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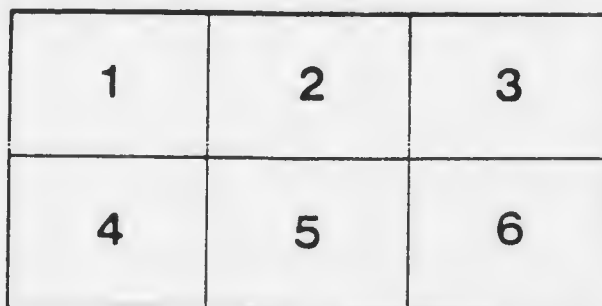
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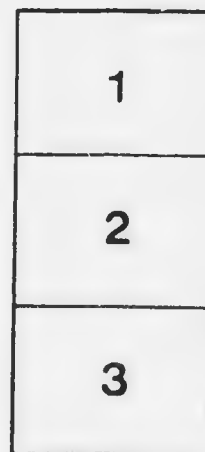
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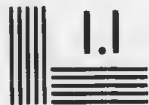
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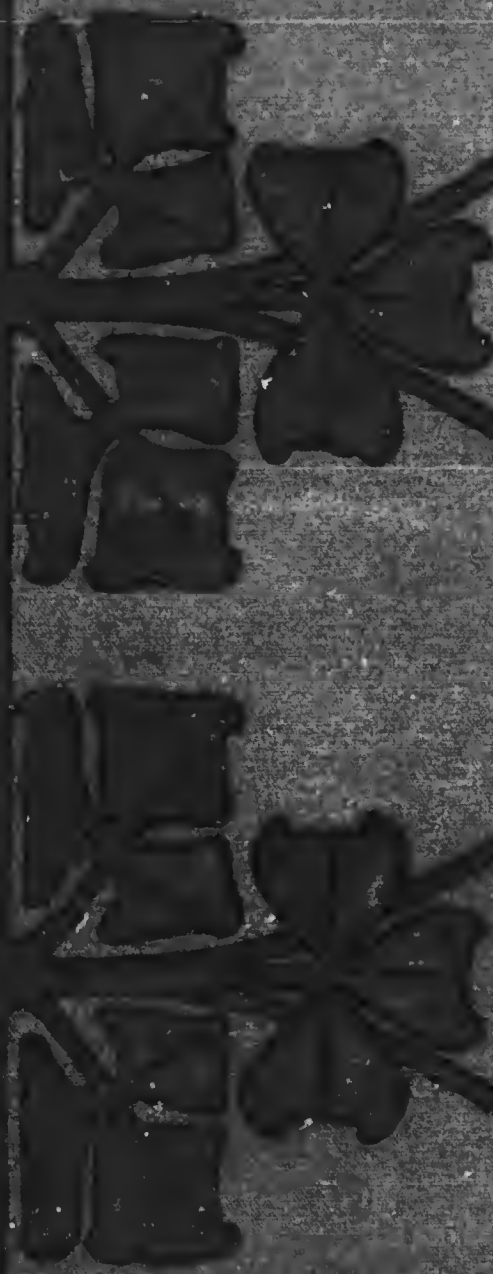
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TREASURE

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THE MONKS' TREASURE









# THE MONKS' TREASURE

*By*  
GEORGE HORTON

*Author of*  
The Long Straight Road  
Like Another Helen

*With a Frontispiece by*  
C. M. RELYEA

TORONTO  
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TO MY FRIENDS  
PROFESSOR AND MRS. MITCHELL CARROLL





THE MONKS' TREASURE



# THE MONKS' TREASURE

## CHAPTER I

### SENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

Two men were talking together in the private office of a great business concern. One, who sat at an open roll-top desk, was middle-aged, with a firm mouth, and in his glance there was a mixture of kindness and shrewdness; he pulled at a philanthropic side whisker while he talked. The other, who was standing, was an athletic young fellow, with a thin eager face, regular features, and a singularly sweet expression of the lips when he smiled — which was very often.

“The two main things,” continued the older man didactically, holding up a finger of his left hand as he counted off number one, “are, first, don't let any of those Mediterranean dealers get the advantage of you, through thinking that you are an anxious purchaser or that you have much money to spend. If you do, they will lose their heads immediately and put on prohibitive prices.

Dwell on the great and growing production of argols in California, and the fact that substitutes are largely used in this country in the manufacture of baking powders — eh, do you follow me?”

“Yes,—yes, sir,” replied Walter somewhat guiltily, for he had, in fact, been thinking of certain good-bys that must be said.

“Give me close attention, now, my boy, for you are going to be thrown entirely on your own responsibility, after you leave this office. The second thing —” counting off number two, “is to look out for adulteration. Argols are the easiest things in the world to adulterate and if you don’t watch those Latins and — and — Levantines, as a cat watches a mouse, they will slip in something or other — clay, gypsum, sand, that will render your purchase almost useless. You understand thoroughly the chemical tests?”

“Certainly, sir,” replied Walter again.

“Well, you ought to, with all the college training you have had. If you’re ever going to put your education to practical use, now is the time to do it. I’m really hoping great things from you on this expedition. This is a mission that you seem particularly fitted for, and I will not con-

ceal from you, my boy,"—here the old man's voice took on a tender tone, "that my affection for you as my dead brother's son, has had much to do with my creating it for you. You have not been a remarkable success here in this office. I might as well be frank about it.

"Now you will have an opportunity to travel and get some idea of the extensive and even romantic nature of the great enterprise of which your uncle happens to be at the head. You will have your wits sharpened, too, in dealing with the shrewdest rascals on earth, the sellers of crude cream o' tartar. You will have a chance to use those languages which you learned in college—I suppose you speak pretty nearly all known tongues, do you not?" Taking this for granted, he continued, raising his voice and becoming eloquent as he drifted upon the great, the compelling theme of his life:

"And you will be, in a certain way, doing missionary work. Remember that the Lythgoe Baking Powder owes its unrivaled reputation among the baking powders of the world to its absolute purity, its freedom from poisonous ingredients. The product which enables us to maintain that purity is found only in wine-

making countries, and there is an immense demand for it. It is used also in photography, in the manufacture of woolen goods, of silks and calicoes, in medicine and in the preparation of effervescent drinks. Don't hesitate in buying up every bit of it you can lay your hands on: round up all the sources, train and establish agents. We claim, in connection with others, similarly interested, to control the entire product. But I have a theory that we have not yet got our hands on half the crude cream o' tartar in the world. Are you still following me?"

"Yes, uncle, indeed. I am drinking in every word you say."

This somewhat exaggerated expression was the result of a subconscious feeling of annoyance and an impulse to regard this lecture a trifle less seriously than it was intended. But there was no betrayal of the feeling in the young man's voice or manner, for he was devoted to this uncle who, for some years past, had acted toward him the part of a father.

"Don't neglect to write to your Aunt Julia often, boy. You know how much good your letters do her. And, now, as you have a hundred little things to do, no doubt, I might as well bid

you good-by. I shan't be able to get down to the station with you."

They both rose and shook hands; then they started for the door, the older man with his arm about his nephew's shoulder.

"Be a good boy, Walter. Live up to the standard set you by your father, and it's all we'll ask of you in business or anything else. And, by the way, take an old man's advice: keep out of all scrapes and complications with women. They're especially dangerous in those frivolous, impulsive latitudes. You know you have a soft side for women."

Walter laughed, still holding his uncle's hand.

"I'm getting too old for such nonsense, I reckon." [He was twenty-five, and had been in love with the college widow.] "And at any rate, I shan't be thrown in contact with anything but swarthy, heavy peasant girls."

"Well, good-by, Walter."

"Good-by, uncle."

"Oh, by the way, here's a letter of introduction to the Reverend Theophilus Ion, American Missionary at — at — ah, yes, a place called Ta Castra, in the island of Andros, Greece. I nearly forgot that, and it's one of the principal things.

When you round up the Cyclades, and I advise you to do that as soon as possible, because we're pretty well represented in Italy and the other Mediterranean countries now, you had better go straight to this missionary. He's right in the thick of things, and he speaks English, though he is a native. He's a godly man and will keep them from cheating you. I have a letter from his wife, addressed to me as chairman of our church committee on foreign missions. It seems they're doing a great work there. You'd better give the doctor fifty dollars for the cause as soon as you arrive. It's a good cause and then, too,— ah, yes, give him fifty dollars."

The young man laughed. "I'll not forget, uncle."

"Mrs. Ion is an American woman, a former school-teacher at Joliet, this state. You can make their house a sort of operating center for the entire Cyclades. Well, good-by once more and God be with you. Come back to us safe and sound."

"Good-by, uncle."

Walter was gone.

Erasmus Lythgoe stepped to the window of his office and looked out. The blizzard of February



was fleeing from the whips of the wind down the bleak, dismal street. 'Twas but the middle of the afternoon, yet electric lights gleamed in a thousand offices. Three or four great wagons, backed against the curb below, were taking on loads of the celebrated Cream Baking Powder, to be shipped to the four corners of the earth.

"There isn't a bad hair in the boy's head," muttered Erasmus Lythgoe; "and I love him as though he were my own son. It is an experiment to send him off to those hot, godless countries, but I must get him interested in the business, somehow. Ha, this is a glorious climate!" he cried, as the wind hurled a great handful of hail against the pane, the confetti of winter's carnival, and then swept on, snapping its trailing skirts of snow. "A day like this puts fight and vigor into a man!"

Sitting down before his desk, he pushed the button for his stenographer.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LADY OF SORROWS

In Athens, whither he had gone directly, in pursuance of the hint thrown out by his uncle in the final conversation, Walter Lythgoe picked up Ian McKenzie. A conference with the American consul elicited the fact that inquiries were frequently received regarding Greek argols and that a large firm located near San Francisco had recently written concerning them.

"There's a queer sort of fellow connected with the British school here," suggested our representative, when questioned on the subject of an interpreter, "who has been here for years and speaks the language like a native. He's as poor as a church mouse and nobody understands how he has been able to stay on here as long as he has. I give him odd jobs of translating to do and he gets some little employment of that kind from the other consular and diplomatic officers. But he isn't here in Athens much. He disappears for

months at a time and they say he goes and lives among the Greeks in their little villages. If so, he doesn't need much money. About ten cents a day would do him handsomely, living like that."

"That's just the fellow I want!" cried Lythgoe. "Where can I find him?"

For answer, the consul arose and offered to accompany Lythgoe to the home of Mr. McKenzie. They found him sitting in the garden of a one-story dwelling high up on the slope of Mount Lycabettus. A fragrant pepper-tree furnished him shade, the while he pored over a yellow Greek manuscript by the aid of a magnifying glass. A dictionary, minus one cover, lay on the round table at which he was reading, and an earthen tea-pot, with a string for a handle, stood atop of a pile of books upon an adjacent chair.

Mr. McKenzie arose, tall, big-jointed, big-nosed, hollow-eyed, brown-bearded.

"Excuse my appearance, gentlemen," he said, "but I have not yet dressed for the street. Please be seated."

His voice was low and pleasant, despite his fierce aspect, which was due to his unkempt, bristling beard, and his shaggy eyebrows. He raised no objection whatever to accompanying Walter,

his only stipulation being that he be allowed to look over the ancient manuscripts in the various monasteries which they might visit.

"'Twill be necessary to visit the monasteries," he explained, "as the monks are great wine-makers, and, besides, they are about the only decent hotel-keepers in many places."

He spoke clean, straight English, for he was a graduate of Edinburgh. Yet any one could tell from half a dozen words that he was a Scot, from that peculiar flavor of the enunciation which can be neither imitated nor written down, and he rolled his r's bravely.

"A queer character, yet unmistakably a gentleman," thought Lythgoe.

"Before I left the garden," Walter related to the consul that evening, "Mr. McKenzie had brewed me a cup of tea and told me a remarkable dream."

"Oh, McKenzie's dreams are famous," laughed the consul; "and he has one every night, but he's none the less a shrewd, hard-headed chap in his way, and I have no fears at all in recommending him to you."

Just at dusk, two weeks later, a dirty, sturdy little steamer cast anchor opposite the town of Ta

Castra, island of Andros. The village consisted of about a hundred brown houses, constructed of thin lamina of stone, and it straggled picturesquely up the sides of a natural terrace. Off at the left lay a low, vividly green valley, planted thick with olive trees of a paler green, and seeming to cut into the row of hills that followed the sea-shore on either hand as far as the eye could reach. A café, two stories high in the rear and one in front for the sake of the terrace, stood on the edge of a cliff. Could natural scenery be shipped, like obelisks, columns, or friezes, some American millionaire would long ago have bought and carried off the view from the terrace. As it is, a man could sit for hours for the price of a ha'penny cup of coffee, and drink his soul full of sea, islands and sunsets.

At least so McKenzie told Lythgoe, as they stood together on the deck of the steamer, and the American concluded that his companion was not exactly crazy, but that he had the soul of a poet. A few tall cypress-trees, scattered about, and a church whose dome rose from a building in the shape of a Greek cross, all but completed the picture of a typical small town of the Cyclades. In addition, this town possessed two other fea-

tures, somewhat distinctive in their nature,—the missionary's house and a castle.

The former was by far the most imposing structure in the town proper. It was two stories high, with neat green blinds, and, unlike the other dwellings, was covered with white stucco. At one end of the house was a vegetable and flower garden, surrounded by a whitewashed wall. As the inclosure was on the side of a hill, the people standing on the deck of the little steamer could look into it, exactly as one looks into the gardens in old drawings of cities, or into the inclosures seen in those photographs which are taken from a balloon. The castle was far back in the angle of a ravine, near the top of the hills, as though it had been built there by some over-lord of old time, to dominate the village and surrounding farms. It had a medieval look and seemed to be dreaming of forgotten tragedies and old romances.

A boat put off from the beach, its sail toppling to the breeze, as a tree that has felt the last stroke of the ax, and came ruffling toward the steamer.

"It's a sleepy town," remarked Walter.

"They're having some sort of celebration, else two or three boats would have come out to fetch us," replied McKenzie, purring sweetly over his

r's, like a contented cat. The end of his tongue was thin and fluttered when he talked, and no amount of Greek, Latin, Arabic and Hebrew had been able to thicken and stiffen it.

"That's a fine beach!" cried Lythgoe, with an enthusiastic sweep of the arm. "I never saw anything so fine in my life."

A mile of sand, in shape like the new moon or the blade of a sickle, reached out its arms as though to welcome the little vessel that lay cradling gently on the evening swell. The sand was clean as a cuttle-bone and the fringe of foam that seethed at its edge as white as new lace.

"They're roasting lambs," persisted McKenzie. "Do you happen to know what particular saint's day it is?"

"Saint's day?" laughed Walter. "No, indeed. We don't keep account of saints in America. We're too busy sinning."

"Ah, well," sighed the Scot, "it makes small odds to us, so long as we get our portion of the beast — and lamb roasted on the spit is a toothsome creature. But for this blessed saint, we might have fared ill. Let's be going ashore."

Stooping, he picked up a cloth bag the shape of a huge slice of American cheese. The tea-pot

with the string handle was tied to it. They climbed down into the sail-boat that was now waiting at the ladder and were soon flitting toward the little town, and even as they approached, the sun sank suddenly out of sight as it does where the edge of the world is piled with mountains. A purple glow, too beautiful to last, flushed the air with glory and began to fade. There was such utter silence for the moment that the "Crack! Crack!" of a washerwoman's paddle, beating her clothes far down the beach, sounded sharp and close at hand. A convent bell rang sweetly, faintly somewhere in the hills, and that mysterious feeling of sadness pervaded the air which is ever the attribute of ultimate beauty. When they stepped upon the beach it was as dark as it ever can be in a country where the stars are rose diamonds.

"So you'll be going to the missionary's?" asked McKenzie, as they walked up the narrow, rocky path toward the town together.

"Yes, and you'd better come along with me. They speak English, you know."

"That's reason enough for my not going," replied the Scot. "Why should a man ever torture his ears with English when he knows the tongue



of Sappho, Theocritus and Menander? No, I'll stop at the Orthodox priest's. As between the two, I've no religious scruples. There's only one true church and that's the Presbyterian. But we'll not part company for the night till we get some of the saint's lamb, and then I'll e'en brew you a cup of tea."

The path corkscrewed about a perpendicular rock and came out upon the main street. A throng of islanders was gathered before the missionary's house. Two or three candles in those little glass globes which shield the flames from the wind, stood on the table and threw a flickering light upon the tall islanders in their uncouth costumes. An old man, squat upon the ground, was roasting a lamb on a spit.

A woman stood in the door of the parsonage, lifting a lamp above the head of a little man with a white beard, which he held tightly clasped in his right hand, as he gazed inquiringly at the strangers.

"Is this the Reverend Theophilus *Eycon*?" asked Walter, raising his hat politely at sight of the woman.

"E-on, sir, E-on," replied the missionary. There was an apologetic note in his voice, as if

he were not responsible for his name in case the strangers were not suited with it.

"Then I have a letter of introduction to you," said Lythgoe, advancing. "My name is Walter Lythgoe, of Chicago."

Mrs. Ion set the lamp upon the mantel-piece and watched her husband impatiently, as the latter fumbled in his waistcoat pocket for his glasses.

"You're slower'n time, father," she cried at last, snatching the epistle. "Here, let me read it." Though snappy and decisive, her voice was not unkind, as she addressed the old man.

"Yes, mother, read it aloud," he assented, but the woman was too deeply absorbed in this missive from her native land to hear or heed him. As she read, Lythgoe, always with an eye for the other sex, glanced at her with no little curiosity, and was not greatly impressed with the lady's personal charm. She was attired in a home-made calico gown, and her reddish hair, that was streaked with gray, was pulled back so tightly at the temples that tiny tents of skin arose all about the roots. Her dress was ill-fitting and her complexion sallow, but the bright ribbon tied at her throat bore testimony to the eternal feminine. The missionary, having at last

found the glasses, was standing on tiptoe at his wife's side trying to read the letter also.

"Hold it a trifle lower, mother," he pleaded, "so I can see too."

"Well, it says," explained Mrs. Ion, "that this gentleman is here on business, the nature of which he will explain to you, and asks us to give all the assistance in our power. It says, moreover, that he will give something to the cause."

"Business? Business?" repeated the missionary wonderingly. "I don't see what business any one could have here, other than the saving of souls."

"The letter says he will explain his business," snapped the lady. Then noticing for the first time that the two strangers were still standing awkwardly and uneasily in the middle of the floor, she dragged a couple of chairs to them, with the remark: "Well, I'm real glad to see any one from America. You didn't introduce your friend."

Mr. McKenzie was presented, and the Scot, who had been looking anxiously out of the door where the Greeks were making short work of the lamb, fixed his gray eyes solemnly upon Mrs. Ion's face and whispered confidingly: "Madam,

would it be possible for us to obtain a bit of refreshment? We're faint with hunger."

"Merciful sakes!" cried Mrs. Ion. "Why, father, these people are starving to death. I'll get you something to eat right away."

"Yes, and I should like to arrange to stay in the house," added Walter. "I don't speak any Greek, you know. I should, of course, like to pay for my entertainment."

"You must both stay with me," replied the missionary. "'I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.' Will you eat in the house here, or out in the open air?"

"Out in the air!" cried Walter. "Eh, McKenzie?"

"Of course!" replied McKenzie. "Only barbarians eat indoors, or those unfortunate people who are still residing in countries where snow and ice prevail for half the year."

The missionary went to the help of his wife, who was already spreading a clean cloth upon a table under the trees. One of the Greeks officiously seized a large platter and held it, while another cut slices from the lamb, which was leaning lengthwise, spit and all, against a tree. It was McKenzie himself who pulled the head off

the spit, and, asking for an ax, split it in twain. Mrs. Ion brought bread, and goat's cheese from the house, water in a porous jug, and a round dish, containing some confection or other covered with a crust. Walter sat down, but McKenzie bent from his tall height and whispered in Mrs. Ion's ear: "And the wine?"

"Not on our premises," snapped Mrs. Ion. "We have no wine-bibbers and whisky-drinkers here."

Her notions as to wine drinking were as uncompromising as her accent. She was a teetotaler in any clime and under all conditions.

"Oh, ah," said the Scot apologetically, taking his place at the board; but he sighed mournfully, "'twill be a dry feed, a dry feed!"

"They're roasting another lamb over at the café," observed Walter, his mouth full of the delicious meat. "By the way, did you find out what saint's day this is? I say, Mr. Ion, what saint's day is this?"

"'Tis no saint's day," replied the missionary; "and if it were we should not be observing it here."

"That's so, of course. You see, McKenzie, Mr. Ion doesn't belong to the Greek church. It's

only the Greeks who celebrate saints' days, you know."

Neither Mrs. Ion nor her husband volunteered any information as to the occasion for the feast, and the two strangers felt that it would be rude to be too inquisitive. McKenzie, indeed, was not in a pleasant humor, for he felt that he was suffering religious persecution in the matter of the wine. Every moment he glanced wistfully from beneath shaggy eyebrows at the throng at the café, where, plainly visible by the light of a huge lantern hanging in a tree, men were dancing and receiving frequent refreshment from the hands of the wine merchant and his assistant.

"'Tis a dry feed," muttered McKenzie again, quaffing every moment a full goblet of crystal water, exquisitely light and sparkling. "Water was made for beasts. Wine was the drink of the gods. Do you know," and he leaned so close to Lythgoe and spoke with such mysterious earnestness that the latter thought some great revelation impending, "do you know, I have small faith in missionaries, except those of the Presbyterian belief. The Presbyterians do a great work."

Walter felt that a pair of eyes were fairly boring themselves into his consciousness and he

looked around. A fat little girl, with a smooth, pleasant face, stood within the radius of the light on the table. She was dressed in a neat pinafore and her hair was held back by one of those semi-circular combs once so popular for children.

"Good evening," said Walter, with a whimsical desire to see what effect an unknown tongue would produce on her.

"Good evening," she replied in excellent English.

"The missionary's daughter," hazarded McKenzie. "Can you tell me, my little girl, what saint's day this is?"

"'Tisn't any saint's day that I know of," she replied. "We have been — been — I don't know what you call it in English. This is the feast for Polyxene and Mr. Douzinas."

"What's Polyxene?" asked Walter.

"That's a girl's name," explained McKenzie. Turning to the little maiden, he said something to her in Greek.

"Yes, that's it," she cried with animation.

"It's a betrothal feast," said the Scot, — "quite as important a ceremony as the wedding itself."

"Who is Polyxene?" asked Walter, much interested in the suggestion of romance.

"Polyxene? Oh, she works for us. We brought her up and converted her, and now Mr. Douzinas wants to marry her."

"Where is she now?"

"Oh, they were all through long ago and she's gone to bed. She said she wasn't feeling well."

"And Mr. Douzinas? Point him out to us, that's a good girl."

"He's over there at the café, drinking wine. Mama doesn't allow wine-bibbing here, because the Bible says 'Look not upon the wine when it is red.' 'Who hath woe, who hath contention? they that linger long over the wine.' So Spiro took his friends and went over to the café. That's him there, the tall man, leading the dance. Don't you think it's dreadful wicked to dance?"

"Teaching the child bigotry, too," muttered McKenzie, as he swallowed another goblet of water.

Walter glanced curiously in the direction of the café. As well as he could distinguish in the uncertain light, Mr. Douzinas was a manly, athletic fellow, and if his agility and enthusiasm in the dance were any criterion, he was in high spirits over his engagement to Miss Polyxene.

And thus did these two men, the American and



the Greek, come within seeing distance. They were destined to remember each other while life lasted.

The missionary now joined them and offered cigarettes, and the three sat for perhaps an hour in silence, except that twice McKenzie suggested brewing a cup of tea, but made no move to put the thought into effect. Mr. Ion arose at last with a sigh.

"You must be tired," he said, "after traveling all day. You'll be wanting to go to bed."

Walter yawned and threw away his cigarette. "I'll go right now. Coming too, McKenzie?"

The Scot hesitated.

"I'm going to the Greek priest's," he said at last, and departed.

The missionary took up a candle and led Walter through a gate into the garden, which smelled sweetly of the night and of some flowering plant. The house itself formed two sides of a rectangle. A high whitewashed wall completed the square, thus inclosing the garden, which, as we have seen, was laid out on such an incline that persons on the sea could look into it. The dwelling thus formed a wide-spread V, one leg of which was composed of sleeping rooms. A veranda, supported upon

slender wooden posts, ran the entire length. Pushing open a door, the missionary set the candle upon a table, and, after fussing about for a while, in the manner of an anxious host, bade his guest good night.

"Good night, Mr. Ion," said Walter, "and pleasant dreams. To-morrow we'll talk business."

Walter fastened his door carefully, lest any of the inmates of the house should hear the rasping of the bolt as he pushed it home, and deem him over-cautious in the house of friends. But, to tell the truth, the strangeness, loneliness and remoteness of the place, his utter ignorance of the character of the natives, and the fact that he had about him a considerable amount of money, made him feel a bit nervous. He had heard that Greeks in remote settlements regarded all foreigners as lords, and there might be some one on the island who would be capable of murdering him for the amount contained in his pocketbook. He not only fastened the door, but pushed the single bed across it ere he prepared to retire.

It must have been about one o'clock when he partly awoke and became conscious that there was a woman in the next room, sobbing as though her

heart would break, but not loudly. There is something theatrical, often, in loud grief. These were low, convulsive sobs, evidently forced from some heart by unendurable sorrow. The very fact that they were smothered, marked them as the utterance of genuine despair. This woman, had it been possible, would not have sobbed at all. She seemed to be talking to herself, too, or praying, but though Walter sat up in bed and listened his best, he could not understand a word; of one thing only he was sure, that never before in his young, careless life, had he heard the voice of such utter sorrow, such cruel and poignant despair.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BEAUTIFUL BOND-GIRL

The woman's grief seemed to wear itself out at last. At any rate she became quiet, and Walter, much wondering, drowsed off. When he awoke, the light of day was streaming through the transom above the door and he could hear doves strutting and cooing in the court without. He remembered the incident of the night, the voice of the sobbing woman. He was but twenty-five, and for the moment he did not think of business at all. An overwhelming desire, which became stronger each moment, possessed him, to solve the mystery of that woman's grief. Perhaps he would be able to do something to help her. He fancied that as soon as he got outside, he could see or hear something that would give him a clue to the mystery.

He dressed hastily, though nothing could make him hurry in the selection of the string tie which he took from his grip. A friend had brought

him from London one of correct length, and by this he always carefully measured each tie before putting it on. As he invariably put the rejected ones back together into his bag, with those which had sometime or other passed muster, the measuring process inevitably became a ceremony. He finally selected a green tie, his favorite shade, after which the completion of his toilet proceeded more rapidly, though he paused frequently to listen if perchance the mysterious woman were still in the next room.

When he at length stepped out upon the veranda, he was a jauntier and more up-to-date figure than one would expect to find in a little island village. His gray business suit had evidently been made by some fashionable tailor, and he had a knack even of giving a punch to his soft traveling cap that left it no common head-covering. Glancing at the door next his own, he observed that it was open. Muttering, "Must be gone," he stepped down into the garden and strolled by the door, as if casually. Seeing no one, he looked more boldly and perceived nothing more than a bed neatly made and covered with a white spread, a bureau with a number of feminine toilet articles, and a stand upon which stood a

cracked flower-holder containing a few fresh violets. There was no doubt that this was a girl's room. Turning guiltily about, he noticed that the fragrance of the night before came from a cherry-tree in full bloom, and that there were several beds of hyacinths and tulips in the yard. The ground of the garden was so slanting that his eyes, passing over the lower wall, fell immediately upon the sea, merrily dancing and flashing in the sun, and whitened here and there with drifting sails.

"Good morning. I hope you slept well last night?"

It was the missionary's wife, with a watering pot, and there was something incongruous, a jarring note, between the incorrigible American accent and the place.

"Ve — very well," replied Walter, stumbling a little over the white lie; but he redeemed himself by removing his cap with unconscious grace, while his lips parted in an attractive smile. "Do let me relieve you of that watering can. No?"

"I'm all through, now," said Mrs. Ion, setting the can down while her faded cheek flushed with pleasure at the unexpected attention.

"If you had called me, I should have been only

too glad to water them for you. I've been fussing about in my room for the last hour. I trust that you and the doctor slept well last night?"

Yes, they had slept well; the doctor was asleep yet, in fact. Evidently, it was not Mrs. Ion whom he had heard weeping.

"And the little girl, she — she slept — well, of course—children always sleep like logs. Where is Maudie this morning? I should like to see her. She's as smart as a whip."

"Oh, Maudie's started for school by this time. These pleasant mornings she leaves the house about eight o'clock."

"She's a dear little girl. McKenzie and I fell in love with her. So pretty, too! Which does she resemble most, her father or you?"

"People all say she most resembles me," replied the missionary's wife, tucking a straggling, reddish-gray lock into place. "But sakes alive! Here we stand talking and you haven't had any breakfast."

The good lady brought a little round-topped table into the garden and spread a white cloth upon it.

"I'll have your breakfast here in no time," she went on, and was as good as her word, for she

soon brough from the kitchen fresh eggs and weak American coffee, supplemented with a dish of her most sacred preserves — these latter an unconscious feminine reward for his flattery. And will it be ungallant to whisper a secret here? Mrs. Ion, as a result of that same flattery, raised the bivouac of tents a little higher upon her forehead, drew her chignon into a more compact knot, and thrust into it a tortoise-shell comb which she had not worn in years.

“I’ve had a delicious breakfast!” cried Walter cheerfully, entering the sitting-room where his hostess was engaged in dusting.

“There! If I’d thought of it, I’d have made you some griddle cakes. Go right back and sit down and I’ll make you some now.”

“No, indeed, I couldn’t eat another mouthful, I positively couldn’t.”

Walter stood about for a few moments, hoping to see something of Polyxene, or to hit upon some subject of conversation that would throw light upon the matter that was now uppermost in his mind: who was the Lady of Sorrows? He could think of nothing more clever than a direct question, however, so he went out at last with the remark: “Well, I think I’ll take a walk down by



the sea-shore. The doctor will probably be up by the time I get back, and then we can get to business."

He had no difficulty in finding his way to the sea-shore, as a path led from the missionary's garden-gate to the edge of the cliff upon which the village was built and then, by a long flight of steps cut in the rock, down to the sand. He was nearly in the middle of the crescent formed by the curving beach, and he stood for a moment with his hands in his pockets, irresolute as to which way he should go. It was an inconsequential matter, yet it was characteristic of the man that he should stand and debate it for a moment in his mind. This interest in little things was the chief source of his zest in life. There was a rocky promontory at either horn; the white fringe at the sea's edge rustled on either side in curves of equal length and infinity of number. Yonder was a fishing fleet of four boats coming in, their sails of exactly the same shape and size, and all leaning at the same angle; but they were passing through the precise center of the opening.

He had about decided to turn to the right, because on that hand there was a flowering tree, white as snow, far down the beach, but he changed

his mind when he heard again that sharp, distinct "Crack! Crack!" which McKenzie had told him last night was made by the paddles of the washerwomen, beating their clothes. There they were, at the left, at the very tip of the crescent. He had not seen them at first, because they were standing at the base of a great rock and were attired in homespun of a dull color. The distance, as Walter estimated with his eye, could not have been less than two miles, perhaps more, yet the sounds rang out with a sharpness and nearness that suggested wizardry. He could scarcely credit his vision, which testified that those startling reports were being made so far away. It seemed rather that spirits of the air were shooting off invisible pistols just above his head.

He ought not to go so far. He really must look up McKenzie, and begin his campaign for gathering and cornering Greek argols immediately. But then, it was beautiful walking here along the beach. The sand was firm and so clean that it slipped from his shoes without dimming the polish which he had put on that morning. Besides, he felt a revival of his school-boy interest in Greece. He wondered if the women still retained any traces of classic beauty. There were three

or four of them over there, at least, and one or more, he reasoned, must be young. He struck out briskly toward the left, stopping only to pick up an occasional cuttle-bone.

The distance was even greater than he had estimated, and he was fully three quarters of an hour reaching the spot where the girls, for they all proved to be young, were at work. There were four of them and he could see that they looked up from time to time as he approached, and that, when they at last became sure that he was indeed coming to where they were, they flocked together for a moment like a bevy of frightened doves. But after a moment's chatter and much laughter they deemed it best to resume their occupation and to take no notice of him.

After Walter arrived at the spot, he scarcely knew what to do, for it now occurred to him that there was no way of talking to the girls, and he saw plainly that they would be embarrassed if he stood and stared at them. So he lifted his cap gravely and passed on. They all bowed, very gracefully, he thought, and it was not till he had got some rods past them that they again burst into merry laughter. It was a charming scene and one that he felt he would never forget.

The girls were all distinctly pretty — that is, three were pretty and one superbly beautiful. Of the three pretty ones, two were petite and bore sufficient resemblance to mark them as sisters, while the other was larger and more voluptuous. The faces of the three were all of that oval type, so common among the Greek peasantry. Their complexions were a clear olive, their hair black and glossy, their eyes wide apart, large and liquid brown, like the eyes of the wild deer. As Walter passed, one of the girls was kneeling by the edge of the sea, another was spreading a piece of linen upon the sand and the third was coming down to the shore with a basket upon her head; for the wash had evidently been brought in two huge panniers slung over the back of a donkey, that, tied to a little tree, stood nodding and dreaming in the white sun.

The beautiful girl was tall, and might have been Diana, if the immortal gods were not all dead. She was attired like her companions, in scant skirt of home-made blue, and loose jacket open at the throat for freedom of motion. She was, like them, barefoot, and her skirt was tucked up at the side, revealing the neat ankle. Her little feet were as white as the foam that caressed them,

as pink as almond blossoms. She it was who was swinging the paddle there in the laughing glory of the sky and sea, in the old, romantic beauty of the world, and the motions of her lithe young body were as rhythmic as the shoreward pulsing of the waves. Her massive coil of soft brown hair had slipped loose and fallen to the nape of her neck, that was broad and tinted a rich brown by the caressing sun. This girl's complexion, Walter noticed in that quick, yet eager, glance of youth, was not olive, like that of her companions; as she glanced up at him, he saw that her throat was as pink-white as the inner surface of a sea-shell. She did not smile in response to his salutation, and he was quite certain, through intuition, that she did not join in the laughter after he had passed.

He understood now why the girls had come so far to do the washing for their families: at this point a stream of considerable volume leaped flashing from the cliff and ran into the sea, and it was the fresh water which had brought them there.

Walter turned and retraced his steps rapidly, carrying with him a vision of graceful poses, bright, mischievous eyes, gleaming teeth, and a

vague consciousness that there was something classic in the beauty of the scene, reminiscent of the rosy dawn-time of the world, when nymphs were about, and princesses did the family wash, thus ennobling labor for all time. Ere Walter had got out of hearing, the girls began to sing a monotonous oriental refrain, to which the falling paddle kept time. He did not understand Greek, but he noticed that two words recurred with regularity, which sounded like *Lemonitsa, Nerani soula*.

When he returned, he was informed that Mr. Ion had arisen and gone to another village about four miles distant, from where he hoped to catch a little steamer that he had seen passing in the offing, and with which he hoped to get to Syra. He would probably be gone about three days.

"But I had hoped to have a talk with him," said Walter to Mrs. Ion, annoyed that his morning walk should have delayed his business. "I can't stay on here indefinitely, pleasant as it is, and I hardly know how to begin till I go over matters with Mr. Ion."

He decided at last to make the best of things, and started in search of McKenzie. He found him at the café, sitting under a great tree and

as usual sipping a cup of tea, which he had brewed within.

"Sit down," he said, "I want to tell you my dream of last night."

"Mac," said Walter, and he wondered, even as he used the familiar address, that he had not employed it before, for he found his heart warming wonderfully to this whimsical Scot, "Mac, I have seen a goddess, a-a-a-woman,—upon my word, I never dreamed of such beauty." He described his stroll. "And to think," he added, "that she should have to be a washerwoman!"

"That's nothing," replied McKenzie. "In these primitive communities, labor has not yet lost its dignity. We are still living in Phæacian days. You may have seen another Nausicaa. I used to imagine that Homer never could have seen Nausicaa, if he had not been blind,—that such a woman could only have existed in a poet's dream. But one does find, sometimes, in these Greek islands, creatures that no poet could have dreamed—that only a God could have called into life!" As he spoke the Scot sighed deeply and sat for some moments with his head buried in his hands.

"They were singing," continued Walter, "some kind of song to a queer tune. It went

like this —” and he hummed the air. “Every minute I heard words that sounded like *Lemon-itza, Nerantsoula.*”

McKenzie began to sing in a feeble, but very sweet tenor — almost a soprano.

“That’s it! That’s it!” cried Walter. “What does it mean, anyhow?”

“Not much, in translation. It’s a folk-song. It means something like this, perhaps:

‘Down by the sea-shore, down by the sea,  
Down by the sea—little green, wild orange tree—

Chiote maidens wash, little daughters of the priest,  
Yes, a little Chiote maiden—  
Little budding lemon tree—

Washes, spreads the clothes and in the sand she plays,  
Spreads the clothes to dry, this maiden—  
Little green, wild orange tree—

Passes by a boat, all golden, leaning over,  
Passes by a boat, O maiden,  
Little green, wild orange tree—

And the sea was like a mirror, and the whole world  
then grew brighter,  
And the sea was like a mirror, maiden,  
Little budding lemon tree!”

“There must have been somebody in that boat,” said Walter, when McKenzie had finished.



"There generally is, sooner or later," replied McKenzie.

Who can read the secrets of the human heart? McKenzie, of all men in the world, was the last to be thought of in connection with sentiment or tender memories, yet for twenty minutes he sat musing, yes, at times actually sighing.

And Walter, was he thinking of argols and baking powder? If so, he must have found it difficult to concentrate on the subject, for he broke in upon McKenzie's reflections at last with a question.

"How shall I talk to her? I don't know a word of Greek, and I can't stay here long enough to learn the language."

And then he uttered an excited cry, so loud that the proprietor of the café, walking some distance off, looked in his direction.

"There she is now," he said. "Look! I can't point — coming up from the sea-shore there."

And, indeed, at that very moment, the head and shoulders of the beautiful unknown were appearing, as she climbed slowly up the corkscrew path. She was bare-headed, as is the custom of the country, and her beautiful face, upon which the

yellow sun fell softly, sifting through the trees, was flushed with exercise. She had a rope in her hand and the mule, laden with two panniers, scrambled upon the cliff after her.

## CHAPTER IV

### UNRAVELING A MYSTERY

The girl led the mule up to the missionary's house and disappeared through the garden gate. A moment later Mrs. Ion came out and helped her take the panniers within.

"That will be the missionary's servant, Polyxene," hazarded McKenzie, to whom the Greek names were easy.

"Servant!" cried Walter. "Can a woman who looks like that be a servant?"

"Ah, it makes small difference how you look," replied McKenzie, "if you haven't the gold. Apes have worn crowns and the sons of apes have ridden in carriages ere now. King Alfred, they say, baked scones once. Besides, strange things have happened in these islands — that girl may have the blood of King Paleologus in her veins."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Walter, "if she's the missionary's servant, it's likely that she speaks English. Don't you suppose she does?"

"If she's the missionary's servant," said McKenzie, dropping his voice to his favorite whisper, and leaning so close to the American that the faces of the two almost touched, "then she's betrothed to that tall Spiro whom we saw dancing at the café, and if you make love to her, you'll get a knife in your back."

Walter started.

"I wasn't thinking of making love to her," he laughed nervously; and then, as his uncle's parting injunction arose to his mind, "I've no time for that sort of thing. There's nothing interferes with business like getting mixed up with a woman. I think I'll stroll over to the house though, just to see if she does talk English."

Walter walked quickly over to the house, and entered his room, where, as he made a show of busying himself at something or other, he could hear plainly what was going on in the garden, as the women went in and out of the kitchen at the end of the other wing. He learned quickly that this modern Nausicaa was no other than Polyxene, and that she spoke English perfectly. It made his blood boil, and he could not at that moment have told why, to hear commonplace little Mrs. Ion ordering this superb creature about in

decisive, though not unkind, tones. Mrs. Ion was an aggressive, bustling Yankee housekeeper, who ruled everybody within reach, her husband included, and ordered people to do things, even while they were being done.

Walter was now seized with a desire to make the girl's acquaintance and to talk with her.

"I can't do any business till Ion comes back," he reflected. "Besides, there is no doubt that it was she who was crying so in the room next to mine the other night. Perhaps I can find out what the trouble is and help her in some way. I wonder if it is because they are making her marry this Greek against her will?" This reflection gave him comfort and strengthened his resolve. Even his uncle could not object to his performing a conspicuous duty. His uncle's fear was lest he become interested in some woman sentimentally.

Walter's opportunity came an hour later. At some distance back of the house, perhaps two hundred yards, was a tiny spring, and from this the family obtained their water for drinking and cooking purposes. The path to this spring was shaded for a part of the way by a trellised grapevine, now putting on the green glory of spring and thrusting out a million tiny baby fingers,

eager to seize whatever they might touch. Seeing Polyxene take up a large earthen amphora of antique shape and go out of the rear garden-gate, he left the house, walked round it and strolled slowly down toward the spring. He found the girl sitting on a rock under the shade of a cypress tree; she was leaning forward slightly, holding the jug so that the tenuous stream could trickle into its mouth. She looked up at him inquiringly and he perceived that her eyes, as she sat there in the shade, were a dark blue, like the blue of the deep sea when the sun is under a cloud. A moment later, when she stepped out into the splendor of the Greek day, he thought they were a light blue, still deep, as of the sea when the sun is shining. She was not embarrassed at his approach, and her pose, even as she held the water-jug and raised her eyes to his, was as graceful and classic as though it had been carved out of Pentelic marble by some pupil of Phidias. Her face was sad, as she sat there now under the cypress tree, and Walter knew, without further inquiry, that she was indeed his Lady of Sorrows.

"I am Mr. Lythgoe," he explained, lifting his hat; "I am living in your house for a few days. And you are Miss Polyxene, are you not?"

"Yes, sir, Polyxene Abattis." She spoke pleasantly enough, but there was a listless note in her voice as though she had lost interest in things and did not care.

"Yes; I heard Mrs. Ion speak your name, so I knew who you were. Had I suspected it when I saw you down there on the sea-shore, I should have stopped and talked with you. But who would ever have dreamed that among a group of girls wa-washing clothes on the shore of a Greek island, one should be able to speak English!"

"Mr. and Mrs. Ion brought me up from quite a small child," she explained, "and they don't talk anything else in the house."

"I suppose Mrs. Ion will make pies and use good American English as long as she lives," laughed Walter, "and wherever she is!"

Polyxene smiled. There was something so infectious in this young man's nature,—he was so engaging and ingenuous! As they were talking now, the jug filled and the limpid water burst gurgling over the sides. Polyxene arose, and breaking off a wisp of some fragrant weed, crushed it into an improvised cork and thrust it into the amphora's mouth. Then she seized the two handles, and ere Walter had realized what

she was about to do, she threw the heavy amphora to her right shoulder. There was extraordinary grace in the act, with its supple play of young, perfect muscles, its unconscious ease, its lithe bending and straightening of the Hebe-like form. Holding the amphora with her right hand, she set her left upon her hip and said, with a smile, "Good-by, I must be going now. Mrs. Ion needs the water for lunch."

"But," cried Walter, "you're not going to carry that great jug to the house, are you? Let me take it — I insist!" And he attempted to take it from her shoulder. But the girl resisted with considerable spirit.

"I carry it a dozen times a day," she said. "It's nothing; I'm used to it."

"But while I am here, I will carry it for you. I'm an American, and Americans don't allow their women to do such work as this."

"Let go," she insisted, blushing prettily. "I am Mrs. Ion's servant and it would set the whole town to talking if you were seen carrying my water-jug for me."

This appeal had its effect, and Walter glanced guiltily around. It would not do for these ignorant and suspicious villagers even to see him



struggling to take the jug from her shoulder. He stood watching her as she passed down the path in the checkered shade of the grape-arbor, through the farther opening of which the sea laughed and flashed.

Walter sat down by the spring and gave himself up to his reflections. She was crying because she had just pledged herself to marry one of these Greeks — there could be no doubt of that — he mused. She probably had never known any other life than this, yet such a girl must have intuitions of something better. She had had hopes, perhaps — who knows? — dreams, longings, maybe, but she had felt, after all, how foolish such thoughts were, how hopeless her condition really was, and she had taken the fatal step. He wondered if many a woman did not have “a good cry” the night after she had promised to marry, even though she had pledged her hand to the man of her choice? It was the giving up of the old life, at best, and the beginning of a new. It must be sad to say good-by to girlhood, under any circumstances, he thought; but Polyxene — what a curious name! — never could have had any girlhood. One would think she would be glad to cease being a servant and to

have a house of her own. This reflection convinced Walter that the girl was contracting an unhappy marriage.

The missionary and his wife were no doubt kind to her, he soliloquized, but they could not understand her. Perhaps all she needed in the world was some human being to sympathize with her and give her a word of advice. He was sure that he sympathized with her, and he arose with a brisk determination to gain her confidence if possible.

He must lose no time, either, he mused further, because the missionary would be back in a day or two, and then he must give all his thoughts to the argols. He must get to work in earnest, at the first possible moment, but he must wait for Ion. His uncle instructed him to confer with the missionary, and he might start the whole thing wrong, if he failed to take this advice. He felt well satisfied with himself because he was keeping his main purpose so well in mind. Though much annoyed that his business was being delayed, he felt less idle now that he had decided to devote to Polyxene only the two or three vacant days of Ion's absence,—this undesired vacation, as it were, which had been forced upon him.

## CHAPTER V

### DANGEROUS BUSINESS

Polyxene waited at table during luncheon, which meal he took with Mrs. Ion in the garden. There had been something romantic in finding the girl by the sea-shore, washing clothes in company with a bevy of nymphs, for Walter had not quite forgotten his Homer. She was stately, too, carrying the water-jug down the trellised walk; but this task of serving-maid was menial and inappropriate to her in his mind. Yet this very fact only increased his sense of her superiority. He felt as though he were being served by a princess in disguise.

He did not dare follow her about with his eyes, as he was constantly drawn to do, neither did he think it prudent at this stage to question Mrs. Ion concerning her. He rather jumped to the conclusion that if he were to help this beautiful creature, he would accomplish his purpose the more easily if he were to make an ally of his

hostess. He was therefore most attentive to the lady during the progress of the meal, evincing such anxious solicitude as to the state of her appetite, such sorrow over the absence of Maud Persephone, and such interest in the lady's most trivial affairs, as to solidify her judgment, already fast forming, that he was an exemplary young man. He sat for at least an hour after luncheon, talking with her. Naturally, they spoke of America, and by great good fortune, Walter had visited Joliet quite recently. A certain prominent banker there was a distant relative of his, and though Mrs. Ion had never spoken with the banker, she had seen him once as a little girl, and she described him.

"Yes! yes!" cried Walter eagerly. "That's Calverly exactly, only his whiskers are quite gray now, and he's bald."

"He naturally would be changed," sighed Mrs. Ion; "it's many years since I saw him last."

The circumstance of both having seen the same man back in America was something tangible — a definite bond between them. Walter felt emboldened.

"Yes," he sighed, "Calverly is getting along in years — he must be sixty, if he's a day. They

— ah, were having a little celebration when we arrived here the other night. Maudie says it was for the betrothal of your — Miss Polyxene and a Mr. Douzinas.”

The girl had gone into the kitchen.

“Yes. These Greeks make a great fuss over getting married. I’ll be glad when it’s all finished.”

“I suppose Miss Polyxene is very happy over the idea of becoming a bride?”

“Polyxene naturally feels bad about leaving us,” replied Mrs. Ion. “She has been with us ever since she was a small child, and my husband and I have been like father and mother to her.”

“Her parents died when she was a child?”

“Yes, when she was very young. Her mother, in fact, died when Polyxene was born, and her father, who was a fisherman, was drowned one morning early while he was out setting his nets. So we took her in, according to the Greek custom. We take care of her and she helps about the house.”

“And I suppose she is very much in love with this Greek? I saw him over at the café dancing, and he seemed a big, fine-looking fellow.”

“So he is, and it’s a good thing for her. He’s

the mayor's son, a sober, industrious young man. My husband arranged it. The fact is, we've really no further use for the girl here, and I told her that it wouldn't be right for her to refuse such a chance as this. Oh, I didn't make her feel that she wasn't perfectly welcome, for she is. But she knows that Mr. Ion and I are getting along in years and that it is her duty to get married now that she has the chance. And this is an opportunity that she would never get again — the mayor's son, and he asks no dowry!"

"I suppose this Mr. Douzinas is very much in earnest?"

"In earnest? I think he would kill any other man that so much as looked at Polyxene. He knocked down with a heavy cane the other day one of his friends who chid him with engaging himself to a 'bond-girl,' as the Greeks call it. But dear me! I must get to work. I don't know when I've wasted so much time — but it isn't every day that I get a chance to talk with some one from dear old America."

"Where — ah — where is Mr. Douzinas, now?" asked Walter with as much unconcern as he could command, as Mrs. Ion arose and brushed some crumbs from her lap.

"Oh, he's gone off on a cruise. He's a spongefisherman and he's absent, sometimes, for weeks together."

"That's fortunate, then, in case Polyxene isn't very deeply in love with him," persisted Walter, rashly, as he thought, the moment the words were spoken. But for some reason or other, Mrs. Ion did not notice his unusual interest in the subject.

"Girls don't have much to say about such matters in Greece," she replied. "They aren't like our girls at home. A husband is picked out for a girl here, and she generally takes him, and I sometimes think it's a good way, for they seem to get along all right afterward. But I'd like to see any one pick out a husband for one of our girls, if she didn't like him!" The good lady laughed at the idea, and Walter joined her. By "our" she meant "American," and he perceived that the bond established by the nebulous and remote Mr. Calverly was still efficacious.

There was evidently no chance of seeing Polyxene to talk with her now. What course should he pursue? Tell Mrs. Ion, who was an American woman, after all, of the girl's grief, and attempt to enlist her aid in some scheme of deliverance? Not yet. Perhaps the girl's sorrow had been for

another cause connected with some phase of her history with which he was wholly unfamiliar. Then, too, the difficulties of the thing began to take definite shape in his mind. This young man was, it seemed, influential in the island, he was of a fiery temper and sufficiently in love to attack murderously a fellow Greek who had presumed to criticize his choice. Besides, the couple was actually betrothed by public ceremony. The Greek would have a right to resent interference, and he would be supported by all his countrymen, as against a meddling foreigner. His life would not be safe if he got mixed up with this Greek, Walter reflected, and he could see at a glance that the missionary and his wife would not care to make enemies of these people among whom they lived. He must draw out the girl herself in some way and make sure as to the cause of her trouble.



## CHAPTER VI

### GOOD ADVICE WASTED

Walking over to the café, Walter found McKenzie seated at a table with a glass of bitter wine before him. The Scot bent toward him with a look of such solemnity that Walter was sure that he was about to be made the recipient of some important discovery.

"It's a very pleasant day!" whispered McKenzie.

"It's perfect. Where've you been all the morning?"

"I've been taking a walk over to the monastery. It's a rare old place, built, they say, in six hundred A.D. They claim to have a fragment of the true cross there, a painting by St. John, a fragment of the carpenter's bench on which our Saviour worked when he was a boy, and an eye-tooth of St. Irene. There's a rare lot of old manuscripts there, too, which I hope you'll be giving me the time to look over."

"Why, certainly! And perhaps you'd better be getting at them right away, for as soon as Ion returns from Syra, we must take up this business of the argols in earnest. By the way, how binding is this betrothal ceremony, such as they were having here the night we arrived? Is it about the same as marriage proper?"

"Oh, no, of course not, but it's rarely broken, rarely broken — and," here he looked meaningly at Walter, "'tis a dangerous business to make love to a betrothed girl in Greece."

"Who said anything about making love?" asked Walter with considerable asperity. "I was just asking out of natural curiosity. One can't help feeling curious at times, you know."

"Will you take a little wholesome advice," asked McKenzie, "if 'tis offered in a friendly spirit?"

"Surely."

"Well, then — you'll pardon me, I know — don't be showing too much natural curiosity in a betrothed girl, here upon a Greek island."

Walter blushed.

"I must get together on this tartar business right away," he said hastily. "Have you learned anything about it yet, Mac?"

"I asked the Father Superior a few questions. They are famous wine-makers over there at the monastery. They have one tun in their cellars that holds four thousand gallons and that they say is filled with wine one hundred years old. That must be a divine elixir—no doubt there as a constant discipline in self-control for the holy Fathers. The Father Superior told me that the lees are found when the new wines are racked off, about two or three months after the vintage,—say in October or November. They used to press these out and send them to Syra in bricks, but of late years there has been no demand, and the lees are now thrown away. The argols are found on the sides of the barrels from which old wine is emptied."

"The thing to do," said Walter, "is to establish headquarters somewhere and send word through the islands that so much will be paid, according to the system here, for argols and lees. Then, some one will have to stay here, inspect the stuff as it comes in, and ship it off to America."

Having formulated this plan, Walter felt that he had actually taken the first step in setting his business going. As for McKenzie's advice regarding the betrothed girl, he knew that it was

given in a friendly spirit, and acknowledged its soundness.

He was thinking of this very matter, when he saw Polyxene pass through the square, leading the mule, this time accoutered with naught save a halter and a leathern pack-saddle.

"Where can she be going now?" he asked.

McKenzie eyed the trappings of the mule.

"I should say that she is going to the mountain-side to gather wild thyme for baking bread," he ventured. "They bake the bread in this country with wild thyme, you know, for the weed gives it an aroma, faint, but delicious." The Scot seemed immediately to forget the existence of the girl. He was poring over a small and badly printed volume of the *Bacchanals* of Euripides, with notes in modern Greek.

Polyxene, with the rope dragging over her shoulder, followed a path that threaded an olive orchard, and that could be seen farther on sketched like a rude *sigma* upon a distant hillside. She wore upon her head a lilac-colored handkerchief, elaborately embroidered and so tied that it dropped in a V between her shoulders. She passed into the shadow of the flowering olive trees, where the light had lost its whiteness and

yet was diffused with so soft and perfect a clearness that objects were more distinct there than in the sun itself. Sometimes she would appear at the end of a vista of parallel trees, and then she would be blotted from his sight for a long minute or so. At last he saw her no more.

Half an hour later he was walking briskly along the same path, glancing eagerly right and left, his heart beating in a strange, turbulent way, when one considers that he was a modern knight-errant, bent upon a purely philanthropic mission. He found Polyxene about a mile from town, chopping at the roots of a wild thyme bush, and tossing the branches which she cut off into a pile that had already grown to considerable dimensions. His indignation at the sight was not un-mixed with pity.

What sort of Christians were this missionary and his wife to allow this beautiful creature to perform such menial tasks? McKenzie was not there to tell him that the work which Polyxene was now doing was neither hard nor unpleasant, and that it would be difficult to find a girl in the island of her age who had not performed the same task a hundred times over. Polyxene was fortunate to be furnished a mule that relieved her

from carrying the wood upon her back, the more common mode of transportation.

"This is an outrage, a — a — blamed outrage!" cried Walter, unexpectedly appearing before her.

"How you frightened me!" she screamed, turning her eyes upon him, as she stood there bending over, with the ax in mid air. Her face was prettily flushed and a damp, brown lock had struggled loose from under the handkerchief and fallen upon her forehead.

"Why, what are you doing here?" she asked.

"I saw you come out in this direction, and I followed you," he replied boldly. "I want to talk with you."

"To talk with me?" There was no coquettishness in the question. The blue eyes looked into his with childlike wonder.

"Yes, why not? You're the only person about the place that I've seen that's worth talking to." He did not glance at her to note the effect of this speech, but reached out his hand, adding, "Here, give me the ax."

She passed it over to him, and he immediately attacked the thyme bush furiously. She stood watching him quietly enough for about five min-

utes, when at last she said, "Now give me back the ax, please. I must finish and get home before dark."

"I'm going to chop this wood," he replied. "Americans don't stand about calmly and let women do work like this."

"But suppose somebody should pass along and see you?"

"That would be a good thing — that would be real missionary work. I'd like to show some of these people how to treat their women."

He pitched into the thyme bush as though that were the guilty party in the premises. Polyxene regarded him with increasing wonder at first, and then at last his boyishness, and something awkward and comical in his style of work overcame her and she burst into silvery laughter.

"Well!" thought Walter, as he noted how ravishingly the rosy cheeks dimpled and how merrily the sea-blue eyes flashed. "That's better music than the sobs I heard last night."

"Well, I must be doing something," exclaimed Polyxene. "We must be starting back before sundown," — and she busied herself with making the pile into a large bundle to be hung on one side of the mule, which stood by patiently.

"I'll soon have enough for the other side," shouted Walter, not abating one whit from his zeal.

"At that rate," laughed Polyxene, "you would soon clear the whole mountain-side."

He helped her bind the second bundle, kneeling upon it with her, and, once or twice, as they pulled at the rope, their hands touched, giving Walter such a thrill as his heart had never felt before.

While they were thus kneeling, a vast bank of clouds in the west was reft asunder, and the sun looked forth, low in the heavens, in the center of a great opening with irregular edges, all of a fierce golden yellow, as though they were burning. Just above the sea's edge a ribbon of bright orange, miles and miles long, stretched parallel with the horizon. The village gleamed white below them, at the head of its crescent bay, upon the fringe of which the foam whitened, as though the Divine Painter had traced a line to mark the water from the land. Toward Athens an island swam in purple mist and the sails of the homing caiques were flushed with a golden light.

"Look!" cried Walter. "Isn't the world beautiful?" And she understood him and was



silent. They arose, lifted the second bundle to the animal's side and started down the hill together.

"It is all beautiful," he said at last, gazing with admiration at the noble face framed in the lilac handkerchief, "and there is nothing in it all so beautiful as you!"

And this was the afternoon of the first day!

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MAIDEN EXPLAINS

In the village of Ta Castra there is no such thing as flirting. If a man wants a woman, he asks her relatives for her, and marries her, if they will give her to him. The man who trifles with a woman's affections is killed by her relatives, and, if the honor of the family demands it, the woman suffers the same fate.

"You mustn't talk that way to me," said Poiyxene, "I am betrothed to another. Spiro would kill you if he heard you say that to me." She spoke in a low voice, and without looking up, but there was a world of suppressed emotion in her tone. Here, then, was Walter's opening.

"Polyxene, I can say to you that you are beautiful without harm, because it is true. I have as much right to say it as I have to declare that the setting sun is beautiful, or the light upon those sails, or the purple glow upon that island. I am American, and we Americans have different cus-

toms from those of the people in this part of the world. We are said — I don't know how true it is — to be the best people in the world to our women. We try to make them happy and not to let them suffer. If an American knows that a woman is in grief, he feels that it is his duty to help her if he can."

Like many a man before him, he was arguing as much to himself as to his hearer. She turned her eyes full upon him, sweetly waiting.

"I heard you sobbing the other night, and I know that you are not happy. Tell me what it is, and I swear to you that I will help you if it lies in my power—yes, if it lies in human power. Are they marrying you to this Spiro against your will?"

"N—o," she faltered, "I said that I would marry him."

"Then what is it, Polyxene? I can see that you are different from these people here. Perhaps you have felt that you were alone, that you had not a friend in the world. If so, you certainly have one now."

He had stopped in his earnestness, and the mule, advancing the length of the rope, rubbed his nose against her shoulder. She buried her

face in the animal's neck and again those despairing sobs shook her frame. At length she looked up, her eyes swimming in tears.

"Oh, what could you do?" she asked; "what could anybody do?"

"Do? I don't know exactly — anything, everything! I could talk with Mr. and Mrs. Ion, I could talk with this Spiro. If he's a man at all, he would not marry a woman that didn't want him."

"Little he would care about that," she replied, smiling sadly at the folly of the plan. "Here in Andros a girl isn't supposed to have any choice in such matters. He and his whole family would be so insulted that they would drive you from the island, or maybe kill you."

"But how about Mr. and Mrs. Ion? She, at least, is an American woman, and would understand."

"It was because of them," replied the girl with sudden spirit, "that I promised. They have been kind to me, they did not even force me to do this, but I felt that I had become a burden to them. I can no longer eat their bread, now that I am sure that they do not need me. Had there been anything else to do — had there been any

way to get away from here — but there wasn't. And there was no good excuse for refusing this chance, as things are looked at here. If I had asked Mr. Ion to stand out against Spiro and his relatives, he would have done so, but he would have made enemies of them all, and that would have put an end to his work in the island. That much he told me. How the Greeks would have laughed at Spiro, if he had been refused the hand of a portionless servant girl!" she added bitterly.

"By heaven, I'll prevent it," cried Walter, "whatever it may cost! I'm not afraid of all the Greeks in Andros. These people claim to be civilized — I'll show them what civilization means."

"It's too late now," sighed Polyxene, shaking her beautiful head sadly. "Had you come sooner, perhaps you might have done something. But now that I am betrothed to him, he regards me as his. You must not interfere — you must promise me that you will not! You do not know the danger you would run," and there was a look of terror in her eyes when she now turned them upon Walter. He realized that her anxiety was for him, and his heart gave a bound. If she hoped to deter him, this was not the right way.

They came now to the upper edge of the olive grove. The ribbon of orange changed into a river of molten gold, into which the pompous disk of the sun dropped, and was dissolved.

## CHAPTER VIII

### 'A MAN, 'A WOMAN, 'AND 'A NIGHTINGALE

Mr. Ion did not return from Syra on the day set, nor for several days thereafter. He was not greatly missed either by Lythgoe or by McKenzie. The latter, relieved for once from the necessity of financing his immediate future, soon became absorbed in his own peculiar interests. He could, in fact, go on for ever, fumbling about among his old manuscripts, or reading one or another of the tattered volumes which he carried in his grip, provided there were some way of meeting his various small expenses. He required shelter, and his stomach was insatiable and could not be reasoned with, nor its demands greatly procrastinated. Indeed, many another poor student has been distracted by this same organ, and it is safe to say that the stomach is the greatest of all enemies to learning, whether it be kept too full or too empty. So, since his bills were being paid for the nonce, McKenzie forgot all about the

argols, which were, it must be admitted, at best but a means to an end with him.

As for Walter, the more he saw of Polyxene, the more determined he became to follow his uncle's advice to the letter and do nothing until after a conference with Mr. Ion. He was but twenty-five and was so anxious to begin right! Interest in a woman engenders in the human male preternatural shrewdness; when that interest progresses to the point of actual love, the shrewdness develops into the cunning of madness. Walter lounged about his room most of the day, encouraging Mrs. Ion's American reminiscences, and feasting his eyes upon the beauty of Polyxene's countenance. The elder woman, it is needless to say, grasped eagerly at the slenderest threads of memory, and was delighted with whatever she pulled into view. Thus the banker Calverly was reinforced by the old high school building, which Walter had once seen before it was torn down; and certain scenes upon the route from Joliet to Chicago were distinctly remembered by both.

Polyxene, on her part, was of course aware that she was the real object of the young man's interest, and the situation was rife with pleasurable emotions for her. It amused and flattered her



and contained enough of intrigue to be exciting. There was a spice of danger, too, for she did not know at what moment he might become incautious and betray himself.

For two whole days he found no further opportunity to talk with her, except for a few moments at the spring, when she had so far forgotten Spiro for the time being as to be in a coquettish mood.

"Aren't you ever going after wood again?" he asked her, and she replied, laughing,

"No, indeed! I am going to stay at the house and keep my eyes on you and Mrs. Ion."

"But, Polyxene," — as she started away with the jug, — "you must help me a little. I really must have another talk with you." She glanced back over her shoulder at him, replying in a whisper: "Be careful, Mrs. Ion might see you and be jealous." As she passed down the walk, she tittered merrily at the absurd conceit — but, woman-like, she had given him no satisfaction.

The moon, which had shone into Walter's room with such brilliancy on the night of his arrival in Andros, lingered later now among the dreaming isles, and it was dark in the garden, save for the light of the great stars. Walter sat up till all

hours, wondering if he should again hear weeping in the room next to his own, but Polyxene, now aware of his presence, managed to pass to her apartment and to retire with all the shyness and subtlety of a mother bird to its nest.

It was on the night after the last brief conversation at the well, that he was astonished at hearing a bird suddenly break into song just outside his door. There was something startling in the melody, which was clearer, wilder and more passionate than anything he had ever heard before. It began abruptly, too, out of the listening silence of the night, and as abruptly ended, giving the silence itself a sort of tenseness and palpability. It was such a natural and spontaneous volley of sweet notes, that its first effect was to cause the hearer to forget the hour, and then to exclaim, a moment later, "Why, it's all dark without!"

With this reflection the song became a strange and wonderful thing, unreal and unlike anything else beneath the sun or the stars. It became a song of dreams and of mystery, the audible cry of the Greek night's passionate heart, the lyric of unseen trystings, the thread of sweethearts of old time, the echo of forgotten Sapphics. A few moments of silence and then the same clear voice

rang through its divine aria again, as fairy-clear as though the singer were unraveling the starlight and spinning it into song.

And now it seemed to Walter as though some bird were dreaming. He tiptoed out upon the porch, and thought he heard a faint rustling among the leaves of a tree above his head. His impression must have been correct, for, after a long interval, he heard the song again, but farther away and deeper among the trees this time. He followed, still with the greatest caution, peering among the dark branches, and came upon Polyxene, sitting upon a bench built around a large fig-tree.

"What is it?" he whispered, that he might not frighten the bird. She turned her sweet face inquiringly to his in the balmy April night and the starlight. "What bird is singing?" he asked, in hushed tones.

"What bird? Oh, it is the nightingale. Have you never heard it before?"

The question, an unconscious confession that she was not frightened at seeing him there, gave him sufficient confidence to sit down beside her.

"No. We don't have them in America. There it goes again! Isn't its song beautiful?"

"Yes. They say that no other bird sings so sweetly. But we hear them so much in Greece that we become used to them and sometimes do not notice them. Often the garden here is filled with them, and you can hear many, many singing at once."

"You did not then come out to listen to the nightingales, Polyxene? Why are you sitting up so late, all by yourself in the garden?"

"Oh, why do you ask me? You don't care! Nobody cares. You think you do, because you are kind-hearted, and an American, but in a few days you will go away and forget all about me."

"Forget all about you, Polyxene? I shall never forget you, and I have sworn to help you if I can. But I know now why you came out here alone. It was because you were sad and miserable and wanted to grieve where nobody could see you. Poor little girl, you must indeed be alone in the world, if you have no one to go to in such trouble as this!"

Both were talking in whispers now. The nightingale had been forgotten, but Mrs. Ion and the little girl were sleeping in the main part of the house, not far off.

"I have always been alone," said Polyxene.

“My mother I never saw, and my father I can scarcely remember, I was so young when they brought him home dead. I can see him now as I saw him twice: once, I had fallen and hurt myself and the old woman who kept house for us was cross with me because I cried so loud. I looked up and saw my father standing there in the door, tall and beautiful, and he picked me up in his arms and called me his little sugar angel, and told me to lay my head on his breast and cry all I wanted to. And I forgot the hurt and looked up into his eyes and laughed — oh, so happy! And I saw him that day when four men brought him home from the cruel sea, and his great strong arms hung helpless, his face was white, and there was sea-weed in his wet hair and his eyes stared so! I called to him ‘Papa! papa!’ But he did not look at me, nor smile —” she was sobbing now and could not speak.

“Polyxene, dear girl — there! there!” whispered Walter, taking her hand and stroking it as though it were indeed a child’s. After she had regained control of herself, he asked: “And did your father leave you nothing at all — you, an only child?”

“Nothing,” she replied, “but a queer old

trunk, bound in leather, that had belonged to his father's father. It is so old now that even the leather is beginning to peel off. There is nothing like it on the island. Oh, if lifeless things could only talk, I sometimes think that old trunk could tell me of the land of which the nightingales sing!"

"Poor girl!—But now, tell me, why is this marriage so distasteful to you? I suppose, of course, that you do not love this Spiro,—do you actually hate him?"

"At first I did not. I did not think of him one way or the other. When he sought me for his wife, I went to him and told him that I did not love him, but he said that he would have me if he had to commit murder to get me; that he loved me and that neither hate nor love nor anything should stand between us. I am very proud—oh, you do not know how proud I am! Strange, is it not, in a pauper and a servant girl?" she asked bitterly. "And so, when I understood that I was a burden to Mrs. Ion, and that there was nowhere I could go, and nothing that I could do, I said that I would marry Spiro. I will work for him, I will be a good wife to him, but I will be a burden to no one!" she exclaimed, and her voice had almost a fierce fierceness.

“But,” said Walter, “perhaps if there were anything else you could do, if there were any way out of it —”

“I would be a slave first, I would work my fingers to the bone as a drudge! For now I think I hate him, because he has driven me into this corner and has had no pity on me. Listen. I have had dreams all my life. I have felt that I am not of these people. I have waked in the night and thought I heard strange voices, as of my own kin, calling me out of a foreign land. It has seemed to me as if sometime I should go away from here, that I was not born to be a drudge, nor even the wife of one of these fierce, rough islanders. Oh, I hate everything here! the faces of Mr. and Mrs. Ion, the faces of our neighbors, the village streets, everything except the voice of the nightingales, and sometimes they call to me, ‘Polyxene, Polyxene, do not hate us. We sing in your own land, too, and the orange trees and the almonds bloom there as sweetly as here!’ Am I not foolish?” she laughed pitifully. “I often think I am out of my head, or that I am dreaming of Heaven and that these things shall come to me only after death. But the dreams are all finished now, for I have chosen





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my lot, and I will bear it bravely — oh, you will see how brave I shall be!”

Walter was silent for some time. He was sure that he must befriend this girl. All the chivalry in his nature was now stirred to its profoundest depths, and, as he was so much in earnest, he wanted to be careful to promise nothing that he could not perform. She inspired the deepest respect in him, and he felt that any hasty utterance would not do justice to the seriousness of his purpose. He did not exactly reason; he was sitting too close to her in the balmy night, with the whispering of the sea in his ears, for that, but he realized that he must be alone and decide upon some definite course of action.

“Listen, Polyxene,” he said tenderly; “there is the nightingale again. Is it not singing to you of your own country now?”

“And what matters it,” she replied sadly, “since all my dreaming is over for ever?”

“It is not over! It must not be over! Trust to me. I have an intuition that I was sent here by fate to be your deliverer in some way. I do not know exactly how; I must think it over. But this I will promise you: I will help you, I will take you away from here, as far as to America, if

need be, and will get you established in a new life, where you can go on with your dreaming, where perhaps your dreams may come true. Only promise me that you will not marry this man. Put him off, manage to delay the fatal step, until I have time to work out some plan. Will you promise me that?"

"You do not know what you are saying," she replied hopelessly. "What would the neighbors think of me if I went away with a strange man? Where would my reputation be after that? I could not hold up my head anywhere in the world."

"The neighbors, dear girl! You would never see them again — they would never hear of you more. You have lived too long in this little island, Polyxene. The world is wide, and those among whom you would take up your new life need not even know how you came."

"I — I could not go away with you like that," was all she said; and then added, rising, "I must be going now. It is dangerous to remain out here with you."

"But Polyxene, promise that you will meet me here to-morrow night. I may have thought of something then to which you can consent."

"I dare not," she replied in a tone almost of apprehension. "It is too dangerous."

He caught her dress to detain her, and pleaded eagerly.

"But you say that the nightingales sing to you of home. If the nightingale sings to-morrow night, take it as an omen, as a voice calling you, and come once more."

"Well, then, if the nightingale sings," she whispered, and was gone.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FACE AT THE WINDOW

That first nightingale of Walter's life was but the harbinger of a seraphic choir. Spring begins in March in the Greek isles, with a softer breath and a more alluring smile than she bestows upon any other part of the world. Here she is not fickle, and the early blossoms know that they are her children and that she has called them with a mother's voice, the voice that never betrays. While the temperate zone is still shivering in the grip of belated winter, springtime blows the mimic snow of the almond blossoms about the purple hill-slopes of the Cyclades, and the trees themselves, seen at a distance, are easily mistaken for snow-banks — sweet deception! By mid-April, Nature's heart, ever as young as the heart of a god, is throbbing with resistless joy, and the pulsing sap is tingling in the finger-tips of a million olive trees, in the buds of the vineyards upon a thousand sunny slopes, in the veins of the gor-

geous oleander and the fragrant thyme; the wild partridge is calling to its mate and will not be denied, and the young kids are capering nimbly on the cliffs that overlook the sea.

Mr. Ion returned at last from Syra, and Walter found him, when confronted with a business proposition, helpless and impractical. He had heard about argols, even knew what they were and that certain Greeks had sold quantities of the product in Syra; any scheme for systematically collecting them, however, seemed to him fraught with insurmountable difficulties. Then, too, he had his religious scruples. Would not offering money for the lees be an encouragement to the wine industry itself? If so, he would have nothing whatever to do with the enterprise, but would even oppose it to the extent of his power. His attitude was exasperating,—but less so than it would have been before the nightingales sang.

And all this time the nightingales continued to sing and the Greek spring worked like wine in Walter's blood. Never did fate furnish more convenient trysting-place for maiden and swain, or more romantic. The missionary and his family, leading uneventful lives of clock-like regularity, retired each night at the same hour, and went

soundly to sleep as people do who have good consciences and think little — especially if the sea is singing them its eternal lullaby.

Walter lingered much in the garden, and on several occasions he met Polyxene there, and she remained and talked with him, very low, to avoid waking those people so near. She had not the least fear of him, he was so different in his manner from the rougher and more primitive men of the island. And so she came to tell him of her origin and of the strange story connected with it, brooding over which had given rise to her dreams.

One night, as they sat beneath the fig-tree, very close together, talking, a small schooner came through the bay's narrow mouth, flitted silently up to the foot of the town, and cast anchor in the dim light of the new moon. A few minutes later Polyxene shivered and gave a suppressed cry of terror. Walter looked anxiously into her face and was surprised to see that it was haggard.

"What is the matter?" he asked; "what has happened?"

"I — I don't know. I felt as though we were in the presence of some dreadful danger — as if — as if a black shadow had just passed over us."

Walter arose and looked cautiously about.

"Perhaps some one has seen us," he whispered.

"Stay here," said Polyxene, "I know the house better, I will go and see."

She went on noiseless feet, but soon returned.

"They are all sleeping," she said; and then she gave a start, while her eyes stood wide and her pretty mouth grew to a circle of conjecture.

"Perhaps some one looked over the wall," she said.

"Nonsense," said Walter reassuringly. "You are just nervous. This thing is getting on your nerves; it's too great a strain for you. Why should any one look over the wall? The idea is preposterous."

Nevertheless, after Polyxene had retired, Walter went into the street and walked clear around the garden on the outside. Neither seeing nor hearing anything in the least suspicious, he went to bed reassured.

As on the occasion of his first night on the island, however, he could not sleep as a young man should. He fell asleep, it is true, as soon as a young man does who has been talking with a beautiful girl in a garden, but he was restless and awoke after an hour, dreaming that a malignant face was pressed against a pane of the win-



dow that opened upon the street. There was no chaining of his limbs by the oppressive influence of a nightmare, but he found himself sitting suddenly up in bed, staring at the window with all his faculties preternaturally alert. He had an idea that, in the brief moment between oblivion and perfect wakefulness, the blind had moved softly shut. He went to the window, looked, and found that the blind was actually closed; but when he raised the sash to reassure himself, he discovered that the hook was unfastened. This was not conclusive as to the verity of his dream, albeit one of the leaves was off at the bottom of the blind and it would have been easy for any one from without to insert a finger and release the hook; for Walter was not sure as to whether he had fastened the blind or not on retiring. Being of a stout heart, he concluded at last that he had indeed been dreaming and nothing more, and went back to bed and to sleep. The next morning at breakfast Mr. Ion remarked, casually, that Spiro had returned during the night. Walter glanced at Polyxene; she was deathly pale. Then he "got together" as he would have phrased it, and remarked cheerfully: "That will be good news for Miss Polyxene."

## CHAPTER X

### POLYXENE'S INTUITION

About ten o'clock McKenzie came in from the monastery where he was now stopping, and Walter went over to the café with him to have a chat.

"I'm all out of tea," he explained to Walter, confiding the secret with as much impressiveness as though it had been some discovery of dread import, "and I came to see if I could buy some in the town here," and he opened out upon the table a red bandanna handkerchief containing several ounces of grayish-looking tea, mostly reduced to a state of powder. "I'm anxious to get back to the monastery and make me a cup of it, to learn what sort of stuff it might be. I fear me 'tis but of indifferent quality," — and he smelled of it long and anxiously. "What think you?" he said, pushing the handkerchief over to Walter, and awaiting the latter's decision with deepest concern.

"I'm not much of a judge of tea, old man," re-

plied Walter, laughing, "but this smells to me very much like powdered sage."

"I fear I'll have to make a trip to Syra to get me some tea," sighed the Scot, "and even there they may not have it of the best."

"Spiro is home," announced Walter.

"Spiro?"

"Yes — ah — Spiro Douzinas, the fellow that is — ah — betrothed to Miss Polyxene, you know."

The subject was a trifle embarrassing in view of his last talk with the Scot, yet he felt that he must make McKenzie his confidant, as he certainly stood in need of a friend and lieutenant.

"I had a troublesome dream last night," replied McKenzie with exasperating irrelevance; "what think you of such a dream as this? I thought I was walking on a narrow path by the sea, with the water on one hand and a steep wall of rocks on the other. And all at once on the beach, a vast distance away, miles perhaps, I saw a tiny lobster. I wondered why I could see him so far, when he was so small, and then it occurred to me that I was dreaming, and that was the explanation of it." McKenzie was resting his elbows upon the table, his chin in his hands, and the

shaggy brows uplifted from his serious gray eyes. "Now a lobster is but a small beast, as God made it, and therefore not terrible. But did you ever stop to think what appalling creatures many of the little beings would be, were they to become as large as elephants or crocodiles — the caterpillar, for instance, the centipede, or even the spider? Well, this lobster began to grow, as big as a dog, as big as a horse, and then as big as an elephant. And then, in the twinkling of an eye, even as it grew, the intervening distance was swept away, and it was lumbering down on me upon eight legs, its two great claws swaying from side to side, opening and shutting with a grating, clattering sound. It was all clad in plate armor, that, dripping with water and crusted with brine, glistened in the sun. I felt that it was not malignant, but worse; an unreasoning creature that came on like fate, destroying whatever was in reach. A small tree stood at the side of the path, and at this it pointed a long tube, as big around as a man's leg, upon the end of which was an eye as large as the headlight of a locomotive. The other tube, with the eye at the end, was directed at me, like an accusing finger. Passing the tree, with one snap it bit it off and then it advanced upon me. I

could not flee, my limbs were paralyzed. I felt that if I could yell, help would come, and I tried to shout. I must have succeeded at last, for just as the great shears opened and I stood within them, the monks rushed into the room, and I awoke."

"That dream was certainly a wonder," admitted Walter, "and for a steady professional dreamer you do take the prize. By the way, I had a dream myself last night; not so complicated as yours, nor so original, but quite as artistic," and he related his own nightmare of the face at the window-pane.

A look of practical shrewdness came into the Scot's eyes, quite at variance with the mystical gleam there while talking of his nocturnal vagaries.

"I fear that this is more serious dreaming than mine," he said, shaking his head slowly; "a dream that may be continued by daylight. I gave you some advice the other day; now I hope you'll not take it ill if I give you some more. There is not much that you can do here. The missionary is not of great use save as a man of God, and if he were not a Presbyterian, I should e'en doubt his influence in that sphere. Let us

be going from here. Were it not for the manuscripts in the monastery, I should have advised you ere this to set out for Santorine, which is in reality a wine-making island. Let us be going to Santorine by the first caique that sails."

Walter arose.

"If you think," he said, "that I am going to be driven away from here by one Greek, or all the Greeks upon the island, then you don't know me. One of my ancestors was killed at Bunker Hill, and my father was twice promoted for gallantry upon the battle-field. The Lythgoes don't run, and I'm not going to be the first to break the record."

"Courage is a good thing," replied McKenzie, "an admirable trait, if you're sure your cause is good?" He whispered the last words, that were, from his lips, a gentle, deferential question.

"Where a lady is concerned, you must let me be the best judge of that," replied Walter, a trifle haughtily.

"Ah, well, we'll not quarrel," said McKenzie. "I only meant the advice in a friendly spirit."

"I believe that!" cried Walter, instantly mollified and offering his hand.

That the Scot was indeed shrewder and more

practical than his eccentricities and his ungainliness would indicate was shown by the skill with which he changed the subject. After a few moments he proposed to walk over to the monastery, actually inducing Walter to set out with him immediately. His object was to prevail upon the American, if possible, to take up his residence with the monks during the remainder of his sojourn upon the island. Walter went to his room to get a stout walking-stick, and found Polyxene there busy putting it to rights.

"Don't go away," he said, "I only came after my stick, and am going immediately."

She cast a hurried glance into the garden, to make sure that no one was looking, and then, stepping up close to him, whispered: "Spiro is angry enough to kill you. You must leave here."

"Why, has he said anything?"

"No, he is very sweet," — and she shuddered — "but I saw murder in his eyes. I feel sure that he was looking over the garden wall last night. I know it; I — I feel it."

Walter knelt by his grip, opened it and slipped something into the side pocket of his walking-coat.

"I shall go when I get ready," he said to

Polyxene, his manner expressing his defiance of Spiro. "Don't worry about me, little girl, and remember our bargain. Good-by. Tell Mrs. Ion that I'll be back to supper."

He left her wringing her hands, and there was a prayer in her big blue eyes.

"Go, go," she whispered hoarsely, "and leave me to my fate!"

As he stepped down into the garden, he noticed the queer little trunk of which Polyxene had spoken to him, and he remembered it as the only thing left her by her father. She had dragged it out to the porch while cleaning her own room. It was bound in pig-skin, held in place by rows of brass-headed tacks, but the leather had come loose at the end next to him, and had rolled down for several inches. He stood for some moments, eyeing it curiously.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE MONASTERY

The road to the monastery, which was about three miles distant, followed the sea-shore for most of the way. At times it straggled through the sand of the beach, or ran so close to the pulsing waves that footprints were washed out as soon as made; or else, perhaps, it climbed the sides of some cliff that projected out into the deep water, and then led along the edge of the rocky wall, with the sea pounding and leaping far below. For some distance the path lay upon a ledge of rock, barely wide enough for two to walk abreast: safe enough, if one's nerves were good, yet perilous to those who are tempted to leap from high places. Here, since it mounted till it comes out upon a plateau, it was known to the islanders as the "Devil's Stairway."

The monastery was situated upon a small island separated from this plateau by a deep channel. You descended to the sea by an arduous path that

sloped along the face of the bluff, and then crossed over by means of a boat that was usually to be found there. The monks towed it over, left it, and then rowed it back again. This little island, a small child of Andros, was largely cultivated by the monks, and was partly covered by a fine old olive orchard. Their vineyards were on the slopes of the mountains which rose upon two sides of the building, forming a background of dark green, for higher up they were covered with pines, against which the white of the ancient structure gleamed distinctly when seen from far away at sea. On the other side, toward the open ocean, there was a very steep incline, and a road wound down to a tiny harbor, where the monks had a wharf, several boats and a caique of their own. The cells, at least those which were occupied, had little windows from which the gaze overleaped the stretch of land below and fell upon the sea, brightly gleaming or tumbling in stormful windrows and seething with innumerable whitecaps.

In early days, there were as many as fifty Brothers in the community of *Agia Brysi*, as the monastery is called. The name signifies, in Greek, Sacred Spring, and was suggested by the supposed therapeutic qualities of a fine spring

which burst from a rock back of the building and which supplied the good Brothers with water. There was a legend of the place, duly set forth in one of the manuscripts which McKenzie had already deciphered, that a certain high dignitary of the Greek church, suffering from a disease pronounced incurable by the doctors, had been directed by the Virgin in a vision to seek out this same spring and drink of its waters. He obeyed, was healed, and from this circumstance arose the name, *Agia Brysi*, or Sacred Spring.

The charter obtained from Constantinople through the prelate's influence could be seen on application to the Father Superior. It was written on parchment in beautiful Greek script, with much compounding of the characters, difficult for the inexperienced to decipher. The initials, ornately executed, were in red ink, and the document was made impressive by two huge seals, which dangled at the end of long blue ribbons. This charter also mentioned the healing of the church dignitary and the vision, thus verifying the matter with proof that was indisputable, so far as the faithful were concerned. For unbelievers, Englishmen, Turks, Catholics and others, it mattered little; were they worth sav-

ing, God would most assuredly make them see the truth.

At the time of our story, the number of Fathers under the roof of the Agia Brysi had become reduced to six, and the institution was by no means so prosperous as it had been formerly. A blight had fallen upon the once profitable lemon orchards, in the form of small spots that disfigured the pale gold of the fruit like some loathsome disease, and God had not yet sent thither the scale-destroying insect; the olive trees were waxing feeble of extreme old age, and the wines of Greece were no longer so famous as they were in the days when Venice was queen of the Cyclades and her gorgeous galleons sailed to every port of Europe, laden with divine vintage, now almost forgotten, with oil and with silks for the great ladies of yesteryear.

Walter and McKenzie passed through an arched portal of medieval aspect into a spacious paved court, in whose stones were worn deep paths by the feet of generations of monks and the hoofs of the mules that had been led through the stables in the rear of the building. A large oak stood in the court, its trunk half dead, seeming to typify the death-in-life of the monastic existence.

On the left of the two strangers, as they entered, and built partly into a cave of the rocky side of the mountain, was the chapel, sufficiently imposing to merit the name of church; directly in front and on the right, were three stories of cells, each with its balcony, covered and running the entire length of both wings, thus forming a long promenade for the monks in time of rain, or when the sun was fierce overhead.

Papa Manoles, the wag of the community, was resting on a bench under the oak-tree. He was a jolly-jowled monk, who had a habit of cradling his burdensome stomach in clasped hands and inflating his fat cheeks, preliminary to the letting go of breaths in an explosive gust with a fluttering of his thick lips. He burst out laughing as his eyes fell upon the Scot, and began immediately to relate some amusing story, pointing meanwhile at a monk of Falstaffian proportions, who was at that moment passing in the direction of the kitchen, carrying a brace of dead chickens by the legs.

“What is it?” asked Walter, observing that McKenzie seemed to enjoy the story. McKenzie, raising his index finger in explanatory gesture, whispered in Walter’s ear: “’Tis a rare good

joke on Brother Myrianthuses," — and then regarded the American intently for several seconds, to see what effect this extraordinary statement would produce.

"So I inferred," said Walter. "Let me share it, will you?"

"You ought to hear Brother Manoles himself tell it. He is a rare wag, is Brother Manoles. It seemed that during the lenten fast Brother Myrianthuses came to the conclusion that he was dying of hunger — you saw him just now" — chuckled McKenzie, — "he dying of hunger!"

"Eh? eh?" said Brother Manoles anxiously to McKenzie, watching Walter's face intently for the effect of the story, that he might laugh with him. "Eh? eh?"

McKenzie explained his progress to the monk and then proceeded with the recital in English. "Brother Manoles here, told Brother Myrianthuses that he might justify by logic the roasting and eating of a chicken thus: 'All crows are birds: all chickens are also birds; therefore, all crows are chickens.'" "

"Eh? eh?" said Brother Manoles, his jolly face now reflecting the smile that began to dawn in Walter's eyes.

“ Having convinced him of that — and he was in a convincible mood — Brother Manoles defied the other to find anything in the rules of the order or of the church prohibitive of the eating of crow at any time. Myrianthuses therefore secretly procured a chicken and set about roasting it in his cell. But the Reverend Hegoumenos, who has a sharp nose, detected the smell and demanded admittance. Brother Myrianthuses was fairly caught, but he followed the Superior into the court, explaining according to the principles of logic. The explanation, however, so enraged the good Superior, who is not a man to be trifled with, that he caught up a roasting-spit, and beat Brother Myrianthuses over the shoulders with it.”

Walter burst out laughing at this point, and the monk, taking a firm hold of his stomach, jiggled all over like a huge jelly-pudding, his clasped hands keeping rapid time to his mirth. After he had laughed at the story as much as it deserved, and possibly a little more, the monk led Walter and McKenzie to the Father Superior's office, which consisted of a large reception-room neatly furnished, and hung with pictures of the church at Tenos, the Tomb of the Saviour, and portraits of the last Paleologos, the Emperor Constantine,

St. Irene, and the priest who had been cured by drinking the water of the Sacred Spring. The library adjoining this was furnished with a goodly number of books, mostly in pig-skin bindings, and several drawers which McKenzie told the American contained the manuscripts which he was reading.

The Father Superior was an impressive-looking man, albeit not of large stature. His beard and hair were snowy white, his thin, ascetic face was of perfect Greek contour, and his black eyes were as keen as those of a hawk. His manners were distinguished by quiet dignity. He ordered coffee brought in, and, using McKenzie as an interpreter, questioned Walter quite sharply, though politely, as to his family, his business, his education, his religion.

Walter then went with McKenzie to the latter's room, which proved to be one of the vacant cells, with a door opening upon the balcony, and a window with a view of the sea. The adjoining cell was unoccupied, and McKenzie urged upon Walter with much earnestness to secure it and bring his effects over to the monastery. But Walter was immovable in his determination to remain where he was for the present. Failing



other reasons, the fear of being thought cowardly would have been sufficient to keep him at the missionary's. There is no more potent moral cowardice than this fear of being suspected of cowardice, and it is frequently associated with superior physical prowess.

Lythgoe remained to dinner with the monks, taking a seat in a high-backed wooden chair at a long table in a great hall, with a high ceiling with bare beams, and then he started out briskly for home, eager to set eyes upon Polyxene again. He had crossed the strait and ascended the bluff, when he saw a man coming up the path.

## CHAPTER XII

### KNIFE AGAINST PISTOL

A sudden tightening about the heart, and a thrill, succeeded by an immediate tenseness of the muscles and a moral bracing, warned him that this was Spiro. He had never seen the man's face clearly before, but the tall form corresponded with the mental picture of the Greek whom Maud Persephone had pointed out to him, dancing at the café on the evening of the betrothal. This man was of goodly stature, and his picturesque *fustanellas* gave him that burly and semi-savage effect which is attained to perfection by the Highlander in kilts. His sturdy legs were encased in skin-tight trousers of homespun, and he came on with a swinging stride, oscillating his arms, which were slightly bent at the elbows. When first seen at a distance, he made a bright bit of color against the gray background of rock: his ruffled shirt-bosom, his leggings and his *fustanellas* were

white, but his embroidered jacket with wide sleeves was blue, while his soft round fez and the pompons at the tips of his *tsaroukia*, or slippers, were of a bright red. About his waist was a broad leather belt of many pockets, from which peeped the handle, in shape not unlike the butt of a Moorish gun, of a Cretan knife.

Walter gripped his heavy stick a trifle tighter, and then strode on, trying to imagine that this was some ordinary meeting, and yet conscious that there was something exaggerated and strained in his air of indifference. Spiro's face, if this were indeed Spiro, was that of a man about thirty-five years of age, bronzed by sun and wind, with high cheek-bones, narrow forehead, high, thin nose, shaped like the rudder of a rowboat, and big chin, deeply cleft.

Walter wondered if this could indeed be Spiro, and, if so, what he was doing so far from the village. The answer that naturally entered his mind was not reassuring, for if this man had actually peeped over the wall, and had seen his betrothed talking alone at night with a foreigner, then it was very possible that there was murder in his heart; besides, it was plain that the face at the window was no dream.

Walter had no particular feeling of exasperation against Spiro, who had been, up to the present time, a rather shadowy individual in his mind. He certainly did not wish to kill him, and his unwillingness to be killed by the Greek was even more pronounced. He would have preferred another place of meeting, if this were indeed Spiro; he would have liked it better if the path had not been so narrow and the cliff so sheer to the sea below. If one were to fall over there, would he strike deep water, or would he hit some rocks on the way down?

A man thinks fast in concentrated moments, and all these thoughts passed through Walter's mind as the Greek advanced toward him. But he did not one whit slacken his own speed or look behind. Here was his opportunity to prove himself, and he did not mean to show the white feather.

At last the Greek was only ten paces off.

Walter stepped to the right, away from the edge of the precipice, and lifted his hat politely. The Greek returned the salute, bowing with what seemed, to the American's suspicious mind, exaggerated courtesy. They stood thus for several seconds, looking into each other's eyes, but unable

to communicate by means of speech. Walter found the position quite embarrassing, and one which, commonplace as it seemed, offered no immediate prospect of solution, unless the Greek would wish to take the initiative. If Walter passed him, he would be compelled to walk on down the narrow path with his back toward him. On the other hand, if he kept looking backward at the Greek, it would be a confession that he had cause to fear him.

At last he smiled amiably, and, pointing to the monastery, said, "Going there, eh, up that way?"

The Greek immediately began to talk, venting his desire to make the other understand in the violence of his gestures and the loudness of his tone.

"It's no use, old man, it's no use," said Walter with that rare smile of his, "I don't understand your lingo and you can't understand mine, so I'll just wish you 'good day,' and pass on."

The thought had occurred to him that this could not be Spiro, after all. He had pictured the Greek as ready to spring upon him at sight, or, at least, to overwhelm him with violent and threatening speech and gesture. To his surprise and mystification, as he lifted his cane and pointed

down the path, indicating the direction which he was about to take, the other again made a profound salute, and, turning upon his heel, came on with Walter.

Evidently he had been sent for him, thought Walter. He wondered if Spiro had run amuck and killed Polyxene.

He had it in mind to say the word "Polyxene" to his companion and note the effect, but something restrained him. He only walked the faster, that he might solve this fear as quickly as possible. So they came on in silence till they reached the part of the path where it was so narrow that two could not walk abreast with safety. Here Walter hesitated and glanced at the Greek, who motioned to his companion to pass on ahead. Walter was equally polite, and this interchange of courtesies was drawn out till it bade fair to become ridiculous. At last the Greek, with an expressive shrug of the shoulders, turned and strode swiftly down the path, his rustling *fustanellas* brushing the rocky wall on the one side and reaching to the edge of the precipice on the other.

They had gone about half the length of this narrow part of the path, when the Greek whirled suddenly about, facing the American.

"Spiro, by God!" gasped Walter, springing back. One look at the face, now contorted with passion, as though he had slyly slipped on a hideous mask, was enough.

The Greek drew his knife, but, strangely enough, did not attack. He rather threw back his head, and, lifting the weapon in the air, made some sort of grandiloquent speech. It was impossible to understand what he said, but he was evidently either denouncing his adversary, after the manner of the old-time heroes, or proposing a combat to the death, with the idea of proving the right by recourse to arms. If the latter were true, he must have been mad with rage and jealousy, indeed, to select such a place of action, where anything like an evenly matched battle would probably result in both falling over the cliff together. Perhaps, when planning the scene, he had expected Walter to fall upon his knees, beg his pardon and promise to leave the island immediately. Such a result would certainly have been salve for Spiro's wounded pride, would have established his reputation as a *palikari*, and made Walter ridiculous in the eyes of Polyxene.

He now beat his breast with the hilt of the knife and pointed to the sea below; tapping the

blade with his fingers, he made a gesture of one drawing a knife and pointed at Walter. The American by this time had got his right hand into his pocket where it came into contact with something cold and comforting. It dawned upon him that the Greek was proposing a duel with knives, the conquered to be thrown over the cliff. There was nothing for him to do but to keep his eyes fixed upon the Greek, and wait. And this he did, every faculty on the alert, every nerve strained to highest tension.

Spiro, seeing that the other made no reply, but stood thus regarding him, ceased his heroics, and looked at Walter. This duel of the eyes could not have lasted more than half a minute, but it seemed an hour. A watery film for a second covered the American's pupils and he winked hurriedly to clear it away, realizing that the least interruption of the keenest vigilance might cost him his life. And the fact that he could not make himself understood added to the strain of the situation. He might as well have been confronted by a wild beast. Strangely enough, he was wondering all the time what sort of a bush that was on a rock there over the Greek's shoulder. It had a red flower, and wrenched with hypnotic power



at his eyes, to pull his gaze dangerously over to one side.

Spiro took a step forward, threatening with the knife.

Walter drew his revolver and the Greek stopped, evidently more affected by surprise than fear. And thus he stood, quite close now, his knife raised. His eyes seemed to say that he accepted the challenge, no matter what the weapon.

Just as Spiro rushed, Walter fired. A musical "ching" mingled with a report, and the gleaming knife flew far out over the water, a flashing curve of light, and dropped into the shimmering sea. The Greek gazed at the whirling weapon, mouth open, amazed. Then, suddenly, his face paled and twitched, as he became conscious of a fierce pain in his fingers. One of them was missing, torn out at the joint, and all were dripping blood. Doubting not that Spiro would rush upon him with bare hands and attempt to hurl him over the cliff, Walter was just about to press the trigger a second time, when he heard frantic shouts behind him and the sound of running feet. Spiro turned and fled, kicking a shower of stones over the cliff as he ran, the tassel of his fez streaming straight out on the wind.

"What has happened, my friend? What is this? What is it?" breathlessly asked McKenzie.

"H — hold me a minute — take hold of me," said Walter. "I am a little dizzy! There, that's right — steady me till we get off from this — this cornice, will you?"

When they had got out upon safer footing, Walter sat down on a rock, replying to McKenzie's urgent anxiety, "Just wait a minute, till I get hold of myself again, and I'll tell you all about it. I feel kind of shaky."

At last he related the entire adventure as it had happened.

"I didn't want to kill that fellow. He drove me into firing. I didn't shoot till the last moment. But wasn't it lucky that I hit his hand? I must have shot where I was looking. I was fascinated by the long knife and the big hand and I couldn't keep my eyes off from them. Whew, but I'm glad I'm out of that scrape!"

"I fear me that you are just getting into it," said McKenzie, shaking his head sorrowfully. "I warned you not to be making love to a betrothed girl. Now you will certainly take my advice, and come down to Santorine, immediately — this very night. I make no doubt we can get

somebody to carry us over in a sail-boat. You'll have Spiro's whole family after you now."

"Listen a minute, McKenzie. It's a case of a lady in distress —" and Walter told of the sobs, of Polyxene's dreams and of his vow to help her if it lay within his power. "I can't take her away," he added, "till I'm ready to get clean out of Greece with her. Besides, she won't go. She says it would ruin her reputation —"

"If you loved her yourself," mused McKenzie, "if you were willing to marry her —"

"Loved her!" cried Walter in great excitement. "Why I love her as woman was never loved before! I dream of nothing night and day but of marrying her. She's a creature of light and beauty to me — some ancient goddess. I never see her carry a jug from the spring, or — or — pick up a broom, that I don't want to tear it out of her hands and dash it to the floor. When she waits upon me at the table, I feel as though I were being waited upon by a princess in disguise, as those old men must feel whose feet are washed by the Emperor of Austria. Something tells me that she is my fate, and that I was sent here to carry her off and live with her the rest of my days, or to die for her, here. But don't you see what

a fix I'm in? I've nothing of my own. I'm just sent out here on the company's money, and if I don't make a success of this job, I hardly know what I should turn my hand to next. If I could only get this thing started, so as to win the confidence of the firm, I'd marry Polyxene the next day. But I'm so at my wits' end about her that I can't get together on business."

McKenzie took his friend's hand.

"Ah well, if you love her," he said, "'tis a different matter. Let us go back to the missionary's and see what has happened."

"How did you chance to come along just at that moment?" asked Walter, as they walked on.

"I tried the tea," sighed the Scot, "and found it to be as you said, mere sage, and it seemed to me that there must be something better in town. 'Tis not possible that men should be so uncivilized as to drink tea like that."

## CHAPTER XIII

### A DECLARATION OF LOVE

Upon reaching the missionary's house, Walter invited McKenzie into the garden with him. The two men seated themselves on the porch and took a quiet survey of the situation. To their surprise, there were no indications that the inmates of the residence were aware of the storm which was brewing. Mrs. Ion was bustling about in her energetic way, and the missionary himself was engaged at some clerical work in one of the rooms opening upon the gallery. Polyxene was nowhere to be seen.

"Excuse me a moment, Mac," said Walter. "I think I'll walk up to the spring."

He did so, but failed to find the girl there, and returned.

"You seem to have a great deal to do this morning, Mrs. Ion," he remarked, reëntering the gate. "You really ought to have help."

She laughed pleasantly, much gratified at this young man's interest in her welfare.

"I'll warrant you were mother's boy," she replied, and a moment after added, as though to relieve his mind with regard to herself; "if Polyxene were here, I should make her bring the water to me, but I had to send her after more thyme wood. I'm going to bake to-morrow."

Walter sprang up and took the *canati* or amphora away from the woman, after a playful struggle.

"Let me bring it," he said, "it will be fun for me!"

After filling the jug and getting it upon his shoulder, he found it quite painful, as it pressed against a protruding bone, and he was filled with indignation that the soft and delicately-tinted flesh of Polyxene should be subjected to such indignity. In the grape-arbor he met McKenzie, stooping a little lest his head hit against the tangled vines. The Scot laid his great hand confidentially upon Walter's shoulder and, bending toward him, whispered:

"I know these people better than you do. I don't see Spiro anywhere and I am a bit uneasy. The girl is off alone and he must be in a rage.

If he should do her violence — murder her — 'tis quite common here — eh, man, don't let the jug fall!"

McKenzie was now holding the *canati* in his arms and Walter was staring at him, pale and speechless.

"Come with me," he cried at last, "quick! quick!"

"'Twas that I was going to propose. But you must take the jug upon your shoulder again, set it down in the garden and come quietly out. Then we'll hie away together."

The two men were soon plunging through the olive orchard, following the path which led to the mountain-side where the wild thyme grew. Long as McKenzie's legs were, he found difficulty in keeping up with his more ardent companion, and he followed, puffing out in Greek a fragment of an old tragedy, which struck him as peculiarly apt:

"Whoever does not think that Love is a great god,  
And the ruler of all the celestial beings,  
Either is blind, or being ignorant of excellent things,  
Does not know which is the greatest divinity placed over  
men."

"There she is, old man, there she is!" laughed

Walter, almost hysterically, as he saw Polyxene at a distance, bending among the thyme bushes.

"I'll sit down here for a moment," said the Scot discreetly, "and you can go and talk with her. Never was mountain climbed at such a speed since Perseus put on his winged sandals."

"Have you seen Spiro?" Lythgoe asked the girl, as soon as he came up with her.

"Not since talking with you last. Why?"

"He met me on the road to the monastery and attacked me, but — but I drove him off. He's an ugly customer, and I feared he had come out here to do you some mischief. By Jove, I'm glad to find you are all right!"

"He attacked you? Tell me all about it."

Walter related in a few words the main features of the encounter, adding, "If I could only talk with him, I might be able to make him see reason. I could show him that it isn't decent to force himself on a girl who doesn't want him, and I could let him know that I'm not afraid of him and that he can't intimidate me. I could show him, too, what a serious thing it will be for him, if he keeps this up. If he hurts you, I'll kill him, and if he kills me, my friends will set Uncle Sam upon him and it will go hard with



him. It's about time some of these Greeks learned that a man can't do whatever he wishes."

Polyxene made no reply, but sat down on a rock, and remained for a long time thinking, her head in her hands. At last she looked up, saying, "You must not remain at Mr. Ion's any longer. You must go away from here immediately."

"And leave you to that crazy devil's mercy? I couldn't do it, Polyxene."

"I have promised you that I will not marry Spiro, that I will put it off some way, and get out of it. If you stay here I can't keep my promise. I must break it for your sake, for he will certainly kill you, if you remain in the same house. And besides, now that there has been a quarrel between you two, my reputation will be ruined, if you remain."

Walter heard these last words with no little impatience. He could not realize that this tiny island was Polyxene's world, that she knew no other, and had no conception of the vastness of the globe and of the size of its great cities, where no tidings of petty Andros ever reached.

"What do you care," he cried, "for the opinion of these half-civilized Greeks? What does anybody care what they think?"

She looked at him reproachfully.

"I am surprised that you ask," she said bitterly. "I am a servant girl, who has nothing else in the world save her good name."

Walter yielded to an uncontrollable impulse. He realized that if the girl wished him to leave the house, he must do so. The avowal which had so often been trembling on his lips must be spoken now, or perhaps it would be everlastingly too late.

"Polyxene," he said, "I will go away, since you wish it. I will go over to the monastery and live with McKenzie. But I shall not go without telling you that I love you, that you are no servant girl to me, but the queen of all the world, a revelation of beauty, sweetness and grace such as I had not dreamed of. There are no such women as you in the great world from which I came, or, if so, I have never seen them. I love you, Polyxene, and I want you to be my wife. Will you come away from here and marry me?"

In his madness he forgot his position, that he had his way to make in the world and no resources save the means supplied him by the business corporation whose agent he was. For the moment there was no one on earth save himself

and the beautiful woman who now stood leaning toward him, trembling in all her limbs, her face as pale as death. A divine strength flooded him, an unreasoning yearning that made him eager to face all dangers and perplexities for her sweet sake. She opened her arms toward him, unconsciously, instinctively, then staggered against a tree with one hand extended, motioning him back.

"You must not talk so to me," she panted, "I am betrothed to another!"

"But you do not love him and he has no right to you! You love me. Tell me, do you not?"

"I can not tell you while I am betrothed to Spiro. I will not be dishonorable, even to him."

"But you would not—" he was about to say that she would not have met him so often in the garden had she not cared for him; but the gentleman in him told him that it would be ignoble to take advantage of a lady's favors. "Well, then," he said, "this much you will promise me, that you will break with Spiro?"

"I have already promised you that. But you must help me by leaving the house, and not seeking me till after I am free."

"I promise you that," Walter replied readily enough. "And after you are free?"

"Ah, that is another thing. Perhaps then you would not care for me. What would all your relatives and friends think if you were to bring home a servant girl to them as your wife?"

Walter laughed.

"No one would believe that you had ever been a servant girl. You would grace the palace of any king."

"I believe you do love me," she murmured joyfully. "But see, look yonder in the bay. There is Spiro's caique, all his caiques putting out to sea. I wonder if he has gone with them?"

That such was the case, Walter and McKenzie learned on their return to the village.

"He has said nothing about the encounter," explained the Scot, who was better versed in the Greek character. "As he came off second best, he is ashamed and wishes to get well of his wound and think out some plan of getting even with you. 'Twould be a wise thing to take the girl and leave the islands while he is gone."

"I shall not run," said Walter grimly.

"Ah, well," sighed McKenzie, "have your own way. They say there's no fool like an old one, but some young ones run a close second. I feared he'd set his whole clan upon you, but I

fancy there's not much danger of that now. He's evidently ashamed to tell of the encounter, as I said, and he loves the girl and doesn't wish to compromise her by a public quarrel. But you'll hear from him again when you least expect it. He'll strike in the dark next time, and give you no chance. We must both keep our eyes open."

"You're a comforting friend, I must say!" laughed Walter, who could think of nothing but that slight, unconscious lifting of Polyxene's arms.

## CHAPTER XIV

### STUMBLING ON A SECRET

That very evening the two men left the missionary's and Walter took up quarters at the monastery, in the cell next to McKenzie's. His steamer trunk came with him, strapped to two long roasting-spits in such manner that the ends protruded, making handles for a couple of sturdy Greek boys; a third carried his satchel, and the American strode at the head of the comical little caravan with that lordly air which every European assumes as soon as he gets settled in the Orient and finds that his migrations, even over insignificant distances, necessitate a retinue. This feature is perhaps the chief charm of the East for a man who has not evolved beyond the love of personal importance and barbaric display, and few men ever leave behind the danger of slipping back to barbarism, of losing a few thousand years of development in a moment.

In the practical and utilitarian West, a millionaire may travel without even a man. His luggage is sent on ahead of him, and he finds it in the room of his hotel on arrival, or shortly after. He rings for a cocktail, he turns on the water in his bath-room. The man of wealth, indeed, approaches more nearly to the ultimate conception of a god, who wills and things are done by invisible and noiseless agencies. In the Orient, a man sees things done, and it takes many slaves, with much labor and shouting, to do them. He realizes that they are being done for him and he pays small sums in many pieces of little value and feels great.

So Walter Lythgoe arrived at the monastery with his steamer trunk strapped to roasting-spits, and his valise carried by a full-grown man, and he knew that these attendants regarded him as a *lordos*, for society is very sharply divided in those regions into the two great classes of those who do things themselves and those who have things done.

It did not take him long to get settled. Two hours were before him until dinner time in the great hall of the monks, and in that time the American unrest took possession of him and he

felt that he must be doing something. He therefore entered McKenzie's room, seated himself astride of a chair, with his face to the back thereof and regarded his companion impatiently. The Scot was leaning over a rough wooden table covered with dictionaries, and attempting to decipher a thick volume, whose contents were inscribed in large characters upon vellum.

"Well, Mac," said Walter, "the sooner we get to work on this argol business and make some sort of a showing, the better I shall like it. I think I'll write a letter to my uncle to-night and tell him exactly what progress we've made so far. Do you know, I haven't written a word home since I've been on the island? And we really have done something, you know. In the first place, we've found out that Ion will be of no use to us whatever. That much I can write to the firm as certain."

"Then—" began McKenzie, but paused without finishing the sentence. He was about to remark that they ought to leave Andros immediately, but his eyes fell upon the yellow volume before him, and he was unable to proceed. Instead, he murmured, "'Tis a work of rare interest that I have here, of rare interest. 'Tis written



in oval uncials of the seventh century style, and seems to be the sermons and meditations of one Father Heracles Skyllises. What would you say, man, if I were to add another name to the Fathers of the Church, would you discover a new Greek author?" Two hectic spots gleamed in McKenzie's cheeks as he said this, and his eyes shone with the fire of enthusiasm.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Walter. "Aren't there enough dead saints already? I should fancy that what we need is a few more live ones."

"Perhaps you're right, perhaps you're right," sighed McKenzie.

"Then, too," continued Walter, "I can write home that we can't set this thing going in a day. I can write to my uncle that all we can do now is to visit the principal wine-making centers, and select fellows who will gather up the product for us and ship it to some central point."

"Such as Santorine," suggested the other.

"Yes, Santorine or Syra. I wonder, if I went away, if Douzinas would come back and frighten Polyxene into marrying him? If he tried it, and I arrived here on the day of the wedding, I'd take her away from him, even if all the Greeks on the island stood at his back. What a thorough-

bred she is! She fairly detests him, she regards him with horror, but she will not listen to me until she has been released by him. If she were a weaker character, she'd go away with me to-morrow; but then I shouldn't love her so much, I shouldn't admire her so immensely, if she were any different. I suppose she is in a difficult position. She went through this betrothal before she saw me, and now it's hard for her to say that she's discarded him because some one else has appeared on the scene. Look at the sea out there — how dark it looks when a cloud passes over it, how it laughs the next moment in the sun. It's fairly black one moment, as deeply tender as a summer sky the next, and now it's bright as polished silver. Polyxene's eyes are like that. Well, I'll go and write to my uncle now. Do you suppose she's descended from the ancient Greeks?"

" 'Tis quite possible. I am not one of those who hold with Professor Fallmeyer that the Greeks are all Slavonians. Carl Hopf seems to me to have the better of it."

" Well, whatever she is, she is as noble and beautiful as any goddess that ever lived. So — let's see, yes, I'll write to my uncle that we are getting started on the right track."

Left alone, the ungainly Scot hummed a little love-song of Chios, very tender and passionate, could one have understood the Romaic words. Then, with a deep sigh, he bent again over the yellow volume, and was soon deeply immersed in a denunciation of Origen's theory concerning the preëxistence of souls.

Walter finished his letter after dinner and walked over to Ta Castra to mail it. Polyxene's request that he leave the missionary's caused him to feel a slight hesitation as to visiting the house, yet he argued that nothing should stand in the way of business, and Mr. Ion was certainly the safest person with whom to leave his letter. Moreover, he remembered that the banker Calverly had shaved off his beard since becoming gray, and he wished to ask Mrs. Ion if she had ever seen the great man clean-shaven. She had, once, and the fact brought them still closer together. Walter did not succeed in getting a glimpse of Polyxene, as the girl was absent from the house on one of those missions which took her to the sea-shore or the mountain-side. Having left his letter, Walter walked back again, feeling that he had begun his business campaign.

The next day the two guests, in company with

Father Manoles, made an exploration of the monastery. They visited many of the empty cells, several of which were still haunted by memories of monks of old time, who had performed miracles of fasting or of penance for self-accused sins; the prayers of this brother had been answered in miraculous manner, the life of that had been prolonged by divine favor, another had been visited each night in his cell by the spirit of Saint Anthony, with whom he had been heard plainly talking.

Of these things Father Manoles told them, but it was in the great, dark wine cave, with its rows of barrels and its one great tun, for which the monastery was famous, that he grew eloquent. Standing in front of it, the fat priest held aloft a candle, and the two strangers looked up as at the roof of a small cottage.

“They say that the wine in this tun is one hundred years old,” whispered McKenzie, smacking his lips at the thought of the possibilities, “and they only draw it for the high dignitaries. The last that drank of it was King George, two years ago, and before him, the Metropolitan from Athens. Ah, truly saith the Scripture, ‘To him that hath shall be given.’”

At the end of the long row of barrels they came to a wooden door, fastened with a huge padlock and marked with a rudely-drawn black cross. Thrice the monk crossed himself devoutly, bowing reverently each time, meanwhile mumbling a prayer. Walter looked inquiringly at McKenzie, who explained, after consulting with Brother Manoles:

“ ’Tis a charnel house they have in there. It is the custom of the Greeks in many places to take up the bodies of the dead after a number of years, to scrape the bones, to wash them in wine and put them away till Resurrection Day in bags. Each bag is labeled, and they fancy ’twill save the Creator trouble at that grand inventory of bones. ’Tis a practical theological idea, and no doubt will be taken in good part by the Creator. Perhaps by this method a man would feel surer of getting all the parts of his own framework. Yet, after all, ’tis an imputation on divine omnipotence. What think you?”

McKenzie, like all Scots, had a gift for theological hair-splitting.

“ I think,” replied Walter, “ that I’d like to see that pile of bags. This is one of the most — most curious things that I have ever heard of. Is this

the — the universal custom in Greece? That is, do they bury everybody in this way?"

"The custom is not universal, but it is quite common."

The great wine cave was dark, save for the feeble light of the candle held by the old priest, who, in his black cassock with the wide sleeves, suggested rather some evil genius of these lower regions than a fat and jolly monk.

"What did he say?" asked Walter. McKenzie and Brother Manoles had been talking together.

"He said that the last monk who was laid away here was one Brother Anthesimos, who begged of the Father Superior that the door might be left unlocked, so that the monks could get out on the day of the Resurrection. But the Superior rebuked the dying man, telling him that God, who made the walls of Jericho to fall flat, could unlock a cellar door. And so the monk died, with the Hegoumenos lecturing him on the subject of faith, and as the sermon was not finished when the end came, the remainder of it was delivered to the corpse, or perhaps shouted after the departing spirit. But does not this incident," continued McKenzie, suddenly dropping his voice to that

mysterious whisper so characteristic of him, "show us how simple and childlike is the faith of these people? They confidently expect that those bags, at the sound of Gabriel's trump, will be changed into a throng of monks — that, in the twinkling of an eye, the entire roster of the monastery, from its foundation, will stand together in a company, ready to answer the roll-call."

"I'd like to see those bags," repeated Walter.

McKenzie talked again with Brother Manoles, and reported:

"They regard this as a holy place, and do not open it to satisfy mere curiosity. Then, too, they feel that it would be disrespect to their dead brethren should they allow strangers to peer in at their bones."

"Oh, I see," replied Walter. "Well, 'tis a very natural feeling, and I respect them for it. Just the same, I have an overpowering curiosity to take a peep at those bags piled away in there, those exhibits filed for future reference. If I could get hold of the key, I'd come down here some night and steal a look at them. That would be something to tell the folks at home!"

But McKenzie was anxious to get back to his yellow book, so, after tasting the wine in several

of the barrels, drawn by Brother Manoles into a dipper made from a gourd, they ascended again into the sunlight.

That very afternoon a little incident occurred that gave to the two guests their first intimation that the rambling old pile in which they were living had its secret — that the old walls, could they talk, could perhaps tell their own dark story, like the walls of so many of the medieval castles and gray piles of the Rhine and the Mediterranean. McKenzie asked permission to look over the manuscripts in the drawers in the Father Superior's room, hoping to find some document that might throw light upon the history of the author of the yellow book. The good Father gave him the key to several of the drawers and sat socially sipping a cup of coffee with Lythgoe while the Scot rummaged. One of the monks came in to report some matter that required the personal attention of the chief, and the latter, hastily rising, left the room. It was at this moment that the learned Scot, not finding anything of importance in the drawer which he had opened, tried the one just below it, but found it locked. None of the keys upon the ring fitted it. He therefore resorted to the simple expedient of pulling the open



drawer clear out, and of thrusting his hand into the one below. Extracting a paper, he sat upon his haunches puzzling over it, when the Hegoumenos returned, and walking up to him, glanced over his shoulder.

The old man's face flushed with anger and then turned pale. Seizing the paper, he wrenched it from McKenzie's grasp, and thrust it out of sight within his cassock. The Scot arose and the two men stood looking at each other: the one inquiringly, with an air of deprecation and surprise, and the other with a soul-searching glance from his keen eyes, in which Lythgoe imagined that he detected an expression of mingled fear and anger. McKenzie began to stammer apologies, but the Hegoumenos regained his self-possession and his suavity immediately. Laying his hand affectionately upon McKenzie's shoulder, he pushed the Scot good-naturedly to a chair and, calling a boy, ordered three cognacs brought in.

Walter could scarcely restrain his curiosity as to the meaning of this little scene, but realized that the priest would surmise what he was talking about, should he and McKenzie engage in a conversation in English. He therefore waited till they were alone in the latter's room.

"You must have stumbled upon some of the monks' private papers," ventured Walter, as McKenzie set the tea-pot with the string handle to boil over a tiny spirit lamp which he produced from his grip.

"'Tis a great mystery," whispered the Scot, bending close to Walter and regarding him solemnly. "The paper was old and broken at the creases, but the Greek was modern, and in the script of to-day — that is to say, of the last two hundred years. 'Twas a list of moneys and it began, 'Brother Loukas, *drachmai* 55,000'; 'Brother Gregorius, *drachmai* 60,000.' There were many others, but I only got thus far when the Reverend Father came in. He asked me how much I had read and I told him, and he explained that in old time wealthy men joined the monastery and turned over all their property to the institution and that this was a list of the benefactions thus received. I said to him, 'You must be very wealthy, then?' but he replied that they were poor; that a blight had settled upon their orange trees and that there was no longer any market for their wines or oil, and that in all these years their money had got away from them in one way and another. Moreover, he said, wealthy men no

longer joined the order and they received no more benefactions from such sources. 'Tis possible, possible. I will not deny that gold is hard to get and easy to go, but how,"—and here he had the air of a man suggesting some dark secret, some mystery that no one else could possibly have thought of—"but how do you account for the Reverend Father's perturbation, man? How do you account for that?"

"Perhaps," suggested Walter, "there may have been some misappropriation of these moneys. They may have got rid of them in some way not creditable to the order."

"Now I believe you have fathomed the mystery," cried McKenzie, pouring the tea into two broken cups.

The next day Walter walked into Ta Castra again to get another glimpse of Polyxene. He was rewarded this time for his journey, for he not only saw the girl, but had the inexpressible joy of exchanging a few words with her. So intoxicated was he during the entire remainder of the day, that he nearly forgot to mention to McKenzie that he had had a long talk with Ion.

"I spoke of the rich monks and mentioned Brothers Loukas and Gregorius. Their families

have lived here for the last hundred years, and have always been poor fishermen."

"Eh?" said McKenzie, "then 'tis a greater mystery than ever. Ah, well, 'tis likely that all these donations were given more than a hundred years —"

"Polyxene wore a red rose in her hair and she blushed when she saw me," interrupted Walter. "The rose was a dark, blood red, and her cheeks were the color of American beauties."

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CHARNEL HOUSE

They took their coffee that evening with the Father Superior again, and found the old man in exceptionally good spirits. He had laid aside for the moment, as though it were a black cassock, his severity and habitual dignified reserve, and talked fluently with McKenzie, even going so far as to perpetrate several innocent jokes, at which he laughed with great heartiness. He showed solicitude, also, as to the comfort of his two guests and asked their pardon half a dozen times for not having given personal attention to their entertainment before. The duties of his office, he explained, were greater than any one would suppose; and hereupon he became quite confidential, mentioning in detail his numerous responsibilities, and even the shortcomings of the monks and the petty annoyances which they caused him. He evidently was trying to be as agreeable as possible, yet he

gave the impression of one who was exerting himself to please. He overdid the thing, somehow, and he was laboring under suppressed excitement.

As his guests, after repeatedly assuring the reverend gentleman that they were most comfortable, were leaving, he said something to McKenzie which caused the latter to turn with sudden animation to Walter.

“Man, the Reverend Father offers to accompany us to the charnel. Father Manoles has informed him of your desire to look into the room and he will go with us — now, if you wish. He says that 'tis a very sacred place, the holy of holies, in fact, and that they do not encourage idle curiosity, but he realizes that we are foreigners, and he will extend a privilege to us that he would not consider if we were Greeks.”

Walter bowed very low to the white-bearded and imposing monk. “Tell him that we appreciate his generosity, and that I should indeed like to see that room; that it may seem quite natural to him, but that to me it would be an extraordinary sight, something — something to tell my friends about and quite different from anything we have in my part of the world. But —” and here the young man's natural courtesy found ex-

pression, "tell him not to do it if it is in the least distasteful to him."

As McKenzie translated, Walter smiled at the priest, that rare smile of his, here mingled with becoming deference.

"*Oristé*," ("come on"), said the monk, and taking down a tall candlestick, antique, and of hand-worked brass, from a shelf, he led the way briskly. As they passed into the court, the Reverend Father called to Brothers Manoles and Timoleon, the latter a young Albanian, to follow. They descended into the great cellar, and the old man walked ahead, holding high the candle and calling out frequently to those behind him to mind their steps and not fall over any obstacles, or run against the projecting spigots of the wine-barrels.

When they came to the door of the charnel, the Father Superior crossed himself three times and intoned the same prayer which Brother Manoles had uttered on the previous visit to the wine-cellar:

"Where are the world's ambitions; where its vain show; where are the gold and silver; where is the throng of toilers and the tumult? All dust, all ashes, all shadow. But come, we will cry to the Everlasting King: God of the ages, deem worthy these who have gone down among us, giving them rest in Thy eternal joy."

Handing the candle to Brother Manoles, the Hegoumenos selected a key from a bunch hanging at the end of a long chain attached to his girdle, removed the padlock and threw the door wide.

"*Oristé,*" he said again, that polite expression which means almost anything in Greek, and the sense of which is determined by the circumstances. "*Oristé, I beg of you.*"

Walter was peering into a room about twelve feet square, in the center of which was a pyramidal pile of bags, somewhat larger than flour sacks, all full. Each was gathered at one end to a pucker and tied with a rope. He could scarcely realize that this was a cemetery, that here were the mortal remains of many generations of holy Brothers, and that the men in long cowls standing by his side expected to be laid away in this silent and peaceful fellowship when their quiet lives in the cloister above should be finished. This was rather a storeroom. The imagination found it hard to transform this pile of bags into anything but a heap of sacks filled with grain, to be made into bread and washed down with wine from the rows of dark barrels among which the uncertain rays of the candle were playing hide and seek.

The Hegoumenos looked sharply into Walter's



face and seemed to read there something, not exactly of incredulity, but of failure of effect, for he stepped into the room, and untying one of the sacks, poured its contents rattling upon the floor.

"God of the ages, deem worthy these who have gone down from among us, giving them rest in Thy eternal joy,"

repeated Brothers Manoles and Timoleon, crossing themselves, and the Hegoumenos responded reverently, "Amen! For the ages of ages!"

This good brother, so the Hegoumenos explained, had passed away some sixty years ago, and when the Creator wanted his framework again on the last day, here it was: an incredible jumble of small bones, the great goggling pelvis, osseus clubs, curving ribs, and the unsightly skull, grinning, grinning, at the littleness of life and the folly of human pride.

"All dust, all ashes, all shadow," repeated McKenzie in Greek, and the Father Superior replied:

"All things are vanity, save those which live after death;  
for wealth does not befriend us, neither does glory  
go with us.

Therefore we will lift up our voices to Christ, our King."

Brothers Manoles and Timoleon gathered up the bones and replaced them in the sack, after

which the Hegoumenos again locked the door and the party turned to leave the cellar. Brother Manoles could not get by the wine-barrels, however, without proposing that the Superior proffer the hospitality of the place to the guests of the monastery,—a suggestion not entirely disinterested, as his own deep potation proved.

## CHAPTER XVI

### A STARTLING DISCOVERY

That night Walter and McKenzie sat up till late, the latter deep in Brother Heracles' attack upon Origen, the former immersed in mingled thoughts of Polyxene and a scheme to send out a Greek courier to the various islands, notifying the wine-makers to store up all their argols from now on.

Occasionally McKenzie would hum the air of a Chios love ditty and would murmur, "We ought to go to Santorine, we ought to go to Santorine."

As Walter arose at last to go to bed, McKenzie came close to him and, taking him by the lapel of the coat, whispered, "You could not rest till you saw the cemetery,— I, too, have a notion which I can not get out of my head."

"Yes?"

"Yes. I must taste the wine that is a hundred

years old; I must even have a bottle of it to take away with me."

"Well, perhaps if we asked the Father Superior for it —"

"I have not the assurance. 'Tis only given to kings and princes of the Church. But I did not tell you of all my notion. I think if 'twere given me I should not prize it so much. I should feel that it could be had for the asking. I would become a midnight marauder. I would prow! through the bowels of the earth, man" — he touched Walter on the chest with the tips of two fingers — "taste the precious stuff and take away some of it. 'Twould be an adventure worth the telling and they would not miss it."

"I'm with you!" cried Walter. "I'd like to take a small vial of it home to my uncle."

Tiptoeing to the door, he looked out into the court.

"All is quiet as the grave," he reported.

McKenzie, after turning his grip inside out and peering beneath the bed and into every corner of the room, took up the tea-pot with the string handle.

"There's nothing to bring it in but this," he said, "and this will do very well. If they see us

in the court, they will think we have been after water for tea."

Putting several pieces of candle in their pockets, they silently stole into the court and down the steps. Entering the cellar, the Scot lighted a bit of candle, and walked straight to the immense tun.

"Wait a moment," whispered Walter, "till I find the gourd."

"Never mind the gourd, man, we'll e'en drink it from the nozzle," replied the Scot, who was already drawing some of the precious liquid into the tea-pot.

"It's good," said Walter, after taking a copious draft, "but I can't see much difference between it and the wine that Brother Manoles gave us from that little barrel yonder."

"Ah, ye have not the discriminating taste," replied McKenzie, smacking his lips. "Man, 'tis like the old, sweet wine, the pure divine drink, in casks fitted in order against the wall in the house of Odysseus. Take another sip. You'll never taste its like again."

"Hush, what's that?" said Walter.

The door at the entrance of the cellar creaked.

"There's some one coming," whispered Mc-

Kenzie, blowing out the candle and leaving himself and his companion in profound darkness. " 'Twill be awkward if we are caught stealing the wine."

There was a sound, as of a door closing, and then a faint uncertain light streamed down the steps and into the cellar. The dark body of a man soon appeared, and the Father Superior came shuffling down the narrow passage between the rows of casks, the tiny flame of the candle gleaming redly and ineffectually in the deep darkness, like one star in the blackness of the night. In the wan light and contrasted with the blackness of his robe, his face appeared strangely pallid, as though he were the ghost of one of those monks whose bones were heaped there in the room beyond; an effect which was not lessened by the snowy whiteness of his hair and beard. On he came, shuffling along the passage, his eyes gleaming with a fixity and a certain uncanny lust that was out of keeping with his venerable and holy appearance, as though he were some malign spirit masquerading as an aged monk, or as if he were a Father of the Church walking in a devil-suggested dream.

McKenzie seized Lythgoe by the arm and

pulled him softly back toward the rear of the great tun. But it is not likely that the Hegoumenos would have seen the two strangers, had they remained where they were, for he was looking straight ahead and mumbling to himself as he passed. They heard him fumble with the lock, open the door and pass into the charnel; heard him repeat again, in a hurried mechanical way, a few words of that sublime prayer for those who have gone down into darkness: "God of the ages, give them rest in Thy eternal joy."

"What in the world is he doing in there?" asked Walter.

The Hegoumenos was busy for some little time, as faint sounds, proceeding from within, indicated. Then, after a moment's silence, there was a jingling noise, as of nails, or bits of metal being poured into a heap.

"That's not bones," whispered Walter, but McKenzie pinched his arm as a warning to silence.

Shortly after, the sound was repeated. Unable to restrain their curiosity, the American and the Scot tiptoed to the end of the tun, and, thrusting out their heads, peeped toward the door of the little room. Their eyes beheld such a sight as it

has been permitted to few men to look upon. The old monk was working by the light of a candle which he had set upon a shingle fastened to a post. He had dug a hole into the pyramid of sacks, and even as they looked, he lifted one of them out, evidently with great difficulty, and by the exertion of all his powers. Untying the rope around the end, he poured upon the floor, thereby augmenting a very considerable pile which he had already made, a cataract of shining, golden, jingling coins. Tossing the empty sack into a heap with the others, he lifted his black cassock to his waist, revealing his trousers, and sat down astride the pile of money with a deep sigh of contentment. Then he ran his hands into it repeatedly, letting the coins trickle through his fingers. And as he did this he laughed, a low chuckling sound that gurgled from his throat in dying ripples, like the laugh of an idiot or of a man just coming out of the effects of an anesthetic.

"Come after me, man," whispered McKenzie, "and be sure you make no noise."

They stole from the place in the darkness, much wondering.



## CHAPTER XVII

### A NARROW ESCAPE

McKenzie and Lythgoe took a long walk in the woods, the next day, to talk over their strange discovery. They did not believe that any one connected with the monastery understood English, yet the atmosphere of mystery and tragedy had so thickened about them that they felt themselves in one of those medieval piles whose very walls have ears. They were so impressed by that weird, unearthly spectacle of last night, that venerable monk transformed into a subterranean goblin, a gibbering gnome; so overwhelmed by a sense of unreality and incredible hypocrisy, that they did not feel comfortable while conferring earnestly together. Moreover, McKenzie's habitual whisper had now become so low that it was impossible to understand him till he had repeated the same sentence half a dozen times.

Sitting at the breakfast table in the great hall,

indeed, Walter found it difficult to believe that last night's revelation had not been a nightmare. The Father Superior was most courtly and gracious, and, as he bowed his head in the silent orthodox grace, making the sign of the cross, a ray of golden sunlight fell upon his gray poll and beard, seeming to envelop him in the sacred splendor of an aureole. There was something so wholesome, too, in the healthy appetites of Brothers Manoles and Myrianthuses, so much good fellowship in their jolly fat countenances, that it was hard even to realize the existence of that charnel room below, waiting to receive, in turn, the bones of this generation.

After wishing the monks "Good morning" and promising Brother Manoles that they would return in time for luncheon, to try a certain famous dish which he had ordered for that day, Lythgoe and McKenzie struck out vigorously on a path leading into the woods and up the mountain side.

"Those are your benefactions that you read about in the list," cried the former, much excited, as soon as they had got well away from the buildings. "The moneys given by Brothers Loukas, Gregorius and the rest. The people in the village

must be mistaken — that is, Ion must be. Why, here's the proof of it. We saw the money ourselves. Now, how much do you estimate there could have been in that pile?"

"I have not the least idea," sighed McKenzie, and then, smiling whimsically, "I know less of gold than of any other commodity, having had less experience in the handling of it. But there was a great sum, a great sum. I wonder, man," he stopped suddenly and seized Walter by the lapel of his coat. Thrusting his face close down to that of his companion, he regarded him for several moments with a look of solemn inquiry.

"Wonder what?" asked Walter. "Why don't you speak?"

"I wonder," whispered McKenzie, "whether that can be some great collection of ancient coins?"

Walter laughed.

"You'd look at a Chicago murder mystery from an archæological standpoint, somehow," he replied.

"If they are antique coins and I can publish them to the world, man," he cried, "my name is made among scholars for ever."

The hill was very steep here and the path nar-

row, so they climbed on for some distance in Indian file, without speaking.

“Stop, Mac,” said Walter at last. “Hold on a minute. I’ve an idea. I don’t believe that the other monks know anything about that treasure down there. I believe it’s the Father Superior’s own pile, that he has hoarded up and hidden away. You could see what a miser he is. I’ve read about such things and seen them on the stage, but I always thought the description exaggerated. I didn’t believe the reality could be like that. That was real genuine gloating. And did you hear him chuckle?”

“But why,” asked the Scot, “why, if it is his, should he keep it hidden away, and not drawing interest? Why should he visit it in the middle of the night, like a thief?”

“Well, you see,” replied the other, “if he got it by peculation, by misappropriating funds—then too, the man is a miser, pure and simple. He loves to run his fingers through it. It’s his bride. He thinks he is running his fingers through her hair.”

“But,” objected the Scot, “the revenues of the monastery are small and have been for a long time. He could never embezzle so great a sum.”

They were not far from the top now. The path at this point lay between walls of rock perhaps ten feet high, that grew lower and finally disappeared altogether as the path neared the ridge. Above them the hill rose in an abrupt truncated cone, upon whose hither edge was a large round rock, considerably projecting.

"Let's rest a wee bit before making that final climb," said McKenzie, dropping down on an inviting log that lay right across the path. "Ah, if we had some of that old wine now," he continued, wiping his brow with a large red handkerchief, "or a nice hot cup of genuine Oolong."

"Let's wait till we get to the top," said Walter. "That rock up there makes me nervous. If it should come rolling down here, there'd be no escape for us."

McKenzie glanced upward. "It has been there for a thousand years and it will be there still when you and I are forgotten. My legs are longer than yours and when they weary in the whole length of them, as now, my weariness is greater than yours."

"Mac," said Lythgoe, "you don't suppose it's possible that money was got by robbery, or anything of that kind? After what I saw last night,

I'm ready to believe anything. Perhaps this is a den of brigands masquerading as monks, and the list that you read enumerates the results of successful raids made by different brethren."

"Hm,— I don't know whom they'd rob in Andros. The whole island is one of the poorest in the Mediterranean and has been since the dawn of history. Besides, 'tis a peaceful island, and brigandage is unknown here."

"They've a caique down there. They might sail away, make a haul somewhere and then come back again. But no, that doesn't seem likely. Old Brother Manoles is no brigand, neither is Myrianthuses."

"'Tis more like, man," began McKenzie, but he never finished his sentence, for Walter caught him by the arm and pointed to the top of the ravine.

A noise, a scraping, and the sound of a tiny avalanche of loose dirt and pebbles had attracted his attention. And now as they looked, the faces of the two men blanched with sudden and helpless fear. The great rock was evidently swaying upon its precarious seat. It tilted slightly forward, while more pebbles fell, and then settled back again in its accustomed place.

"God help us," cried Walter, "the rock is falling. We must climb out of here!"

Both men sprang to the sides of the ravine and attempted to scramble up the rocky wall. But it was too sheer and there was no projection into which they could grip their hands. A muffled crash, a grinding thud, and they saw the huge boulder at the top of the pyramid. It made one or two slow revolutions, then started toward them with fearful velocity, whirling like an asteroid, scattering the stones before it in the increasing impetuosity of its rush, and throwing off a spray of rock from its own periphery. In rainbow leaps and bounds it came on, as though too full of its new freedom, after ages of inactivity, to endure longer the downward drag of the earth. It spurned the ground, and ricocheted in rude joy, ponderous, yet light as a child's pebble skipping on the bosom of a lake. The helpless men turned and ran down the path for a short distance, yielding to the unreasoning instinct of fear, then, hearing close behind them the crashing of the great rock in its progress, fell flat upon their faces. At such times the most thoughtless human — yes, even the infidel — prays, and Walter shut his eyes and gasped, "God save me, God save me!"

A moment later they were both sitting up in the path, looking into the woods below, through which the rock was crashing, laying the smaller trees low as though it had been a cannon ball rolling through reeds. They saw it strike a stalwart pine, a lord of the forest, split into halves, and thus continue its course. One of the fragments stopped soon, but the other could be heard long after the shaking tree-tops no longer betrayed its presence, crashing, crashing far below.

Walter looked at his companion for some time in wonderment, and then his overwrought nerves found voice in a mirthless laugh. McKenzie, who was pale as a sheet, took him by the lapel of the coat, and bending close, whispered solemnly, "Man, yon big stone must have jumped over us!"

No longer tired, they ran up the steep incline and examined the place where the great rock had been but a moment before. Walter pointed to some marks in the earth, and they both, falling upon their knees, examined them carefully.

"A crowbar," said Lythgoe.

"There can be no doubt about it," replied his companion. "And I shouldn't wonder if we found that Douzinas had come back!"



Walter's face flushed hotly with anger.

"If so," he cried, "he must have gone down by the path on this side. If I catch him, I'll waste no sentiment on him this time!"

He was gone, leaping down the rocky way, McKenzie following and shouting to him to turn back. The search was fruitless and they both returned to the monastery as quickly as possible.

"It couldn't have been one of the Brothers," whispered McKenzie, "for they are all here."

"One of the monks? By Jove, I never thought of that!"

Walter walked into Ta Castra and looked about. If Spiro had returned, he certainly had not put into that port.

"Man," said the Scot that night, looking up from the yellow book, "I have been prowling in the Father's library again, looking for old manuscripts, and hoping that I might find something else that would throw light on the list of moneys. But there was nothing, nothing. As I expected, the Hegoumenos offered me every facility. If there was anything else, he has removed it."

"Of course," replied Walter, "what else could you expect?"

He sat smoking for half an hour in silence,

while McKenzie studied. "Well, good night, old man," said Walter at last, rising to retire. "What is this?" His eyes had fallen upon a tiny volume, lying upon the table, bound in silver filigree work.

"Oh, 'tis a prayer-book in the Italian tongue. I found it behind a row of big volumes, where it had fallen down. I brought it with me, as I am a little rusty in the Italian language, and this is a bit archaic. I must speak to the Father about it. I do not believe he saw me bring it away."

Walter examined the binding curiously, and as he did so, he turned pale and then his face flushed with excitement. He was studying a design wrought out upon the cover in the dark-colored, oxidized silver.

"May I take this with me, may I take it?" he asked eagerly. "I—I would like to see if I remember any Italian myself!"

"I shall not care for it to-night," replied the Scot. "I shall be busy till the wee hours with my new saint here."

Walter left the room, carrying the little book with him.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE AMERICAN INVESTIGATES

Walter sat for a long time in his room, deeply thinking. Very often he looked at the design upon the cover of the little book. An idea was taking shape in his brain, and a purpose, a plan of action was forming there, the result of the idea. The convent clock chimed softly, yet with weird distinctness in the silence of the night, sounding the hour of twelve. A nightingale burst into song there in the court and his heart went out to Polyxene with unutterable longing.

He would not confide in McKenzie, he decided, until he had looked into this matter himself. He would do this thing for his sweetheart alone, none other should share in it. He was thinking of the story which Polyxene had told him of her origin, all that she knew and all that she did not know. If there should be something else besides coin in those bags, he soliloquized, some-

thing that would complete the story? If there were anything more to be learned, here in the monastery was the place to look for it; there could be no question about that.

Rising, he took his candle and stepped out on the porch, or that part of the cloister shading the door of his cell. Not a sound was to be heard, save the wind in the trees on the mountain side; there was no light but that of the stars spangling the sky, and the feeble, yellow glow cast upon one of the windows of the dining-room, from the oil lamp kept constantly burning before the eikon of the Blessed Virgin. Satisfying himself that the doors to all the cells wherein the monks were sleeping were closed, he stole across the court and descended the flight of steps leading to the wine cave. Pushing open the heavy wooden door, he lighted his candle and walked rapidly down the long passage between the tuns, straight to the door of the charnel. As he went, he drew a bunch of keys from his pocket, dexterously separating one of the largest from the rest with his finger and thumb. The lock upon the door was an old-fashioned affair, of simple make, and he was in hopes that he should be able to release it with some other key than the one made for it.

To his surprise, he found the door slightly ajar, the lock hanging open in the staple. His first thought was that the Hegoumenos was within, in the dark, and he blew out his candle hurriedly and listened for a minute, for ten minutes, his heart in his mouth. All was silence. If the old man were there, thought Walter, he would certainly have betrayed his presence by some slight sound, for the ten minutes of suspense seemed ten hours and it was impossible that a man should not have stirred or breathed in that time. Pushing open the door, the American thrust his head within — into the blackness of a Cimmerian cave.

The Hegoumenos must have been there already, concluded Walter. He had gone away and forgotten to lock the door. Walter decided that he could take his time, then, for he would have three hours before him, without fear of interruption. Entering the room, he lit his candle, and dripping a little of the wax upon the shingle projecting from the post, set the taper upright. He then approached the pyramid of sacks and was just lifting the one at the apex away, when he heard a sound that set every faculty upon the alert and caused him to pause and stand there, his very soul listening. There could be no doubt

of it: that shuffling tread of the old monk coming nearer, nearer! The deliberate scraping of his feet upon the cement floor, far off at first, and scarcely perceptible except to an ear rendered preternaturally alert, grew more and more distinct.

Walter took for granted that the old man was coming from the direction of the wine cellar, and the dominance of the mind over the senses caused the illusion to persist for some seconds. Springing noiselessly to the shelf, he plucked down the candle and blew it out. Then he crowded back into a corner of the room and waited, striving in his despair to frame some sort of excuse: his great curiosity, his — He could see in imagination that grisly specter coming down the long subterranean passage, ever approaching nearer, as plainly as though his physical eyes were resting upon it; but it was not until the sound of the footsteps was so distinct that they seemed in the very chancel, that Walter became aware by a sudden revelation, the ultimate dominance of sense over mind, that the monk was not approaching through the wine cellar, but from the opposite direction. There was a grating sound, and a squeak, as of a panel sliding; light streamed into the room, and the Hegoumenos stepped into view. Closing the

opening in the wall behind him, he shuffled on through the room, crossing himself as he passed the sacks. Closing the door behind him, he locked it, leaving the American standing there in the dark, alone with the bones of all those generations of monks and the golden treasure which they guarded. Again could be heard the shuffling of the Holy Father's feet upon the cement floor, but now the sound grew ever less distinct and at last tapered into silence.

Had Walter been less stout of heart, he would have cried out, and thus have gained release from his uncomfortable position. It must be confessed, too, that his first feeling as the monk passed without observing him was one of relief at his temporary escape from detection in proximity to the treasure. He feared nothing so much as the probable imputation that he was there for the purpose of abstracting some of the golden coins — an act of which he was of course at that time incapable. No, he would let the Father Superior go, and would trust to his wits or to chance to get out undetected. At any rate, the ecclesiastical miser would make his regular visit tomorrow night, and then Walter might be able to slip out, or, at the worst, then would be time

enough to reveal himself. But here a horrible thought arose in his mind: Suppose the Hegoumenos did not come the next night? Suppose he did not visit the place regularly and should not come again in a week — in a month? Why, then, Walter thought, McKenzie would look for him. But no, perhaps not. Would not McKenzie take for granted that he had been made away with by Spiro, and be scouring the woods for him, while he was starving to death down there in that underground prison? At any rate, he should get no help inside of twenty-four hours. He wondered how hungry and thirsty a man got in that time? He might as well do what he came there for anyway. The Superior would surely not be back again that night.

Lighting his candle and setting it again upon the shelf, he attacked the pile of bags resolutely, tossing them into a heap at the bottom of the pyramid as he dug straight down through its center. The bags were light and rattled gruesomely as he handled them or as they fell upon the floor.

As he worked he thought of McKenzie's translation: "All dust, all ashes, all shadow."

Tied to each end of the ropes that bound the



mouths was a tag, and he attempted to read the writing upon one of these, but it was in Greek script, with which he was entirely unfamiliar, and, besides, he would scarcely have been able to decipher it, had it been in the ordinary text. As he had told his uncle, little of his college training remained with him save the games and the athletics. There were in all about three hundred bags in the pile, but it did not take him long to find what he was after. It was necessary to stand upon the packages, that he might reach down into the hole that he was digging, and occasionally a tibia or femur snapped dryly beneath his weight, or the smaller bones crunched into powder. The first time this happened, he was conscious of a sickening feeling, a shock of horror, as of one who has committed a sacrilege, but this soon passed away in the absorption of his quest. The bags containing the gold were in the center not far from the bottom. The first one that he seized pulled him sprawling. Exerting his strength, he lifted it out, and then, standing over it, raised and lowered it several times, estimating that it weighed about fifty pounds.

There were ten of the heavy bags in all, and after Walter had got them all together, he opened

them one by one and examined their contents. They all contained gold, yellow gold, and the majority of the pieces were somewhat smaller than English pounds and inscribed with letters which were unfamiliar to him, but which reminded him of an Arabic inscription he had once seen. He took for granted that they were Turkish. There were Spanish coins, too, of larger size, great disks of gold struck for the buying of men's souls and for the price of murder, piracy and many a nameless deed; with French napoleons and the roubles of Russia, marked with the shrewd, stolid, libertine face of her greatest, most Christian, most licentious queen.

Walter was about three quarters of an hour going through the sacks, but if he had hoped to find anything within them that might throw any light upon the secret of their acquisition, or the source from which all this wealth sprang, he was doomed to disappointment. Of one thing only he satisfied himself: none of the dates upon the coins was later than the year 1820. He did not examine them all, of course, but as many as he glanced at, selected at random, antedated that year and some were much older. Yet, despite this fact, they were in general bright and little

worn, as though belonging to a hoard that had been laid aside after collection and not put into circulation.

There was an eleventh bag, not quite so heavy as each of the ten, whose contents, nevertheless, were presumably of great value, for they consisted principally of jewelry: ropes of pearls, a dainty coronet starred with big diamonds, crystal crosses set in gold and fringed with diamonds, a reliquary set with a large sapphire, brooches not a few, bracelets, rings, pendants. There was much filigree and open work in fantastic designs, and grouping of precious stones, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, in showy clusters. As this pile of barbaric adornment lay on the floor, the gold shone with a dull gleam in the dim light, but several of the gems burned fiercely, like the eyes of serpents lurking in the grass. Walter held each of the large objects so that the rays of the candle might fall on it, but laid them down in turn until he picked up at last a solid silver box, narrow and long, for cigarettes, perhaps, or snuff, or intended as a dainty receptacle for a lady's toilet. There was some design upon the cover of this which he could not distinguish, so he sprang to his feet and held the box close to the candle.

At last! This was enough to convince him — to convince anybody. These people must be blind, or they would have seen that she was no servant.

He put the tiny box in his pocket, then took it out and dropped it on the pile, at which he looked as he stood there for some moments in deep thought.

He would take it, he decided at last with resolution, and run his chances of the monks not missing it. If he should never get down here again, this might be his only proof. He would take it for Polyxene's sake.

And he put the box into his pocket again.

Straightening his back, which ached after stooping so long, he pressed his hands against it with a sigh and glanced at the candle. The rim at the top was broken through at one side, allowing the wax to run down and form a lump of waste at the base; not more than two inches of the precious cylinder remained, and the realization of this fact caused Walter to exert himself to the utmost in replacing the precious bags and rebuilding the pyramid. He did not neglect, however, to detach one of the tags which were tied to the heavy bags as well as to the others, and to

slip it into his pocket. He decided that it would be a good thing to have with him.

Having finished his task, he stepped to that spot in the wall where the monk had come through, and examined it carefully. He was facing a pine-board partition, neatly sealed, and the sharpest scrutiny detected nothing in this particular spot at all different from the remainder of the wall. Placing both his palms against the boards, he pushed steadily. As he had expected, a rectangle about the size of a very narrow and low door yielded to the pressure and retreated to the depth of an inch or slightly more, thus clearing the space into which it was set. It was now easy to slide this panel out of the way and to step through. Taking down the candle, Walter did this and closed the opening behind him. The panel was pulled out from this side, he noticed, by slipping one's finger into a tiny knot-hole, ingeniously left there for that purpose. He was now in a long, low, vaulted passage-way, along which he walked rapidly, shading the candle with his hand, that the breeze generated by his motion might not cause it to burn out too rapidly.

He decided that he could find his way back there, even if he had no light. He couldn't get

lost. All he had to do was to turn about and keep going.

There was nothing of interest in this passageway, save one door, this also fastened by an old, rusty padlock, as in the case of that admitting to the charnel. The end of the tunnel was reached at last. It had simply been walled up, and terminated in a partition of massive, irregular stones, held together by means of cement, after the manner of the exterior walls of the building. If this passage formerly opened out anywhere, there was no indication of it now on the exterior, and its very existence must have been forgotten save by those in the secret.

As Walter stood absorbed in thought his candle guttered and the flame expired. He awoke with a start to a realization of the fact that he was in absolute darkness, and, save for a few Swedish matches, with no means of making a light. He remembered now that locked door which he had noticed, opening into the side of the passage. Feeling his way to the place, he stood before the door, and now, in the absolute and black darkness it seemed to him that exceedingly faint beams of yellow light trickled through the crevices at its side and beneath it; so faint, indeed, that he

could not be sure, even after he had stood straining his eyes in the darkness for some minutes. If it was indeed light, it was as indistinct as those shapeless spots of color which sometimes float in space before tightly closed eyes. Taking from his pocket the bunch of keys which he had brought for opening the door of the charnel, he found the lock, and tried one key after another.

The sense of oppression which had been creeping over him but a moment before, of growing uneasiness at the horror of his situation in case relief should be long delayed, now gave way to uncontrollable excitement and his hands trembled so that he could hardly find the hole in the lock with the keys as he tried them, one by one. He must know what was in that room. If he could not get in with these present means, he would find another way. Here was where the Father Super — at this thought he stopped and listened with his ear against the door. It occurred to him that there might be some living person therein, or else, why the light, if indeed it was a light? Could it be possible that some unfortunate prisoner was confined in this rayless dungeon, some monk, perhaps, who was no longer trusted, or some layman who knew too much? In such





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case, Walter would learn the secret of the treasure *viva voce* — The lock yielded!

That long key with the narrow tongue caught the bolt and drew it. Walter entered the room, a long, narrow apartment, and there was indeed a sort of lamp burning at the farther end: a glass tumbler filled with olive oil, upon whose surface floated a bit of cork transfixed with a wick. The tumbler, thus made luminous, could be seen plainly, as could also the eikon of the Virgin, with wide mat of polished brass, before which the light was burning. Numerous dark objects could be dimly discerned scattered about the floor, but in the obscurity of the room, they appeared shapeless and indistinguishable. As Walter stepped eagerly forward toward the light, he felt some soft material beneath his feet, and looking down, he thought he made out a dark object, lying parallel with the wall, beneath the eikon. Taking down the tumbler with its floating wick, he examined this object, and found it to be a heavy, rough rug, such as Greek peasants weave. Lifting this, he discovered that it had been used to cover a skeleton.

## CHAPTER XIX

### HE IS CAUGHT IN A TRAP

Under ordinary circumstances the bravest man would experience a distinct shock upon being unexpectedly confronted by a skeleton; and if this happened in the dark of an underground chamber, possibly haunted by the memory of some ancient crime, the impression produced would be none the less fear-inspiring. But love, as McKenzie remarked, is the most powerful of all the gods. Walter was no longer at all hazy or uncertain as to the mental impulse which had sent him prowling among the half-buried secrets of the monastery. His eagerness and excitement were now so great that he would probably not have heard the Father Superior, had the latter at that moment come shuffling into the room. He was kneeling by the skeleton, passing the illuminated tumbler above it, searching every detail.

Among the bones, inarticulate in many places,

yet lying in an order that indicated that they had not been disturbed since the time when they were covered with flesh, were the shreds and remnants of what had once been clothing. Walter took a bit of the fabric between squeamish finger and thumb, and it crumbled like ashes. He gave up all hopes of finding any written testimony there. But as he gazed now at the skull, it seemed to have rolled a trifle, as a head might turn upon a neck, as though the eyeless sockets wished to gaze into his own eyes. It was all fancy, of course, yet a feeling of companionship with that wreck of a man long dead came over him, and he felt like saying aloud, "You know the secrets of these catacombs and would tell me, too, if you could speak." The skeleton's feet were encased in a pair of high boots, and by its side lay a slender rapier with hilt in shape of a cross, and handle inlaid with pearl.

The American threw the rug back over this melancholy sight, and cast his eye hurriedly over the objects about the room. They were mostly domestic utensils, many of them of solid silver, as he judged by the weight, and nearly all of graceful or artistic design. There were solid silver candlesticks and a candelabrum, a brazier of brass, surmounted by a dove with wings out-

spread, several disks of hammered brass, covered with Turkish inscriptions — evidently table-tops; and numerous urns and vases of various shapes, of copper. These latter were all ornamented with the same design: running grape-vines, bearing clusters. Walter laughed aloud. Now, he would make Polyxene's dreams come true. He would tell her where that other country was where the nightingales sang — the dead themselves should tell him her secret!

The article which he had picked up and held, a massive silver sugar-bowl, bore upon its side, deeply engraved and plainly visible, an armorial shield, within which were three arrows, arranged after the manner of the bees on the device of the Barberini family. The shield was surmounted by a crown and beneath all were the Greek letters, *μη λοξά*.

Could any one have peeped in at the door at Walter, he would surely have thought that the young man was losing his mind in this dreadful place, for he continued to laugh, somewhat as the Father Superior had done while gloating over the gold, and he kissed the device upon the sugar-bowl repeatedly. Finally, putting the utensil down, he examined hastily the other objects in the

room, looking always for the same device. Everything, even to the cheapest candlesticks of filled brass, bore the shield and the coronet, although all were not marked with the motto. Satisfied at last with his search, he set the primitive lamp back before the eikon upon the shelf.

The next thing was to effect his escape, if possible, without letting the monks know that he had been in there. He might have to go to Athens or to Rome, and they would make away with the treasure before he got back, if they caught him down here. By Jove, he thought, if they caught him they would never let him out! They would probably leave him here to keep company with his friend on the floor. Consulting his watch, he found that it was now five o'clock. It would not be safe to remain in this room, since, if anybody came he would not have time to fasten the lock. He therefore went out into the dark corridor, and, after some difficulty, succeeded in again throwing home the bolt. His key did not work so well in closing the lock as it had done in releasing it.

What could he do now? There were about a dozen matches in his pocket by which he could, from time to time, consult his watch and ascer-

tain the hour. He stood in the dark passage, racking his brains. The entrance into the charnel was easy, and the door admitting to the wine cellar should not be an impassable obstacle. Prisoners had escaped from dungeons where the doors were of massive iron. If he had only made a study of such matters! A man should never despise any sort of knowledge, for at some time the most unlikely information or skill may prove useful. Of course, his great hope was that the Father Superior would visit the chamber of the skeleton; Walter would then simply slip by him while he was in the room, pass through the sliding panel and out of the charnel, which could not be locked on the inside. But did he make these visits every night? The American began to realize that his fate depended upon luck.

If he were some fellows, he reflected, the Hegoumenos would be down inside of an hour.

He began to feel hungry and found it distinctly uncomfortable standing there. The monks would be taking their early coffee soon now — at six o'clock. They had deliciously fresh eggs. If he waited for the Hegoumenos, he asked himself, how many hours would it be, supposing it were six now? Suppose he came at eleven

the next night: seventeen hours. That would soon pass. It must have been half an hour already, since he had locked the door of the skeleton's room.

He scratched one of his matches and found that it was exactly five minutes past five, that only five minutes had elapsed since he last looked.

He felt he must do something to make the time pass more rapidly. When one is watching time, it goes with dragging steps. Guiding himself by touching the wall with his fingers, he retraced his steps back to the wooden panel and succeeded, after some difficulty, in finding the knot-hole. He even passed into the chamber where the treasure was concealed, but he imagined now that it was heavy with an oppressive and sickening odor, the smell of death, and he did not remain.

The idea occurred to him to "play" that he was blind, and to promenade up and down to determine whether or not his other senses would acquire immediately that added keenness which comes to the aid of the sightless. Curiously enough, when imagining himself blind, he closed his eyes, although the darkness of the vault was already absolute — blue-black.

As the hours wore slowly on, he grew faint



from hunger, for the stomach of a young man ill brooks delay.

“If I only had something to spread over the damp floor,” he thought, “I would lie or sit down.” But the only things he could think of as available for this purpose, were the bags in the charnel, or the rug covering the skeleton in that other room. The grim humor of the thought caused him to laugh aloud. But he stopped abruptly, in the midst of his mirth, and peered searchingly into the darkness. It seemed to him that he had heard his laugh echoed far down the corridor — spectral laughter. Were those foot-falls approaching, almost noiselessly? Where should he flee? But he did not flee. Waiting, he stood with doubled fists, his muscles tense. He realized that it was the dead that he now feared and not the living; that now, no longer engrossed by his quest, superstition had swooped down upon him and might, unless he were on his guard, throw him into a panic.

He tried to recover himself, and so modern had been his training and so great was his will power that he managed to carry himself bravely, though the natural man in him caused him to stop now and then and listen, quite mechanically, or

to cast his eyes over his shoulder, as though to make sure that nothing was approaching from behind. Once he apologized to himself that it was not much wonder, for if the dead ever walked, they certainly would haunt this place.

He passed a whole hour standing by the chamber of the skeleton, watching the light beneath the door, which he was able to see quite plainly now. He had never realized before what a cheerful thing light is. The more he studied the question of escape, the less feasible it seemed to him, without betraying the secret of his visit to the cellar. By pounding on the charnel door, he might or might not make the monks hear. The door was of heavy oak, but by throwing himself against it frequently, he might loosen the staple. As his situation grew more insupportable, the temptation to try grew stronger, and once or twice he nearly yielded to it. He restrained himself with the thought that his only chance of getting out was to wait for the Father Superior. Striking another match, he looked at his watch again. It was half-past seven.

Where would the monks think he was? McKenzie would tell them that he had arisen early and gone into Ta Castra, for the Scot would have

no other idea, knowing his devotion to Polyxene. It was by allowing his thoughts to dwell upon that fair object, by the way, that he caused the time to pass most rapidly. The knowledge that she loved him — and he felt sure of that — came as a ray of cheer into that place of darkness and dead men's bones, and lifted its black influence from his soul; and love walked for many hours in that gloomy vault, from the charnel to the chamber of the skeleton, and back again, and for the first time in centuries there was something besides darkness there.

## CHAPTER XX

### FREED BY A CHANCE

Love is sometimes propitious to her votaries, just as in ancient days Aphrodite befriended those who made offerings to her. Walter's deliverance came earlier that night than he had hoped. A little after ten (he had just consulted his watch with his sixth match) he beheld a faint, twinkling star of light far down the corridor, advancing toward him, for he was at that moment near the chamber of the skeleton. Removing his shoes carefully, he retreated beyond the door to a safe distance and waited. At first he could see nothing but the point of light, coming on like a will-o'-the-wisp, carried by invisible fairy hands. A hand took shape in the darkness, and a pallid face, the outlines of a black robe, seemingly gathered up out of the darkness itself. It was not the Father Superior. They must all know the secret!

The little, gleaming fanatic eyes of Brother

Pandelemon burned redly in his white face, like two baleful stars: Brother Pandelemon, tall, ungainly, loose-jointed, with thin black beard and fleshless face — Brother Pandelemon, the one ascetic, fasting monk beneath the roof of Agia Brysi. He entered the chamber of the skeleton and Walter ran past on noiseless feet, and slid and replaced the panel, pushed the door opening into the wine cellar ajar, and nearly ran into the Father Superior. There, not ten feet off, the old man stood, looking back over his shoulder, listening to confused sounds that came from the upper regions: men running over the wooden floors of the cloister, raucous shouting, the babel of confused voices. The Hegoumenos glided away like a frightened ghost, and Walter, following him, escaped into the court, into the fresh sweet air and the light of the stars.

The whole personnel of the monastery was surrounding McKenzie, who, haggard, disheveled, voluble, was discoursing in fluent, excited Greek, bending every moment close to his hearers, with fevered eyes, the while he dropped his voice to a whisper of fearful impressiveness.

Walter thought he had discovered his absence, and was just now telling them of it.

Crossing the court unobserved, he stepped outside the gate, that he might give the impression of one just returning from Ta Castra. He waited for a moment, however, before putting his plan into effect and was surprised to see the monks return to their cells, yawning; Brother Manoles was evidently amused, for he laughed as though the entire matter were a joke, while Brother Myrianthuses was annoyed, it was plain to be seen, at having been disturbed. When they were all gone, Walter entered the Scot's cell and sank into a chair.

"Get me something to eat, for heaven's sake," he said. "I'm starving; I'm faint!"

McKenzie glanced at him from shaggy eyebrows, then, perceiving that something was wrong, came over to where Walter was sitting and said, as tenderly as a woman:

"Man, you look sick. Did you have no supper?"

"I've had nothing to eat since day before yesterday, and I've got wonderful things to tell — incredible things! But I can not talk till I have something to eat. Come on, let's go to the kitchen and get something."

"Wait a bit," said McKenzie, "I'll find something for you."

The Scot left the room and soon returned with a bit of cheese and a huge chunk of black bread.

"You can e'en wash it down with the hundred-year-old wine," he suggested, producing the teapot.

Walter fell to contentedly.

"I didn't know that black bread was so good," he remarked a moment later. "Why, our American bread can't be compared with it. This — this bread is delicious! But what was all that hullabaloo I heard?"

"Oh, yes," replied McKenzie, "such a dream as man never had before! While you were away in the village, I put in the whole day on the sermons of Saint Skylisses, and I have no doubt that my mind became unduly excited — for 'tis a wonderful find, a wonderful find! Man, I thought I was fishing in a river as dark as ink — the waters of Acheron, perhaps. I sat by a tree whose limbs seemed to be fingers twisted and broken with pain and disease. And in my heart was a great fear, I knew not of what. At first it seemed to me that I dreaded the Thing that I was about to draw up from those black waters and then I said, 'I will go away from here.' But I could not move; I sat and fished with fatal

skill for the Thing that I did not want. Though I could not see it, I knew when it was approaching from afar off in the black depths. It came nearer and nearer to the hook, it seized the bait and as I felt the pole tremble, my hair arose on end and my whole body turned cold with horror. I lifted the pole and drew the creature out. It dropped at my feet, a little toad, that for some reason or other nauseated me. I started to laugh at my fears, but too soon, too soon! The creature began to grow, it reached the size of a cat, of a dog, of a tiger. Hopping to the tree, it stood upon its hind legs and sharpened long, curving claws. I wondered what it meant, and even as the thought entered my mind, it slowly turned its neck and rolled its great, fiery, malignant eyes at me. Man, ye have never seen such a look of hate, of lust for blood. I screamed for help, and the good Brothers came hurrying in and awoke me."

"And now, listen," said Walter, "till I tell you my story, and then we'll put our heads together and see what we can make out of all this. Oh, by the way, read this tag, that I took from one of the bags containing the gold."

McKenzie complied. 'Twas the name of a



monk, with the date of his birth and death, a sort of paper tombstone.

“The record that you stumbled on, then,” said Walter, “simply means that such and such sums of gold have been put into bags formerly occupied by the bones of the monks whose names are given.”

Walter began to tell his story, but had not proceeded further than half a dozen sentences when he yielded to fatigue and fell asleep in his chair. McKenzie lifted him as tenderly as though he had been a child and laid him upon the bed. The American did not awake until noon.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE TREASURE AND THE SKELETON

“Man, I never dreamed anything like that!” Walter had just finished relating to McKenzie his adventures in the underground regions of the monastery. The two men were sitting close in the Scot’s room and were talking low.

“And did you notice,” replied the American, “how absolutely simple and innocent they all acted at lunch to-day? Isn’t the Father Superior a very able Jekyll-Hyde, though? Now listen, while I tell you what I make of all this, and what I propose to do. Polyxene’s grandfather —”

“Oh, man,” interrupted the Scot, “you’re in that frame of mind that you’d bring Miss Polyxene into any discussion or plans that might enter your head.”

“Damn it, don’t interrupt me till you hear what I have to say!” snapped Walter, but added immediately: “Oh, I beg your pardon, old man, but

I'm tremendously worked up over this thing, and besides, I haven't got over my night in the cellar yet. Polyxene is descended from a baby that was mysteriously produced by the monks of this same monastery in May of 1822. Nobody ever knew where he came from and nobody ever has been able to find out. The Brothers, of course, preserved secrecy as an obligation connected with their sacred calling. Where did that baby come from? Naturally, being — well — being in love with Polyxene, I have studied myself dizzy over that baby. He couldn't have dropped from heaven, and if he had been a product of this gossiping, prying little community, somebody would have chanced on the secret sooner or later. Very well — don't get impatient, I'm coming to it. You and I go down cellar to get some of that old wine and we discover that this ancient building has its skeleton in the closet — its mystery. The Father Superior is a miser and he gloats nightly over bags of money concealed among the bones of the dead. Naturally, I am thinking of Polyxene all the time. To me she is the chief mystery of the island. I do not take her for granted, as these people have learned to do. Now, I have one little clue to her

origin. This, I think, will surprise you: she has an old trunk, a cypress-wood box, bound with brass nails, in which the clothing of the little foundling of 1822 was kept. The Brothers turned it over with the child. 'Tis an antiquated affair, but it bears one mark that means a great deal to me. She told me when we—that is, when I—or rather, in our talks together, that she didn't feel at home here, that the nightingales—Mac, I suppose this sounds silly to you!"

"Not a bit of it," replied McKenzie, "I understand such things better than you suppose."

"Well, that trunk had been covered after it became old, with some sort of tough, yellow leather, probably pig-skin. This has become loose at one end and has peeled away, and under the leather is a mark, a coat of arms,—a crown, and beneath it a shield, marked with three arrows! I saw it on her porch the other day, standing so close that I could not be mistaken." Walter clutched McKenzie's knees with such a grip that the latter winced with pain.

"A shield with three arrows!" exclaimed the Scot. "Why, that's the device upon the prayer-book."

"Exactly," cried Walter, leaping to his feet in

uncontrollable excitement; "and every pot, candlestick and vase in that secret chamber is marked with the same device! See here!" — and he shoved the snuff-box into McKenzie's hand. "It was the prayer-book which suggested to me that there might be more proof of the same kind in the cellars of the monastery. McKenzie, that trunk came from here, with the baby; and if we find where the monks got that treasure and those jewels, we shall learn where they got the baby, and who Polyxene really is. I firmly believe that every coin and every jewel and every vase in that cellar belongs to her."

The Scot was studying deeply. Though not a practical man, his mind had been trained to weigh and sift evidence in matters of history and philology and his memory was most delicately retentive. Every detail of Walter's argument was clearly before him and he was giving each point its due consideration. At last he spoke:

"Applying the methods of modern scholarship to your argument, I should say that you have no grounds at all for your conclusion. Even though the trunk belonged to the man whose remains you saw, yet there may be no connection between the man and the baby of 1822. The trunk may have

been given to some baby not his, as easily as to his own child. But granting that Miss Polyxene's great-grandfather was his child, you have absolutely no reason for believing that there is any connection between the treasure and the man. Your reasoning reminds me of that by which Doctor Schliemann became convinced that the long skeleton which he dug up at Mycenæ was that of Agamemnon, king of the Greeks. Homer says that Agamemnon was tall; he was king of Mycenæ: a tall skeleton accompanied with many royal objects of gold was dug up at Mycenæ, hence those were the bones of Agamemnon."

"I remember about that," replied Walter, "and I remember that while the proof was not sufficient to convince scholars, who never believe anything, yet many people, without the courage to admit it, actually do believe that those were the bones of Agamemnon. There are fashions in scholarship, you know, as in clothes. Just now it's the fashion to disbelieve. By and by, when the excavators have done a lot more digging and have proved that Homer and the Bible are all history, it will become the fashion among scholars to believe everything. But now, listen, Mac: suppose the case were still open, suppose the evidence were

not all in and Schliemann had said to the scholars: 'Come with me, to Troy, for instance, and I will show you that those were the bones of Agamemnon.' Would they not have thought that he had made a good enough start to justify them in going, or would they have said, 'We won't believe anyway'?"

"Modern scholarship," replied McKenzie with dignity, "continues to investigate so long as there is a chance for the least ray of additional light."

"Well, then: here is a clue to the identity of the man whose skeleton lies down there, beneath us. Suppose I go to Athens, or Rome, or Paris and find out what family bears that coat of arms. If any prominent member disappeared within the last eighty or ninety years, taking a great treasure with him, will they not know about it? So that's what I propose to do. I'll go and look up this matter and you can go down to Santorine and find out what amount of argols the island produces and whether the wine-makers will be willing to save them up for the amount we offer."

"To Santorine?" cried McKenzie. "'Tis a good plan. There's where ye'll find the argols, man, — there's where ye'll find the argols!"

"All right," said Walter, rising briskly, "I'll write a letter to Polyxene, telling her I'm going off for a month, and we'll get started to-morrow morning. Did you ever notice what beautiful brown hair she has, as soft and beautiful as — as — why, there's nothing in the world like it!"

"I know," said McKenzie, "yes, I understand," — and as Walter left the room, the Scot again hummed the love tune of Chios.

As the two guests of the monastery were passing through the court, they encountered Brothers Manoles and Pandelemon. The former, in his jolly, friendly way, asked them where they were going, and they replied, "To Ta Castra."

Brother Pandelemon for once abandoned his austere and repellent mood and inquired affably why they did not sail over, as there was a fair breeze and going around by sea on such a pleasant day was much more agreeable than walking.

"'Tis a good idea," said McKenzie, and his companion agreed. Brother Pandelemon accordingly accompanied them to the pier and helped them get out the small boat, the monk himself raising the sail and shoving them off with true Greek officiousness.

"This is much better than walking," ob-



served Walter, after they had been flying before the wind for about ten minutes. "Whatever may be the secret of the monastery, it's hard to believe that the monks are involved in any crime. They're an obliging, hospitable lot. Now, it was very decent of Brother Pandlemon, for instance, to send us off in this boat. It's tipping so, old man, I believe I'll move to that side." Rising, Walter took a step forward and his foot went through the bottom of the boat, carrying with it a piece of board about twelve inches long and four wide.

"My God, we're sinking!" he cried, as the water gushed into the little craft. Fortunately McKenzie, who was sailing the boat, had been keeping close to shore, and both could swim, so that they were not actually in great danger. They were soon standing upon the beach, wet as drowned rats, gazing ruefully at a few feet of mast sticking from the surface of the sea and a bit of white canvas, alternately bellying and flapping in the wind.

"Well," observed Walter, "I suppose this means going back and getting dry clothes."

"What do you say to going on as we are?" replied his companion. "I have been wet many

times to the skin, and have never caught cold. We'll wring out our clothes and walk fast. The hot sun will dry us, and when we get to the café we'll take a drink of cognac."

"I'm game for it, if you are," replied the American, "but my collar and cuffs are wrecks."

They accordingly put this plan into effect and were soon tramping vigorously along the path toward the village.

"Well, man, what do you think of Brother Pandeemon now?" asked McKenzie.

"I was just thinking of that very thing. I didn't know that you noticed how easily my foot went through that board. And now I'm ready to believe that it was this same amiable Brother who rolled the stone down on us and not Spiro. I wonder if the monks know all about my being down there among their bones and treasure-bags? I wonder if they have kept watch on every move we've made since we've been here?"

"God knows, but one thing I'm quite sure of. I shall be glad when we're safely away from here. As for Spiro, if you haven't heard from him yet, you are sure to, sooner or later. A Greek would never let such a score as he owes you go unpaid."

"As I believe I remarked on a previous occa-

sion, Mac, you are certainly a comforting friend. And now let me tell you, that if I find out what I expect to when I get among civilized records, I'm coming back here."

## CHAPTER XXII

### A TRIP TO ATHENS

Polyxene was at home and she flushed to her white throat upon seeing Walter again. He not only found an opportunity to slip the letter into her hand (copied at the café, for the original was saturated), but to hold a few minutes' conversation with her. Here is what the letter said:

“MY BEAUTIFUL AND NOBLE DARLING,—

“I can think of nothing but you. I love you more and more every day, and I do not know what I am coming to, as it seems now as though I could not live without you another minute longer. You are so sweet and I am so proud of you, that I feel like shouting to all the world that I love you, I love you! No man living has such a wonderful sweetheart,—for you are my sweetheart, you know you are. And now, sweetheart, sweetheart, I have wonderful news to tell you. I

think I have found out something over there in the monastery that will help me to learn who your father really was, what family you sprang from. I must go away from you a month or so, dearest, to look the matter up, and when I come back, I will tell you all about it. You must not ask me now, as I really know nothing, but I am sure that I am on the right track. Besides, I want to wait to tell you all about it, when I know all. So good-by, sweetheart, sweetheart, for a little while. Oh, how I wish I could kiss your sweet lips just once before I go! Though you belong to me, and though your glorious eyes have looked love into mine, yet I have never kissed you. But I will not ask you for this now. I came to tell you why I am going away, and that I shall be back soon. And you must not breathe a word of what I have told you here to a soul, for if you do, you may spoil everything. So good-by a little while, sweetheart, darling!

“Yours to the end of the world,

“WALTER.”

The Greek women, like all women of the South, expect warmth and impetuosity in love-making, but it is safe to say that Polyxene found the lan-

guage of this letter quite satisfying. Love and youth make us all Southerners.

To Ion and his wife Walter explained that he was going away on business for a few weeks, and they took for granted that he meant the business of the argols. Mrs. Ion insisted on entertaining her countryman and his friend at supper, and set busily about the preparation of another rhubarb pie for the occasion. Walter watched Polyxene furtively to see if he could tell by her actions or appearance when she had read his letter, and was at last rewarded by a look that nearly caused him to lose his self-control and betray himself.

None of the monks was visible when the two foreigners returned that night, and nothing unusual happened, although they barricaded their doors with the furniture, and each slept "with one eye open." A steamer, bound for Syra, that would stop at Ta Castra, was expected at ten the next morning, so they left the monastery early, that they might be sure of catching it. Brother Pandelemon did not put in an appearance, but Walter, in settling with the *xenodochos*, or steward, who chanced to be Brother Manoles, insisted on paying for the boat, asking McKenzie to explain simply that they had swamped it: that they

were poor sailors, anyway. And so they got off, as they had come, in a dirty little coasting steamer, which waited for a few minutes in the crescent bay, whistling frantically, and to which they were taken in a row-boat. Ere the deck engine had ceased its spasmodic throbbing as it pulled at the rattling anchor chain, while the screw was churning the water into foam with its first revolutions, Walter sat on a bench and took a sheet of white paper from his pocket: Polyxene's reply to his letter, his first written communication from her. He had read it before, of course, but he wished to read it again.

“DEAR MR. WALTER,—

“I am very much surprised at what you tell me. It was all I could do not to ask you what you have found out, but since you told me not to ask, of course I thought I ought to do as you said. [“Dear girl,” murmured Walter, furtively kissing the sheet. “She thinks she ought to do as I say!”] Do not be afraid that I shall tell any one what you have written me. It is so little that you ask, and you are doing so much for me! Besides, there is no one here among these people to whom I tell my real self — no one here in whom

I have ever confided. I shall pray every night for your safety, and shall thank God for having sent you to Andros. I know that you will find out what you have gone to seek, for one so wise and noble could not fail. Oh, how glad and excited I am! It will be hard to keep Mrs. Ion from seeing that I have something on my mind, for she has sharp eyes, but even if she suspects something, I am sure she will never guess what it is.

“Your sincere and grateful friend,  
POLYXENE ABATTIS.”

“P. S.—I have seen nothing more of Spiro, but when he does come back, I will do what I told you. Poor fellow, I am sorry for him, but I shall make him see that he would be happier with some nice girl that really loves him. I do hope he will be reasonable.  
P. A.”

Carefully replacing a sprig of fragrant heliotrope that he had found between the leaves, he walked to where McKenzie was standing, leaning over the rail and asked:

“Does it mean anything in Greece when a girl sends a flower to a—a young man, for instance?”



"The language of flowers is more generally known in Greece than in any other country. A bit of white jasmine, for instance, signifies, 'You are most lovely'; a white carnation, 'My love for you is pure'; red, 'I love you warmly, or ardently'; the anemone, 'My love is betrayed'; a sprig of heliotrope, simply, 'I love you —'"

"Eh? Oh, it does!" cried Walter. "It means, 'I love you.' But how in the name of the seven wonders of the world did you come to know all this?" He could not help laughing, there was something so irresistible in the idea of McKenzie, tall, ungainly, big-nosed, fiercely-bearded, gazing solemnly at one from beneath shaggy eyebrows, the while he whispered confidentially the language of flowers.

McKenzie blushed; a red glow could be seen spreading at the roots of his beard, as though low grass was burning among bushes.

"'Tis in my anthology of modern Greek songs," he explained, "and I chanced to run my eye over it."

They passed the arm of the bay, and Polyxene's island slowly melted into the sea-blue sky and the sky-blue sea.

"When you just sail by an island," remarked

McKenzie, "you are apt to think of it but as a spot on the map, yet every one of these bits of land is a little world by itself, with its history, its tragedies, its memories of old loves and hates, its unwritten romances. I warrant you, man, that there is not an island in the Ægean that has not its story to tell, fully as interesting as this which we have stumbled on in Andros!"

"Mac," said Lythgoe, "I wonder if we couldn't estimate pretty nearly the amount of money there is down in that cellar. I lifted several of the bags, and they seemed to weigh about fifty pounds apiece. They were surely the weight of fifty-pound dumb-bells. Now there were ten of them in all. How much would five hundred pounds of gold be worth, say? Is there any way to tell? Do you happen to know how much a thousand dollars weigh?"

"No," replied McKenzie, "but I know how much an Attic gold stater weighed, and I can come somewhere near it from that."

Taking a pad of paper from his pocket, the man who knew the Trojan war better than the peninsular campaign, and the Attic demes more familiarly than the counties of England, made the following calculation, which he expounded in all

seriousness to his companion: "One gold stater of twenty drachmas' value, weighed 133 of our grains, or  $\frac{133}{7000}$  of a pound, as I remember that there are 7000 grains in a pound avoirdupois. If 20 drachmas' value weighs that much, then one drachma would weigh one twentieth of that, or  $\frac{133}{140000}$  of a pound avoirdupois. In 500 pounds weight, then, there would be as many drachmas as that fraction is contained times in 500. Inverting the divisor and multiplying we have  $\frac{500}{1} \times \frac{140000}{133}$  or 70,000,000, divided by 133. Dividing, we get 526,290 drachmas. Now, the value of the ancient drachma was  $9\frac{3}{4}$ d. of our English money, therefore we find how many pence there are in these drachmas, reduce to pounds, and we get £21,901. Is it not simple, man," cried the Scot, enthusiastically, "and does not this calculation demonstrate the practical value of classical learning?" \*

"Surely! It demonstrates also the value of the classics as mental gymnastics. Just multiply

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\* Mr. McKenzie's calculation was ingenious and does credit to his rare classical scholarship. The reader who happens to know the value of an ounce of gold, however, will see that the Scot's reckoning resulted in an appreciable undervaluation. There was no way, of course, of arriving at any idea of the worth of the jewels.

that now by five to reduce it roughly to American dollars. Let's see. Thanks. \$109,505! Oh, I don't believe we'll carry water-jugs and cut wood much longer!" cried Walter, his face flushing with excitement. "Now, when we get to Athens —"

"Athens?" repeated McKenzie, "I thought I was going to Santorine to arrange for the argols."

"Oh, that's so. I forgot all about the argols. At any rate, you'll have to come with me, now, old man, as I might need you to read Greek or Italian books for me. We must get to work on the argols, though. We'll do it as soon as we get back. \$109,000! Mac, there's easily that much in those bags!"

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE STORY OF THE SKELETON

It is June in the Greek isles, the early days of June, when the world is like a great, red rose in full perfection of bloom, while it is yet morning and there is dew on its petals; it is early June in the Ægæan isles, and the world is like a glorious woman in the heyday of her charms — radiant, voluptuous, consummate, yet as tenderly dainty as a young maiden. There is a time in the Greek June as in the life of a woman, when every moment is precious, for nature can do no more; she has exhausted all her resources and bestowed every gift in her power and the inexorable law of change whispers, "It is time to fade."

It is cool in the early mornings now, and the stars linger late in a mauve, lilac-pink sky; it is hot and still in the middle of the day, and through the long yellow afternoon, save for the rasping of the cicadas; and at evening the bees drift home

from the fields of wild thyme upon the mountain sides in tawny clouds. The ravines are gushing over with their torrents of oleander blossoms, pink and white, and the poverty vines and wandering heliotrope are filling the air with their mingled perfumes; and, after the sun goes down, the heavens, the sea and the hills are bathed in amethystine hues of indescribable beauty, as though the day were not dying, but were lying down to sleep upon a couch of violets.

Walter has returned from Athens, and he is telling Polyxene the result of the journey. It is nine o'clock in the evening, and the moon, a votive shield of old gold, hung in the temple of the sky, gleams with an almost dazzling radiance. Yonder, where its light falls in an open space, it would be quite possible to read by it, and the shadows cast by the trunks of the trees, and even by the vine and fig leaves, are as blackly distinct as silhouettes. In the shade of the fig-tree, too, it is quite dark, for the moon, in Greece, as in other countries, is ever the lovers' torch: however brightly she may shine in the open, her rays do not penetrate and suffuse the hidden places.

"I don't know what you will think of me," she was saying, "meeting you in this way; but I just

couldn't wait to hear what you had to tell me." She spoke earnestly.

"I don't think there's anything wrong in it at all. It's awfully sweet of you. As I told you, in my country the young people sit out in the gardens and talk till all hours of the night. Of course, where they are not watched as they are here, they are put upon honor, as it were, and they — they — always act just as though the whole world were looking at them."

"Oh, of course," whispered Polyxene; and then added, "I never met anybody like you before — a real gentleman. I — I trust you so! And to think that you should have been so kind to a poor servant girl! I can't understand it."

"Servant girl? You are no servant girl. I knew that from the first moment my eyes rested upon you, when you were washing clothes down there by the sea."

"No servant girl?" repeated Polyxene, much wondering.

"No indeed! Of course not! Listen, Polyxene, I am almost afraid to tell you. The baby who was given by the monks to the Abattis, your grandfather, was the heir of a noble Italian family, originally from Genoa, but settled for hun-

dreds of years in the island of Chios. I had no difficulty whatever in finding out who he was, by McKenzie's aid. McKenzie is a noble fellow, by the way, and we must never forget him." This unconscious use of the mutual "we" is a pretty sure sign that a couple has drifted into deep water.

"No," replied Polyxene, "we never will. And what was my grandfather's name, my father's name? What was, what is, mine?"

"I don't know what your name is, exactly, you have so many of them, nor your grandfather's either, since he was never rightly named. Your great-grandfather, the man who brought the baby to the monks, was Giovanni-Maria, Giovanni-Maria — I can't remember it all, now. Come this way a little, till I read it to you," — and he slid along upon the bench into the bright moonlight, the girl following him.

"Yes, yes!" she said, as he took a paper from his pocket and held it so that the ghostly light fell full on it. Their cheeks were almost touching, and Polyxene's eyes shone like deep, clear pools in her pale face.

"His name," read Walter slowly, "was Giovanni-Maria-Antonio-Ossuni, Duca di Polcavera,



sixth Marchese di Cogoletto. So ——” and he arose and bowed low, with playful reverence, sweeping the earth with the brim of his hat.

“What a funny name!” laughed the girl nervously, not clearly comprehending.

“So I have the honor of saluting Signorina Polyxene Ossuni, Duchess of Polcavera, Marchioness of Cogoletto.”

“But what does all this mean? Does it mean that I am a rich woman, that I am no longer a servant?”

He sat down again by her side.

“You never were a servant, except in the sense that it is possible for a queen to perform menial tasks. Whenever you lift a water-jug, you become a statue by Phidias, when you wash clothes by the sea, you are a nymph. But I must tell you what we have found out so far. There was no difficulty in connecting the shield with the three arrows with the Ossuni family. We went directly to the library of the Boulé, and it proved to be the one place in all the world where we should have gone. Having got hold of the name Ossuni, I said to McKenzie, ‘Now what’ll we do? If there had only been an Almanac de Gotha in those days!’ What was my surprise to find that the

Almanac de Gotha runs back to 1764, and from this I learned that the Ossuni family has been extinct in Italy since 1800, at which time the titles had passed to the representative of a branch living in Chios. Here is where McKenzie came in. 'The great massacre of Chios occurred in 1822, man,' he said; McKenzie always says 'man' when he gets excited, 'and you say that the monks produced their baby in that year?'

"'Yes,' I told him, 'in May of 1822.'

"'In May, did you say, man?' he cried, more excited than ever, and then he whispered to me: 'The massacre took place in April!' In less than an hour he came to me with a Greek book on the massacre of Chios. It seems that they have any amount of literature on that subject, and he read me the following — I can remember it word for word: 'Among those who disappeared and were never heard of again, was an Italian nobleman, the Duke of Polcavera, with his infant son, and two servants. The duke was known to be very wealthy, and it was reported that he kept his money concealed in his palace, as was the custom among the islands in those times, but though the Turks dug everywhere, they could find nothing. So enraged were they, that they set fire to the

duke's palace, utterly ruining it, with all its rare furnishings, hangings and treasures of art, thus destroying one of the most beautiful of the old Venetian palaces in the island. The duke's escape was almost miraculous, having been effected by an underground passage leading to the sea, where a small caique was anchored. His wife and elder son, who were visiting at a neighbor's, some distance away, were both murdered. As neither the duke nor any of his followers were ever heard of again, it is supposed that they escaped from the knives of the Turks, only to be swallowed up by the waves. Thus became extinct one of the oldest Italian families settled in the Cyclades.' Don't you see, Polyxene, there can be no doubt about it? Even McKenzie believes now: the infant son taken from Chios in April; the mysterious baby given up by the monks of Agia Brysi in May; the implements in the monastery marked with the family coat of arms; the same coat of arms on your trunk, your personal appearance, so different from that of these people — everything points to the truth. There can be no mistake."

"Yes, and then my dreams of another country," added Polyxene, with a woman's reason.

"My feelings in the matter! And what do you want me to do now?"

"Now, Duchess ——"

She laid her hand upon his arm, appealingly: "Don't, don't," she pleaded, "I must always be Polyxene to you."

"Well, then, Polyxene, you must for a few days yet be more cautious than ever, and must go on in the old way. There are certain — certain proofs yet to be got in the island, there is work to be done, and we must not arouse the least suspicion. I want to get your rights for you, to get possession of your property, and you must continue to live this lie for a little while, just a little while longer."

"It is easy to do anything that you ask me to do," said the girl simply.

She had put on a *condogouni*, a short jacket with wide embroidered sleeves over her white waist and had tied a white silk handkerchief loosely about her head. As she stood there in the moonlight, the sweetest ghost that ever walked, there was something in her eyes, as she made this last remark, that made Walter feel faint for a moment and then maddened him.

"Polyxene," he said, "I always thought you a

queen, or a goddess, as I told you. But I — I wish you would forget anything I may have said to you. I — I have nothing of my own, and you are certainly a duchess and may be a comparatively rich woman. When you get in your new sphere, and have seen life through your new eyes for a while, then maybe you will give me an opportunity to speak of these things again."

Walter was surprised at the result of this speech: the last of the Ossunis and the heir of a hundred generations of Italian romance, threw both her arms about his neck and held him in a convulsive embrace. He could feel her warm, firm, supple form trembling from head to foot as it pressed against his.

Throwing her head back, with closed eyes, she murmured, "Kiss me."

Cheek to cheek and lip to lip, she purred, as the Italian women do when they love, "I will say it, dear, nothing shall stand between us. I love you, I love you!" And then as if to justify herself, she added: "If I am indeed a duchess, I am your duchess, dear, for ever and ever. It is only upon Polyxene the servant girl that these people have claims, only Polyxene the bond-girl that would refuse your love."

As they stood thus, they began to say good night, an interminable ceremony with young lovers, as everybody who has really lived, knows; and it was in the midst of this ceremony that Mrs. Ion came upon them, stared for a moment speechless, and then sank on the bench as though struck down by a physical blow.

"For the land's sake," she gasped at last, "who would ever have dreamed of such a thing?" And then, gathering breath and strength: "Polyxene, aren't you ashamed of yourself — you — you — oh! Mr. Lythgoe, I never would have thought this of you, an American, and coming from the same part of the country where I do! To make love on the sly to this young girl in this way and spoil her only chance to get married! I think it's too bad of you," — and, as a proof that she really was agitated, she covered her face with her handkerchief and burst out crying.

"There! there!" said Walter, patting her on the shoulder; "don't cry, dear Mrs. Ion. I should think you'd rather have Polyxene marry an American than a Greek, you being an American. I want to marry her — to make her my wife."

Mrs. Ion was pacified by this explanation as

soon as she clearly comprehended its import, for she was very fond of Walter.

"But I advise you," said she, "to keep quiet and run away with her, or the Greeks may kill you both. And don't for goodness' sake let anybody know that I knew anything about it. Mr. Ion and I would have to move off the island if you did."

Kissing Polyxene affectionately, she said: "You can consider yourself lucky, my girl, to get an American man for a husband. But why were you so — so everlastingly sly? You couldn't have gone on as long as this without my knowing anything, if Maud Persephone had been here."

That young lady, it should be explained, had been sent by her mother to America, to spend a year at the home of Mrs. Ion's sister, and attend school. A Presbyterian missionary from Athens had gone over with his wife on a lecturing tour and had offered to take the girl with him. "You might know I would favor my own countryman. Now run along to Mr. Ion, he's sick."

"Lucy, Lucy," called a querulous voice, "who's that talking out there in the garden?"

"It's Polyxene and I. I'm just sending her to the spring for some fresh water. Here, my girl,

you'll have to go. Take this jug. I mustn't tell a fib. No, not you," seizing Walter by the arm in her quick, imperative way. "You've done spooning enough to-night. You must go to bed now."

Walter took both of Mrs. Ion's hands in his. "You're pure gold," he said, laughing, "an American to the backbone."

Looking over Mrs. Ion's head he watched the Duchess of Polcavera go out of the garden gate in the splendid moonlight, with a water-jug upon her shoulder.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### FOR A FAIR WOMAN'S SAKE

“What did you say that those Greek words, *μη λοξά*, Polyxene's motto, mean?” Walter asked of McKenzie as the two were sitting in the former's cell at the monastery, whither they had returned.

“They signify, ‘Not deviously,’ or ‘obliquely.’ Taken in connection with the three arrows, they might perhaps be best translated as ‘Straight to the mark.’ The adverb, ‘*λοξά*,’ which is very good ancient Greek, is employed most frequently to-day by dressmakers, with the sense of ‘on the bias.’” McKenzie was at home when started on a philological question, and could not be shut off before he had exhausted his store of knowledge on the subject. “It is not at all strange,” he continued, “to find a family of Italian origin using a Greek motto, for this language, which was, for hundreds of years after the Roman con-

quest, the tongue of literature and polite society, has never died and never quite lost its prestige. Then, too, the Ossuni family lived so long in Chios that they must have adopted Greek as their mother tongue."

"Yes," replied Walter, who had not heard the last part of this short homily. "'Straight to the mark.' McKenzie, I love Polyxene Ossuni,—that fortune and those jewels belong to her, and I mean to get them for her."

"I fear, man, 'twill be difficult, for if you appeal to the authorities, the monks will put the treasure where it will never be seen again, or the government may declare that Polyxene's title is not sufficiently clear and may seize the money. We are not in England or America now."

"Yes, or the poor girl might be involved in a lawsuit that would last for years, and the lawyers would get it all. You have echoed my very thoughts. So I mean to 'go straight to the mark.'"

Walter's face was pale and he was trembling with suppressed excitement, but there was a determined look in his eyes, as he stood leaning with one hand on the back of McKenzie's chair.

"I mean to take that money away to-night —"

McKenzie started. "What do ye mean, man?"

"Just what I say. Hear me out. The money belongs to the duchess, and she must have it. These reverend Brothers could have got possession of this treasure in no other way than by taking it from the Duke of Polcavera. Right here is where he disappeared. Now, this is my plan, that I have studied on night and day till I have gone nearly mad over the matter. I will tell you, because you must help me. I haven't said a word to Polyxene, because if we get into trouble, I don't want her to share any of the blame. We must take that money out of there to-night, somehow, and hide it. I have picked out a place where the devil himself couldn't find it. I don't think the monks suspect anything, for they seemed mighty glad to get us back again. We'll hide it, I say, and then we'll go away. We'll take Polyxene with us, and after six months or a year, we'll slip back here unexpectedly, with a steam launch, or small steamer, and get the treasure. Don't interrupt me — don't interrupt me, at any rate, to say 'no,' because you've got to help me. It's a risky kind of thing, I know. We might get trapped down there, and these monks are wolves in sheep's garb. It seems like robbery,

too, to carry off money in this high-handed way, but it isn't, it's eternal justice, it's the righting of an old wrong, it's peril incurred for a fair lady's sake — for as fair, virtuous and noble a lady as ever lived. Then, there's another consideration. They say that possession is nine points in the law. If it should turn out that this money belongs to any one except Polyxene, we can manage to restore it to the rightful owner. We are convinced, I think, at least I am, that it does not belong to the monks, and they are likely to put it away where nobody ever will see it again, and deny that it ever existed."

The Scot arose to his tall height.

"For the lady's sake," he said sweetly, "I'll help ye, for I do believe that right is on the lady's side."

Lythgoe sprang forward and seized both of McKenzie's hands.

"You're the right sort," he cried, "through and through, and together we can not fail. We'll wait till there's no longer any danger of being disturbed. We'll watch till, say, one or two o'clock, and then we'll go down there. I have the tools in my grip to draw the staple to the charnel, or to saw through, if necessary, but I

'don't want to do that; I want to make that money disappear as neatly as though the Duke of Polcavera's ghost had spirited it away. I know how to go through the panel, and I can get into the chamber of the skeleton. Now, there's a small window opening into that, closed by an iron shutter on the inside, and opening out into a sort of air-hole about two feet deep on the outside. There's a narrow path clear round the building, between the walls and the foot of the mountain against which it is built on the rear and north side. This path ends where the big rock is, into which the chapel has been scooped out, partly, as you know, by the hand of God. I strolled around this path to-day, and noticed the air-hole, and I understood in a minute where it went to, for I remembered having seen the shutter. Well, we'll take the bags two and two — there are eleven of them, we can make it in three trips — and we'll lift them up and push them into this air-hole. Then we'll arrange everything as it was before, go around and get them and carry them off and hide them, and then I'll elope with Polyxene. Mrs. Ion will help me to carry out that part of the scheme — she's on my side.'

When Walter came to that part of the plan

which had reference to Polyxene, his face flushed with rapture, and there was that in his expression of mingled exaltation and joy, which showed him capable of any madness for love's sweet sake. But who shall say that aught is madness that is done for love? His enthusiasm communicated itself to McKenzie, whose gray eyes glowed beneath their shaggy eyebrows.

"Man," he cried, "ye are like Jason, bringing away the golden fleece from the land of Colchis; ye are a second Theseus fetching another Ariadne from Crete! There's something wonderful in your plan; I could never have thought it out in my dreams. When we get away, I suppose you'll be attending to the argols immediately? You'll be going down to Santorine?"

"The argols? Oh, surely. We'll get through with this thing inside of a week, and then we'll begin in earnest on the argols. By Jove, I'd almost forgotten about the argols! As soon as we get to Santorine, I'll write a full report to my uncle, telling him what we've done already, and describing to him the superior advantages of that island. You can help me in that."

"I know that island well," replied McKenzie; "I have been there so much, and I'll help you in

this matter, because I should expect you to come to my aid if my Arethusa — ”

“ Your Arethusa? ”

“ Oh, man, I've been wanting to talk to you about her! While you have been paying your court to Polyxene, you have had my fullest sympathy, I have understood your feelings, because I too love! Listen, man,” whispered McKenzie, and he had never looked so solemnly into Walter's eyes as now. “ In Heftamyloi, in the island of Santorine, there is a young woman who has not her equal upon earth for beauty. She is black-browed, like Theocritus' Amaryllis, her eyes and her hair are dark, the blood is like Cretan wine in her cheeks, her lips are red as pomegranates, and her teeth as white as cuttle-bone. She is as mischievous as a nymph, so that I sometimes think her to be a Nereid, trying to drive me mad. But she loves me, man, I am sure of that, and she has a heart as tender as an angel. She was grinding coffee when I first saw her, and I never see a coffee-mill that it does not call up before my mind that sweet vision of Arethusa grinding coffee. Let's take a cup of tea and talk about our sweet-hearts. Ye have never seen beauty like Arethusa's, man.”

"Except, of course, Polyxene's," corrected Walter.

"Beauty is not everything," fenced the Scot. "Polyxene is certainly beautiful, and she is sweet and good."

Walter flushed with anger, but glanced at his companion, who was evidently embarrassed at the turn the discussion had taken, and yet not willing to admit that his lady's beauty had its equal in the world. The American burst out laughing good-naturedly.

"Well, brew your tea," he said, "and let's talk about your sweetheart. It certainly is your turn now. Oh, you old rascal! So that's why you were so anxious to get down to Santorine?"

"'Twas a mere coincidence, though I'll not deny that Arethusa drew me more strongly than the argols. But Santorine is the chief wine-making island of the Cyclades — it really is."

Thus they whiled away the afternoon, but as evening approached, Walter's excitement grew almost uncontrollable. Twice he walked around to the back of the building to make sure that the window was still there; and he thought that the evening meal would never end. Whenever he laughed at any of Brother Manoles' jokes, as



translated by McKenzie, it seemed to him that his voice sounded unnaturally high and shrill. The Father Superior, he was sure, was regarding him with a slyly malevolent gaze and could read his thoughts.

By eight o'clock everything became quiet in the monastery yard: so quiet that the mournful cry of some nocturnal bird, common to the region, "Piurp! piurp!" seemed the audible expression of the vastness and loneliness of the night. A little later the fat Brothers Manoles and Myrianthuses, who occupied adjoining cells, had fallen to work in earnest in the business of sleeping and were well started on their nocturnal duet. At times they purred along amicably together, like two happy lions; then one would attempt an intricate series of gurgling tremolos, or would imitate the "Kek, kek!" of Aristophanes' batrachian chorus; whereat his competitor would stop suddenly with a sensational finish, and would remain silent for several minutes, as though gaining breath for a supreme effort, which usually proved to be an angry snarl, a deep hiss like that of a geyser about to erupt, or a low rumble. This somnial chorus was still on at eleven, and, combined with the darkness and the quiet that

otherwise prevailed, produced the impression that the entire world was wrapped in the slumbers of the Enchanted Palace.

The two plotters had put out their lights, and conversed now only in the lowest whispers. By a slight crack in the door — they were both in the same room — they watched the court near the entrance to the wine cellar.

“They’re all asleep, Mac,” whispered Walter, “there’s nobody coming out to-night. They don’t come out every night, of course. We just happened to catch them those two times.”

“But why did they try to kill us?”

“We’re not sure that they did. It might have been Spiro, after all, the first time, and the wetting may have been an accident.”

“If they tried to kill us,” persisted McKenzie, “then they are watching us night and day like cats. What do you say to locking them all in their cells before we go down?”

Walter thought a moment.

“Too dangerous,” he decided at last. “If one of them should want to come out for any reason, he’d raise a fearful hullabaloo, and they’d get us somehow. No, we must run the risk. Come on, we might as well go now.”

"If the monks discover us, what course shall we pursue? We must not take human life, nor must we allow them to kill us, as they seem crazy enough to do."

"I've thought of that, McKenzie. The times that we have seen any one of the monks in the cellar, it has been only the Superior or Brother Pandlemon. If we are discovered, it will be by only one monk. We must grab him, whoever is nearest, gag and bind him, and then go on with our work. Once started, we can't stop. I believe you're clearer-headed than I am. It would never do to go down there without having planned for every emergency. Do you think of anything else?"

"N-n-o."

"Well, then, let's be going."

They stole across the court like shadows and again entered the dark cellar together.

## CHAPTER XXV

### A FIGHT WITH STRANGE WEAPONS

The reader must pause for a moment and try to put himself in the place of these venturesome young men, and let his imagination play, if he desires to gain an idea of their feelings, as they now entered upon their strange adventure. He must try to picture in his mind the great dark cellar, the rows of huge wine-tuns, looming indistinctly in the light of the one candle; McKenzie, tall, awkward, Quixotic, roughly-bearded, his eyes gleaming with excitement; Walter, thin-faced, pale, eager, his young heart full of the great love of a woman.

Without a word they fell to work upon the staple to which the padlock was hanging, as it was driven into the door and bade fair to yield much more easily than the one at the other end of the hasp, which was deeply imbedded in an oaken post. Walter drew the iron little by little, by

means of a pair of pincers with a long handle, a sort of general utility tool much used in Greece. Biting with this one leg of the staple close to the wood repeatedly and throwing his entire weight upon the extreme end of the handle, he established a leverage that was well-nigh irresistible. They were soon in the charnel, and it was the Scot who still held the light while the American again dug down into the center of the uncanny pyramid, making a hole like the crater of a volcano as he tossed the rattling bags ruthlessly into a heap. From time to time McKenzie thrust his hairy face into the crack of the door and peered down the long passage between the wine-tuns, but no twinkling candle appeared at the far end of the vista.

"There," said Walter, wiping his perspiring brow. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven — that's all. Shall we put the bones back first? No, I think not. We'd better carry the gold through into the chamber first and restore this pile afterward. Here, I'll make sure of the jewels on the first trip."

Sliding back the panel, Walter passed through, carrying two of the precious bags, besides a candle in the grip of his thumb. He was followed by McKenzie, the two men bending at the hips and

knees as they trotted down the long passage, like athletes about to jump by the aid of heavy weights. Walter quickly opened the chamber of the skeleton and the four bags were deposited beneath the window. The trip was repeated in silence and fevered haste. So great was the agitation, so intense the preoccupation of the men, that McKenzie carried off the bones of Brother Elias Palamaras, who received his crown of glory in 1811, not noticing the greater size of the bag or the lightness of its weight. This, however, did not delay matters, as there were eleven bags and three trips were necessary.

They had left a bit of candle burning at each end of the route: one in the charnel and one in the chamber of the skeleton. The passage was thus left entirely dark. In the middle of the third trip, just as Walter stepped through the door into the passage, after having put down his two bags, he was sure that he heard footfalls of some one quite close to him, stealing away in the darkness. He was himself standing in the faint light cast by the candle, and could have been discerned by any one a few feet away. He seized McKenzie by the arm, giving the low hissing signal for silence, "Sh-h-h!"

He was sure he heard the sounds, as stealthy as the treacherous tread of a cat, and it occurred to him, as though by inspiration, that one of the Brothers had stolen upon them with intent of locking them up in the chamber of the skeleton, and that they had been delivered from this horrid fate by the merest chance. Walter rushed forward in the darkness, determined to seize the intruder, as they had planned, and immediately there was a hurried shuffling of feet, as though the person, whoever it might be, were running away at the top of his speed. He was running rapidly too, and seemed likely to elude pursuit. Soon he bounded into the faint light shining through the panel, passed into the charnel and stood for one brief moment among the scattered bags of bones, glaring back into the blackness of the tunnel — Brother Pandlemon, tall and ungainly as McKenzie himself. There was no fear in his fanatic eyes, as he stood there with his long priest's hair tumbled about his shoulders, his face haggard with hate, a butcher-knife in his hand. Walter paused, as did also McKenzie, who was standing by his side. The seizing and binding of this man did not seem practical now that the time had arrived for putting their plan into effect. It is often

so much easier to plan than to execute! A dozen stout men would have had their hands full in binding this member of the Church Militant, and then there would have been some cuttings and possibly killings before he would be relieved of his weapon. But a moment he waited, then turned and disappeared through the door.

"He'll lock us in here, man," whispered McKenzie.

"We must not let him do that, knife or no knife!" exclaimed Walter. Even at that moment they could hear the rattle of the staple and lock on the outside, as they were fumbled by unseen hands. They both rushed simultaneously and struck the door with such terrific force that they threw it wide. The drawing of the staple had rendered its immediate locking impossible, and Brother Pandelemon was hurled sprawling among the entire body of monks, out in force: the Father Superior with a candle in his left hand and the roasting spit, his favorite weapon, in the right; and around him were grouped Brothers Manoles, Myrianthuses, Theodore, Timoleon, weaponed for the most part with kitchen utensils, a heavy iron frying-pan, a poker, a pair of tongs, a brass candlestick three feet



high. For a brief second the opposing parties looked at each other, and the Father Superior began a sentence, whether of denunciation or of parley will never be known, as Brother Pandemon, maddened by his undignified fall, scrambled to his feet and sprang forward with a snarl of rage, brandishing his knife.

But he was destined never to pass the door, for the Scot, quick-witted enough in a fight, as all Kelts are apt to be, grabbed a bag of bones in each hand, and swinging one of them high in air, brought it down with such force upon the reverend Brother's head as to disqualify him for further participation in the discussion. He collapsed very prettily and lay limp across the threshold.

The Scot was not slow to follow up his advantage. Flourishing his sacrilegious and unheard-of weapons, he charged, dealing blows right and left. But the monks had no idea of letting these young men escape. They returned McKenzie's blows with interest, and Brother Manoles, throwing his arms about the Scot's neck, tried to drag him down. He was indeed so far successful that the twain fell athwart the long spigot of the great wine-tun, knocking it out, and

the precious fluid, one hundred years old, the special beverage of kings and princes of the Church, spouted clean across the passage. This was too much for Brother Manoles. Shrieking, "Mother of God, the beautiful wine!" he seized the spigot and tried to stick it back into place, but was immediately pushed over by Walter, who had followed McKenzie and was trying to break from the grip of a couple of monks.

At this juncture the Superior's candle was knocked from his hand, and the fight went on in the dark, the contestants plashing around in the priceless wine that was now rapidly covering the cement floor. Groans could be heard, the thud of blows, delivered indiscriminately on friend and foe alike, and the playing of the stream from the great tun, interrupted now and again as that despairing *bon vivant*, Brother Manoles, succeeded in inserting the spigot for a brief instant; for no sooner did he succeed, kneeling there before the tun, praying frantically to the Virgin, meanwhile, to save the wine, than some one was sure to push him over and set the stream going again. Walter was possessed of no weapon at first, as his impulse had been to dash through in McKenzie's wake, but now, as he freed himself from

gripping hands with a supreme effort, he wrenched way from Brother Theodore the tall brass candlestick, and swinging this spitefully to keep himself free, he backed to the door of the charnel, and then was absolutely obliged to retreat through the panel and down the long passage. McKenzie had disappeared, and it occurred to the American that his companion had probably been killed or knocked senseless.

Walter was given short shrift in the passage, for the monks, provided with a light, came hurrying after him almost immediately, and brought him to bay against the partition wall at the farther end. Holding his candlestick as a baseball bat, he stood watching them warily. But Brother Pandlemon now appeared, armed with a Gras rifle, which the Father Superior, after some angry words, took from his hands. By the actions of the two monks, Walter judged that Brother Pandlemon wished to put him out of the way without further parley. The Superior, however, pointed significantly to the candlestick, and then raised the rifle to his shoulder. Walter dropped his weapon, and the rifle came down. He was immediately overpowered and thrown into the chamber of the skeleton.

The monks locked the door and shuffled away, gabbling excitedly, and left him there a rich man in gold and jewels but a very poor one in hope.

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### BEATEN AND MADE PRISONER

Walter's first feeling, as he stood in this damp underground cell, was one of utter despair. He had been defeated in his attempt to get the fortune which he believed to be rightfully Polyxene's, out of the clutch of the monks, and he was momentarily overwhelmed by the sense of defeat. But what glorious possessions are youth and a stout heart! That he was not crushed, was soon evidenced by the fact that despair almost immediately gave way to the healthier emotion of rage, and he found considerable comfort in imagining what he would do could he but have that fight over again.

Fool that he was, he thought, to be afraid he might kill some of those sanctimonious hypocrites! If he ever was turned loose among them again, he would have no such compunctions! Monks? Devils, thieves!

Grasping the candlestick in imagination, he strode nervously up and down the obscure room, grinding his teeth and laying about among imaginary foes.

That was one stout blow he got in, anyway, on some good Brother's back, he reflected; it made him howl — if it had only been the old scoundrel's head, it would have cracked it, sure enough.

He was in pain, too, for he had been pretty thoroughly cudged himself, and as the excitement of the fight gradually wore off, his bruises became clamorous in all portions of his body — a fact which by no means tended to sweeten his temper. He was not in the dark, fortunately, nor in danger of being so, as those primitive lamps which the Greeks use so much — wicks floating in tumblers of olive oil, burn indefinitely.

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast,” said the poet. Walter had not been left alone with his rage and his bruises ten minutes before he began to look the situation squarely in the face, and to search for its alleviating features.

First of all, was there any possibility of escape? He examined the window, but this did not offer much encouragement. The opening was narrow, the walls were thick, and a round iron bar, firmly

imbedded in the mortar, cut it in halves, lengthwise. He would have to be a weasel or an india rubber man to get through there, he decided.

The door was out of the question, unless he could force it, as it was locked on the outside. He threw his entire strength against it a number of times, but failed to produce the least effect. One thing was certain: McKenzie knew where he was this time, and if at liberty, would make every effort to rescue him. Perhaps the Scot would come to the window on the outside and attempt to communicate with him. With this in mind, Walter stood by the window for a long time, on tiptoe, listening. As nothing resulted, and as he was sure that he heard two persons speaking Greek outside, along toward morning, he became almost certain that something had happened to McKenzie. The more he thought of this, the more plausible the idea became, as he felt sure that his friend would have come around to the window had it been possible.

Strange how superstition will invade the sanest and stoutest heart! The dreadful sleeper, there beneath the rug upon the floor, gradually became an object of dread to Walter, and began to exert an uncanny attraction upon him. He tried to

reason that he was this man's — this Thing's — friend, and that it would do him no harm, but even the possibility of assistance from the dead gave him little comfort. Had the bony wreck arisen and thrown wide the door, or caused the wall to gape for him, he would probably have been too paralyzed with fear to avail himself of the opportunity to escape. And the fancy came to him at last that the orbless eyes were following him, with some message of intelligence.

So uncomfortable did this notion become that he was obliged to throw back the rug and glance at the skull to rid himself of it. But the relief was only momentary, for as soon as the death's head was covered, the fancy returned.

The most curious phase of this attack of superstition was that the oval-faced and stolid Virgin, upon whose features fell the yellow light of the olive-oil dip, seemed a wholesome influence. Her eyes also drew his gaze, and in whatever part of the room he chanced to be, they were looking into his own, with the ghost of a beneficent smile. Thus do surroundings and circumstances affect the character of men, of nations. Here was Walter Lythgoe, a product of American civilization, an erstwhile devotee of golf and



*King Dodo*, actually deriving comfort from the presence of a painted eikon. But Mr. Lythgoe was now in the cellar of a medieval monastery, in possession of an ancient secret, looking at things by means of a lamp as old in principle as civilization itself; alone with the bones of a man whose spirit, if ever the dead do speak, would find it hard to hold its peace.

But there were various objects scattered about the room, as we have seen, and Walter searched among these, in hopes of finding something that would serve as a tool for opening the door. The most hopeful among these was a tall, graceful pitcher with slender neck, and a handle made in imitation of grape-vine, with dainty leaves. Taking this up, he inserted the long, pointed snout in the crack of the door and pried with all his might, but he only succeeded in twisting the pretty utensil out of shape.

At five o'clock, or thereabouts, he heard footsteps outside, as of some one passing along the path near the window, and pulling himself up so that his face was in the opening, he shouted, "Hey, hello, let me out; I'm locked up down here!"

He could not see any one, of course, as the

window opened into a sort of air-hole, a trifle below the level of the ground, and as his call brought no response, he concluded that one of the monks must have gone by.

It is no part of this narrative to describe Walter's increasing terrors and despair as the hours of night wore away. A Poe would have had him nearly insane by the time the first faint gray of dawn began to glimmer in the narrow window, and would possibly have represented him as falling with hysteric laughter into the arms of the Father Superior when the latter came at last to open the door; for the Father Superior did come in the early morning with Brothers Pandlemon and Timoleon.

The old man had possibly descended to take away his precious gold bags. At any rate, he could not keep his hands off them, for he picked several of them up and dropped them into a more compact pile; he weighed them one by one, casting a pitifully suspicious eye at Walter, as though the latter might have removed some of the gold; he opened the contents and peered within; and as his eyes fell again upon the yellow metal, he chuckled with satisfaction, an affectionate sound, such as a young lover makes in the

heyday of youth's passion. He even picked up one of the bags, seizing the neck with both hands, and started for the door. Brother Pandeemon followed his example, taking two, when their eyes fell again upon Walter, who had been for the moment forgotten.

"Uh!" said Brother Pandeemon — a cry of rage like that of some wild beast — and he advanced threateningly toward the American; but the Father Superior, coming in between, shouldered him back, remonstrating with him with many loose-sleeved gestures. It was evident that Brother Pandeemon found it difficult to restrain his wrath, but that the Superior, for some reason, was opposed to further violence. After a protracted and voluble discussion, the monks bound Walter's hands and conducted him out of the cellar into the light of day again. As they passed through the court, Brother Manoles, his arms folded within his cassock and his head cast dejectedly down, espied them. The jolly monk thrust out a fat arm, and shaking a ponderous, greasy fist, advanced a few steps toward Walter.

Alas, for the frailties of human nature! The word which he uttered and which indicated the cause of his wrath was "Kراسي, Kراسي!"

which is the modern Greek for wine. Father Manoles cared more for the beautiful, ancient beverage, the elixir of kings and princes of the Church, than for all the gold in all the bags. It had been spilled and absorbed by the unappreciative cellar floor; the great tun had spouted its priceless blood into the air, a ruthless, wasted stream of undreamed dreams, unloved friends, songs unsung. Who knows how many hours Brother Manoles may have sat in the shade of the trellised grape-vine in one corner of the court, doting over that precious wine, smacking his lips; or how often he may have arisen in the middle of the night, and heedless of the Superior's punitive roasting spit, may have stolen to the cellar below to filch a generous draft from its contents?

If Brother Manoles ever dreamed of preferment, of mounting the grades of his order and becoming a prince of the Church, 'twas only because such may drink of the contents of the coveted tun without sin. If a devastating army had fallen upon the monastery and had swallowed the wine down with much roaring of songs in a foreign tongue and elinking of eups, Brother Manoles would not have been so utterly discon-

solate, for wine is made to drink and soldiers often have discriminating palates. But to spill its brave blood into the untasting air! No wonder that Brother Manoles' exasperation was almost murderous in its intensity! A monk has no use for gold, and even if spent, it can only buy palaces and slaves and the music of citharas. In that wine-tun was the stuff to strew the hard wooden bench in the monastery court with rugs from Bokhara a foot deep, material to build a palace fairer than that of Kubla Khan, magic to summon all the Jannaris of the prophet's heaven. 'Twas the fountain of Youth, now run dry.

Walter followed the monks very willingly, for he was too weak to struggle and was so glad to get out of his present gruesome quarters that any change was welcome to him. They led him up two exterior flights of stone stairs, to the gallery of the second story, and shoved him into a well-lighted room, where the sun streamed in through a window of fair size. He owed these more cheerful quarters, no doubt, to the fact that the monks wished to remove him entirely from the vicinity of the gold and the secret.

He seemed to be now in one of the guest chambers of the monastery, as it was furnished

with a narrow bed, a wash-stand with pitcher and basin, and a wooden chair. The monks slammed the door and fumbled for some time on the outside, evidently securing the lock. Walter tried to free his hands that were tied behind his back, but found that they had been too well fastened.

Stepping to the window, he looked out. He could see the waters of the Ægæan rolling blue in the distance, and the tops of some tall trees growing on the slope of the hill below him. The prospect gave him the impression of being high up.

He was startled and surprised to hear the bell of the monastery summoning the inmates to some form of morning service — the voice of the bell sounded so innocent and so familiar, as the voices of church bells always do. Yet what irreligious passions and evil impulses had been engendered in the bosoms of the worshipers by the possession of those bags of gold!

Walter was not left alone long, for the Superior soon returned with a boy bringing food. Brother Pandlemon stood at the door to prevent escape. At a word from the Superior, the boy untied the cords about Walter's wrists, who, though very

hungry, had an idea of carrying this thing off as coolly and impudently as possible. He knew the word used by the Greeks for valise, as it is similar to the English, being no doubt a mere corruption therefrom. So he called two or three times, with the same manner as if he were at a hotel, for his "valitza, valitza." The boy looked inquiringly at the Superior, who grunted assent and the bag was soon brought; but ere it was handed to its owner, the Superior deliberately opened it, examined the contents carefully and abstracted an excellent American revolver.

Walter deliberately removed his soiled collar and cuffs, and going to the wash-stand, commenced to make his toilet. There being not much water in the pitcher, he offered it to the boy, pointing to its interior with his finger. But the Superior pushed the boy spitefully from the room, and went out himself, locking the door behind him.

Walter reflected that it was his cue to act as though he took it for granted that they did not dare do anything to him. Having changed his collar and cuffs, he tied his cravat with considerable care and attacked his breakfast.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### PLANS FOR ESCAPE

Walter was in the last extremity for sleep, yet he could not lie down on the narrow bed and close his eyes. Brother Pandlemon's tall, ungainly, sinewy form, his reputation for fanaticism, the fact that he shared with the Superior the mad, secret, insane lust for that blighting treasure there in the bags below,—all these things combined to render him a disquieting and altogether uncertain factor. Walter examined his door, but found no means of fastening it, as it was bolted on the outside. It opened out, too, which rendered it impossible for him to secure it by pushing the bed against it. But he must sleep. He was so fatigued that there were red lights floating before his eyes, and he was giddy. There were two or three nails driven in the plaster of the wall, for hanging clothing upon, and it occurred to him that he could fasten the



door with one of these. Accordingly he pulled out a nail and drove it into the jamb near the knob with the heel of his shoe, which he took off to utilize as a hammer. Tying his handkerchief tightly upon the door-knob and the nail, he tumbled upon the bed and was immediately fast asleep.

About an hour later his eyes parted wide in sudden and perfect wakefulness and he found that he was gazing straight into the eyes of Brother Pandelemon, who was advancing toward him on tiptoe, half-way between the door and the bed. Brother Pandelemon's right hand was hidden in the breast of his cassock. He was not making the slightest noise, and he must have awakened Walter just by the intensity of that basilisk gaze of his. The two men looked at each other for a moment, when the priest, muttering something, perhaps an apology, turned about and snuffled from the room, closing the door softly behind him. For a minute or possibly longer, the American lay still, staring straight ahead with wide-open eyes, when, all of a sudden, a thrill of terror slivered through his frame and caused his hair to feel as though it were indeed rising on end. Springing from the bed, he reached the

door at a bound and examined the handkerchief, to find that it had been sliced through with a sharp knife. Whoever had opened the door had evidently pulled until he had made a crack sufficiently wide to admit a thin blade, and then had sawed the handkerchief in two.

Walter's knees suddenly grew weak and he sank into a chair, muttering "My God!" He knew why this fanatic monk had stolen into his room, but he did not understand why he should have opened his own eyes at that opportune moment. To that chance, a thing that might happen to a man only once out of a thousand times, he owed his life. But for that extraordinary psychological freak—or was it veriest chance?—he would at this moment have been lying dead upon the bed, or gasping out his last breath while his life-blood oozed from a cowardly thrust.

He determined that he would escape somehow, and would do it that very day. That monk was crazy; he could see it in his eye, and had meant to kill him. If he went to sleep in this room tonight, he would never wake again. And first it seemed to him that he must have some kind of weapon, something with which to defend himself, should Brother Pandeemon return with

murderous intent. The only objects in the room which could possibly be utilized as weapons were the water pitcher and the two chairs. Walter practised for some time with one of the chairs, swinging it about his head, and deciding upon the most convenient way of gripping it.

He realized now that he was in actual peril of his life; that he was fairly in the power of a band of men who were no better than madmen, whose characters had been warped and perverted by the possession of gold which was, to them, useless.

The windows of the upper story were wide enough to allow the body of a man to pass, unlike those of the cells below, which were merely long slits, very narrow in the rooms and widening toward the external surface of the walls. Evidently the lower portion of the building was the medieval part, and the upper story had been added more recently. Placing his chair within convenient reach, he pulled himself into the open window, so that, lying on his stomach, he could look straight down the white wall. The distance was not great — a sheer fall of fifty or sixty feet, he judged, but there were uninviting-looking rocks below, and a drop from the window would have killed him just as effectually as a leap from the

top of the Washington monument. Nevertheless, upon that window he centered all his thoughts; it afforded his only chance for escape, it was his only exit to liberty and safety. He examined the bed carefully, with the idea of tearing up the clothing to make a rope. There was but one sheet, as is the custom in the Orient, and that was a flimsy bit of fabric. The one woolen blanket would be hard to tear and possibly not strong in strips. The mattress was more promising, but all this work must be done at night, after danger of interruption was over.

No one who has not been in a similar predicament can realize the intensity with which Walter was studying this problem. Where should he fasten his rope when it was finished, into how wide strips must he tear the blanket and the mattress, and, consequently, how long a rope could he make — these were the subjects he was studying when he again leaned from the window, to judge more accurately, if possible, its height from the ground.

As he was thus occupied, he heard a sound that so thrilled him with joy that he came near losing his balance. That sound was "Hist! hist!" and, though it might have been made by anybody,

of any nationality, and have been exactly the same sound, yet the only man on the isle of Andros who would hail him in this manner was McKenzie. The American looked and looked again, straining his eyes as he searched the deep woodland and the cliff bordering the road that led down to the sea.

But there was no sign of any one, and so great was his shock of disappointment after that first impulse of joy, that he narrowly missed breaking down, and venting his exasperation in tears or profanity. He had given up hope of McKenzie; he had believed him dead — killed in the fight — or captured like himself and locked up. And now here comes some one with a “Hist! hist!” or could it have been a trick of his brain, of his overwrought imagination? He was as nervous as a mother cat, anyway, from loss of sleep and strain, and he had heard that the brain sometimes plays exactly such tricks.

Yes, it was doubtless imagination, it — but no, here are the eyes coming to the ears' assistance, in glad confirmation. Yonder, in the shade of the oaks, from behind that gray rock, rises for one brief moment the hirsute and shaggy poll of Ian McKenzie — silently, mysteriously rises, and as

silently and mysteriously disappears. Had the Scot been masquerading as one of the satyrs or fauns that peopled the world with which he was most familiar, he could not have grown out of the sylvan landscape or melted into it again more cunningly. Lying upon his stomach across the wide window-sill, Walter laughed till the tears came into his eyes, laughed immoderately. Then, slipping to his feet, he danced about the room like one mad, singing, irrelevantly, it is true, but with an impulse of joy, the line, "Little Willie went to war, na hum, na hum, na hum!"

The words were from a fine old Scotch song, which McKenzie was in the habit of droning very comically, as an adjunct to contentment or deep thought. And there he was, safe and sound! He had either got away, or the monks had not caught him yet. Walter climbed into the window and watched and watched again, and at last had the inexpressible joy of seeing that shaggy head rise a second time from the rock. He understood why the Scot was so cautious. On that side were the cells of several of the monks. But there, at any rate, was McKenzie, and the first thing was to get communication with him.

Walter took a pencil and bit of paper from

his grip, and wrote as rapidly as possible:

“DEAR MAC,—

“I’ve been planning to get out of here to-night, by tearing up the bed-clothes and making a rope. But I’m afraid such a rope wouldn’t be safe, and besides, I’m not sure that there’s enough stuff. Can’t you pass a rope up to me during the night, somehow? I’ll let down a long string, and you can tie a rope to it. If you find this note, and think you can get a rope to me, wave your hand. But, for heaven’s sake, don’t let the monks catch you. If they ever get us both in here, we’ll never be heard of again. You can take some rope from their old caique, down at the wharf. I’ll let my cord down as soon as it is dark, and you can steal over and tie the end of the rope to it.

“WALTER.”

But how could he get this note to McKenzie? To drop it was hopeless, as the Scot could not come into the road before dark. Evidently he must throw it, which would be easy from that height, if he had any heavy object to which to tie the bit of paper. A nail was too light and the only other detachable object suitable to the purpose was a castor from the bed. It did not take

Walter long to wrap the note around one of the castors and to tie a handkerchief snugly over this. Then, standing upon a chair, he again looked for McKenzie, who was evidently watching, for he responded to Walter's gestures by raising his head. The prisoner now held up the white packet and fainted two or three times, as though about to throw it. Then, when he was satisfied that the Scot understood, he hurled the thing with all the skill of an old-time first baseman of high repute, straight at the dim and shaggy head. The white object flew clean across the road and dropped among the bushes at McKenzie's side. It disappeared and the head disappeared.

The Scot was evidently hunting, and he must have hunted long, for it was fully ten minutes before he gave the sign. At the end of that time, which seemed an hour to Walter, the head slid up from behind the rock for a third time, and a long arm waved joyously in the air. The American jumped down from his chair with a light heart. He regarded his deliverance as good as accomplished, and waited for the night with no little impatience. He no longer felt tired or sleepy. One thing only occurred to cast a shadow over the brightness of his anticipations. Looking



from the window ten minutes later, he was disturbed to see Brothers Pandlemon and Timoleon, the two athletic priests, emerge from the wood near the very spot where McKenzie had so recently been.

Could this have been the result of a coincidence, or had they been watching McKenzie?

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### McKENZIE FINDS A ROPE

That the monks considered McKenzie as good as captured, there can be no doubt, for they had little conception of the bold spirit which inspires men of the world of action and hardy endeavor, especially men of the Anglo-Saxon race, to regard seemingly insurmountable obstacles merely as incentives to greater effort. Between the tiny bit of land on which the monastery was situated and the mother island of Andros, rolled a deep channel three hundred yards across in its narrowest part. They were evidently waiting till they should get the two intruders together, within the walls of the building, before they should put whatever plan they had with regard to them into execution. McKenzie, they probably thought, must come in before very long, driven by hunger, if for no other cause. Nevertheless, it made them feel uneasy that he should

be even thus much at large, carrying their dreadful secret about with him, and the Scot soon found that they were hunting him with great vigor. Brothers Pandlemon and Timoleon, young and active men, must have seen Walter throw the note. With commendable shrewdness they had seen that the latter would attempt to make his location known to his confederate.

The Scot, who had caught sight of the two monks, decided that he must not go near the window again for the whole day. He must get the rope somehow, make them believe he was in some other part of the island, elude them and steal back there after dark. The program seemed a difficult one, and easily frustrated, yet nothing more practicable presented itself to his mind. He was relieved to observe that neither of the monks, whom he had seen, carried firearms, and concluded that, if they contemplated violence, it formed no part of their plan to commit any act which would leave damning traces of murder. As he sat turning these thoughts over in his mind, crouched in the bushes, he heard the crackle of a breaking twig and glanced up to see the faces of Brothers Timoleon and Pandlemon quite near to him, peering through the leaves. The hair of

the latter monk had fallen loose, and a long strand of it, tangled by clinging pins, dropped even to his waist. He was bending forward with clutching fingers, and but for the shape of his tall hat, might easily have been mistaken for a bearded witch, on mischief bent. A coil of rope hung about Brother Timoleon's wrist.

McKenzie leaped to his feet with the agility of a surprised giraffe, and tore through the thick brush with tremendous strides, having the monks in hot pursuit. It is possible that he would have been overtaken and forced to try conclusions in a hand-to-hand fight, two against one, but he was saved from this by an accident which may seem incredible, but whose plausibility is confirmed by an incident in Holy Writ; and we must remember, too, that this is a truthful narrative, and that truth is often stranger than fiction. A shriek of pain, followed by shouts of "Unfasten me! unfasten me!" caused him to turn his head. Brother Pandelemon's hair was securely caught and thoroughly involved in the branches of a vicious live-oak, through which he had attempted to struggle and his *confrère* had paused for a moment in perplexity, giving vent to exclamations of astonishment.

Even as the Scot bounded upon them, not willing to lose this providential opportunity, Brother Timoleon grabbed both hands into the hirsute tangle and began to yank. McKenzie knocked him down. A fleeting impulse possessed him to sling the man over his shoulder and carry him off as a hostage to assure Walter's safety, or perhaps deliverance through exchange of prisoners, but he thought better of the matter immediately and hurried off, leaving the modern Absalom tearing his hair from the bush, which seemed, as fast as he got some of it away, to seize upon and entangle new portions. Already numerous silken strands, several feet in length, were clinging to the implacable branches, and they may, no doubt, be found there to this day, causing the passer-by to imagine that a dryad or other nymph may have met misfortune there.

It was fortunate for McKenzie that Brother Timoleon's rope was too short for Walter's purpose, as the Scot would probably have carried it away with him thoughtlessly, thereby setting the monks to thinking.

McKenzie concluded that now was the time to secure a rope from the caique, while he was sure that those two, at least, were not on his track.

He therefore thrashed through the underbrush, never stopping till he had come out into the clearer spaces on the slope nearer to the sea. Between the trunks of the pines he could see the waters glittering in the sun, and the gray needle of rock that rose abruptly from their surface, a little way out. This was directly opposite the wharf, which was hidden from view by a mass of boulders forming a tiny crag by the side of the road, at its seaward terminus. This would also, of course, eclipse the hull of the caique; still, McKenzie thought it odd that its tall mast was nowhere visible. There were many little springs upon the island, in addition to the copious source from which the monastery took its name, and one of these now quenched McKenzie's thirst, which was becoming troublesome. It was about noon now, and as he lay on his stomach drinking, his mind reverted to a chunk of bread that he had noticed not long before in the bottom of the caique's dinghy, tied to the wharf. It was moldy bread, swollen with sea water, and there had been one or two stale fish lying near it. The idea of it gave him a feeling of disgust, yet he was hungry enough to reflect that a starving man might contemplate such a morsel with avidity.

He delayed but a moment at the spring. Another hundred yards and he had passed the mass of boulders. The caique and the dinghy were both gone! McKenzie had not the least doubt in the world that the monks had removed them immediately after his irruption from their midst, to prevent his sailing away and bringing help. Or had some of them gone after assistance? This did not seem probable, as they were now numerically strong enough to overpower him could they capture him. He laughed as he thought of the ease with which Walter and he would swim the channel — if he could only find a piece of rope.

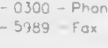
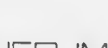
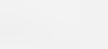
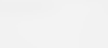
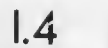
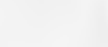
There was the boat-house, a long low cabin of wood at the water's edge. Or was it a boat-house? McKenzie had taken this for granted in that casual, uninterested glance which he had cast at it one day. But now it occurred to him that the structure was too large for the dinghy and not big enough for the caique, and these two craft were the monks' entire fleet, so far as he knew. He crept to the edge of the boulder, projected his head, and looked up and down the road. No one was visible, so he dropped into the road and made a dash for the little hut. Its seaward end was open and within was a channel with





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wooden flooring on either side, for the accommodation of a long boat. There was no boat within, but a fish-net was hanging to pegs upon the wall, and in one corner lay a long coil of slender rope.

McKenzie actually laughed to himself. Of course, if the monks made their own oil and wine, raised their own meat and vegetables, caught their own fish, what more natural than that they should have fish-nets and ropes? Fifty feet would do, he thought.

The Scot knew that he measured two yards from tip to tip with his arms extended and hands open, and he reeled off eight of these units from the coil, or something less than fifty feet. Winding this tightly about his left arm and taking the end in his hand, he again plunged into the woods and struck across the island. His idea was to work around behind the monastery toward the channel, so that if he were again located and hard-pressed, he might jump into the sea and swim over to the mainland of Andros. He found the walk long and tedious, albeit the monks' territory was, geographically speaking, too insignificant a dot of land to be put down on any map. Many other travelers have had the same ex-

perience. Almost any one of the isles, which swarm in groups in the southern Pacific and are indicated on the maps as mere dots whose number we do not even take the trouble to count, is a tiny continent, with mountain peaks, slopes covered with trees, stretches of wave-kissed beach, and fertile valleys.

McKenzie found at last a hiding place in a thick tangle of underbrush on the hillslope looking toward Andros, and lay down, determined to pass the remainder of the day in this retreat. His mind now reverted again to that piece of bread which he had seen in the bottom of the dinghy, and it did not seem so disgusting to him. He remembered that it had not been in actual contact with the decayed fish, which were, after all, the offensive objects.

He would get less hungry, he reflected, if he kept still. Exercise was a great thing to increase the appetite. Ah, how refreshing a cup of tea would have been then!

Feeling in his pockets, he found that he actually had a few drawings of tea with him in a brown paper, but, rack his brains as he would, he could think of no way of steeping it. He fell asleep at last chewing a handful of Oolong dust,

and did not awake till late in the afternoon. The sun had crept over behind the monastery building, which intercepted the glare, indeed, but left the side of the island in a luminous shadow that resembled a long twilight.

McKenzie sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"Ah, that was a beautiful dream!" he sighed. And was he not then in Santorine, at his betrothal feast? Ah, that lamb which Uncle Loudovikos was roasting, how delicious it smelled! He told him it was done, he told him a dozen times! But the old pig-head would not remove it from the fire. Had he not been so obstinate, he could have eaten before he awoke. His mind reverted again to the piece of bread in the dinghy. He had no doubt that it would have been quite clean and palatable with a bit of the outside rubbed off.

It was now time to work back toward the neighborhood of Walter's window, and this he immediately began to do, keeping in the thickest of the brush and creeping along as noiselessly as possible. Ere he reached his objective point, the vesper sounded, with that wild, sweet tone of bells rung on a height above the water. It began to rain now and through a vista between the trees,

McKenzie could see the heaving waters, livid, as they often are after the quenching of the sun, everywhere and infinitely pitted by the pelting rain. And there, looming strangely large in the wan light, the monks' caique went heaving by, with Brother Myrianthuses, an old-time sailor, at the helm: Brother Myrianthuses, his tall hat dripping rain, and his drenched robe clinging shapelessly to his portly form. Three small boats trailed after the caique, in tow.

"Have you seen anything of him?" called a voice from the shore.

"Nothing, absolutely nothing," shouted Brother Myrianthuses, leaning against the tiller. "I have been clear around the island. There's not a boat now anywhere on the beach that he could get away on."

It continued to rain, and now and then thunder growled from over Andros, as though some great beast were hidden among the hills. The darkness was perfect, with the exception of an occasional pallid gleam of lightning. Edging around close to the end of the monastery where it abutted against the hill, McKenzie stole along the wall until he reached the exact spot beneath Walter's window, and there, sure enough, he found, after

some little search, the end of the long strip of torn bed-clothing which had been let down. Tying the rope to this, he pulled gently, and it immediately began to ascend the wall. The Scot retired into the wood by the side of the road, and watched the window impatiently.

Walter would be out soon, he thought, and then they would be off after something to eat. He himself could swim the Hellespont for a bit of bread. But a half-hour passed by, and Walter did not come out. Meanwhile the storm increased, and the flashes of lightning became more vivid. And now it was that the Scot heard the footfalls of some one running rapidly up the road from the sea. Whoever it was must pass directly beneath him, not ten feet off. Probably Brother Myrianthuses, he mused, returning from his vain cruise around the world.

At that moment the entire stretch of road, lined with boulders and pine-trees, was lighted up by an electric flash, and there in the center of it, not twenty feet away, drenched to the skin, disheveled, pallid, was the beautiful Duchess of Polcavera. Drenched to the skin, truly, and that one instant's glimpse, too fleeting for any change of attitude, gave the impression of a human being in

great and anxious haste; just as the figures on a vase, or a statue, inanimate though they be, seem to have been struck out in the acme of incompleting action, by a lightning flash of genius. What was Polyxene doing on that lonely road and how did she get there?

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### OFF WITH THE OLD LOVE

To answer that question, we must go back a few hours, and change the scene to the village of Ta Castra. Polyxene stands beneath the trellised grape-vine, with a dripping amphora upon her shoulder. The sun shines upon the Ægæan and makes it like unto that sea of glass which St. John beheld; it suffuses the deep, cloudless heavens with a light soft and yet so glowing that the eyes can scarce endure it; it cradles the uttermost isles, nesting where the sky and the sea are one, in amethystine radiance.

It shines, too, upon three little ships beyond the harbor mouth, causing the white of their canvas to flash as brightly out of the blue of the sea, as the wings of doves fluttering upon a sunny green. Side by side they come on, all rigged alike, and leaning at exactly the same angle to the wind.

Polyxene bends forward, curving her shapely



fingers, the better to shut out the intensity of the light, and peers long and searchingly at this little fleet. Satisfied at last, she drops her arm to her side and walks slowly toward the house. She knows these particular ships; they are coming home, something tells her, to her, but she does not seem well-pleased, as those should be, whose "ships come home." So many mingled emotions sweep over her features, that it would be difficult for one who knew not what was passing in her mind, to guess the cause of the girl's interest in those ships. At one moment, as she glances again seaward, she seems moved by pity, at another by fear; and there creeps into her eyes an expression of resolve, as of one who has a disagreeable duty to perform, and who means to get through with the ordeal as quickly and kindly as possible.

The reader has already divined that those are Spiro's ships coming in, and that Polyxene's feminine intuition tells her that he is returning to claim her. She knows, as women know such things, that he loves her, and that no amount of humiliation, or of taunts from his friends or his family to the effect that this servant girl, already beneath him, has been trifling with another, will keep him from sailing back after her.

The task that she has to perform is a hard one, for, according to the island usage, she has given her word and he has a claim upon her. But she is no longer Polyxene Abattis, she is not the girl who gave herself to Spiro, and moreover, she loves another; loves him as only those of her race know how to love, and it would be much easier for her to thrust a knife to her heart than to marry Spiro. Her reasons are to her all-sufficient, yet she knows that she can not urge them upon this man who is standing now upon the deck of one of the ships out there; she can simply tell him that she has changed her mind.

She will appeal to his manhood, and when he speaks of his love, she will beg him in the name of that love, to let her go without hate or threatened violence. He ought to give her up without words; there are so many beautiful girls upon the island, why should he cling only to her? As she reasons thus, she makes her own unworthiness seem quite clear to herself. She is willing to occupy any stratum of humility, so that he will but leave her in peace. How gladly she would believe that Xene, or Maria or Kalirrhoe was more beautiful than herself, and hand Spiro over to any one of them, happy in his better fortune!

But she could not persuade herself that the Greek would be easily convinced. He loved her, in his fierce savage way, she was sure, and besides, there was his pride to be taken into consideration. It would madden him to the point of fury to be told that she or any other woman, upon whom he might have set his heart, had preferred another man to himself. Self-abnegation — the supreme desire to see a woman happy, even if it be necessary to give her to another to secure that happiness, forms no part of savage love.

“Spiro’s coming back,” said Polyxene quietly to Mrs. Ion, whom she found bustling about the court.

“Eh?”

“I said, ‘Spiro’s coming back!’ His ships are just outside the harbor mouth.”

Mrs. Ion looked up.

“Good gracious! How pale you are! Do you suppose he’s after you? I kind o’ thought he’d gone off in a huff. If he really insists on having the ceremony performed, I don’t know what you will do. I told Mr. Lythgoe to run off with you —” here Polyxene suddenly flushed rosy red — “but he didn’t take my advice. Father’s sick now,” continued the lady petulantly, “and I

couldn't mix him up in any such row as this, even if he was well. If you and Mr. Lythgoe had just quietly eloped, as I advised you to, nobody would have suspected our knowing anything about it. I could have been as indignant as anybody. You see, we've got to live here," she finished with a sigh.

The little woman was tired from nursing her husband, and she had been thinking of her native land of late. She loved the gentle, weak, impractical missionary, with that motherly love which a strong woman often feels for a weak man; but there was no disloyalty in the thought that, if she outlived him, there would be nothing to keep her longer in this far-away isle, among these strange people. She was a pitiful figure now, with her reddish hair, streaked with gray, disheveled, and her cheeks pale and sunken from much watching.

"Don't worry, mother," said Polyxene kindly. "There'll be no fuss. I know how to manage Spiro. Now you go and lie down a while, and do let me take care of Mr. Ion — do, you are worrying and working yourself to death."

An hour later Spiro's three caiques shed their sails as a tree casts its leaves and came to anchor

at the foot of the town; and Spiro himself, landing with impatient haste, climbed the winding path and flung across the square to the missionary's house. The tassel of his fez danced merrily as he walked, and his cheeks were as brown as a nut from the kiss of the winds of the sea. Straight to the missionary's front door he went and knocked loudly. It was Polyxene who opened for him, and he greeted her with a glad cry and a movement as though he would push in and take her in his arms. But she thrust out her arm and said:

"Sh! Mr. Ion is very sick. Did you wish to see me, Spiro?" For she had no mind to avoid an interview, but rather to suggest one and have the matter settled as soon as possible.

"Did I wish to see you?" he laughed. "'Tis not strange if a man should wish to see his affianced bride, is it?"

"No, no, not at all," she replied; "but Mr. Ion is really very sick and we can not talk here. Wait for me a moment, and I will walk with you upon the beach."

Tying a handkerchief about her head, she joined him and together they walked down to the sea-shore, and strolled along the snowy sands,

making, as seen from afar, a dainty aquarelle, in the diaphanous, shell-tinted light, with the bright blue of the sea, their picturesque costumes, and gay bits of color here and there, of fez and handkerchief, embroidered jacket and pompons.

"I couldn't stay mad at you, my little bird (*poulaki mou*)," began Spiro. "I was mad with jealousy because another should have even dared to look at you, who belong to me — me, the demarch's son." He was ill at ease and trembling with eagerness and passion, and he kept on talking rapidly, as one will who is not sure of his cause and desires to prevent any unfavorable avowal — to sweep away all strength of opposition before the other speaks.

"The whole town was talking of you and him, Polyxene, and you can understand what impression that would make upon me, your betrothed — me, the demarch's son. You see, my treasure, my relatives had already made life almost a burden to me because I had taken you, a servant girl, and intended to make you my wife, but I said to them, 'What if she is a servant? There is none like her, none so beautiful in all Andros.' Of course, I could marry any one, I could have my pick."

It was becoming easier for Polyxene now, and a gray tint was creeping into the sea-blue eyes.

“But if I prefer you, if I am determined to lift you up to my level in life, that is my business, is it not, my life? (*Zoë mou.*)”

“Yes, indeed!” murmured Polyxene.

As in the case of all jealous men, Spiro could not keep off the subject of the other man, not knowing that it is by acts and not by words that one establishes superiority in such an emergency.

“And when he met me there and threatened me with a pistol, and made me turn about and — and walk away — me, the demarch’s son, I was crazy with rage. A-a-a-h, I could have broken his back, the accursed of heaven, the cowardly dog! Why, Polyxene, look at me! I am a man. I could take that girl, that Frankish fop in my hands, thus, and hurl him over the cliff, or dash him upon the ground as they do a devil-fish when they slap it down to make it tender for boiling. Ah, ha, ha, ha! But he would never have waited for me, if he had had no pistol — not he. So I sailed away, into the night and the storm, and I walked the deck when it thundered and the keen spray whipped my face, and I cursed him and I cursed you, even you, my treasure, and I shook

my hands at the black sky and I cursed God, because he had sent this dog of a foreigner to make me ridiculous and to take away my — my — ”

“Your servant girl from you,” suggested Polyxene.

“Yes,” cried Spiro, who was too transported to notice the irony. “But my rage at last wore itself out, and there came calm upon the sea, and the soft winds blew upon my hot brow and cooled it, and the lapping of the waves against the prow quieted the tumult in my heart, and my great desire and loneliness for you surged in upon me again, stronger than life or death or rage or shame. And I said, ‘She is mine, mine! I will go back and take her, and if any so much as smile at me, he must settle with me, me, Spiro! By the Virgin, they shall not do it twice!’ I said, ‘She is mine, and if that white-livered infidel cur be there still, I will drive him from the island, I will kill him.’ Ha! If he broke into the house, and I ate him (*To’ fage*), if I thrust my knife deep into him, thus, who would blame me? And shall I not kill him, if he try to steal what is dearer to me than aught else in the world? For I love you, my little bird, my life, my light, my eyes. I love you more than life, or heaven,— I



burn for you as one wandering in a hot desert raves for cold water. And so, Polyxene, my own, we will be crowned by the priest right away. I have come back for my bride!"

"I can not marry you, Spiro."

She spoke low, but very distinctly.

"You can not marry me?"

His face, flushed by excitement and the effort of speaking, grew livid. "You can not marry me?" He had been talking very loudly a moment before, the words bursting forth in a torrent. Now they came slowly and hoarsely. "You do not know what you say. Why, you will ruin my life if you do not marry me! You are promised, you are betrothed to me!"

He was suffering now and she felt pity for him.

"Listen, my friend," she said, laying her hand upon his arm. "Listen. I beg you to forgive, to forget me, and not to feel hard toward me. I know that I promised, that I am betrothed to you. But I should never have done it. I was weak and I yielded because I was driven to it, because I was a poor girl all alone here without friends to help me and advise me. Any woman ought to be proud of such a man as you, and bet-

ter, oh, far better and more beautiful girls will be proud of you. But I do not love you in that way, Spiro, I — a girl can not instruct her heart whom it should love. It is no disrespect to you that I do not, God knows! It is my own blindness, perhaps. Spiro, I ask you to release me and be my friend. If you will do this for me, I will honor and bless you to the latest day of my life. Will you release me and not feel hard toward me, dear Spiro?"

They walked on for some distance in silence. Polyxene glanced at her companion's face and she was not reassured. At last, unable to endure the suspense longer, she spoke:

"But you did not answer me, Spiro, my friend."

He aroused, as a man from a dream, and laughed bitterly,—such a laugh as a damned spirit might have given utterance to.

"Ha! So you can not love me, eh? I am not sufficiently attractive for you! Where is this cur, this, bah! this cowardly blackguard of yours, stopping?"

Her face flushed with anger, but she made him no reply.

"Where is he?" he cried, seizing her by the

wrist. "Is he still at the missionary's? Tell me. I must know."

Polyxene thought of Mrs. Ion and replied:

"If you are referring to Mr. Lythgoe, the American, he is not at our house. They are friends of yours."

"Where is he, then?"

"He is at the monastery."

"I ought to kill you, my girl, to save my honor. But I will marry you, first, and perhaps then I will kill you. We will see. To-night I settle with the foreigner. He shall not escape me this time. Prepare for our wedding, my little bride."

Throwing her wrist violently from him, he turned and strode back toward his ships. Polyxene stood and watched him as he walked away, along the edge of the sea, looming very large in the red flare of the setting sun. A storm was coming up and a few shining drops sailed obliquely downward through the air.

For a few moments Polyxene stood irresolute, fear in her eyes. But it did not take her long to decide what course she should pursue. She took for granted that Spiro would go by land and it would be impossible for her to take the same

route without being seen. But the missionary owned a small boat, snugly moored in a crevice of the cliff, and she knew how to sail. It was locked and she must go by the house for the key. This she did, and was relieved to observe that Spiro had not yet left. Evidently he did not intend to start until after dark. It was night before the brave girl, herself, got off.

It was raining hard now, the sea was unsafe for so small a craft and the vivid lightning, illumining with a lurid glare the heaving waters, would have terrified a woman under ordinary circumstances; but a girl who is going to save the life of her lover is not easily deterred.

## CHAPTER XXX

### A BRAVE SWEETHEART

McKenzie slid down into the road, and yielding to a sudden inspiration, called to the girl in English. His thought was to avoid terrifying her, if possible, and it struck him that she would be more willing to meet one of her English-speaking friends at that moment than any of the Greeks.

"St! Miss Polyxene, Miss Polyxene!" he called.

She stopped. He could not see her now in the darkness, but he knew that she had stopped and was listening, because the patter of her footsteps suddenly ceased.

"Who is there?" she called, bravely enough, save for a scarcely perceptible quaver on the last word.

"'Tis I, Mr. McKenzie, here in the road, but a few steps from you. Come closer and tell me

what brings you here on such a night as this. Speak and have no fear."

Another flash of lightning,—a weird, faint flicker this time,—revealed the two, leaning toward each other with straining eyes and faces wan in the unearthly light. There could be no mistaking the tall, ungainly Scot, and Polyxene ran toward him with that perfect confidence which the true gentleman inspires in all women.

"Oh, I'm so glad to see you!" she laughed, a trifle hysterically. "I can explain to you, and — I — I wouldn't like to have the monks see me here."

"What has happened?" asked McKenzie. "What can I do for you? Ye have but to tell me, and if it be in the power of man, 'tis done."

"Oh, I know that, I know it!" — and then she continued breathlessly: "Spiro came back to-day, and when I told him that I could not marry him, he said he was coming over here to kill Walter. I know that he meant it, for his eyes were like those of a wild beast. There was murder in them. I hastened over ahead of him to warn Walter."

The Scot whistled softly.

"When might we be looking for Spiro?" he

asked, looking at Polyxene with undisguised admiration.

“Now, any moment. I sailed over, and if he comes by sea, he may be right behind me. If by land, he may be going into the monastery now, now while we are talking!”

The Scot was puzzled and it was necessary to think fast. If Walter dropped out of the window within the next few moments, before the arrival of Spiro and his crew, then it would be possible for the two foreigners and the girl to sail away together in Polyxene's boat: and what a delightful surprise that would be for Walter! The Scot's romantic nature leaped at this possibility joyfully. If, on the other hand, anything had happened to Walter and his escape had been forestalled, it would be useless to keep the girl there in the rain, and cruel to let her suspect that her lover was in danger also from the monks. If Spiro caught her there, too, he would be prone, in his jealous rage, to wreak his vengeance on her — a most common proceeding in Greece, and McKenzie very well knew it was ten to one that her disappearance from the village would be noticed by the missionary's family.

“Come!” whispered Polyxene, “come! you must go now, this instant, and warn Walter.”

"Where did you leave your boat?" asked McKenzie.

"Not right at the wharf—a little way off, where Spiro could not see it, should he come that way. On fête days, when many boats come to the monastery, the smaller ones tie up at several places along the shore."

"Ye're a wonderful woman!" exclaimed the Scot. "There's only one other in the world that's your equal. Run down to your boat and wait for half an hour, and then I'll come to you, if it is possible. At any rate, I'll warn Walter and we'll see that Spiro doesn't find him. If I'm not there in half an hour, you must sail away. You came and I suppose you can get back. At any rate, you mustn't stay here. Go, now, and be careful that Spiro does not meet you on the road."

"You—you think that Walter will be safe, even if you do warn him?" she asked tremulously, the while a faint blush of lightning played about her pale features.

"No doubt of it, no doubt of it!" whispered McKenzie, suddenly reminded by the lightning that they were standing in plain view in the road and imperiling the entire plan of escape. "But



we are wasting precious time. You must run along now," — and taking the girl gently by the shoulder, he turned her about. She hastened away and McKenzie crept into the bushes, where he crouched, keeping his eyes turned toward the window of Walter's room. The most of the time he was gazing into blank darkness, but ever and anon, as the fickle lightning gleamed, the black wall loomed for an instant from the night, and the window burned with a dull sheen, as the face of still waters by starlight. Earlier in the evening, the feeble glimmer of a candle had outlined the panes in dull yellow, but that had gone out now.

When the light first disappeared, McKenzie took for granted that Walter had extinguished it preparatory to his descent, and he stared the more eagerly into the darkness, wondering where the next lightning flash would strike out his form: just emerging from the window, or sprawling black against the wall like a great spider at the end of his filmy rope? But the precious minutes passed away and still Walter did not come forth, and, as McKenzie lurked and watched, hunger raged within him like a fire.

"Why don't he come down," he muttered,

“that we may e'en go and get something to eat? I wonder if by chance there was a bit of bread in the girl's boat?” What poor weak creatures we are! Interfere with the seemingly most insignificant function of our physical being, or deprive us of food or water, and we can think of nothing but our miserable bodies, or some part of them.

It seemed to McKenzie now that the crying reason for delivering Walter was that his own hunger might be satisfied. Ah, if he would only come down while the girl was there with the boat, how quickly they could sail over to the village and get something to eat! But if Spiro and his ruffians came first — hark, was not that the sound of footsteps? He was sure he heard something down the road leading to the sea, and he turned his face in that direction. Perhaps the girl was returning, unable to control her anxiety. Yes, somebody was certainly coming. The Scot drew himself together still more compactly into the clump of bushes within which he was hiding. The person — the persons — approached, they came to within ten feet of the Scot's hiding place. There were several of them and they were talking Greek in a low tone.

McKenzie raised a trifle on tiptoe and crouche<sup>d</sup>

there with his ear turned toward the voices, in the attitude of a letter S, or of a man in a Chinese torture box. He must hear what those people were saying; if Spiro was there, he must detect his voice. If this were a party of the monks, they would not be likely to kill Walter when he dropped from the window; but if it were Spiro and his men, something savage and desperate must be decided upon immediately. McKenzie was not hungry now. He felt about him in the dark. Could he but lay hold of a large club or billet of wood he might leap among Spiro and his crew just before Walter came within reach, shouting to the American in the meantime to help himself. There was great virtue in a surprise and a sudden attack, and two or three men might be disabled before they knew what had happened. The thought of it aroused all the good fighting blood in him, and the very desperateness of the chance added to his fierce, primal joy as he lay squat upon the ground and his great, hairy hand crawled about, spider-like, after the club. If only he might find — something! Then the probable futility of such a search occurred to him and he lay for a moment thinking. Ah, he had it!

Yonder, by the side of the road, was a pile of

fagots, many of them limbs no larger than a man's wrist, sawn from the sturdy scrub-oak. He would listen now, and then, as soon as they moved away a little, which they were sure to do, he would creep over in the darkness and secure one of those clubs. He clenched his fists and laughed silently as he thought of how he would make it whistle about their heads. Yes, yes, even if it were the monks, that would be the plan to pursue. He was now so possessed by the idea, it seemed so good to him, that he determined to put it in effect, whoever these re-joiners might be, always provided that they discovered Walter in the act of escaping. With this thought in mind, he pushed his shaggy face through the thick bush and looked again at the monastery: and at that moment there was another lightning flash,—a vivid one this time.

“Look there! look there!” cried one of the Greeks, pointing. McKenzie's heart almost stopped beating, for there was the rope dangling down the side of the wall and Walter just climbing out — not from the window which McKenzie had been watching, but from another, farther toward the front of the building. In this latter window a light had been faintly burning for some

time and the Scot had taken for granted that one of the Brothers was in that room. How did Walter get there and why had he changed his room? But the Greeks were talking together excitedly now, and he could hear what they were saying.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### SAVED BY A LUCKY THOUGHT

Walter's joy when he felt the improvised cord twitch can be easily imagined. He knew the moment he began to pull, that there was a rope at the other end. He leaned from the window, and pulled carefully lest the flimsy cord should part. He realized now that he could never have got to earth safely on any rope that he might have made out of those bed-clothes. There at last on the floor was a goodly coil of stout, though light, rope.

It would hold a horse, thought Walter. He had already determined to attach it to the bed and he stepped toward that object of furniture, with intent of pulling it toward the window, when his vigilant ear caught the sound of footsteps on the gallery without, hastening toward his door.

His face blanched, and a dangerous light gleamed in his eyes. Being an Anglo-Saxon,

and driven beyond all restraint and convention, he said things that would not look well in print. But five minutes more and he would have been outside the walls, in the woods with McKenzie, on his way to Polyxene. His gaze leaped about the room, exploring every cranny with that microscopic intensity of search which the senses acquire in supreme moments. He was looking for a weapon, for he was fairly transported with rage at the meddling monk, whoever he might be, who was about to spoil his plans at the very moment of their realization.

"I'll smash you, curse you, and go out anyway," he snarled. The footsteps stopped in front of his door. There was no weapon more deadly than the chair in sight, and his sudden, unthinking anger had yearned for something that would kill, without fail; but there lay the precious rope and there was his valise. Instinctively, with no better developed thought than that he must hide his means of escape, he stuffed the rope into the valise and closed the latter, even while he heard some one outside pushing at the reluctant bolt, which slid back and allowed the door to open just as Walter straightened up, and stood in the middle of the floor, feeling that his secret was written

all over his face and could not be concealed from these monks.

The Father Superior entered, with Brother Timoleon.

“What do you want now, you old idiot?” snarled Walter, addressing his question to the elder of the two men, as he stepped forward. His look must have been ugly, as they fell back with evident trepidation. The American was even cheered by a fleeting hope that they would retire long enough for him to accomplish his purpose, for which he needed now but a few seconds — scarcely a minute. He was doomed to immediate disappointment, however, as the Superior's only idea in retreating toward the door was to call for more help, which he proceeded to do. To reassure him, Walter put his hands in his pocket and backed toward the window, laughing — loudly and unnaturally, as his own ears testified.

“What's the matter with you fellows?” he called out in as conciliatory a tone as possible; “if you'll only look about or do whatever you like and go out, I'll not hurt a hair of your heads.”

“Eh?” said the Superior, advancing with renewed courage now that the burly form of Brother Manoles appeared at the door. Walter



repeated his comforting words, to which the old monk's only reply was a disdainful "Pah!" He had forgotten for the moment that all the world did not talk Greek. It was now the Superior's turn to look about the room. Walter in the meantime was standing with his back against the wall, very close to the chair. He was fully determined, in case his unwelcome visitors picked up his valise, to leap suddenly upon them, swinging this weapon, and to rush the door or lose his life in the attempt.

The reason for the Superior's visit at this inopportune time will never be known. He probably forgot it himself in his amazement at seeing the bed-clothing torn in strips. Giving vent to an unecclesiastical whistle of astonishment, he pointed to the flimsy cord, and Brother Timoleon, advancing, picked it up. The two monks chattered together in Greek, looking first at Walter and then at the window, the Father Superior repeating "Um hum! Um hum!" again and again, and nodding his head wisely. Brother Timoleon wound the cord about his hands and, pulling, without much difficulty broke it. This seemed to amuse the monks and they laughed merrily. Evidently this foreigner had very little sense. Broth-

er Manoles was called into the room, and Timoleon, after pointing to Walter and the window, broke the cord in another place. Further Manoles was also amused. Here would be a joke worth telling over a canikin of wine, illustrative of the stupidity of foreigners and the superior intelligence of Greeks.

And still the valise attracted no attention. This matter of the flimsy cord was all absorbing.

The merriment of the monks was but of short duration. They were not in mood for continued laughter, and even here the cause of their mirth was grim enough. They were thinking what a joke it would have been at the American's expense had he precipitated himself from the window at the end of those strips of torn bedding. The fact remained, however, that Walter was plotting escape, and this evidently was theme for a serious discussion. A decision was at last reached, for two of the monks stepped briskly up to him, seized him by the arm and hustled him toward the door. His mind being focused on the grip, he was taken completely by surprise and offered no resistance. Moreover, they were taking him out of the room and an attempt to break away would stand a better chance of success in

the open court than behind a closed door. They rushed him straight down the gallery toward the front of the building, and stopped before another door, which they proceeded to open. Walter hardened his muscles and set his teeth for a struggle. Brothers Manoles and Timoleon had him in their clutch, and down there in the yard, looking up with baleful eyes, was the murderous fanatic, Pandlemon. Here, also, was the Father Superior, himself an active man, despite his years.

It did seem hopeless. The door was open now and they were about to shove him in. If he were to attempt to break away, now was the instant. A moment more and it would be too late. At that critical needle-point of time, his eye caught sight of the stupid monastery servant, slouching down the gallery, bringing the valise, out of sheer force of habit. Whenever one of the monks changed his cell, or when, on rare occasions, a guest arrived, this boy acted as porter. He had no intellect beyond doing as he was told, or as he had done before. Brother Manoles seized the grip and pitched it into the room and Walter was unceremoniously shoved in after it. There was something in the way Brother Manoles threw the valise into the chamber with a spiteful "Nah!"

expressive of the dislike which often includes even the inanimate effects of a hated person. Walter entered without the least opposition. The door was locked behind him and he again found himself alone.

The room which he now occupied was evidently used for storage purposes. Boxes of potatoes and onions stood about the floor and stalactites of garlic depended from the ceiling, while various useful implements, such as hoes, spades, and the like, leaned against the wall. There was no bed here, and no furniture other than a broken chair or two, and the remnants of an outworn and discarded mule saddle. Walter hastily and eagerly opened the grip, and there, as he expected, was the coil of rope.

They searched it such a short time before, he chuckled. They knew just what was in it, didn't they? Now what could he fasten it to? A heavy hook in the ceiling, put there for holding a bag of cheese, perhaps, or other similar things, attracted his attention. By means of the boxes he was able to reach the hook, which he quickly unscrewed by passing the hoe-handle through it and twisting. It did not take long to fasten the hook securely into the floor, below the window. Then

he tied the rope and jerked with all his might. One could hang a horse on it, he thought again. He was about to shove up the window and climb out, when he remembered something that caused him to hesitate and stand with lips pursed in surprise, and wide-open, wondering eyes. The recollection that saved him from a horrible death came to him through the aid of associative memory, calling up a story that he had read in boyhood. What it was, and how Walter came to think of it now, we shall see in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE AMERICAN ESCAPES

Our recollections of childhood and of early youth consist rather of a series of detached impressions than of a continuous panorama of memory. Trivial incidents, utterly forgotten by our elders, happenings, stories, remarks, sighs, linger with us to the day of our death, while much more important things pass out of our minds for ever in half an hour.

Among the first books that Walter had read as a small boy was a collection of stories, among which was the mournful history of a young lover who came each night to visit his lady in a garden. He was hated by the girl's father, hence the necessity of clandestine trystings. One night the couple were surprised in the garden, and the unfortunate swain was captured and locked in an upper room of the paternal tower. After he had languished there several days, one of the retainers brought

him a note apparently in the handwriting of his beloved, and a rope. The missive contained the usual amount of lovers' nonsense, of course, and something else, evidently in a more practical vein, as it instructed him to escape from the window that night by means of the rope. His lady-love would be awaiting him below, it said, and he would fairly fall from the window into her arms.

With what impatience did he await the hour designated! A little before the time, we have no doubt, he dropped his rope from the window and climbed down. Arrived at the end, he found that his toes did not touch the ground, but he was not disturbed at this, for the note, in the well-known handwriting, had prepared him for just such an emergency in the following words: "I could not find a rope quite long enough, but do not fear, as you will have but two or three feet to fall and the sward is soft there."

He accordingly let go with the greatest confidence, only to fall a tremendous distance through the air and be crushed to death on the rocks below. Walter did not remember how far this old-time lover fell, but we can be sure that the story-book made it a good long distance. There is no earthly reason why a story writer should weaken his effect

by leaving a hundred feet or so off from his castle wall. It is just as easy, in a romance, to write big figures as little ones. At any rate, the idea of that youth hanging there in the dark, believing that his toes were near the ground, while, in fact, he was swinging in mid air, was one of the things that had made a permanent impression on Walter's youthful mind, and he thought of the story now, as he stood there by the window with his rope in his hand. It was a forged note, of course, which sent the lover of old-time to his doom, and Walter was setting his own trap; yet in other respects there was a great analogy between the two cases. The monastery wall at this point was built flush with the face of a precipitous rock, at least twenty feet high, which bulged out at the ground in several large bubbles of stone. Walter remembered the situation distinctly. The monastery was backed up against the mountain, and used this rock at its forward part as a portion of its foundation.

His rope had seemed none too long for escape from the other cell; would it suffice now? He again fastened the door with a handkerchief, as he had previously done, as a precaution against surprise. Opening the window, he dropped the



rope out and, leaning far forth, looked down. A flash of lightning revealed the end of the cord dangling at an uncomfortable distance from the ground. It fell just beyond the bottom of the wall, in fact, so that, deducting his own length, there would still be about fifteen feet for him to reach to the uneven rocks below; not a thrilling distance, nor sufficient for the purposes of an ancient romance, but quite enough to break several of a man's bones and to disable him so that he might lie there on the ground, a bruised and bleeding mass of helplessness. Walter had little hunger for any such fate as this, nor did he wish to take the one chance in a thousand by which a man sometimes falls from a great height and escapes with but slight injuries.

He had done so much thinking in the last few hours over this plan of escape that he could afford to do a little more. Should he try to communicate with McKenzie and get a few feet more of rope? He dismissed that thought instantly. In the first place, it would be necessary to make too much noise, and, secondly, he had now no means of pulling the rope up, even if the Scot had any more at his disposal.

He reflected that he might untwist the thing

and make it double its length; but the rope had, of course, but three strands, and by untwisting it, he would make two cords, one of which would be too weak for his purpose.

If he only had some one to help him, he thought, he could go half-way down, tie the rope to something, have it untied at the upper end, and then complete the distance. He suddenly wondered if that could not be done anyway. He must "get together" and study the thing out — immediately, too.

The idea had been suggested to him by thinking of a projecting beam that he had noticed, right in the path of his descent, about two-thirds of the distance down. In many of the old structures of Europe, the ends of timbers can thus be seen, sticking out a couple of feet or more.

He could straddle that beam, tie up to it, and then climb on down to the ground, if he had somebody to untie for him at the upper end. Bribe the errand boy? It would be too risky, and besides, he might not see him again in a day or two, and he must get out this very evening.

Could he not set his candle upon the floor — for the monks had left him one — pass the rope out, and hang to the projecting beam until the

candle flame had done his work for him? This seemed so simple and practicable that he thrilled with excitement at the idea as though his deliverance were already accomplished. He even went so far as to throw the cord from the window and to set the candle upon the floor close against it. Now that he looked at the arrangement, it appeared even more practicable than it had seemed in conception. The little length of candle which he had allowed would surely burn down in about five minutes and the flame reach the cord. But suppose the latter failed to ignite? Impossible! He held the flame to the hard-twisted hemp, confident that it would catch fire immediately. What was his surprise to find that nothing of the kind happened — that, on the contrary, it was no easy matter to ignite a tightly twisted cord.

It could be burned off, though, he soliloquized, and he must find out immediately how to do it. He wondered if hemp were an inflammable substance.

Cutting off a little bunch of the frayed ends with his knife, he held them in the candle and they burst into flame and consumed in his hand. It was because the rope was twisted so tightly, he concluded, that it would not burn off. But he

could certainly rig up a spot in it that would catch fire and eat clean through.

His experiment with the frayed ends led to the following expedient: He opened up the strands at the place which he desired to burn and threaded through and through brushes of the loose hemp, picking them out and opening them up with his fingers. One strand he left long and twisted it rather tight to serve as a wick. This wick, as well as the rope itself at this point and the fuzzy protuberance, he soaked with drippings from the old-fashioned tallow candle. His idea was that the wick would burn down into the fuzz, which would ignite and make such a hot flame all about the rope that the latter would either catch fire or become so weakened that he could jerk it in two. He lit his improvised wick by way of experiment and it began to burn strongly and rapidly. He blew it out immediately, exclaiming: "If that doesn't do the business, then I don't know what will!"

He must scramble down fast, for if the rope should turn over, the fuzz might catch fire before he could reach the timber. Lighting the wick again, he watched it for a moment with anxious eyes, as a man will a thing upon which his life or

his fortune depends; then he climbed out of the window into the dark and rainy night and started down the slender rope, hand over hand. It cut into his palms and tried his strong though unaccustomed arm to the uttermost, and a great wave of fear swept over him that the burning rope, up there in the chamber, might part before he reached the timber and drop him down upon the rock below. He took long strides with his arms, flinging his legs about in air in his effort to twist the rope around one of them, that he might slide down, as he now remembered seeing some one do — perhaps a trapeze performer in a circus — but he found that many things which appear perfectly easy, only seem so because they are done with consummate skill.

A vivid flash of lightning hissed at him as though in derision, and its long pencil of fire pyrographed him there, sprawling against the pallid wall.

One of his shins struck the timber so sharply that a sickening pain went to the pit of his stomach. The next instant he was clinging to the projecting beam, lying upon it in the angle between chest and elbows, muttering, "Thank God, it holds!" for the thought that it might be rotten

had flashed upon his overwrought brain at this juncture, fairly causing his hair to stand on end. It held indeed, and he quickly and securely, though 'twas no easy matter, tied the dangling end of the rope and waited, pulling gently. A minute probably passed away, which seemed to the American clinging there to his perch, like an hour.

It must have gone out, or the monks must have put it out. This thought caused him to turn his head and stare up along the black wall toward the window, but he could see nothing save a little area of the wall in his immediate vicinity. He pulled again, more impatiently — he jerked — and to his great joy the rope came loose and its blazing end flew far out through the rainy night and fell with a slap upon the rock below. With a laugh Walter swung loose from the beam and went on down, scraping against the rough wall.

His toes touched the ground, but he had not taken two steps away from the building when several men leaped upon him, grunting passionate gutturals in an unknown tongue. They struck him savagely, they seized him with rough hands that bit into his flesh and tore his clothing. He fought them furiously, swearing frantically in a delirium of rage, striking and kicking like a mad-

man. But all to no purpose. A blow upon the head rendered him unconscious and when he came to again, he was lying, bound hand and foot, in the bottom of a large catboat, his back against the bit of deck across the forward end. He was dizzy from the blow upon his head and every bone in his body ached from the rough usage he had received.

His captors were four in number, tall Greeks with handkerchiefs tied about their brows. Even in the darkness he could discern that they were not monks. He kept perfectly still as they shoved off and ran up the sail with deft hands. Soon the boat was boiling through the seething sea. Where were they off to? What fate was in store for him? What were his chances for escape? He tugged at the cords that were cutting into his wrists, but those knots were tied by sailors and a ghost could not have undone them. Again the lightning played faintly, revealing the forms of four sturdy, wild-looking islanders. He who sat at the helm was Spiro, and there was a smile of hellish triumph and hate upon his face, which was as ghastly pale in the sulphurous light as the face of a fiend

Were they going out into the deep waters, to

cast him overboard, thus bound? The thought made him strain at his bonds.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### McKENZIE SWINGS 'AN OAR

In silence thus they sailed on into the night and over the heaving sea. The waters pounded against the bottom of the boat, beneath the prow, shaking the frail timber; yet she staggered on, obedient to the will of him who sat there at the helm. Often the little craft rose like a chip to the peak of some monstrous wave, and swung down the next moment to the bed of the trough with a long, sickening swoop; or the beak caught the curl of a breaker, and a volley of hissing spray drenched the American, lying there huddled and helpless.

He at last concluded that these men had no intention of casting him into the sea; if such were their plan, why did they defer putting it into effect? Surely the water was deep enough where they were now, and that jealous Greek would not have been able longer to delay his vengeance, if his heart had been fixed upon the sea as an instru-

ment of revenge — or justice, as he no doubt regarded it.

No, they were saving him for some more lingering or shameful death. Perhaps the Greek would wait for daylight, that he might feast his eyes upon his captive's agony or fear. Walter felt that he must "get together," that he must be really of stout heart.

As is always the case when men are in extreme peril, or when they feel that their earthly moments are but few, the American's mind reviewed rapidly the past: his childhood, his college days, his disappointing career since graduation. The sweet face of his dead mother looked at him, very distinct, as he lay there with closed eyes, and his kind, bustling, indulgent uncle gazed at him reproachfully.

"I didn't do anything about the argols, after all," he sighed, "and I did get mixed up with a woman. But uncle didn't know, he didn't dream — who could ever have dreamed?"

He saw Polyxene now, washing clothes by the shimmering sea, coming down the grape-arbor with the ancient amphora upon her shoulder, standing in the moonlight while the nightingale sang, her great eyes shining like stars.

Who would get her rights for her now, he mused bitterly. Fool that he was, that he did not tell McKenzie his new plan!

At this moment something happened which caused Walter to start as though he had received an unexpected shock from an electric battery, and give vent to a stifled "Ha!" fortunately unheard in the seething of the waves. A great hand reached out from beneath the deck and pinched his arm gently; then it slid down his sleeve to his wrist, and one of the fingers slipped beneath the rope binding him; the next instant a knife sliced through the rope and his hands were free! Walter grasped the big hand in his own and pressed it gratefully, and the pressure was returned. A long knife was then put into the American's fist and he realized that he was in a position to release his feet whenever he desired, that he was in possession of an effective weapon, and that a friend and confederate was lying there beside him.

Two against four and free! This was certainly better than one against four and bound, much better if one of the two were McKenzie, whose prowess Walter had already witnessed. There would be the advantage, too, of a surprise, of a sudden attack. They could kill two of their an-

tagonists before the latter realized that anything was wrong, and then throw themselves upon the other two. Gripping the handle of the knife hard, Walter leaned toward the dark form that was nearest to him. Should he plunge the knife into it and then spring forward? Would McKenzie be able to get out and follow his lead with sufficient despatch? Why, he had not even freed his own feet!

He would better go slow, he reflected, or he might spoil the whole thing.

But he had been very near to thrusting at that silent Greek with his knife.

He was restrained, too, by ignorance — want of experience. One moment it seemed so easy to him to tumble those four figures over the rail into the sea — the next he was not even sure that a knife thrust to the hilt would put a man *hors du combat*.

He decided at last to wait for some sign from his confederate, who must have a plan in mind; and he resolved not even to cut the rope about his ankles at present, lest a flash of lightning betray him. But he clutched tightly the comfortable handle of his knife, and smiled grimly as he thought of the surprise in store for any who

should attempt to lay violent hands on him. Doubtless the man stowed away there beneath the bit of deck had some surmise of Walter's impatience, for the great hand stole out again and lay upon his leg with friendly, detaining pressure.

They had sailed for perhaps half an hour through the inky blackness, save when the faint lightning illumined the waters, heaving sullenly in the fickle light, like the waves of Achæron in the sulphurous flickerings of hell. At the end of that time the man at the helm growled some orders to the crew, who sprang to their feet and began to take the sail down. The prow grated on the sand, which could be dimly discerned, with its skirt of white foam, for several feet on either side of the boat. Some shore had been reached, Walter did not know where, but he imagined that it was a tiny island, little more than a great rock, which he had often gazed at from the monastery. The great, strong hand tightened upon his leg, in warning that he was to remain quiet even yet. The entire crew, including Spiro, leaped ashore, and bent to the sides of the boat, in act to pull it high and dry, when a form slid quickly by Walter and a voice whispered in his ear:

“Come on, now!”

In a twinkling he sawed the rope about his ankles in two with the knife and arose. He was too late to do anything, however, for McKenzie stood in the prow swinging a heavy oar as though it were a mullein stalk. It was wet and purred as it circled about his head, falling with dull, sunken thwacks upon the heads and backs in its way. Walter stumbled over a cross seat, and ere he could arise, the Scot had set the end of his terrible weapon in the sand and given the boat a shove that sent it far out into the darkness, leaving the astonished Greeks upon the island to nurse their bruises, or, perhaps, to bury their dead — for those were no lye-taps which Ian McKenzie rained about him when his blood was up, and the lust of fight aroused within him.

“Lie down! lie down!” cried the Scot, and the reason for the request was soon evident, as a lively fusillade from the pistols on shore bade adieu to the departing foreigners.

Skilfully McKenzie ran up the convenient sail, and with the sheet in his hand crept over the benches to the tiller. As the boat, answering to the helm, leaped away into the darkness, the dwindling voice of Spiro could be heard freighting the wild wind with screaming, ineffectual

curses. Walter, lying flat on the bottom of the boat, laughed like a madman, loudly, almost hysterically. Spiro must have heard him, for again he shot, his pistol making a red streak of flame in the darkness at each discharge.

"I shouldn't wonder if he were quite vexed at us," remarked McKenzie in his soft woman's voice, with his ever-present scholar's fear of overstating.

Walter went back to him and seized one of the great hands in both of his.

"I owe you my life, old man," he cried, "and I shall never forget it. That was splendid! Grand! Didn't you surprise 'em, though? I wonder what they thought had struck 'em?"

And again, weakened by the sudden release from the long strain to which he had been subjected, he burst into uncontrollable laughter.

"Are you hungry?" asked McKenzie. "Ye'll find some bread and cheese under the deck there, where I concealed myself. There was a whole loaf when I first came down, and there's not much left now. But there's a bite, man, a wee bite, if ye're hungry."

"Hungry?" asked Walter. "No, I'm not hungry. I'm too happy to be hungry."

"Then, if you'll kindly pass it to me," said the Scot, with a sigh of content, "I'll e'en finish the loaf."

"But how did you manage it?" asked Walter. "How did you plan it all out so splendidly?"

"'Twas easy enough. They planned it out for me. I was hiding in the bushes and I heard Spiro say that they would take you to this island and leave you on it tied, in a cave, to starve to death. 'Twas an ancient Greek punishment that he had planned for you, that decreed for Antigone by Creon, King of Thebes. I doubt not that Spiro would have come from time to time to taunt you."

Walter shuddered.

"I repeat that I shall never forget what I owe you, old man," he murmured.

"You owe me nothing at ail," replied McKenzie. "You owe your life to the bravest and most beautiful woman, with one exception, that I have ever seen. The duchess sailed over from the missionary's, through the darkness and the storm, to warn you that Spiro was coming to seek your life. I met her in the road, heard her story and was on the watch for Spiro."

"Polyxene did that for me!" cried Walter. "Dear, noble, brave Polyxene! Isn't such a wom-



an as that worth living for and worth dying for, McKenzie?"

"You may well say that," replied the Scot. "A man's life or death is of but little worth when the happiness of such a creature is concerned."

"Did you ever hear of such nobility, such beauty, such sweetness before?" asked the American. It had ceased raining now and the great round moon was racing through a wild and cloudy sky. It was a shy, frightened moon, that hid one moment behind a dark mass of cloud and the next leaped across a blue interstice to hide its face again. Walter sat with hands clasped, gazing far across the turbulent waters, the rapt expression of the dreaming lover upon his thin features.

"I have that," replied McKenzie stoutly, "as I have often informed ye."

"Where is the dear girl now?" asked Walter, not noticing the peculiar reply. "Where did you leave her?"

"In Santorinc."

"In — oh, I understand, now! I mean Polyxene. Is she still on the monastery island?"

"I told her to go back home, if I did not come to her within half an hour. 'Twas the only thing to do. I hoped that you would come out before

Spiro got there and that we could sail away with her, over to the mainland. I trust that you will excuse me for not escorting her back home, under the circumstances?"

"Where are you going now?"

"To Ta Castra, to spend the rest of the night."

"Good! Then we can find out whether Polyxene arrived safe or not. She would have got back all right, wouldn't she, Mac? You can't think anything can have happened to her, do you? There is no way of hurrying up a little, is there?"

"There's the missionary's house now," replied the Scot, as the moon, bursting through the clouds, flooded the world with light. "In ten minutes we shall be in the village."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE AMERICAN GOES AFTER RECRUITS

From Mrs. Ion, Walter learned that Polyxene had not been gone over two hours. The missionary's wife supposed that the girl had been with Spiro all this time, and she was heartily glad when she saw her enter the house again, safe and sound, though thoroughly drenched. No one in Ta Castra as yet knew anything of the episode with the monks, and Walter had not the least idea of taking any other person than McKenzie into his confidence. He was greatly tempted, we may be sure, to open up the whole matter to Polyxene, as it seemed to him to be an unnatural thing that there should be any secrets between himself and this beautiful girl whom he loved so passionately.

He had perfect confidence in her. He believed, of course, that she was the one woman of perfect discretion who knew how to keep a secret. Yet his plan for recovering the treasure included, in

the first place, as we have seen, its secret abstraction; and now he had in mind to resort to violence. Either of these methods had a lawless look, despite the fact that he was proceeding in the only way to obtain justice and right a great wrong. He did not wish Polyxene to be accessory, even through knowledge, to anything that might be high-handed or dangerous in his operations.

It would be time enough to tell her all when he had brought things to a happy issue and was able to lay her fortune at her feet. Still, he realized that she was a woman, and could not but feel pity for the curiosity which he knew must be consuming her.

Mr. Ion was still very sick; so sick, in fact, that his wife was talking of sending to Athens for a physician.

"If we could only take him to America!" she sighed to Walter, as she dropped wearily into a chair and folded her hands in her lap. "I don't believe much in these Greek doctors, even the best of them. Old Doctor Prout, of Joliet, our family physician, could set him on his feet in a week."

"Why, I saw Doctor Prout once," cried Walter. "Tremendous lot of beautiful white hair — wears an old-fashioned silk hat — drives a fat lit-

tle horse without any check-rein, that holds his head low down and goes grazing all around when the doctor makes a call."

"Yes! yes! That's him," cried Mrs. Ion, almost weeping with joy. "For the land's sake, how plain you do make me see him! They say these islands and all this scenery here are beautiful, but I'd rather see honest old Doctor Prout's silk hat at this minute than all the isles of Greece."

What portion of this sentiment was inspired by solicitude for Mr. Ion and what by homesickness, Walter found it difficult to decide, but of one thing he was sure: the bond of sympathy between himself and Mrs. Ion had been greatly strengthened.

There was a boat sailing for Athens at eleven, on the morning following Walter's escape from the monastery, and upon this the two friends embarked.

"I'll be back inside of a week, sweetheart," Walter whispered to the young girl, as he held her in his arms, "and the next time I go away I'll take you with me, if you'll come."

"I would follow you to the end of the world, my soul."

"Come now," he cried. "Come now! We be-

long to each other, why delay another day, another hour?"

"I can not leave Mrs. Ion yet, not till her husband gets better."

"But Spiro — he will be so angry now that I have evaded him again. Is it safe to leave you here? I did not tell you, he found McKenzie and me and we had a struggle with him; we got the better of him and his men. Will he not be frightfully angry now?"

"Have no fears," she replied with confidence. "There are some things a woman knows. He has set his heart on marrying me, and will do no violence. I shall know how to manage him."

Walter did not tell her where Spiro was, because he feared that she might feel it her duty to go and release him. At the present moment, the fact that the Greek was marooned gave him a feeling of security, and he had not yet found time to give thought to Spiro's probable fate — a thing that he was sure to do as soon as his bruises ceased aching and his more generous side had opportunity to assert itself.

Polyxene's assurance also allayed his fears, and he ceased urging her to come with him now.

He remembered those few hours in the morn-

ing, before the boat arrived, as the sweetest of his life, for, the missionary being confined to his bed, he was allowed perfect freedom to pass the time with Polyxene. The girl, too, having settled with Spiro, was no longer troubled by conscientious scruples, and returned his caresses. Pure as innocence itself, yet unaffectedly and engagingly simple, there was none of the coquetry and pretended shyness about her which the belles of our highly civilized cities too often assume. She was deliciously modest, as the blushes mantling her delicately tinted cheeks testified, yet she made no attempt to dissemble the fact that she loved Walter and had given herself to him.

Such a girl would no more have entertained a disloyal thought than she would have committed theft. It would have been hard to convince her of disloyalty in the one whom her heart had crowned, but, once convinced, the very foundation of her faith would be uprooted and she would never again believe anything. As Walter sat under the awning of the little steamer, he read a letter from his uncle, in reply to one of his own, sent soon after his arrival in Greece.

"I'm glad to find you so enthusiastic in business matters, my boy," the letter said, among

other things, "and I believe that you have finally 'got together,' as you call it. I have at last convinced the firm of the wisdom of my decision to send you on this mission. I read your last letter to Van Inwigen, our vice president, and he remarked, 'Well, I guess the boy is a chip off the old block, after all. We can use all the crude tartar he can buy, can't we, Erasmus?' And I answered him, 'We can use all there is in the world, if we can get hold of it at the right price.' We shall be expecting a tremendous shipment this fall from the isles of Greece, at the figure I mentioned. If you can carry out this thing so that we can reduce the price of our finished product, you will not only be one of the most important men of the firm, but you will also become, in a way, as I explained to you, a public benefactor. I hope you won't take it ill if I again warn you against the besetting weakness of young men, the absorbing wiles of pretty women. Your aunt tells me that you have a wonderfully taking way with the sex, you young rascal, and you have my sympathy, for, in all confidence, I believe you take after me — me as a youth, I mean — in that regard. You have not, of course, been in that country long enough yet to get into any complications with the fair sex. That



would have been too rapid work for even me, in my palmiest days. But you are beginning to get waywised now and I must warn you again. You are in Greece at the company's expense, and you are there for business and not for philandering. I think you made a great strike in selecting that Scot, McKenzie, to act as your interpreter. He will be of great service to you, and there is certainly no nonsense of a sentimental nature about such a queer old dry-bones as he must be. And now, my boy, I have a pleasant surprise in store for you. Van Inwigen and I together have bought Van Dervoort's steam yacht—Van Dervoort, the New York millionaire. We are having her repainted and fitted up to suit our taste and shall rechristen her 'The Argolis'—name of a country in Greece, you know, and at the same time suggestive of the thing that furnished the money that makes her possible. She is big enough and steady enough to cross the ocean safely, and if I can induce your aunt to embark on her, we shall come across for a cruise of the Mediterranean. You can then show me what you have done, and we can zigzag about the Mediterranean a little together. Your queer Scotchman can come with us and explain the antiquities and we can combine business, pleasure

and instruction. Your aunt sends her love, and advises you against staying out late nights. If you feel the least bit under the weather, she says, take eucalyptus. She is pinning her faith to that now, a cure for all the ills that flesh is heir to—”

Walter let the sheet fall upon his knees and sat gazing out upon the sea, rippling gently in the bright noonday sun. A breeze, generated by the motion of the ship, drifted through beneath the awning, cool, yet indescribably balmy, and stirred the damp locks that fell low on his forehead. His hat lay on the seat beside him.

“Dear old uncle!” he murmured with a sigh. There was something so distinctly human about the man, so kindly, that he could not help loving him. “So the old gentleman is proud of his conquests as a youth!” Walter was touched by the confession. The elder Lythgoe was treating him, now, no longer as a boy, but rather as an equal and confidant.

“He believes that I have settled down to business at last,” mused Walter. There was no disloyalty to Polyxene in the fact that the possibility of disappointing and displeasing this kindly man who had vouched for him, afforded him the keenest apprehension. But he was a buoyant youth

and the humor of the situation suddenly striking him, he leaned back and burst into laughter.

"Well, even uncle himself must admit that I've made record time in getting into a 'complication', as he calls it. However disgusted he becomes, that feature of it must arouse his admiration." When Walter turned his mind's eye from his uncle upon Polyxene, he became reassured.

"When he sees her," he thought, "he'll throw up both hands. If he has any sort of eye for a woman, as he says he has, he must admit that she hasn't her equal upon earth. What if he is getting old? Polyxene would have charmed Methuselah silly or have brought old Diogenes out of his tub." About his aunt he was not so sure, and he knew that she possessed great influence over his uncle, but he sat up very straight at last, and jerking his cuffs down with decision, settled the whole matter thus, as indeed it had been settled from the beginning:

"Well, if they don't like it, I'll have to stand it. I know that there's no one on earth like Polyxene, and I'll have her if I have to work like a slave for her all my life."

McKenzie came across the deck, carrying the carpet-bag in shape like unto a huge piece of

American cheese. His beard was more than usually disheveled, and his deep-set eyes were almost sepulchral in their solemnity.

"Man, I had a dream last night," he whispered, bending close to Walter's ear and fixing him with a mournful gaze. "I thought—" For once Lythgoe felt annoyed; he had so many real things to think of!

"Do you think Spiro will starve to death on that island?" he inquired. "I wouldn't like to have him starve, and we may not be back before a week."

"There's water," replied the Scot. "Brother Manoles told me so; and they can pick up something to eat from the sea — *echini*, and so forth — rather salt food, but then, there's the water, you know. Man, my dream —"

"Yes, yes! But they will be apt to get off right away, won't they?"

"Um, hardly — people rarely go there, and it's out of the path of the ships coming into Ta Castra. They might be picked off to-night, but it's more likely that they'll stay there till we send after them. I thought I was in a great—"

"Sit down, now, Mac," interrupted Walter hastily, "and let me tell you my plan."

"Ye must hear my dream first. 'Tis on my mind, and I'll not be easy till I get it off."

"All right, then, old man, let's have it. I suppose you think it's just as important as anything that happens in waking hours."

"Just as important, really! Perhaps more so. We live in two distinct worlds, one while we wake, the other while we sleep, and I sometimes think the latter is the more real world; for 'tis then our bodies are dead for the time being, and our minds, our true selves, wander at will. As I was telling you, I thought I was lying upon a slab in a great morgue. There were two rows of naked bodies, lying upon slabs about breast high, and between these rows was an aisle that stretched and stretched away, interminable, as far as eye could reach. Right in the center of the aisle and at its head was a monster clam, also upon a slab, whose upper shell bore some resemblance to a grotesque, humorous face. Man —" Here McKenzie plucked at Walter's sleeve, bent nearer and spoke still lower, "a whimsical, satirical face, something like that upon the surface of the full moon, that seemed to be infinitely amused at these interminable rows of naked dead bodies, as who should say or think, 'So this is the end of it all, eh? The end

of all the plans and soaring ambitions, and hopes, the delirium of love, the joy, the heart-aches, the despair! A comfortable, cool little slab in the morgue — he! he! he! It's really funny. It all ends in such an exquisite anti-climax; perfectly unexpected, too, nearly always unexpected' ”

“ You do make something out of a dream,” said Walter, fascinated in spite of himself.

“ But listen, man, I'm not through yet. That fearful clam breathed by opening wide his mouth and bringing it together again with a 's-s-h.' Within him were the heart, liver and lungs of a man, all throbbing, and when he brought his cold, thin lips together, a fine spray hissed from his nostrils, and wherever it fell upon the corpses it burned them, inflicting indescribable agony, as though it were vitriol. And every time that 's-s-h' was heard, for the clam breathed rhythmically, taking a half-minute for each complete opening and closing, the eyes of the corpses, all down the line, rolled toward him, in agonized apprehension — and mine rolled, too, for I was one of them, ye know.”

Walter shuddered.

“ How much of Mrs. Ion's mince pie did you eat last night before you went to bed? ”

"Three pieces. I was still very hungry, from my long fast upon the island."

"Well, you have done it full justice, I must say," laughed the American. "Mince pie is famous with us, you know, for its dream-producing qualities."

"What a great blessing to the human race 'twould be," sighed McKenzie, "if, having this potent influence, it incited only pleasant dreams!"

Having thus relieved his mind, McKenzie was ready to listen to Walter's plan for abstracting the treasure belonging to the Duchess of Polcavera.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### WHERE IS THE TREASURE NOW?

A few days later a steamer not much bigger than a tug and in shape actually bearing much resemblance to a wash-tub, stole slowly through the deepening twilight toward the island whereon the monastery was situated. Lythgoe, with true American enterprise, had succeeded in hiring this disreputable-looking craft shortly after his arrival in Piræus harbor. It was rusty, clumsy, begrimed with smoke, and slow, it is true, but it was immediately available and would answer his purpose. The *capitanyos*, or captain, the engineer, and one sailor were the only Greeks on board, as Walter had insisted on making the contingent of this nationality as small as possible. He was relying for carrying out his plan on the assistance of one American and one Englishman, whom McKenzie had brought along from the American and English archæological schools. These youths had



been put upon their honor in the matter of secrecy and had been taken into full confidence. In case of success they were to receive three hundred dollars each; in the event of failure, nothing. They came along with the greatest willingness. The romantic nature of the quest fired their young blood, and the three hundred dollars would mean another whole year in Greece!

The captain, a merchant of the tramp variety, was just the man for the purpose, as he had brought many a cargo of the incomparable Andros onions (better than those of Egypt) to the harbor of Piræus and even so far as France, and he knew every inch of this coast perfectly.

Walter was in great fettle, albeit a trifle nervous. Arrayed in a jaunty business suit and immaculate linen, all of which he had found time to purchase in Athens, despite the haste, he walked to and fro upon the deck, gazing now at the monastery, snuggled in its green nook, now at Ta Castra, the little village glorified by the presence of Polyxene. It is no small thing to be a commander of a ship, even a little ship. It is the next thing to being an emperor of the earth, for the reason that this whole floating world, to the jumping-off place in every direction, is subject to one's or-

ders. Herein is found the real source of a millionaire's pleasure in a yacht. It is the only way that a man can buy absolute dominion.

"They will suspect nothing, if they see us passing here," Walter remarked to Bosanquet. "Steamers like this go by here every day." The little vessel rounded the island, as though to strike down the coast of Andros, but it slowed up in the shadow of a great cliff, at whose feet it presently anchored.

"Unless one of them is prowling about," said Walter to McKenzie, "I don't believe they have the least idea that we've stopped here. There's nothing but the smoke to betray us."

"They're monks, and 'tis their dinner time," remarked McKenzie. "I don't think ye have much to fear."

Walter laughed gaily. "If they were Presbyterians, now!" He was in the highest spirits. Thus far everything had worked out exactly as he had planned it, and with the most perfect simplicity. Nothing remained save to go up, get the gold and sail away; and was he not going to take away a still greater treasure upon this very ship — even Polyxene herself? He carried in his pocket the key of the little cabin upon the deck,

and there stood at this moment upon the table a great bouquet of red roses and a dish of mixed fruit upon the sideboard, to say nothing of a box of the exquisite candy which they make at Athens. He looked at his watch and reckoned that inside of three hours Polyxene and he would be sitting in the cabin and they would be sailing away together.

They cast anchor cautiously and preserved the most perfect silence, while the shades of evening enveloped them, and the gray shadow of the rock deepened swiftly to black, blotting out the ship that lurked at its base. At nine o'clock the four conspirators went ashore and stole into the wood. Each carried in his hands several slender, yet strong, bars of hard wood, of good length. Arriving at the edge of the road, at the very spot where McKenzie had watched so long a few evenings before, Walter whispered:

"They seem to be all asleep, eh, Mac?"

"All the lights are gone out," replied the Scot.

"You see, they go to bed about eight o'clock,"

Walter explained to Bosanquet and Weadock, "and should all be sound asleep by this time. The only danger is in running into the Superior or

Brother Pandlemon. They are the ones who are the prowlers."

"It's hardly late enough for them yet," suggested McKenzie. "Man, I believe 'tis the very hour for our business."

"Suppose we advance then, gentlemen, silently, silently, remember. Follow me on tiptoe."

They crept around the building close to the wall, and peeped into the court. There was no sign of life within. To all appearances the monks were sleeping soundly, lulled by the winds in the trees. They certainly could not be expecting the return of the troublesome foreigners, who had seemed glad enough to get away.

The strangers removed their shoes and stole into the inclosure, each stopping before a cell door indicated by Lythgoe. They fell immediately to work.

Each took from his pocket a steel elbow, tipped with a sharp screw, and began twisting it into the frame of the door. There was no light in the court, save that of the stars and the moon, but it was a clear night, and they could see sufficiently. Four doors were securely fastened in half a minute: a steel elbow on either side and the wooden bar laid across.

McKenzie and Walter fastened the remaining two doors, and then the four put their heads together.

"There are eleven bags," explained Lythgoe. "Bosanquet and I will go down and carry off four of them, down nearly to the ship. We won't let the captain see us, or he might sail away with those. You fellows can keep watch till we get back. Then we'll all go down and lug off the rest. Isn't it simple, though? Come on, Bosanquet."

They descended into the cellar, Walter leading the way between the wine-tuns with a candle which he took from his pocket.

"That strong smell," he explained, stopping before the huge tun, "is from the hundred-year-old wine that was spilled during the fight that I told you about."

He felt so confident, so little nervous, that he took the time for this explanation with a certain degree of insolent assurance.

He did not see how his plan could fail, since the most ticklish part of it had been got through with such ease. He would send somebody from Ta Castra to let the monks out and to look after Spiro.

The same flimsy old lock was on the door of

the charnel and they found no difficulty in forcing it, as before.

“There, those are the bags, Bosanquet. Each one has the bones of a dead monk in it. His name is on the label. See here! Hold the candle now, while I dig down to what we want.”

Bosanquet was greatly interested. He was an archaeologist, and McKenzie had explained to him that the British had discovered the existence of a similar custom at Palaiokastro, in Crete, a survival from Mycenæan times. He stood holding the bag in the crook of his left arm, reading the label, while Walter dug rapidly down into the pyramid. The crater was soon excavated, clean to the floor; it was enlarged. Bosanquet caught the contagious excitement and, dropping the bag which he was holding, bent over and looked into the pit which Walter had digged, tilting the candle so that the latter might the better see. At last Walter looked up. His face was white at first, but immediately a silly grin crept over his features, followed by the burning signal of shame.

“The — the — treasure is not here!” he faltered. “They — they — have removed it.”

Whirling about suddenly, he attacked the pile of bones, and pitched all the rattling generations

of the dead into the corner, in hopes that what he was seeking might be mingled through the pile. He worked with the frenzy of a madman, hurling the bags savagely, as though they were responsible for his disappointment.

But all to no purpose, for the monks had indeed changed the *cache* of the treasure.

Walter thought of the chamber of the skeleton, whither he and McKenzie had carried several of the bags, and thither he hastened, in company with Bosanquet. He was disagreeably surprised to find that the monks had not even taken the trouble to lock this door. The reason for this was evident, for the skeleton had disappeared, and all its belongings: vases with the telltale coat of arms, rug, sword, even the eikon was gone! As for money, there was not the least sign of it. Lythgoe rushed down the long, dark passage, his fists doubled, his temples pounding with rage.

Bosanquet, following as best he could with the candle flickering to a tiny point of blue, heard his flying footsteps, and the string of angry adjectives that trailed behind him down the narrow vault: "The damned, scoundrelly, hypocritical—"

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### FRIGHTENING THE MONKS

“Mac,” cried Walter, bursting upon the little group that stood beneath the tree in the court, “the treasure is gone—’tis gone, I say, the sanctimonious old devil has taken it away—Polyxene’s money, he has taken it away! But, by God, I mean to have it, if I take it out of his yellow old hide.” Fairly beside himself with rage that seemed to be growing with the exasperation that it fed upon, he strode toward the Father Superior’s door. McKenzie seized him, however, and held him fast.

“Stop, man, stop, the treasure’s in the building, I warrant you. We must find it.”

“That’s so,” cried Walter. “Come on, then. We’ll ransack —”

“But wait a minute, man, wait a wee minute. We must put our heads together and think a little now. Rushing aimlessly around will do us



small good." McKenzie took on the look of the cautious counsellor and spoke in solemn tones.

"They will have hidden it well this time," suggested Weadock, a black-haired, swarthy, thick-set man, with a square chin. He spoke with deliberation, as ever. "I doubt if we could find it in this great pile, with all its secret chambers, caves and underground passages, were we to hunt a week. The only way to get it is to make the monks tell us where it is."

"By torture?" whispered Bosanquet, a tall, blue-eyed Englishman. "I don't like it — if the surroundings *are* medieval."

"'Twould serve 'em right, the thieves," fumed Walter, "but I don't like it either."

"There must be some other way," said McKenzie. "Let us put our heads together."

They had been discussing the subject about ten minutes when Bosanquet, who had sharp ears, whispered:

"Sht! I thought I heard something."

"'Twas the latch of the Father Superior's door," said Walter. "He is trying to get out."

He was indeed. He rattled the latch, he shook the door, he threw his weight against it, and at last he pounded and shouted.

"Eh, ha, what?" cried Brother Manoles, in Greek, his voice betraying the fact that he had been aroused from a deep slumber. The impact of the fat Brother's body could plainly be heard as he lifted the latch of his own portal, and bumped against it, expecting it to open. He too, began to rattle, pound and shout, and soon all six of the Brothers were screaming to the others to let them out. They silenced down at last, all except Brother Myrianthuses, who, suspecting a practical joke on the part of Manoles, kept up the hubbub for some time.

"Into the shadow deeper, deeper," whispered the Scot, throwing his long arm about his companions and drawing them behind the tree. The cook at this moment came out of the kitchen, yawning cavernously, and making desperate efforts to open his heavy eyes. He was attired in his shirt, his hair was matted, and he held a candle high above his head. He was followed by the kitchen boy, in similar dishabille, a whimpering lout, who seemed to be frightened; as indeed he was, for supernatural visitors, angry saints, for instance, often appeared to the denizens of monasteries.

"We have forgotten the cook," said McKenzie.

"When I dash at him, you, Bosanquet, run for the front gate, and you, Weadock, for the kitchen door. Come, with me, Walter. He must never open one of those doors."

The plan was instantly put into effect, and McKenzie reached the cook just as the latter's hand was on the bar closing Brother Pandlemon's door. The cook's knees knocked together, his face blanched and his jaws dropped ajar with fright. The boy sank praying to the earth.

"If we only had some rope to bind them," said McKenzie.

"The rope that I escaped with," said Walter, "I'll get it." He soon came running back with it.

The cook and the boy were securely tied and thrown into the church.

"We'd better look at them from time to time, to make sure that they don't get loose," suggested Weadock.

McKenzie now proceeded to attempt to parley with the Father Superior through the door, representing to him that all the monks were in the power of Walter and his friends, that further resistance was useless and that he would avoid a great scandal if he told where the treasure was.

In case of compliance the strangers would go away, and never mention the matter of the stolen treasure to any one.

“We are in complete possession of all the facts regarding it,” he argued, “and you can not possibly keep it in any event. If you tell us, we will take the cook a distance with us, till we get safely away, and then we will free him to come back and let you all out.”

But the Father Superior kept as still as a mouse, and all his family followed his example. When McKenzie reached the door of Brother Pandlemon, something happened. That warlike monk had evidently prepared for any further raids upon the precious bags, for he fired through the door, very narrowly missing McKenzie's head. The fact that the gallant gentleman was stooping while he talked, saved him from perforation by the bullet from an old-fashioned pistol, of large bore.

After the excitement arising from this episode had subsided somewhat, Bosanquet volunteered:

“We can not resort to torture, it is true, but can not we frighten the monks by pretending to offer violence to some one of their number?”

“That might be an idea!” assented McKenzie.

“For instance : that large window in the church looks right out on the court here. Could we not herd all the Brothers in the church, and threaten solemnly to hang them one by one to this tree, unless they give us the desired information? We could rig up an effigy and hang it, by the light of the lantern. ’Twould take but a minute and be most realistic, as seen through the window, and by the uncertain light. We could begin on Brother Pandelemon, alleging his rebellious conduct as the reason for selecting him as the first victim.”

“But do you think,” asked Weadock, “that they would take our theatrical exhibition seriously? Would they not know that we would not dare commit murder, and see through the deception?”

McKenzie answered: “I know the Greek country people as I do those of Scotland. They are entirely ignorant of the outside world, concerning which they have the wildest imaginings. Indeed, they look upon all foreigners as utterly unregenerate and savage at heart. ’Tis very likely that they will be surprised if we do not offer some violence.”

“By Jove, I believe it’ll work!” cried the ever

sanguine Walter. "There must be some weak ones among them. One of them will be sure to show the white feather. It will work — something must work!"

"But where would we get the costume for our effigy?" asked Weadock.

"Why, from the monk that we pretend to hang," explained Bosanquet.

"We'll put them all together in the church. Then we'll make our little speech and wait for them to speak. Failing this, we'll take Mr.— what's his name? yes, Pandelemon, out to the kitchen, strip off his garments, stuff them with something or other—"

"The hair from my bed mattress," suggested Walter.

"—and invite the Brothers confined in the church to watch while we pull this clerical effigy up into the tree. We can just flash the light of the lantern upon it, you know, if we should not succeed in making it very realistic."

"Will it be safe to let them all loose in the church together?" asked Weadock. "Can we manage them?"

"We'll have to take them out one by one and bind them," declared Walter. "I suppose this

may seem like sacrilege to you people, and I want to say right here that no man respects the Greek Church more than I do, but I have had some experiences with these particular Brethren which convince me that they are not worthy representatives of that Church. How shall we get Pandemon out without letting him puncture one or more of us?"

It was decided to throw the door wide suddenly and without previous noise, and to let the Brother find himself unexpectedly covered by revolvers. This was done, and with the greater success, as the weapon possessed by the monk proved to be a single-barreled affair, for which he had no more bullets in his cell. He fought with desperation, however, like the mad fanatic that he was, scratching and screaming like a cornered wildcat; but he was in the hands of four active young fellows, who soon overpowered him, and securely fastened his hands and feet.

"Bind him tight," said McKenzie grimly in Greek; "never mind if you do hurt him a little. 'Twill soon be over: they'll either tell us where the treasure is, or they'll all be hanged within half an hour."

The other Brothers, realizing that the odds were

against them, offered no resistance, but submitted with the best grace of which they were capable. Brother Manoles alone was quite voluble, urging that this was a poor return for hospitality, and that such conduct would not have been possible on the part of Christians. This was the result of harboring barbarians, Franks, infidels; nah! all the best wine had been spilled, and now they were subjected to unspeakable indignities!

The Father Superior bore himself with such dignity that McKenzie was constrained to offer an apology, adding:

"It is just as painful to us as it is to you, Father, but it is all your own fault. If you will tell us where this money is that we may restore it to its rightful owner, we will not lay the weight of our hands upon you."

Wonder of wonders! "There is no money," he replied, "and never has been. You gentlemen are suffering from some strange illusion." He said it with so much solemnity that Bosanquet and Weadock looked inquiringly, almost doubtfully at each other.

"What does he say?" asked Walter, who alone could not understand him.

McKenzie translated.



"Bind him tight, bind him tighter than the others!" shouted Walter. "The old hypocrite! Tell him, tell him, McKenzie, that he'll conclude that we are no illusion before we get through with him. What a mockery are gray hairs when they mask so much wickedness! The gray old rat!"

Walter was very much in love, as we know, and it made him frantic to think that these men persisted so strenuously, so desperately, in holding back his sweetheart's fortune and much that would help him in proving her origin.

"God will judge between ye and me," said the Father Superior, no doubt noticing the effect which he had produced on Bosanquet and Weadock. "Bind me if ye will. I would share the martyrdom with which he has seen fit to crown my brothers,"—and he held out his thin, white hands, from which the wide sleeves fell away, disclosing the blue-veined, slender wrists.

"I don't half like this business," muttered Weadock, but he followed the others to the church.

The monks had seized the opportunity while they were locked in their cells to make a hurried toilet, and they were now seated in a row in the church, in the high-backed cathedral chairs against the wall. As each one was placed in the chair,

his feet were bound, and now that the roster was complete, McKenzie raised the lantern which he had found in the kitchen, and the Anglo-Saxons looked over the silent, impressive, yet grotesque line. The rays of the lantern gleamed upon the brazen frames of the eikon, upon the tall candlesticks, and flickered among the glass pendants of the chandelier swinging from the ceiling. They mingled with darkness in the high dome, where only the bare feet of the saints painted there, and the hem of their robes, were visible.

Father Timoleon alone had put on his tall hat, and he sat near the middle of the line.

"Reverend Brethren," began McKenzie, "it is with great regret that we have been obliged to resort to these forcible measures. You know why we are here,—to secure possession of certain bags containing money, and to restore them to their rightful owner—" Manoles bent forward and glanced down the line, his mouth wide as though in honest wonder.

"Money?" he repeated. Brother Timoleon laughed, and there seemed to be a slight flavor of real mirth in the sound. Bosanquet and Weadock again exchanged glances.

"Yes, money," continued McKenzie, "and we

intend to have it. You must see that we are in earnest. It is for you to say whether we shall proceed to still more violent measures. We will give you five minutes to begin telling where you have removed those money bags to. If, at the end of that time no one has spoken, we shall take you out one by one and hang you to the tree in the yard, beginning with Brother Pandlemon."

"Bah!" snarled Brother Pandlemon; "hang, and may the fiend take you!"

Walter pulled out his watch and called the minutes.

It seemed an hour to him till the second hand traveled around the little circle, and all this time Polyxene was being defrauded of her rights!

"One minute!" he called at last. The silence was painful. Bosanquet and Weadock noticed that the Superior's face was of ashen pallor, while that of Pandlemon was spotted with rage. The other monks were exchanging wondering glances, as though they did not quite understand, or could not believe their eyes and ears.

"Two minutes!"

"Three minutes!"

"Four minutes!"

The Superior was evidently trying to catch

Pandelemon's eye, but the latter stared fixedly at the earth, as though conscious of that magnetic gaze, yet grimly determined not to yield to its influence.

"Five minutes!"

There was a moment's wait, as of indecision, while the Scot searched the faces of the monks to take advantage of the least sign of weakness.

"Come!" he said sternly, and seized Pandelemon by the arm.

"We might as well see this experiment through," muttered Weadock, stepping to McKenzie's assistance.

Pandelemon offered no resistance this time, but arose and came along as soon as the rope about his ankles was cut.

"If I knew of any treasure," he cried, looking the Superior full in the eyes, "I would die sooner than yield to these vile unbelievers."

The Superior, who had been leaning forward anxiously, settled back in his chair once more with a sigh.

During the wait which now ensued in the church, he sat silent, his chin buried in his breast, over which his white beard spread like a silver cataract. Fully ten minutes must have passed

away thus, which seemed so long a time that the other monks took hope and began to chatter volubly, saying:

"They would not dare."

"'Twould be murder and they would all be guillotined for it."

At last, however, McKenzie again entered and announced:

"All preparations are now complete for the hanging of Brother Pandelemon. We would avoid this grave and dangerous step, if possible, therefore we give you one more chance to speak."

"The Superior is going to speak," cried Bosanquet; and indeed, the old man had the appearance of one about to say something. He thought better of it, though, and again the chin dropped on his breast, the while he shook his head and muttered: "I can't believe that they will do it."

McKenzie left the room, and soon his voice could be heard outside in Greek, commanding gruffly:

"Throw the rope over that limb! No, no, no, not that one, the other, that will hold."

The light of the lantern now shone against the window and the branches of the tree were dimly visible. Who knows what terrors may have filled

the minds of these simple monks, ignorant of all the world save one little island? One could see written plainly upon their faces the question: "What savage men from over the sea are these? What murderers, what brigands?"

Two of them began to pray and Brother Manoles to plead.

"There is no treasure, good strangers, I tell you there is no treasure. My Virgin! Do you think if there were, I would not tell you?"

And above it all could be heard McKenzie's voice:

"Once more, Pandlemon, have you anything to say? He 's silent. Pull him up then, pull! Pull!"

A form dressed in a long black cassock, with dangling legs and hands tied in front, danced into the dim light of the lantern, and whirled about.

"Let him down!" screamed the Father Superior, "let him down, and I will tell — not for myself, not for myself, but for these others, whom I can not see die."

He stood swaying upon his hobbled feet, holding out his bound wrists that trembled beseechingly. Bosanquet sprang to the door and

shouted: "Let Pandeemon down. The Superior will tell!"

The dark form was dropped to the earth, and almost immediately afterward McKenzie entered the room.

"Is he dead?" asked the old man. "Is he dead, eh? He is not dead, is he?"

"No," replied McKenzie; "I am glad to say that he received a bad choking only, and will be all right in a few moments. But you spoke just in time."

"There is a treasure," whispered Bosanquet to Weadock, who came in at this moment. "The old man said so, but he was a pitiful sight, and he has his good points. It made my heart ache to see him."

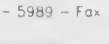
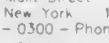
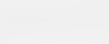
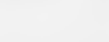
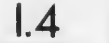
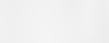
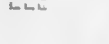
Walter freed the Superior's feet and, turning to his companions, cried joyfully: "Come, gentlemen, all, we have nothing to do but to follow the good Father here, who will take us to the money-bags. Lead on, with the Father Superior, Mr. McKenzie!"





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## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MONASTERY

The Hegoumenos was as fleshless as a hawk, and, despite his age, as light and muscular. He passed out through the front gate of the court and led the way through the woods, flitting along so rapidly that it was difficult for the others to keep up with him. He climbed the path down which the huge stone had rolled, so nearly crushing the life out of Walter and the Scot. Several times he stopped and looked up and down, saying: "Hold the lantern lower, so that my old eyes can find the mark which tells us where to turn off."

"Weadock, you were right," cried Walter gaily; "we never in the world could have found it by simply hunting. They did hide it well this time, sure enough!"

Twice the Superior mumbled, "Ah, um, yes, here it is," and left the path, striking into the deep woods. But each time, after wandering

about for a while, he stopped and stood, shaking his head, and muttering:

“Wrong, wrong, I can not find it, I am lost!”

“I fear, gentlemen, that we are being made the victims of Greek duplicity,” affirmed McKenzie at last.

“I know we are,” said Walter. “He could go as straight to that gold as a wolf to buried meat, blindfolded, if he wanted to. Well, let’s take him back to the path once more.”

They did so.

“What sort of a sign was it that marks the place where you turn off?” asked McKenzie.

“Twas a tree of peculiar shape — ah, there it is!” cried the priest brightly.

“Now we’ve found it,” said Bosanquet, translating for Walter’s benefit. “The old man is not so bad as you fellows think he is.”

“He does seem to be going straight enough this time,” assented Walter.

They all plunged into the wood after him, and, surely enough, he led them straight to a rock the size of a small dwelling house, whose precipitous face was covered with stunted brush and a great, spreading grape-vine.

“There’s a small cave in there,” said the Su-

perior, pulling the vine to one side, "and there the treasure is hid. Take it, since you must, and free us from your sacrilegious presence as soon as possible!"

McKenzie held the lantern in the mouth of the cave, and Walter, standing by his side, peered eagerly within. The others crowded about him. Weadock spoke first, his calm, measured utterance filling the breathless silence with conviction:

"There's nothing in there, absolutely nothing at all."

"Eh? eh? What is it? What is it?" said the Father Superior.

Walter strode up to him.

"You old sepulcher —" he began.

"What does he say, what is the matter, eh? eh?" repeated the Superior.

"There are no bags there, your Reverence," explained McKenzie, "as you very well know, and we shall have to hang Brother Pandelemon for good this time, and perhaps one other of your flock."

"No bags there?" The Father Superior spoke in a resigned tone. "Now God forbid! Someone then has taken the treasure,— some prowling

thief, who has no right to it at all! This is a judgment on me. Would God that I had given it to you in the first place!"

"He does it very well," said Bosanquet, who no longer doubted the old man's duplicity.

"Well, what'll we do now?" asked Walter. "He'll play with us here till help arrives, or till the monks get loose."

They were standing on a side hill, with the monastery, dimly visible in the moonlight, looming beneath them.

"He really bit at the execution play," suggested Bosanquet, "we'd better push that right home. We — hah! Oh, good Lord, what's that!" A roar shook the hills, and a burst of red light, of indescribable brightness, awoke every little twig in the forest, every pebble at the foot of the trees into sudden and vivid being. It set a thousand startled birds to twittering and flashed far over the waters of the sea. A giant jet of irresistible spouting flames leaped skyward from the rear portion of the monastery, carrying bodily with it much of the kitchen and completely wrecking the cells. In the very center of the red brush of fire, the body of Brother Pandlemon went tumbling heavenward. 'Twas as fleeting as a flash-light,

yet as vivid and lasting an impression as the photograph thus taken. In the middle of the white road leading to the water could be seen a man in islander's costume, running.

"The prophecy is fulfilled!" shrieked the Father Superior. "Oh, holy One, Mother of God, forgive us our sins and have mercy upon us!"

Dropping on his knees, with bound hands raised toward heaven, he began to pray, rapidly, volubly, beseechingly, as a frightened woman might plead for her life to an executioner.

In a hole in the ground, where the cellar had been, beams and debris were burning. The cells upon the right of the court were a heap of ruins, but having been constructed entirely of brick, they did not burst into a fierce flame.

Even as the four Anglo-Saxons stood looking, not having recovered yet from the first shock of wonder and surprise, much of the wall upon the left fell with a crash, revealing the surface of rock against which it had been built. The church alone, which sat a trifle back in a nook of solid rock, remained standing. The sound of this last crash attracted the attention of the Superior, who desisted from his frenzied praying, and fixed his keen old eyes upon the scene of the ruin below

him, now visible from the tongues of flame which played here and there among the debris, especially from the cellar. Scrambling to his feet, he started on a run for the monastery, or all that was left of it.

There was that in his manner to remind one of the bird which misleads by various subterfuges until her nest has been actually found, when she throws off all restraint and forgets everything save her distress.

"He'll be going to the treasure now," remarked McKenzie, following.

"For shame!" panted Weadock, "'tis anxiety for the Brothers." Not having free use of his hands, which are nearly as necessary in running as the feet, the Superior fell and rolled down the steep incline. McKenzie assisted him to rise, and he started on again, seemingly unconscious of the Scot's presence.

They all arrived at the scene of desolation. The front gate and the wall of the court were standing. The Hegoumenos ran through the gate and stood in the smoldering court, the light of the flames playing upon his ashen face and white beard, gazing at the face of rock upon the left, from which the monastery wall had fal-

len away. There was a small cavern there, which had evidently been closed in front by the brick wall.

In the natural chamber thus opened up, hung the very eikon which Walter had seen in the chamber of the skeleton, the oil dip before it still serenely burning. Several of the urns and other objects were also plainly visible, and—

“There are the bags,” cried Walter, “hurrah! There they are!”

It would have been quite impossible to reach them from where he stood, but in his thoughtless excitement, he started in their direction. Observing his intention, the Father Superior, still in the frenzy of the bird whose nest has been uncovered, darted into the church. McKenzie followed him, down the long aisle, past the captive monks who had dropped on their knees, and transfixed by fright, were kneeling in a row before the cathedral chairs, praying; into that part of the edifice which had taken advantage of a large dome-shaped cave (as at Mega Spelaion, and other places in Greece); through a door behind the Holy of Holies; along a dark narrow passage in the rock, to emerge at last in full view of the others, side by side with the Hegou-



menos. The latter fell weeping and mumbling beside the money-bags, covering them with his long robe as a hen does its chickens and calling them many endearing names, in a voice pitifully rich with maternal tenderness.

The Scot touched him gently upon the shoulder. He looked up as one in a dream, hugging the bags to his bosom.

"We've no time to lose," shouted Walter, "the whole town will be here in a minute."

"You're right about that," chorused Bosanquet and Weadock, and the three started on a run for the interior of the church. As the door to the passage had been left open, they found it without difficulty and were soon standing beside McKenzie and the Superior. It was very hot up there and getting hotter, as the woodwork buried beneath the brick was beginning to burn.

"Come on," said Walter, "let's get these out of here as soon as possible,"—and seizing two of the bags he started down the passage.

At that moment a shouting was heard on the edge of the wood, and the captain and his assistant appeared by the side of the road.

"Hey, hello, there!" called McKenzie, "come up here and help us." Depositing his two bags

in the church, he enlisted the aid of these auxiliaries, who had run over, as soon as they could muster the courage, to learn the cause of the terrific uproar.

"We can make it now in one trip," explained the Scot, and they were soon staggering through the woods in a line with their precious burden. As they were six in number now, Walter found that he had one hand unoccupied, and he accordingly picked up a slender and graceful Venetian vase, upon which the arms of the Polcavera family were most clearly distinguishable. But before he left, he threw back the rug from the skeleton, lying there, and said:

"Gentlemen, we will now say farewell to the remains of Giovanni - Maria - Antonio - Ossuni, Duca di Polcavera, sixth Marquis of Cogoleto. I had hoped to take these remains with us, that they might be decently interred with his family. But that is now impossible."

Laying the rug back over the poor remains of what was once a duke and a marquis, he added, "Good-by, Polyxene's grandfather. If your spirit be hovering somewhere near, as I feel that it is, I am sure that you will understand and will be satisfied with this night's work."

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Before he plunged into the wood, Walter looked back. Lights were dancing on the headland opposite the monastery island, and one, twinkling on the water, showed where a boat was coming across.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE PROPHECY FULFILLED

The Hesperinos Aster, or *Evening Star*, as the rusty little tub was called, put directly for the mouth of the moon-shaped bay of Ta Castra, by Walter's orders.

"I'm going for the real treasure, now, old man,"—Walter, fairly intoxicated with joy, explained to McKenzie. The Scot pressed his hand, but made no reply.

"The Father Superior has something to say," announced Weadock, coming up at this moment. "Wouldn't it be a good idea if we all went in to hear him?"

The old man had followed the gold on board, and into the cabin, where he sat down by the pile of money-bags gazing at them, his head in his hands.

He looked up as the four Anglo-Saxons entered, and commenced to speak immediately, in

a weary, monotonous tone. His eyes were dull now, he trembled with palsy, and his face was like that of a corpse. Weadock pulled his student's note-book from his pocket, and sitting down at a small table in the cabin, took the aged monk's story in shorthand,—an accomplishment which the young archæologist had acquired for use in the lecture-room. McKenzie translated the substance to Walter, whose impatience would not brook delay, in his characteristic whisper.

“The prophecy has been fulfilled now, and I know that you will take away the treasure,” he began. “God did not give me strength to give it up, but now that it is gone, I speak these words to absolve my soul from sin. Perhaps He will account it to my credit, for my soul's good. You will wonder at my freeing my mind to you in this way, but I see the hand of God in what has happened and the fulfilment of prophecy. I wish to confess, and right a great wrong while He still spares my life. And, indeed, I believe He has spared it, and has not destroyed me, as He did Pandelemon, that I may confess. God knows how I have prayed for strength that I might give up that treasure, but I could not, it had taken such hold of me! And the devil whispered that I was

holding it for the good of the Church, that scandal might not arise.

“It had been here so long, too! Since the year 1822, when a caique sailed up to the monastery pier one evening, just at sunset, and a man carrying a small baby in his arms was seen walking up the road to the building. He knocked at the gate and asked for the Superior, at that time the venerable Father Loudovikos. Closeted in the Superior's office, the stranger revealed his identity. He was the Duke of Polcavera, and he had escaped from the massacres of that year in the isle of Chios, with his infant son, and three servants, all the rest of his family having been murdered by the Turks. He was a man stricken with grief, who, but for the babe in his arms, would not have cared to live. He confided to the Superior that he had brought with him certain bags of treasure, which had been concealed in his house, as was the custom in those days, and he asked the Reverend Father to take charge of them till he could decide as to his future course. The Superior acceded, but suggested that the treasure be brought up after the monks had gone to bed, as he thought it best that such a dangerous secret be confided to

as few as possible. Accordingly it was brought into the monastery that night, and there it has been ever since, a hidden curse. The caique sailed away, carrying the duke's servants on some mission of inquiry, leaving himself and the little babe. Thus was the secret burden of a great crime thrust upon this sacred brotherhood; for one of the monks, through the devil's connivance, was awake and saw the bags brought into the monastery. He overheard enough to know what was in them. He saw how heavy they were, and where they were put."

The Superior's face was flushed now, his eyes were bright with a hectic light, and he was talking very rapidly.

"The devil working in him, and driving out the Holy Spirit, this monk entered the duke's room, murdered him, and, putting some of the money into a bag, attempted to escape. But his greed caused him to take a larger load than he could carry, and he was overtaken by the Superior and two of the Brothers. Crazed by the possession of gold, he fought them, and one of the Brothers in self-defense struck him with a club, causing him to die. Thus the blighting power of the gold was felt, the very first night that it was

under our roof. You can imagine the horror of good Father Loudovikos and the two Brothers. The one thing which they realized most of all was that these things must be kept from the ears of the world, lest the order, yea, the whole Christian Church, be scandalized. They dug a grave for the wicked monk and buried him there in the woods. They hid the bag of gold, to go back after it later. Then they hastened home and the Superior sent such of the monks as were about the building, out into the fields. 'Twas just day-break, now, for Loudovikos, you see, had looked into the stranger's room very early, being anxious, when he thought of the treasure, the knowledge of which and of what it would mean to a man, having kept him restless all the night."

"Is he not getting garrulous?" inquired Weadock. "We'll soon be in the harbor now."

"We must hear the whole story," hastily returned Bosanquet, "even if we have to take him to Naples."

"The gold was put out of the way, together with some other things which the duke had brought up from the caique —"

"Where was the baby all this time?" asked Weadock.



“ I do not know. The paper did not say. The dead body —”

“ The paper — what paper ? ”

“ The report of the affair was written out by Father Loudovikos, and must now be burned up, as it was in the bag containing the sacred bones of Brother Konstantinos, who passed away in 1815. Doubtless one of the monks had taken the child for the night, as I have known Brothers to be afflicted with a pitiful yearning to hear the voices of young children. The Superior called the Brothers together and bound them by a most solemn oath never to tell of the foul deed which had befallen the monastery, lest the Church be scandalized. He said naught of the treasure, but let it be understood that the murder had been committed for what money the man might have had about him. The babe was given to a family in the village and nothing was said as to its origin. The Superior hoped, when the servants of the duke returned, to induce them, being good Christians, to keep silence as to the cause of their master's death. He would give them the money and the child and ask them to sail away in God's name. But there was a terrible storm — God so willed it for his own inscrutable purpose,

and the caique was wrecked and all on board drowned. Thus," continued the Hegoumenos, with a sigh, "was the treasure left here, and the long history of its blighting influence began. The child was small, there was no way of restoring the money without revealing the secret of the monastery. Father Loudovikos lived to be a very old man, and on his death-bed prophesied in a whisper to one of the two monks who shared the secret, that when the treasure should be given up, the monastery would be destroyed.

"This same monk became his successor, and did not dare give up the money, for he wrote that there was the light of prophecy in the dying man's eyes. Ah well, what else is there? It was I who hit upon the plan of hiding the gold among the bones of the dead, that it might be in a place where none would look and where I might visit it without suspicion. It was I who set up an eikon of the blessed Virgin in the room where lay the bones of the murdered duke, and I went frequently to pray for the repose of his soul, as he was taken away without warning by one of our order. And I ever restrained Pandelemon's hand, that no further crime might be recorded against us, because of the gold. He suspected from the start that you had

found out something, and pursued me night and day, with 'Kill them, Father, kill them, or we perish and the Church will be disgraced.' But I would not."

McKenzie and Walter exchanged glances. They were thinking of that boulder which had so nearly crushed out their lives and of the treacherous boat.

"But what would you have done with us, had you secured us both?" asked the Scot.

The monk's hands closed convulsively, and a look of hard greed, a wolfish contraction, distorted his eyes.

"I—I—do not ask me," he replied with an effort. "The spell of the devil was upon me while I had the gold, and I acted as a hag-ridden man, or one who walks in an evil dream. I did not dare let myself think what I wanted you for. But I thank God that I have been rescued from utter ruin. But let me finish. The babe grew up, and at the age of forty married, and was blessed with a son, who married and became the father of a daughter, Polyxene. God has also taken care of her, and now she is soon to become the wife of a wealthy young man. And the treasure, those bags of gold, all that money — it has been with

us so many years — we have grown to love it so, we who knew of it, we — O God, have mercy on me!”

His hands had been freed for some time, and falling on his knees beside the bags, he began to pat and fondle, and coo endearing terms to them.

“That’s a sad sight,” said Walter; “I don’t like to look at it.”

He was aware of an unmanly mist in his eyes as he passed out upon the deck.

“The old man did the square thing at the last, didn’t he?” said Weadock, following him out, with the note-book in his hand.

“With this and the testimony of us all, there’ll be no difficulty in proving the young woman’s right and title. A duchess, eh? How does she look? How will she carry it off?”

“Like a queen!” cried Walter. “Duchess doesn’t half express her.”

Weadock turned away, whistling softly, and murmuring:

“Ah, so that’s it!”

At this moment the little hoisting engine began to chug feverishly and the anchor chain buzzed out.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

“I AM GLAD FOR YOUR SAKE, DEAR!”

McKenzie, who was still in the cabin, touched the priest gently upon the shoulder, saying, “It is time to go, Father.” He arose with a deep sigh and walked as far as the door, his venerable head resting upon his chest. But he did not pass out, for he seemed suddenly to be seized with something resembling hysterics.

“I will not go!” he shrieked, his thin, white hands, curved like the talons of a hawk, trembling in the air. “I can not leave it, it is so beautiful. For forty years I have communed with it and talked with it every day. I have poured it through my fingers and listened to its soft music, more moving to the soul of man than cithara or harp. It has smiled at me there in the dim cellar, with the yellow smile of the sun, or of a thousand stars, and it has whispered, ‘I am yours. I belong to him who can win and keep me. I am the genius

of the earth, and I bring power and gratification and ease and honor to those upon whom I smile. They think you are a poor monk, but we know that you are a king.' I tell you that I will not leave it; it is mine, mine!"

McKenzie and Bosanquet seized the old man's arm, and forced him, screaming and struggling, from the room. For a moment he seemed to have the power of three men, but his strength soon deserted him, and they led him, limp as a rag and whimpering, to the ladder, down which it was necessary to lift him. Walter took Bosanquet ashore with him, leaving McKenzie to guard the treasure, and save the Greek captain the temptation of sailing away with it.

Springing lightly to the shore, the moment the prow touched the sand, Walter ran swiftly up the path with the Englishman, leaving the man from the *Evening Star*, who had rowed them out, to get rid of the Father Superior as best he might. It was but a short distance from the landing to the missionary's door, yet Walter ran as though there had been miles to go and a life depended upon his speed. A thousand disturbing conjectures urged him on: perhaps Polyxene was away from the home; perchance Spiro had escaped and killed her,

in his jealous frenzy; or maybe he had carried her off. The man running down to the monastery road there in the light of the explosion, had he not been Spiro? And what had caused that terrific and destructive detonation? The wine-barrels or casks filled with cognac? And, if that running man had indeed been Spiro, what was he doing there at that time?

The reply to the last question seemed easy enough. Escaped, he had returned immediately to the monastery, to carry out his threat of revenge; to hang about the place, doubtless, waiting for an opportunity to murder his successful rival.

To take Polyxene away! What a simple and peaceable solution of the whole situation! If only nothing happened now, in these last few moments to spoil everything!

Here was the door, but what could this mean? There was a light in the front room. In thinking out his coming for Polyxene — and Walter had pictured this event a thousand times in his imagination — it had always seemed to him that if he came in the night, she would be sleeping, dreaming of him, perhaps, as she would confess afterward. He tapped at the door and Mrs. Ion opened it. She was dressed in black, her eyes red with

weeping. Even as he held out his hand to her, Polyxene appeared from another room.

"My dear husband is dead," replied Mrs. Ion to his look of inquiry. "We buried him yonder on the hillside to-day." Her lips quivered. "Alone. He did not belong to their Church, you know."

Polyxene put her arms about the older woman's neck, and tenderly patted the thin red hair, streaked with gray.

"I — I am sorry," stammered Walter. It was not much to say, but there was no doubt, as he took the woman's two hands in his, that he meant it. "I am sorry, and I don't know, under the circumstances, how I am going to tell you what I came for. Mrs. Ion, I must take Polyxene away, and she must go with me now, within the next few moments. Polyxene is a duchess and a rich woman, and I have got her whole fortune on board my steamer, here in the bay. We must get away before Spiro and his friends attack us, or before the islanders know what I have on board."

"Polyxene a duchess — a rich woman?"

"Yes; I'll explain some other time. And now," he continued in a tone in which courtesy struggled with impatience, "if you don't want to spoil her



whole life, say good-by to her, and let her come right with me, without a moment's delay."

Mrs. Ion kissed the girl and pushed her from her. Then she ran out of the room and appeared again in less than a minute with some wraps.

"Take these," she said, tumbling them into the girl's arms, "and for goodness' sake, do get away as soon as you can."

"Dear mother," said Polyxene, embracing her, "dear, dear mother."

"Now, don't hinder me," snapped Mrs. Ion not unkindly, as she disengaged herself, "for I'm coming, too. And as soon as I can sell, I'll go to America. I couldn't stay here now — now that my husband is gone. I might as well come now."

"Good!" cried Walter, "good! But please hurry."

"Oh, I'll be ready in no time. You'll see."

Nothing could have happened better suited to divert this woman's mind from her grief, which was real, than the necessity of bustling about — the necessity of haste for a genuine reason.

"Oh, by the way, we must have that trunk," said Walter, who, in the joy of standing by Polyxene and holding her hand, had nearly forgotten this important bit of evidence. Bosanquet, who

had remained on the porch, came at Walter's call and they carried out the trunk together. Mrs. Ion, now wearing a black hat and widow's veil, and carrying a large crayon portrait of her husband under her arm, locked the door, and put the key in the pocket of her dress. Polyxene picked up the heavy satchel, which the older woman had packed in time that would have done credit to a commercial traveler, and thus the procession started across the square.

"It's nearly midnight," remarked Bosanquet; "I suppose the village is all sound asleep?"

"No," replied Mrs. Ion. "They have about all gone, at least all the men folks, to see what exploded. We should have gone to bed, but we heard a loud noise and the house shook. It sounded as though it came from the direction of the monastery."

"It was the monastery," replied Walter. "I will tell you all about it as soon as we get on board. At present," he panted, for the trunk was heavy, and the path down to the sea steep, "the main thing is to get up anchor as soon as possible."

The Father Superior was walking up and down the beach, his head bowed, his hands crossed be-

hind him. He came up as Polyxene was stepping into the boat, and detaining her, said, "The Lord is giving me strength and is casting out the devils in his name. Daughter, you will soon learn of the wrong which I and those of my order have done you and yours. I shall never see you again, and I am near to death. An old man asks your forgiveness, that he may pass away in peace."

"Wrong?" murmured the fair girl; then turning to Walter: "He says he has done me a great wrong and asks me to forgive him."

"Tell him that you will; he is right, and we shall all feel better about it."

"I forgive you, Father, freely and fully from the bottom of my heart, for whatever wrong you may have done me and mine!"

"And one thing more," persisted the priest, now venerable indeed, his voice quavering with emotion, "I would be assured that you will put the wrong where it belongs, at the doors of the few weak men who have sinned, and will not think the less of the ancient and glorious Church of Christ, of which they are such unworthy members."

"This, too, I promise," said Polyxene; and then, the courtly blood of a score of Dukes of Polcavera throbbing in her veins, she lifted the with-

ered hand to her lips with reverent grace and fine courtesy.

With Polyxene and Walter steaming out of the harbor of Ta Castra, our story doubtless ends for those who have read this truthful history simply for the love story which it contains. Such can lay the book down here and be sure of the author's blessing, inasmuch as they have come with him thus far. For the benefit of the old guard, if any remain, who love to linger on a while with the characters, even after the story is told, we shall follow Walter and Polyxene down the trail of the waning moon, past the islands dreaming in its silver sheen, even perhaps to the land whose nightingales had called her from afar.

From Mrs. Ion and Polyxene, Walter learned enough to satisfy his mind as to the real cause of the explosion.

During the recent war between Greece and Turkey, a large quantity of powder and muskets had been stored in the cellar of the monastery, which building the islanders had picked out as the scene of their most desperate resistance, in case they were attacked by the murderous Turks, who spare neither women nor children when once aroused.

Spiro was the very man who brought these war-

like supplies to the monastery, with his fleet of caiques. He had been taken off from the rock where McKenzie and Walter left him, the very night of Walter's arrival with the *Evening Star*.

"He and his companions had been living on sea urchins, snails and a raw devil-fish which one of them caught. They were staggering with faintness, all except Spiro, who seemed to be upheld by anger. He was like a wild man, his cheeks sunken, his eyes glaring. He cursed constantly, and he made no reply to any question asked him. In fact, none of the men would give any explanation of how they came to be marooned. As soon as Spiro's feet touched the shore, he plunged into the woods, still cursing."

This was the story told by the sailor who brought him ashore and who came directly to Polyxene's house with the news.

"Yes," added Walter, after Polyxene had finished, "and he came directly to the monastery. He dashed through the court while we were out in the woods with the Superior, and lighted the fire which caused the explosion. That's just what he did, for he thought we were sleeping there, and he was so maddened by jealousy and rage that he didn't care whom else he blew up, so that he made

sure of me. I — I can understand how it would make a man crazy to lose you, dear."

Polyxene shuddered and laid her head upon Walter's shoulder.

"God saved you for me," she whispered. And later she asked:

"Won't your people find me ignorant and — and queer? I have scarcely any education at all, and I don't know the ways and manners of the world, of your world, my heart."

"You know quite enough of the world," replied Walter fondly, "and as for manners, you possess the grace and dignity of a queen. I have seen society women in plenty, and I shall be proud of you anywhere."

"If you are not ashamed of me, I shall be content, and as for my education, you will see how I shall study, how fast I shall learn!"

Mrs. Ion stood leaning against the rail looking toward the island where she had passed so many years. She could see nothing of it now, save a light twinkling here and there. She thought of a lonely grave on the hillside, where lay the body of the kindly old man whom she had followed to this remote corner of the world, and she wept silently. She was going back to America, and she was

bristling with energy and courage, but something told her that she would never see Andros, nor that new-made grave again, and she had loved him.

But a ship is naught more than a miniature world, and ever in the world youth and its transports take but little note of sorrow. Walter brought Polyxene into the cabin and, opening two or three of the bags, said :

"Look, sweetheart, all this is yours."

"Then it is yours," she replied, "for all that I am and have belongs to you." The gold did not impress her as he had expected, but when he took out the coronet of the Dukes of Polcavera, whose gems burned fiercely in the light of the candles, and set it upon her brow, woman-like, she turned and looked long in the mirror over the sideboard. Her eyes flashed proudly as they gazed on his again, but she came straight up to him and holding out her hands, said with tears of joy in her voice :

"I am glad for your sake, dear! Always remember," she added, speaking low and with her lips dangerously close, "that I am only a duchess, and that you are my king!"

And now we shall step from the deck of the

*Evening Star* to that of the elegant and commodious *Argolis*, floating at anchor in the harbor of Piræus. Let us descend to the smoking-room, where sit together in evening dress, talking, three men. One is advanced in years, but energetic and shrewd; he pulls continuously at a philanthropic side whisker as he converses. The other members of the trio are Walter Lythgoe, his nephew, and Ian McKenzie, archæologist and dreamer. The last mentioned, despite his lank, ungainly form and shaggy head, seems entirely at home in evening dress.

“They may laugh at us,” continued Erasmus Lythgoe, “and call it the Baking-Powder University, but I see no reason why we should not do good with our surplus money, just as well as though it came from oil, pork, pickles or whisky. Van Inwigen and I have concluded to found a university, and in talking with experts on the subject, we find that we need, besides buildings and professors, a library and a museum. Now, I learn that Mrs. Cranston, angel of the Wheelan-Cranston University, out west, has kept a man in Europe several years, buying up statuary and vases and — and things for their university. She gave him two thousand a year and expenses. Now it



seems to me, Walter, that our friend McKenzie here is just the man to do that for us."

"By Jove," cried Walter, leaping to his feet, "it seems so to me, too. Capital! capital! You couldn't duplicate him, if you were to hunt all over Europe."

"Of course," concluded the elder Lythgoe, "when he finishes that job we could find a place for him in the college. That is to say, his connection with the institution would be permanent. May we hope that you will give us the — ah — benefit of your talents, Doctor?"

McKenzie nodded solemnly, by way of assent, but for some reason or other did not trust himself to speak.

"And how soon do you think you could begin?"

The Scot, leaning forward with shining eyes while a vivid blush flooded the roots of his beard, whispered:

"Just as soon as I can make a trip to Santorine. 'Twill not take me over a week." And Walter, seizing one of the great shaggy hands in both of his own, pressed it affectionately.

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