

legitimate king, grouped themselves round a coarse peasant named Coltzida, the most impudent and talkative man of the band, lacking both talent and courage, but in similar circumstances fortune generally favours such. Coltzida fairly hurled abuse upon his prostrate master, and finished up by saying: "The milord did not spare you; you also must die, and it is well. My friends, we are the masters, we will henceforth obey no one; we will pillage the kingdom! take Athens, and encamp in the palace gardens! I know where to lead you! Let us commence by throwing this old rascal along with his beloved milord into the ravine."

Coltzida's eloquence very nearly cost us our lives. Ten or twelve of the king's faithful-old followers, who might have come to his assistance, were writhing in pain. But a popular orator never rises to power without causing jealousy. So soon as it appeared that Coltzida would become chief of the band, Tambouris and some other ambitious spirits wheeled round and joined our party, preferring one who knew how to lead to this presumptuous talker. Besides they had a presentiment that, as the king had not much longer to live, he would select his successor from among those who remained faithful to him. Ten or twelve voices were raised in our favor. I clung to the king, and he, too, had placed his arm round my neck. Tambouris and his friends consulted together, and a plan of defence was improvised. The two parties overwhelmed one another with abuse; our champions kept the stairway and protected us with their bodies, and pressed the enemy into the king's chamber. Suddenly a pistol shot resounded, and rocks were heard falling with a frightful noise.

Coltzida, with all his companions, rushed to the arsenal. Tambouris without loss of time seized Hadgi-Stavros, and in two strides was down the staircase, had placed him in a safe spot, and returned for me, carried me down and laid me by his side.

Our friends entrenched themselves in the room, barricaded the staircase, and organized the defence ere Coltzida returned.

On counting our numbers we discovered that our army was composed of the king, his two servants, Tambouris, eight brigands, Dimitri and myself, fourteen men in all, of whom three were disabled. Our enemies had the advantage of numbers and position, but we had more rifles and cartridges. We did not know precisely how many they numbered; we had to expect at least twenty-five or thirty assailants, but we were protected to the right and left by inaccessible rocks.

If Coltzida and his companions had had the remotest notion of war, we would have been done for, but the fool, with his two men to our one, economized his ammunition. Our men, though no more skilful, were better commanded, so they managed to shoot down five or six before nightfall. As for me, stretched in a corner and sheltered from the bullets, I endeavoured to undo my fatal work and recall to life the King of the Mountains, who was suffering cruelly, and complaining of burning thirst. He said to me:

"Cure me, my dear boy; you are a doctor and ought to be able to cure me. I do not reproach you for your action; you had the right to act as you did, you would have done right in killing me, for had it not been for your friend Harris I would not have failed to kill you. Is there nothing to quench this intolerable thirst? I do not cling to life; I have lived long enough, but if I die they will kill you, and my poor Photini's throat will be cut. What were you saying just now? Photini loves him! Unhappy girl! After all it is well she loves this man, he will possibly take pity on her. If he only knew how rich she is, but the poor innocent is herself ignorant of the extent of her fortune. I should have told her that her dowry would be four millions. And now we are the prisoners of Coltzida! Cure me, and by all the saints in Paradise I will crush him!"