

**EDWARD
BENSON**

THE CAPSINA,
AN HISTORICAL
NOVEL

Edward Benson

The Capsina. An Historical Novel

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The Capsina An Historical Novel

CHAPTER I

The little town of Hydra, white-walled and trailing its skirts in the Ægean, climbs steeply up the northeastern side of the island from which it is named, and looks towards the hills of Argolis on the mainland and the setting of the sun. Its harbor sheltered from the northern and southern winds, and only open towards the west, where the sea is too narrow ever to be lashed into fury by gales of that quarter, was defended in the year 1819 by a very creditable pier and a good deal of swift and rakish shipping. The inhabitants lived a life somewhat sequestered from their oppressed and down-trodden countrymen, supporting themselves by enterprises of fishing and the humble sort of commerce, and the hand of the Turk, then as now lustful, cruel, and intolerable, lay but lightly on them, for the chief products of the island itself were only stones and cold water, untaxable goods. But something of the spirit of stones and cold water, something of the spirit, too, of that quickly roused sea, soon made furious, soon appeased, but always alive, had gone to the making of the men of Hydra; and they were people frugal and hardy, resourceful and industrious, men of the wave and the mountain. Of its various clans – and its regime was highly feudal – that of Capsas was the wealthiest and most influential; but just now, a tragic prologue to this tale, a blow so direful had fallen on those much-esteemed men, and in particular on Christos Capsas, a youth of about two and twenty, that the clan generally, and Christos in particular, were in a state of paralyzed inaction strange to such busy folk. It had happened thus:

The head of the clan, Nicholas Capsas, had died some nine months before, leaving an only daughter, Sophia, henceforth officially called the Capsina, just nineteen years of age. The clan all remembered that they had warned each other that trouble would come on account of the Capsina, and they found to their unspeakable dismay, and without a grain of pleasure in the fulfilment of their prophecy, that their gloomy forebodings were completely accomplished. Sophia was a girl of much greater force of will than it was at all usual to look for in a woman, for the most refractory women, so the clan believed, chattered and scolded, but obeyed. The Capsina had struck out a new and eminently disconcerting line in following her own desires in silence, deaf to remonstrance. The beginning of trouble had been a very stormy scene between her and her father when, following the invariable law of clan etiquette, she had been betrothed on her eighteenth birthday to her cousin Christos, on whom now so paralyzing a consternation had fallen. She had submitted to the ordeal of formal betrothal only on condition that she should marry Christos when she thought fit, and at no other time. Such an irregularity was wholly unprecedented, but Sophia declared herself not only ready, but even wishful to throw the betrothal wreaths into the fire sooner than marry Christos at any time not fixed by herself, and the ceremony took place only on this understanding. Three months later her father had died suddenly, and when Christos on this morning, one tremble of timorousness, but conscious of the support of the entire clan, went to the Capsina, offering his hand and heart, to be taken by her with the greatest expedition that mourning allowed, she looked him over slowly from head to heel and back again, and said, very distinctly, "Look in the glass." This her betrothed had rightly interpreted as a sign of dismissal.

Sophia, after hurling this defiance at her family, gave Christos time to retreat, and then went about her daily business. Her mother had died some years before, and since her father's death she had had sole management of the house and of all his business, which was ship-building. But she had been accustomed from the time she could walk to be in and out of the building-yards with him, and the outraged clan, even in the unequalled bitterness of this moment, would have confessed that she was

quite capable of managing anything. She was tall and finely made, and the sun had joined hands with the winds of the sea to mould her face with the lines of beauty and serene health. Her eyes and hair were of the South, her brow and nose of her untainted race, her mouth firm and fine. She watched Christos out of the gate with all the complete indifference her great black eyes could hold, and then set off down to the ship-yard where a new brig was to be launched that day.

There she stood all morning among the workmen, bareheaded to the sun and wind, directing, and often helping with her own strong hands, and though it would have seemed that she had her eyes and all her mind at the work, she yet found time to glance through the open gate on to the pier, where she could see a talking knot of her clan gathered round the rejected Christos; and, in fact, her mind was more given over to the difficult question of what step she should next take with regard to the question of marriage than to the work on hand. For, indeed, she had no intention of marrying Christos at all. Since her father's death her work and position had become more and more absorbingly dear, and she did not propose to resign her place to a somewhat slow-minded cousin, whom, as she had candidly declared on her betrothal, she loved only as much as is usual among cousins. The question was how to make this indubitably evident.

The ship was to be launched about mid-day, and, as the time drew near, Sophia began to wonder to herself, not without a spice of amusement, whether the clan would think it consistent with the correct attitude of disapproval to attend the launching to which they were as a matter of course invited. After the barrel of wine, in which the success of the new ship would be drunk, had been hoisted on deck, she even delayed the event a few minutes to give them time if they wished still to come. But it was evident that she had offended beyond forgiveness, and she stood alone on the ship when she hissed stern foremost, true to an inch, into the frothed water. Sophia, ever candid, was not at heart ill-pleased at the absence of the clan, for as she was godmother so also she was peculiarly mother to the new ship, departing therein from certain formulated rules as to the line of the bows and the depth of the keel, which, so she thought, if made deeper would enable her to sail closer to the wind, and she loved her great child more than she loved her betrothed. She had even, which was unusual with her, spent several intent and sleepless hours in bed at night when the ship was yet on the stocks, her mind busy at the innovations. Surely the ships that others built were too high in the water, especially forward; a sudden squall always made them sheer off into the wind, losing way without need. A less surface in the bows was possible. Again, a longer depth of keel would give more grip on the water and greater stability, and it was with much tremulous hope and frequent misgivings lest this new departure should involve some vital and unforeseen error that she had laid down the lines of the ship in a manner perfectly new to the shipwrights of the island.

And as the building progressed and the timbers of the hull rose to their swifter shape, her hopes triumphed over misgiving, and she felt that this new ship was peculiarly hers – hers by the irresistible right of creation, not shared with any.

She stayed on board till a late hour that evening, seeing to the hoisting of the tackle by which the masts should be raised the next day, absorbed in the work, and dwelling with a loving care on the further details, and it was nearly dark, and the workmen had gone ashore an hour already when she rowed herself back to the yard. Not till then did her mind return to the less enticing topic of Christos, which she had left undetermined, and she walked home slowly, revolving the possibilities. Her great, stately watch-dog, a terror to strangers, and not more than doubtfully neutral to friends, received her with the silent greeting of a wet nose pushed into her hand, and when she had eaten her supper, the two went out on to the veranda. That was the companionship she liked best, silent, unobtrusive, but sensitive, and she took the great brute's fore-paws and laid them on her lap, and talked to him as a child talks to its doll.

"Oh, Michael," she said – the adoption of a saint's name to an animal so profane had greatly shocked the clan, but the Capsina remarked that he was a better Christian than some she knew – "oh, Michael, it is an impossible thing they would have me do. Am I to cook the dinner for Christos,

and every evening see his face grow all red and shiny with wine, while he bids me fetch more? Am I to talk with the other women as sparrows twitter together in a bush? Am I to say I love him? Oh, Michael, I would sooner stroke your hair than his. Then what of the cousins? They will call me an old maid, for many cousins younger than I are married. But this I promise you, great dog, that unless I love I will not marry, and what love is, God knows, for I do not. And if ever I love, Michael – yes, they say I am fierce, and of no maiden mind. So be it; we will sail together in the brig *Sophia*, for so will I name her – you and I and she. And if some one, I know not who, comes from the sea, all sea and sun, some one not familiar, but strange to me and stronger than I, you shall be his, and the ship shall be his, and I shall be his, all of us, all of us; and we all, he and I and you and the ship, will go straight up to heaven."

She laughed softly at herself, and buried her face in the dog's shaggy ruff. "Oh, Michael," she whispered, "the cousins are all saying how queer a girl I am. So perhaps am I, but not as they think. I should be the queerer if I married Christos, and yet to their minds my queerness is that I do not. Why did you not bite him when he came here this morning? for so he would have run away, and this thinking would have been saved. Yet you were right, he is a familiar thing, and we do not bite what is familiar. Perhaps, when the strange man comes, I shall hate him, although I do nothing else but love him. Yet, oh, I am proud, for we are prouder, as the proverb says, than the Mavromichales of Maina. But, Christos, he is slower than a tortoise, and less amusing than a mule; oh, well enough no doubt for some, but not for me. Perhaps I shall marry none; that is very likely, for the men I see here, for instance, are not fit things to marry, and so, I make no doubt, they think me. And there is always the ship-building. Oh, we will get very wise, Michael, and sail our ship ourselves, and see strange countries and over-sea people. There must be some one in this big world as well as I, and yet I have not seen him, but we will do nothing without thinking, Michael, unless it so happens that some day we no longer want or are able to think. Perhaps that – there, get down, you are heavy."

She pushed the dog's paws off her lap, and, rising from her chair, went to the end of the veranda to look out upon the night. The full moon swung high and white among the company of stars, and the sea was all a shimmer of pearly light. A swell was rolling in soft and huge from the south, and the end of the pier was now and again outlined with broken foam. Beneath the moonlight the massive seas looked only a succession of waving light and shadow, and the rattle of the pebbles on the shingly beach outside the pier in the drag of the swell came rhythmical and muffled. The Capsina, in the unrest and ferment of her thoughts, was unwittingly drawn towards that vastness of eternal and majestic movement, and slipping her embroidered Rhodian hood over her head, she whistled softly to Michael, and went down through the strip of garden towards the shore.

She passed along the quay and out beyond the harbor; all the wandering scents of a night in early summer were in the air, and the rough strip of untrained moorland which lay beyond the town was covered with flowering thyme and aromatic herbs, rooty and fragrant to the nostrils. She walked quickly across this and came down to the shingly beach which fringed the promontory. All along its edge the swell was breaking in crash and flying foam, for the south wind of the day before had raised a storm out to sea, and several ships had that day put in for shelter. Far out she could see a pillar of spray rise high and disappear again over a reef of rock, gleaming for a moment with incredible whiteness in the moonlight. Michael snuffed about in rapturous pursuit of interesting smells among the edge of rough herbs that fringed the beach, making sudden excursions and flank movements inland, and grubbing ecstatically among the tussocks of cistus and white heath after wholly imaginary hares. By degrees Sophia walked more slowly, and, coming to the end of the promontory, stopped for a moment before she began to retrace her steps. No, she could not marry Christos; she could not cut herself off from the thrill that her large independence gave her, from working for herself, from the headship of the clan. For her she thought was a wider life than that of the women of her race. How could she limit herself, with her young, strong body, and the will which moved it, to the distaff and the spinning-wheel? Christos! He was afraid of Michael, he was afraid of the sea, he was afraid

of her. But how to make this clear to demonstration to the clan was beyond her. Moreover – and the thought was like a stinging insect – there lay at home the deed of her betrothal to her cousin.

She whistled to Michael and turned back into the town. Several groups of men were scattered along the length of the quay, and the Capsina, walking swiftly by, saw that Christos was among them. She hung on her step a moment, and then, with a sudden idea, turned round and called to him.

"Christos Capsas," she said, "I would speak to you a moment. Yes, it is I, Sophia."

Christos disengaged himself from the group a little reluctantly and followed her. He was a somewhat handsome-looking fellow, but rather heavily made, and slow and slouching in his movements. The Capsina, seeming by his side doubly alert, walked on with him in silence for a space, and then stopped again.

"See, Christos," she said, "I have no wish to offend you or any. If what I said this morning was an offence to you, please know that to me now my words were an offence. Yet I will not marry you," and on the word she suddenly flared out – "oh! be very sure of that! And I have something to say to the clan. Be good enough to tell them that I expect all the men to dinner with me to-morrow, when I will speak to them. You will come yourself. Yes? Let me know how many will be there to-morrow early. Good-night, my cousin. Michael, be quiet, and come with me."

The clan signified their intention of accepting the Capsina's invitation in large numbers, for they too felt that their family affairs must come to a crisis, and that something explicit was needed. The Capsina, they were sure, would supply this need. As the day was warm, she gave orders that the dinner should be served in the veranda, and that the barrel of wine which had been put on board the brig should be brought back, for it was her best. All morning she attended to the things for their entertainment, first going to the market to buy the best of the freshly caught mullet and a lump of caviare, wrapped up in vine leaves, and choosing with care a lamb to be roasted whole over the great open fireplace; then, returning to see that the *pilaff* of chicken was properly seasoned, that the olives were dried and put in fresh oil, and herself mixing the salad, flavoring it with mint and a sprinkling of cheese and garlic. After that the rose-leaf jam had to be whipped up with cream and raw eggs for the sweets, and another pot to be opened to be offered to the guests, with glasses of cognac as an appetizer; cheese had to be fetched from the cellar, and dried figs and oranges from the store cupboard. Then Michael, to whom the hot smells were a tremulous joy, must be chained up, and in the midst of these things there arrived a notary from the town, who, at Sophia's dictation, for she had but little skill at writing herself, drew up a deed and explained to her where the witnesses should sign or make their mark. By this time it was within an hour of dinner, and she went to her room to dress, and think over what she was going to say.

Sophia had an inbred instinct for completeness, and she determined on this occasion to make herself magnificent. She took from their paper-wrappings her three *fête* dresses, one of which had never been worn, and looked them over carefully before deciding between them. Eventually she fixed on the new one. This consisted of three garments, a body, a skirt, and a long sleeveless jacket reaching to the knees. The body was made of fine home-spun wool buttoning down the side, but the whole of the front was a piece of silk Rhodian embroidery in red, green, and gold, and a narrow strip of the same went round the wrists. The skirt was of the same material, but there was stitched over it a covering of thin Greek silk, creamy-white in color, and round the bottom of the skirt ran a trimming of the same Rhodian stuff. Before putting the jacket on she opened a box that stood by her bed, and took from it four necklaces of Venetian gold sequins, one short and coming round the neck like a collar, and the other three of increasing size, the largest hanging down almost as far as her waist. Then she put on the jacket, which, like the other garments, was bordered with embroidery, and draping her hair in an orange-colored scarf of Greek silk, she fastened it with another band of Venetian gold coins, which passed twice round her head. Then, hesitating a moment, she went back to the box where her gold ornaments were kept, and drew out the great heirloom of her clan, and held it in her hand a moment. It was a belt of antique gold chain, more than an inch in width, each link being set with two

pearls. The clasp was of two gold circles, with a hook behind, and on each of them was chased the lion of Venice. Scroll-work of leaves and branches, on which sat curious archaic eagles, ran round it, and eight large emeralds were set in each rim. Sophia looked at it doubtfully for a moment or two, and then fastened it round her waist, inside her jacket, so as to hide the joining of the body and skirt.

Her guests soon began to arrive, the first of them being Christos, the father of her betrothed, with his son. The old man had determined to be exceedingly dignified and cold to Sophia, and as a mark of his disapproval had not put on his *fešta* clothes. But the sight of that glorious figure, all color, walking out from the shade of the veranda into the brilliant sunlight to meet them, took, as he said afterwards, "all the pith" out of him.

Sophia received him with a sort of regal dignity as befitted the head of the clan: "You are most welcome, Uncle Christos," she said, "and you also, cousin. I was sorry that your business prevented your being able to come to the launching of the new boat, but perhaps you will like to see her after dinner."

Uncle Christos shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

"I had no idea you would be so grand, Sophia," he said, "and I have come in my old clothes. Christos, too, you slovenly fellow, your shirt is no fresh thing."

The younger Christos's *fustanella* was as a matter of fact quite clean, but he smoothed it down as if ashamed of it.

"But, Sophia," went on the old man, "they will not be all here yet. I will run to my house and be back in a moment," and he fairly bolted out of the garden.

Christos and Sophia were thus left alone, but Sophia was quite equal to the occasion, and spoke resolutely of indifferent things until the others arrived. By degrees they all came, the elder Christos the last, but in the magnificence of all his best clothes, and they sat down to dinner. And when they had finished eating and the pipes were produced, Sophia rose from her place at the head of the table and spoke to them that which she had in her mind.

"It is not my wish," she said, "to hurt the feelings of any one, but I will not violate my own. As you perhaps have heard" – and the slightest shadow of a smile passed over her face, for she knew that nothing else had been spoken of for the last four-and-twenty hours – "my cousin Christos has asked me to fulfil my betrothal to him, and I wish to make my answer known to you all. You understand me, then: I will not marry my cousin, either now or at any other time. I have here" – and she took up from the table the deed of the betrothal – "I have here that which is witness of my betrothal to Christos Capsas. With the approval of my family and clan I will tear it up and burn it. If there is any one here who objects to this, let him say so, and I will tell you what I shall then do. Without his approval, and without the approval of any one else, I shall send to the town for the notary, procure witnesses, and sign my name to this other deed. I am no hand with the pen, but so much I can write. In it I bequeath all my property, to which I am sole heiress – for my father, as you know, died without a will, suddenly – not to my clan, nor to any one of my clan, but to the priests."

A subdued murmur of consternation ran round the table, and the elder Christos called gently on the names of five or six saints, for the clan were not on good terms with the church, and the Capsina herself had threatened to loose Michael on the first priest who set foot uninvited in her house. A paralyzed silence succeeded, and Sophia continued her speech.

"See," she said, "I am perfectly in earnest. We are prouder, as our proverb says, than they of Maina, and, being proud, I for one do not threaten things which I am unable or unwilling to perform. Perhaps marriage seems to me a different thing from what it seems to you. But that is no reason that I am wrong or that you are right. My betrothed I believe to be an admirable man, but I am so made that I do not choose to marry him, nor, at present, any other man. And now the choice is with you. I destroy in your presence and with your consent both these papers, or I will sign in your presence and without your consent that which only needs my signature. I will leave you here for half an hour, and when I return, Christos Capsas, the father of Christos, my betrothed, will tell me what you have

decided. Uncle Christos, you will please take my place here and tell the servants to bring you more wine when you want it. You will find the white wine also very good, I think."

And with these paralyzing words the Capsina dropped her eyes, bowed with a wonderful dignity and grace to the clan, who rose to their feet despite themselves at the beauty of the girl, and marched into the house.

At the end of half an hour she returned, and standing a moment in her place turned to the elder Christos.

"You have decided," she said, and taking up the two deeds in answer to a nod from her uncle, she tore them across and across. Then she gave the pieces to a servant.

"Burn them," she said, "there, out in the garden, where we can all see."

Certainly the Capsina had a sense for the dramatic moment, for she stood quite still where she was in dead silence until a puff of wind dispersed the feathers of the ash. Then she turned briskly and filled her glass.

"I drink prosperity to him who was betrothed to me," she said, "and wish him with all my heart a better wife than I should ever have made him. And here," she cried, unbuckling the great gold belt, "take your wife to-morrow, if you will, or when you will, and here is my gift to the bride."

And she handed the gorgeous thing across to her cousin, clinked glasses with him, and, draining her own, flung it to the ground, so that none other should drink from it.

Then sitting down again:

"This is a fortunate day for you, Christos, if only you knew it, and for you all. For here am I, a free woman, who knows her trade, and will give all her time and energy to it, and indeed I am not lazy, and so double the riches of the house, instead of sitting at the distaff and picking up the olives. For, in truth, I do not think that I am of the stuff that wives are made of. You have often told me, uncle, that I should have been a man, and, before God, I think you were right. And you, dear Christos, some day I should have tried your patience beyond all bearing, and you would have raised your hand to strike me, and then, perhaps, you would have felt my fists rattling about your face, or maybe, if I really was angry, for I do not think I could take a blow from any man, I should have set Michael at you. And then, if you were wise, you would have run away, for I think Michael would kill whomever I told him to kill, for he is greatly obedient, and a fine thing it would have been for the folk to see the head of the clan running from a four-legged dog, while his wife hished the beast on from the threshold."

A roar of laughter greeted this, and Sophia looked up, smiling herself. "So we are friends again, are we not?" she said; "and we will never again give others cause to say that they of the clan are of two minds among themselves. And now, cousins, if you have smoked and drunk what you will, let us go down and see the new brig, for indeed I think she will have no luck unless you all come. To-morrow the masts are hoisted; this morning I have had no time to attend to my business."

The brig was duly inspected, and though some of the elder men shook their heads over this new-fangled keel, and the somewhat egoish name of *Sophia* for the Capsina's ship, the general verdict was satisfactory. To celebrate this day of her emancipation she let all the workmen go home, giving them half a day off work, and returned alone to her house towards evening. She went at once to loose Michael from his unaccustomed confinement, and stood for a moment with her hand on the dog's neck.

"Michael," she whispered, "does it not seem to you that Christos desired the money more than he desired me? Yet, perhaps, it was the others who urged him, for, in truth, he looked a little downcast. But that a man should consent to that! Well, I am too happy to-day to find fault with any one."

For that year and the next Sophia worked with unintermittent energy in her ship-yard. Sometimes it seemed to herself that a kind of frenzy for ships and the sea had possession of her, and, busy with open-air thought, she never even noticed the glances which men cast on her. Her fame, the stories of her wonderful knowledge of ships, her fiery beauty, her utter unconsciousness of men, had passed beyond the island, and sailors who had put in at Hydra would wait about on the quay to

catch a glimpse of her, or speak to her, for she would always have a word for sailors. She was not content to know that her ships were truly built and seaworthy, but she cruised about, mastering the individuality of each; for, as she said, a ship, like a horse, would obey one master when it would not obey another, and her own brig, the *Sophia*, turned out a miracle of speed, and could sail, it seemed as by magic, into the teeth of a gale. She commanded it herself, directing its course with an apparent recklessness, really the result of knowledge, through the narrow channels and swirling currents of the close-sown islands, through passages where rocks were ranged like a shark's teeth, row on hungry row, and the green water poured over them with the speed of an autumn gale, or beating about, close-hauled, past the reef of wolves which lie waiting off Methana. Sometimes she would charter herself to a merchant, and carry trading produce as far as the Asiatic coast, or to Alexandria; but for the most part she seemed possessed merely by the desire for the sea, an instinct of her race, but coming to flavor in her, for the fierce battling of skill calculated against the brute force of the incalculable elements, for the hundred tactics which nothing but practical intimacy can teach. To her clan she became a sort of cult, the more so as she had left all her property, if she died unmarried, to Christos, who, in point of fact, took to himself a wife within six months of the final rejection.

In 1821, when she was now near the end of her twenty-first year – alert for adventure – came the stinging news of the outbreak of the revolution.

To Hydra, that small and frugal island, tales of Turkish cruelty, greed, and lust, and the inchoate schemes of vengeance, had come only as echoes vague and remote, and the news of the outbreak was like the bolt out of the clear sky. For the Turks had formed a sufficiently accurate conception of the character of those dour islanders, and while there were women, and to spare, in the other places, and it seemed that on the mainland, peopled, so they considered, with richer and softer folk, taxation might be indefinitely increased, it was not for a fattened pasha to procure with trouble and fighting what an indolent order given over his pipe could bring him. Sophia, on the eve of her return from a prolonged and prosperous cruise, interviewed the captain of a caique who had put in with the news of the taking of Kalamata, and heard a tale to make the blood bubble and boil – how the rising had run like fire through summer-dry stubble from north to south and east to west, how that Greece was to be free, and pull no longer under an infidel yoke. Tale followed tale; the man had seen with his own eyes free-born Greeks, man, woman, and child, treated as an unmerciful master will not treat his beast; he had tales of torture, followed at the last by death, lingering and painful, but welcome as the end of pain – of things unnatural and bestial beyond word or belief. There had been a cousin of his living near Nauplia. He had come back from the fields one day to find his wife dead and abominably mutilated on the threshold; his two daughters had been carried off – with them his two younger sons; the elder lay stifled by his mother. They had – And Kanaris stopped, for the thing could not be told. It was on the quay, within half an hour of her landing, that the Capsina heard the first news, and in her brusque way she whisked the man up to her house and gave him wine and tobacco, and listened while he talked. Others of the clan were there to welcome her, and stayed to hear, old Christos among them, and the tales were stopped and pointed with exclamations of fierce horror and curses on the Turk. Sophia sat in dead silence, but her eyes were black flames, and more than once her lip trembled at some story of hideous outrage on women and children. She only asked one question – "They are Greeks, to whom the devils do such things?" And on the answer, "And we too are Greeks," she said, and her hand clinched.

Her foreman had been waiting for orders as to the unloading of the brig, and when the tales were over, she sent for him.

"Begin the unloading now, at once," she said, "and let the work go on all night. Oh, man, are you a stuffed bird, that you stare so at me? Do you not understand the tongue of your fathers, or shall I speak Turkish? I will be down there in an hour. Unload at once." Then turning to the captain of the caique, "You will sup with me," she said, "and you too, Christos. By-the-way, what is your name?"

"Constantine Kanaris."

"That is a good sea-name. Do you hate the Turk, and can you handle a boat?"

"The one as thoroughly as the other."

"I offer you a birth in the *Sophia*, directly under me. I command my own ship."

"And I, too," said Kanaris, "as my father and grandfather have done before me."

"You accept the post?"

Kanaris looked rather bewildered.

"Capsina," he said, "you are one of few words, and so am I when work is to be done. I have told you of Nicholas Vidalis, who is among the first movers of this revolution. Him I have promised to serve, in the cause of the war. I cannot go back from that."

The Capsina frowned, and struck the table impatiently.

"Do you not understand?" she said – "that his work is my work? Oh, Uncle Christos! what is the matter with you? Has the sky fallen, or do you hear the trumpet of the archangel? God in heaven! for the present there is no more trading for me. Do you not see that there must be a fleet, or these devils will keep on sending more arms and armies into the country? Are you a Greek, man – are you anything but a fiend from the pit, that you can wonder at me, when you hear how they treat other clans, free-born and scornful as ourselves, like slaves and beasts? That I should be busy like a mule carrying silk stuff, when such things are going on! There must be a fleet, I tell you, and the *Sophia* is the first ship of that fleet. By God! but I have found my work at last! It was not for nothing that I have built ships, and learned how to sail them, and take them where the devil himself would be afraid to trust to his luck. Now quick," she said to Kanaris – "do you take this berth or not? I want a man something like you, who hates and works and is silent. You will suit me, I think."

"Our purpose is war on the Turk and no other purpose?" asked Kanaris.

"That is better," said the Capsina – "we are getting to business. Yes, only war on the Turk. War? Extermination, rather, for that is the only business of Christians with regard to them. And you shall be no loser, if we prosper; and if we do not prosper, I pay you still the wage of the captain of a brig."

Kanaris flushed.

"Why do you say that?" he asked. "Is it for that that Nicholas – God be thanked for him! – and those like him serve?"

"I was wrong," said Sophia, "but you were a stranger to me till this moment, but you are no stranger now. You will come?"

"I will come," he said.

With that they fell to supper, and when supper was over Sophia and Kanaris went down to the harbor. The brig was lying close in unlading, and returning boats were passing to and fro from it to the shore. Two great resin flares on the deck showed them a crowd of men working at the crane by which the freight was conveyed from the hold and swung over the side to the barges that received it. The cargo was of silk from the Syrian coast and was for Athens and Salonica; but the foreman, in blind obedience to Sophia's instructions, was unloading it and storing it in her shed on the quay. They found him there when they got down, and she nodded approvingly when she saw what progress the work had made.

"Have we another ship in?" she asked.

"Yes, the *Hydra*, but she is due to sail to-morrow to Syria," said he.

The Capsina stood for a moment thinking.

"May the Virgin look to Syria!" she said. Then, "What is your caique doing?" she asked Kanaris.

"Picking up chance jobs."

"Here is one then, and Syria is all right. Will you undertake to deliver the silk to Athens and Salonica?"

"Before what date?"

"This day three weeks. My men shall do the freighting for you, and you can sail to-morrow night. You will carry it easily; it is only a quarter of the *Sophia's* cargo, for we have discharged at Crete and Melos. Also it is the season of south winds."

The matter was soon arranged, and the two went on board the *Sophia*, that Kanaris might see the ship. To him, as to the Hydriots, the build of the vessel was new, but she had acquitted herself too well on her previous cruises to allow of any doubt as to the success of what had been an experiment, and Kanaris, who had more than once been on board English and French cruisers and men-of-war, talked with Sophia as to the guns she should carry. They could obtain these, he told her, at Spetzas, where the revolutionists had formed a secret arsenal. It would be better, he suggested, to delay any alteration in the bulwarks and disposition of the ship till they saw what guns were to be got.

At the end of an hour or so they went on shore again, Kanaris to his caique, Sophia back to her house. The night was still and windless, and from her room she could see the flares on the *Sophia* burning upright and steady in the calm air, and the rattle of the gear of the crane was audible. She felt as if her life had suddenly burst into blossom, and the blossom thereof was red.

CHAPTER II

Next day came news that Spetzias had openly joined the insurrection, and two proselytizing brigs put into Hydra, to try to raise, if not more ships, at any rate recruits. They both carried the new Greek ensign, white and blue, and bearing the cross of Greece risen above the crescent of Turkey. The tidings that the Capsina was going to join the revolutionists with her ship had already spread through the town, and when next morning she went down to the quay to speak with the captains of the Spetziot vessels, she was like the queen bee to the swarm, and the people followed her, cheering wildly. Their voices were music and wine to her, and the thrill of exultation which belongs to acts of leadership was hers.

Fierce and fine too was the news from Spetzias: the people had risen, and after an immense meeting held on the quay had chosen a commander, and broken open the treasury in which was kept the annual tribute to the Ottoman government. The taxes had just been got in, and the treasury was full. With this money eight brigs were being armed and manned, and would set sail to Melos, at which island, as they knew, were several Ottoman vessels making their annual cruise of conscription for raising sailors. In such manner was the vintage of the sea to begin.

Round the Capsina and the Spetziot captains the crowd surged thickest. One of these, Kostas Myrrides, had a certain loud and straight-hitting gift of oratory, and the crowd gathered and swayed, and hung on his words. There had been erected for him a sort of rude dais made of a board placed upon two barrels, and from there he spoke to the people.

"The wine is drawn!" he cried; "to the feast then! Yet indeed there is no choice. Greece is up in arms, and before long the armies and fleets of the infidels will be on us. What will it profit you to stay still and watch? Do you think that the Turks will sit in justice and examine whether this man is an insurgent and the other is not? Is that their way of dealing? The justice of the Turk! You have heard the proverb and know what that means. The fire of war leaps from cape to cape and mountain to mountain. Kindle it here. Already has one of you, and that a woman whose name will not be forgotten, thrown in her lot with a glorious cause – Greece, the freedom of Greece!"

The shout rose and broke in waves of sound, only to swell and tower afresh when the speaker unfurled the new-blazoned flag, and waved it above them. Truly, if the Turkish ship of conscription had come in sight, there would have been short shrift for those on board.

The government of Hydra was in the hands of twelve primates, who were responsible to the Ottoman government for the annual tribute in specie (in itself but small), and also for the equipment and wages of two hundred and fifty able-bodied seamen yearly to the Ottoman fleet. To raise this more considerable sum a tax of five per cent. was levied on the income of every man in the island. Now the ship-owners were more than the bulk of the tax-payers, and it was clearer than a summer noonday that if they joined the revolutionists, unless the island revolution became general, or their ships met with immediate success, the Ottoman fleet would descend on the Hydra, and the Shadow of God would have a word for the primates, and a rope. Thus it came about that while the uproar was still growing and fermenting on the quay, the primates met together, and found grave faces. The Capsina, they considered, was primarily responsible for this consternating stroke, but to try to guide the Capsina back into the paths of peace, they feared, was like attempting to lead the moon with a string, and to quarrel with her was to quarrel with the clan, to whom she was as a god, eccentric, perhaps, but certainly unquestionable. The responsibility of debate, however, was not granted them, for before they could devise any check on the Capsina, a new and tremendous burst of cheering caused the president, Father Jakomaki Tombazes, to rise and go to the window. Three vessels were leaving the port, two being the Spetziot vessels, with the Greek flag blazoning its splendor to heaven, and as for the other, there was no mistaking the build of the *Sophia*. Tombazes gasped, then returned to the others.

"The Capsina has gone," he said. "And, by the Virgin," cried he, rising to the heroic level of the event, and striking the table with his fist, "she is a brave lass, and Hydra should be proud of her!"

This straightforward statement of the duty of Hydriots was not less abhorrent to the assembled primates. The Capsina had gone, the clan were shouting themselves hoarse on the beach, and, where an action of the Capsina was concerned, it was not less idle to argue with the clan than to employ rhetoric to a mad bull. The only courses open were to fly for safety to the mainland, join the revolutionists, or employ coercive measures with the rest, whereby they should not do so. Now the tax-collectors were necessarily of their party, for the necks of all the officials under the Turkish rule were, so to speak, in one noose, and there were also a number of old, sedately minded or retired men who would distinctly prefer to live out their lives in inglorious peace, unless matters were already in the fire, than to burn squibs, for in so small regard did the primates hold the revolution, under the very nose of the Shadow of God. But, look at it as they might, they were bound to confess that a sorrier party had never been got together. Even Tombazes, by his remark about the duty of Hydra, showed he was of no reliable stuff, and the primates seemed depressed. For the rest, the island was capering in exultant frenzy on the beach, at what the Capsina had done, and what they would do.

Tombazes, who as their president should have shown himself a pillar of prudence, alone of them all sat with a glistening eye, and smiled, showing his teeth in his black and scarcely gray-streaked beard. Then throwing his head back, he burst out into a great crack of laughter.

"The Capsina is finer than we all," he said. "What a girl! She is the only man among us, for all our long beards. Who knows she may not sail straight for Constantinople, force her way into the Sultan's presence, and set Michael at him. I can almost see her doing it, and indeed I should dearly like to. 'Hi, Michael, at his throat, boy!' she would cry. Yet I see her walking out again safe and leaving him lying dead like a broken doll, for I cannot imagine three armies of Turks stopping her. She would call them dogs and devils, and, the chidden dogs, they would tuck their tails away and only snarl. Yes, my brothers, this is not in order; I am but a fond dreamer. But let us come to the point. The Capsina beats us. Oh, she beats us! We need not waste time in making faces at that. But what next? Of course we must do our best to stop this rising, but, though I would not have it said by others, my heart is not wholly on our side, though my head shall be. Is not the Capsina stupendous?"

He rose again from his place, and hurried to the open window for another glance.

"They are all crowding on sail," he said, "but the Capsina's ship is first – first by half a mile, I should say. She is always first. Pre-eminently has she been first this morning. Yes, yes, I know, let us come to the point. Perhaps Brother Nikolas will give us his views," and the great burly man bent down his head to hide the inextinguishable joy of his face.

Brother Nikolas's views were short, sour, eminently depressing, and as follows:

The Turkish ships which were cruising for the conscription would be at Hydra before the end of April – that is to say, in considerably less than a month. Instead of two hundred and fifty able-bodied recruits they would find twelve, or perhaps eleven, primates – here his eyes looked lemon-juice at Tombazes – a quantity of unemployed tax-collectors, some elderly gentlemen, some women, and some children. This would probably be thought an unsatisfactory substitute. They could fill in the probable course of subsequent events for themselves, for one Turkish raid was very like another. He would suggest guarding the treasury at the risk of their lives, to show that they, at any rate, had no hand in the matter.

Others spoke in the same melancholy vein, and at the end Tombazes.

"The point, so I take it, is this," he said. "Unless we stop this movement, or, if we are unable to stop it, unless we run away for refuge to the insurgent armies in Greece or in other islands, we are certainly dead men. Brother Nikolas has suggested that we have a certain duty to the Turk; well, that is as it may be, but in any case we are at present the vassals of the Sultan, and for the sake of our own necks, this meeting, I am sure, would wish to repudiate the movement. It will be no manner of good, but we must let that be known. With your consent, I will send for the mayor, and make an official

inquiry as to what the tumult is about, and where and why the Capsina has gone. Meantime, and with the utmost haste, I suggest that we stow the island revenues in the church. It may be difficult, but I think it will be possible if we do it quietly. The money will certainly be safer there."

The primates dispersed: some to mingle with the crowd, and try to allay this illicit enthusiasm, whereby certain men got infected with it; some to make arrangements for the funds of the national treasury being moved to the church; Tombazes alone, though burning to go down among the people, waiting in the room where they had met for his conference with the mayor, Christos Capsas. Indeed, he was in most unprelatical vein, and the meeting of the two was very cordial; you would have said they took the same side. Christos dwelt with extreme complacency on the expedition of the Capsina – it was like the clan, he said, to take the lead in adventure – and Tombazes, though officially he had bound himself to deprecate it, gave a halting lip-service only to the cause of the primates.

"And the men of the island, you say," says he, with a dancing eye, "are resolved to follow this – this most imprudent and ill-advised example set them by the Capsina? Man, do they realize what it means? Do they not know that the Turks will descend on those they leave behind – their women and their children?"

"Yet the women would have them go," said Christos.

"The more senseless they. Yet women are ever so. For what will happen to them? Are the Turks so chivalrous? And will Turks make kind parents to the children who will be fatherless?"

"Yet the children are sailing sticks and branches in the harbor, and throwing stones at them. 'This,' they say to one another, 'we will do to the Turks.'"

"By the Virgin, they are true Greeks, then!" shouted Tombazes, lustily, forgetting himself for a moment but his voice ringing true. Then with impatience: "What does it matter what the children do?" he asked. "It is a new thing to take counsel of the children before we act."

"Yet you asked me of the children," said Christos, smiling, "and, as you said, father, they are true Greeks."

Tombazes sat down, and motioned Christos to take a seat.

"You, then, are on the side of the women and the children," he said, "or rather, if you look at it aright, against them; for sure is it that you give them over to the Turks to treat – to treat as Turks treat women and children. Your son Christos a servant in the harem – have you thought of that?"

"I am on the side of the Capsina," said Christos.

Tombazes looked furtively round, as if to see that none other was there, walked slowly to the window, and came back again with quicker step. Twice he began to speak, twice stopped, but at the last he could contain himself no longer.

"And so, by all the saints, am I!" he cried. "See, Christos, I trust you, and this must not be known nor guessed. For sure I would, if I followed my desire, sail after that splendid girl – yes, swim to wherever she may go – with the Greek flag over me. Man, but my heart burned when I saw that. The cross above the crescent, and soon no crescent at all. Thus shall it be. But I and the others, and you, too, are put over these people, and we must make them consider what will follow. Nothing must be done wildly; because we are aflame with this wonderful, prophetic flag, tinder to that spark, we must not act as if the thing was done, as if the moment we take up arms, down go the Turks like the walls of Jericho; and in this, Christos, I am speaking with all the sincerity God gave me. No enthusiasm, no sudden rising will do the work; the fight will be long and bitter, and if a new and glorious thing is to spring up, it will be watered with tears and with blood – with tears of the fatherless and widow, and blood of the fathers. Tell me yourself, you are the father of a family, with a stake in peace; what are you meaning to do?"

"The Capsina has lent me the *Hydra*, which was to have sailed to Syria to-day with stuff for the Turkish governor. The stuff she has thrown overboard, and I sail to-morrow for Nauplia, where I shall get orders."

"She threw the Turk's stuff overboard? I would it had been Turks! Great is the Capsina!" and the primate capered barbarously up the room and down again. "And now I will go down to the people," said he. "You and I have a secret, Christos; but I wonder how long the devil will give me strength to keep it."

Down on the quay matters had fared more briskly than among the primates. A member and delegate of the Revolutionist Club, by name Economos, had landed with the ships from Spetzas, and had been preaching revolt and revenge to willing ears. Even before the departure of the Capsina, whose sails were now a gull on the horizon, he had begun enlisting volunteers, and before Tombazes reached the harbor, he was already at the head of an armed band, including several ship-captains, and was rapidly earning a cheap popularity by addressing the mob as "citizens of Greece."

Tombazes, who, for his ruddy face and burly heartiness, was popular with the people, made his way through to where the crowd was thickest, and instantly interrupted the man's speeches.

"Now what is this all about?" he cried, good-humoredly, pushing his way in. "What is all this disturbance? It is all most irregular. Ha, Dimitri, you should be driving out the sheep instead of wasting time on the quay, for all the world like a quacking goose that can't lay an egg! You, too, Anastasi, now you are a less idiot than some, tell me what this is about, and who is that holding a flag which I do not remember to have seen before?"

He made his way through the people up to Economos.

"Now, my good fellow," he said, "just stop preaching for a moment. We primates have a good deal of preaching to do, and so we have much sympathy for those who listen. Who are you, where do you come from, what's your business, and what's your name, and what are you talking about? Oh, you silly folk!" he cried, aloud, as a discontented murmur rose up. "You are all going to have fair play – that is why I am here. But just let me learn what it is all about. Melesinas, don't brandish your knife in that foolish way, or you will be cutting your own oaf's hand off!"

Economos paused, and realizing that there was nothing to be gained by insolence, seeing that this man was a friend evidently of the people, stepped down from the table on which he was standing.

"My name is Antonios Economos," he said. "I am an emissary from the Club of Patriots in Greece, and I am here to raise the revolt in Hydra against the Turk."

"That is all very well," said Tombazes. "You want ships and support, and for ships you want men, and for men money. Has the Club of Patriots supplied you with that?"

"The treasury – the national treasury!" shouted several voices.

Tombazes looked up quickly, and, springing forward with an agility which in a man of his bulk bordered on the miraculous, seized hold of a big fellow whom he had seen shouting and shook him till his teeth rattled in his head.

"Another word," he cried, "and I pop you into the harbor. You too, George, I saw you shouting too. If I tell your wife it will be but little supper you get. I am ready for you all, five under one arm and six under the other. Oh, I will teach you to interrupt when I am talking to another. Get back with you from the table, all of you, all of you. And you there, Yanni, bring me wine and two glasses, this gentleman and I have to talk together, and chairs – two chairs; and the sooner the rest of you silly quacking folk clear away, the fewer there will be for me to put into the sea, and that will save trouble for us all: for me, in getting hot on so warm a day, for there are fat lubbers among you; and for you, in having to change your clothes."

The crowd edged a little back, more good-humored than resentful, for they were accustomed to be treated like children by Tombazes, and the island knew him familiarly as "The Nurse." He was their doctor, a practitioner of heroic simples, sun and sea being the staple of his prescriptions, their spiritual consoler, herein also employing the less morbid remedies. He could sail a boat against the best of their seamen, and he had again and again, as they all knew, taken the side of the people against the greedy and grabbing primates. The wine and the chairs were brought, and he and Economos sat down, clinked glasses, and settled down to talk.

"You will have found dry work in all that talking," said Tombazes, "unless you are very fond of your own voice. Good wine is the gift of God, and this is not bad. Now I heard what that man shouted, and so did you. Now tell me straight, for this it will save trouble. Was it you who suggested that they should get the money from the treasury, or they?"

Economos, who had been playing the noisy demagogue all morning, and was quite prepared to play it again, if advisable, determined for the present to talk soberly.

"They suggested it," he said, dryly. "I'm willing also to tell you that it struck me as an admirable notion."

"Did it so?" said Tombazes, musingly. "Then you are more easily pleased than most men, for your idea of the admirable seems to me the silliest thing I have ever heard tell of. And as I am older than you, and a man of experience, it is likely I have run against many silly things in this world. Now, man, sit down; this is my way of speaking; no man in this island takes offence at what I say, for he knows that would not help what he has his hand to – aye, and he would be like to get his nose pulled, which is of the more immediate consequence. Now tell me how many ships do you mean to victual and put into commission with your admirable notions?"

"Four, to begin with," said Economos.

"Four, to begin with, says he!" exclaimed Tombazes, in a lamentable treble voice. "And how many to end with, and with what will you be paying the crews? Man, do you think you will find enough to keep them in pipes and tobacco with what is in the treasury? Four, to begin with! – save us all!"

"The crews will average sixty men each," continued Economos, "and that will make two hundred and forty. Every year the treasury pays the wage of two hundred and fifty men. I deal with facts, you see."

"Come, then, let's have facts," cried Tombazes, "and surely I will help you. It's facts the man will be wanting. Why, you must have a fever or an ague in your blood! You want bleeding, man, I see it in your eye. Do you think we collect the taxes for a whole year together?"

"I suppose what there is in the treasury will last us a month."

"Well, say it lasts a month," said Tombazes. "What then? You will return here for more money. Much will you find when you have taken from the island just those men who pay the bulk of the taxes. I'm thinking that your admirable notion is even sillier, if we look into it, than it appeared on the surface. And even the look of it on the surface made me think you had been better for blood-letting."

"See, father, listen to me," said Economos, with sudden earnestness. "Have you heard what has happened? Surely you have not, or you would not speak thus. Do you know that Kalamata has been taken by the Greeks, that the beacons of liberty have flashed from one end of the country to another? A free people have stood in the meadows round Kalamata and sung the 'Te Deum' for that great and wonderful victory. Is that not a thing to make the blood tingle? In the north, Germanos, archbishop and primate, has raised the revolt. The monks of Megaspelaion are up in arms; Petrobey and they of Maina have come forth like a herd of hungry wolves."

Tombazes' eye flashed.

"It is fit that you should tell me all you have to say for their mad scheme. Go on, man, go on. Tell me all you know. I – I can judge better so."

Economos suspected the truth, that the primate was all tinder to the flame, and, with a certain acumen, did not let him see this, nor did he at present tax him with it. Instead, he spoke of the plans of the revolutionists – how that the Turks were flocking into Tripolitza, from which, when the time came, there would be no escape; how essential it was to the success of the war that Greece should be cut off from the headquarters of the Ottoman forces. This could not be done till the coasts were in the hands of the insurgents, and their ships prevented fresh arms and men being sent into the country. That was the part of the Greek ports and islands. Spetzas had already joined; in Psara soon would the standard of revolution be raised; was Hydra, the largest and best-manned, she who should be both arms and sinews of naval Greece, to stand neutral? Indeed, neutral she could not be. If she was not

with the insurgents the Turks would soon make her into an advanced point from which they could the more easily reach the mainland. She would be garrisoned; her harbor would be a cluster of Turkish ships – would that be a pleasant thing for the Hydriots? Their only safety was in fighting. Greece was in arms – what matter to the Turks if Hydra had joined the insurgents or not? Would the mob of soldiers and sailors spare them? Would they leave the Hydriots their houses while they camped on the hillside? Would their women be spared because they were loyal? And the danger to Greece was thus doubled. The Turks would be holding an eyrie from which to swoop in the midst of the patriots. "Indeed," concluded Economos, returning from his somewhat rhetorical language to colloquialism, "we will have no wasps' nests in the seat of our trousers, if you please."

This was too much for Tombazes, and motioning back the crowd, who had begun to encroach again, he spoke low to the other.

"I shall surely burst unless I speak," he said. "Do you not see how I am with you? Man, you are blinder than the worms if you do not see that. But if you drop a word of that till I give you leave, I swear by the lance of St. George and the coffee-pot which he made whole, that I will kick you till my foot is sore and you are less like a man than a jelly-fish! That treasury notion of yours is absurd. That I stick to, and for the reasons I gave you. Give it up, I ask you, for the present. Mark you, and listen to me. I am a traitor in my camp for a good cause, and I can help you. If the primates and others are assured you are not going to touch the national treasury – for its safety, they think, means their safety from the Turk – half the opposition will be withdrawn. You must raise money another way. Moreover, you want five times as much as there is in the treasury. And what is the use of four ships? Eh, that was what I meant when I said your notion seemed to me the silliest thing I have ever heard. Did you not see that? Ah, well, God made the blind men also! There are at least thirty in the harbor, which are all capable of carrying guns and of outsailing those lubberly Turkish tubs. You must have them all. And you must not leave the women and children here defenceless. You must organize a body of men who will guard the harbor and the town. Luckily there is no landing except this side the island. Afterwards, of course, you will add the money in the treasury to what must be collected by levying a tax. Milk the treasury dry, man. The money will be stored in the Church of St. George, and I shall have the key. Now mark the result of our conversation. I have persuaded you, so I shall tell the primates, and you the people, not to touch the treasury – that alone will quiet my party considerably. Propose to the people to levy a tax on all the capital in the island, and submit that to the primates as the only condition on which the treasury will be untouched. The people will give willingly, the primates unwillingly, but the money will be the same. Fill your glass; shake hands with me, and I will go to my party. I drink to the freedom of Greece, and to you. Viva!"

For the next two or three days negotiations went on between the primates and the people, and often Tombazes had occasion to wear a mighty grave face, whereby he should cloak the merriness of his heart. The part he was playing, as he assured himself, was the only way of fighting for the good cause, for had he openly joined the revolutionist party, the confidence which the other primates felt in him would be gone, and they would be the more eager to oppose tooth and nail to any proposals. But what they regarded as his diplomatic victory with regard to the national treasure, gave him a position of extraordinary security among them, and Economos, perhaps partly for his own ends, and the spurious credit which the people would give him of having successfully fought down the opposition of the primates, was equally anxious to conceal Tombazes' part in the affair.

At length a sum adequate to meet all immediate expenses was raised; the crews were all paid one month's wages in advance, with the prospect of prize-money won from the Turks, and the people seized on the national treasury. Tombazes' ill-suppressed delight at this step, which was conveyed to the primates in conclave, put him for the moment within an ace of exposure.

Fresh intrigues began; the primates, to make the best of a bad job, appealed to those sailors and captains who had formerly been in their employment, offering fresh berths in their own service; for many of them owned ships, and as the island was now pledged to the national cause, they, too,

proposed to have a finger in the prize-money. Economos, on the other hand, failing to see how it was just that those who had opposed the scheme should take a share in it now, organized a revolutionary committee in whose hands should be the sole conduct of the war, and naturally enough did not appoint any primate on it. Eventually – for both sides were somewhat afraid of each other, and wished to avoid open collision – a compromise was arrived at. Those captains and men who had already definitely engaged themselves in the service of the revolutionists during the opposition of the primates, were forbidden to serve on the primates' ships. On the other hand, the ships of the primates were to be admitted to the fleet, and should be treated in the matter of prize-money with the others. Finally – and had the primates known the cause of this, there would have been angry men in Hydra – the command of the entire fleet was given to Tombazes.

On the morning of the 29th of April a solemn service was held in the church, and Tombazes read out the declaration of the independence of Hydra as part of the free state of Greece.

"It is determined by us," so ran the proclamation, "the primates and governors of this island of Hydra, to serve no longer nor obey the infidels who are the enemies of God and of His Christ, and of the blessed mother of Christ, and from this day we declare that we will make ourselves a free people of the realm of Greece. In the support of this resolve it will be our duty to fight for our wives, our children, our country, and we will fight till the death without counting the cost, and giving whatever we possess – our goods, our obedience, and our lives – to our country's cause. May He who is the Giver of Victory and has already given us the will to fight, strengthen our arms and deliver His foes and ours into our hands."

By the first week in May, such was the frenzy of expedition among the men, the Hydriot contingent, numbering twenty sail, was ready to go to sea. The eight brigs from Spetzas which had sailed to Melos to capture the Turkish conscription ships had put in at Hydra, uniting themselves with Tombazes' fleet, and reported complete success. The credit of the capture however belonged, as they acknowledged, to a strange ship that sailed as if by magic, and which no one knew. For as they were nearing Melos, intending to get inside the harbor where they knew the Turks were, and capture them before the Melian contingent got on board, and while they were still a couple of miles out to sea, the wind, which so far had been favorable, dropped, and the airs became so light and variable that they lay for two days like painted ships, taken back rather than making ground.

At this point, Tombazes, to whom the Spetziot captain was telling his tale, got up from his chair and waved his arms wildly.

"It was she – I know it was she! Thank God it was she," he cried. "Go on, man."

Captain Yassos looked at him a moment in surprised wonder.

"It certainly was a she," he said. "How did you know?"

"The spirit of prophecy was upon me!" cried Tombazes. "Finish your tale."

"It was our desire to take the ships, you will understand," he said, "before the Melian folk got aboard, while if we failed, they ran risk of being murdered by the Turks, for fear of their helping us. But it would seem God willed it otherwise, for He sent us no wind except as it were the breath of a man cooling his broth. A little mist, too, was rising seaward and spreading towards us, and when we who knew the sea saw that, we thought it impossible we could get ten miles in time, for the mist means a calm and windlessness."

"Oh, am I a boy who would be a sailor, that you tell me the alphabet of things?" exclaimed Tombazes.

"You will see it all makes the thing more marvellous," said the other, smiling, "so be patient with me. Well, we were cursing at the calm when suddenly, on our starboard quarter – my ship being to starboard of all the others – there came it seemed the shadow of a ship, white and huge, with all sails spread and coming towards us. Dimitri, my son, who was with me, said, 'Look, father, look!' and crossed himself, and I did the same. Now I am no left-handed man at ship sailing, but when I saw that ship moving slowly but steadily towards us while we lay like logs, I thought it no canny

thing. She passed half a cable's length from us, and I saw her guns looking through the open ports, new so they seemed to me; and on her topmast, and I blessed the Virgin when I saw that, was the flag of Greece. One man stood at the tiller whose face seemed familiar to me, and by him stood a woman, tall, and like the morning, somehow, to look upon. In that still air I heard her say to him, 'A point more to starboard,' so it seemed that she was the captain, and as she passed us she waved her hand, and cried, 'Do you not wish a share in this, or am I to go alone? Come, comrades, follow, follow. I bring you the wind.'

"On her word the wind awoke, the slack ropes began to run through the blocks, and in a few seconds the sail was full. Up went our helm, and we followed. But it was like following a hare on the mountains to follow that great white ship. She swam from us as a fish swims from a man in the water, and before we had turned the cape behind which lies the harbor we heard her guns. Twice before we came up she had sailed round the largest of the three ships, pouring in broadside after broadside, the other replying clumsily and hardly touching her, and just as I, who was ahead of the rest, fired at one of the others, the ship she was battering struck its colors, and anchoring, she let down the boats, and with two boat-loads of her crew she put off to board them. Then those treacherous devils of hell under the flag of truce, you mind, again opened fire on her. But it seems she had calculated on that, and on the instant her ship blazed again, firing over their heads and raking the deck where the Turks were. This time, as I could see, they fired red-hot ball, and one, I suppose, struck the powder-magazine, for it was as if the end of the world came, and a moment after the Turk sank. The boarding party was not far from the ship, and the explosion showered boards and wreckage round them, but thereat they turned and rowed back again, their work being done for them. For me, I had my own affairs ready, and for ten minutes we blazed and banged at each other, but before it was over I looked round once, and saw already at the harbor's mouth the ship which had come out of the mist beating out to sea again. Now, father, you seem to know who that woman was; who was it?"

"Glory be to God!" said Tombazes. Then, "But, man, you are an ignorant fool. Who could it be but the Capsina of Hydra? But where has she gone? Why is she not with you?"

"I know not: she was gone before we had finished with the others."

With the combined squadron from Spetzas and Hydra had joined nine ships from Psara. There was half a day's trouble with them, for they refused at first to recognize the command of Tombazes, and said it was fitter that the three islands should cast lots, and let the choice of the admiral go with the winner. They had, they said, a most wary man of the sea among them, who had worked with the Russians and knew the use of the fire-ship. But the Spetziots had accepted Tombazes as commander of the two islands, and the Psariots were told that they might do the same or leave the squadron, and they chose the former, though ill-content.

They cruised northward, for knowing that news of the revolution had reached Constantinople and that the Sultan Mahmud was preparing to send a fleet to the refractory islands, they hoped to intercept this, and thus prevent punishment reaching their homes or fresh supplies putting into ports on the mainland. Several times they sighted Turkish ships, and thus two or three small prizes were taken. For ten days they met none but single ships, which, without exception, surrendered, often without the exchange of a shot; the crews were taken and sent back to Hydra or Spetzas, where they were prisoners; but these vessels being for the most part trading brigs of the poorer class, there was little booty to be divided among the captors.

The tenth day of the cruise saw the squadron off Cape Sunium, at the extreme south end of Attica. The day before they had run before a strong south wind, hoping to clear the promontory before night and get through the dangerous straits to the north of it by daylight. Until evening the heavens had been clear, but the night came on cloudy, starless, and calm, and fearing to pass the straits in so uncertain a light, for they were full of reefs, orders had been given to lie to and wait for day. But the currents of that shifting sea rendered it impossible to maintain position. The greater part of the squadron was caught by the racing flow of water that runs up northwest towards Peiraeus, and drifted

safely but swiftly up the gulf. Of the remainder, all but two weathered Sunium and lay for shelter under Zea, where they remained till morning. But these two, finding themselves dangerously near the rocky south headland of Sunium, beat out to sea again before the breeze dropped, and by morning lay far out to the east of the others.

Day broke windless and calm, with an oily sea, big, but not broken, coming in from the south. The ships in the gulf had to wait for the land breeze to spring up: those off Zea who had passed Sunium lay to till the others joined them, but the two to the east, Hydriot ships, out of shelter of the land, had a moderate breeze from the north.

For two hours after daybreak they waited, but the others, out of reach of their wind, made no sign, and about nine o'clock they were aware of a Turkish ship coming from the north, and sailing, as they supposed, to the islands or to some Peloponnesian port. The two Greek ships were lying close together, it may be a cable's distance apart, and it was immediately clear to each that the Turk must be stopped, for the purpose of their squadron was none other than this. The admiral's ship, far away to the west, it was impossible to signal, and even if possible, ineffectual, for nought but a miracle would have brought up a land breeze at nine in the morning. So as in duty bound the two brigs, like sea swallows, put about, and hoisting the Greek flag went in pursuit of the Turk.

As they neared her it was evident that a day's work was before them, and Sachhuri, the captain of one of the brigs, signalled to Pinotzi: "Ship of war," and Pinotzi signalled back: "So are we." Yanni Sachhuri, the captain's son, a lusty, laughing boy of about eighteen, danced with delight as he read the signal to his father, and heard the order to clear for action. The ports had been closed, for a heavy sea had been running during the night, but in a few minutes the guns were run out, the men at their posts, and the pokers heating in the galley fire. Sachhuri's vessel carried ten guns, four on each broadside and two in the bows; Pinotzi's only six, but of these two were thirty-two-pounders and heavier than any of Sachhuri's.

The Turk was running due south, and Sachhuri from the bridge, seeing that if they went straight for her, she would pass them, ordered that his ship should be laid two points nearer the wind, and Pinotzi followed his lead. In ten minutes it was clear that they were rapidly overhauling her, and in another half-hour they were but a short mile off. For a moment the Turk seemed to hesitate, and then, putting about, went off on an easterly tack. But here the Greek gained more speedily, and she, perceiving this, went off straight down wind again. This manoeuvre lost her more ground, and Sachhuri and she were now broadside to each other when the Turk opened fire. Her aim was too low, and the balls struck the water some two hundred yards from the Greek ship. In spite of her imposing appearance Sachhuri noticed that only five guns were fired, the balls from three of which ricocheted off the sea, and flew, two of them, just beyond the Greek's bows, the other clearing the deck without touching her. Sachhuri's guns replied, but apparently without effect, and changing his course he made an easterly tack to pass behind her, for all her guns seemed to be forward. Pinotzi, who had heavier ordnance, ran up broadside, and he and the Turk exchanged a volley or two, but, owing to the heavy rolling of the ships and the inexperience of the Greek gunners at least, without doing or receiving damage.

Sachhuri's guess had been correct, though why a ship-of-war had put to sea only half-armed he did not pause to consider, and, coming up within range, he let her have the starboard guns. But he had thus to lie broadside on to the sea, which made accurate aim difficult; and again putting her head to the sea, he ran on, meaning to use the two guns in his bows at close quarters.

For an hour or more it was the battle of the hawk and the raven. The two Greek ships skimmed and tacked about on the light breeze, sometimes getting in a broadside as they closed in, sometimes passing behind her stern, where she seemed to be unarmed. Twice Sachhuri sailed round her, giving broadside for broadside, and at last a lucky shot cut the main-mast of the Turk in half, bringing down to the deck a pile of wreckage and canvas. They could see the men hauling away to clear the deck, when another shot from Pinotzi brought down the second mast, leaving her rolling helplessly, with

only the mizzen standing. Sachturi had just rounded her stern, and had given another broadside, when the Turk fired, and a ball crashing through the bulwarks killed two sailors, and with them Yanni, who was just taking an order from his father to close with her and throw on the grappling-irons.

Sachturi did not move; but he set his teeth for a moment, and looked at Yanni. He was lying on his back, half his chest shot away, staring up into the sky. His face was untouched, and his mouth seemed to smile. He was his father's only son, and Sachturi loved him as his own soul.

In another ten minutes the grappling-irons were cast on to the Turk; twice they were thrown off, but the third time two anchored themselves in the ropes and blocks of the wrecked main-mast, and, though the Turks sought furiously to free themselves, in another minute the Greeks from Sachturi's ship were pouring over the side. Since Yanni had been killed he had only said three words, twice when the grappling-irons were thrown off, and he ordered them to be cast again, once as they boarded, "Spare none!" he had cried.

The order was obeyed. The Turks had exhausted their ammunition, and fought with knives only, charging down with undaunted bravery on the muskets of the Greeks, and when the deck was cleared the boarders went below. In a cabin they found an old man, dressed in the long white robe of a Mussulman patriarch, with the green turban of the sons of the Prophet on his head, playing draughts with a woman. And here, too, Sachturi's order was obeyed.

The booty taken was immense, for on board were presents from the Sultan to the Pasha of Egypt, and when the Turkish ship was no more than a shambles they brought it all on board Sachturi's vessel for division. They found him sitting on the deck, with Yanni's head on his knee. He was quite silent and dry-eyed; he rested his weight on one hand, with the other he was stroking the dead lad's hair.

CHAPTER III

The next fortnight's cruising was well rewarded by the prizes they took, but already symptoms of a dual control in the fleet, and thus of no control at all, had unhappily begun to make appearance. The primates were by no means disposed to forgive the slight which Economos had put upon them, and before long they devised a cunning and unpatriotic scheme of paying in public money, so to speak, their private debt to him. To a certain extent the immediate adoption of his naval plans among the sailors had been due to the hopes he put forward to the islanders of winning large prizes, and the primates, by making a main issue of this secondary desire among them, began to reinstate themselves in power. Much of the booty taken was to be divided on the return of the squadron to Hydra, and Economos, at the suggestion of Tombazes, proposed that one-half of the gains of the cruise should be appropriated to the prosecution of the war. This was an equitable and patriotic suggestion, but coming as it did from Economos the primates opposed it tooth and nail. Equally, too, did it fail to satisfy the more greedy and selfish of his supporters, who cared for nothing but their own aggrandizement.

Economos's proposal had been put forward one afternoon some three days after their return to Hydra, at the sitting of the revolutionary committee, which had been reorganized and included all the primates. Tombazes alone of his class supported Economos, but the matter was still in debate when they rose for the day.

The afternoon had been hot and windless, but an hour before sundown a southerly breeze began to stir, and before long word was brought by a shepherd who had been grazing his flocks on the hill above the town that he had seen a ship under full sail off the southwest, making straight for Hydra. It was known that a Turkish ship had escaped the fate of its consort at Kalamata, but the fleet, though they had kept a lookout for it, had seen nothing of it. Her fate they were to learn later. Tombazes hesitated what to do; the ship might be part of the Turkish squadron which had been cruising off the west coast of Greece; again, it might be the single ship from Kalamata. In the former case they had better look to the defence of their harbor, in the latter it might be possible to man a couple of brigs and give chase.

He determined, however, to wait a little yet; for no other ship had been sighted, and as long as there was but one it would be time to give chase when she declared herself more manifestly. So going down to the quay, where he would meet Economos and other commanders, he mingled with the crowd. Even in so short space the ship had come incredibly nearer, and even as he looked a livelier gust shook out the folds of her flag, and at his elbow some one shouted, "The Capsina; it is the Capsina! It is the Capsina back again!" The flag she carried was blue and on it was the cross of Greece, no crescent anywhere.

On she came, black against the crimson sky, crumpling the water beneath her forefoot. On the quay the crowd thickened and thickened, and soon there came to them across the water a cheer from the ship. At that all throats were opened, and shout after shout went up. For the moment all the jealousies and quarrelling were forgotten, the primates mingled their enthusiasm with the rest, feeling that but for the example so memorably set by the Capsina their pockets would be lighter by all the prize-money they had won; and even Father Nikolas, perhaps the sourest man God ever made, found himself excitedly shaking hands with Economos. After passing the southern point of the harbor the *Sophia* hauled down her mainsail, and three minutes afterwards she had swung round and her anchor chains were screaming out. Before she had well come into harbor fifty boats were racing out to meet her, then one of her own boats was let down, and they saw that tall girlish figure, preceded by Michael and followed by Kanaris, step in.

The elder Christos, with his son and daughter-in-law and grandchild, were the first on the steps when she came ashore. She kissed them affectionately, asking first after one and then the other.

"And what has been doing since I went?" she asked. "I have only heard that certain ships from Hydra have been stinging the Turks very shrewdly, but no more. For me I have not been idle, and two Turkish ships lie on the ooze of the deep sea, and one more I have taken to Nauplia; it will do penance for having served the Turk in now fighting for us. Ah, father," and she held out her hand to Tombazes, "or admiral shall I call you? Here is the truant home again."

But before the evening was out, though the enthusiasm of the people grew higher and higher as the Capsina's deeds went from mouth to mouth, the primates cooled, and Father Nikolas from being positively genial passed through all the stages of subacidity and became more superacid than one would have thought it possible for so small a man to be. For it appeared that Tombazes had dined with her and that she had wished to hand him over at once no less than eight hundred Turkish pounds for the "war fund." Tombazes had told her that at present there was no war fund, and that on this very day a proposal had been made for one, which would without doubt be vetoed on the morrow. At this it seemed that the Capsina stared at him in undisguised amazement, and then said, "We shall see!" Soon after a boy from her house came running into one of the cafés on the quay, which Economos frequented, and said that the Capsina wished to see him immediately.

Economos seemed disposed to finish his game of draughts, but his opponent, no other than the rejected Christos, who was getting the worst of it, rose at once, and swept the men back into their box.

"When the Capsina calls for us we go," he remarked, laconically.

"And when she sends you away you go also, but elsewhere," remarked Economos, who had heard of Christos's dismissal, and with this Parthian shot left the café in a roar.

The elder Christos was also with the Capsina, and when Economos entered she rose.

"You are doing what is right," she said, shaking hands, "and I am with you. So," and she looked severely at her uncle – "so will Christos Capsas be. Sit down. There is wine for you."

Then turning to Tombazes:

"It is quite out of the question not to have a war fund," she said. "On the mainland half of all that is taken goes to it, and the other half, remember, is divided among far more men in proportion to the prizes than we have here. Good God, man!" and she turned to Christos, "how is it possible that you did not see this? And you tell me you were going to vote with the primates. How is the war to be carried on thus? Is the war an affair of a day or two, to last no longer than an autumn's vintage? Already, you tell me, the national treasury is empty. Have you finished the war? for if so, indeed I have not heard the result; or how will you pay the men for the next cruise? How do the numbers go on the question? There are four of us here who will of course vote for the fund."

Tombazes appeared somewhat timorous.

"Capsina," he said, "it is not my fault, you know; but you must remember that you are not on the committee."

The Capsina laughed.

"That is not a matter that need trouble you," she said. "We will see to that to-morrow. The meetings are public, you say. Well, I shall be there – I mean to be on the committee, and of course I shall be. By the Virgin! it would be a strange thing if the head of our clan had no voice in affairs that so concern the island. It is fit also that Kanaris should be of the committee, for though he is a Psarian yet he serves on a Hydriot ship, and it is likely that I shall give him the command of another when I cruise next."

Even the blind faith with which Tombazes regarded the doings of the Capsina was disposed to question this, and Christos moved uneasily in his chair.

"Is it not a little irregular," he asked, "that one of another island should have a voice in the government of Hydra?"

"The war, too, is a little irregular," said the Capsina, "and only in the matters of this war do I propose he should have a vote. Now, father," she went on, "here is this man, one of a thousand, as I know him to be. He and I will fight any two of your ships, and knock them into faggots for the fire

quicker than a man could cut them from a tree. He is of Psara, it is true, but he serves Hydra. And he shall have a voice in the matter of the fleet to which he now belongs."

With the admission of the Capsina and Kanaris into the committee, the conclusion would not be so foregone, so thought Tombazes, as it first appeared to him. For their admission he pledged himself to vote, and for the rest he trusted the Capsina.

Long after the others had gone Sophia sat where she was, lost in a sort of eager contentment. The home-coming, the enthusiastic pride and affection of her people, stirred in her a chord she had thought and almost hoped was forever dumb. The wild and splendid adventures of the last weeks, her ardent championship of her race, the fierce and ever growing hatred of their detestable masters, had of late made the sum of her conscious desires. But to-night something of the thrill of home was on her, more than once she had looked half enviously at the small ragged girls who stared at her as she passed, who were most likely never to know anything of the sweet sting of stirring action, but live inactive lives, with affection for ardor, and the care of the children for the cause of a nation. Michael lay at her feet, and she wondered vaguely if it were better to be as she was, or to sit at the feet of a master and be able to call nothing one's own, but only part of another. But to think barren thoughts was never the Capsina's habit, and her mind went forward to the meeting next day.

The meetings were held always on the quay. A table was set, round which sat the four-and-twenty members of the committee, and the people were allowed to stand round and listen to the official utterances. But after the pleasant freshness of hearing Father Nikolas say bitter things to Tombazes, and Tombazes reply with genial contempt or giggle only, had worn off, they were not usually very generally attended. But this morning, an hour before the appointed time, the end of the quay, where the meetings were held, began to fill, chairs and benches were in requisition, and Sachhuri's father, the miser of Hydra, by report the richest man of the place, had given two piasters for a seat, which in itself constituted an epoch in the history of finance. By degrees the members of the committee took their places, Tombazes looked round with ill-concealed dismay at the absence of the Capsina, and called for silence. The silence was interrupted by a clear voice.

"Michael, Michael," it said, "come, boy, we are very late." And from the end of the quay came the Capsina, attended by Michael and Kanaris. She walked quickly up through the crowd, which made way for her right and left, stopping now and then to speak to some friend she had not yet seen, and still round the table the silence continued.

Father Nikolas broke it.

"The meeting has been summoned," he said, bitterly. "Am I to suppose it has been summoned for any purpose?"

But Tombazes had his eyes fixed on the Capsina.

"Is the meeting adjourned?" asked Father Nikolas, and the chairman smiled.

The Capsina by this time had made her way up to the table and looked round.

"A chair," she said. "Two chairs. Kanaris, sit by me, please."

She had chosen her place between old Christos and Sachhuri, and the two parted, making room for the chairs. Kanaris sat down in obedience to a gesture from her, but she remained standing.

"I have a word to say," she began, abruptly. "Since the clan of Capsas has been in this island, the head of the clan has always had a voice in all national affairs. I have been prevented from attending the former meetings of this particular assembly, because I was perhaps better employed in chasing and capturing Turkish ships. And as head of the clan I take my seat here."

For another moment there was dead silence, and Father Nikolas, in answer, it would appear, to hints from his neighbors, stood up.

"This matter is one on which the vote of the committee is required," he said; "for, as I understand, by its original constitution it possessed the power of adding to its numbers. For myself –"

But Sophia interrupted him.

"Does any one here, besides Father Nikolas," she said, "oppose my election?"

"I did not say – " began Father Nikolas.

"No, father, because I made bold to interrupt you," remarked the Capsina, with dangerous suavity. Then, turning in her place, "This committee, I am told, was elected by the people of Hydra. There is a candidate for election. The chairman shall give you the name."

"The Capsina is a candidate for election," said Tombazes.

Among the primates there was a faint show of opposition. Father Nikolas passed a whispered consultation to his colleagues, and after some delay eight of them, amid derisive yells from the people, voted against her, but her election was thus carried by sixteen to eight. But there was greater bitterness in store for Father Nikolas.

The Capsina again rose, and the shouts died down.

"I have first," she said, "to make a report to the admiral of the Hydriot fleet, to which I belong, as to the doings of my crew and myself. We sailed, as you know, perhaps a little independently, but what we have done we have done for this island. On the second day of my expedition we sank a Turkish vessel, which was cruising for conscription in the harbor at Melos, with all on board. Perhaps some were picked up, but I do not know. On the eighth day we captured a cruiser off Astra, and Kanaris took her into Nauplia, where she will now enter the service of the Greek fleet. On the twelfth day we sank a corvette off the southern cape. There was a heavy sea running, and she went to pieces on the rocks. We have also taken a certain amount of prize-money, the disposition of which I will speak of later. But first there is another matter. Kanaris is by birth a Psarian, but he serves on my ship, and he is willing to continue to serve in the Hydriot squadron. It is right that he should have a voice in the affairs of our expeditions, for I tell you plainly if any man could sail a ship between the two Wolf rocks of Hydra, he is that man. He has been taken into the most intimate councils of the central revolutionary committee, and it is not fit that he should be without a voice here. Also before long he will be in command of the *Sophia*, when a new ship I am building is ready. Father Nikolas will now be good enough to tell us his reasons for his opposing my candidate."

Father Nikolas started as if he had been stung, but then recovering himself, "The Capsina has already stated them," he said. "This man – I did not catch his name – "

"If you reflect," said the Capsina, sternly, "I think you will remember that you did."

Father Nikolas looked round with a wild eye.

"This man," he continued, "is a Psarian. Is that not sufficient reason why he should find no place in a Hydriot assembly?"

"Surely not, father," said the Capsina, "for you, if I mistake not, are by birth a Spetziot; yet who, on that ground, would seek to exclude you from the assembly?"

"The cases are not similar," said Nikolas. "Thirty years ago my father settled here, while it is but yesterday that this Kanaris – "

"I was waiting for that," remarked the Capsina, absently.

A sound came from the chairman almost exactly as if somebody sitting in his place had giggled, and then tried unsuccessfully to convert the noise into a cough, and Father Nikolas peered at him with wrinkled, puckered eyes.

"I will continue," he said, after a pause in which he had eyed Tombazes, who sat shaking with inward laughter, yet not venturing to meet his eye for fear of an explosion. "For ten years I have sat in the assembly of primates, and any dissatisfaction with my seat there should have been expressed thirty years ago, some years, in fact, before she who is now expressing it was born."

The Capsina smiled.

"I think I said that no one would think of expressing, or even perhaps – well, of expressing dissatisfaction," she replied, "and I must object to your putting into my mouth the exact opposite of what you really heard from me."

"Your words implied what I have said," retorted Nikolas, getting white and angry.

"Such is not the case," said the Capsina. "If I were you, I should be less ready to find malignant meanings in words which bear none."

Here Tombazes interfered.

"Father Nikolas," he said, "we are here to discuss matters of national import, and I do not see that you are contributing to them. Kanaris, let me remind you, is a candidate for election."

Kanaris himself all this time was sitting quietly between the Capsina and Sachturi, listening without the least evidence of discomposure to all that was being said. He smiled when Nikolas suddenly blurted out the name of which he was ignorant, but otherwise seemed like a man who supports the hearing of a twice-told tale with extreme politeness. He was rather tall, strongly built, with great square shoulders, and his dress was studiously neat and well cared for. His hair, falling, after the custom of the day, on to his shoulders, was neatly trimmed, and his chin very smoothly shaven. In his hand he held a string of amber beads, which he passed to and fro like a man seated at a café.

Now, however popular the election of the Capsina had been with the people, it was soon clear to her that there was no such unanimity about Kanaris. The islanders were conservative and isolated folk, and they viewed with jealousy and resentment anything like interference on the part of others in their affairs. But for the adoring affection in which they held the girl, without doubt Nikolas's party would have won the day, and, quick as thought, the Capsina determined to make use of the people's championship of herself to gain her ends. She was of a quick tongue, and for the next ten minutes she concentrated the acidity of Nikolas on herself, provoking him by a hundred little stinging sayings, and drawing his attack off from the debate on to herself. At length he turned on her full.

"Already we see the effect of having a woman in our councils," he said. "An hour has passed, and instead of settling affairs of moment our debate is concerned with the management of the monastery rain-water and the color of my hair. This may be useful; I hope it is. But in no way do I see how it bears upon the conduct of the fleet. And it is intolerable that I should be thus exposed in the sight of you all to the wanton insults of this girl." His anger suddenly flashed out. "By the Virgin," he cried, "it is not to be stood! It was an ill day for the clan, let me tell them, when the headship passed into hands like that. I will not submit to this. A Hydriot is she, and where is the husband to whom she was betrothed? I tell you she cares nothing for Hydra, nor for the war, nor for any of you, but only for her own foolhardy, headstrong will."

"Is the Father Nikolas proposing that I should now marry Christos Capsas?" asked Sophia. "That is a fine thing for a primate to say, or is it not since he came to Hydra that my cousin Christos chose a wife for himself?"

Father Nikolas's face expressed an incredible deal of hatred and malice. "This must be stopped," he said; "this woman or I leave the assembly."

"The remedy lies with Father Nikolas," said the Capsina.

Nikolas paused for a moment: his mouth was dry with anger.

"It is not so long ago," he said, "that I heard Hydra proclaimed an independent state, and subject to none. Show me anything more farcical than that! Free, are we? Then who is this who forces herself and her creatures into our assembly? Are we to be the slaves of a woman, or her clan? I, for my part, will be dictated to and insulted by no man, or woman either. The clan of Capsas – who are the clan of Capsas? They are leagued together for their own self-seeking ends."

This was just what Sophia was waiting for. She sprang to her feet, and, turning to the people, "Clan of Capsas!" she cried. "You of the clan!"

In an instant at the clan cry there was a scene of wildest confusion. Old Christos jumped up; Anastasi overturned his chair and stood on the other side of Sophia; Michael raged furiously about in the ecstasy of excitement, and from the crowd that stood round men sprang forward, taking their places in rows behind the Capsina till their ranks stretched half-way down the quay.

Then the Capsina called: "The clan of Capsas is with me?"

And a great shout went up. "It is with you."

She turned to Father Nikolas.

"If you or any other have any quarrel with the clan, name it," she said.

Father Nikolas looked round, but found blank faces only.

"I have no quarrel with the clan," he said, and his voice was the pattern of ill-grace.

"Then," said Sophia, "again I propose Kanaris as a member of this committee."

The appeal to the clan had exactly the effect Sophia intended. It divided the committee up into those for the clan and those against it, and that strong and cheerful phalanx seemed to be terrorizing to waverers. Amid dead silence the votes were given in and counted, and Tombazes announced that Kanaris was elected by sixteen votes to nine.

The business of the war-fund then came before them, and this Sophia opened by handing over to Tombazes eight hundred Turkish pounds, that being half of the prizes of her cruise. Economos, who had been instructed by the Capsina, laid before Tombazes a similar proportion of his takings, and Sachturi and Pinotzi followed the lead.

Some amusement was then caused by Anastasi Capsas, who had been unlucky in the late cruise, gravely presenting to Tombazes the sum of twenty-five piasters, for all that he had taken was a small Turkish rowing-boat which he found drifting after Sachturi's capture of the Turkish ship, and which he had subsequently sold for fifty. Father Nikolas, it was noticed, did not join in the laugh. But a moment afterwards he rose.

"Perhaps the Capsina or the chairman will explain what is meant by the war-fund," he said. "At present I know of no such fund."

The Capsina rose.

"I hear that yesterday there was debate on this matter," she said, "and that Economos proposed that part of the booty taken should be given to a war-fund. Now it is true that nothing was said about this before the last cruise, but I understand that the money raised has been exhausted, and unless you consider that the war is over, I would wish to know how you intend to equip the ships for the next cruise. Or has Hydra tired of the war? Some of our ships have been lucky: Father Nikolas, I believe, took a valuable prize. It is easy, then, for him to defray the expenses of his ship for the next voyage. But with Anastasi Capsas, how will it be? For, indeed, fifty piasters will not go far as the wages of sixty men."

She paused a moment, and went on with growing earnestness.

"Let us be sensible," she said, "and look things between the eyes, as a man looks before he strikes, and not pretend there are no obstacles in the path. We have decided, God be thanked, to be free. This freedom can only be bought dearly, at the cost of lives and money, and by the output of all our strength. We are not fighting to enrich ourselves. Only the short-sighted can fail to see this, and the short-sighted do not make good counsellors. Can any one tell me how we are to man ships for the next cruise, how get powder, how make repairs to our ships? On the mainland they are contributing one-half of all that is taken to the service of the war. Would it become us to ask for funds from them – for, indeed, they are sore pressed for money, and many of them serve without pay or reward. What has Nikolas Vidalis got for his ten years' work, journeying, scheming, risking his all every day? This, as he himself said, the right to serve his country! Is he not wise to count that more worth having than many piasters? Have you heard what happened to the second ship from Kalamata, which put into Nauplia on its way to Constantinople, to bring back men and arms? Two boys followed it out into the bay at Nauplia, ran their caique into the stern, set fire to it, and saved themselves in their small boat. One was a son of Petrobey, the other was Mitsos Codones, the nephew of Nikolas; him I have never seen, but there is a song about the boys' deed which the folk sing. There is their reward, and where should they look for a better? Are we mercenaries? Do we serve another country, not our own? Is the freedom of our country to be weighed against money? But this I would propose – that after our next cruise, should anything of what we give now be left over when the men are paid and the ships fit for use again, let that, if you will, be divided. Only let there never be a ship which cannot go to sea,

or is ill-equipped for want of money, which might have been ready had not we taken it for ourselves. Now, if there is aught to say against this, let us hear it. For me, I vote for the war-fund to be made up of half the takings of each ship."

The Capsina's speech won the day, and even a few of the primates went over to her side, leaving, however, a more malignant minority. At the end of the meeting the money was collected, and the Capsina was fairly satisfied with her morning's work.

It was two days after this that word was brought to Hydra by a vessel of Chios, that Germanos, Archbishop of Patros, had need of Economos. The latter had friends and relations in Misolonghi, and as there was a strong garrison of Turks there, it seemed wiser to get the soundings of the place, so said the archbishop, from a man who would move about unsuspected. Therefore, if his work in Hydra was over, let him come. Late that afternoon he had gone to see the Capsina, in order to find out whether any of her vessels were by chance going to Nauplia or some mainland port, and could put him on his way.

"For my work here is finished, or so I think," he said. "Only this morning, indeed, I met Father Nikolas, who alone has been more detrimental to the cause than even the Turks; but he seemed most friendly to me, and regretted that I was going."

The Capsina was combing out Michael's ruff after his bath, and was not attending very closely. But at these words she left the comb in Michael's hair and looked up.

"What is that?" she said.

"I met Father Nikolas an hour ago," said Economos; "he thanked me for all I had done here, and said that he had hoped I was stopping longer. In fact, I think he has quite withdrawn all his opposition."

Now the Capsina had excellently sure reason for knowing that the primate still harbored the bitterest grudge against Economos for having first proposed and eventually carrying the institution of the war-fund, and her next question seemed at first strangely irrelevant.

"Do you walk armed?" she asked.

"Not in Hydra."

She drew the comb out of Michael's ruff, and clapped her hands. The servant came in at the summons.

"I want to see Kanaris," she said. "Send for him at once."

She stood silent a moment or two, until the servant had left the room, and then turned to Economos.

"I don't really know what to say to you," she remarked, "or how to account for my own feelings. But it is borne in upon me that you are in danger. Nikolas friendly and genial to you! It is not in the man. He is genial to none. That he should be genial to you of all men is impossible. Afterwards I will tell you why. Come, what did he say to you?"

"He asked me to sup with him this evening," said Economos, "and I told him that for aught I knew I might be gone before."

"He asked you to sup with him?" said the Capsina, frowning. "God send us understanding and charity! But really – " and she broke off, still frowning. Then after a pause:

"Look you," she said, "I do not know much of Father Nikolas, but this I know, that you can have no enemy more bitter. He took, so you tell me, a valuable prize in this last cruise. It is you, so he thinks, who has deprived him of half of it, and certainly it is you and I between us who have done so. Now the man has good things in him. I am trying, you understand, to put together these good things, his certain hatred of you, and his asking you to supper. Did you notice how he winced when at the meeting the other day I said: 'You are a Spetziot, but *for that reason* we would not turn you out of our assembly,' I think he knew what I meant, though my words can have meant nothing but what they seemed to say, except to him, Kanaris, and to me. It is this: He is a primate, but he is married, and fifteen years ago the Turks carried off his wife, who is a cousin of Kanaris, from Spetzas. Now I believe that the one aim of his life is to bring her back. She is in Athens, and he knows where. Man,

you have taken half the ransom out of his closed pocket, I may say. Does he love you much? And if a Spetziot does not love he hates, and when he hates he kills. Why, then, did he ask you to supper?"

"You mean, he intended to kill me?"

"Yes, I mean that," said the Capsina.

"The treacherous villain – "

"No doubt, but think what you have done. Now, without unreasonable risk to you, I want to be certain about this, for Nikolas, I know, will give trouble. I am going to send you off to-night in the *Sophia*, to be landed at Kranidi. But I want you to leave this house alone, and walk down to the quay alone. There is not much danger; your way lies through the streets, and, at worst, if my guess about Nikolas is right, he will try to have you knifed. He dare not have you shot in the town, but a man's throat can be cut quietly. Man, what are you afraid of? Indeed, I wish I was you. But here is Kanaris. Kanaris, did you see or speak to any one on your way up here?"

"Yes, to Dimitri, the servant of Nikolas. He was coming out of a shop."

"What shop?"

"Vasto's shop."

"They sell knives in Vasto's shop," remarked the Capsina. "Well, what did he say to you?"

"He asked if Economos was with you. And I said that I thought so."

"That is, then, very pretty. Kanaris, you are to take Economos over to Kranidi to-night. He will leave this house in an hour exactly. You will wait for him in that dark corner by Christos's house, and keep your eyes open. Why? Because Dimitri will not be far off, and he will try to knife him. Dimitri, I am afraid, must be shot. Economos will do the shooting, but he must not shoot towards the dark corner of Christos's house, or there may be a Kanaris the less. Mind that, Economos. If he shoots not straight, Dimitri will probably run down towards the quay, where he will mix with the crowd. It shall then be Kanaris's business to stop him. Or he may run up here. It shall then be my business."

Presently after Kanaris went down to the harbor to get the *Sophia* ready for sea. With a fair wind it was only two hours to Kranidi. The navigation was simple: a dozen men could work the ship, and they would be back before morning.

The Capsina took down two pistols, and proceeded to tell Economos what he was to do. He must walk straight to the quay and quickly. He must stop to speak to no man, and not fire unless attacked. She would be in the shadow of her own gate, Kanaris at the lower end of the street, where it opened on to the quay, so that should any attempt be made on his life the assassin would be hemmed in on both sides.

"Yet, yet," she said, hesitating, "ought I to warn Nikolas that I know? It seems a Turkish thing to do, to set a trap for a man. Really, I am afraid I should do the same to you if I were he, only I think I should have the grace to kill you myself, for I cannot think I would have my dirty work done for me, and I should not be such a fool as to ask you to supper. I don't want this wretched Dimitri to be killed – I wonder what Nikolas has paid him? Yes, it shall be so; one who attacks in the dark for no quarrel of his own will be ever a coward. So shoot in the air, only to show you are armed, and leave Dimitri to me."

At the end of the hour Economos rose to go. The Capsina went with him to the gate, and from the shadow looked cautiously out down the road. The far end of it, a hundred and fifty yards off, opened on to the brightly lighted quay, and against the glare she saw the figure of a man silhouetted by the long creeper-covered wall to the right of the road.

"Yes, that is Dimitri," she whispered. "Begone, and God-speed. Don't shoot, except to save your own life. Run rather."

She stepped back under cover of her gate, and looked after Economos. He had not gone more than twenty yards when she heard a quick but shuffling step coming down towards her from above, and, looking up, saw Father Nikolas. Standing as she did, in a shadowed embrasure, he passed her by unnoticed, and went swiftly and silently across the road, and waited in the shadow of the opposite

wall. He had passed so close to her that she could almost have touched him. Then for a moment there was silence, save only for the sounds of life on the quay and the rapid step of Economos, getting fainter every second. Then came a sudden scuffle, a shot, and the steps of a running man getting louder every moment. She was just about to step out and stop him, when Father Nikolas advanced from opposite. The man gave a little sobbing cry of fright, till he saw who it was.

"You have failed," said Nikolas, in a low voice.

"Yes, and may the curses of all the saints be upon you!" cried Dimitri. "You told me he went unarmed. You told me – Ah, God! who is that?"

The Capsina stepped out of the shadow.

"Yes, he has failed," she said. "And you, too, have failed. This is a fine thing for the Church of Hydra. Man, stop where you are. Not a step nearer. I, too, am armed. By God," she exclaimed, suddenly, rising an octave of passion and contempt, and throwing her pistol over the gate into her garden, "come a step nearer if you dare, you or your hired assassin – I am unarmed. You dare not, you dare not commit your murders yourself, you low, sneaking blackguard, who would kill men under the guise of friendship. You asked Economos to supper to-night, regretting he was going so soon: that would have been the surest way! Instead, you send another to cut his throat in the dark. You have failed," and she laughed loud, but without merriment. "A fine, noble priest are you! Hydra is proud of you, the clan delights in you! In the name of the clan I pay you my homage and my reverence."

Not a word said Father Nikolas.

"So you have no reply ready," she went on. "Indeed, I do not wonder. And for you, Dimitri, is it not shame that you would do the bidding of a man like this? Now, tell me at once, what did he give you for this?"

"If you dare tell – " whispered Nikolas.

"Oho! So there is perhaps something even more splendid and noble to come! If you dare *not* tell, rather," said Sophia. "Quick, man, tell me quickly."

The man fell on his knees.

"Capsina, I dare not tell you all," he said. "But I have a disgraceful secret, and Father Nikolas knew it. He threatened me with exposure."

The Capsina turned to Nikolas.

"So – this grows dirtier and more ugly, and even more foolish than I thought, for I did you too much justice. Devil I knew you were, but I gave you the credit for being cunning. It is not very safe for a man like you to threaten exposure, is it?"

And she turned and went a step nearer to him.

Father Nikolas, in a sudden frenzy, ran a couple of steps towards her, as if he would have seized her. For answer she struck him in the face.

"That for you," she said, suddenly flaming again into passion – "that for you; go and tell the primates that I have struck a priest. It is sacrilege, I believe, and never was I more satisfied with a deed. Run, tell them how I have struck you, and get me punished. Sacrilege? Is it not sacrilege when a man like you shows the people the blessed body and blood? You are afraid of man, it seems – for you dared not touch Economos yourself – but it seems you hold God in contempt. You living lie, you beast! Stand still and listen."

And she told Dimitri the story of Nikolas's marriage. Then, turning again: "So that is quits," said she, "between you."

Then to Nikolas: "Now go," she said, "and remember you are in the hollow of my hand. Will you come at night and try to kill me? I think not."

Nikolas turned and went without a word.

The Capsina saw him disappear, and then spoke to Dimitri.

"You poor, wretched creature!" she said. "You have had a lesson to-night, I am thinking. Go down on your knees – not to me, but to the blessed Jesus. I forgive you? That is no word from one man to another. Go to the church, man, or to your home, or even here, and be sorry."

"Capsina! oh Capsina!" sobbed the man.

Sophia felt strangely moved, and she looked at him with glistening eyes.

"You poor devil! oh, you poor devil!" she said. "Just go by yourself alone somewhere and think how great a brute you are. Indeed, you are not a fine man, and I say this with no anger, but with very much pity. You had no grudge against Economos. Yet because you were afraid you would do this thing. Thank God that your fear saved you, your miserable fear of an ounce of lead. What stuff are you made of, man? What can matter less than whether you live or die? Yet it matters very much how you live and how you die. There, shake hands and go."

CHAPTER IV

The fleet put to sea again in the last week of May, cruising in the Archipelago, eager for the spring coming of the Ottoman ships. They took a northeasterly course, and on the 5th of June sighted a single Turkish man-of-war to the north of Chios. But it put about, before they were in range to attack, and ran before them to the mainland, anchoring in the harbor of Erissos, beneath the walls of the Turkish fort. To attack it there at close quarters meant exposure to the fire from the fort as well; moreover, the harbor was nearly landlocked, and thoroughly unsuited to that rapidity of manoeuvre by which alone these little hawks could dare attack the ravens of the Turkish fleet, for, except when the sea-breeze blew, it lay nigh windless. Tombazes could scarce leave it to sail south, but his plan of action was determined by the appearance, on the morning of the 6th of June, of more Ottoman ships from the north – a man-of-war, three frigates, and three sloops – and before noon news arrived from a Greek town called Aivali, farther up the Asiatic coast, that the garrison of Turks had been suddenly increased in the town.

Here, then, was work sufficient: the single Turk must not sail south, the fresh convoy of ships must be stopped, and help must be sent to Aivali. What this increase of garrison might mean, Tombazes could not conjecture, but he told off fifteen vessels to follow the Turkish ships, while the rest waited at Erissos to destroy the blockaded vessel at all costs and with all speed, and then sail on to Aivali. A meeting of the captains was held on the admiral's ship, and it was resolved to attempt the destruction of the Turk by fire. A Psarian in the fleet was said to know the use and handling of fire-ships, and one was prepared, but badly managed, and the only result was that two of its crew were first nearly roasted and then completely drowned. However, on the following day another Psarian volunteered to launch one, which was managed with more conspicuous success. The boat was loaded with brushwood, and brushwood and sails were soaked in turpentine. It set off from the fleet while it was yet dark, and, conveniently for the purpose, a white mist lay over the harbor. The air was windless, and it had to be rowed swiftly and silently up to the anchorage of the Turk. They had approached to within a cable's length when they were sighted from on board the enemy, but the captain of the fire-ship, Pappanikolo, knowing that a few moments more would see the work done, urged the men on, and drove his boat right into the bows of the Turk, contriving to entangle his mast in the bowsprit ropes. Then, bidding his men jump into the boat they towed behind, he set fire to the ship and rowed rapidly off. A few muskets only were fired at them, and they escaped unhurt. Not so their victim. In a moment the fire-ship blazed from stem to stern, pouring such vast clouds of smoke up from the brushwood, which was not quite dry, that it was impossible for those on board or from the fort to reach the seat of the flames. Many of the sailors jumped overboard and swam to land, but the ship itself burned on till the fire reached the powder-magazine and exploded it.

This being done, the remainder of the Greek fleet weighed anchor and went north again. While rounding Lesbos they met the ships which had pursued the rest of the Ottoman fleet returning. They, too, had shunned the Greeks, but with the south wind had escaped into the Dardanelles, where the Greeks had not ventured to follow. Most of the pursuing vessels had been of the primates, and the Capsina expressed her scorn in forcible language.

Aivali was a wealthy commercial town in the pashalik of Brusa and on the coast of Asia Minor. Since the outbreak of the war several similar Greek towns had been plundered by irregular bands of Turks, and the pasha, seeing that his revenues were largely derived from Aivali, for it was the home of many wealthy Greeks, was personally very anxious to save it. Thus the troops which, as Tombazes had been truly informed, had been sent there, were designed not for its destruction but its preservation. But the news of the destruction of the ship at Erissos had raised the excitement of the Turkish population at Aivali and desire for revenge to riot point, and already several Greeks had

been murdered in the streets. Such was the state of things when Tombazes' fleet dropped anchor outside the harbor.

That night, under cover of the darkness, came a deputation to the admiral. Unless he helped them their state was foregone. Their protectors would no doubt guarantee them their lives, but at the sacrifice of all their property; but, as seemed certain if the Turkish population rose against them (for they had heard that irregular bands of soldiers were marching on the town), the luckier of them would be murdered, the fairer and less fortunate sold as slaves. They appealed to Tombazes to rescue them, and take them off on the fleet, and this he guaranteed his best efforts to do.

Aivali was built on a steep hill-side running up from the sea. The lower ground was occupied with wharves and shipping-houses, then higher up came the manufacturing quarter, consisting mainly of oil-mills, and on the crest of the hill the houses of the wealthier inhabitants. It was these which would be the first prey to the mob.

Early next morning Tombazes landed a company of soldiers to protect the families who embarked. The troops of the pasha, who wished to prevent any one leaving the town, replied by occupying a row of shops near the quay, and keeping up a heavy musket fire on the troops and the ships. Meantime the news that the Greek fleet would take off the inhabitants was over the town, and a stream of civilians had begun to pour down. The soldiers returned the fire of the Turks, while these were embarked in small boats and taken out to the ships; but the odds were against them, for their assailants were firing from shelter. But suddenly a shout went up from the fleet as the *Sophia* weighed anchor, and, hoisting her sails, came close in, shouldering and crashing through a line of fishing-boats, risking the chance of grounding. Then, turning her broadside to the town, she opened on the houses occupied by the Turks, firing over the heads of the soldiers and embarking population. The first broadside knocked one shop to pieces, and in a couple of minutes the Turks, most of the regular troops, were swarming out of houses like ants when their hill is disturbed, and flying to some position less exposed to the deadly and close fire of the *Sophia*.

Simultaneously the Greeks of the town, fearing that this occupation of the houses lower down by the regular troops should cut off their escape, in turn occupied some houses in the rear, and kept up another fire on them. Between the *Sophia* and them the troops were fairly outclassed, and the line of retreat for the population was clear again.

But this engagement of the regular troops with the Greeks gave the rabble of the Turkish population the opportunity they desired. They rushed to the bazaar and rifled the shops, spoiling and destroying what they did not take; and, after leaving the quarter gutted and trampled, made up the hill to the houses of the wealthiest merchants, from which the Greeks were even now fleeing, and captured not only goods, but women and children. Unless some speedy move was made by the troops, it was clear that the bulk of the population would escape or fall into the murderous hands of the rabble; and unable, under the guns of the *Sophia*, to make another attempt to hold the quay against the Greeks, they set fire to various houses in a line with the shore, that a barrier of flames might cut off the lower town from the upper. Meantime they collected again at the square which lay to the left of the town, with the purpose of making another formed attack on the troops on the beach. The Greek soldiers seeing this, as it was now hopeless to try to save the town from burning, themselves set fire to another row of houses at right angles to the beach in order to cut them off from the line of embarkation, and between the quay and the new position taken up by the Turkish troops. In a short time both fires, under the ever-freshening sea-breeze took hold in earnest.

Meantime boat-load after boat-load of the sailors had put to land; among the first, when the guns of the *Sophia* were no longer needed, being the *Capsina* and *Kanaris*, with some two dozen of the crew. They went up the town to help in protecting the line of retreat, and the fires being then only just begun, passed the oil-mills, and reached the wealthier quarter. The Turkish population, seeing they were armed, ran from them, and in an hour, having satisfied themselves that the upper quarter of the town was empty, turned back again towards the sea. But suddenly from some quarter of a mile

in front of them rose a huge pillar of smoke and fire, and with it a deep roaring sound as if all the winds of heaven had met together. Kanaris first saw what it was.

"Quick, quick," he said, "it is an oil-mill caught! There is a whole row of them below us!"

They hurried on, but before they had gone many yards they saw at the end of the street down which they were to pass another vast volume of flame break out, sweeping across to the opposite houses in long tongues of fire. From inside the mill came a crash, and next moment a river of flaming oil flowed out and down the street. To pass that way was impossible, and they turned back to make a *détour* to the other side of the town, away from the quarter where the troops were assembled. But before ten minutes had passed a dozen more mills had taken fire, and when at length they had passed the extremity of the line of fire, and came out on the quay, it was to find the beach empty, and the boats no longer at the shore. The torrent of flaming oil had poured down the steep and narrow streets, and thence across the quay over on to the water, where it floated, still blazing, and a belt of fire some thirty feet broad lined the water along the bay. The charred posts on the edge of the harbor-wall were hissing and spluttering, sending out every now and then little lilac-colored bouquets of flame, and it was somehow across that burning canal that their retreat lay.

The Capsina stood still a moment and then broke out into a laugh.

"We shall get through tighter places together, Kanaris," she said. "See, the oil has already ceased flowing, but we cannot stop here. The troops may be down again. Look you, there is only one way. A run, a good long breath, a dive; if we catch fire, next moment the water will put it out – and up again when we are past the flames. It is not more than thirty feet."

Meantime the Turkish troops hearing that one party, at any rate, of the Greeks was still in the town, and thinking that all retreat by the beach was now cut off, had stationed themselves away to the left beyond the flames. The Capsina waved her hand to them.

"No, no, we don't go that way, gentlemen!" she cried, and next moment she had run the dozen scorching and choking yards across the quay and plunged into the flames. Kanaris followed, and after him the others with a shout. The Turks, seeing this, discharged their muskets at them, but ineffectually. A moment later a boat had put off from the *Sophia*, and, as they rose safe beyond the flames they were dragged on board dripping, yet strangely exhilarated and thrilled with adventure.

The deck of the *Sophia* was packed with men, women, and children rescued from the sacked and burning town, and strange and pathetic were their stories. Many did not know whether their families had been saved or not, for in the panic and confusion of their flight the children perhaps had been carried off in the boat from one ship, the parents in another. Some had come on board with nothing but the clothes they were in, others had dragged with them bags of money and valuables, but all were in a distraught amazement at the suddenness of the hour which had left them homeless. The sun was already sinking when the Capsina got back to her ship, but the glow of the sunset paled before that red and lurid conflagration in the town, and after dark, when the land breeze set in, the breath of it was as if from some open-mouthed furnace, and the air was thick with ashes and half-consumed sparks, making the eyes and throat grow raw and tingling with smoke. So, weighing anchor, they sailed out to the mouth of the harbor, some miles away from the burning town, where the heat was a little assuaged and the air had some breath of untainted coolness in it.

By next day the fire had died down, a smouldering of charred beams and eddying white ashes had taken the place of blazing houses and impenetrable streets, and once more the town was searched for any Greeks that remained. Some few were found, but in no large numbers; and that afternoon the fleet turned south again to give the homeless a refuge on one or other of the revolted islands. Many of the able-bodied at once enlisted themselves in the service of the revolutionists, others seemed apathetic and stunned into listlessness, and a few, and these chiefly among the older men and women, would have slunk back again, like cats, preferring a ruined and wrecked home to new and unfamiliar places.

Throughout August and September the fleet made no combined cruise; some ships assisted at the blockade of Monemvasia, others made themselves red in the bloody and shameful work at Navarin. Then for a time all eyes and breathless lips were centred on the struggle going on at Tripoli; the armies and ships alike paused, watching the development of that inevitable end.

Autumn and early winter saw the Capsina at Hydra, busily engaged in building another ship on the lines of the *Sophia*, but with her characteristic points even more developed. She was going to appoint Kanaris to command the old *Sophia*, and to sail the new one herself. December saw her launched, and about the middle of January the Capsina took her a trial-trip up as far as Nauplia.

It was one of those Southern winter days which are beautiful beyond all capacity of comprehension. There was a sparkle as if of frost in the air, but the sun was a miracle of brightness, and the wind from the southeast kindly and temperate. The sea was awake, and its brood of fresh young waves, laced here and there with a foam so white that one could scarcely believe it was of the same stuff as those blue waters, headed merrily up the gulf, and the beautiful new boat, still smelling aromatically of fresh-chiselled pine wood, seemed part of that laughing crowd, so lightly did it slip on its way, and with a motion so fresh and springing. From the time she left the harbor of Hydra till she rounded the point of Nauplia, her white sails were full and brimming with the following wind, and it was little past noon when they swung round to the anchorage.

All that afternoon the Capsina was busy, for there were many friends to see, and she spent some time on the Turkish ship which she had captured in the spring and which was being made ready for sea again; and all the time her heart was full, she knew not why, of a wonderful great happiness and expectancy. The busy, smiling people on the quay, the sparkle of the gulf, the great pine-clad hills rising up towards the fallen Tripoli, her own new ship lying at anchor in the foreground – these were all sweet to her, with a curious intimacy of sweetness. Her life tasted good; it all savored of hopes and aims, or fine memories of success, and she felt a childlike happiness all day that did not reason, but only enjoyed.

She was to sleep on board that night, returning to Hydra next day, and about the time of sunset she was sitting with Kanaris on the quay, talking to him and a Naupliot friend. The sky was already lit with the fires of the west sun, and the surface of the bay, still alive with little waves, was turning molten under the reflection. A small fishing-boat, looking curiously black against that ineffable blaze, was beating up to the harbor, and it gave the Capsina the keen pleasure of one who knows to see how well it was being handled. These small craft, as she was aware, were not made to sail close to the wind, but it seemed to her that a master who understood it well was coaxing it along, as a man with a fine hand will make a nervous horse go as he chooses. She turned to Kanaris.

"See how well that boat is handled," she said. "She will make the pier on this tack."

Kanaris looked up and judged the distance with a half-closed eye.

"I think not," he said. "It cannot be brought up in one tack."

The Capsina felt strangely interested in it.

"I wager you a Turkish pound it can and will," she cried. "Oh, Kanaris! you and I have something to learn from him who sails it."

The Capsina won her pound, to her great delight, and the boat drew up below them at the steps. It was quite close under the wall, so that they could only see the upper part of its masts, but from it there came a voice singing very pleasantly, with an echo, it seemed, of the sea in it, and it sang a verse of the song of the vine-diggers.

Up the steps came the singer, from the sea and the sun. His stature was so tall as to make bystanders seem puny. His black hair was all tousled and wet. He was quite young, for his chin and cheek were smooth, and the line of mustache on his upper lip was yet but faintly pencilled. Over his shoulder he carried a great basket of fish, supporting it freshly, you would say, and without effort, and the lad stood straight under a burden for two men. His shirt was open at the neck, showing a skin browned with the wind and the glare of the water, and the muscles stood out like a breastplate over

the bone. His feet were bare and his linen trousers tucked up to his knees. And it was good also to look at his face, for the eyes smiled and the mouth smiled – you would have said his face was a smile.

The Capsina drew a long, deep breath. All the wonderful happiness of the day gathered itself to a point and was crowned.

"Who is that?" she asked the Naupliot, who was sitting with her.

"That? Do you not know? Who but the little Mitsos? Hi lad, what luck?"

Mitsos looked round a moment, but did not stop.

"My luck," he said. "But I must go first to Dimitri. I am late, and he wants his fish. For to-day I am not a free man, but a hireling. But I will be back presently, Anastasi, and remember me by this."

And with one hand he picked out a small mullet from his basket, threw it with a swift and certain aim at Anastasi's face, and ran laughing off.

So Mitsos ran laughing off, and a moment afterwards Anastasi got up too.

"We had better go," he said to Kanaris, "or the market will be closed, and you want provisions you say."

"Ah, yes," said the Capsina, "it is good that I have you to think for me, Kanaris, for I declare the thing had gone from my mind. Let them be on board to-night, so that we can sail with day."

The two went off together towards the town, and Sophia was alone.

"Some one from the sun and the sea" – her own words to Michael came back to her – "and you shall be his, and the ship shall be his, and I shall be his." The dog was lying at her feet, and she touched him gently with her toe.

"And will you be his, Michael? Will you be Mitsos's?" she said. "And what of me?"

Surely this was the one from the sun and the sea, of whom she had not dreamed, but of whom she could imagine she had dreamed, he who had gone at night and burned that great ship from Kalamata, returning, perhaps, as he had returned this evening, laughing with a jest for a friend and a ready aim, of whose deed the people sang. She had wondered a hundred times what Mitsos was like, but never had she connected him with the one of whom she spoke to Michael.

She rose from her seat and went to lean over the quay wall. She was convinced not in thought – for just now she did not think, but only feel beyond the shadow of doubt – that Mitsos was ... was, not he whom she looked for, her feeling lacked that definiteness, but he for whom she would wait all her life. He was satisfying, wholly, utterly; the stir and rapture of glorious adventure had seized him as it had seized her; the aims of their lives were one, and was not that already a bond between them? He was a man of his arm, and his arm was strong; a man of his people, and a man not of houses but of the out-of-doors. She had taken him in at one glance, and knew him from head to heel: black hair, black eyes, a face one smile, but which could surely be stern and fiery; for any face so wholly frank as that would mirror the soul as still water mirrors the sky, the long line of arm bare to the shoulder, trousers all stained, as was meet, with salt and sailing gear, the long, swelling line of calf down to feet which were firm and fit to run – surely this was he for whom she had been designed and built, and she was one, she knew, at whom men looked more than once. And her heart broke into song, soaring...

She stood up, a tall, stately figure, yet girlish, still looking out to sea. He had left his boat below the wall; he had said he would be back soon, and she meant to wait his coming. The wind was strong, and a coil of her glorious hair came unfastened, and she raised her hands to pin it up again; her skirt was blown tight and clinging against the long, slim lines of her figure, her jacket doubled back against itself by the wind, and like Mitsos, perhaps with thinking of him, her face was one smile.

The sun had quite set, but over the sky eastward came the afterglow of the day, turning the thin skeins of cloud to fiery fleeces, and flooding the infinite depth of the sky with luminous red. Behind her the town flushed and glowed, and the white houses were turned to a living gold. After a while she faced round again, for she heard steps coming, and seemed to know that it was Mitsos back again.

"Oh, Anastasi!" cried a voice, "but is there not a fool waiting behind that corner with a good fish to throw and waste? Take it home to your supper, man, and thank God for a dinner you have

not earned except in that you have a large face easy to hit. Eh, do you think I cannot see you? You'll be thought a fine hand at hiding, will you?"

Mitsos advanced cautiously, for he was meaning to go to his boat, where he had left his coat and shoes, and the boat lay behind a corner most convenient for a hiding man. The Capsina was standing close by, and Michael bared his teeth as Mitsos came up.

"Fool, Michael!" said the Capsina; "is it not he?"

Then as Mitsos got within speaking distance —

"Anastasi has gone," she said; "you were over quick, were you not, at seeing him?"

Mitsos laughed, but paused a moment as Michael made the circuit of him, sniffing suspiciously.

"This is what I never entirely enjoy," he said, standing still. "Now no man can go sniffing round my bones and have a sound head on his shoulders. But there is less sport, so I take it, in fighting a dog. Ah, he is satisfied, is he? That is for the good. But where is fishy Anastasi?"

"He went to the market with Constantine Kanaris to buy provisions."

"Is Constantine Kanaris here?" asked the boy. "No, I know him not; but Nikolas Vidalis, the best man God ever made, and my uncle, knew him for a fine man. But why, if Kanaris is here she is here, for he serves with her."

"She! Who?"

"Who but the Capsina? I would give gold money to see her. Why — " Mitsos stopped short, and Sophia laughed.

"Thus there is double pleasure," she said, "for I, too, have often wished to see the boy of whom the people sing. Yes, I am the Capsina; why not?"

Mitsos's big eyes grew round and wide.

"What must you have thought of me?" he said. "But indeed I did not know — " and he bent down from his great height and would have kissed the hand she held out to him.

"Not so!" she cried, laughing; "they of Maina and we are equal."

"That is true," said Mitsos, standing upright a moment; "but where is her equal who took three Turkish ships?" and bending again he kissed it.

"Yet a lad I have heard of burned a ship of war," said she.

Mitsos flushed a little under his brown skin.

"That was nothing," he said, "and, indeed, but for my cousin Yanni there would have been no burning." Then changing the subject quickly: "You came to-day only, Capsina? Surely you will not go again to-morrow." Then, "Ah," he cried, "but I, too, am going to sea, so I may say, with you, for I am to be of the crew of the Turk you brought in here. But you will have a fleet soon!"

"I cannot have too many brave men to work with," said Sophia. "But you under me! Lad, you could sail a double course while I sailed single. Though I have known you perhaps ten minutes, yet you have made me the richer," and she held out the Turkish pound she had won from Kanaris, telling him how she had gained it.

Mitsos grinned with pleasure.

"Well, I think I do know this bay," he said, "for indeed I must have been more hours on it than in the house. But, oh, Capsina, when will that Turkish ship you took be ready for sea, for indeed it eats my heart to go catching fish when I should be catching Turks."

"They tell me in six weeks," she said, "but they seem a little slow about it all. They want more speediness. See you, Mitsos," she said, then stopped.

Mitsos looked up.

"See you," she said again. "Kanaris after this takes command of the old *Sophia*. I want some one who knows the sea, and who is better at home on a ship than on his own feet, to be under me: or it is hardly that — to be with me, as Kanaris will tell you. Come. I sail from here to-morrow, or I will even wait for two days or three: or if that is not time sufficient for you — yet what do you want, for your hands and feet you carry with you? — you can join me as soon as maybe at Hydra. So. It is an offer."

"Then to none other shall it now be offered," said Mitsos. "And what shall I want with two days or three? See, I will sail home now on the instant across the bay, to say good-bye to those at home, and they I know will be blithe to let me go, or rather would think scorn of me if I stopped and went not; and what does a man want with two days or three days to sigh or be sighed over? For my life I could never see that. Oh, Capsina, may God send us great winds and many Turks! I am off now; I am a fool with words, and how gratefully I thank you I cannot tell you. And Dimitri has never paid me my day's wage. May he grow even fatter on it!"

The Capsina laughed with pleasure.

"You go quick enough to please me," she said, "and that is very quick. And I hope, too, I may be found satisfactory, for indeed you do not stop to think what sort of a woman I may be to get on with."

"You are the Capsina," said Mitsos, with sturdy faith.

"You find that good guarantee? So do I that you are Mitsos; little Mitsos, they call you, do they not? That will be the name you'll hear from me, for indeed you are very big."

"And growing yet," said Mitsos, going down the steps to his boat. "Well, this is a fortunate day for me. I will be at your ship again in three hours, or four, if this wind does not hold. My homage, Capsina."

"And mine, little Mitsos."

He shoved his boat out from the wall, and she stood with sails flapping and shivering till he pulled her out from under shelter. Then with a heel over and a gathering whisper of water she shot out into the bay, and faded, still followed by the Capsina's gaze, into the dim starlit dusk.

So he was coming – he. Surely there could be no mistake about it all. A stranger, she had seen a stranger at sunset on the quay, and her heart had embraced him as its betrothed. Only an hour, less than an hour, had passed, and as if to confirm the certainty, all arrangements had been made, and this very night he would be on her ship. Day after day they would range the great seas together with one aim and purpose.

How could it fail that that welding should leave them one? Had not her soul leaped out to him? How strange such a meeting was, yet not strange, for it was the inevitable thing of her life. How impossible that they should not have met, and met, too, at this very time, she in the height of her freedom and success – yet, oh, how ready to be free no longer! – he, just when he hungered to be up and throwing himself against the Turk. Michael, too, surely Michael knew, for when Mitsos was going off again, he had walked down to the bottom step above the water and watched him set off, wagging his tail in acceptance of him. She would have wagered herself and the brig and Michael that they were all going up to heaven.

Presently after came Kanaris from the market, and he whistled across to the ship that it should send a boat to take them off. He was surprised to find the Capsina still on shore, supposing she would have gone back to supper on the ship, or would be with some friend in Nauplia. Indeed, a friend had gone seeking her on her ship, bidding her to sup with him, but she, wishing still to be alone, had said she was just going home. This was half an hour ago, and she lingered yet on the quay with Michael for guard. As they sat watching for the boat, hearing the rhythmical and unseen splash of oars getting nearer, this struck Kanaris.

"You have supped, Capsina?" he asked.

She looked up.

"Supped?" she said. "I don't think I have. Indeed, I am sure I have not. I am hungry. I got to looking at the sky and the water, Kanaris, as one does on certain days, when there is no wind at sea, and it is certain I forgot about supper. Surely I have not supped. We will sup on the ship when we get back, and, as we sup, we will talk. Yes, I have been thinking a big cargo of thought. I will tell you of it."

They were rowed back across the plain of polished harbor water, and went on board in silence. Supper was soon ready – a dish of eggs, a piece of the broiled shoulder of a roe-deer, which the

Mayor Dimitri had sent to the Capsina with a present of wine and cakes made of honey. And when they had eaten, Sophia spoke of her plans.

"Kanaris," she said, "I have found him who will take, your place when you have command of the old *Sophia*, as you will on this next cruise. Oh, be tender with her, man, and remember, as I have always said, that she must be humored. She will sail to a head wind if you do not overburden her, but too much sail, though no more than others carry, would ever keep her back. Ah, well, you know her as well as I do. What was I saying? Oh yes, Mitsos Codones, the little Mitsos, you know, will join me here; he who gained me a pound this afternoon. He sails with me in place of the Captain Kanaris."

Now the offer of the presidency of Greece would have been less to the taste of Kanaris than the command of the *Sophia*, and his gratitude, though not eloquent, was sincere. But presently after the Capsina, looking up, saw doubt in his eye.

"Well?" she said.

"It is this," said Kanaris, "though indeed it is no business of mine. Mitsos is but a lad, and, Capsina, what do you know of him? Surely this afternoon he was a stranger to you."

Sophia smiled, and with a wonderful frank kindness in her black eyes.

"And you, Kanaris," she said. "Did not a strange sea-captain come to Hydra one evening? Did he not talk with me – how long – ten minutes? And was not a bargain struck on his words? Was that so imprudent a job? By all the saints, I think I never did a better!"

"But he is so young, this Mitsos," said Kanaris.

"Am I so old? We shall both get over it."

Kanaris filled his glass, frowning.

"But it is different: you are the Capsina."

"And he is of the Mainats. That is as good a stock as ours, though our island proverb says we are the prouder. And, indeed, I am not sure we are the better for that, for I would sooner have Mitsos here than, than Christos."

The Capsina, it must be acknowledged, found an intimate pleasure in putting into plain words what Kanaris could not let himself conjecture in thought.

"Christos?" he said. "Well, certainly. And if, he being a cousin of yours, I may speak without offence, it would be a very bold or a very foolish man who would wish to have Christos only to depend on in the sailing of a war brig."

"And the sailing of my brig will be the work of Mitsos," said Sophia. "Oh, Kanaris, you have lost a pound, and how bitter you are made."

Kanaris laughed.

"Well, God knows he can sail a boat," he said. "My pocket knows it."

"Then why look farther for another and a worse?" said the Capsina.

Kanaris was silent; the Capsina had hinted before that she meant him to command the *Sophia* in the next cruise, but he had yet had no certain word from her. And, indeed, his ambition soared no higher, and to no other quarter – to command the finest brig but one in the island fleet was no mean thing; but it is a human failing common to man to view slightly any one who takes one's own place, even when it is vacant only through personal promotion. Kanaris's case, however, was a little more complicated, for the Capsina was to him what he had thought no woman could have been. His habit of mind was far too methodical to allow him the luxury of doing anything so unaccounted for as abandoning himself to another; but there were certainly three things in his soul which took a distanced precedence of all others. Ships were one, destruction of Turks another, and the Capsina was the third. In his more spiritual moments he would have found it hard to draw up a reliable table of precedence for the three.

And certainly he was in one of his more spiritual moments just now, for there were no Turks about, his ambition to command a fine ship was satisfied, and the Capsina seated opposite to him had never so compelled his admiration. To-night there was something triumphant and irresistible in her

beauty, her draught of sparkling happiness had given a splendid animation to her face, and that flush which as yet he had only associated in her with anger or excitement showed like a beacon for men's eyes in her cheek. But in her face to-night the heightened color and sparkling eye had some intangible softness about them; hitherto, when it had been excitement that had kindled her, she looked more like some extraordinarily handsome boy than a girl, but to-night her face was altogether girlish, and the terms of comradeship on which Kanaris had lived with her, uncomplicated by question or suggestions of sex, were suddenly and softly covered over, it seemed to his mind, by a great wave of tenderness and affection. The Capsina, the captain of the boat, the inimitable handler of a brig, were replaced by a girl. He had been blind, so he thought; all these weeks he had seen in her an able captain, a hater of Turks – a handsome boy, if you will – and he was suddenly smitten into sight, and saw for the first time this glorious thing. But Kanaris was wrong; he had not been blind, the change was in the other.

But here, coincident with the very moment of his discovery, was the moment of his departure, and he left her with another, a provokingly good-looking lad, the hero of an adventure just after the Capsina's heart, and the subject for the songs of the folk. Was not Mitsos just such as might seem godlike to this girl? In truth he was.

She filled his glass again, and he sat and drank in her beauty. She seemed different in kind to what she had ever looked before – her eyes beat upon his heart, and the smile on her beautiful mouth was wine to him. He looked, weighing his courage with his chance, opened his mouth to speak, and stopped again. Truly such perturbation in the methodical Kanaris touched the portentous.

The Capsina had paused after her question, but after a moment repeated it.

"So why look farther for another and a worse?" she said again.

"Don't look farther," he said, leaning forward across the table, and twisting the sense of her question to his own use; "look nearer rather. Look nearer," he repeated; "and, oh, Capsina – "

The smile faded from her mouth but not from her eyes, for it was too deeply set therein to be disturbed by Kanaris.

"What do you mean?" she said.

"It is that I love you," said he.

But she sprang up, laughing.

"Ah, spare yourself," she said. "You ought to know I am already betrothed."

"You betrothed?"

"Yes, betrothed to the brig. No, old friend, I am not laughing at you. You honor me too much. Let us talk of something else."

Mitsos meantime was on his way back to the Capsina's betrothed. He had sailed rapidly across the bay, and made the anchorage close to the house in no longer than half an hour. His father, Constantine, had died two months ago, and since then he and Suleima had lived alone. Just now, however, Father Andréa was with them, staying a few days on his way to Corinth, where he was summoned by the revolutionists, and Mitsos, going through the garden to the house, saw him walking up and down by the fountain, smoking his chibouk.

"Ah, father," he said, "I am late, am I not? But I must be off again. I met the Capsina to-day in Nauplia, and she has offered me a place on her brig – the place Kanaris held under her, or rather with her, she says. She sails to-morrow morning. Suleima is in the house?"

"Yes, with the child, to whom the teething gives trouble. This is very sudden; but, lad, I would not stop you, nor, I think, will Suleima. Go to her, then."

Suleima had heard voices, but she was trying to persuade the baby to go to sleep, while the baby, it seemed, preferred screaming and struggling. She was walking up and down the room with it, crooning softly to it, and rocking it gently in her arms. She looked up smiling at her husband as he entered.

"I heard your voice," she said, "and I would have come out, but I could not leave the adorable one. Poor manikin, he is troubled with this teething!"

"Give me the child," said Mitsos; and the baby, interested in his own transference from one to the other, stopped crying a moment, and Mitsos bent over it.

"Oh, great one," he said; "is heaven falling, or are the angels dead, that you cry so? How will you be able to eat good meat and grow like the ash-tree, unless there are teeth to you? And how should there be teeth unless they cut through the gums – unless, like an old man, you would have us buy them for you?"

The baby ceased crying at the deep, soothing voice, and in a moment or two it was asleep.

"It is wonderful," said Suleima, taking it back from Mitsos, and laying it in the cot; "but, as you know, I have always said you were often more a woman than all the women I have ever seen."

Mitsos laughed.

"A fine big skirt should I want and a double pair of shoes," he said. "And, oh, Suleima, but it were better for the Turks I had been just a chattering woman."

"Eh, but what a husband have I got," said she, pinching his arm. "He thinks himself the grandest man of all the world. But what is there you have to tell me? – for I read you like father reads a book – there is something forward, little Mitsos."

"Yes, and indeed there is," said Mitsos, "but what with you and the child, and all this silly, daffing talk, it had gone from my mind. But this it is, most dear one, that the Capsina is here, and she has offered me the post just under her on the new ship she has built, that one you and I saw put in this morning. Eh, but it is grand for me! She will sail to-morrow."

"To-morrow! Oh, Mitsos!" Then, checking herself. "Dearest one, but your luck is still with you. She is a fine, brave lass they say, and handsome, too, and, so Dimitri told me, her ship is the fastest and best in Greece. So go, and God speed you, and I will wait, and the little one shall make haste to grow! You will stop here to-night? No? Not even to-night? Come, then, I must look out your clothes for you at once, for you must have your very best, and be a credit to the housewife."

She held Mitsos's hands for a moment, and put up her face to his to be kissed.

"Blessed be the day when first I saw you!" she whispered.

"And blessed has been every day since," said Mitsos.

"Even so, dearest," and she clung to him a moment longer. Then, "Come," she said, "we must make much haste if you are to go to-night, and indeed you shall leave behind that shirt you are wearing, to find it clean and fresh and mended when you come back. I will not have you going ragged and untidy, and oh, Mitsos, but your hair is a mop. Who has had the cutting of it? Sit you down and make no more words, and be trimmed."

Suleima got a pair of scissors, and clapping Mitsos in a chair, put the light close, and trimmed and combed out his tangled hair, with little words of reproof to him.

"Eh, but she will think you a wild man of the woods, fit only to frighten the birds from the crops. Sure, Mitsos, you will have been rubbing your head in the sand, and it was only yesterday you were scrubbing and soaping all afternoon. Well, what must be, must. Shut your eyes now and sit still," and clip went her scissors along the hair above the forehead.

"It is like cutting the pony's mane," she went on. "Such horse-hair I never saw yet. Well, the stuffing is half out of the sofa-cushion, and this will all do fine to fill it again. Now, stop laughing, lad, or an oke of hair will fall down that throat of yours, and so you will laugh never more. There, you are a little less of a scare-man. Get up and shake, and then change that shirt and trousers."

In an hour Mitsos was ready, and with a big rug on his shoulder in which his clothes were wrapped, he and Suleima set off to the little harbor below the house. The boy was going with him in order to take the boat back again, but Mitsos had sent him on ahead, and he and Suleima walked slowly down to the edge of the bay beneath a sky thick sown with stars.

"Mitsos," she said, "it will be with a heavy heart and yet a very light one that I shall say good-bye; heavy because we love one another, and yet for that reason very light. And, however far you are from me, yet you are here always in my heart, and the child is daily more like you. And, indeed, how

should I love one who sat at home and went not out on these great quests? Where should I have been now, think you, oh foolish one, if you had not gone catching fish and then Turks? so do not contradict me. And oh, Mitsos, I am going to say a very foolish thing for the last. You are so dear to me that I can scarcely speak of you to others, for so I seem to share you with them; and it would please me if I thought that you too would be very sparing of my name, for so I shall feel that, as on those beautiful nights together on the bay, we enjoyed each other in secret, and none knew. And now we are come to the boat – look! – and the boy has made ready. It is very bravely that I say good-bye to you, for with my whole heart I would have you to go. Oh, most beloved!"

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