largely attended, people travelling long distances to be present. Everything went smoothly enough until the morning of the eventful day, when, while sitting in a room of Shitta Bey's house, which was situated near the mosque, Shitta Bey himself entered in great perturbation. For some time he walked up and down, apparently much exercised in his mind, ejaculating continually, "Here's a pretty

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business! This will ruin everything!" At last I inquired what was wrong, and he then informed me that a native chief had arrived from the interior, accompanied by an extensive retinue, and that the main object of his visit was to offer *me* two of his daughters in marriage!

At first this information somewhat amused me, and I confess that I laughed outright, much to the annoyance of the perturbed Shitta Bey, who took the matter very seriously indeed. He explained to me that it was no laughing matter, that such a potentate was all-powerful in his own dominions, and was not used to being

thwarted in his wishes, and that a refusal on my part to wed his daughters would be taken by him as a personal affront and might lead to all sorts of trouble! This placed the matter in an altogether different light. I was, and am, a married man with a family, and the contemplation of such an alliance alarmed me considerably.

My merriment subsided suddenly, and we discussed the matter with much gravity, with a view to finding some way out of the dilemma. It appeared that the dusky potentate had been travelling for three weeks, by means of canoes over the lagoons, and that this offer of his daughters to the Sultan's emissary was regarded by him as a fitting honour in commemoration of the auspicious occasion. The task that lay before us, of course, was to avoid offending the dusky monarch, while at the same time refusing his magnanimous offering. Finally I decided to meet him, and endeavour to argue the matter with him. The meeting took place in the



"THE MEETING TOOK PLACE IN THE COMPOUND ATTACHED TO SHITTA BEY'S HOUSE."

compound attached to Shitta Bey's house. The stalwart savage, surrounded by a crowd of followers, proceeded to make a most elaborate speech, which was interpreted to me, and in which he dwelt at great length upon the personal charms and the many virtues of his two daughters, named respectively Fatima and Ayesha, whom he wished to bestow upon me. He was most impressive and very eloquent, but I am afraid I did not fully appreciate his earnestness and manifest good intentions. All the time I was revolving in my mind what to say in reply; how to excuse myself from his embarrassing offer without hurting his feelings and causing a bother. At length he concluded, and in response I launched forth into an elaborate harangue, in the course of which I thanked him with fulsome gratitude, expressed my sense of my unworthiness to accept such an honour, and ventured to point out to him that, much as I should desire to become possessed of two such treasures as Fatima and Ayesha, yet, inasmuch as we were of such diverse nationalities, such an alliance most unfortunately appeared to me to be impracticable. With this objection my speech concluded, and I hoped that I had made it clear and reasonable that I could not accept his offer. But I was not to be let off so

lightly. His Majesty would not accept this as an adequate excuse, and he proceeded to reply at considerable length, pointing out that difference of nationality need be no bar, inasmuch as according to the teachings of the Koran all true believers were brethren! This placed me upon very dangerous ground, and for the moment I was puzzled what to say in reply. Then it occurred to me to plead the already replete condition of my quiver, and I proceeded, to the running accompaniment of further deep regrets, to explain that "my household" (I avoided using the word "wife," as

it was clear that a multiplicity of helpmeets was quite a natural thing according to His Majesty's ideas) was already at its full com-

plement, and that according to the laws of my country I might not add to its number. This appeared to convince him, he no doubt taking the word "household"—as I had intended him to—to indicate wives, and I was very gratified when he accepted this version of my matrimonial affairs in good faith and humour, and refrained from further expatiating on the irresistible personal attractions of Fatima and Ayesha. I have always looked upon that affair, however, as one of my narrowest escapes.



THE MOSQUE WHOSE INAUGURATION MR. QUILLIAM ATTENDED ON BEHALF OF THE SULTAN—IT WAS IN CONNECTION WITH THIS EVENT THAT HE MET WITH THE EMBARRASSING PREDICAMENT DESCRIBED IN THIS STORY. [Photo.]