

watching her keenly; "if you do not come with me now, you will never see me again."

With a cry she flung herself into his arms. "Achmeti mou, you must be my home, my country, my all!"

Without a word he lifted her on the horse, took his seat behind her, and in another moment they were flying through the olive grove as if the beautiful Arab had wings to his feet.

Xanthi was missed as soon as her father and brother awoke, for it was a circumstance so unprecedented that a Greek peasant girl should be absent from her home, that it excited alarm and suspicion at once. Costandi went without delay into the village to try and obtain some tidings of her, and in the course of an hour he came back to his father, with his face so transformed by furious passion that the old man rose appalled from his seat, and could only gasp out "My daughter!"

"Your daughter and my sister no more, father," said Costandi, grinding his teeth, "the accursed woman has given herself to Achmet, the Turk—yes, the Turk!—and is gone with him to his home!"

The old man gave a cry almost like that of a wild beast when his prey is torn from him.

"It cannot be—it cannot be," he groaned out; "that son of a dog may have carried her off, but she has not consented."

"She has," said his son. He came up to Apostoli, and spoke in a voice of deep passion. "Listen, father; the papas met them in the olive grove—she was on the horse in front of the Turk—the priest thought she was being stolen away, and he caught the bridle, and besought that bound to give her up to him; then Xanthi—Xanthi, father!—turned and put her arms round the Turk, and said she would never leave him—she would go with him wherever he went: she was his own, his wife!"

Apostoli stopped his ears. "Enough," he said. He sat down on the divan, his face changing to a livid hue and a dark expression of concentrated rage and hate. At last he slowly stretched out his right hand and said: "Let her be anathema."

"It is not enough only to curse her, father," said Costandi, very slowly. The old man looked up and met his son's eyes. He understood the meaning they expressed, and his glistened face became convulsed in the agony of the terrible conflict of feeling that was rending his heart. Costandi continued to meet his almost imploring gaze unflinchingly; at last the old man, in a faint, broken voice, whispered: "My son, must it be?"

"Father, are you a Greek, and do you ask me?" With a groan Apostoli drew his capote over his head, laid his face on his arms, and remained motionless. Costandi took his gun from the corner of the room and went out.

It was night once more—sweet, beautiful, and calm, as that which had witnessed Xanthi's final apostasy to her country and her faith; and the solemn loveliness of the hour was even more exquisite in the pine-grove of Souli, where she now enjoyed it, than in the familiar scene where she had beheld it last. This grove lies along one side of the plain of Marathon, in the shade of the mountains that encircle it, and forms the only break in that wide expanse whose edge is washed by the rippling waves, with the exception of the tumulus in the centre, where the bones of the long-remembered heroes yet rest in peace.

The sea was lying now under the soft starlight like a sheet of molten silver, serene as the cloudless sky that looked down on the calm scene of ancient strife; and the hush and stillness in the air were so complete that one might well have fancied one could have heard, according to the old tradition, the phantom horses of the Persians neighing in their agony, and the shout of the Greeks as they rushed to their death. Within the pine-grove the shadows lay soft and deep, but there was light enough for little Xanthi to busy herself in preparing a repast for her lover with the provisions which he had carried off from a luckless Greek peasant, whom he had met on the mountain path going home with a well-laden donkey. Achmet had brought Xanthi

to this spot to rest till the heat of the day was over, and they intended to resume their journey in an hour or two. Xanthi was moving about with a light step and a sunny smile, arranging the grapes and bread and the skin of wine at the foot of a tree, where her lord could recline at ease. She had given herself up for the time to the intoxicating sweetness of the love she no longer cared to conceal; they were together, free and alone, and she had flung out from her heart all thought of Greece in its oppression, and her father in his anger and misery. Achmet was with her, and what was all the world beside to her? This, she felt, was the crowning hour of her life, the best, the sweetest; and true it is, that the brightest and loveliest hour of day is often that over which the sun cast his lusty rainbow-tinted rays before he leaves the world to gloom and night.

Presently Xanthi discovered that the wooden water-bottle, which Achmet carried slung from his saddle, was empty, and that it must be replenished as much for the sake of the horse as for their own. The Turk at once said that he knew there was a little mountain stream not very far up the hill-side, where he would go to fill it; and smiling at Xanthi's entreaties that he would come back as quickly as he could, he swung the bottle over his shoulder, and disappeared among the trees. Still she busied herself in preparations for his comfort, and at last, having made every arrangement she could think of that was likely to please him, she went and stood quietly leaning against a tree, with her beautiful bright face turned in the direction from which she expected to see her lover return. After a little time her ear detected a foot-step coming towards her; she leaned eagerly forward, calling out in a joyous tone—"Achmeti, my thrice beloved, are you come?"—and a voice, a voice she knew too well, answered, hoarse with rage—"Accursed woman! it is I who am come!"

The arms stretched out to embrace her lover, fell at her side; her large eyes, dilated with unutterable terror, became fixed and glassy; her lips refused to form even a cry for help; frozen with the awful presage of her fate she stood like a statue, waiting the approach of the avenger. Soon, from among the trees, her brother appeared, and stopped a few paces from her, where the full starlight fell upon his cruel, inexorable face. Slowly he raised his gun—then a wild shriek burst from the unhappy girl; she fell on her knees, and clasped her hands.

"Amaun! amaun!" she cried, in a voice of stifled agony. This word, which means simply mercy, is a Turkish expression; but it is currently used in Greece, and at another time it would not have been remembered from what language it was taken; now, if anything could have added to Costandi's implacable wrath, this would have done it.

"You do well to ask mercy in Turkish: it is a fitting word to be the last on the lips of a false-hearted Greek, and now, in your own blood, will I wash out the stain of your infamy!" He fired, as he spoke, with a sure and steady aim. Xanthi, struck to the heart, fell over on her side, and on her beautiful face, upturned to the starlight, death stamped the seal of its mysterious calm, effacing for ever the look of horror and fear which had marred its loveliness in the last awful moment of consciousness.

Costandi drew near and looked at her, not to mourn the fair young life he had destroyed, but to assure himself that the work was well and surely done, and that the child of their common parents could be false to Greece no more. Then, when he had fully satisfied himself that Achmet would find only a corpse where he had left a form of living beauty and a heart beating with love, he turned calmly from the spot and disappeared among the trees.

Costandi lived many long years after Greece had been free, and the Moslem driven from her fairest possessions. He may be living still—possibly he is one of those old men, of whom we have heard, who have renewed their youth in the cause of Crete, and are even now fighting, hand to hand, with their ancient foes on her shore. But this is certain—the deadly hatred to

the Moslem, which nerved his hand to shed the blood of his young sister, and by her sweet life in the dust of death, is burning now in the heart of every Greek, with as quenchless a fire as ever in those days of more visible conflict; and whatever the future may have in store for the East, that fire will never die out while Turkey in Europe can be said to exist.

HELGA AND HILDEBRAND.*

Helga sits at her chamber door—
God only my heart from sorrow can sever!
She seweth the same seam o'er and o'er.
Let me tell of the sorrow that lives for ever!

What she should work with golden thread,
She works away with silk instead;
What her fingers with silk should sew,
She works away with gold, I trow.

One whispereth in the ear of the Queen,
"Helga is sewing morning and e'en!"

Her seam is wildly and blindly done;
Down on the seam her tear-drops run!"

The good Queen hearkens wonderingly.
In at the chamber-door goes she.

"Hearken unto me, little one!
Why is thy seam so wildly done?"

"My seam is wild and my work is mad,
Because my heart is so sad—so sad!"

My father was a King so good—
Fifty knights at his table stood.

My father let me sew and spin,
Twelve knights each strove my love to win:

Eleven wooed me as lovers may,
The twelfth he stole my heart away;

And he who wed me was Hildebrand
Son to a King of Engelland.

Scarce did we our castle gain,
When the news was to my father ta'en.

My father summoned his followers then:
"Up, up! and arm ye, my merry men!"

Don your breastplates and helmets bright,
For Hildebrand is a fiend in fight!"

They knocked at the door with mailed hand:
"Arise and hither, Sir Hildebrand!"

Sir Hildebrand kissed me tenderly:
"Name not my name, an thou lovest me;

Even if I bleeding be,
Name me never till life doth flee!"

Out at the door sprang Hildebrand,
His good sword glistening in his hand,

And ere the lips could mutter a prayer,
Stew my five brothers with golden hair.

Only the youngest slew not he—
My youngest brother so dear to me.

Then cried I loud, "Sir Hildebrand,
In the name of our Lady, stay thy hand!"

Oh, spare the youngest, that he may ride
With the bitter news to my mother's side!"

Scarcely the words were uttered,
When Sir Hildebrand fell bleeding and dead,

To his saddle my brother, fierce and cold,
Tied me that night by my tresses of gold.

Over valley and hill he speeds:
With thorns and brambles my body bleeds.

Over valley and hill we feet;
The sharp stones stick in my tender feet.

Through deep fords the horse can swim;
He drags me choking after him.

We came unto the castle great;
My mother stood weeping at the gate.

My brother built a tower forlorn,
He paved it over with flint and thorn;

My cruel brother placed me there,
With only my silken sark to wear.

Whene'er I moved in my tower forlorn,
My feet were pierced with sharp, sharp thorn.

Whene'er I slept on the stones,
Aches and pains were in all my bones.

My brother would torture me twentyfold
But my mother begged I might be sold.

A clock was the price they took for me—
It hangs on the Kirk of our Ladie.

And when the clock on the kirk chimed first,
The heart of my mother aunder burst."

Ere Helga all her tale hath said,
(God only my heart from sorrow can sever!)
On the arm of the Queen she is lying dead.
(Let me tell of the sorrow that lives for ever!)

* From Ballad Stories of the Affections, from the Scandinavian; By Robert Buchanan.