

they wanted to avenge the girls from Mistra, a thousand other victims, themselves, and me. Still I did not require to restrain their arms. There was such a remnant of grandeur in the ruined hero that their anger gave way to astonishment. I told them in a few words how the king had defended me against his entire band, the very day, too, on which I had poisoned him. I explained to them the meaning of the fight they had interrupted, and of the strange war in which they had killed our defenders.

"So much the worse for them; we, like Justice, wore a bandage over our eyes."

Meanwhile the enemy, recovering from their stupor, recommenced the attack. Coltzida did not know what to make of those three men who had struck friend and foe alike, but conjecturing that either they or the poison had delivered him from the King of the Mountains, he ordered his men to destroy our fortifications. The noise of falling materials warned my friends to reload their arms. Hadgi-Stavros waited till this was done, and then asked John Harris:

"Where is Photini?"

"On board my boat."

"You did her no injury?"

"Did I take lessons from you in torturing children?"

"You are right; I am a miserable old man; forgive me, and promise me to spare her."

"What would you have me do? Now I have found Hermann, she shall be restored to you whenever you desire it."

"Without ransom?"

"Old brute."

"You will see," said the king, "whether I am an old brute."

Passing his left arm round Dimitri's neck, he stretched his trembling hand towards the hilt of his sword, with difficulty drew the blade from the scabbard, and marched towards the stairway where Coltzida's insurgents were congregated. They moved back on beholding him—fifteen or twenty

armed men, and yet not one of them dared defend, excuse himself, or take to flight. They all trembled before the awful face of their resuscitated king. Hadgi-Stavros marched straight towards Coltzida, who, more pale and scared than the rest, endeavoured to conceal himself, and with one blow severed his head from his body. Then, being seized with a fit of trembling, he let his sword fall by the side of the corpse, and did not condescend to pick it up.

"Let us go," said he. "I will carry my empty scabbard along with me; neither the blade nor I are of any value now. I have finished."

His old comrades approached to plead for pardon; a few besought him not to forsake them, they could never get on without him. He did not honour them even with a reply. He begged us to take him to Castia, where we could procure horses, and thence to Salamis to fetch his daughter.

The brigands let us start without opposition. On seeing that walking was painful to me, my companions supported me. Harris asked me if I was wounded, and catching an imploring look from the king, I told my friends that having attempted a perilous escape, my feet were wounded. We slowly descended the mountain paths; by degrees the weather cleared up, and the first ray of sunshine appeared very beautiful to me, but Hadgi-Stavros paid little heed to things external. It is a serious matter to break off from the associations of fifty years.

My friends' horses, along with the guide, awaited them by the fountain at Castia. Inquiring how they happened to have four horses, they informed me that M. Mérinay formed one of the party, but had alighted to examine a curious stone and had not reappeared.

Giacomo Fendi lifted me on my saddle, the king, with Dimitri's assistance, got into his, Harris and his nephew mounted their horses, while the Maltese, Dimitri, and the guide proceeded on foot.