

LORD KILGOBBIN.

BY CHARLES LEVER.

Author of "Harry Lorrequer," "Jack Hinton the Guardsman," "Charles O'Malley the Irish Dragoon," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LXIV.

GREEK MEETS GREEK.

So excited did Atlee feel about meeting the father of Nina Kostalergi—of whose strange doings and adventurous life he had heard much—that he scarcely slept the entire night. It puzzled him greatly to determine in what character he should represent himself to this crafty Greek. Political amateurship was now so popular in England that he might easily enough pass off for one of those "Bulls" desirous to make himself up on the Greek question. This was a part that offered no difficulty. "Give me five minutes of any man—a little longer with a woman—and I'll know where his sympathies incline to." This was a constant boast of his, and not altogether a vain one. He might be an archaeological traveler, eager about new-discovered relics and curious about ruined temples. He might be a yachting man, who only cared for Salamis as good anchorage, nor thought of the Acropolis except as a point of departure; or he might be one of those myriads who travel without knowing where or caring why; airing their *ennui* now at Thebes, now at Trolhatten; a weariful, dispirited race, who rarely look so thoroughly alive as when choosing a cigar or changing their money. There was no reason why the "distinguished Mr. Atlee" might not be one of these—he was accredited, too, by his minister, and his "solidarity," as the French call it, was beyond question.

While yet revolving these points, a cavase—with much gold in his jacket, and a voluminous petticoat of white calico—came to inform him that his excellency the prince hoped to see him at breakfast at eleven o'clock; and it now only wanted a few minutes of that hour. Atlee detained the messenger to show him the road, and at last set out.

Traversing one dreary, ill-built street after another, they arrived at last at what seemed a little lane, the entrance to which carriages were denied by a line of stone posts, at the extremity of which a small green gate appeared in a wall. Pushing this wide open, the cavase stood respectfully while Atlee passed in, and found himself in what, for Greece, was a garden. There were two fine palm-trees, and a small scrub of oleanders and dwarf cedars that grew around a little fish-pond, where a small Triton in the middle, with distended cheeks, should have poured forth a refreshing jet of water, but his lips were dry, and his conch-shell empty, and the muddy tank at his feet a mere surface of broad water-lilies convulsively shaken by bull-frogs. A short, shady path led to the house—a two-storied edifice, with the external stair of wood, that seemed to crawl round it on every side.

In a good-sized room of the ground-floor Atlee found the prince awaiting him. He was confined to a sofa by a slight sprain, he called it, and apologized for his not being able to rise.

The prince, though advanced in years, was still handsome; his features had all the splendid regularity of their Greek origin; but in the enormous orbits, of which the tint was nearly black, and the indented temples, traversed by veins of immense size, and the firm compression of his lips, might be read the signs of a man who carried the gambling spirit into every incident of life, one ready "to back his luck" and show a bold front to fortune when fate proved adverse.

The Greek's manner was perfect. There was all the ease of a man used to society, with a sort of half-sly courtesy, as he said: "This is kindness, Mr. Atlee—this is real kindness. I scarcely thought an Englishman would have the courage to call upon anything so unpopular as I am."

"I have come to see you and the Pardonon, prince, and I have begun with you."

"And you will tell them, when you get home, that I am not the terrible revolutionist they think me: that I am neither Danton nor Felix Pyat, but a very mild and rather tiresome old man, whose extreme violence goes no further than believing that people ought to be masters in their own house, and that when any one disputes the right, the best thing is to throw him out of the window."

"If he will not go by the door," remarked Atlee.

"No, I would not give him the chance of the door. Otherwise you make no distinction between your friends and your enemies. It is by the mild methods—what you call 'milk-and-water methods'—men spoil all their efforts for freedom. You always want to cut off somebody's head and spill no blood. There's the mistake of those Irish rebels: they tell me they have courage, but I find it hard to believe them."

"Do believe them, then, and know for certain that there is not a braver people in Europe."

"How do you keep them down, then?"

"You must not ask me that, for I am one of them."

"You Irish?"

"Yes, Irish—very Irish."

"Ah! I see. Irish in an English sense! Just as there are Greeks here who believe in Kulbash Pasha, and would say: Stay at home and till your currant fields, and mind your coasting trade. Don't try to be civilized, for civilization goes badly with brigandage, and scarcely suits trickery. And you are aware, Mr. Atlee, that trickery and brigandage are more to Greece than olives or dried figs."

There was that of mockery in the way he said this, and the little smile that played about his mouth when he finished, that left Atlee in considerable doubt how to read him.

"I study your newspapers, Mr. Atlee," resumed he. "I never omit to read your *Times*, and I see how my old acquaintance, Lord Danesbury, has been making Turkey out of Ireland. It is so hard to persuade an old ambassador that you cannot do everything by corruption."

"I scarcely think you do him justice."

"Poor Danesbury!" ejaculated he, sorrowfully.

"You opine that his policy is a mistake?"

"Poor Danesbury!" said he again.

"He is one of our ablest men, notwithstanding. At this moment we have not his superior in anything."

"I was going to say, poor Danesbury, but I now say, poor England."

Atlee bit his lip with anger at the sarcasm, but went on: "I infer you are not aware of the exact share subordinates have had in what you call Lord Danesbury's Irish blunders—"

"Pardon my interrupting you—but a really able man has no subordinates. His inferior agents are so thoroughly absorbed by his own individuality that they have no wills—no instincts—and therefore they can do no indiscretions. They are the simple emanations of himself in action."

"In Turkey, perhaps," said Atlee, with a smile.

"If in Turkey, why not in England, or, at least, in Ireland? If you are well served—and, mind, you must be well served, or you are powerless—you can always in political life see the adversary's hand. That he sees yours, is, of course, true: the great question, then, is, how much you mean to mislead him by showing it? I give you an instance: Lord Danesbury's cleverest stroke in policy here, the one hit probably he made in the East, was to have a private correspondence with the khedive made known to the Russian embassy, and induce Gortchakoff to believe that he could not trust the pasha! All the Russian preparations to move down on the provinces were countermanded. The stores of grain that were being made on the Pruth were arrested, and three, nearly four, weeks elapsed before the mistake was discovered, and in that interval England had reinforced the squadron at Malta, and taken steps to encourage Turkey—always to be done by money, or promise of money."

"It was a coup of great adroitness," said Atlee.

"It was more," cried the Greek, with elation. "It was a move of such subtlety as smacks of something higher than the Saxon. The men who do these things have the instinct of their craft. It is theirs to understand that chemistry of human motives by which a certain combination results in effects totally remote from the agents that produce it. Can you follow me?"

"I believe I can."

"I would rather say, is my attempt at an explanation sufficiently clear to be intelligible?"

Atlee looked fixedly at him—and he could do so unobserved, for the other was now occupied in preparing his pipe—without minding the question. Therefore Atlee set himself to study the features before him. It was evident enough, from the intensity of his gaze and a cer-



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See This Dress?

Surprise Soap Washed it.

And will wash any washable material without injury to the color or material—it is harmless yet effective.

White goods are made whiter and colored goods brighter by the use of Surprise Soap.

Thousands use it. Why don't you?

Use Surprise on washday for all kinds of goods without Boiling or Scalding.

READ the directions on the wrapper.

tain trembling of his upper lip, that the scrutiny cost him no common effort. It was, in fact, the effort to divine what if he mistook to read aright would be an irreparable blunder.

With the long-drawn inspiration a man makes before he adventures a daring feat, he said:

"It is time I should be candid with you, prince. It is time I should tell you that I am in Greece only to see you."

"To see me?" said the other, and a very faint flush passed across his face.

"To see you," said Atlee, slowly, while he drew out a pocket-book and took from it a letter. "This," said he, handing it, "is to your address." The words on the cover were M. Speridionides.

"I am Speridion Kostalergi, and by birth a Prince of Delos," said the Greek, waving back the letter.

"I am well aware of that, and it is only in perfect confidence that I venture to recall a past that your excellency will see I respect," and Atlee spoke with an air of deference.

"The antecedents of the men who serve this country are not to be measured by the artificial habits of a people who regulate condition by money. Your statesmen have no need to be journalists, teachers, tutors: Frenchmen and Italians are all these, and on the Lower Danube and in Greece we are these and something more. Nor are we less politicians that we are more men of the world. The little of statecraft that French emperor ever knew he picked up in his days of exile."

All this he blurted out in short and passionate bursts, like an angry man who was trying to be logical in his anger, and to make an effort of reason to subdue his wrath.

"If I had not understood these things as you yourself understand them, I should not have been so indiscreet as to offer you that letter," and once more he proffered it.

This time the Greek took it, tore open the envelope, and read it through.

"It is from Lord Danesbury," said he, at length. "When we parted last I was, in a certain sense, my lord's subordinate—that is, there were things none of his staff of secretaries or attaches or dragoons could do, and I could do them. Times are changed, and if we are to meet again, it will be as colleagues. It is true, Mr. Atlee, the ambassador of England and the envoy of Greece are not exactly of the same rank. I do not permit myself many illusions, and this is not one of them; but remember, if Great Britain be a first rate power, Greece is a volcano. It is for us to say when there shall be an eruption."

It was evident, from the rambling tenor of this speech, he was speaking rather to conceal his thoughts, and give himself time for reflection, than to enunciate any definite opinion; and so Atlee, with native acuteness, read him, as he simply bowed a cold assent.

"Why should I give him back his letters?" burst out the Greek, warmly. "What does he offer me in exchange for them? Money! mere money! By what presumption does he assume that I must be in such want of money that the only question should be the sum? May not the time come when I shall be questioned in our Chamber as

to certain matters of policy, and my only vindication be the documents of this same English ambassador, written in his own hand and signed with his name? Will you tell me that the triumphant assertion of a man's honor is not more to him than bank-notes?"

Though the heroic spirit of this speech went but a short way to deceive Atlee, who only read it as a plea for a higher price, it was his policy to seem to believe every word of it, and he looked a perfect picture of quiet conviction.

"You little suspect what these letters are," said the Greek.

"I believe I know; I rather think I have a catalogue of them and their contents," mildly hinted the other.

"Ah! indeed; and are you prepared to vouch for the accuracy and completeness of your list?"

"You must be aware it is only my lord himself can answer that question."

"Is there—in your enumeration—is there the letter about Crete? and the false news that deceived the Baron de Baude? Is there the note of my instructions to the khedive? Is there—I am sure there is not—any mention of the negotiation with Sephanotis Bey?"

"I have seen Sephanotis myself; I have just come from him," said Atlee, grasping at the escape the name offered.

"Ah, you know the old Paltkho?"

"Intimately; we are, I hope, close friends; he was at Kulbash Pasha's while I was there, and we had much talk together."

"And from him it was you learned that Speridionides was Speridion Kostalergi?" said the Greek, slowly.

"Surely this is not meant as a question, or, at least, a question to be answered?" said Atlee, smiling.

"No, no, of course not," replied the other, politely. "We are chatting together, if not like old friends, like men who have every element to become dear friends. We see life very much from the same point of view, Mr. Atlee—is it not so?"

"It would be a great flattery to me to think it." And Joe's eyes sparkled as he spoke.

"One has to make his choice somewhat early in the world whether he will hunt or be hunted; I believe that is about the case."

"I suspect so."

"I did not take long to decide; I took my place with the wolves!" Nothing could be more quietly uttered than these words; but there was a savage ferocity in his look as he said them that held Atlee almost spellbound. "And you, Mr. Atlee? and you? I need scarcely ask where your choice fell!"

It was so palpable that the words meant a compliment, Atlee had only to smile a polite acceptance of them.

"These letters," said the Greek, resuming, and like one who had not mentally lapsed from the theme—"these letters are all that my lord deems them. They are the very stuff that, in your country of publicity and free discussion, would make or mar the very best reputations among you. And," added he, after a pause, "there are none of them destroyed—none!"

"He is aware of that."

(To be Continued.)