

"*Metera! Metera!* (mother, mother). Then the sound of a horse galloping.

She flew for Stephanos.

"He has taken my children! He has taken my children!" she cried.

Stephanos hardly recognized his wife in the terrified woman who clung round him with white face and staring eyes.

"He! who?" asked Stephanos bewildered.

"He, Niko! Oh! run, fly, he will take them to the mountains. Oh! Stephanos, *kardia mou* he has taken my children, I heard Demetri's cry *Metera*, and I heard the horse's hoofs."

Stephanos ran out into the road. More than a mile away there was a dust cloud moving in the direction of the mountains.

"God's will be done," he said devoutly. "Take courage, wife, he will not hurt them, we shall have to pay, that's all. Who knows, twenty pounds, thirty! He will not ask us more than we have. I have thirty in the bank, you have your coins. We shall hear soon from him. Don't lose heart, wife," and poor Stephanos strove hard to comfort the broken hearted woman who wailed for her children and would not be comforted.

In a quarter of an hour the news was all over the village. Costi the *Kunigos* who knew the mountains and the brigands best would not hear of the idea of pursuit. The children were in no danger at all. In two or three days at most they would hear from Niko