

danced their airy rounds so joyously, and the bees hummed so sweet and dreamy a lullaby about their drooping heads. A fairer and very different garden was blooming upon the balcony above, where, carefully shielded alike from the north wind and heat of summer, Cyrill had placed his pet flowers in pots or long wooden boxes, the handiwork of the monks. During the hot months the projecting eaves afforded a sufficient protection against the scorching noonday sun, and the Abbot never neglected watering with his own hand, both morning and evening, his foster-children as he was wont to call them. Here they remained throughout the autumn and even until the early snows began to whiten the mountain tops, breathing the mild and genial air; but when winter came in good earnest and the keen frost threatened their tender blooms, they were removed from the breezy balcony into one of the rooms Cyrill had built in this wing of the monastery, and where he was accustomed to keep his few treasures, the works of some of the great Fathers of the church, rare old folios bound in parchment and clasped with locks of antiquated fashion. Roses, broad-leaved ivy, red and white geraniums, hyacinths, lilies and fragrant bulbs stood on artistically carved and tastefully arranged consol tables and pedestals, or hung suspended from the ceiling in pots and boxes, all daintily filled with fresh moss, while around the walls and in the corners tender shrubs and plants of taller growth formed leafy arbours and graceful alcoves. Here amid his flowers, the only luxury his quiet and simple monastic life allowed him, Cyrill was wont to retire when wearied with the duties of the day, or whenever he was desirous of collecting his thoughts, and here his monks, as they went their rounds, could see the Abbot busied, until far into the night, with his favourite flowers, or spellbound by the persuasive eloquence of John of the Golden Mouth. The monks looked with veneration upon their Abbot, so unlike themselves in every respect, so accomplished and yet so unassuming, so serious and yet so kindly, they loved him as a father and revered him as a saint, who held closer commune with Heaven than they ventured to aspire to. The Turks honoured in him the prudent peacemaker, always reconciling differences and healing feuds, and whose thoughtful and wise conduct had smoothed away many difficulties and spared their government much serious trouble. The peasants in the neighbouring villages knew that they never knocked at Cyrill's door in vain, and that he was always ready to assist them to the utmost of his ability. Many and many a time his wise and benevolent mediation had brought back peace and union to a divided family; and times without number, by the judicious and seasonable advance of a small loan, he had saved from ruin some unfortunate Bulgarian who had got behind-hand with the taxes and imposts. In the affair of Eurikleia and the Secretary he had a task of no small difficulty before him, one that would require all his tact and skill, and it was not with a light heart that he entered upon its performance. As he witnessed the painful scene enacted at the gate of the monastery that morning, he had perceived at a glance the dangers which threatened all concerned, not merely the Greek maiden but Ilia and the foreign Secretary as well. He was well acquainted with the Turkish soldiery, and knew all that the order of a pasha meant for a gendarme, especially in the present circumstances, when a Bulgarian peasant and a poor, helpless Greek girl were the objects concerned. For the present, indeed, he had succeeded in restraining the violence of the Turk and reducing him to reluctant and sulky obedience, but he knew well that here, not less than elsewhere, the old proverb would hold good: "Forbearance is no acquittance." On the other hand, even suppose he succeeded in saving the pretty Greek from the hands of the Turks, how should he protect her from the danger which threatened her from the side of Werner and from her own evident liking for the young stranger? How should he save her from a step that could only involve her in ruin? How was he to bring her back again to Ilia Michalovitch! He felt a truly fatherly interest in this fair young Greek; as she lay at his feet that morning she had commended herself to his favour and protection in words so fervent and yet so touching in their simplicity; she had raised her eyes to his with a look so beaming and so joyous as he bent over her and bade her welcome as his fellow-believer and his countrywoman, that he had promised to himself, cost what it might, to save the poor thing from the abyss on whose edge her feet trembled, and that much, that everything, depended upon the young stranger, his penetrating and experienced eye had not failed to perceive.

Cyrill was still considering how he should broach the subject to Werner, when the latter, conducted by a young monk, entered his apartment. Cyrill received him amid his flowers, and desired Brother Gregory to produce pipes and tobacco, as well as the unavoidable *doldshas*,* and its accompanying glass of water, the essentials of every Bulgarian *tête-à-tête*.

"Pardon me that I ask you to assist at a private interview when we have hardly seen one another. I feel, however, that I need a friend, a confederate, to aid me in the work I am undertaking, and I believe that I have both in you. Will you trust me?"

"Venerable father," answered Werner, who had indeed suspected that the Abbot desired to speak with regard to Eurikleia, but who did not quite comprehend what Cyrill could want from him by these words, "why should you not possess my confidence? But in what way can I?"

"I have seen," interrupted the old man quickly, "that the young Greek counts upon your protection, and implores your aid against the gendarme who persecutes her. I have heard that you promised her your help, and in good truth, my young friend, you are disposed to extend a brotherly and helping hand to a maiden as good and pure as she is noble.

Still, bethink you, Demir Keran is prepared to venture everything, to run every risk. Tell me, then, how you propose acting so as to save both her and Ilia her bridegroom?"

Werner had not by any means calculated upon the conversation taking such a turn. The words of the Abbot sounded to his startled conscience as a reproof, and blushing deeply he replied that he had not yet considered in what way he might be of assistance to the maiden.

"To the maiden, and to her bridegroom," answered the old man in the same measured, confident tone, "for, should any misfortune befall the young Greek it would be all over with Ilia." And then he related to the young stranger how, in the Bulgarian villages, marriages were made in simple, patriarchal fashion, how Eurikleia and Ilia had known and loved one another since childhood, how they had grown up together, how since their earliest youth all their plans for the future had been in common, and how in this land ruled by aliens alike in faith and race, they had accustomed themselves to look forward to confronting the sorrows and trials, as well as the joys, of life in one another's company. And, as the Secretary seemed moved and interested by this picture of idyllic happiness, the worthy Cyrill proceeded with well-considered additions to fill in and complete the picture in its smallest and most affecting details.

"I readily believe you, venerable father," replied Werner, when the Abbot at last paused in his description; "but, still, it seemed to me, this morning, as if Eurikleia's feelings for Ilia were not so deeply rooted, for she reproached him often and passionately, too, while on the way here, with his cowardice, and when he had not courage to defend her she turned from him and—"

"And turned to you, you would say?" said Cyrill smiling. "Yes, indeed, I know that. And that is just the way with girls. But he would be greatly mistaken who should conclude, from this sudden outburst of angry scorn, that love had fled, and woe to him, says the old Western proverb, 'who will place his finger between the bark and the tree.' On the day in which Ilia, along with us, dares to confront the Turk, on that day will Eurikleia behold in him her true and only friend and legitimate protector."

"Well," answered Werner with an amused smile, "all I can say is, that the day on which the unhappy Bulgarian confronts the Turk does not seem to be very near at hand."

"Do not deceive yourself, my son," rejoined the old man. "Ilia is a Bulgarian, and you do not yet know this people. They endure injustice and oppression longer than Europeans, but suddenly the long-smothered fire bursts forth, and forget not what you have often heard, that none are more terrible, more bloody in their vengeance than cowards when they have once resolved to break their bonds. Ilia Michalovitch is one of the best of his countrymen, he bends his neck to the yoke, but woe when he once breaks that yoke from his neck. When the day of deliverance dawns the weak are ready to go to the greatest extremes. But to do this they require friends to give them comfort, advice and aid. And these friends my son, we will be to poor Ilia."

So saying Cyrill reached forth his hand to Werner, as if to ratify a solemn treaty. Werner hesitated for a moment to grasp it, he felt himself shaken by the Abbot's words. Since the morning he had been living in a romantic dream of love and utterly regardless of his own prospects and reckless of consequences he had sketched out a romantic and daring plan of abduction and of an entrancing, soul-ravishing existence with this Greek, so gentle and yet so brave, so fascinating and yet so tender. And now it was as if through the gentle and persuasive words of this kind-hearted Abbot, another feeling had got the mastery over him, a feeling of reproach and of repentance, a feeling of shame at his own weakness. He thought of the promise that he had given to the unhappy Bulgarian to defend him and his bride, and he blushed involuntarily when he reflected how near he had been breaking his promise and becoming a traitor to him.

"Count upon me!" he exclaimed, while he laid his hand in that of the Abbot. "What do you wish me to do? I will stand by you."

"I have not been deceived in thee, my son," said Cyrill in a voice trembling and indistinct from his emotion; "thy heart is good and noble, keep it so and good fortune will attend thee all thy life."

And once more he pressed the young man's hand.

"Let me think over the matter and consider in what way we are to act," he added. "So long as Eurikleia remains in the monastery, so long will no ill befall her. Take the gendarme back with you over the Danube, and while he accompanies you I will find time to come to an understanding with the Pasha."

The last beams of the sun sinking slowly behind the lofty mountains lit up the flowers on the verandah with their soft golden light.

"You have not yet admired my garden, my son," said Cyrill, and rising he led the youth from flower to flower with kindly, winning courtesy. In one of the corners a solitary rose was blooming, but of how rare beauty and how delicious fragrance. A moss rose, half bud, half flower, turned its beautiful white corolla striped and rayed with pink towards the sunlight while exhaling a most exquisite perfume. A smile passed over the old Abbot's face; two bees were humming busily about the flower, and seemed to be striving which of them would be the first to sip the fresh, sweet honey of the young rose; a big, dark bumble-bee, in a coat of variegated velvet, was buzzing noisily round about the flower, as though it aspired, as well as its more slender and more graceful cousins to rifle the sweets of the lovely rose. The sight seemed to have awakened the same thoughts in the minds of Cyrill and the Secretary.

"We will soon make an end of the bumble-bee," said the latter, extending his hand to the Abbot.

* *Doldshas*.—The readers of Mr. E. D. Gerard's interesting novel, "The Waters of Hercules," at present running its course in *Moya*, will hardly recognize the Roumanian *dulcétia* (pronounced *Dolchétia*) in its barbarized form. It is a kind of sweetmeat or confection as popular in Roumania and the neighbouring countries as ice-cream is elsewhere. Its name is derived from Latin *dulcis*.—Tr.