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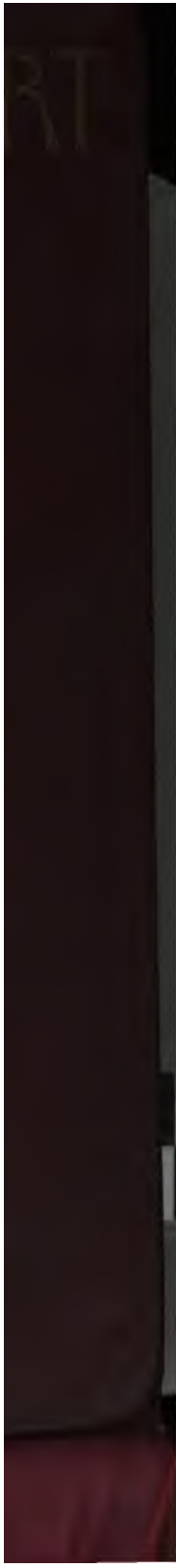
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THE QUEEN'S HEART



THE QUEEN'S HEART



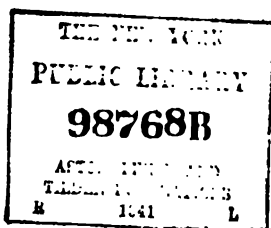
THE QUEEN'S HEART

J. H. HILDRETH



6. 6
BOSTON
MARSHALL JONES COMPANY
1918

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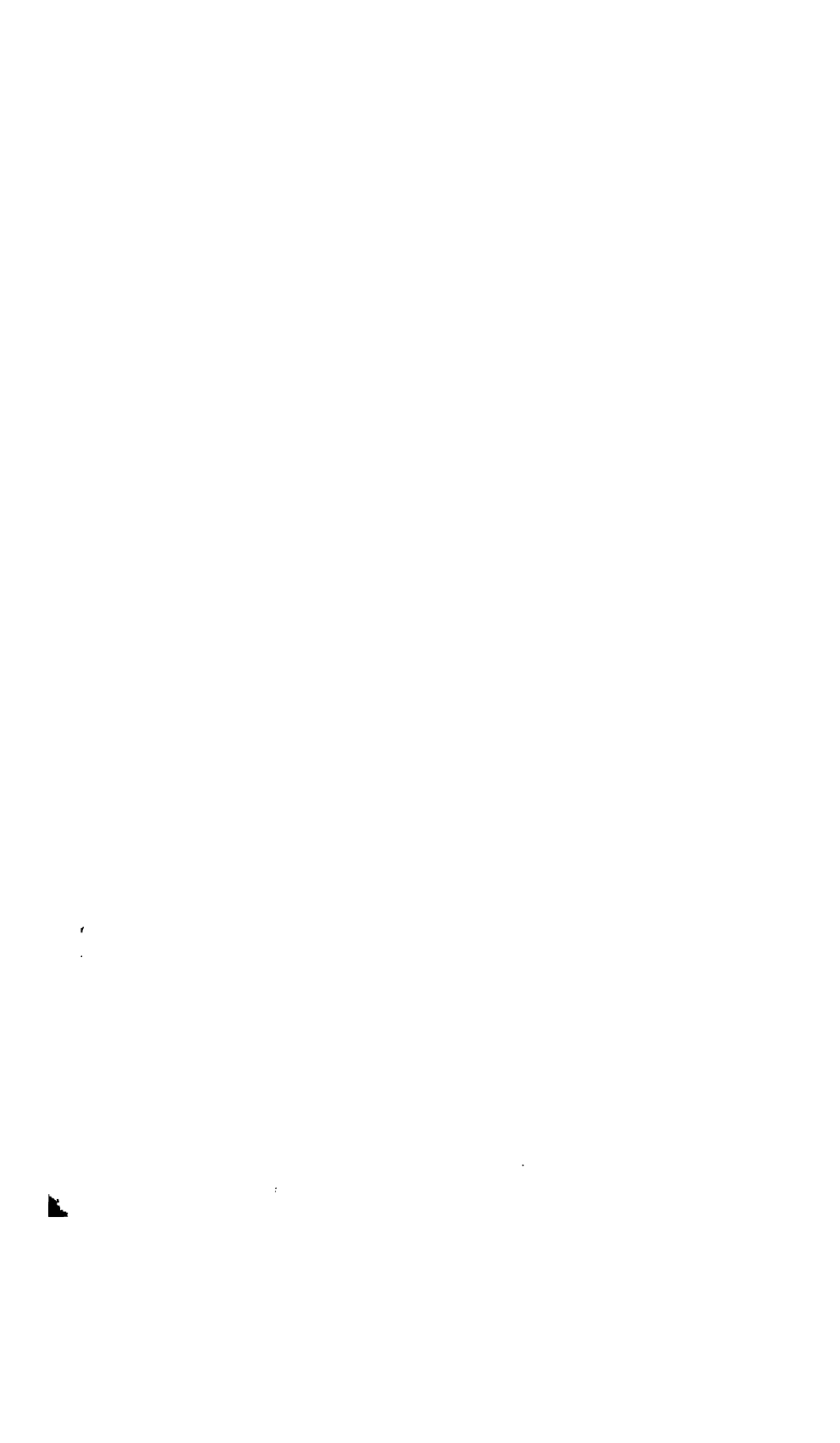
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CHAPTER I

ON THE HIGH SEAS

THE light breeze out of the southwest had died away altogether as the sun came down towards the edge of the sea, and the broad sails of the *Fleur de Lys* flapped lazily as she rose slowly and sank again on the long oily swell. The pennant of the Baltimore Yacht Club at the peak curled a little now and then in an aimless sort of way as the masts swayed ever so slightly, but otherwise there was no sign of even a breath of air.

It was still and it was also hot. The dead air stagnated over the dead sea and the red sun seemed to send reverberations of dead heat out across its path of beaten and glowing copper that seemed riveted on the slow curves of the sea.

A long youth slouching in a low wicker deck-chair, feebly clicked the ice in a tall glass and whined peevishly: "Jack, Jack! I say, you know, I really can't stand this sort of thing indefinitely."

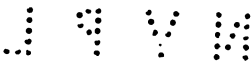
Jack Northrop tamped his pipe with a brown finger and chuckled grimly, "Oh, yes you can, my son, because you have to: and the worst is yet to come." He glanced along the sea with a shrewd eye. "You see, it's going to be between ten and fifteen

degrees hotter before it's any cooler, and you might as well make up your mind to it."

Harry Heath groaned and cracked a piece of consoling ice between his teeth. "It's all very well for you to talk, you infernal salamander: you haven't any nerves, and it's my belief no susceptibility to physical emotions either. The rest of us are human beings with no desires for an anticipatory acclimatization for the hereafter. Miss Wentworth, will you please take this fireproof object away and lose it, or push it overboard, — or something?"

A slim and ardent lady of indeterminate age and sufficiently plausible waves of tawny hair came languorously along the white deck and looked down at the suffering youth with an expression denoting angelic pity. "Poor old thing," she cooed throatily, resting a long ivory hand on the feverish brow. "Don't mind what big and heartless men say when they are ugly. There comes the steward now: shall I tell him to bring you another rickey with lots of the coldest ice, and the very nicest gin, and the most *exquisitely* fresh limes on board? Yes, that will do you beautifully, and be a perfect antidote for nasty Northrops and other horrid sea-monsters."

"Yes, please, good angel, and give the monster a fan. He might as well soothe my last moments. The heat is bad enough, but the loss of the wind is worse for we shall *never* get to Nantucket, but just be a



'painted ship upon a painted ocean,' forever and ever, while it gets hotter all the time until by and by we are nicely done and fall off this sizzling frying pan into the gaping maws of the greedy little fishes."

Northrop sniffed intolerantly. "Harry doesn't know when he is well off. Look at him, he has all he wants — with the equator thrown in for good measure. The longer we are out, the better, I say: who wants to get to Nantucket, or any other place? I am quite content to keep going, if we get nowhere. Or to stay as we are, only so as we don't arrive. Buck up, son, and drown your troubles: after it's hotter it's going to be colder, so *that's* all right. Here is Captain Elliot now; find fault with him if you want to. Oh, Captain, the Heath baby says you have botched your reckonings and run us into the doldrums."

Captain Elliot, a lady on either side, came to a full stop and gazed at the helpless Heath. "Doldrums!" he snorted with scorn, "why I remember a calm once in the Bay of Biscay beside which this would be half a gale, and as for heat!" — his scorn was inarticulate.


Northrop looked out under low eyelids as the Captain came ploughing along like a battleship conveying a transport and a racing sloop. The simile was a good one for the Captain and Owner of the *Fleur de Lys* was built on the general lines of a

fighting ship, broad in the beam, solid, massive, lumbering. When you say that Mrs. Elliot strongly resembled a transport, you have said enough as to her physical proportions and indispensable, comforting nature. When you say that Dorothy Howard was like a racing sloop, you have *not* said enough; you have hardly begun.

Tall, strongly made and cleanly built, with hands and feet rather large for ordinary canons of feminine beauty, she looked not unlike a Greek Victory masquerading in a white duck suit. You always felt this sense of incongruity no matter how well she dressed (which was not to be measured by any masculine vocabulary) and you did not mind it: it seemed an added attraction.

An added attraction, not an added beauty, for people seldom called her beautiful: rather they spoke of her with the awed admiration intelligent folk employ in referring to the Venus of Melos or the Victory of Samothrace.

There were those in Boston, and elsewhere, who actually said the girl's eyes were too far apart, her hair too light & brown, (olive, some said) and her mouth quite five eighths of an inch too wide and *much* too full. No one contradicted the statements, for it could not truthfully be done. Besides no one wanted to: they all said it did not matter, which was quite true.



In looking up, ever so little, Northrop's eyes caught those of Miss Howard full and fair: hers did not fall, but his did; which was typical. She was so frank, her detractors called her the Holy Inquisition. On the other hand it has been covertly reported that for a time Northrop was called Daisy in the remoter parts of the Baltimore Club. This in time came to the ears of the individual in question, the results being widely noted. Thereafter the *sobriquet* fell into immediate disuse.

The shyness remained however, and it became a proverb in Maryland that there were only three things in creation of which Jack Northrop was not afraid: a man, a horse and a gun.

He was the idol of his aunt, Mrs. Elliot, and of her husband. Every summer he went cruising with them up and down the Atlantic coast. Strange and midnight subterfuges had to be indulged in to complete any party of which he was a member, for the knowledge that girls, strange girls particularly, were to be on board would generally send him into the Adirondacks when the day for sailing came around. Curiously enough, after a day or two his shyness wore off, and for the rest of the cruise he would be absolutely at his ease; therefore Mrs. Elliot always held that the means justified the end: which came quickly enough, for her recalcitrant nephew never called on his fellow voyagers after once they set foot on shore.

A curious thing had happened this summer however. Early in March the *Fleur de Lys* had gone south to the Bahamas, with General Howard and his daughter, and Jack Northrop with his mother and younger sister on board. They had come back to Norfolk, and three days later had started for Nantucket. While making up the party Mrs. Elliot had sent for Jack and asked him to join it. Then the strange thing happened. He had distinctly inquired if Miss Howard was to go with them. With fear and trembling his aunt had acknowledged that such was the case.

"Let you know this evening," was the reply.

At eight o'clock, during dinner in fact, a note was brought to Mrs. Elliot. This was what it contained:

"No end of thanks. Will go with you with pleasure, Jack."

After dinner Mrs. Elliot went to bed. She stated that she was prostrated with the shock and that such another would be fatal. Her husband grinned and that night put up the best game of billiards of the season. He also drank three mint juleps: which was unwise.

To an outsider the awful significance of the event would have been disquieting — had it been apparent. If anything, Jack Northrop was poorer than Miss Howard. He was a surgeon and a young one. General Howard was trying to keep up the old family

estate in Dedham on no funds, (his father having been of a particularly open-handed disposition) and succeeding most indifferent well. Hence to outsiders, *viz.*, General Howard and Mrs. Northrop, the indication could only have been alarming. It is possible that their innocuous effect on Mr. and Mrs. Elliot was due to the fact that they themselves had no children, while nothing they could do would keep down Mr. Elliot's income.

Therefore on the second voyage the *Fleur de Lys* made this year, the party consisted of Captain and Mrs. Elliot, Miss Howard who was going north to join the general at "Norfolk Hall," Miss Ethel Wentworth, a kind of cousin of the captain's, Harry Heath, who had belonged to the same company of cavalry (militia) with Northrop, and Northrop himself.

The *Fleur de Lys* had sailed from Fortress Monroe on the 20th of June. For twenty-four hours the wind had been strong and favorable, then it had begun to shift and waver, until at last on the evening of the 22nd it sunk into the sea and left the yacht motionless in the oily water, about ninety miles off Cape Henlopen.

"You said ninety miles I believe, didn't you, Captain?" yawned Heath.

"And not a fathom too far either."

"Why?"

"Because if we were much nearer you might have to walk, the rest of the way."

"Wind?"

"I expect so. Look at that sky."

The sun had gone, and its arc of rose reflection in the east had risen above the horizon until it lay on the crests of a gigantic range of cloudy mountains, piled in tumbling masses high above the sea. In the lower shadow thin lightning shivered incessantly, and now and then the rosy crests were brushed with silver fire.

Miss Wentworth clasped her hands.

"How *perfect!*" she cried ecstatically, "isn't it just like *millions* of *crépon*; and such a lovely color! I shall have a gown like that at once. Pearl gray silk, quite heavy I think, but almost white; peach bloom *crépon* and my Persian silver. How rapturous!"

Heath considered the matter critically. "I don't like the silver," he said. "Substitute mother of pearl and opals."

"Mr. Heath, that is a revelation. I *will!*"

The idea was not without its attractions to Mrs. Elliot. Captain Elliot had gone to speak to the skipper, and no one heard Northrop say to Miss Howard, "Let us go forward; do you mind?"

"Of course not, it is fine up in the bow."

"Even if we are not moving?"

"Even then. Of course it isn't like having salt spray in your teeth and the wind beating your hair out of all control, still it has always the memory of that glory, so I like it."

"That is curious, I hate being in the stern of anything also. I hate to follow."

"Yes, I think you do. So do I in a way, but there is something queer about me. I think I would rather command than anything, but if I can't command I absolutely enjoy obeying."

Northrop smiled. "That is right," he said. "I fancy that is the true spirit of a commander. Really, I don't believe a man can direct unless he knows absolutely how to obey. Knows how and enjoys it also."

"Can you obey?"

"Good heavens, yes!" and Northrop laughed aloud. "I should think so; my — by courtesy — military training taught me that. We were under iron orders at school, and I was two years a trooper in the cavalry before I got to be second lieutenant. Oh yes, I can obey, but I want to select my superiors!"

Dorothy Howard sighed a little wistfully. "Yes, I suppose it is all in that, but most of us can't choose."

"I can."

There was something in the man's voice that made her glance up with a sudden flush.

What had happened to Northrop's eyes? She had never seen them like that. The gray had turned black, deep and luminous; they seemed like centres of magnetism, she could hardly wrench her own eyes from that steady, dominating gaze.

"Yes, oh yes, we can all choose," she said tremulously and hurriedly, "but it is so hard to have our choice."

The magnetism was gone; she felt the change through her veiled eyelids. When she ventured to look again Northrop was as she had seen him before, only his eyes were grayer, harder, and his mouth was thin and firm.

Mrs. Elliot hailed them from the stern. "Come back, children. Mr. Heath is going to tell us a ghost story!"

Northrop looked at Miss Howard. "Shall we go?" he said.

That was all, but for the life of her the girl could not have said "yes," though she willed it, and though she hated herself for her weakness in allowing another to control her movements.

"It is too early for ghost stories," she said slowly.

"Too early!" Northrop shouted, "too early and too hot for Harry to exert himself. By and by!"

They sat in silence for some moments looking into the east where the full moon was breaking its way through the tumbled clouds, ashy, now that the

opalescent fire of the sun's reflection had burnt itself out.

Miss Howard spoke first, and rather nervously.

"What is that, that dark spot out under the moon?"

It was a trivial question, but someone *had* to speak.

Northrop looked where she pointed.

"Is it a boat?"

"I can't see, it looks almost like one; with a short mast in it. Isn't that it?"

"It may be; wait until I get a glass."

Northrop was gone but a moment. "Upon my word it *is* a boat, and I don't think it is empty. I see something under the mast,— the oar, for I am sure it is an oar stepped for a mast."

Captain Elliot also had seen the dark object, and now came forward.

"What do you suppose that is?" he said. "It looks to me like a deserted boat."

For a few minutes everyone watched the mysterious shadow in the evening twilight, wondering as to the nature of the forlorn object that had been swept into their field of vision by some subtle current of the sea.

Northrop spoke suddenly. "I am dying for lack of exercise. I think I will row down and find out."

"What a crazy idea!" almost shouted the Captain.

"The barometer is falling like a plummet and the skipper has already given orders to shorten sail. We shall have it in the neck presently."

Northrop looked over the sea. There seemed no immediate danger of wind and he grew stubborn.

"All the same, Uncle, I am going. It won't take half an hour to row out and back, and nothing can happen in that space of time. I am simply dying of inanition. A short row strikes me exactly right. Have the men get a boat ready and I will be off."

Captain Elliot went grumbling aft and Northrop turned suddenly to Miss Howard.

"Will you come too? The sea is quite still, and a row will be a pleasant change."

"It will be a change, and I will come with pleasure. Shall we ask any of the others?"

"No, I think not; it is hardly worth while."

"Very well; I will be ready as soon as the boat is."

She disappeared below and Northrop went aft.

"Miss Howard and I are going on a quest: we propose to solve the problem of the empty boat, but we will be back in time for supper."

There was a chorus of protest and Mrs. Elliot rose to her feet in indignation.

"I never in my life heard anything so perfectly mad! We are going to have an awful gale, everybody says so — your uncle, and the skipper and — and everybody. Jack, you shan't go."

Captain Elliot stuck his hands in his pockets and spread his short legs wide. "That's right," he said with decision. "You may be crazy, but you shan't be suicidal — on *my* boat. You stay just where you are."

Heath yawned placidly and murmured, "Yes, stay where you are, dear boy. Just think of taking the least unnecessary exertion with the mercury hammering against the top of the tube. Don't speak of it — you make me so very warm."

"My dear Aunt, and people generally," said Northrop serenely, "you are, if you will allow me to say so, talking rot. There is no wind, and there will be none for an hour. It will be lighter by moonlight than it is now in the twilight. It is not hot, at least not so hot rowing a small boat as it is sitting here in the dead air thinking about it. Miss Howard wants to go and so do I. So we are going. All ready, Miss Howard? Give me your hand then. Now you can keep your eyes on us all the time. If we stay too long, give us a hail and we will come back. All right! Cast off!"

The boat sheered off from the *Fleur de Lys* and Northrop took the oars.

CHAPTER II

THE DERELICT

AS Northrop pulled silently across the smooth water into the fast darkening east, Dorothy Howard sat in the stern sheets of the boat and thought. The unexpected change in Northrop from a shy and almost boyish diffidence to a quiet yet dominating self-possession, was a revelation. It was as though he had suddenly dropped a gentle mask showing behind a quality of a nature and degree thus far without the limits of the girl's experience. The new phase showed itself in nothing he said, but it made itself felt and in a way hardly to be resisted. Thus far in her short life Miss Howard had commanded, and in her case also, the domination she exercised had been more through a certain subtle influence than any positive action. People obeyed her and submitted to her direction, not because she claimed this but because there was something about her that required such subjection. For the first time she found herself confronted with a spirit that compelled her in the same way. At the first attack she had submitted, and the thought was in a way humiliating, yet it was exhilarating as well, and she glanced at the man before her, swaying to and fro at the oars,

as one runs one's eyes over a horse that shows of a sudden a spirit hitherto unsuspected. "I wonder if this is war?" she thought to herself, "at all events, it is greatly to be desired."

What Jack Northrop's thoughts were at the same moment it would not be hard to guess, for the strong, quiet figure before him was more than pleasant to look upon. All he said however was — "I think this is a pretty good lark, don't you?"


"It certainly is a most refreshing change from the Ancient Mariner stagnation of the *Fleur de Lys*; there really seems a bit of breeze out here."

"Just the current made by our motion, I fancy. There will be enough by and by, but not until long after we get back, I think. Just look behind you!"

Miss Howard turned towards the west and gave a little cry of delight not unmixed with awe.

The sight was wonderful. The sunset light was nearly gone, but from the sea gigantic masses of clouds were rolling up like the lofty smoke of some titanic volcano. The sky was overcast half way to the zenith, but clear against the rolling and shifting shadow rose a column of luminous cloud flickering with ceaseless lightning that palpitated over its entire surface and darted outward in long, crackling, feathery branches, like fiery frostwork.

It looked ominous but if it had been a rushing tornado, Miss Howard would under no circumstances



whatever have suggested the desirability of caution to Northrop.

"Yes, it looks bad" he said, answering her unvoiced thought, "but I really think we hardly need to hurry ourselves. If you listen you will hear no thunder, and there is no sign of wind. It cannot be over a mile at the most from the yacht to the derelict, and that is a short row. Are we heading right?"

Miss Howard leaned a little and looked by him.

"Quite right" she said "and we are very near."

A few strokes brought them close to the object of their quest, and Northrop shipped his oars and caught hold of the gunwale of a half-submerged quarter boat, pulling himself alongside.

It was empty except for a water-soaked pea jacket, a small keg and two or three broken tins. In the bow an oar was stepped as a mast, and fragments of ropes twisted around it showed that some kind of a sail had been rigged by the occupants. There was nothing to indicate the story of the forlorn relic adrift on the sea, and the name printed on the bow, *The Mary L.* gave no hint.

"I will take the coat with us" Northrop said, "but we have had our labor for our pains."

"And I have had a change; I am content."

Northrop sat looking at his companion, not offering to ship his oars. "Are you?" he said slowly "I am not — yet."

He sat silent for a time, and Miss Howard watched the full moon rise through the white, rolling clouds that followed close behind. Northrop's eyes were fixed on her and just at present she did not care to look at them.

"You know the derelict was only an excuse, of course?" he said.

"For what?"

"For getting you away from that chattering crowd on the *Fleur de Lys*."

The tone roused a sudden antagonism in Miss Howard. "Were you quite justified in assuming that I would come?"

"You did come."

This was worse than ever, for the assertion was unanswerable, and the girl bit her lip. She began to think she was angry.

"I think I would have jumped overboard for the sake of incident. I hate stagnation."

"I saw that and I did the best I could to help you out."

"Thank you."

If that man kept his curious, compelling glance on her much longer, Miss Howard knew that she should say something for which she would be unusually sorry, but it roused her antagonism to a dangerous pitch.

"Let us change again," she said suddenly "let us go back."

"Not now, I want to talk to you first."

"Please don't; you will be sorry if you do, now."

"And you also?"

"I don't know. I don't know what you mean. I wish you would go back! don't talk to me!"

A man with any experience or any intuition would have known how to hold his tongue. Northrop possessed none of the first and therefore the latter did him no good. As a result he went on.

"I *must* talk to you now. I think you know what I want to say, better than I can say it. Yet I must do the best I can."

Dorothy Howard looked up with flashing eyes. This man had broken her self-control and she hated him for it. "I warn you not to speak to me now. If you have any intelligence you will row back!"

"Dorothy!"

A roar of dull thunder swept across the sea; the girl made no reply; her brown head was bent and her hands shook as they grasped the tiller rope until little white spots came in them.

"Dorothy!"

The head was raised now and there was fierce, almost savage anger in the eyes that confronted Northrop coldly and directly.

"Will you row back or not?"

Another burst of thunder crashed around them, and as its echoes rolled off across the water, there came the far-away crack of a pistol shot.

Northrop threw the oars into the water and pulled the boat's head around to the west. Without a word he began to row as though he were in a racing shell.

It was hardly to be wondered at. From the horizon nearly to the zenith was a curtain of impenetrable blackness, its upper edge like curled foam under the moonlight. The heat-lightning was gone, but in its place bolt after bolt of white flame rent the black pall from top to bottom. Crackling thunder burst almost simultaneously with each flash, and in the infrequent pauses came a dull, increasing roar like a torrent from a riven reservoir.

The moon was gone, overwhelmed by the climbing clouds in the east that rushed upwards to meet the forces from the west in the crash of conflict. The darkness seemed to walk over the sea and but for the fierce lightning the yacht would have become invisible, but every now and then Miss Howard could see her spars and low hull and wide-spread sails, now black against a flash of lightning, now gleaming silver in the glare of some bolt that burst overhead.

The girl kept her eyes fixed on the ever-vanishing boat, looking neither to the right nor left. She saw dark figures rushing to and fro, saw the mainsail come fluttering down, then the foresail, until only the double reefed fore staysail was left; and she knew that a tempest was on them. They were steadily nearing the *Fleur de Lys* when suddenly

everything was blotted out by a fearful flame. The whole world seemed to turn into a white-hot ball that hung before her eyes in the midst of black chaos. There was a crash like the discharge of a hundred and ten ton gun. Her head whirled and she seemed to feel herself falling.

Then a strong, firm voice said, "Did you see if that struck the yacht?"

"No; I don't know, I think not."

"Keep the boat's head steady. We shall be through this in a moment!"

The *Fleur de Lys* was hardly an eighth of a mile away when the wall of cloud seemed to sever itself bodily from the sky and hurl itself vertically upon them. It came with a roar that swept Northrop's voice before it like a dead leaf in the wind. The last light was blotted out; the rain, leaping in sheets across the sea, shut down between them and the yacht. Blind with the seething rain, her hair lashing across her face, Dorothy felt the boat rise, rise, to a dizzy height, felt it stagger under the shock of bursting waves, then sink into an awful, unfathomable abyss.

Her teeth were set on a strand of hair that had thrashed across her mouth, her eyes fixed on the straining figure before her, as with muscles knotting like rope, Northrop fought to keep the boat's head to the wind.

As they rose on the crest of a wave a great, pale

shape shot by them, and in a rift of rain both thought they saw the slim hull of the *Fleur de Lys* running down the wind, but the wraith was swallowed in the engulfing tempest, and yacht or no, they could not turn to follow her.

The rain rushed eastward as suddenly as it had come, but the waves still shouldered themselves upon them, seemingly increasing in size, and the darkness was no longer broken by lightning, it was utter and impenetrable.

Hour after hour, it seemed, passed in this hand to hand fight, but at length the clouds broke into black scuds that rushed across the purple sky, and the moon, high above the sea, gleamed on a field of creaming foam, leaping in the white light.

Dorothy leaned forward, and spoke softly. "Will you trust me with the oars? I can row, and I am strong. You will kill yourself if this continues."

Northrop shook his head, but he contented himself with holding the boat's head to the seas that swept like lines of cavalry upon them.

So through the night the little boat rode out the gale that sent eleven sailing vessels and a tramp steamer to the bottom, between Savannah and New York, and when the sun came above the edge of the fast quieting sea it saw a boat tossing heedlessly and in it a young man stretched out, fast asleep, his head in the lap of a girl with wild hair streaming about her face.

CHAPTER III

A PHANTOM SHIP

NORTHROP opened his eyes and spoke very slowly: "The next thing is to start for shore. I think I can row now."

"Oh hush, hush!" and Dorothy covered his mouth with her hand. "Don't think of that, or anything else just yet. We are safe, and it is you that have saved us both, be content with that."

"Yes, after having led you to your death! Could I do less? If ever a damned scoundrel deserved hanging for murder it is I!" He sat up suddenly. "Where are we anyway? The wind was about west north-west, wasn't it? We must have driven about four miles an hour; that would mean that we're between thirty and forty miles further from land than the *Fleur de Lys* when the gale struck. A hundred and thirty miles, say. Well, we will try to make it to-morrow night if we are not picked up in the meantime. I wonder what became of the yacht?"

"Did you see her go by us in the storm?" said the girl in an awestruck voice.

"Yes, riding like a duck. She is a good boat. They will think we are drowned."

"Pray God *they* are not drowned."

“Trust my uncle for that. He would bring the *Fleur de Lys* through anything.” He sat up rather wildly. “Let me bring *you* safely through this and there is one thing left for me in life. To work out my cursed folly in leading you into this ghastly danger. First we will get to land however.”

“Yes, yes! but there is time for that; you must rest a little longer.”

“No, I will not rest! Good God! isn’t it enough that I should risk your life, which is dearer to me than the whole world, but I must let you starve here in mid-ocean while I loaf like a child? Do you realize that we have nothing to eat, nothing to drink? We must go without until we reach shore. Do you understand that?”

“Quite well, but do not let us lose our presence of mind because of that. We may be picked up. We are right in the line of travel. Do you remember that we saw four ships yesterday? Now I am not going to let you lose your head. We must work, and work reasonably. You fought splendidly last night. It is my turn now—wait!—” for Northrop was raising his hand rebelliously. “I am going to row now while I have some strength, then you can take your turn. Give me the oars! You *must* see that this is wise.”

It was, beyond a question, and Northrop took his place in the stern, raging inwardly at the reason against which he could not contend.

The sun rose higher and higher, but the tempest had cleared the air and it was no longer intolerably hot. A clean, fresh wind was blowing from the northwest and they laid their course due west as nearly as they could judge. The sea was quieting fast, the thunder-gust having disturbed it only on the surface, and it seemed as though the boat was making good progress. Dorothy rowed for an hour, and then yielded her place to Northrop.

"Thank God I have my brandy flask!" he said, as he took the oars. "All there is, is for you, and you had best take a little now."

"All is *not* for me by any means! What folly, really if you go on like this I shall begin to think you are not a reasoning animal."

"But I have my pipe. That is just as good."

"For quenching thirst?"

Northrop laughed savagely. "I will let my will attend to that."

"You will do nothing of the kind, but you will obey *me*. Do you remember how I told you about my love for commanding? Now, the mood is on me," and she handed the flask to Northrop with a look that was not to be defied.

Shortly after noon the wind shifted a point to the west, and after that progress was slow and uncertain. Later the shadow of a sail appeared to the east, but the vessel was hull down and a little later vanished

altogether. As night fell Northrop felt the grip of hunger, but a glance at the calm though pale face of the girl blasted him with shame at the thought that he should even remember that it was twenty-four hours since he had broken his fast.

From eight until nine Dorothy took her turn, and then Northrop made her as comfortable as he could in the stern, begging her to sleep if possible.

"You will call me at seven?"

He looked down at the white, strong face, so brave and yet so delicate in the moonlight, and his voice broke in spite of his determination.

"Dear heart, dear heart! I love you with all that is in me. I have done my best to kill you, but by God! I will bring you through this, and when you are safe again I will ask you the question you would not let me ask you yesterday."

A little smile came around the pathetic lips that parted to say "Ask it now."

There was neither sea nor shore left, neither night nor tempest, as Northrop went back to his work, but only a great and wonderful calm. What was it to him that they were adrift in an open boat, many miles from land, without food or drink, ship-wrecked on the great deep? Nothing; nor to her, lying under the purple sky where the little stars faded before the advancing moon, Northrop's coat around her and his strong figure swaying rhythmically before in the

silver moonlight. The storm had cast them helpless in watery desolation, they had escaped drowning by a slender chance only to confront starvation, but out of it all had come the knowledge of a great and enduring love — and the end justified the means.

Physical exhaustion conquered determination and the girl slept; hour after hour, while the moon crept down the sky and Northrop pulled steadily, resting now and then with his bursting head between his hands, and his chest heaving in great gasps. His own reason taught him that he could not reject the brandy without imperilling their chances of safety, and he drank sparingly, grudging every drop that moistened his burning mouth and revived his lagging vitality.

It was early dawn when Dorothy awoke, and she reproached Northrop with loving bitterness.

“Dorothy,” he said, “You asked to command yesterday, but in the end you obeyed. Do you remember? Now I command; perhaps in the end I will obey, but not yet. You may row for a little now, if you wish, for I confess I can hardly see, I am so sleepy. If I do not wake in two hours you *must* rouse me. Promise!”

“As you promised me?”

“With more intention of keeping the promise than I had, else I will not sleep at all.”

Northrop slept for more than two hours, but it was Dorothy who woke him in the end.

“Jack, dear Jack, I think there is a steamer on the horizon!”

Northrop sat up quickly, gazing where the girl indicated. About four miles to the southwest was the long line of a steamship, blurring the sky with a smudge of smoke. She was apparently headed due east, and without a word Northrop pulled the boat round and laid his course south southeast to intercept her if this were possible.

The steamer seemed to advance with extraordinary rapidity, and Northrop rowed with all the remaining strength that was in him. As she drew nearer, Dorothy stood up waving her white shawl, and in a little while Northrop, with a great sob in his heart, saw the ship change her course, until she headed almost directly towards them.

The steamer slackened her speed. Northrop saw men busy at the davits, and in a few moments a small boat sank down the gray side of the steamer and the two forlorn waifs knew that they were wanderers no longer.

They examined their rescuer with interest. At first Northrop had supposed her to be some merchant steamer sailing from Philadelphia, but as she drew nearer he abandoned this idea, and decided that she was a steam yacht of extraordinary size. She appeared to be about three hundred feet long, with a

freeboard unusually low for her indicated tonnage. She had a sharp, receding bow like a cruiser, and her lines were singularly keen and delicate. A long superstructure painted greenish gray like the hull, reached well forward, and extended aft nearly to the stern; midway were two surprisingly tall funnels, and her slim masts were devoid of yards or booms. Altogether Northrop found her puzzling in the extreme, and decided that she could only be a remarkably luxurious steam yacht, built for great speed.

"I simply cannot row another boat's length" he said to Dorothy. "They must do the rest."

The boat from the mysterious steamer swept alongside; in the stern sat an officer, a tall, handsome man, with a close-cropped beard and a short mustache brushed up at the ends. He examined the castaways narrowly, and when he spoke it was with a curious foreign accent, strange but rather attractive.

"You have been lost at sea?"

Northrop laughed, a little hysterically. "Not exactly, but near it. *We* aren't lost, we know quite where we are, but our yacht is lost; at all events we can't find her, and we are tired of looking."

"You have come from a ship, is it not?"

"Or rather the ship has gone away from us. We went for a row day before yesterday, and then a shower came up. We missed the yacht in the blow, have been rowing ever since, and here we are."

The officer spoke to the men in a low voice, using a language neither Northrop nor Dorothy had ever heard before, and then turned to the castaways. His speech was courteous though somewhat constrained.

“If the lady will give me the honor of her hand, I will beg to assist her to the boat. You will also follow, Sir, and we will return to the *Isigoné*.”

The transfer was quickly effected, and the sailors pulled for the motionless yacht, with a strong man-of-war stroke that filled Northrop with admiration. The *Fleur de Lys*' boat was abandoned and felt swaying upon the slow waves. Northrop protested against this action but without the slightest effect; and after all, what did it matter?

Side by side the castaways watched the *Isigoné* rise higher and higher as they approached her, and with every boat's length Northrop's wonder increased. She certainly was a most palatial vessel for a private individual, and her keen lines, curiously disposed port holes, and unpierced deck house, were far away from the ordinary condition of affairs in any steam yachts Northrop had ever seen.

When they reached her side a gangway had already been lowered, and with keen curiosity mingling with their hunger and exhaustion, Dorothy and Northrop climbed to the deck.

An officer in a uniform similar to that worn by the

man who had come to their rescue, received them. He was of medium height, rather blond, with a frank attractive face. He inquired at once, in correct English, if they had been long in the boat, and on learning that thirty-six hours had passed since his new guests had eaten anything, conducted them at once to the companionway where he gave Dorothy in charge of a black woman with a white turban around her head, adding a few words in the language which had already baffled Northrop. Then he turned to him.

"I have given orders that the lady shall have everything she can ask for, so now I will attend to you, Sir. Follow me please."

They went down the companion-way and along a narrow passage until the officer opened a stateroom door and turned to Northrop.

"This will be your room," he said with a smile. "As you came on board rather hurriedly I infer that your wardrobe and toilet requisites may be a little inadequate. I will see that this lack is supplied; in the meantime, here is a steward now with what will probably be more attractive to you."

At the same moment a boy came down the passage with a tray, the sight of which filled the half-starved Northrop with rejoicing. The officer smiled again and bowed.

"I will send you some makeshift clothes at once"

he said, "and you had then best sleep a bit, for I fancy you have had little of that of late. Then I shall be glad if you will meet me in the forward cabin with your companion."

He turned to go, but Northrop called to him. "One moment please; may I ask if I have the honor of speaking to the Captain of this yacht?"

"Oh, no. I am Mr. Grosvenor, the ex—er—the first officer."

"Then will you give my very formal but inadequate thanks to the Captain for what he has done for us? Later I hope to be able to make my acknowledgments in person."

Mr. Grosvenor bowed and departed, and Northrop shut himself in his stateroom and fell upon the meat and drink that had been provided in generous measure. As he devoured the well cooked food and slaked his burning thirst with big draughts of whiskey and water, he heard the screw begin turning and knew from the tremors that pervaded the vessel, that they were once more under way.

He looked around his stateroom with interest. It seemed to possess no distinctive features worth mentioning. It was an ordinary room, more like the cabin of a merchant steamer than that of a yacht, he thought, being small and very plainly fitted up. On one side was a simple brass berth, on the other a narrow transom with a single deep-set porthole over

it: opposite the door was a wash-bowl with its glasses in sockets over. "Plain enough" thought Northrop, "but a good deal better than I expected ever again to see a few hours ago."

As he finished eating, a steward brought an armful of clothes, but sleep was heavy upon him and he tossed them to one side, threw himself in his berth and almost instantly fell asleep.

It was late in the day when he awoke, and after a hasty bath he selected a pair of duck trousers which fitted him admirably, and a short coat which was less of a success in this direction, and started for the deck.

At the foot of the companionway he met Grosvenor, the first officer, and with him they entered the forward cabin.

"Miss Howard, how is she?" asked Northrop eagerly, "has she come from her stateroom yet?"

"I will find out" and the officer summoned a steward, sending him to inquire.

While waiting, Northrop told his story in few words, the officer listening with interest, and just as he finished Dorothy appeared at the door.

None the worse for her day and a half in the rôle of a castaway, Dorothy came into the cabin and the men rose to receive her. The first officer's inquiries were courteous and elaborate and to all of them the girl could only give assurances of her complete satisfaction with the attentions she had received.

"I could hardly wear the stewardess' gowns" she said laughing, "and as there are, I take it, no ladies on board who could help me out, I contented myself with what I have, but it will be for a little time only, I dare say. We shall undoubtedly meet another vessel bound for the United States, to which you can transfer us. Do you not think so?"

Grosvenor waited a moment or two before answering, though the reason was hard to understand.

"We shall hope for the best — *your* best" he said smiling slightly, "but we are rather out of the line of general travel, so it is impossible to say."

"Where *are* we bound then," said Northrop, "may I ask?"

The officer hesitated. "Well" he said finally, "this voyage is in the line of a summer cruise and the Captain is not in the habit of planning long ahead. We may touch at the Azores, possibly."

Dorothy's face fell a little. "I hope we may meet another vessel before then" she said gravely. "I hate to think of my father in ignorance so long as to my safety. You see we are in a most trying position: we do not know of the fate of the *Fleur de Lys*, nor do those on her know what has become of us. It would kill my father if he were led to believe we were lost."

Grosvenor looked at the girl sympathetically. "It is certainly most unfortunate, but his suspense will

be for a few days only: we may meet a vessel any moment by which we can send word back."

"But if we meet a vessel we shall certainly go back in her," said Northrop, "for while we do not want to appear discourteous, we should, I fancy, prefer to return in anything rather than continue to impose ourselves on your very generous hospitality."

"We will consult the Captain about that," replied Grosvenor slowly. "Doubtless he will make some arrangement."

Northrop rose hastily. "Where is the Captain? Can we not see him? At all events I want to thank him."

"Shall we go to his cabin now? The Captain asked that you do him that honor as soon as you had recovered."

Both Dorothy and Northrop assented instantly, and together they followed their guide along a narrow alley towards the stern of the ship. At the end of the passage, where a second companionway led to the deck, they came to a closed door at which the officer knocked. A slow, musical voice came in reply, the extraordinarily thick and heavy door swung open and they entered the Captain's cabin.

CHAPTER IV

BYZANTINE CROWN-JEWELS

THUS far nothing had been in evidence on board the vessel in which Northrop and Dorothy had so suddenly become voyagers, which would indicate that she was other than a plain and businesslike steamship, constructed with unusual solidity, and with an almost total disregard of wood as a building material. In no respect did she show in her internal arrangement anything that would indicate that she was a pleasure yacht, the uniforms of the officers giving the only hint that the *Isigoné* was other than a respectable merchant vessel. The first glance at the interior of the Captain's cabin dispelled all illusions on this score, however, and so extraordinary was the sight that met the eyes of the two travellers they remained for a moment dumb, although the Captain rose to receive them, and stood waiting.

The cabin reached quite across the ship and was almost as long as it was wide. It was therefore more like a room in a big country house, or the Admiral's quarters on an old-fashioned warship, than the Captain's cabin on a steam yacht.

Around the walls stretched carved bookcases of some dark wood inlaid with delicate patterns in

ivory, the backs of hundreds of superbly bound volumes showing through the bronze gratings that filled the doors. Below stretched a wide divan covered with gilded leather and piled with many cushions of rich stuffs. Above, the wall was hidden by several large, dark pictures in ancient frames, and by great squares of old Flemish tapestry. Vessels in wrought metals and in lustrous cloisonné stood on the tops of the book-shelves, and in one corner of the room blazed a huge jar of old red Satsuma. The ceiling of the cabin was of cedar inlaid with mother of pearl, and on the floor were dark-hued rugs from Asia Minor. On one side stood a piano and by it a tall, gilded harp, on another a great desk of Florentine make, and in the midst of the room was a long table where lay a great map: beside this stood the Captain.

The room was strange and unexpected, the appearance of its occupant no less so, although quite in harmony with the surroundings. He was a tall, slim man of middle age, with a rather delicate and poetic face. His hair which was dark and waving and unusually long, fell on either side of a face that would have been pale but for the brown tan that dyed it. A cavalier beard, and a mustache brushed away from a curiously mobile mouth, made up a physiognomy that was at once attractive and startling, grave yet fantastic.

Like the other officers he was dressed in a purple and silver undress uniform, and as he stood by the

great table, the long map before him, gazing with melancholy, inquiring eyes at his visitors, he was, it almost seemed, quite the most extraordinary figure one could find in any Captain's cabin in this nineteenth century.

After waiting a little to give his guests time in which to recover their presence of mind he gave them a courteous welcome and, as soon as Dorothy and Northrop were seated, asked them for the story of their adventures. All the time Northrop was speaking, the Captain sat behind the table gazing intently at him, quite motionless; nor did any shade of expression cross his thoughtful face except once when General Howard's name was mentioned, when his eyebrows rose slightly and then knitted themselves with a still more intent expression.

As Northrop finished his story the Captain sat silent and thoughtful for a few moments and then turned to Dorothy.

"Miss Howard, this is a curious coincidence, — or would seem so to those who are too ignorant to believe in Divine Providence. I knew your father well, many years ago, and remember him as a faultless gentleman, and therefore as a good soldier. Let me ask you about him, for I have heard nothing of his life since—since a year you could not remember."

Dorothy's face brightened with something like relief, and in a few moments the two were talking

like old friends. In the mean time Northrop was dividing his attention between his curious surroundings and the no less curious figure of his unsought host. There was something baffling about the latter. For a moment Northrop seemed vaguely to remember his face, but the next glance at the almost seventeenth-century figure before him dispelled the half-formed thought, and he would turn, puzzled and curious, to study still closer the remarkable room and its extraordinary decorations. Behind the Captain, in what was evidently the place of honor in the cabin, hung a full length picture of a strangely beautiful woman in a costume that would have been Greek but for a Byzantine crown and a jewelled girdle with its long pendant in front. On either side hung from the ceiling a silver lamp of great beauty of workmanship in which a flame was burning, and below stood a small table covered with a richly embroidered stuff, whereon stood a tall Crucifix of gold and ivory.

"Quite in keeping with the rest of the *mise en scène*," thought Northrop, "a pagan goddess with Byzantine crown-jewels, and a Crucifix in front; and the queer part of it all is *I know that face!* Where I have seen it I can't say, but I know it as well as I know the Captain's."

At that moment a knock sounded at the door, and at a nod from the Captain, Grosvenor admitted the officer who had come to the rescue of the castaways.

He spoke in the language Northrop had heard before, and so he listened closely as the Captain replied.

It was the same here as in the other instances. He could not understand what was said and yet the tongue sounded familiar. Suddenly he caught a word that was unmistakably Greek, though curiously pronounced, and shortly after he heard another. He cursed his laziness in letting his Greek go by the board, and strained every nerve to gain an intelligible idea of what was being said. It was all to no purpose however. That he had heard two or three unmistakable Greek words he would swear, but they threw little light on his perplexity, and he saw the officer depart, with some disappointment, though with a feeling that something had been gained.

As Grosvenor left the cabin, the Captain turned with a fine smile breaking the sadness of his face. "This is a great pleasure and a great coincidence as well, Mr. Northrop," he said. "I find that I have had the honor of knowing Miss Howard's father, and now I believe I know your uncle as well. Was he not once an *attaché* of the American Legation in Constantinople?"

"Why, of course," replied Northrop, "but," with a glance at the Captain's face, "I should fancy you could hardly have known him then. It must have been thirty years ago!"

The Captain laughed softly. "Yet I *did* know

him, though to be sure I was quite young. He did me a great favor once. He helped me through some complications in which I had involved myself—quite innocently—in Asia Minor, and I am greatly privileged in being able to do some service to his nephew in return. You may command me in any way and I beg that you will accept my service.”

“You are very good,” said Northrop. “I have two favors that I want to ask. The first is that you give us some enlightenment as to who you are, and the second is that you will let us appear ungracious by asking to be transferred to the very first ship we meet.”

The smile faded from the Captain's face. “I quite understand your anxiety to return,” he said gravely, “and believe me, I will do all in my power to gratify you. I will tell you frankly, however, that I can not send you back on *any* ship that may come in our course. There are three flags she must not fly, one of which we could hardly encounter anyway. Unfortunately one of the other flags is most constantly met with in these latitudes and here I am powerless. In case an available ship appears, however, I will try to oblige you, otherwise I must beg you to tolerate such hospitality as I can offer you until we reach—port. There I promise you shall be released—if you then wish it, and I shall insist on your allowing me to act as your banker until

you can communicate with your friends." He rose and bowed slightly. "And now you will pardon me if I leave you, will you not? Anything I have here," and he waved his hand towards the bookcases, "is wholly at your service. I have assigned the black woman whom you have already seen, Miss Howard, to you, and George the steward to you, Mr. Northrop. I beg you to make yourselves wholly at home in this room; report to me any lack of attention or any wish you may have, and do me the honor to dine with me tonight."

He bowed profoundly to Miss Howard, and shaking hands with Northrop, left the cabin by a door aft concealed by a great square of tapestry.

Northrop and Dorothy looked at each other with a comical mixture of gratitude, bewilderment and distrust, and when they turned to go they saw that Grosvenor was regarding them with silent amusement. "Would you not like to go on deck?" he said. "Let me show you the way."

They passed up the companionway which ascended from the entrance to the Captain's cabin, noting how much more ornate it was than that which descended to the forward cabin, and reaching the deck were soon left to themselves by Grosvenor who disappeared forward.

The ship seemed almost deserted, for they had ascended to a kind of hurricane deck which ex-

tended completely over the deck-house, stopping at its sides however, not continuing to the sides of the vessel. Forward and aft sailors were moving about on the main deck, but on the part of the ship where they themselves stood no one was visible. On the bridge above them was the dark man, their rescuer, who was evidently second officer, but otherwise they were alone. They sat down on one of the long deck seats and looked at each other without speaking. Finally Dorothy broke the silence.

"Have you the slightest idea where we are?"

"Not the most rudimentary notion!"

"Two hypotheses have occurred to me. This boat, the *Isigoné*, is either the freak of an enormously rich man who wants to do something strange, or else it is a royal yacht and the Captain is some prince or other who is travelling incognito."

"There is a third possibility, and that is that this craft is a sailing mad-house!"

Dorothy laughed. "If we don't find out something quite soon it will have two new patients, that I am sure of."

"I quite agree with you. You noticed of course that I got no answer when I asked the animated 'old master' down below who he was?"

"Yes; and you of course saw the portrait in its shrine in the cabin?"

"I should say I did. They are a nice couple: one is

about as freaky as the other, only the Captain has the advantage of being alive."

"Do you suppose he is the lost Archduke of Austria?"

Northrop started. "That can't be," he said slowly. "No German ever spoke English as he does; besides he knows our people, has known them for a long time, evidently."

Dorothy sighed and looked dreamily out to sea. "I suppose you are right, but I hoped he might be the Archduke, it would be most picturesque."

"Undoubtedly, but hardly reasonable. You need not be discouraged, however. I confess I believe when we solve this mystery we shall find it even more picturesque than would be the case if we were the guests of an Archduke."

"What, for example?" and Dorothy turned to him eagerly.

"Oh, I haven't imagination enough to conceive of anything sufficiently mad, but I am confident we have struck something rich. If only we could send word home I should almost like to see this thing through."

"And so should I. I think it is getting brilliantly interesting, but we *must* get word home somehow. I can't bear to think of my father" — and the girl's face clouded.

They sat and talked for more than an hour, trying

in every way to obtain some solution of the mysterious *Isigoné*, trying to remember where they had seen the face of the portrait, where and how the Captain could have known their people. But their efforts were baffled at every point and they were forced to the conclusion that they must wait, taking things as they came, until some chance word gave the missing clue, or until a homeward-bound vessel removed them from the theatre of the curious drama in which they had so unexpectedly had parts assigned them.

As they rose to walk up and down for a time, they saw the Captain on the bridge with the unknown officer and noted that he was gazing ahead through his glass. They stepped to the high, thick bulwarks of the deck, and saw that the *Isigoné* was shaping her course directly for a spot on the horizon that melted off into a blur of smoke. Presently Grosvenor came to them.

“There is a steamer dead ahead bearing down on us, and it is possible that we may be able to send a letter by her. The Captain is very sorry that he can not put you aboard, but he begs that you will accept his hospitality a little longer.”

Northrop turned on the officer sharply. “Why can the Captain not put us on board? Does he know the nationality of the steamer? And if he can send a letter why can not he send us? I don't like this at all!”

Grosvenor's eyes narrowed dangerously and he

spoke coldly and formally. "The Captain's order — request — is that you shall write what letters you wish and they will be sent to the steamer if she is bound for an American port. He asks also that you do not refer to the ship you are now on except to give her name, the steam yacht *Isigoné*, and that you simply speak of him as Captain Villiers, an old friend of General Howard and of Mr. Elliot. You may also state that you will land at the first port the yacht makes, whence you will be able to return to America."

"And if we prefer to exercise our own discretion as to what we write?"

"I am to obtain your word of honor."

"And if we decline to give it?"

"The letters will not be sent."

Northrop stood silent, gnawing his lip savagely. Dorothy turned and spoke to him in a low voice. "Jack, he has a perfect right to ask this; remember he did not seek to have us come on board, we forced ourselves on him, and if for any reason he wishes to control our actions he has the privilege of doing so. Let us follow his request absolutely."

"Very well," and Northrop went down to his storeroom, furious at the restrictions laid on him but compelled to acknowledge the cogency of Dorothy's reasoning.

An half hour later he came on deck with his letters,

and as he did so he found that the homeward-bound steamer was so close that he could distinguish the figures on her decks. Almost immediately the stranger slowed up, as did also the *Isigoné*, and at the same moment Dorothy came on deck with her own letters. They were unsealed, as were Northrop's, and with rather unnecessary dignity he gave the package to Grosvenor.

"Will you kindly take them to the Captain," he said stiffly, "in order that he may see that they are all right?"

Grosvenor flushed red. "Have I your promise that you have complied with the request made you?"

"Yes."

"Very well, that is all that is necessary."

A boat was already lowered, and the ships had hardly come to a standstill before its crew was pulling towards the steamer. As they watched her Northrop said to Dorothy in a low voice, "I wonder if I could help matters if I should shout for assistance."

Before the girl could reply they heard the voice of the Captain close behind them.

"She is the *Victoria* from Gibraltar to New York, so your letters will be delivered in a very short time," he said gravely and in a tone that showed plainly he had heard Northrop's question.

Dorothy turned to the Captain and spoke quickly. "Is it impossible for us to be sent home on the

steamer? It is not too late even now. Surely you can do us the favor; remember what a very extraordinary position we are in. Surely it is bitterly unkind in you to keep us here?"

"Believe me," said Captain Villiers, "it is almost as great a grief to me as it is to you, but I have regretfully come to the conclusion that it is impossible for me to send you back on this vessel"—he paused slightly, then said slowly, "or on any other. There are very good reasons which make it necessary for me to follow this course. The moment certain events take place I can release you; not until then. In the meantime do not let us be enemies, but let us try to bring about such a condition amongst us that you will honestly regret leaving the *Isigoné*, as I shall certainly regret your departure."

"If no opportunity offers before, you will allow us to leave you at the Azores, will you not?"

"We shall not touch at the Azores."

"But Mr. Grosvenor led us —"

"Not to think that we were to stop at the Azores in any case, I am sure, for Lieutenant Grosvenor is not aware of my intentions in the matter. I beg that you will give me your confidence; no harm shall overtake you if I can help it, and you shall be subjected to as few inconveniences as possible. In many ways your coming on board the *Isigoné* was a misfortune. I tell you this frankly though you are in no respect to

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CHAPTER V

“TO THE HOLY RESTORATION!”


WHEN Northrop went to his stateroom to make himself as presentable as possible for the coming dinner he was confronted with a most amazing surprise. Carefully laid out on his berth was a full suit of evening clothes. He stared at them open-mouthed, and a knock at his door sounded twice before he pulled himself together enough to say, “Come in!”

It was the boy George whom the Captain had assigned to him as his valet.

“Will you please tell me the size of your shoes, Sir, and also of your shirts?”

Northrop burst into a shout of laughter, but controlled himself and gave the required information. No sooner had George gone than Northrop hurried off to Dorothy’s room to find out if she also had been served in the same way. Low conversation and smothered laughter greeted him as he paused before the closed door, and satisfied that he would be playing Dorothy no trick if he accepted this new attention, he did not knock but returned to his stateroom, meeting George at the door with shirts and shoes.

Hardly knowing whether to yield to amazement or.



amusement, he dressed and went out into the forward cabin.

A few minutes later Dorothy swept in to meet him: not a smile quivered about her mouth although her eyes were dancing. To Northrop she seemed perfectly dressed, although a feminine judgment would undoubtedly have picked many flaws in the fit of the dinner gown of plain white silk and sea-green velvet. He stared in astonishment.

"I expected something queer, but not this. Where in the name of common sense do you suppose that gown came from?"

"Don't ask me: I accept conditions, I don't try to analyze them. The stewardess — I mean *my maid* — brought me three gowns to choose from: this was the simplest and I took it. It doesn't fit any too well and it is awfully queer in design — something like the dress of the woman in the picture, don't you think? But it is better than my yachting things, and it *is* a relief to get into something fresh. Tell me, *does* it look presentable?" and the girl turned slowly, her eyebrows curved apprehensively.

"It is faultless, but —"

"For Heaven's sake, what?"

"Where did it come from?"

"Really, Jack, I don't care. This is a play or a dream. Questions are quite unnecessary in either case. Let's take things as they come."

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“Even dinner clothes? Greenhouse flowers next!”

“And Huyler’s chocolates, fresh, I dare say!”

Dinner was served in a somewhat smaller cabin than the Captain’s, opening from it on the starboard side. There was evidently a door from the passage at the foot of the companionway, but this was closed, and to reach the dining saloon it was necessary to pass through the Captain’s cabin. Though much less startling than the latter it was sufficiently unusual to cause Northrop to stare a little as he entered. It was wholly finished in dark walnut and Spanish leather, and the table, laid with seven covers, was brilliant with glass and silver flashing in the light of candelabra with unshaded candles. In the Captain’s cabin Northrop and Dorothy had met Grosvenor, and three men they had not hitherto seen: Fr. Norton, a tall, smooth-shaven, ascetic-looking priest in a black cassock; the surgeon, Dr. McCraik, and a swarthy old gentleman with a white beard and black eyebrows, who was introduced as Mr. Kalathos.

Dorothy and Northrop were a little taken aback at the appearance of the strangers for they had rather expected to dine with the Captain alone. However, they put the best possible face on the matter and went in to dinner, Dorothy on the Captain’s arm with a very lively sense of the fact that things were likely to happen.

As they paused by their chairs Fr. Norton asked a

blessing in Latin, and then all the men turned towards the farther end of the table where there was a vacant chair, bowed profoundly, and took their seats.

Dorothy glanced out of the corner of her eye toward the seat that had received such general homage, and saw that it bore a gilded crown of curious shape, and that its back was embroidered with a coat of arms, a shield having a large, curiously shaped cross with four small crosses in the angles, and that the entire surface of the dark purple velvet was stamped with golden "I"s each in its wreath of laurel.

"This," she thought, "is very excellent fooling. It is a play, a flagrant drama, but it is amusing and I think I shall see it through." She sat on the Captain's right with Mr. Kalathos beside her: opposite sat Fr. Norton, and by him Northrop. As she raised her eyes from a swift survey of the table she found herself gazing at a second portrait of the Greek goddess, hanging at the end of the room directly over the state chair. Her brain whirled, and catching Northrop's eyes she indicated the portrait to him. He glanced up, then looked at her, and his eyes said, if his lips did not, just the one word "Mad."

The Captain was silent and almost taciturn so Dorothy soon found herself talking exclusively with Mr. Kalathos, but as he spoke no English, French had to be the medium of communication. She was

surprised, though, as she had to admit to herself, without reason, to find him extremely well read and more than entertaining, and in a few moments they were absorbed in conversation over Venetian pictures, Mr. Kalathos being evidently a connoisseur of considerable attainments, for he had the various schools at his tongue's end. He was deep in an argument over the Vivarini, and Dorothy was listening attentively, when she heard the Captain speak for the first time for some minutes.

"That does not sound like good American doctrine, Mr. Northrop. That statement verges on monarchism."

"Why give it a name?" answered Northrop. "If it is justifiable, what does it matter what we call it?"

"Very little, it is true, but as I myself am an American, I think I can say that our people are much more afraid of names than of things, and with us it does not do to say a word against established institutions if they are democratic, or in favor of them if they are monarchical. If one does one is charged with being a reactionist."

"What of that? Is not a Republic with monarchical tendencies safer than a Monarchy with democratic tendencies?"

There was a general murmur of assent and Northrop went on, "I consider myself a good American, but just because of that I am jealous and suspicious

of everything that makes towards inferiority in my country. America is greater than the Republic, and vital Americanism existed before the Republic was born — in fact it was stronger then than now. We might advance towards monarchy as far as we have retrograded from true democracy: we should still be Americans. George Washington would recognize us then but he never would know us now. We tried an experiment in government, and in certain vital respects it has failed lamentably. It is wasteful, illogical, incompetent, corrupt, and generally representative, not of the high average of will, principle and action, but of a minority of low standard that is fast becoming a majority even as its average is steadily degraded. We all see the result and we howl sporadically for reform, but we do not dare suggest changing the conditions that make the result inevitable. I doubt if we even realize that the results follow only from the conditions.”

The Captain nodded. “Exactly; our people are political cowards. We are suffering under a form of government that may be called anarchy tempered by reform, only the reform is sporadic and evanescent. We have had popular uprisings enough in the last twenty years, Heaven knows, and not one of them has had a lasting effect. We don't go deep enough: we are shallow, vain, cowardly. The country has reached a condition in which decent men live in it on

sufferance. Public life is closed to them: closed and barred by the false reading of the Constitution that says that the electoral franchise is not a privilege but a *right*. That is a theory far more imbecile than that of an absolute despotism is supposed to be. Society is closed to them by the golden doors of a mushroom, money-aristocracy. Art and letters are dead, our cities are hells on earth. What have we left? Nothing but a rotten, mushroom growth waiting for the fire of anarchy to consume it and leave in its place a blasted and desolate waste.”

Captain Villiers had suddenly leaned forward as he spoke until, as he finished, he was bending across the table, with the flickering light of the candles gleaming across a face from which all sadness, all repose had fled, leaving it eager, burning, almost boyish. As he drew back in his chair he kept his deep, magnetic eyes fixed on Northrop, who felt bound by them in spite of himself.

The priest was the first to speak. “I think the whole trouble lies here,” he said. “We have been working on the theory that all power comes from below, from the people, and is delegated by them to their representatives. That followed inevitably from the atheism of the last generation. Thank God! there is a revulsion now and atheism is no longer a power. Once admit that God *is*, and that theory fails: acknowledge His existence and you are compelled to

and as he did so he found that the homeward-bound steamer was so close that he could distinguish the figures on her decks. Almost immediately the stranger slowed up, as did also the *Isigoné*, and at the same moment Dorothy came on deck with her own letters. They were unsealed, as were Northrop's, and with rather unnecessary dignity he gave the package to Grosvenor.

"Will you kindly take them to the Captain," he said stiffly, "in order that he may see that they are all right?"

Grosvenor flushed red. "Have I your promise that you have complied with the request made you?"

"Yes."

"Very well, that is all that is necessary."

A boat was already lowered, and the ships had hardly come to a standstill before its crew was pulling towards the steamer. As they watched her Northrop said to Dorothy in a low voice, "I wonder if I could help matters if I should shout for assistance."

Before the girl could reply they heard the voice of the Captain close behind them.

"She is the *Victoria* from Gibraltar to New York, so your letters will be delivered in a very short time," he said gravely and in a tone that showed plainly he had heard Northrop's question.

Dorothy turned to the Captain and spoke quickly. "Is it impossible for us to be sent home on the

steamer? It is not too late even now. Surely you can do us the favor; remember what a very extraordinary position we are in. Surely it is bitterly unkind in you to keep us here?"

"Believe me," said Captain Villiers, "it is almost as great a grief to me as it is to you, but I have regretfully come to the conclusion that it is impossible for me to send you back on this vessel"—he paused slightly, then said slowly, "or on any other. There are very good reasons which make it necessary for me to follow this course. The moment certain events take place I can release you; not until then. In the meantime do not let us be enemies, but let us try to bring about such a condition amongst us that you will honestly regret leaving the *Isigoné*, as I shall certainly regret your departure."

"If no opportunity offers before, you will allow us to leave you at the Azores, will you not?"

"We shall not touch at the Azores."

"But Mr. Grosvenor led us —"

"Not to think that we were to stop at the Azores in any case, I am sure, for Lieutenant Grosvenor is not aware of my intentions in the matter. I beg that you will give me your confidence; no harm shall overtake you if I can help it, and you shall be subjected to as few inconveniences as possible. In many ways your coming on board the *Isigoné* was a misfortune. I tell you this frankly though you are in no respect to

true basis of monarchy, which, with Fr. Norton, I hold to be the nature and source of kingly responsibility."

The Captain's face cleared a little. "I understand you," he said, "and your position is of course tenable: were it not so we could not look on Rome, Byzantium, the ancient German Empire, the Kingdom of Poland or the Papacy as true and legitimate monarchies, which they of course were and are. You say you would defend the principle of heredity, however, were it a part of the Fundamental Law."

"Most certainly, as I would defend every other clause of the constitution."

It was Grosvenor who next spoke. "Captain," he said, "it strikes me that we have by no means been as unfortunate in our guests as we might have thought. It seems to me that Mr. Northrop is a very promising subject, and I am sure I can say the same of Miss Howard, for one who bears the name of the honorable house of Norfolk can be neither a democrat nor a —"

"Softly, Mr. Grosvenor," interrupted the Captain, "you go too fast." Then turning to Northrop, he fixed his eyes on his face and said, "Mr. Northrop, there is much in what you say that encourages me, your frankness prompts me to go still further. Tell me: have you never in your life found the conditions of modern life intolerable to you? Have you never been sickened by the ruling powers that have sapped

our vitality and drained our system, the newspaper press, practical politics, a money aristocracy, the stock exchange, public opinion? Have you never felt all that is in you revolt against the sordid, contemptible conditions that surround you, until you found yourself driven step by step to the inner citadel of your own soul, there to eat out your heart day by day while the besieging forces of materialism, philistinism, atheism, and anarchy, cut off all communication with the outer world, filled your ears with their malign turmoil, crowded closer, closer with their evil, obscene shapes, until you could almost count the day of their final victory when the fortress of your own soul should be violated by their horrid mob? Have you never felt this terrible consciousness coming over you until you were ready to sacrifice anything, everything for a noble ideal, for a cause for which you could fight, a hero to follow and for whom you could give your life? Tell me, have you not dreamed of the great days of the Crusades, of the later Middle Ages, of the cursed rebellion in England against his sacred Majesty, Charles, of the great days of the '15 and the '45, longing for those conditions which would give you a master at whose feet you could lay down your life, a cause for which you could sacrifice yourself joyfully? Tell me if you have never felt all this, for if your answer is 'yes,' I can give you your quest!"

Nothing could exceed the dramatic, almost theatrical nature of the Captain's words. With every sentence his face changed, quick waves of feeling sweeping across it like winter aurora in the northern sky. His voice was singularly deep and passionate, his eyes blazed with fiery enthusiasm, and as he leaned forward, half his face in bright light from the candles, the other half in deep shadow, Northrop felt that he had never been so fascinated in his life, so swayed against his judgment and his will. He had had much the same appeal made to him before and far more eloquently, but there was something in the dominating magnetism of this strange man that was almost mesmeric. He tried to pull himself together in order that he might answer with some sanity, but Dorothy spoke first. She also had felt the magnetism of the Captain's personality, and her words showed it.

"Yes," she cried. "Yes, that feeling must have come to everyone who sees with his eyes and hears with his ears and understands, in our unhappy country. It has seemed to me that for years the life of honorable action has been closed to men in America and that nothing is left for those who love beauty and righteousness but the life of contemplation. The Church is still left though it is riddled with heresy and schism, a little music is given us now and then, a few pictures, a few books. But if I were a man I

could not live such a life as that which would be simply a dream of appreciation. I should need action. I need it now though I am a woman. Were I a man I would not rest night or day until I had gathered enough men around me to attack the smallest stronghold of entrenched ignorance and corruption and philistinism. We would carry that and pass to the next, and we would fight as the Crusaders fought until we had destroyed the present reign of unrighteousness in the world, and brought in its place a reign of law and order, of "sweetness and light." Although a woman, I would fight for this, but that can not be necessary when there are so many men who, like yourselves, know the evil of the time, know its cause, and are ready to take up arms to destroy it."

As she paused, breathless, she saw that the Captain was standing in his place. He spoke instantly. "I thought this once. I would have fought to save my country. I was helpless. The day had not yet come. It is written by inevitable destiny that so America is not to be saved. Why *should* she be saved from the penalty of her folly when the scourge has not been spared from the peoples of the past? Through the fire of anarchy, into the night of desolation, went the nations whose glory was even as hers. Athens, Carthage, Rome, England, France, each has wrought its own destiny, and the curse is on them for their evil deeds. What shall save us from the fate we have

builted for ourselves out of the folly and bigotry and ignorance of our little minds? Nothing; not one man, nor ten, nor ten thousand. The doom of America is upon her. It is written that this generation shall not pass until all be fulfilled; until New York and Chicago and Boston shrink smaller and smaller within their desolate fields; until the forests rise again and march irresistibly upon the degenerate sons of a great and perished race; until the handful of Indians that our devilish penury has spared, grows to a myriad and once more drives back the outposts of a vanishing civilization. The tempest of wrath is sweeping across the sea to destroy the new world, as time after time it has purged the old, but its fringes are vanishing even now from the cradle of the world's civilization. In the East is the pale glimmer of dawn and there rests the ark of salvation. Out of the western night we move to the flush of the new day, and as the ark of Noah preserved for a world blasted with the righteous vengeance of God, life and hope, so shall we save from the imminent day of wrath that which was worthy and beautiful in the past!" He paused and lifted a glass of wine. "I drink," he cried, "I drink to Her Majesty Isigoné, and to the Holy Restoration."

CHAPTER VI

ENTER: DR. MCCRAIK

IT was bright moonlight, and the *Isigoné* was running eastward through a glassy sea at about eighteen knots an hour, when Dorothy and Northrop came on deck after the close of the strange dinner. They leaned against the bulwarks, drinking in the cool, salt air, and for some time neither spoke. Finally Northrop broke the silence.

"I feel as though I had been drinking too much," he said, pressing his forehead between his palms.

"And I as I should imagine opium smokers might feel. What an extraordinary magnetism Captain Villiers must have. I think he almost makes me believe all he says."

"I *should* believe him absolutely, if I were with him long. You see, he takes seriously all that I have wanted to believe and feel, but have never dared to. I have been thrown with practical people mostly, you know, men to whom the Captain's talk would be delirious raving, and whenever I have been tempted to feel as he does, or to speak after his fashion, I have been laughed out of it, shamed into philistinism again by the common-sense of my associates. I never found a man before who dared to realize his dreams or try to. I wonder how much he *does* try."

"I am sure he is wholly in earnest!"

"I don't mean that. So am I. I mean, I wonder just how much this ship and these men indicate. Is it a poetic and theatrical freak? Are they just sailing around as a protest, or is there something behind it? Is this XIXth century piracy or are they bound on some mad mediæval quest? Are they trying to realize their ideals to the last degree? That is what I want to know."

Dorothy looked at him with shining eyes. "Jack!" she cried, "I begin to see! Do you remember their drinking to 'Isigoné the Queen'?"

"Yes, of course. You mean —"

"Don't you remember now where you have seen the face of the woman in the portraits down below?"

Northrop knitted his brows. "It is like a dream," he said. "I can almost seize the remembrance, but on the instant it is gone."

"Try and think," and Dorothy spoke softly. "Do you remember ever having seen portraits in the illustrated papers, about two years ago, of the dethroned Queen of Rhodes?"

Northrop started violently, and caught his breath. "By gad, you are right! Isigoné, Queen of Rhodes, and she was deposed by a lot of resident Turks who suppressed the Greeks and established an absurd republic. That is it, by heaven that is it!"

They stood looking at each other, dumb with the

revelation that had come to them. Northrop pulled at his cigar excitedly. "It is a case of rescue, or kidnapping, or something of that kind. This is a filibustering expedition I swear! That explains the language, and the queerly pronounced Greek words I caught. They are talking modern Greek! But who is Villiers? Who is the old man you talked to at dinner? What is this ship? Where did she come from? How was she fitted out? Whom does she belong to?"

The questions poured from him with a rush, and he gazed at Dorothy excitedly. "You have a woman's wit; solve some of these questions. In the first place, *who is Villiers?*"

Dorothy knitted her brows. "I have been trying to think. I know the name, and his face suggests something to me, but vaguely. Oh, let me think! Perhaps this is the Queen's yacht that escaped at the time of the revolution. Did you ever read anything that would justify that idea?"

Northrop shook his head. "It doesn't seem reasonable that the sovereign of a bit of an island like Rhodes would have a yacht like this; besides this isn't a yacht. I am more and more convinced of this! If it is, why isn't it fitted up like a yacht *all over*? Why has it all those queer little houses near the bulwarks, that look as though they might hide *rapid-fire guns*? Why has this same upper deck bulwarks six

inches thick? Why has it that long steel bridge with the little houses at either end? Why is everything made of metal? And above all things, if it is a yacht, what in thunder is in this vast deck-house?" He stamped on the deck with his foot. "Do you realize that but for the two companionways and the funnels, we can't account for an inch of its contents? What is that section for, forward, around which the bulwarks do not go and which has its portholes always closed? And there is the same thing aft! Dorothy, take my word for it, we are afloat on a great, big, howling mystery. I want to see it through. Let's stand by!"

"What a wild dream," said the girl shivering. "You have been bewitched by the madman below, — so, between you and me, have I — but we *must* be reasonable, we are in an absurd position and we must seize the first chance to go back."

"Then I hope we shall meet no ship this side of Gibraltar. Do you care if we don't?"

Dorothy hung her head a little, but she said "No" without a tremor.

A few minutes later they were joined by Dr. McCraik who came up leisurely filling a pipe; seeing Northrop smoking, he turned to Dorothy with a jolly grin, "If the leddy has no objections I'll juist smoke a wee bit meeself?" he said interrogatively, and tamping his brierwood critically, lighted it with the utmost care,

“Ye’ll be havin’ braw weather the nicht, will ye na?” and he cast his eye critically over the smooth sea. “My certie! but it looks fine as though the bit storm that brought ye aboard the *Isigoné* had swept things up so that ye’ll ha’ guide sailin’ for the twa three weeks, maybe mair, ye’ll stay by her!” and he sat himself down on a deck chair and stretched his short legs comfortably before him in the white moonlight.

“It certainly is a glorious night,” said Northrop with a quick glance at the recumbent figure, “but the weather will hardly need to continue fine for many days, I hope, in order to give us a smooth voyage on *this* ship.”

The Scotchman flashed a surprised look at Northrop. “Guide sakes, man!” he exclaimed. “Ye’ll hardly be expectin’ to leave us before our job’s done?”

“I don’t know anything about your ‘job’ as you call it, but we certainly do expect to leave by the first ship we meet to which the Captain will transfer us: or, at the worst, to go ashore at Gibraltar.”

Dr. McCraik smoked for a few minutes in silence, his twinkling eyes roving from Northrop to Dorothy. Then he rose carelessly and strolled around the deck, casting his eye now up at the bridge where a single figure was standing dark against the moon, now below at the main deck. Then he came back and sat down.

"I'll be wrong I dare say, Mr. Northrop, but from the words ye let fa' at dinner the night, I took it both yerself and the leddy swallowed a' the Captain said and found it na' such a bad mouthful after a' was said and done."

"I don't know that that follows," said Northrop, "or that it would make any difference if it did. You must remember, Dr. McCraik, that we know nothing of this ship and nothing of any man in her: and quite as little of her destination or what she is for. We are a pair of castaways, you see, with just one object in life, and that is to get back to America as fast as steam will take us!"

"Man!" said the doctor in a low voice, "I believe ye, and on top of that I sympathize wi' ye. This is na' the ship for you and me and the leddy there to be sailing on, Guide knows where. But for the matter o' that it's na' the ship to win from either."

The doctor's words were not of a nature to reassure Northrop and Dorothy, and they looked at him anxiously.

"Doctor McCraik," said Northrop rapidly, "I believe you mean a great deal more than you say, and I want you to clear things up for us. I don't want to pry into Captain Villiers' affairs or the secret of this ship, but I want to know where she is bound and what port she is first to make. And more than that I want to know if we are to be allowed to go peace-

ably, or whether I must fight for it. I propose to leave this ship at the first opportunity anyway, and you may tell Captain Villiers that if you like, for I shall certainly tell him myself!"

"Ca' canny! ca' canny! lad, ye'll draw na water by missca'in the bucket. Just speak easy and keep your eyes about ye, and we'll come to an understandin' at once. Sit ye down by me and we'll con-vairse as touching the quality of this beyutiful night. It wad be mair convenient, Mr. Northrop, if ye wad juist sit facin' me, while the leddy will be sheltered fra' the wind if she will sit so, lookin' forward."

"Noo then, the sentries being posted we'll juist hold a wee bit council o' war."

He leaned forward and looked Northrop in the eyes. "Man," he said solemnly, "Man, wad ye have me tell ye where this *Isigoné* is goin' and what for to do?"

Northrop nodded, and he and Dorothy listened with all their ears.

"A' weel! She's juist come a' this gate to find a bit Queen, overthrow a fashious republic that doused her, and put her back on her throne again. That's a'."

He sat back, and looked with admiration at Dorothy and Northrop.

"Deed man, but it's grand, a wee bit make-believe ship o' war like this *Isigoné*, wi' three, four hundred men, mair or less, I dinna ken, fitting out a' so inno-

cent under the government o' the United States and steppin' off osteensibly for Argentine, and then, whisht! swingin' round wi' na' so much as a 'by your leave' to the great reppooblic, and lashin' out for the Island of Rhodes, makin' nothin' o' the Sublime Porte and a' Turkey, for the Sultan's behind tha' little republic, ye'll see!" and he wagged his head sagely. "Ou ay! 'tis a grand thing, but, man, is it the kind of chase we wad select, you and I and the bonny leddy? 'Deed it is na'. And that is why I speak to ye as I do, for," and he lowered his voice to a faint whisper, "we'll juist escape thegither."

Northrop stared. The man spoke honestly and frankly, but why should he wish to leave a vessel in which he had accepted a position. He asked the doctor this question. The reply was instant.

"Guide save us a'! wad ye have me stay in a ship commanded by a Captain that is e'en daft, dour, mad as any March hare? Man! had I ha' known whaur the ship was goin', or that the Captain was ravin' mad, would I ha' come div ye think? I thought I was shippin' on a bit yacht for a summer cruise!" He drew his chair closer. "Now listen to me. Tha' puir mad birkie down below is rich. I grant ye that. Man! he is awfu' rich, and him as they ca' Mr. Kalathos — noo, wait ye a bit, whom div ye think that man really is? None other than a Dook! His grace, the Dook o' Kalathos, div ye mind? Ane o'

they Rhodian nobles the bit Queen created, or her father! Weel, this same Kalathos, he has so worked on the mind o' the mad Captain that he has e'en won him into this daft beesiness, and the two o' them, with the lads they ha' bought or bewitched, are bound for Rhodes to restore the ex-Queen. Noo, did ye ever hear the like of that? An' we a sailin' wi' them! Man, it's a disgrace, let alone the fact that when a' is said and done, it's a wee bit rope for ain and a' o' us. And so, my dears, the question the noo is, hoo shall we escape?"

Northrop was silent. McCraik's revelations confirmed all his own fears, and he saw clearly the desperate nature of the danger that confronted them.

"But why should Captain Villiers wish to keep Miss Howard and me on the *Isigoné*?" he said at last, "surely we can only be in the way of the carrying out of any such scheme as you propose."

"Hoot! laddie, ye're na' that quick after a'. The Captain canna' send ye ashore for fear ye tell the whole beesiness, an' then where wad he be? Answer me that, man!"

Matters were growing very thick, and Northrop realized it. "Have you any scheme to propose?" he said to the Doctor.

"'Deed have I, but I need your help, an' that's why I spiered at ye wad you like to get away. Look! We'll get na' chance before we reach Geebraltar, that

I ken well. But when we get into the Mediterranean I misdoubt me if the Captain will na' stop for provisions an' letters, an' a' that. Weel, I doubt the Captain would na' let me ashore in the boat, for I div na' think he likes me ower much, na' has he much confidence in my loyalty to the Greek Queen though my ain great grandfather *was* oot in the '45, the knowledge o' which fact led him to gie' me my present berth," and McCraik chuckled softly. Then he continued, "I would bribe some o' the men on board but, Guidesakes! I think they are a' e'en as mad as the rest. But I ken hoo we can get a sma' boat, the twa o' us, along i' the wee sma' hours, an' we'll e'en take her and with the leddy win ashore. I canna quite manage myself, bein' a landsman, and I canna row, so I'll e'en need your help, Mr. Northrop, and I doubt na' ye'll gie it me for the sake o' saving Miss Howard at all events. Guidesakes! there's the Captain the noo! I must na' be seen too thick wi' ye, so for the time bein' I'll juist bid ye guide night."

It was with a different sense of their position that Dorothy and Northrop went below to their state-rooms that night, and Northrop lay awake for a long time trying to convince himself of the feasibility of the Scotsman's plans, doubting them a little, yet devoutly thankful that he had this new ally who seemed a tower of strength. As for Dorothy, it would be strange if with her feeling of relief at the

appearance of a chance of escape had not been mingled a vague disappointment that the adventure was to come to an end so soon. In the words of Alice, she said to herself, " 'Curiouser and curiouser' and as the strangeness increases so, I must confess, does my interest, and I *should* like to see the thing through."

CHAPTER VII

AN ACT OF WAR

BUT for the dull foreboding of ill things to come, that hung always over Northrop and Dorothy, the days on the *Isigoné* would have passed pleasantly enough. The weather was faultless and the ship rushed through the water at an exhilarating speed, yet every knot she made removed them further and further from home and brought them nearer to the strange and fantastic mystery that lay before them like a fog bank on the edge of the sea. So far as the immediate present was concerned, however, there was nothing to complain of. Life on the strange vessel was far pleasanter than could ever happen on an ocean steamer or on any yacht, for the officers, and attachés — as Kalathos and Fr. Norton were to be considered — proved unusually entertaining, and with any one of them conversation was a delight, from the sad-eyed Captain to the jolly and rollicking Doctor.

The Captain's cabin had been placed entirely at the disposal of the adventurers, and with such cordiality that neither Dorothy nor Northrop could feel that their presence there was an intrusion. As a result it became their daily haunt, and its store of

books and pictures, its musical instruments and its astonishing chessmen, were in themselves a source of entertainment even when the Captain was absent. So far as the chessboard was concerned, it proved a means of elucidating the Captain's character in a new direction. Northrop first played a game with McCraik, beating him easily, for he himself played a sound, cautious, masterly game. Captain Villiers found the two men sitting with knitted brows over the enormous pieces carved from teakwood and ivory in Delhi, and as Northrop finally drove the Doctor into a corner from which there was no escape, to the accompaniment of the latter's invectives, suggested that he also should try his fortune.

In him Northrop found his match, and his confident prowess, famous through Baltimore and Washington, availed nothing. Captain Villiers played a game that was disconcerting and disastrous to his opponent. His attack was fierce and intrepid. To defence he gave little heed, but it was impossible to check his attack or compel him to the defensive. To no possibility was he blind, and his combinations were startling in their originality and daring. From the first, Northrop saw the game was lost. The second followed to the same fate, the third was a draw through Northrop's dogged persistence, but no single game could he win, and he finally gave up with a very new sense of his opponent's capacity.

The Captain smiled as he threw himself down on one of the long divans and lighted a cigar. "I have studied war all my life," he said, "though theoretically only, and chess is like war. Napoleon's method, and his law of warfare, hold in chess as well as in field science. Nearly all men play chess in the courtly and formal way that Austria played at war with Napoleon. I have adopted the system of the great general and I find it answers — usually. Once I found a man whom I could not terrify, and he conquered me by starting an attack first. Then I was lost, for I knew nothing of defence and I could not bully him. He was a Unitarian minister and a Democrat, which I thought curious at the time. I understood it later, for in both fields I found he could not defend himself, there also his safety lay in attack."

Captain Villiers played both the pianoforte and the harp with great feeling if little technique, and both Dorothy and Northrop sang, so the evenings on the *Isigoné* were full of music and the time swept by with wings. To Northrop at all events, the approach of Gibraltar meant the end of a summer's dream, for the conditions were such as no sane man could complain of. To find himself afloat in ideal surroundings with Dorothy by him, no curious or jealous eye within a thousand miles, was a situation ideal in the extreme and he improved it to the utmost. Yet there was always the divertisement of the

ship's officers to give zest to the ardent companionship, and Northrop felt with increasing vigor the growing conviction that if this sort of thing could only keep on, he for his part would accept it blindly and without a word of fault. Once the wild idea occurred to him of suggesting to Dorothy the possibility of appealing to Fr. Norton to use his offices to change the informal journey into an impromptu honeymoon, but he rejected the fancy as impossible. Yet it may be that the idea had occurred to Dorothy as well. People think of stranger things than they are given credit for.

Member of a practical profession as he was, Northrop yet, as he had said, had within him the possibilities of extreme idealism. To him also the nineteenth century brought little of sweetness and light. He would have laughed at the man who accused him of imagination or romanticism, he might even have sworn at him for a clumsy theorist, and he would have been justified in so doing. He hated the sordid nature of contemporary society, the petty and ignominious traffic that called itself politics, the malignant influence of journalism, the poverty of ideas, the lack of proportion in life, the black malevolence of trade, but he hated these things rather because they were illogical than because they were lacking in the poetic quality. Logic was to him the mainspring of his life, and to his credit be it said, his

was real logic, not the blind riot of unwarrantable assumptions that did duty as logic in the minds of the Nordaued individuals around him. It was logic, he always declared, that drove him from agnosticism into the Church, not the craving for beauty in religion, and he was probably right to a large degree.

As a consequence of all this the life on the *Isigoné* was like a restoration to Eden. No flagrant materialism knocked against his shins, no element of commercialism or philistinism got in his way. Everything moved smoothly; granting its basic assumption everything was logical and consistent. Dorothy was an angel, the officers were — with the possible exception of the Scottish doctor — gentlemen and men of cultivation. Given no thought of the morrow what, save the above-mentioned clerical offices of the priest, was to be desired?

So Gibraltar loomed threateningly in the distance, and he came to regard Dr. McCraik as a marplot and an enemy. What if they should refuse to escape with him? It was a pleasant thought, but like that other, not to be considered, and for the same reason not to be mentioned to Dorothy. Here again, reticence was hardly necessary—on the part of either, but men and women never seem to learn that ideas occur to both with curious coincidence.

It was the 27th of June and Gibraltar was rushing upon them at the rate of three hundred and fifty

miles a day. Dinner was over, three bells had sounded from the deck, and Captain Villiers, Kalathos, Fr. Norton and the adventurers were sitting in the cabin drinking their coffee. The Captain was strumming lazily on his harp, fragments and memories of the Brahm's Song of Fate. A soft wind drifted through the open ports, making the red flames in the hanging lamps before the Picture quiver and tremble fitfully. The desire that had been in Dorothy to obtain some certain information from the Captain as to the mission of the *Isigoné* was heavy upon her and she determined to show him that she knew something of the mystery with which he surrounded himself, trying so if she could bring him to definite speech. Hitherto, both she and Northrop had avoided the question carefully, although the conversation had tended with marked insistence towards monarchy and reactionism in general. Something one of them had let fall had changed the intention the Captain had manifested at the first dinner, and nothing would draw him from the abstract to the concrete. The end was coming fast however, and before they were hurled once more into what Captain Villiers had called "the maelstrom of dying civilization" *something* must be settled definitely. She glanced at the bent and shadowed face against the gilded wires of the harp and opened her mouth to speak.

As though conscious of her intention, Villiers modulated from the solemn chords of the Song of Fate into the pleading and warning music of the beginning of the third act of Lohengrin, and the girl paused. Was there indeed some mystic reason why she should not ask the question on her lips? Would the asking bring sorrow and the untimely end of this lotus dream? Rational as she thought herself, she could not but feel that here lay the truth and, cut off as she had been for days from the restraining influence of modern common sense, she hesitated to ask a question that a week ago would have seemed simply a matter of reason. As she paused with parted lips and hesitating heart there was a quick, peculiar knock at the door. The Captain's face changed from dreamy thoughtfulness to a hard, black mask where his once melancholy eyes flashed with eager fire, and throwing the great harp to one side until it toppled and fell among the cushions, leaped with a bound to the door. Both the Duke and the priest followed, and without a word of apology the three men left the cabin, and their hurried steps were heard ascending the companionway.

"What has happened?" cried Dorothy softly as the footsteps died away.

Northrop sat listening: no sound came from above.

He rose and looked through the porthole, then he called the girl in a whisper.

Close by them, not two miles away, were the lights of a steamer; she showed dark and shadowy under the rising moon, and was evidently pursuing the same course as that of the *Isigoné*. Northrop reached out his hand.

“Come!” he said.

Together they went on deck. It was just moonrise and the great red disc hung clear in the east. The sea was like a pavement of basalt under the purple sky. Not a sound came from the *Isigoné*, but the beat, beat, of her propeller, and now and then the soft hiss of escaping steam. The hurricane deck was empty but on the bridge were a half dozen figures, amongst them the tall form of Captain Villiers, a night-glass fastened to his eyes. Below, the deck was crowded with men, innumerable: where had they come from? It seemed impossible that the *Isigoné* should hold so many. And all were standing in silence, their eyes fixed on the stranger. She was a cruiser of some five thousand tons, of a superseded type, with three masts and wide-spreading yards. Her side swelled out into two sponsons, and forward appeared to be a barbette with the muzzles of long guns protruding, covered with tarpaulins.

There was something solemn and awe inspiring in the silent advance of the cruiser, with the lights gleaming at her ports and sparks flashing now and then in the thick smoke that poured from the furnace.

She was steering slowly eastward, but at a rate that was fast leaving her behind the *Isigoné*. With a whispered word to Dorothy, Northrop passed along the port side of the deck until he stood close by the bridge and in its shadow.

There was silence on the bridge, but suddenly he heard the Captain's voice.

"She is Turkish, of course, but why do you assume that she is the *Sheik-ul-Islam*?"

Grosvenor's voice came in reply. "Because that is the ship that was sent to Rabat when the pirates broke loose again. Besides, she answers to the description of the *Sheik-ul-Islam*."

"You may be perfectly right, but what is she doing five hundred miles from land?"

"That I do not know, but I will stake a good deal on her being the *Sheik*."

"How many guns does she carry?"

"Two eight-inch, four four-inch quick firing, and eight Hotchkiss rapid fire guns. She has two torpedo ejectors."

The second officer spoke, and after that the conversation was in Greek. Northrop rejoined Dorothy, and as he did so he saw a flag flutter at the stern. The stranger was crowding on steam, and hung on their quarter about two miles and a half to starboard.

Northrop studied the *Isigoné's* flag in vain: the moon was low and the flag was only a black square

in the dark. The cruiser was not ignorant of its nature however, as a cloud of sparks from the funnel distinctly showed. The *Isigoné* had slowed down after coming up with her, and for a few moments she gained perceptibly.

Suddenly the *Isigoné* seemed to pull herself together like a mustang, and with a great leap she sprang away. The deck trembled beneath them and a rain of sparks swept from the tall funnels. She drew away from the cruiser as though the latter had been at anchor. As Northrop and Dorothy stood at the after end of the hurricane deck as far as the bulwarks would allow them to go, watching the black cruiser drop astern, there was a burst of flame from the dark silhouette, and as the crash of the explosion reached them, the water a little distance off the starboard bow of the *Isigoné* was dashed into leaping foam.

Shrill whistles sounded on the flying ship, the crowd of men forward and aft broke into little black groups one of which swarmed to the part of the deck just below. Grosvenor sprang down from the bridge and came beside them, though as far as he was concerned both Dorothy and Northrop were non-existent. He gave a few quick, sharp orders, and under their eyes the adventurers saw an amazing transformation take place. One after the other the walls and roof of the deck house swung downward or rolled back, and in a flash lay before them the

great low cylinder of a turret with two big brown guns thrusting far astern.

In the meantime the *Isigoné's* course had changed and she was now steaming north northwest, the foam leaping about her prow and high above her deck. There was a second crash from the cruiser, but the shot went far to starboard, and that from a third discharge close to the port bow.

"They would do well to get some new range-finders," muttered Grosvenor to himself as he turned and went forward. In a moment he flashed a glance at Dorothy. "You had better go below," he said, "this sort of thing is not for you. Go to the citadel, not to the Captain's cabin."

Dorothy watched him disappear, defiantly. "I shall do nothing of the kind, thank you!" she said, then turning to Northrop, "Jack! I have never seen a sea fight, have you? Let's stay!"

Northrop knitted his brows. "I would rather you did not, but I really don't believe there is any danger; the *Isigoné* can steam two knots to the cruiser's one and we are already beyond range of the quick fire guns, while it doesn't look as though the Turks could manage the big rifles. I would not leave for anything, so stay if you like, only — if the *Isigoné* fires in return you *must* go below."

"Only in case you come too!"

With a great sweep the *Isigoné* curved east and in

a moment was broadside to the cruiser, driving back on her course at twenty knots an hour. The enemy was silent and an equal stillness was over the *Isigoné*. Inch by inch the great turret swung round, the long guns pointing always to the cruiser. The ships were three miles apart.

“Dorothy, the fun is going to begin, but you must come with me. We are going to fire and so are they, in ten seconds.”

Hardly had the two gained the starboard deck where they were hidden from the enemy, when a roar of thunder crashed around them, so terrific, so cataclysmic, that the girl staggered, blind and deaf, and would have fallen but for Northrop. With a quick glance around he took her in his arms and leaped down the companionway. The ship was full of stifling gas and thin, choking smoke; broken glass crackled on the carpet under his feet as he passed down the corridor to Dorothy’s cabin, and dark figures flashed by him in the dim light. One of them seized him by the arm: it was Fr. Norton.

“She is not hurt? Bring her into the citadel, the cabins might be pierced by a shell! Here, this way!”

The portion of the citadel in which they found themselves was the lower or berth deck on the level of the cabins. It formed the central portion of the ship, the staterooms being arranged around it in a fashion Northrop had never seen before. The room

was almost empty and only dimly lighted. Around the walls were hundreds of rifles in racks, giving the room the appearance of an armory.

Dorothy struggled free. "Oh please, Jack, don't make me stay here. I shall get used to the noise and I want so much to see the fight. If you are going on deck, please take me with you."

Fr. Norton looked at her in astonishment and Northrop laughed.

"I expected as much, but really you must stay below. This is final."

"And there may be work for you to do," said the priest significantly.

Even as he spoke a man staggered into the room holding by the arm a smoke-blackened gunner. There was a bad wound in his shoulder from a flying splinter of shell, and Dorothy was at him almost as soon as Dr. McCraik, who came from another part of the citadel singing "The March of the Cameron Men" at the top of his voice.

"Losh! man, what did ye run afoul of?" he shouted. "We'll juist make an anatomical specimen o' ye in a jiffy. Miss Howard, there's lint there in the square chist. Guidesakes, but ye'll make a braw surgeon the night. Noo, me man — "

The whole fabric quivered under another discharge and the crash of artillery, deadened to a crushing roar, seemed to split the tympana, as Northrop

seized a magazine rifle from the rack and slipped into the corridor.

Outside the citadel doors the smoke was stifling, but he knew the way and in a moment gained the main deck.

As he came out into the moonlight he looked in vain for the cruiser. The white smoke was driving across the sea like a dense fog but the ocean lay blank. He slipped around the forward turret, and as he looked aft saw the *Sheik-ul-Islam*. The *Isigoné* had given her a broadside as she passed, and the Turk had evidently replied, for a jagged and splintering furrow in the deck showed the passage of one shot at least, evidently from a four-inch gun. The second discharge must have been for the purpose of raking the enemy as the *Isigoné* passed her astern. Its result was only too evident. The great black cruiser lay motionless on the sea, her stern low in the water, her bow thrust into the air. She was on fire and the flames were sweeping her amidships where wood had been used in the construction of the upper works after the fashion of the time in which she was built. She was helpless, disabled; her guns were silent, and as Northrop gazed at the result of the first sea-fight of which he had been a spectator, a white flag fluttered in the moonlight.

The *Isigoné* curved southward and swept in under the silent guns of the cruiser, and then Northrop

saw how dire had been the devastation. The forward barbette was a great ruin, for one eight-inch shell had burst just at the base of the carriage. Several shots had passed right through the hull, one funnel was shot half away and leaned dangerously astern, while the sailors and marines were devoting themselves to fighting the flames that poured from the deck house.

It was a strange and fascinating sight, this great cruiser once fierce and threatening now beaten into a shapeless ruin by what Northrop had once supposed to be a steam yacht, but a stranger was to show itself to him.

As the *Isigoné* slowed up, a boat put off from the wreck, but hardly had it started when the flaming ruin rose swiftly by the bow, trembled violently, swayed forward, and with a dull roar like heavy thunder, disappeared. A deep explosion hurled the water high into the air, and the sea swayed slowly into silence as great waves rolled outward into the darkness. The stillness of the night was unbroken even by a whisper and the sea was empty to the horizon. The *Sheik-ul-Islam* was out of commission.

CHAPTER VIII

A STROKE FOR FREEDOM

WHEN Northrop awoke the next morning it was with a feeling that release had come from some strange and unquiet dream that had lain heavy upon him. He tried in vain to fix his mind on some one of the vague memories that could give reality to the confused impressions that drifted around him. But none seemed actual, definite, not even his "good-night" to Dorothy, when she came from the hospital deck of the citadel to meet him as he went below after witnessing the tragic end of the Turkish cruiser. Hardly a dozen words had passed, a spell seemed on them and they had gone to their state-rooms as in a heavy dream. And now, lying in his berth, with the tremor of the screw pervading the cabin, the soft mellow light of early morning streaming through the port and a peaceful silence everywhere, the dull memory seemed to die away with the other visions of his troubled sleep, and for a time Northrop almost thought the whole thing was a feverish dream.

As he went on deck and looked around him, the first sight of the familiar surroundings seemed only to strengthen this feeling. The smooth sea sparkled

gayly as the little waves crept over its surface; a soft wind was blowing idly and the pale sky was brushed with feathery clouds. The second officer was on the bridge, and fore and aft, men were moving about in little groups. Everywhere was the calm of the great sea and the salt breath of the deep. It was with almost a shock of surprise that Northrop, in glancing aft, saw the ragged furrow in the deck that told of the passage of a Turkish shot.

Then the tangled visions took form and shape, and the crowding events of the night came back in all their grim and portentous horror. Aside from the exhilarating excitement the night was not pleasant to think of, fraught as it was with the annihilation of hundreds of men on whom lay, so far as Northrop knew, no shadow of crime. Why must the *Isigoné* have arrogated to herself the prerogatives of Fate, sending the crowded crew of the *Sheik* to their last account? True, the Turk had fired first, but was it more than a signal to heave to? Yet what right had she to demand this on the high seas? It was a mazy labyrinth of mysteries, but Northrop felt that now at last they *must* be settled. This could not go on. Pirate or patriot, Captain Villiers must show his colors.

"Was it all a dream, Jack?" and Dorothy came on deck and stood beside him, looking in his face with wondering eyes. For answer Northrop pointed to the riven deck.

Dorothy followed his glance and shivered slightly as she saw the trace of the shot.

"It was real, then. Where is the other ship?"

"Sinking still, down through the black water with four hundred dead on her deck."

"Oh, why was it done! Why? Were none saved?"

"I don't know; a boat put off just before the cruiser sank but whether she was engulfed or not I can't say. There is Dr. McCraik, perhaps he will know."

The Scotsman came rolling along, his hands in his pockets and a capacious grin on his round, fat face.

"Guide mornin', guide mornin'! An' hoo did ye sleep the night? Easy I doot na', though if I am na' goon daft there was a bit disturbance on deck at one time. Juist twa three sailor men cavortin' round I dare say. Guide sakes! but they broke the peacefu' stillness o' the night I'm thinking. Noo, *did* ye hear anything, mem?"

The Doctor cocked his head on one side with a comic assumption of polite indifference. Northrop spoke quickly.

"Dr. McCraik, what do you know about last night that we do not?"

"Hoot! what a question to speir at a man. What div ye know my bonny, bonny bairns?"

"First, were any men saved from the wreck?"

“Deil a one, juist exceptin’ a sheep, and maybe twa three cattle in the shape o’ bald-headed heathens o’ Turks.”

“Then the boat with the flag went down when the cruiser sank?”

“Deed yes, — an’ man! did she no sink juist beautiful? I had gone into my own stateroom for a case o’ instruments, one of the crew being a wee bit inconvenienced by a heavenly compound fracture o’ the left tibia, and through the port I saw a’! O! it was grand, man! I wad rather ha’ seen it than assist a party off wi’ his leg.” And the surgeon’s little eyes twinkled with supreme satisfaction.

Northrop was silent for a moment and then he said in a low voice. “Why did we sink her?”

“Hoot! why should we na’? She was on’y a black Turk, and they are juist any man’s legeetimate prey. Moreover, did I no tell ye the Captain declared war on a’ Turkey, the mad creatur’, for that the Porte is upholdin’ of the Republic o’ Rhodes? This is juist e’en the beginning o’ the game, and from now on it’ll be overhaulin’ pure tradin’ vessels if there’s any o’ that ilk that fly the crescent flag, and sinkin’ ’m out o’ hand, wi’ maybe now and then a fashious warship or two that does na suspect the nature o’ this elegant pirate. Man! we must e’en out o’ this gin’ we would save our skins! Div ye no coincide wi’ me in that judeecial opeenion? Or are ye hot wi’

the smell of blood, yeerself and the leddy there, an' will juist continue wi' they bonny pirates below until ye are ripe for the hangin'? Will ye do that thing? Answer me noo!"

"Dr. McCraik," said Northrop slowly, "last night's happenings have only resulted, I think, in strengthening the determination Miss Howard and I have made to escape, with or without you, at the first opportunity that offers."

"And a verra gude deceesion to arrive at; but when I saw Miss Howard there takin' to surgery and nursin' like a hielanman to kilts, an' you, my birkie, struttin' off wi' a magneeficent rifle in the crook o' yer arm, I sair misdooted me but ye had both gone daft like a' the escaped lunatics below and would juist bide where ye were. 'Deed! though, but it wad na ha been so surprisin' when a' was said and done, for I must juist e'en confess that the prospect of havin' real live flesh and bones under me bit knives and saws again was cheerfu' an' refreshin'. However that may be, I'll no be that far away fra' good chances at the same carvin', e'en if I do win oot o' this piratical *Isigoné*. And it'll no be that long before I am at work again, an' great pleasure it'll gie me to be o' service to my former friends," and the doctor wagged his head sagely, and rubbed his palms with a knowing though somewhat saurian smile.

Six bells struck, and as it wanted an half hour of

breakfast time Northrop questioned the doctor further as to his plans for escape. He got little satisfaction, for the jolly old fellow just rubbed his hands and winked flabbily.

“Laddie,” he said, “the responsibility rests now on you. I will juist leave it a’ for you to work out, for I know ye’ll succeed. I ha’ no plans except to e’en keep my eyes open and watch my chance. Ye’ll juist do that same, and by and by we’ll find a bit boatie tied somewhere like a dog to a doorpost, and then ye shall row me ashore. But as for plans — Hoot! I have nane, they must grow fra’ conditions. Div ye mind that?”

“But can’t we count on some certain action by the Captain? Can’t we learn how the watches are posted at night on the ship when she is in port? whether any boats will be kept at the gangway? We must know what to expect, or when the time arrives we shall not know what to do!”

McCraik smoked placidly, his eyes half closed. “Na, na, my birkie, we can count on nothing, we can juist wait, that’s a’. We may be able to subsidize one o’ they sma’ boats fra’ the shore, that I’m g’in to understan’ come oot to a ship when she ties up for the night. I know na’. Only this I’ll tell ye, the responsibility is on you, me man. I place it there. I’ll e’en do what I can in the matter, but my advice is, wait until the event. When the time comes, count


on James McCraik, he never played a man false yet nor deserted him in an emergency."

This was not reassuring. Northrop felt an unmistakable sensation that told him he was being made use of, and the rôle of cat's paw was eminently distasteful to him. Yet he must make the best of it.

Seven bells struck and the three conspirators went below, trying to believe, in spite of themselves, that one breakfast more would be the last on the *Isigoné*.

Captain Villiers did not come to breakfast nor did either of the officers. Only Kalathos, Fr. Norton and the Doctor appeared, of all the ship's company. No reference was made to the events of the night. If Northrop tried in the most indirect way to bring the conversation around to the subject, he was put off, and drawn away by the most subtle craft. The conversation was therefore formal and far from the point, and only in a certain hardly hidden elation and smothered excitement did the Duke and the priest show any sign that anything unusual had taken place.

All day long the Captain remained invisible. He did not appear at luncheon, and questions from Northrop elicited the bare information that he was slightly indisposed. It could have been of no importance, however, for Dr. McCraik was not summoned, and the baldness of the excuse was quite evident.



Nearly all day Dorothy and Northrop had remained on deck. The Captain's cabin was empty, to be sure, and not even the Duke or Fr. Norton appeared to break its solitude; but a certain feeling of delicacy closed it to the adventurers. The Captain had showed that he desired to be alone, and since he had done this it hardly seemed fair for his unwilling and unwelcome guests to force him to the seclusion of his own stateroom. To both of them his desire for solitude seemed natural enough, and as they thought of the events of the past night each acknowledged a certain delicate sympathy for the man who had taken into his hands the power of life and death. What must be his thoughts on this, the morrow of the great tragedy for which he, and he alone, was strictly responsible? Was he overwhelmed with remorse? Was he sitting in silence and gloomy meditation on the terrible act whereby he had at a blow ended the lives of hundreds of men? His withdrawal from human companionship seemed to indicate this, and such a course was quite in harmony with what he had shown of his melancholy and visionary character.

In spite of themselves, neither Northrop nor Dorothy could in their hearts condemn him. They acknowledged to each other that they could only feel that in some way he was the instrument of fate and, mistaken or otherwise, his action was governed by

some powerful and conscientious principle. They felt no horror for him, only a kind of pity.

Night had fallen at last, and as the east was growing gray towards the moonrise, a light had gleamed on the horizon, far ahead on the port bow. With a sudden and simultaneous heart throb the two travellers saw in it the beacon that indicated the end of their adventure. Each regarded it with the most conflicting feelings. It signalled the release from a fantastic journey it is true, but also the approach of the last stroke for liberty with all that might mean of danger and possible disaster. Above all it meant their severance from a swiftly advancing story that was growing keenly interesting, and which for them must close before its mysterious end, before the development indeed of its fascinating plot. Yet there was no choice. Reason directed them to escape at any cost, and reason must be their guide.

As they stood gazing in silence through the night, Captain Villiers came and stood beside them. When he spoke it was with an unchanged voice.

"Miss Howard, Mr. Northrop, I am at a loss to explain the feeling that prompts me to offer you a word or two of explanation. I cannot see that it is in any way due you, technically, but I must confess to a quite singular desire that you should not in any way misunderstand me — or the action of last night."

He paused and Dorothy turned to him with perfect

frankness. "Captain Villiers, for my own part, and before you say anything more, I want to assure you that any explanation is unnecessary. I cannot for a moment think that the action to which you refer indicates any dishonorable or unworthy motive on your part. Why I should feel this I do not know, but it is a fact, and so far as I am concerned I beg you will believe that I trust you, even in this extraordinary and tragic affair."

The Captain bowed. "I thank you. Nevertheless, I must say this. The battle last night was not of my seeking. That you must have seen. It was offered me and I accepted. I could have refused it for the *Isigoné* can make twenty-four knots under forced draft. I did not do so for the reason that I represent a — nation — at war with that of the lost cruiser. I showed my rightful flag and the *Sheik* fired on it. No other course was open to me but retaliation. The result was the fortune of war: to be bitterly deplored, God knows, but inevitable. The action was entered into by ships which were quite conscious of each other's nature — perhaps of their mission. It was not an act of piracy on my part, but of war."

Northrop looked the Captain squarely in the face.

"I believe you," he said, "and I thank you for your confidence. It is possible that we may — know more of the *Isigoné* than you suspect, at all events the assurance you have given is a welcome confirma-

tion of what we actually believed. Whatever may be the end of our extraordinary relations, I want to say now, for Miss Howard as well as for myself, that we respect your motive and understand your action. I wish you could take us more fully into your confidence. This is for you to judge of, however."

"I understand your wish and I will meet it. But not now. In forty-eight hours we shall be beyond the straits of Gibraltar. I beg that you will calm your impatience as much as possible. I give you my word of honor that after the expiration of that time I will take you into my confidence. Today is Friday. Sunday evening I will tell you — everything."

When Northrop went on deck the next morning the *Isigoné* lay motionless, but he looked to port in vain for sign of Gibraltar. A light mist lay on the sea but it was not sufficiently dense to hide the great shape of the English stronghold, and for a moment he almost thought the *Isigoné* must have stopped far outside the Pillars of Hercules. It was not until he climbed to the hurricane deck that he saw her position. To the south, close at hand, lay a low shore and the white walls of an African city, and he realized that the escape planned for that night must be, not to English but Moorish territory. Dr. McCraik was standing forward also, surveying the situation critically, and as soon as he saw Northrop he came up, his jolly face clouded for the moment.

“Ah, weel! my son, it wad seem that we must e'en change our tactics a bit. No' that it matters so awfu' much, for it can be but a matter o' ten or mayhap twal' miles across the bit straits, an' I doot na', it is juist as well that we should ca' on the black-a-moors first, juist as a formality. Div ye no follow me?”

It seemed to make no difference, indeed, and the two men fell to a low-toned conversation as to ways and means.

No chance was to be let slip. If an opportunity offered in the shape of an unobserved boat at the foot of the gangway it was to be seized, no matter at what hour, and the conspirators were to trust to luck to get them ashore unobserved. If their escape was noticed, then they could only make a fight for liberty. There must be an American consul in the white town and they could claim his protection. There were good reasons for Captain Villiers refraining from too long a stay at anchor, and from too vigorous action in the line of re-capture, so the danger was slight.

Their scheme seemed unsuspected, so far as they could judge at breakfast, and their liberty was unrestrained. Hour after hour they watched the small Moorish boats swarm round the ship, watched the purchase of various commodities, and at last the departure of the ship's boat for the shore. Not for a

moment, however, was the head of the gangway unguarded, and they were forced to watch the day pass and the sun droop towards the sea without an opportunity which they could possibly seize.

Night came and still the *Isigoné* lay at anchor. One by one the men disappeared from the deck. The conditions were favourable, for the mist which had lain all day on the sea, deepened and closed in on the vessel. Hour after hour passed, and at last towards midnight the *Isigoné* seemed asleep but for the figure on the bridge and the guard pacing to and fro before the head of the gangway.

With the utmost caution, Northrop, the doctor and Dorothy slid from the cover of the citadel into the lee of the after turret. Eight bells sounded, the middle watch came on deck and the ship grew still. From the African town that still gleamed through the fog in straggling lights came now and then a far-away cry. The mist deepened, and the moon, now in her last quarter, failed to pierce its density, changing its blackness only to a faintly luminous gray.

The three looked around them cautiously but with a certain feeling of despair. The city lay so near, yet they were unable to reach it. The only one of the *Isigoné's* boats afloat was a little dingy fastened to the grating of the gangway, but at the head of the steps a marine paced steadily up and down and it

was physically impossible for a man to descend unobserved. Both Northrop and Dorothy stood silent, racking their brains for some plan of escape short of swimming, and Dr. McCraik stood watching them quizzically.

“Noo are ye no’ a pretty pair o’ seempletons? Ye canna think o’ a guide plan, and there is one that is juist grand, *grand*, man!” he repeated in a wheezy whisper. “List ye noo! We’ll slip ’round all so still to the port deck, then, laddie, ye’ll lower yerself over the side, first having removed such superfluous clothin as modesty will allow; ye will then swim slowly around by the stern o’ the ship until ye bob up *under* the gangway. In parenthesis I’ll suggest that ye swim under water. I ha’ in my hand a cartridge shell whilk I e’en took the liberty o’ secretin’ as a memento after the bit trouble wi’ yon fashious Turk. At the moment the sailor boy at the gangway turns his back thereupon in his progress forward, I’ll accidentally flip this bit shell into the sea beside ye. At the signal ye will clip the dingy’s rope wi’ this knife whilk I now gie ye and whilk ye can most conveniently carry in your teeth. Then, slidin’ along the side o’ this braw vessel, ye will return where the rope whereby ye descended is still hangin’. Tyin’ this same rope to the bit painter o’ this dingy, you will ascend to the deck, reshume ye’re clothes, and I will then go down to said dingy and receive Miss

Howard, whom you will follow immediate. Then pullin' off, we will gain the shore and leeberty!"

Dr. McCraik delivered these directions like a professor lecturing to a class in anatomy, and with infinite gusto, which was not in the least marred by his rather asthmatic whisper. Yet the plan was good and almost before he had done speaking Northrop was pulling off his outer clothes. In another moment he had slid down the side into the sea and was swimming silently around the stern. The great gray mass of the *Isigoné* loomed above him, and as he swam slowly up the starboard side a drift of melancholy music came from one of the ports of the Captain's cabin, and it was almost with a pang that he realized that he was about to cut himself off from the ship forever.

He had hardly gained the gangway, where he hung, with the dingy rising and falling beside him, when there came a little splash in the sea. With a quick stroke he severed the painter and in a moment was sliding back along the ship's side, pushing the little boat before him. No accident occurred, his passage was unobserved, and in a very few minutes the dingy was secured to the rope and he himself was on deck again.

With a rapidity of motion which belied his age and bulk, Dr. McCraik heaved himself over the side, and Northrop turned to lower Dorothy. As he did so he

heard footsteps on the companionway, and he had just time to pull Dorothy's arm in his and start walking, when the Captain appeared. He started as he saw them, and stared in surprise, for the hour was late and the decks unattractive in the thick mist. He said nothing, however, that could lead Northrop to fancy that he suspected anything was wrong, and after a few formal words and a cordial "good night" left them and passed forward on the way to the bridge.

With a great gasp of relief Northrop led the girl back to the awning stanchion where the rope was secured, and glanced over the side to see if Dr. McCraik was ready. The boat was gone.

CHAPTER IX

CAPTAIN VILLIERS

EITHER by intentional treachery, or through some sudden impulse born of the terror that came from the discovery of the Captain's presence on deck, Dr. McCraik had cut the rope and, whether he could row or not, had made his escape in the dingy that seemed their last hope of safety. That it *was* their last they could not doubt, and before them loomed now the imminent climax, not to be blinked or avoided. Henceforth the *Isigoné's* career was their own, and theirs Captain Villiers' fate. This was sure. As Northrop and Dorothy stood staring stupidly at each other in the gray night this final conviction came to them simultaneously. The man spoke first.

"Dorothy, our fate is on us. It was written that we were not to escape from this ship. To what end I don't know, but there it is. At all events we have done our best, we have let no chance escape us, so we can go forward to whatever is in store for us with clear consciences. Strange as it may seem, I cannot be sorry. Can you?"

The girl stood silent, looking along the side of the *Isigoné* towards the mist that closed in behind them where Dr. McCraik had vanished. She lifted her

face to Northrop as he stood holding her close in his arms.

"Jack," she said, "I think it is fate as you say, and if so we cannot escape it. Well, then, let us make the best of it. It does not matter where we are, life is larger than continents. We can hold to our honor wherever our lines are cast and so — let us trust in God and go on!"

Northrop kissed her softly. "Let us take that for our motto, the war-cry of our curious quest. We can't have a better. 'Trust in God and go on!' That is brave and honorable. In some way and for some mysterious reason we are linked for the time being with Captain Villiers. I believe his mission is honorable in spite of appearances, and of something that I seem once to have had which, if I remember aright, was called common sense. If it is, let's stand by him. At all events we are doomed to adventure. I am ready. Are you?"

And Dorothy said "yes" without a tremor.

When morning came again they were out of sight of land, steering a course due east: the mist had vanished and the Mediterranean lay shimmering in the hot sun. At breakfast nothing was said of Dr. McCraik. It was as though there never had been such a man. No place was provided for him at table and no word was said either as to his disappearance or the possible complicity of the adventurers in the

plot that had resulted in his escape. In every way Captain Villiers and the attachés were as before: courteous, even courtly after their own quaint fashion, and Northrop acknowledged to himself a certain feeling of shame that he should have dared to plot against them even in order to release himself and Dorothy from a forced imprisonment.

It was Sunday, and mass was said at six bells in the Captain's cabin.

When Dorothy and Northrop came down from the deck they found a transformation in the cabin. A large square of tapestry in the centre of the wall forward had been drawn aside, disclosing a small alcove arranged as a sanctuary, with a gilt and ivory Altar. Everything was very small but exceedingly beautiful, from the old frontal of Italian needlework to the sanctuary lamp of Persian silver. The walls were covered with tapestries, and for altarpiece was an unusually beautiful Paris Bordone. A few chairs had been placed in front for the officers and the two guests.

Mass over, the little congregation went on deck where they were joined shortly by Fr. Norton, and now all the ship's company were summoned for a few prayers, hymns and a short address. They were all in English, and from this fact it became evident that the crew was very largely American, and the discovery was in a way reassuring.

There must have been at least three hundred men assembled on the main deck, and as the adventurers stood by the Captain and Fr. Norton, looking down on that solid mass of life, listening to the vigorous responses, the hearty singing, they felt a certain enthusiasm coming over them at the thought that this body of men must have knowingly consecrated themselves to a cause which, if Dr. McCraik was to be relied upon, was hopeless in the extreme.

There were prayers for "Her Sacred Majesty Isigoné," for the "Holy Restoration," for the defence of lawful governors, and a hymn that was exciting in its enthusiasm. The words neither Dorothy nor Northrop could quite follow, but it was evident that they were dynastic rather than religious. In Fr. Norton's address, however, there was no word of political suggestion. It was a frank, manly, vigorous exhortation, and Northrop heard it with some surprise, for from what he had seen of the priest he had hardly expected to find in him any evidences of great strength or vigor of thought. He rather looked on him as one of those converts to Roman Catholicism through the influence of his senses and emotions, and for men of this class he had scant respect.

The day seemed to pass with laggard steps: Captain Villiers had given his word that he would reveal the secret of the *Isigoné* and her mission that day,

and Northrop and Dorothy knew he would keep it. Everything had proved that what Dr. McCraik had said in the matter was true, and so of course the secret of the *Isigoné* was known to them already. Not in detail, however; while, so far as the Captain himself was concerned, they were still in absolute ignorance. It was with intense eagerness, therefore, that the adventurers waited for the Captain to keep his promise.

It was not until after dinner that he indicated any intention of doing so. As they all passed into the cabin for their coffee the Captain threw himself into a low chair and said abruptly, "You still wish for the story of the *Isigoné*?"

The assent was prompt and vigorous. Captain Villiers lighted a cigar, as did Northrop and Kalathos, and after a few minutes' silence began.

"How much you know already I cannot say. That the traitor McCraik has already told you something, I know. It was, I fancy, enough to lead you to endeavor to escape with him — pardon me" — and he raised his hand deprecatingly, "I do not blame your action in the least and for the future we will not refer to it. Of myself, I think you still know nothing, so let us begin here."

He paused again while the silence was unbroken save by the throb of the engines. "I must tell you frankly that my object in giving you our secret is

that I may gain you to our side. I am anxious to retain you in the *Isigoné* until we reach — land, and after that I confess I wish you to refuse to leave our fortunes even when we are compelled to give permission. Why I feel in this way does not matter. In part it is selfish. As you know we have a chief surgeon no longer. We shall need one soon and I am unable to obtain one until our voyage is finished. This may be too late. I therefore wish to offer the position to you, Mr. Northrop. I look on this as a temporary arrangement, however. At Calche it will terminate if you wish. There I shall offer you a position more consonant with the ability I am sure you possess, and one which affords an opportunity for advancement which few would reject. So far as Miss Howard is concerned I cannot presume even to make suggestions, but if she has ambitions I can assure her that they will be gratified. Enough of this, however; I confess my object in telling you my story in greater detail than I promised you.

“My name is Francois Villiers de l' Isle Adam. In the United States I am known as Francis Villiers, for my family has assumed this anglicized version of the name since 1795, when they were driven from France for their devotion to their lawful sovereign. By direct and unbroken descent I am heir of the last Grand Master of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem who reigned in the Island of Rhodes. Twelve

years ago I married Miss Lynde of San Francisco, as you now perhaps may remember. You may also remember that she lived but two years."

He was silent again, and Dorothy and Northrop exchanged glances. They remembered now with perfect clearness why they had known the Captain's face, for at the time of his wife's death the papers had called the world to examine carefully the man who had become one of the richest in the country through the death of the great heiress who had been his wife. Villiers had, however, dropped utterly out of public life a year or two after his wife's death and shortly his name was forgotten also.

The Captain shook himself together and continued.

"I have already told you enough to show you how I feel with regard to the conditions that maintain in this century, and to the guiding principles which have made these conditions possible. How I came to believe as I do does not matter. I can only say that I tried honestly to use the wealth which had come to me for the furtherance of righteous ends. At first I sought to influence the minds of people through art, literature and education. I soon found this effort to be more than useless. It was seed cast in stony places, there was no soil and the little shoots withered away. It was seed cast among thorns, and the brambles of rooted prejudice, false ideals, inherited prejudice,

grew up and choked it. I found I was dealing only with superficials. Then I tried to go deeper. I went into political life. The result was disenchanting to one who believed in the phantasm of so-called 'evolution.' I found only retrogression, perishing statesmanship, a dying sense of right and wrong: over all a system of organized corruption based on fundamental and overwhelming ignorance and venality, a system so powerful, so firmly intrenched behind the defences of an incompetent Constitution that assault thereon was childish. I became convinced that, so far at least as my own country was concerned, nothing was possible but irresistible progress towards final catastrophe. I studied the thing carefully and was able to convince myself that the republican system was not the only righteous one; then that it was founded on an assumption of conditions that no longer existed, if indeed they had ever been. I found the monarchical system to be based on what I held to be sound reasoning, and accepted it. In the meantime I looked around to see if anywhere were the germs of new life, of the restoration of the noble and beautiful things so long absent from the world, those things which in their madness our fathers threw away in the years following the so-called Reformation. It seemed to me that I saw their birth in the fields of the old classical civilization, fields that had lain fallow for a thousand years. It seemed to me

that in the little Island of Rhodes was the dayspring of the new life. I dreamed of transferring myself, with all the wealth that had come to me, to this happy kingdom, establishing there, with the aid of the enlightened monarch who then reigned, an ark of refuge from the crash of the coming end of the reign of Antichrist; an ark of preservation, for all that the world had created of beauty and nobility during long centuries, from the wrath to come. Then fell the death of the King, the succession of his daughter, Her Majesty Queen Isigoné. Still I held aloof, watching the first year of her noble reign, my courage returning as she showed one after the other evidences of a greatness equal to that of the King, her father. Like the crash of a rending earthquake came the damnable insurrection of two years ago and the establishing of a foolhardy government that called itself a republic. In an instant I saw the wiping out of the beautiful Greek civilization that had promised so much, the dominance once more of the hated Turkish element, the exile and imprisonment of the Queen, the end of all my dreams and my aspirations.

“From that moment I knew clearly the part I had to play in the world, and I consecrated myself to it utterly. I determined to use all my wealth if necessary to drive back the devil from the Eden into which he had entered. To save the cradle of the new life. God helped me to make this seem possible. A

man with whom I had close relations during my short political life was high in the good graces of a South American government — it does not matter which. At that moment an armored cruiser was on the stocks at Cramp's yard, building for this same republic. Through the influence of the friend I speak of I had the republic enter into an agreement to transfer this cruiser to me on its completion. I was in the meantime appointed special agent and had the cruiser completed according to my wishes and with a view to the special work she was to do.

"In the meantime the Duke of Kalathos," he bowed to the old gentleman who solemnly acknowledged his salutation, "arrived in America, an exile. I found him out and from that time we worked together. One by one officers and men were chosen, for I had agents everywhere looking for those who would suit my purpose. Arms and ammunition were consigned in three steamers I chartered to southern nations, and on a certain day 'Cruiser No. 26' sailed from Philadelphia and the chartered steamers from their ports. We effected a rendezvous at a given point on the high seas. Cruiser No. 26 was transferred to me and became the *Isigoné*, arms and ammunition were placed on board, and the *Isigoné* began her mission.

"For two years I have devoted myself to the details of the campaign I am about to begin — or

rather have now begun. As the occasion arises I shall explain these to you. At present I need only give you the general lines, but first I must tell you a little more of the history of Rhodes and of the present condition of affairs. At the time of the War of Greek Independence, Rhodes, Crete and Samos, you remember, did excellent service and practically won their independence. Crete was sacrificed and still remains under Moslem rule. Samos was made an autonomous principality, paying tribute to the Porte, and the same treatment was accorded Rhodes. Here the choice of ruler fell on Constantine, a brilliant soldier claiming descent from the last ruler of Rhodes under the Byzantine empire. He proved a quiet and rather inadequate prince until the outbreak of the Crimean war when he seized the opportunity to declare the absolute independence of Rhodes, and from this date no tribute was ever paid. Shortly after, in 1860 I believe, Constantine I died and was succeeded by his son as Constantine II with the title of King. This monarch's reign was of a different nature. His efforts toward the advancement of the welfare of his little kingdom were characterized by the most far-seeing wisdom, and as a result Rhodes strode rapidly forward in wealth and prosperity. The islands of Syme and Calche were added to its territory by a treaty with the Porte, and negotiations were begun for the cession of a portion of the

mainland. Had these negotiations succeeded, the area of Rhodes would have been doubled. In the midst of them, however, Constantine II was assassinated by a Turk, a member, as was afterwards proved, of a secret society under the influence of the Porte. The King having no sons, his daughter Isigoné succeeded, and it was then discovered that the negotiations for cession of Dorian territory were only a blind. A powerful secret society existed among the resident Turkish merchants, its object being to overthrow Greek control and restore that of the Moslems. This object was effected two years ago under the guise of a righteous rebellion against a wicked and incompetent queen—a lie of the most appalling magnitude, for no nobler woman ever lived than Her Majesty. Nevertheless, supported by Turkish influence and Jewish money, the plot succeeded. The person of the Queen was seized and imprisoned in the Island of Calche, Turkish gunboats in the harbor of Rhodes backed up the arbitrary actions of the Turkish minister, the public buildings were seized, and in a night the revolution was completed and the republic proclaimed.

“I need not remind you that up to date no sign of republican government has appeared. It has been an oligarchy of Turkish and Jewish merchants, ruling without sign of parliament and without the consent or voice of the Greek population, which is in the enormous majority. So here is where we stand now.

Crushed by oppression, the island is full of Greeks ready for revolt, breaking indeed almost every month into some sudden rebellion which is rigidly ground down. In the Island of Calche is the Queen, securely guarded, a Queen worthy of the most extravagant honor and devotion. In the city of Rhodes is an oligarchy of Moslems, Jews and atheists ruling as they see fit and compelling obedience by means of an army of some six thousand men, mostly Turks, enlisted from the mainland.

“The usurpers have no navy and their arms are of a pattern admirable ten years ago but now superseded. Under my decks I carry arms and ammunition which place my little body of three hundred men far above the republican army in power. Can you think for a moment that we run any chance of defeat?”

“Shall we be left alone to settle matters as we may with the usurpers?”

“I think so. Turkey would aid them, but she has her hands full in Armenia and Macedonia. France cannot possibly interfere officially. Greece would help us if she could but her aid will not be necessary. Why, look! Along the coast of Asia Minor is a Greek population of three million souls. Judiciously managed, a revolt could be instigated there which would bring the Turkish Empire to the ground, and such a revolution accomplished, the maritime territory from the Dardanelles to Lycia freed! ——”

The Captain paused. Overcome with the thought of the splendid dominion that rose before him he murmured, "What a nation! my God! what a nation!" then suddenly interrupted himself.

"This, then, remains for us; the overthrow of an alien and evil despotism and the restoration of a lawful Queen, one who has shown herself possessed of all those qualities that demand reverence and love. The crushing back of the 'unspeakable Turk' from a land and a race that had already in the war for Greek independence won its autonomy after a thousand years of oppression. The defeat of the devil, the lord of this world, the establishing of righteousness and order. More: the building of an Eden of the new life in the heart of the old world, the restoration of those things which are the soul of life and which we have utterly lost. The beginning of the Holy Restoration, the kindling of the light of righteousness and truth in a world weary of the night it has brought upon itself. Here in this island Eden, in a land bursting with plenty, lying on the verge of a great mainland all ready to our hand; here where every influence of nature is favorable, we will build an earthly paradise, gathering from the dying world treasures of art and literature, drawing to ourselves all those who are weary of the reign of philistinism and anarchy. Without, the world may go its way towards its own destiny: within our walls the seed

of the new life shall germinate, burst into bloom, and at last scatter its fertile seeds over a desolation enriched by the flood of the wrath of God that is close at hand. This is the mission of the *Isigoné* and in this mission I offer you a share. What is your answer? Is it yes or no?"

Was it the result of some subtle hypnotic influence? Was it sudden and delirious impulse, or was it the answer of some actual craving for the realities of life that the world could not and would not give? Who shall say? And yet without a breath of hesitation, Northrop and Dorothy answered in a single voice, "Yes."

CHAPTER X

THE MYSTERY-SHIP

IT was now the first of July. To the north lay the pale blue shape of the Greek island of Cythera, and southward the low shadow of Crete stretched along the sea. Dawn would bring Rhodes and Calche within a few hours' steam, and then — action! Dinner was over. Captain Villiers, with a word of apology, sent Dorothy and Fr. Norton on deck, and then summoned the ships' officers, among whom Northrop was now officially enrolled, for a first council of war.

For Northrop's benefit, Villiers had explained the nature of the ship's armament and the military stores she carried, for it was evidently his policy to accept him in full confidence. The *Isigoné* was curiously armed; there were, first of all, the two pairs of eight-inch guns in turrets fore and aft, protected from observation by the removable screens and folding tops of thin steel. The secondary battery consisted of six six-inch guns mounted on the lower deck, and the usual complement of quick-firers. The novel element in her armament consisted of four eight-inch mortars that if necessary could be mounted for siege operations, but were now fixed on the main

deck at either end of the citadel where the heavy steel roof plates could be rolled back. Northrop had never heard of mounting mortars on a ship, and expressed his distrust of their practicability, since the gun platform furnished by a ship at sea could be but unstable at the best and would only make aiming almost out of the question. Captain Villiers thought differently however, and placed implicit trust in his stubbed little monsters. The *Isigoné*, he said, was planned for action primarily against land fortifications — as at Rhodes and Calche — and in-shore, in fairly smooth water, the mortars should be trained with considerable accuracy. In a sea fight, given an equally level sea, one shell out of ten, if it reached its mark, would be better than broadsides of ordinary guns, since it would act against the decks and, penetrating, destroy everything within a large radius.

The citadel was another of his innovations: a kind of rectangular tank, heavily armoured, built up within the ship from well below the water line to some nine feet above the main deck. It was about twenty feet wide and ninety feet long, effectively protecting the engines and boilers, with their funnels, and furnishing an almost impregnable area for the magazines, which had to provide not alone for the ship's guns, but as well for the loyal troops he hoped to raise in the island. The supply of machine guns was very large, some twenty in all, of a compact and powerful

type, and there were rifles and munitions sufficient to arm about nine thousand men.

At the head of the long table sat the Captain, and around it gathered the officers: the Duke of Kalathos as commander of the marines and such forces as could be spared for shore duty, Lieutenant Grosvenor and Second Lieutenant Tsamados, Mr. Anderson, navigating officer, the lieutenants of division who were in command of different sections of the battery, and the chief engineer, Mr. Mackenzie.

“Gentlemen, in twenty-four hours we shall come to anchor off Calche: our immediate course is clearly mapped out, but I will remind you of it briefly. According to the reports which the Duke has obtained and to those which I received at Ceuta from our agent in Rhodes, the defences of the place consist of a land battery of ten muzzle-loading eight-inch rifles and two three-inch quick-firing guns. The garrison or guard is composed of nine hundred men armed with single-firing Remingtons. The fortifications are simply rough earthworks. We shall steam in until we are two thousand yards from the fortifications. The secondary battery and the mortars will then open fire, and it is desirable that every shot should tell as our supply of ammunition is limited. The town lies to the south of the earthworks on the low shores of the bay. Under no circumstances is a shot to be allowed to fall here. As soon as the bom-

bardment begins, General Kalathos will see to the disembarking of the two hundred men who are to make the shore attack. Each boat will carry a machine gun for shore use. As soon as a landing of the troops is effected, you will march at once on the castle, liberating Her Majesty. You will then leave a sufficient guard for her protection, and, in case the battery is not silenced, you will attack it from the land side. See that the proclamations are posted at every opportunity. On the surrender of the battery you will see that all the rebel garrison is imprisoned. The Duke will remain in Calche with a hundred rifles, a thousand rounds of ammunition and four machine guns, also a guard of twenty men to be selected by him. Her Majesty will be escorted on board the *Isigoné*, the marines will return with their machine guns, and we shall immediately sail for Rhodes. The telegraph office is in the first street to the right of the pier. This you will, of course, seize at once, and you will see that every effort is made to contradict the messages which, in all probability, will have been sent to Rhodes at the beginning of the bombardment. Is this plan clear, or are there criticisms to be made, or points elucidated?"

After a moment's silence Lieutenant Grosvenor spoke, "This plan is based on the assumption that we shall find the harbor empty. Do we know this? Is it not possible that one or more Turkish cruisers

may be there, having got wind of our movements?"

"That is by no means probable. When we sailed from Ceuta the harbor of Calche was empty, and the nearest Turkish ships were the *Murad IV* and the *Anghora* at Smyrna, the *Feth-i-Boulend*, and a small gunboat cruising along the Cretan shore, and the *Naïmé Sultana* at Mytelene. Even if our secret were discovered it is doubtful if Turkey could decide to take action and succeed in gathering her fleet before Calche. Your suggestion is good, however. Now in case we find a fleet at Calche, there are two plans open to us: either we can change our course and strike straight for Rhodes, knowing that it will be free from ships, or we can destroy the fleet at Calche. Let us discuss this."

The matter was carefully considered at every point and it was finally decided to give battle to whatever Turkish ships of war might be in the harbor, if any, but to no one did this seem a possibility worthy of much anxiety. One by one the lieutenants of division made their reports to Captain Villiers, received last instructions as to the management of their particular guns, and then the council broke up.

There was little sleeping that night. In every part of the ship were men busy testing every piece of mechanism, going over every portion of the engines and the guns, swinging the great turrets back and forth, looking to the machinery of the mortars in the

citadel and that of the ammunition hoists. On the berth deck of the citadel four machine guns and six two-pounder rapid-fire guns with their caissons, stood ready for transferring into the boats, and the rifles and revolvers for the landing party lay ready, with their cartridge clips. On deck, the masks of the turrets and sponsons had been removed, together with railings, awnings, stanchions, and all unnecessary hamper, and when the sun came out of the sea before the rushing *Isigoné*, she showed in her true light — a warship armed to the teeth.

Dark against the sunrise the shape of Rhodes lay like a cloud, and to the left, a smaller shadow, rose the island of Calche. The ship was wonderfully silent: from the bow, back to the after turret she was crowded with silent figures, staring, all of them, towards their destination, towards the blue gates that were to open before them to — what? The event was beyond their control and their knowledge, but the action lay close before them. Somewhere in that blue vapor the woman was sleeping to whom every man had sworn allegiance through Captain Villiers; some from sheer desire for adventure, some for hungry craving to exercise their chosen trade of war in a land that would grant them opportunity if their own country lay at peace. Some from faithful devotion to their rightful Queen, some from a romantic sympathy with a royal lady, wronged beyond endurance. And over

them all, directing every movement, the man who claimed the blood of the last Grand Master of Rhodes, Francois Villiers de l' Isle Adam, standing with folded arms on the bridge in the bright morning.

Northrop came on deck, nervous with excitement. The day of days had come! Before the sun had passed again below the sea, the blow would have been struck, Queen Isigoné would be free, and a new episode of history would have begun. To what end? He could find in his heart no doubt and no misgivings. Day by day the magnetism of the Captain had worked upon him, and the portraits of the beautiful Queen as well. Little by little his old habits of thought, his old convictions and prejudices had fallen from him: the cord which connected him with western ways had stretched thinner and thinner with each knot the *Isigoné* had covered, until it had finally snapped. He no longer had any criterion of *modernité* whereby to test his actions, and it was with a curiously humorous sadness that he felt himself drop from the nineteenth century back into some picturesque and historic past. He realized at last how much a matter of custom and result of environment are habits of thought, and he had no argument ready to answer his impulses when they urged a course of action that two weeks ago, in the hard, narrow air of the New World, would have seemed grotesquely preposterous. He, John Northrop, of

Baltimore, U. S. A., surgeon, was involved in a mediæval scheme to restore the dethroned Queen of a Greek island! Well, what of that? It was a very honorable thing to do! The answer showed him his case was hopeless: and to tell the truth, he was glad rather than otherwise.

Dorothy came on deck and stood beside him.

"See," he said, "there is Rhodes, at last. Before luncheon time arrives, if all goes well, we shall be in possession and Isigoné will be free!"

Dorothy sighed. "I am not afraid, but I wish it were over. I shall be glad it is not, with the first gun that is fired, but now I look forward with dread, though there is no reason. I cannot see from what you tell me that there is any danger; it looks almost like child's play, like a sham battle, but I can't help a certain misgiving. I only wish *I* could fight, with one of those exquisite rifles in my hands, or my eye running along the beautiful smooth barrel of a Hotchkiss, its leaping butt against my shoulder. I should think of nothing but action, and then I should be happy, but to know that I can do nothing — "

"It *is* hard!" and Northrop took her hands in his, "but there doesn't seem any way out of it, does there? Still, you can help me, you know."

"I hope you won't need help, and if the Calche fortifications are what you say, I don't see what chance there is. Do you?"

“Precious little, but one can never tell.”

The breakfast was hurried and constrained. No one spoke much, except the Captain and the Duke, who, now in French out of courtesy to Northrop and Dorothy, now in Greek, seemed arranging minor details of the land attack which was to be in Kalathos' hands. A desire to go with him had taken violent possession of Northrop. There seemed little chance of his services being needed on board, one of his assistants would certainly do as well, but on shore the case was different. Here the fighting must be in the open, and he coveted a chance at a little of it, while the certainty of wounds and death to some of those on shore, gave him a good excuse. He broached the question to Captain Villiers, but the latter did not take kindly to the scheme, and Northrop was at last forced to content himself with a promise that if the earthworks fell before the disembarking of the little body of troops was effected, he should be allowed to go.

When they came on deck again, Calche had risen close before them. Seventeen knots an hour was fast lessening the space of sea between the *Isigoné* and her goal, and already with a glass they could see the little white houses dotted on the gray rock which seemed to form the island. To the right, Rhodes lay long and blue, rising in the midst into the peak of Monolithos. A spur of the island of

Calche ran out into the sea towards Rhodes, hiding the little harbor and the town beyond. From this point a line of dangerous rocks stretched far to the south, and the *Isigoné* was therefore compelled to shape her course towards Rhodes in order to escape them. As she swerved southward, a puff of white smoke appeared on the extreme point of rock. There was a sudden gasp of surprise. What did it mean? They had been sighted, but why should a signal be given? Were the Turks watching for them? Captain Villiers knitted his brows, called an officer on the bridge to him, and in a moment the crew were beat to quarters and quick preparations began. Every gun was shotted, the crews of each took their places, the officers in charge of the range finders were at their posts, and everything stood ready as the ship curved round the point of rocks, and, ploughing north, swept the rocky promontory away from the harbor of Calche.

The reason of the puff of smoke became plain. Calche lay, a cluster of white dots against the gray of the mountain: to the right was the low brown line of earthworks on a small point that curved to the south, partially protecting the bay. In front, black smoke pouring from their funnels, and the sea leaping into foam around their bows, four warships, riding abreast, stood out to sea, straight for the *Isigoné*.

CHAPTER XI

THE BATTLE OF CALCHE

THE unexpected had happened, but not the unforeseen. The Turkish ships at Smyrna and Crete had effected a juncture at Calche, either as the result of some inexplicable coincidence or because in some way word of the *Isigoné* and her mission had reached the Turkish authorities. It was not a formidable fleet that had assembled, except to ships of their own class, and the *Isigoné* was in every way their superior. No one of them was in itself worth serious consideration: with four acting in concert the case might be different. At all events the Captain was to accept battle: this was sure. In a few moments the men were all at their posts, the guns were manned, and with flags flying the *Isigoné* charged on the enemy squadron.


When sighted, the Turks had evidently just left their anchorage close in-shore and were heading to sea, four abreast and about five miles away, a formation which soon changed to a line in echelon, the starboard ship forging forward, followed at a short distance by the second, the third following behind, the fourth still further in the rear.

The *Isigoné* held steadily on her way, running at

about sixteen knots, steering a point to port of the foremost ship. Captain Villiers was on the bridge, Grosvenor in the conning tower. Dorothy had gone down to the berth deck of the citadel at Northrop's order to make ready for possible wounded, he himself remaining on the main deck to watch until some casualty called him below.

The Queen's ship opened the battle. At about four miles the forward mortars gave tongue with a shattering crash; one shell burst prematurely over the foremost ship, the other fell astern. An attack of this nature was evidently unexpected by the enemy, for the line wavered and for a few moments lost its formation, while the foremost ship brought its forward turret into action, shooting wildly and without effect. Four minutes later the mortars thundered again, and this time one shot struck just before the leader while the second plunged full at the base of the forward turret and, bursting, enveloped the ship in heavy smoke.

Then the enemy opened on the *Isigoné* with every available gun, swinging to starboard to bring the broadsides into action. A shell burst in the port of the aft six-inch on the exposed side, killing two men: one of the six-pounders on the upper deck was demolished and four or five men wounded. The *Isigoné's* time had come, however, and she shook under the blast of the forward turret guns, while the



secondary battery carried destruction to the men exposed on the enemy ships, either at the guns or in the tops.

With a quick swerve she swept to port and down the line of the squadron. For a moment she had the leader in line with the other two, the first ship struck having fallen astern, and she was subject to the fire of one only. As she forged onward she fired point blank at one ship after the other, driving past unharmed so far as serious damage was concerned. As she came up with the first victim of the mortars, their effectiveness (when they could get in a shot) was very apparent. The shell had fallen almost vertically and just at the base of the forward barbette, pierced the deck plates, and had burst at the right moment. Guns, barbette and deck for the space of three or four hundred square feet had disappeared to give place to a chasm full of wreckage, with the muzzle of a big gun thrust into the air. The bridge also was half destroyed, with the conning tower, and apparently the *Feth-i-Boulend*, for this proved to be her name, was thoroughly disabled and out of control. She was game still, if unmanageable, for as the *Isigoné* drove past, sheering away from the squadron, the wreck opened on her with the guns in her after barbette and the available units in her secondary battery, landing one shell, which was sufficiently Turkish not to explode, in the bow of the Queen's

ship, dismounting another six-pounder and killing or wounding four men.

The *Isigoné* was now well in-shore in very smooth water, and slowing down under the lee of the rocky point, brought her mortars again into play, impatient at their enforced inaction while the ships were at close range. The enemy also had formed, well out at sea, in single line — the forward ship, the *Naïmé-Sultana*, keeping up a fairly steady but inaccurate fire from her six-inch guns. On the other hand, the mortars were carrying dismay to the enemy: evidently their crews had been well trained and the percentage of hits was greater than could have been hoped. Shell after shell played around the nervous ships, some in perilous proximity, and at last they were compelled to come to close quarters in order, if possible, to neutralize the effectiveness of the mortars or at least confuse their aim.

The decision came just too late: a shell from one of the aft mortars leaped into the air, curved in its high trajectory above the advancing ships, and descending, burst in their midst in a great maelstrom of thunderous black smoke which drove slowly to sea and revealed only two ships advancing to the attack. How much harm had been done was not evident as yet, but at least the Turks had already lost fifty per cent of their efficiency, for two cruisers already were out of action and it was evident that

the *Isigoné* outclassed the antiquated vessels at every point. So far as they knew she was uninjured and they must resort to desperate action or the battle would be lost.

Motionless, the Queen's ship watched them: firing on both sides had ceased and the silence was unbroken. On the shore could be seen small knots of people on the beach and the little pier of Calche, watching the strange fight. The insignificant land fort was firing now and then, with no apparent effect, but the *Feth-i-Boulend* had fallen silent after the *Isigoné* had put a couple of shells into her. On the bridge Captain Villiers stood like a carved figure-head, his glass riveted on the advancing ships that were moving forward at full speed. As they came the *Murad IV* drew some hundred yards ahead, while her consort, the *Anghora*, sheered a little to the east. A nod from the Captain and the officer at the dial marked "ahead full speed." The Turkish manœuvre was evident. At the risk of one ship at least, the admiral had decided to crowd the *Isigoné* between them and to torpedo her as they passed, for the harbor was narrow and there was little space for manœuvring. It looked as though Villiers was going to humor them, for the *Isigoné* started dead ahead directly between the advancing ships. Slowly the guns in the forward turret swung around until they followed the *Murad IV* advancing to starboard,

while the aft guns were laid as far forward as their arc would permit.

Perfect silence: 3000 yards, 2500; would Captain Villiers never fire? 2000 yards; still the same silence and the ships rushing steadily ahead: 1500 yards, and the enemy ships opened fire with all their available guns: 1000 yards. Two spurts of fire from the forward turret, and two shells buried themselves full in the bow of the *Murad IV*, close at the water line, rending the thin, old steel plates like paper and destroying the forward torpedo tubes. Simultaneously the shells from the aft turret swept the deck, bursting, one below the bridge, the other on the ship's port quarter. At the same moment the *Isigoné* swung to starboard, towards the *Anghora*, which was buried in rushing smoke shot with red lightning. The Queen's ship plunged into the storm of death: a shell burst between the forward mortars, destroying one of them, with most of the crew: another entered the bow and burst somewhere inside, raising the deck in a great crackling blister. Still the *Isigoné* held on and in another instant struck the *Anghora* about twenty feet abaft the aft barbette, cutting clean into her old side, from deck to well below the water line, and then, shaken but intact, reversed, pulled out and swung clear of the wreck.

The fight was at an end. Slowly making for shore was the riddled *Murad IV*, her bow already low in the

water and smoke drifting astern from fires that apparently could not be quenched. A little to the east lay the helpless *Feth-i-Boulend*, unable to steam in any direction. To the southeast the *Naïmé-Sultana* was lumbering out to sea, running away, with a mass of ruin amidships. Close at hand the *Anghora* was fast trimming by the stern, while her crew raged helplessly around her boats, striving to escape before she sank. The Battle of Calche was over.

Below on the berth deck of the citadel, stripped to the waist in the torrid heat, Northrop worked over the shattered men brought down from the upper and gun decks, and then sent them below where Dorothy took charge of them as best she could with what assistance was possible on the part of the black woman and the stewards. As the *Isigoné* backed away from the broken *Anghora*, Northrop left his last man and rushed up on deck in the midst of the officers, gun-crews, sailors, engineers, stokers, all eager for a sight of the wreck of battle and a breath of decent air.

It was strange company that sought the deck after the action: half naked men blackened with powder and reeking with sweat, disheveled officers dripping as from a deluge, their faces blistered, hair singed, uniforms torn and dirty and blood-stained. Some of the men had red bandages around heads and arms, others had to be held up by their fellows

for a glimpse of the wreck-strewn sea — a motley crowd that danced and yelled over the sweeping victory.

But the Captain still had his hands full. It would be a catastrophe were the *Naïmé* to escape and reach the city of Rhodes, or even land the men on the shore of the island for which she was working with such speed as she could command. On the other hand, it might be equally disastrous if the *Murad IV* reached Calche, and she was already well in-shore. Meanwhile the *Anghora* was fast going down, and she seemed to have few boats left to provide for the escape of her crew. A landing on the part of the rescue party from the *Isigoné*, without a moment's delay, was manifestly imperative, for the danger to the Queen increased at every moment, so Villiers reluctantly gave up the chase of the *Naïmé* and stood in-shore as far as his ship could safely go. As she got under way the old *Anghora* lurched heavily and went down, but she sank in shallow water near the rocky point, and her battered upper works remained above water. The *Feth-i-Boulend* was safe enough and was keeping afloat, a white flag floating from her foretop. In a few moments the *Murad IV* grounded in about four fathoms of water, to the south of the town of Calche, and her crew made for shore in what boats they had, effecting a landing as the *Isigoné* stopped just off the little pier.

With commendable discretion, the old fort accepted the situation and ran up a white flag: the *Isigoné* lay in a position which well commanded both the forts and the riddled Turkish ship, and she still had enough guns in commission to render both complaisant to her will, so at once the disembarkation began.

Late as it was, the Queen must be rescued without a moment's delay, for her peril, both from the Turkish guards and garrison and the reinforcements from the *Murad IV*, could only be of the gravest nature. What had happened during the battle, or might happen in the next hour, was a thing no one could think about: the only possibility was a supreme effort at immediate rescue.

As rapidly as possible the boats of the *Isigoné* were filled and sent back and forth from ship to shore. There was no sign of resistance at the landing, only groups of frightened Greeks who came from their hiding places to give a somewhat hysterical welcome to their miraculous saviours. The Duke shouted that they had come to release and restore the Queen, and called for volunteers, getting at once some fifty or sixty men of all ages, who were rapidly armed and formed into a company of rescuers. In a few moments the little army of some two hundred and fifty men, with four machine guns and two two-pounders, had been organized and the Duke

struck out for the castle where the Queen was imprisoned and where the refugees from the *Murad IV* would naturally have joined the garrison.

His work was done on the *Isigoné*, and with the Captain's permission Northrop attached himself to the rescue party. The temptation to be in the forefront of the adventure was too great to be resisted, and with a light heart he followed the chase on shore.

CHAPTER XII

A ROYAL RESCUE

THE Duke of Kalathos knew the ground perfectly, and so of course did the local volunteers. To Northrop, it was all a sort of wild novelty and supreme adventure, and he stared eagerly at every detail of the rather sordid and insignificant little village that was huddled around the head of the already dilapidated pier. Frightened, curious faces peered out of the shuttered windows, a gaunt dog or two scurried from in front of the marching men or snapped at their heels. Up the steep, cobble-stoned street, with the Duke in front, impressive in a new uniform and bearing himself like a Crusader — as indeed he was — the little party with its rattling guns pressed on towards the castle which lay on the outskirts of the town and on higher land: the Castle of Villaret where Queen Isigoné had been imprisoned for more than two years.

Every precaution was taken against surprise, and picked men went before, and into every ramifying alley, as scouts. Behind followed the marines from the *Isigoné*, then the battery of machine guns and two-pounders, and as a rear guard the sixty volunteer Greeks. There was no sign of the enemy until they

came through the last straggling cottages into the open space of waste ground that lies before the walls of the garden Constantine II built around the Castle of Villaret.

This monument of the Knights was one of the many small castles built by the Grand Master, Fulke de Villaret, and it had been a fancy of the Kings of Rhodes to restore it as a royal residence. This purpose has been partially effected, the existing ruin having been half restored and a large wing built on to the right. The gardens had been extremely beautiful under Constantine II, and this beauty had been increased by Queen Isigoné, but since she had suffered imprisonment the place had gone somewhat to ruin, and as the attacking party came before it, late in the afternoon, the castle rose before them, rough and ragged but strikingly picturesque.

The buildings consisted of the great square tower, battlemented and machicolated, with the arms of de Villaret on a great stone shield half way to the top, rising from ruins on the left shrouded in ivy and vines, and the new portion lying to the right, built of yellowish stone, with large arched windows. A high stone wall surrounded the castle, enclosing perhaps two and a half acres of land, the once famous garden, now a tangle of palms and fig trees and exotic flowers grown rank and luxuriant.

The castle stood silent, with no sign of life, but as

the scouts fell back to the main line for orders, a volley crashed through the ivy that mantled the wall, and the Duke realized that the enemy was strongly entrenched in the garden. Hurriedly swinging his men into a place of safety behind several of the straggling houses, he looked around for some base of operations. The ivy completely covered the walls, effectually masking the loopholes the garrison had cut, and it was impossible to tell how complete the defence might be. There were but two gates, this and another at the back. Sending a small party around to reconnoitre there, the Duke prepared to attack the defences from the front, should the rear offer no better opportunity. The houses acting as a shelter seemed the best protection for the machine guns, and two of them were forthwith brought in by a back way and installed in a rough living room on the side towards the castle and some two hundred yards away. The two two-pounders were hauled around some outbuildings to the right, so that they would attack the gate with an enfilading fire. The men were drawn up ready for the assault, in the lee of the houses, and on the return of the reconnoitering party with information that the rear gate was equally defended (one of the men possessing a bullet in his left arm as proof of this), the attack began on the gate.

The men were well protected by the thick walls

of the house and the shields of the guns, and the defenders were wise enough to reserve their fire. That of the machine guns was galling, however, though it had little effect on the stone walls. The gate was a better target, and the stream of bullets that spouted from the whirring, rattling, machine guns gnawed the oak planks into leaping splinters. The two-pounders were splitting the stone on either side of the gate into flying pebbles, and every moment a yell from within showed that bullets were finding their way through the improvised loopholes. No structure of wood could stand under the hail of shot from machine and rapid fire guns, and in a moment both valves of the gate, riddled at the hinges, swayed and fell together into the garden. Then the fire of the assailants ceased, and the four reserve machine guns rattled into the pebbly path and were hustled up the slope towards the breach. A sharp fire from within met them, but though several men went down, only one was killed, and under the coercion of deadly engines spouting twelve hundred shots a minute the defenders broke among the trees and bushes of the tangled garden and retreated to the castle.

The leader of the Greek volunteers made a gallant attempt to prevent this retreat, rushing his men around inside the garden wall to the right under cover of the thick trees, but by the time he reached a spot

from which he could command the gates of the castle the great majority of the Turks had succeeded in entering, and only a dozen or twenty stragglers were cut off and made prisoners.

Instantly the Duke drew in his infantry and what served as artillery to the shelter of the wall, sending two of the machine guns and a small body of men to hold the rear gate. The enemy was trapped as securely as so many vermin: it was only a question now as to whether they should surrender in a body or be slaughtered like rats in a pit. The Duke sent a shot from one of the little two-pounders through the castle doors to attract the attention of the inmates and then, by a petty officer bearing a flag of truce, summoned the garrison to immediate surrender. There was considerable parleying at the doors, between the party on the inside and the flag of truce, the shot-hole the Duke had so thoughtfully provided serving as a means of communication. Finally the officer returned, his face drawn with dismay.

"They refuse to surrender, Excellency, and they say that if you open fire on the castle they will strangle the Queen at the first shot. Furthermore, they say that if at sunset you have not withdrawn your force they will kill the Queen and cast her body to you from the top of the tower!"

The Duke staggered against the ivy-covered wall in horror. His face turned yellow and he gasped piti-

fully for breath. It was a terrible problem that confronted him. He knew that the imprisoned Turks were quite capable of executing their threat. Yet if he withdrew, the party would escape and they would carry the Queen with them! The poor old man's teeth chattered, and he turned round and round looking for someone to give him council.

The message from the Turks had roused every spark of chivalry and devotion that Northrop possessed. He felt now for the first time that he could die cheerfully, if by so doing he could save the Queen he had never seen. He seized the Duke's arm sharply, and spoke rapidly.

"One thing is sure, the Queen is alive; and another, that she is safe until sunset; it lacks an hour of that now. We at least have time to think. Is there any way in which we can find where in the castle the Queen is imprisoned?"

Kalathos shook his head, the horrible position in which he was placed seemed to have deprived him of the power of reason.

Northrop knitted his brows; there must be some way; if the Queen was not with the imprisoned garrison there *was* a way. But how solve this question? He turned to the Duke again. "Excellency, it is not the time to despair but the time to act with courage. Send to the garrison and find out if they will deliver the Queen to you on condition that they are allowed

to go unharmed. Bad as this would be, there is a chance of worse. Negotiate, attract their attention, and in the meantime I will see if I can locate the Queen."

He slipped beside the wall and followed it around to the left, and so down the side until he was opposite the ruined portion of the castle, with the great gray keep towering over him. Something told him that the Queen was here, as yet secure from the savage crew in the new wing. He pulled himself up to the top of the wall by means of the great vine stems, and stared at the ruin. The walls had partially fallen, ragged crags of masonry rising from the tangle of citrons below. The keep was in good preservation, but no opening appeared in its lower stories on this side; near the top were two pointed windows. As he studied them the white face of a frightened woman appeared at one, then vanished on catching sight of him. Was the Queen there? It was worth the attempt to find out, and he dropped to the ground again and hastened back to the gate. He found the Duke still stupefied, but as he rapidly unfolded his plan the old man straightened up and his courage seemed to return.

The scheme was simple. Northrop was to wind a rope around his waist and make his way to the window of what he felt sure to be the Queen's apartments. Once there, he was to lower her from the

window to the Duke, who was to receive and guard her with a small company of men, escorting her at once to the shore. In the meantime the general attack was to be made on the castle doors. The plan was feasible. It all depended on Northrop's ability to reach the Queen and that he could do this he felt sure. He slipped a couple of revolvers in his pockets, with a lot of cartridges, twisted a rope that one of the men found in a neighboring house about his waist, and slid again around the edge of the garden.

He scaled the wall in safety and dropped on the other side: here he was safe from observation, for the keep and its adjacent ruins were all that was to be seen of the castle. He glanced again toward the window, and once more a face appeared, only to vanish. Northrop would have sworn that it was the face of the portrait, and with a fiercely beating heart he began his ascent.

The walls rose irregularly, forming two sides of a quadrangle, of which the tower was a third, nearly to the level of the Queen's window. Here and there they were broken by windows of which the arches had fallen, or by great gaps in the stonework, but vines grew half over them, and with a clear head there seemed no reason why the thing should not be done successfully. Breathless, Northrop pulled off his boots and began his climb. At first it was easy enough; from a low citron to a level space about fif-

teen feet above the ground, by means of a strand of vine. Here he paused to reconnoitre. The next stage was a straight piece of vertical work on broken rubble wall, but he crawled up like a cat. From here it was a long incline as far as the angle, and just around it; at this point intervened a bad break. Northrop measured it with his eyes, leaped, caught a stone that slipped and crashed by him, rattling to the stones below, seized another vine as he was falling, and so pulled himself to the top. He was now almost on the level of the Queen's window, but it lay in the wall a good twelve feet away to one side. He thought a moment and then whistled softly. Far below he saw the Duke and his guard, but the window remained vacant. With a sudden thought he cut a button from his uniform — like all those on shipboard it bore the royal "I" and the wreath of laurel—and stepping back, tossed it through the open window. He heard it rattle on the floor, then there came a little cry, and he nearly toppled from the wall as *she* came to the window; the Queen, Isigoné, the original of the picture on the ship, only living, more beautiful, more exquisitely human in her helplessness.

"Madame!" he cried in French. "We are here to save you, the Duke of Kalathos is below, look down and you will see him! The garrison is imprisoned in the castle but even now they are sending to kill you. Can you tie this rope to the mullion?"

He tossed the end in, saw it caught and secured with a good workmanlike knot, seized it as far out as he could reach, launched himself into space, swung back and forth for a moment, pulled himself to the sill, and in a moment had leaped into the room.

Isigoné, Queen of Rhodes, stood before him. Two or three terrified women clustered around her, staring with great, frightened eyes. Doubt was out of the question. There was the same unusually tall, vigorous figure, the masses of black hair, the great velvety eyes, and over all, like a royal mantle, royalty unmistakable, mitigated in no way by the worn and shabby gown that clothed the noble figure as a beggar's rags might cover the Venus of Melos.

Coerced by the silent and beautiful woman gazing at him with passionate, inquiring eyes, Northrop instinctively fell on one knee and, lifting the Queen's hand, kissed it reverently. Then he straightened up and in as few words as possible told Isigoné of the parley with the Turks, their threat, and the plan he had devised for lowering her from the window to the Duke of Kalathos who would send her to the ship while the imprisoned Turks were given the chance of surrender or ignominious slaughter.

The Queen shook the women away and came forward a step: then to Northrop's amazement she spoke in fairly good English.

"I am ready now. Send down my women first. I will follow."

Northrop glanced at his watch and saw with a gasp that it wanted less than five minutes of sunset.

"Madame," he said, "I beg that you will go first, there is not a moment to lose. The Turks may send to kill you at any instant, for the time is up. The women shall follow."

The Queen looked at him almost scornfully. "What! leave my women here even for a moment? I will not. Send them first!"

"But your Majesty — "

"Send my women first!" and the Queen's eyes flashed fire. "You are wasting time. Go!"

One glance convinced Northrop that protest was out of the question, and as rapidly as possible he knotted the rope under the arms of one of the women, took a turn around the mullion of the window, and paid out the rope slowly and carefully.

At the same moment he heard the rattle of machine guns, and knew that, mistaking the woman's figure at the window for that of the Queen, the Duke had ordered the attack begun. He prayed for time. The strain on the rope slackened and he pulled it in. In another moment a second girl was launched through the window. Hardly had he begun to lower away when he heard a pistol shot behind him, and a bullet flattened against the stone wall by his side.

The last of the three women screamed, but her cry was silenced by a rush of words from Isigoné. "They attack the door," she said swiftly to Northrop in English. "It is locked and barred but it cannot stand long. It is too late, leave the rope and follow!"

The loosened rope released Northrop and he leaped to one side out of range of the bullets that sung through the door, which happened to be just opposite the window. The Queen caught him by the arm.

"Quick! this way! We cannot defend this room, but above there is better! Follow! Follow!"

She sped across the empty room, with an arm around the last of the women, who was tremulous and half fainting with terror. Northrop followed, the shots splintering the door behind him. To the right a door opened leading to a passage and stairway at right angles in the thick wall. An enormous old lock secured the door from the inside, and fortunately the great rusty key was in it. Exerting all his strength Northrop shot the bolt and rushed up the worn stone steps. At the top a door opened to the left, and following the darting figure of the Queen, Northrop entered and found himself in the royal bedchamber.

The room was directly over the one below, and was of the same size, meagerly furnished, but with evidences of femininity in spite of its bareness. At first it seemed that they had changed only for the worse, in coming up to this topmost story, but the

Queen soon showed how strong a position they had gained. At the head of the narrow stairs was a small room about eight feet square, in a kind of turret that rose at the corner of the tower. Into this room the Queen led Northrop. It was fitted up as an oratory, with a little shrine with its icon on one side, and a rough prie dieu before it.

"See!" cried the Queen. "This is my little fort against the devil and against men. Here in this wall, a little window! Look! It gives right on the stairs and at their head. You can shoot, shoot, any man, every man that comes through the door, for the stair is so narrow, and if you have care they cannot see you. You have revolvers?"

Northrop pulled one from each pocket and silently laid them on the ledge in front of the narrow window which was hardly more than a slit, evidently intended originally as a means of defence of the stairway.

"Good!" cried the Queen, with a low laugh. "I also have a revolver. They will be here in a little. I will load a second for you so that you can fire all the time. We can hold this place against armies. But at the least, there is the roof, and to that there is only a ladder which we can draw up."

Shots through the stair door showed that the enemy already had possession of the lower room. A faint light came into the narrow stone stairway

through a loophole in the wall, and with one six-shooter in his hand and two lying on the ledge, Northrop waited, almost impatient for the door to fall. Outside could be heard the steady rattle of machine guns; from below came the incessant crack of the shots that were destroying the old lock. Every now and then puffs of smoke leaped through the oak plank, and at last it yielded and two men sprang up the stairway. It seemed like murder to shoot them down at such short range but there was no alternative, and one after the other they dropped, and rolled heavily down the steps.

Resistance of this nature was evidently unexpected. The Turks undoubtedly thought to find only a passive opposition in the shape of doors, for they could know nothing of Northrop's attempted rescue. There was a pause, and then a rush was made for the stairs. Northrop fired steadily, but of the four men who led the assault three only fell: one got by and in a moment was sheltered from the fire by the thickness of the wall. He was at the last door and only a rusty lock secured it. There was no further attack from below, and Northrop heard the fellow throw himself against the door that strained and creaked under his weight. Then came a sudden voice in his ear.

"I have taken one of the revolvers and will attend to the chamber door myself. Marya will stand in the

embrasure of the wall. You need not fear for me. I can shoot well."

She told the truth. The door burst open, but a shot snapped at the same moment and something fell heavily to the floor. At that moment Northrop's attention was quite taken up, for into the stairway poured a mass of men. Their shots sung through the loophole and spattered on the stone wall, but a very few in return from Northrop seemed to block the narrow passage into inextricable confusion. One report after another from the chamber seemed to show that some of the party had escaped, only to fall before the Amazon Queen. Still the dark figures rushed into the passage. By and by they crawled, now seemingly driven by terror, and the reason soon became evident. The castle was taken! Shots crashed in the room below them, the enemy was out-flanked and between two fires.

No more men came into the awful stairway, the sight of which made Northrop sick. The firing ceased below. Perfect silence came down, and with humming ears and blinded eyes he staggered out into the chamber. In the deep embrasure of a window which gave her some protection, stood the Queen, dark on the rose colored sunset light that streamed around her, a revolver in each hand and her whole body quivering like that of a tiger at bay. Around the shattered door were huddled three motionless figures.

“Io pæan!” shouted Northrop, and rushing up to the Queen he caught her by the hands in good American fashion. “The day is won, and Isigoné is Queen again!”

CHAPTER XIII

ISIGONÉ, R.

IT was not good to stay in Villaret Castle that night, for there had been a great fight, upstairs and down, backward and forward, in the great rooms of the building of Constantine II, and in the vaulted chambers and narrow passageways of the ancient castle. Machine guns and magazine rifles in the hands of two hundred and fifty men quite out-class ten-year-old rifles, though they may number seven hundred, and possess the protection of good thick walls. With the machine guns the attacking party had driven in the castle gates as they had those of the garden, and after a little practice on the windows by the two-pounders and sharp-shooters, the great hall was carried with a rush. It was hand-to-hand work, and revolvers and sabres were the only weapons effectual. Little by little, however, the garrison was driven in, and at last, divided into a dozen small groups seeking every avenue of escape, it was overpowered. One party, the largest, comprising perhaps a hundred men, made a dash for the rear gate, cut its way through the company with the machine guns, and vanished into the rocky hills that rose close behind.

Therefore it was not good to stay in Villaret that night, and in the early twilight Kalathos, hysterical and a little shaky, gathered his men for the return to the *Isigoné*, leaving Captain Hay and twenty of the marines, with the volunteer Greeks and two of the machine guns to guard Villaret. Word had been sent at various intervals to Captain Villiers as to the progress of events, but the last had gone on the carrying of the walls, and as yet the Captain knew nothing of the successful result of the expedition. An orderly was sent clattering down the streets to warn him of the approach of the royal guest, and close behind followed the triumphal procession.

From every direction the Greeks were pouring into the little town, and with each step down the narrow street that led to the pier the throng in the fast darkening alleys drew closer. In their patriotic enthusiasm, the people threw themselves on the soldiers and on the guns, winding them with such flowers and vines as they could find at hand, bearing great palm branches over them and casting them in the way. Before the Queen, who rode on the only horse in the party, their enthusiasm changed to awe-struck devotion: they knelt as she passed, struggling to kiss her foot, the edge of her gown, her horse. Beside her, old men, women and children walked in a solid mass, tears pouring in thankfulness from their eyes. The singing was incessant: every one seemed

to sing, and at last, as they passed the little church of St. Christopher, the Greek priest came out with his acolytes bearing candles and censers, and a great gold and painted icon.

So, step by step, the short journey from the castle to the ship turned into a royal progress, and as the party came out at last in the paved marketplace by the sea, the captured fort, its transfer effected during the attack on Villaret, thundered a salute with its old smoothbores, answered at once by the guns of the *Isigoné*, the discharges flashing in the growing dusk like fitful lightning.

At the pier lay the Captain's gig, and as the Queen dismounted, Lieutenant Tsamados leaped on shore and fell on his knees before his sovereign. As *Isigoné* stood ready to embark, she turned to the little crowd of people and spoke.

"O my people! God in His infinite goodness has seen fit to lift from our beloved land the curse that had come upon her. Into our hands He has once more given the supreme authority. The first act given under our own free will is the release of all political prisoners. This order had been given, and if any of you sorrow for a brother or a son or a husband, he will be in your arms before tomorrow's dawn, unless already God has chosen to crown his devotion with holy martyrdom. Living or dead, those who have suffered for me and for my country

are in my mind, and thus shall they remain until the charge is given by me to my successor. No man who has fought or suffered since the first day of the unholy rebellion shall ever be forgotten. I go now to my ship, my ship that has scattered and annihilated the squadron of the rebels' allies. Tomorrow, at Villaret, I will see my people again, before I go to assume my authority over Rhodes. To God I commend you."

The dusk was closing over the sea as, the tall figure of the Queen in the stern, the gig swept toward the shadowy *Isigoné*, closely followed by two of the ship's boats with the few marines who were not required for guard duty on shore and were returning to her. Such of the wounded as could be moved followed in another boat, the dead were in the hands of the Greek priest, the seriously wounded in the little hospital where the few Greek attendants that remained had been placed under the charge of one of the assistant surgeons from the *Isigoné*. Northrop, who with amazement saw himself treated as quite the hero of the occasion, even by the Duke himself, sat with the latter in the gig.

All the way to the *Isigoné* the Queen was silent, but her great eyes seemed to drink in the evidences of the morning's fight around her. The dark shapes of the sunken and stranded ships, the *Murad IV* still showing a lurid glow from the dying fire that had consumed all her upper works that were de-

structible; the low line of the shore battery where the flag that rose the next morning would show, not the hated crescent, but the five crosses. Then her eyes were fixed on the *Isigoné*, and remained so until the boat swept to the gangway as a second salute crashed out from the six-pounders, and in the twilight the crew could be seen stretching in a single motionless line along the rails of the main deck.

As the Queen stepped on the grating of the gangway, the ship's band struck up the Rhodian hymn. For a moment *Isigoné* hesitated, and she caught at the Duke's arm, while she stifled a great sob. It was the first sign of weakness she had shown, and Northrop looked with admiration at the woman who could carry off the events that had been hurried into the last few hours, with such nerve and self-control. When he reached the deck he saw a curious sight. Shining on the decks riven by Turkish shots, and on the steel walls of the citadel, bruised, dented and shattered with great cracks, was the light of many lanterns, and in the midst of the illumination, surrounded by marines presenting arms, and bare-headed sailors, stood a tall, shabbily dressed woman. Before her knelt Captain Villiers and the officers of the ship, in a half circle, swearing allegiance to the sovereign whom, until that moment, they had never seen, but for whom they had already fought two sea fights, bombarded a land battery and reduced a

castle. Without an instant's hesitation, Northrop fell on his knee and in a moment he had bound himself by the most solemn oath to defend Isigoné and her cause and her people, to the death. Then he rose and went to find Dorothy.

It was not a hard task, for it would seem that Dorothy had also started to find him, and so they met at the head of the aft companionway, and a moment later were in Dorothy's cabin, holding each other close, each staring into answering eyes.

"I *knew* you would come back safe, dear heart," whispered Dorothy. "I have prayed for you almost all the time since you went away, and now you must tell me all, all — unless you are too tired?"

"Tired! no," and Northrop shook himself like a great dog, "but I am, I suppose, the very dirtiest and most unpresentable object in this hemisphere. Let me get out and make myself reasonably decent, and then I will talk as long as you like. No, I won't kiss you again under the present conditions. Just you wait here, though!" He started off with a bolt, but halted at the door and turned. "I say," he said in a low voice, "I have sworn allegiance to the Queen."

"Very well," and Dorothy laughed in his solemn face. "You made a mental reservation, I suppose — I being that reservation — and I am ready to do the same. *Do* women swear allegiance, though? I

have no doubt but that we are all mad and need to be locked up, but — I don't care, and I — am — glad!"

When Northrop came back clothed, though according to ordinary canons of good sense, no more in his right mind than before, he found Dorothy still waiting for him, and throwing himself down on a transom he started in with a full account of his adventures since he had pulled off from the ship with Kalathos, so few hours before. He had only advanced in his narration as far as the carrying of the outer walls, when a petty officer came with word that they were expected to dine with the Queen, and in half an hour.

Dinner was served in the great cabin, for during the action of the morning a small shell had pierced the wall of the dining room, and exploding, had changed the beautiful little apartment into a black and yawning desolation, shattering its floor and leaving a clear space from the protective deck to the main deck. Nor was the great cabin untouched, for shot from the enemy's secondary batteries had entered the ports and done serious damage in every direction. However, in the main the cabin was intact, and the hurried repairs that had been made rendered it quite respectable in appearance.

There was no longer an empty chair to receive the salutations of the officers, but the Queen herself, every inch a Queen, her beauty enhanced by one of the mysterious gowns that had already filled Dorothy

with such amazement. It was in no way hard for Dorothy and Northrop to enter into the exalted and exulting spirit of the feast, and they instinctively drank the enthusiastic toasts that followed one after the other, seeing nothing incongruous in the action, accepting it as part of the new life that already seemed larger and finer than that they had definitely left.

Captain Villiers was another man. His face was swept clear of all the lines of anxiety that had masked it before, his voice had a different ring, and he seemed acting under stress of tremendous excitement, almost divine exaltation. Nor was this strange: against heavy odds he had won his victory. He had defeated, not a weak oligarchy with its superseded means of defence, but a powerful ally: he had freed the little island of Calche, and seen the flag of the five crosses floating over fort and castle: finally, he had liberated the Queen, given her already a small spot of independent territory, and brought her to the ship he had purchased and equipped for her. The reducing of the city of Rhodes, and the freeing of the whole island, seemed a trifle after the actions that had closed, and however great their victory in the island itself, the battle of Calche and the Second of July would remain the great day of liberation.

That he felt himself, in a sense, the agent of God, he showed in what he said, and although he took no

credit to himself, giving all for the naval battle to the executive officer Grosvenor, and that of the siege of Villaret and the rescue of the Queen, to the Duke and Northrop, he nevertheless showed that he believed himself the passive instrument of Divine Providence, through whom the germs of the new life and the "Holy Restoration" were to be preserved. There was no one, at dinner at least, who felt disposed to refuse him this position.

Northrop found his situation amazing and embarrassing. The moment he entered the cabin with Dorothy, he was hailed with cheers and shouts of enthusiasm: even the Queen rose and turned to him with a fine, frank smile, holding out her hand to clasp his own in most democratic fashion. He stared in astonishment, quite at a loss to understand the meaning of this demonstration, and it was not until the Queen told him to sit on her right, in the place of honor, the place due to the man who had been the means of saving her life, that he realized that this credit was forced on him, and that his adventure had brought him into the very front of local fame and credit, binding him by iron chains to the Queen and her cause forever.

During dinner there was no conversation save of the battles since Captain Villiers had raised the Queen's standard off Gibraltar at the fight with the *Sheik-ul-Islam*, and of the motives that had led him

to champion Isigoné's cause. So close had been the Queen's imprisonment in Villaret, no word had come to her of possible succour, and therefore she was ignorant of everything that had occurred previous to the moment when Northrop entered the castle keep through the window, announcing that he proposed to lower her to the Duke below. All the latter's plotting, and the efforts of his agents in Rhodes and Calche were utterly unknown to her, and she had lived on from day to day for two weary years, ignorant of all that was happening in her kingdom. The first warning she had received of an attempted restoration had come from the sound of the fighting out to sea. From the first shot she had been a passionate spectator of the great fight, for the keep of Villaret commanded a wide view over the town of Calche, and across the little bay and the intervening sea to the purple line of Rhodes. At first she could not believe that her fortunes were involved, for the single ship that was coping with the four Turks was of a size and nature widely distant from the two little gunboats that had composed her navy, yet she had watched the entire action as though her fate hung upon it, and as ship after ship was disabled, until the last stood out to the east, she had thrilled with exultation and hope.

Then had come the hurried retreat up through the town of the refugees from the stranded *Murad IV*, the defence of the walls, the advent of the Duke with

his precious battery, the carrying of the east gate, and then — Northrop's appearance through the window. The moment she had seen, from the top of the keep, the flag that was her own waving over the little body of men that had driven in the Turks and captured the outer line of defences, she had realized that this was indeed a movement towards restoration that stood good chance of better success than had the constant sporadic attempts that, during the last two years, had resulted in prompt defeat and the sacrifice of many loyal lives; and she had waited patiently for the victory that seemed so near, ignorant of the danger that menaced her from the desperate garrison. It seemed that none had come near her since the first gun was fired in the battle of Calche, the castle garrison had been too busy strengthening the defences that hitherto had been adequate enough against the little bands of patriots that, with trivial and worthless arms, had endeavored to storm the castle. The whole keep belonged to her alone, and she was seldom molested, for it contained no windows in the three lower stories, and escape was impossible, but the moment the refugees appeared, hurrying through the town, she and her three women had done what they could to protect themselves from attack from within, and as a matter of fact it was probable that the Turks had been unable to effect an approach to the room in which Northrop found her,

until the moment their shots came through the door.

As the Queen told all this, and much more of pathetic and moving incident connected with her imprisonment and the siege of the castle, everyone sat silent, absorbed in the narration. As for Northrop, he was bewitched by the beauty and dignity of the Queen, the sweetness, and the sudden tigerlike passion that would follow almost immediately after some bit of womanly delicacy and feeling. Isigoné seemed like a great symphony to him, with movements now allegro, now andante, now adagio, now even scherzo, yet through all, running one great sonorous and heroic motive, a royal and splendid devotion to a crushed and tortured people. The Queen's voice was one that could sway multitudes or individuals equally well: a low contralto, that sometimes seemed to have less of the speaking than the singing qualities. Now and then, particularly when she was speaking Greek, her words seemed almost like a chant. As she sat at the head of the table, a fillet of bay leaves the only crown on her black hair, her deep, velvet eyes fixed with strange power now on one, now on another of her auditors, the warm ivory of her face flushing with an undertide of sultry rose, her slim hands clasping and unclasping on the carved arms of the great thronelike chair, her breast heaving, her round throat throbbing as she spoke in her strange, sonorous, velvety voice, she certainly

seemed the most beautiful and wonderful thing in the world. As Northrop gazed at her, fascinated, he wondered if she were not like Mary Stuart, and confessed that if she were, then he could understand the devotion the unfortunate Queen of Scotland and England had won, confessed that here, as there, was at least one Queen who could do no wrong.

CHAPTER XIV

THE QUEEN'S AUDIENCE

AFTER dinner the plan of the future campaign was mapped out. With wondering admiration, Northrop watched the Queen quietly draw strand after strand of the meshed scheme into her own hands, without assurance and without pretence, but so surely, so steadily, that in a very short time she was the unmistakable head and centre of all things. Ignorant as she was of recent events, except from hearsay, she nevertheless knew Rhodes and her people so much better than anyone else, even Kalathos, and she so manifestly possessed the mind of a statesman and the knowledge of political methods, that she stood head and shoulders above all her councillors. She forgot nothing that had been told her, and each fact seemed to take its place at once in a perfectly organized panorama, which now and then she appeared to regard carefully. In moments of this kind her eyes would half close, and she would be quite silent. Then in a moment her face would light up with intelligence again, and she would put her finger at once on the weak spot, or indicate unerringly some quality in the people, some detail of policy, that must inevitably modify the general scheme.

Northrop had never seen a woman in this position before, indeed he had rather scorned the idea as absurd and preposterous, but in spite of himself he was compelled to admit that here was a feminine incarnation of statecraft, and he admired accordingly.

The release of the patriots made prisoner by the Turkish oligarchy, had been ordered the night before, so far as Calche was concerned, and this pleasant duty had been assigned to Captain Hay, commander of the marines, as well as the military charge of the liberated town and the surrendered battery. He was to be left in charge of the island, with a small body of men from the *Isigoné*, and a store of arms and ammunition supplementary to what had been captured in Villaret. The organizing of a local guard from the Greeks resident in the island was to be undertaken at once, and as soon as each company could be equipped, it was to be transferred to the coast of Rhodes, where the people were to be roused and formed into a volunteer army which was to march on the city from the land-side on the seventh of July. A report from Captain Hay, brought in about ten o'clock, showed that the castle itself contained arms and ammunition, of sorts, sufficient to equip about seven hundred men. From the helpless *Feth-i-Boulend*, still lying disgracefully under the *Isigoné's* searchlight, at least five hundred more equipments should be obtained, and the *Isigoné* could

spare three hundred. If any machine guns and two- and six-pounders could be saved from the *Anghora*, or the half-burned *Murad IV*, these would be left with Captain Hay, who, as soon as he had his men organized, was to leave Calche in charge of the released Greek governor, Athos Ionides, and cross with his little army to the main island.

In the meantime, Captain Villiers was to see to the *Murad IV* and the transferring of her men to prisons on shore, and he was to strip her of all her light guns that might prove useful in arming the defences of Calche, and in supplying the places of his own shattered secondary battery. One of the six-inch and two of the five-inch guns in the citadel had been disabled, and it would be impossible to transfer such large weapons from the cruiser, even if she still had any in good order, which seemed highly probable as she was never in the thickest of the fight. The *Isigoné* would have to remain weakened to this extent, but three-inch quick firing guns from the store below could be mounted in the citadel, and as the great guns in the turrets were still intact, the *Isigoné* was yet a good fighting machine, particularly as a mortar had already been mounted in the place of the shattered one on the upper deck.

The *Isigoné* had come through the fight well so far as her structure was concerned. No shell had pierced her water-line, or her citadel or turret redoubts. Two

had entered the thin armor of her sides, beside the one that had made such havoc in the dining room, but neither had done irreparable damage. Eighteen men had been killed, including the first captain of the aft turret, and a quartermaster, and twenty-four more or less injured, but this was an amazingly small percentage in view of the strength of the enemy and the number of shots hurled against the devoted *Isigoné*.

What to expect before the city of Rhodes, no one knew. As soon as the loyal forces took possession of the telegraph office they found that warning had been sent by the Turkish operator, for no reply could be obtained of any kind whatever, and either the cable was cut or the authorities at the other end refused to answer. A day or two could make little difference, however, even if the escaped *Naimé* reached Rhodes, for it would be impossible for the Turks materially to strengthen the defences, while the advantage of a small land force, if serious operations were necessary against the city, was enormous. Of the Turkish cruiser and the two Rhodian gunboats which, since they were at Rhodes, must be in the service of the republic — Captain Villiers had no fear, but there was a garrison of three thousand men in the city and its vicinity, and the guns of its defences were of modern make. It would do no good for the Greeks to rise if they were not supplied with

arms, and arms were scarce in all parts of the island except Rhodes itself, and here the Turks were supreme.

Altogether a land force was indispensable, and so the Captain made up his mind to a few days of inaction while he repaired his ship in the best manner possible, and waited for Captain Hay to gather his volunteers.

That the Queen should at once hold her first "court" in Villaret seemed every way advisable. It would be an act of policy as well as of kindness, and would be a formal resumption of the functions of royalty. Before turning in, Captain Villiers sent a last message of instructions to Captain Hay, together with a lot of broadsides proclaiming the restoration of the Queen, her public audience, and the reward offered for the traitorous members of the republican government, which he had had struck off at the little printing press with which the *Isigoné* was provided, and at last, long after midnight, well content with the day's work, every one turned in.

Early the next day the Queen went on shore. It was quite an imposing train that followed her in the *Isigoné's* boats, with the five crosses fluttering over each. The Duke, with twenty more of the marines detailed for escort duty, the ship's band, and the Queen's women with several stewards as special servants, made up the party, and Northrop watched

them depart with interest. It was all his now; *his* country, *his* people, *his* Queen. He felt this surely and distinctly, with hardly a regret for the life and land he had voluntarily forsaken. "After all," he had said to Dorothy as she stood on deck waiting for the Queen, to whom she had become, through Isigoné's special request, the first of the new ladies-in-waiting, "after all, it is well enough to talk about the possibility of republican devotion to principles, not men, but it doesn't work. Most of us are weak enough — or strong — to demand the personal element, and that sort of thing our own kind of government does not afford. Fancy being personally devoted to President Harrison or President Hayes, or worse than all, to the present incumbent, President Maguire! It can't be done. Great crises may make men fight for the Constitution, but for the ordinary run of people, the personal devotion in a republic is the personal devotion to the ego. To succeed, a government must take into account men's foibles, and one of the greatest of these is hero worship."

Northrop himself was to remain on board to look after the patients he had deserted to join the land expedition the night before. Captain Villiers had to attend to the *Feth-i-Boulend* which had lain under his searchlight all night, and now clamoured silently for relief. The audience was set for three o'clock, and until then both would stand to their duties. North-

rop's was the easier, for the disposition of the crew of the Turk was a hard question. Towards noon, however, the transfer of the prisoners to the shore was complete, the flag of Rhodes floated at the foremast of the riddled addition to her navy, and the removal of the small guns to the *Isigoné*, and the arms and ammunition to the castle and fort had begun. Apart from the awful ruin wrought aft by the thirteen-inch shell, the cruiser was not vitally injured. Her hull was intact, but the mortar shell had pierced the protective deck and wrecked the boilers, killing the engineers, firemen and stokers almost to a man. The aft barbette was a desolation, but otherwise the battery was uninjured, and the rapid-fire guns, the four-inch quick-firing rifles, and the magazine stores were invaluable. It would be some time before the ship could be repaired fit for going into commission again, but Captain Villiers anticipated this with the utmost optimism, and already spoke of the *Feth-i-Boulend* as a member of the Queen's navy. Whether the rammed *Anghora* could be raised or not was, of course, a question that could not yet be solved, and as for the *Murad IV*, she looked a hopeless case after the conflagration that had gutted her, but even if the *Feth* alone proved ultimately available, the prize was a good one and easily earned.

At luncheon Northrop ventured to ask the Captain what he thought about the attitude of Turkey

now that her ships had been sunk and her republican protégé defeated.

“War, of course,” Villiers had replied, “but I am sure we can meet it safely. Before the Porte can send another fleet against us we shall have strengthened the defences of Rhodes materially, and with my mortars and the mines which I have the means of making, I can render the city impregnable.”

“But suppose they land an invading army, what then?”

“Before that, we can raise and arm the country. I can count on ten thousand men. Two thousand I can arm from the *Isigoné*, Villaret and the cruisers. In Rhodes, the city, are at least eight thousand and probably ten or twelve thousand rifles, so we have enough. The Greeks will fight to the death. They could never have been conquered by the rebels but for the fact that they could acquire no arms. Once arm them, give them their Queen to fight for, and if a Turkish force of ten thousand men landed at Monolithos it must be cut to pieces before it reached Ialysos. I am sure of this. I do not hesitate for a moment to fight Turkey.”

It was two o'clock before the Captain and Northrop were ready for shore. As they landed they saw on all sides evidences of the victory they had won for the Queen. Rhodian flags were everywhere, brought from their two years' hiding, and flaunting at last un-

hindered where twenty-four hours before their display had meant death. No sign of the hated crescent, nor of the equally hated Turk. There were few enough of the latter in Calche at best, apart from the garrison, but now not even one was to be seen. Rugs and bright stuffs hung from the windows, and wreaths and festoons of flowers appeared at every available point. In the streets every man, woman and child was heading towards Villaret, and each was in holiday clothes, and none without a garland or bouquet of flowers, or green leaves at the least. The spirit of rejoicing was infectious, for these poor people had forgotten nothing of their training in classical methods and customs by their three sovereigns, and as they passed up the narrow rocky streets, sang and danced in a way that was like nothing but an Alma-Tadema picture. Their costume, almost Hellenic in its effect, though rough and coarse, was fine in color and line, and worn with perfect grace. It was all like a vitalized water-color, and different indeed from the sort of thing Northrop had seen as he followed the landing party twenty-four hours before through deserted streets, where only now and then one caught a glimpse of a Turkish fez at a shattered window, or a frightened peasant in the ugly clothes the Turkish government had forced in use.

Villaret was gorgeous in fluttering flags, and in front the square was alive with crowded Greeks. It

looked like a very well done classical costume party, and Northrop glanced left and right eagerly as the guards made a lane for them through the crowd. The moment they appeared word had flashed around who they were, and what part they had had in the Restoration, and once more, as the two men, with a group of officers behind them, passed through the opening crowd, they found themselves hailed with shouts of welcome and songs of praise, while palms and flowers fell on the ground before them.

The great hall of Villaret would hold hardly five hundred people, and as there were at least five times this number assembled, a few only were admitted at a time. As the party from the ship entered, they stopped for a moment to take in their surroundings. The room was well proportioned and ornamented in a rather severe and lifeless classical style: the Turkish occupants had done far less to wreck it than the guns of the loyalists, and everywhere were to be seen the evidences of the recent bombardment, in splintered window frames, chipped stone and shot-riddled pictures. At the end of the room was the royal dais, and though the throne itself was gone, the great embroidered velvet curtain with its gorgeous arms emblazoned in the midst, hung in its place, and relieved against it stood the Queen.

Surely no monarch had ever claimed such reverence in point of beauty alone. The shabby gown had

given place to a splendid Greek costume of white and gold, and around the Queen's purple-black hair was a wreath of gold laurel. She was speaking in Greek as they entered, and they waited until she finished and a shout of acclamation thundered through the room. Then the Queen saw them, and in a moment the crowd was cut in two, and in silence they passed up the long room. On either side of the throne steps stood men, evidently of some note, showing, nearly all of them, the unmistakable signs of recent imprisonment. On one side Kalathos, and on the other side Lieutenant Tsamados, almost the only man among them all who had escaped the scars of imprisonment. Calche had been a favorite prison with the "republic," and although death had been meted out to many of the first men of the kingdom, there were some of lesser note here who were identified with Rhodes, rather than Calche, and with both the royal government and the many rebellions that had followed its fall.

As Captain Villiers and Northrop approached the steps of the throne, the group of officers instinctively fell back, and alone they came and knelt before the Queen. Isigoné hardly waited for them, but stepped impetuously down, reaching a hand to each and raising them to their feet. The Captain was grave and calm with the consciousness of perfect achievement, but poor Northrop trembled and blushed like

a schoolgirl at commencement. Action was all very well, and he liked it, but this passive receptiveness was rather too much. Shy and consciously awkward, he waited in the utmost discomfort. The Queen began speaking in Greek, which he could not understand, and he ventured to raise eyes and glance at the group on the throne steps. He saw but one face, that of Dorothy, standing on the Queen's right, alone, and his confusion and embarrassment redoubled under the glad look the girl gave him. Suddenly the Queen spoke in French.

“For yourself, Captain Villiers de l' Isle Adam, it is only right that I should give you here before my people their thanks, the thanks of the Kingdom of Rhodes. You, an alien, citizen of a great republic, saw from over the sea the sorrows of a stricken country. For you there was neither personal interest nor personal gain, only the bitter cry of an outraged people, the tears of a prisoned Queen, and in your heart God placed the will and the power to do His work, to save a little people, to release His servant, and, if this may be, with His gracious aid to raise once more the standard of the new life which shall save the world.” She paused a moment, and then stretched her arms out as though to embrace the universe. “In this I see but one thing, the unfathomable will of God. From this day I am no longer Queen

only of a group of islands, of an Hellenic people, I am Queen of all those of every blood and every land who desire peace, and righteousness, and beauty and nobility of life. My kingdom shall be their sanctuary, my people their brothers, as my God is their God, from sea to sea. Within my realm shall come neither injustice nor evil, neither sorrow nor weariness, save such as God in His infinite wisdom may give for His own unsearchable ends. I swear this before God and my people.

“I have said that for you was neither interest nor gain. This is true, for I, the Queen, can add nothing to the qualities God has already given you. Yet there must be outward sign of the debt Rhodes owes, the debt she can never discharge. It is not well that she should owe this great obligation to Captain Villiers. From this moment it is due to you, cousin and friend, François de l' Isle Adam, Marquis of Calche, Commander of the Most Holy Order of the Silver Cross.”

No shade of emotion crossed the face of the man who from that minute was Marquis of Calche, as he knelt and kissed the Queen's hand, while a burst of acclamation swept through the room, Kalathos having translated into Greek the last words of the Queen. Then Isigoné turned to the blushing Northrop, and he shivered with sudden terror as he heard a thrill in her voice which had not appeared

when she spoke gratefully but rather formally to Captain Villiers. Her voice fell a little, and her eyes were melting as she spoke quickly.

“My friend, you have saved my life, as the Marquis of Calche has saved that of my kingdom. What have I to give you in return? Nothing that you would prize, nor that — I may give; only this. As John Northrop you may never aid me again. I accept no further service from him. But if Count Villaret will yield his Queen, — his friend, aid and loving service, she will take it with gladness and gratitude until the day dawns when she may ask the same from one who bears a higher and more exalted title, a title more befitting the service he has rendered.”

Again the crowded Greeks shouted aloud, and even more vigorously than before. Captain Villiers, now the Marquis of Calche, they revered as their deliverer. Northrop's deeds had been spread abroad and they loved him as the saviour of the Queen.

CHAPTER XV

A BIRD UNCAGED

DURING the short stay in the harbor of Calche, the Queen lived on board the *Isigoné*, Captain Villiers handing over to her his entire suite of apartments, contenting himself with one of the small cabins alongside the citadel. From earliest morning until late at night the ship was surrounded by myriads of small boats crowded with the island folk eager to catch a glimpse of their beloved sovereign, anxious to make their touching offerings of fruit and flowers, bits of needlework, pottery, glass, everything in fact that seemed to them to possess value, and which might show the Queen something of their love and devotion.

It was impossible to stand on the deck and look down on that moving carpet spread over the sea, every strand in which was a loyal heart, without keen emotion. Every boat was wreathed in flowers, with bright rugs trailing along the sides, and all the people clothed in the gayest colors.

Old men with hoary beards sat motionless with clasped hands, tears streaming down their cheeks. The younger men fought good-naturedly for a chance to touch the sides of the ship with awe-struck fingers,

looking on her as some miracle wrought by God. Women held up their children that they might catch a glimpse of their Queen whenever *Isigoné* came to the side of the ship to smile and speak a word or two of welcome. Now and then some voice would break out in a well-known hymn, and then every one would burst into singing, ceasing only to cheer lustily for the Queen, for Captain Villiers, for Northrop,—even for the *Isigoné*, for they seemed to think the inanimate ship as worthy of praise as those on board. Indeed, by nightfall, great palm leaves, branches of flowering trees, garlands of blossoms, were fixed to each projection within reach, while the fervent kisses that were lavished on every available inch of her hull must have quickened the great heart within to life.

Early in the afternoon all the priests and monks in the island came in procession to bless the ship, the Abbot of the Monastery of St. John, in the last boat, vested in a cope of crimson and gold, crowned with an enormous mitre, and bearing the Host in a splendid pyx. Embroidered banners flaunted in every boat, the flame of great candles flickered in the gentle wind, and incense smoke poured like the reek of some holy battle into the summer air. It was all like the restoration of some gorgeous pageant of a long-dead time; and Northrop and Dorothy stood for hours, watching the ever changing pageant.

All day, and well into the night, the Queen worked with the officers of the ship and the released Greeks, over the innumerable details consequent upon the Restoration, and Northrop watched her from afar with a feeling of awe. Here was a young girl not more than twenty-three, beautiful as a goddess, with the mind of a great statesman! It was a new phase of feminine character to him and he studied it in amazement.

"What do you think of the Queen?" he said finally to Dorothy, as together they went on deck after their coffee in what was now the Queen's cabin.

"Think of her? I *love* her!"

"Already?" and he smiled in the girl's flashing eyes.

"Yes, why not? I think she is absolutely the most wonderful creature in the world, and I am sure she is as good and true as she is great and beautiful!"

"If she is, then she is the most extraordinary woman of the century. Do you know, seeing her I almost begin to believe in the Captain's doctrine that here, in this little island, is to be the dawn of a new civilization that shall supersede all that we have been led to look on as the glorious achievement of the nineteenth century."

"I know it. I really believe we are in the midst of the rising of a new dispensation that will almost bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth!"

Northrop looked thoughtfully out across the sea towards where the purple shadow of Rhodes sank into the sea. "If we win the battle of Rhodes," he said gravely.

Towards the end of the late supper that night, the Queen began to laugh softly to herself, and then raising her smiling eyes to the Captain, she said suddenly, "My Lord of Calche, I want to go ashore tomorrow for a frolic; may I?"

Villiers interrogated her respectfully with his eyes.

"I mean this: I have been shut up so long in that horrible prison, that, like a long-caged bird, I want to try my wings. I am sure I can't help you here, and — I *do* want to have a little walk on real ground and under real trees. Of course, I know the danger from the rebels that escaped, and from the other Turks, but we could have an escort, and we won't go far up the hills behind the castle. Isn't it possible?"

The Captain looked down so as to avoid the coercion of the Queen's eyes. He did not like the idea in the least. The chance of catastrophe seemed very threatening. "Does it seem wise, your Majesty, to expose yourself so soon, and so needlessly?" he said at length without looking up.

"Give me fifty men under the Duke of Kalathos, or Lieutenant Tsanados if you can't spare the Duke, and I will answer for the consequences. This is not a mere whim. You don't know how one hungers for

grass under one's feet after two years of imprisonment."

It was impossible for the Captain to protest any further, and so it was arranged that early the next day Dorothy, Northrop, Andreas Constantinides, one of the patriots released from the prison of Calche, and a former minister of war in the Queen's cabinet, together with the two women who had shared their sovereign's imprisonment in Villaret, should accompany the Queen on shore, Tsamados going with them in command of sixty picked men from the *Isigoné*.

The day was soft and clear, like all days in this favored region where the sun seems always to shine, and where the heat is never excessive. As the adventurers sat in the second boat that put off, facing the Queen, she said with a frank smile:

"Now I want you to forget that I am sovereign of a bit of an island lost in the Mediterranean. Will you? For today I mean, and for all days when I can ask it. Forget I have any titles, let me be just your friend, for I am that, am I not? But I forgot, you don't know me yet: well, you shall see. We are bound on a frolic, like children. You, dear," and she nestled a hand in Dorothy's, "shall be just Dorothy; you," with a flashing glance at Northrop, "shall be M. de Villaret, and I—well, I will be Madame. Now we are all on a good footing, and can enjoy ourselves."

They did not land at the little pier of the village, for they wanted to escape the importunities of loyalty, but instead they struck for the low shore about a mile south of the town, and crossing the road which ran a little above, entered the small forest which the Queen's father had made into a shooting preserve. No sign of human life was visible as the little party clambered over the rocky hillside through cactus thickets and between the tall candelabra of the aloes. under the great trees. It was quite still, and the air was heavy with the perfume of semi-tropical forests. The feathery fronds of great ferns brushed their faces: long branches of climbing vines drooped low across their path, in the openings of the forests curious flowers nodded delicately, and the warm smell of summer hung in the air.

It was not long before Northrop found himself the special escort of the Queen, while Tsamados and Constantinides contended steadily for Dorothy's attention. Tsamados had the advantage of longer acquaintance, but his duties as Captain of the Guard were sadly hampering, and the Greek patriot scored against him perceptibly. Every thought of what had passed and what was to come seemed to have been swept away by the breath of the forest, and as the Queen had wished, the expedition was simply a light-hearted picnic. With every step of the way Isigoné's spirits rose higher. Laughing and singing she leaped

like a faun from rock to rock, fearless and agile, though she never disdained Northrop's proffered hand: it even seemed that, now and then, the contact was longer than necessity demanded.

Suddenly she would overwhelm him with tumultuous questions as to his life in America, and how he came to cast in his fortune with that of Villiers. Then, in a flash, she would be convulsing him with absurd stories, gossip of the little Court before the insurrection, caricatures of its members, tales of the wild tricks she played on the gravest officials while she was Crown Princess.

Then she would demand news of all that had happened during the last two years, the course of events politically and socially on the continent: if any great pictures had been painted, any music written or any wonderful books. She was insatiable, and Northrop was driven constantly to seek refuge in Dorothy's wider knowledge for information.

When the rays of the sun began to fall vertically through the gold-green leaves of the fig trees, the little party sought for a camping ground, and soon found an ideal spot. It was a wide cleft in the rocky hillside, opening to the east just over the village and a few hundred feet above. On both sides the cliffs were mantled with dark ivy, and here and there lemons and citrons spread their thick leaves to the high sun which glowed like flame on the golden fruit. The

turf was bright with flowers, and huge rose vines grew rank and luxuriant, clambering through the trees and hanging in festoons of splendid blossoms that shook a snow of rosy petals whenever the wind stirred.

Below the plateau lay the white and gray roofs and flat domes of the village, with a bright flag fluttering from the keep of Villaret Castle. Beyond, the level sea lay like a pavement of lapis lazuli, and just in front was the purple mass of Rhodes rising into the low peak of Monolithos.

The Queen threw herself down on the turf, gazing out towards her island kingdom; silent now for the first time. Meanwhile Dorothy and Constantinides — Tsamados was posting his men in a great circle around the heights over the little ravine — Dorothy and Constantinides, with the Queen's women, superintended the arrangement of the luncheon.

A great flat stone served as a table, and this they covered with broad acanthus leaves, with roses and wild flowers strewn everywhere. The iridescent Rhodian glass and the quaint painted pottery of Calche flashed in the gleams of sun flickering through the leaves of the big lemon tree that spread its branches, heavy with fruit, above. Then the little party threw themselves on heaps of ferns and acanthus and broad big leaves, for luncheon.

The sight of the purple island still unransomed

had quieted the Queen's extravagant spirits, and the conversation turned on the history of the insurrection. As Northrop listened to what Isigoné and the ex-minister told of the savagery of the Turks and the treachery of the Jewish residents, he ground his teeth with impotent fury. All that he had heard from every source seemed to prove that Villiers was right in saying that under the Constantines the Island Kingdom had been almost a paradise, and that the revolution had been a crime against God and civilization. He found himself blessing his lucky stars that he had been thrown with Captain Villiers, and as he remembered the crudeness and the blatancy of conditions at home he shuddered at the idea of returning to a country he had once loved so well.

The Queen fell to talking with Dorothy, and Northrop began to question Constantinides as to the industrial and agrarian system which had been developed under the kings, and he marvelled mightily as the Greek laid before him detail after detail of a scheme so simple, so straightforward, so immensely in advance of everything the West could offer.

When luncheon was over and they were all lying at ease on the soft carpet of turf, smoking, and drinking the last of their store of the wonderful Rhodian wine from the slopes of Monolithos, the Queen began speaking of the work that lay before her government

when once the island had fallen and she could be free to begin the labor of restoration. She had forgotten nothing of the principles her father had instilled into her, or of the schemes and projects he was working out at the time of his death. Since the revolution, industry, robbed of the fostering care of the government, had languished seriously, and the island no longer supplied the exquisite glass, the curious enamels, the rugs and carpets and embroidery, for which it had become famous under Constantine II. The production of wine had increased, but its quality had deteriorated badly. Fruit growing had not developed and during the last year grain had been imported for the first time.

Isigoné was full of plans for the changing of all this, and her eyes gleamed as she traced out scheme after scheme for re-establishing prosperity. "If only the Turks have not spoiled my people's minds," she said, "all will be well, but if they have made them as bad as their inartistic work, there is hard labor before us. Why, before I was imprisoned there was not a man or woman in all Rhodes who did not express everything he did beautifully. My father brought weavers of carpets from Brousa and Ismid, workers in enamel from Japan, glass blowers from Venice; and under their teaching the Rhodians had come to do beautiful and national work. If all this has been lost — "

She was interrupted by a commotion at the entrance of the ravine. Two guards were bringing in a prisoner, a man of middle age, half clothed in skins, his unkempt hair and beard framing a weather-beaten face whereof hardly more could be seen than the deep-set eyes. Tsamados leaped up and went to meet the man.

"Lieutenant, we caught this man creeping through the brush, armed: here is his gun. He will answer no questions, though we spoke both in Greek and Turkish. What shall we do with him?"

Tsamados scanned the man narrowly, while all the Queen's party rose, standing close about her, watching. The prisoner's furtive eyes swept over the group.

"Who are you?" said the Lieutenant.

The man spoke slowly, "An outlaw."

"What are you doing here?"

"Looking for some one to shoot."

"What do you mean?"

The outlaw looked at him sharply. "Are you a Turk?" he said.

"I am a Greek."

"Are any of you people Turks?"

"We are all Greeks — and Americans," Tsamados added with a smile towards Dorothy.

"Then you are safe."

"Why are you hunting Turks?"

"To kill them."

"Why?"

"That is my business!"

"If you do not answer I shall take you to the ship and imprison you."

The man drew himself up proudly. "What ship?" he asked shortly.

"There, below," and the Lieutenant pointed to the *Isigoné* lying at anchor in the blue sea.

"Whose ship is that?"

"The Queen's."

"What Queen?"

"The Queen of Rhodes."

The outlaw burst at a bound from the soldiers and fastened his fierce hands on the officer's arm. "Who is the Queen of Rhodes now?" he almost whispered, his eyes burning like coals in the shadow of his long hair. The Queen came a step forward.

"I," she said clearly and strongly.

The man leaped as though a knife had smote him. He stared at the Queen, trembling terribly. Then he fell on his knees, stretching his gaunt arms up to the sky. His eyes were closed but tears streamed from under the lids while he sobbed aloud. Then he threw himself on the ground and crawled so until his fumbling hands touched the Queen's feet, when he lay quite still.

In an instant *Isigoné* was on her knees beside him with his hard hand in hers.

"Who are you?" she said softly. "See, it is I, Isigoné, by a miracle from Heaven made Queen again. Look at me: do you remember my face?"

The man lifted his head, devouring her countenance with famished eyes.

"Could I ever forget? And are you Queen again? Mother of God, you have heard my prayers!"

It was some time before the outlaw could talk rationally, but in time he controlled himself enough to tell his story. He had been a well-to-do merchant in Lindos at the time of the revolution, and with his four sons, his brother and six nephews, had joined the first party of loyalists to try to rescue the Queen and overthrow the usurping oligarchy. One by one his people had been killed, either in battle or at the hands of so-called justice, until he alone had been left. Less than a year ago he had headed the last attack on Villaret Castle, where the only son left to him had given his life, and since then he had wandered in the wild lands of Calche, hunting the hated Turks as a tiger tracks his prey.

"See!" he cried, stretching out his knotted left arm. "See the glorious work! These blue spots show the record. Whenever I killed, I cut my arm and rubbed in a bit of powder. Forty-two marks, and each is the proof of a dead traitor. Here — " and he indicated five small red wounds still raw and bleeding, "here is my hunt of yesterday. In the morning,

from my cave up there, I saw many Turks abroad in the forest. I could not tell why they were there in such numbers, and why they seemed so terrified. I only got five of them, alas! but I would have had more today. Why were they running away from Calche? I could not tell: so I was creeping down to the village to see. Then I found you here. Praise the God of Heaven and earth and his dear Mother who has wrought this miracle!"

It was late in the afternoon when the guards were brought in and the little party retraced its way to the seashore. Once more Northrop was the Queen's escort, and she hung on his arm quiet and thoughtful.

"Dear friend," she said at length, as they brushed through the cool forest, "how can I ever be worthy of all the love my people pour out before me? This poor man whom I never saw before, and who now marches before me, proud, and almost insane with happiness, thinking nothing of all his sons who died for me — he is a type of them all. And what have I done to deserve it? What *can* I do? I am afraid, so afraid that I dare not think. I fear myself for I know myself, and — Oh! it is wrong, wrong for a woman to wear a crown, for till the end of the world she will be a woman first — and a Queen afterward!"

CHAPTER XVI

QUEEN — OR WOMAN?

THE sun had gone into the sea and the twilight was darkening into dusk. Three days had passed since the audience: the Greek government of Calche had been reorganized under the old Governor Ionides, a body of eleven hundred men had been gathered together and despatched to Monolithos, where already the inhabitants of the main island were assembling, and arming with material sent across in the little boats of the sponge-fishers. The *Isigoné* was under way for Rhodes with the Queen on board. It was hardly a three hours' journey under half steam, but the Marquis of Calche was anxious to be before Rhodes at earliest dawn in order that, if possible, the city might be reduced before sunset, and it was better to lie at anchor for the night while every preparation was made for the attack, than to steam in at dawn and begin the bombardment immediately.

In accordance with international law, he had sent word overland twenty-four hours before, that the city should be surrendered at dawn on the seventh of July, in default of which, bombardment would begin at once. For every reason both the Queen and he, himself, shrunk from this last resort. Under the Greek

kings the city had been considerably beautified and even now possessed a population of nearly thirty thousand, although the policy of the republic had reduced it from what it was at the time of the Queen's accession, and had brought the Turkish population into predominance. It hardly seemed possible that the oligarchy would offer any serious resistance, and everyone looked for a peaceful surrender of the city. The Queen's proclamation had declared a general amnesty except to the members of the central government, and it was hoped that the rank and file of the Turkish population would refuse to stand by their masters, whom already they had come to hate through their corruption and inefficiency. No parliament had yet been called, and the government was simply that of an irresponsible oligarchy, a committee of the Turks and Jews who had caused the rebellion.

The *Isigoné* steamed slowly on in the gathering night, the long silhouette of Rhodes lying close inboard to the southeast, the lights of Calche dying away one by one, behind. In the three days she had lain at Calche, such repairs as were possible had been made; she was now in pretty good fighting trim, and really irresistible considering the nature of the resistance she would be liable to meet if worse came to worst and the oligarchy decided to fight for its life.

As the strong ship ploughed almost silently through the black water and the night that was coming from

the east, Northrop paced up and down the deck alone. It was late, and Dorothy had gone to her stateroom. As he turned at the end of his promenade he saw two or three dark figures in the starlight, coming from below, and recognized among them, the Queen. At first he remained where he was by the bridge, and Isigoné did not see him but stood by the rail gazing silently at the vanishing shadow of her island kingdom, destined perhaps to be hers again, and resting now for the last night under the tyranny of the oligarchy.

Northrop stood smoking, watching the Queen. He acknowledged the fascination she exerted over him as over everyone else, and wondered at it curiously. It was not alone that she had the power of compelling everyone — save the Turks — to acknowledge her cause and follow her standard, but it was that there was a curious fascination about her personality as a woman that was extraordinary and irresistible. The moment you came within her "sphere of influence" you felt a strange, half-sad, half-loverlike devotion, that was all the more dangerous from being tinged with a curious melancholy. The Queen was one person — and a very wonderful one — but Isigoné was quite another, and you somehow seemed to forget her royalty when you thought of her personality alone, and came to look on her as a strange and matchless woman.

Northrop knew all the stories that had been told of her, and that had been used as an excuse for the rebellion against her rule. How she had covered the Greek Duke of Lindos with honors until he was called her favorite, and his name linked with hers in the public speech in a most offensive way. How she had dissolved every parliament called in her short reign because each demanded his removal from the position of Chancellor of State. How, according to rumor at least, she had sacrificed questions of state to her love for a subject; and in his new enthusiasm he disbelieved them all. He could not, and would not, believe her the less a Queen for being a woman, although as he looked at her melting eyes with the ivory white lids, and at her strange, full, curling lips, he was forced to admit that they indicated passion and sensuousness to an unusual degree.

Since her release not a word had been said of the Duke of Lindos — who had been executed by the triumphant oligarchy before it had been in power two weeks—and Northrop looked on the black stories as malicious slander. And yet — in his heart he knew that, were their truth proven to him, it would make no difference. He could still follow her as Queen, devote his life to her as Isigoné. In some strange and impossible way she seemed already beyond law, above custom, subject to none of the tests applicable to another.

As he stood still, apparently unnoticed in the shadow, the Queen spoke to her women, and with a reverence they left her alone. Then she turned towards him and he knew she had been conscious of his presence all the time. He threw his cigar over the side, and with a sudden throb in his heart that astonished him mightily, came to where she was standing by the starboard bulwarks, leaning against the shield of one of the rapid-fire guns.

“Villaret,” she said, giving him the new title that sounded strangely to him, and that he hardly liked, “Villaret, will tomorrow bring you opportunity to make me still further your debtor?”

“Nothing can do that, but it may give me the chance to prove my loyalty and devotion to your Majesty.”

“To Isigoné or to the Queen?”

“To the Queen.”

“Have you not shown that already?”

“No, your Majesty.”

The Queen stamped her foot with something like impatience. “Once for all, cousin, let us do away with titles and formalities when — we are together. They hurt me! Do you understand?”

Northrop shivered a little, for the night air was chilly, but he bowed silently in assent.

“That is well, and now let us go back. You say you have done the Queen no service. Did you not save my life?”

"The life of — Isigoné."

The Queen spoke very softly, with that throaty note in her voice that was so seductive and so terrible. "Was it for *me* then, not for the Queen, that you ventured your life?"

"Yes."

"And yet you had never seen me."

"I had seen your portrait; you were a woman in prison. Can you wonder that I acted?"

"Ah, then," and the Queen laughed softly, "it was for Woman in the abstract that you risked your life, not for Isigoné!"

"That may have been the impulse: I knew the *reason* as soon as I stepped into the tower chamber."

Isigoné sighed softly. "Am I making you a courtier already?"

"No: a subject."

"Only that?"

Northrop glanced in sudden terror towards the Queen's face. It was lifted to his with an expression of strange and sorrowful sweetness. Her hand trembled a little as it lay on the smooth barrel of the gun that stood between them. He shivered again, but not with cold. Why did she speak like that? It unnerved him, and he was ashamed of himself. There was a long pause before he said, "Is not that enough? What more could I be?"

"What *less* could you be!" and there was bitter-

ness in her tone. "Subjects are mine through the accident of birth, the motive of self-seeking, patriotism, a hundred things. This devotion is to my crown, to the Queen, not to *me*. Can't you understand? But, of course not. Cousin, a Queen is a sorry thing. She is surfeited with crowding devotion while she starves for the one thing that makes life worth the living, the one thing that no subject is too poor, too base to possess, but that is denied her for life. True, perfect, heart-whole—well, let us say—friendship."

"Surely not: not you at least. Surely you have found this thing through the very adversities that have been heaped upon you!"

"Where? In my women who were with me in Villaret — yes. But is that enough? Oh no, it is so little, so little. I want more, more. I want someone to forget that I am Queen, remember that I am only a woman, and if there is anything in me worthy of love, to give it me, me, Isigoné, the woman!"

She was still looking eagerly in his face through the starlight, and her hands clasped and opened nervously on the chilly steel. With a sudden impulse Northrop bent and kissed the one that for the moment lay nearest him. "Madame," he said with a voice that trembled in spite of his resolution, "Madame, I am only a new-made subject, and I have no right to speak, no excuse for my temerity, but — I beg that you will believe one thing. From the mo-

ment I set foot in Villaret Castle, what little service I have given you, all the great service I covet the chance to do, was not and will not be for the Queen of Rhodes, but for — Isigoné.”

He cursed himself the moment he had spoken, for the Queen caught both his hands in hers and with a sudden movement pressed them to her heart until he and she stood staring into each other's eyes as they leaned across the slim gun. He could not withdraw his gaze, and he saw in the Queen's eyes those things that turned him sick with fear and apprehension. In a moment she was gone, and he watched her tall figure disappear in the gloom toward the stern of the ship. Then he cursed himself as he stood alone, for out of the night grew clear before him the strong, bright, serious face of Dorothy, hanging like a St. Elmo's fire in the gloom, and to his re-awakening conscience there seemed in it reproach and wonder illimitable. He strode back and forth on the deserted deck, gnawing his heart. What had he said, what had he done? Worse, what had he *thought*? As the magic of the Queen's presence faded away he came to look with horror on what seemed to him his treachery towards the girl whose face hung before him, visionary, impalpable, an accusing portent in the night.

“Love her? Love Dorothy?” With all his heart and soul, with a love that could not change, that

could suffer no diminution, no shadow of swerving. And yet — what was she, the Queen, Isigoné? A sorceress? With a beating heart he acknowledged that while they stood there together he forgot Dorothy, the world, everything, seeing only her; and against his will. Over and over again he assured himself that it *was* against his will, finding some justification in the childish thought that there was actual magic in the Queen's personality that compelled him against his own volition.

He smoked savagely, hour after hour, pacing up and down the deck wet with the night dew. What did it all mean, anyway? What was he to the Queen? Or was he anything? What did she mean by her low-voiced words, and the long, half-shy, half-imperious glances from her strange eyes? After all, was he not a fool himself, a fatuous, maundering idiot — but if so — what did *he* mean? This was a facer, and he chewed the end of his cigar nervously. An hundred times he fixed his mind on Dorothy, and each time with a sense of relief and pleasure; but in a moment he was once more looking into Isigoné's deep eyes, feeling the magnetic thrill of her trembling hand. Fighting he did not mind, he enjoyed it in fact, but it must be in the open, man to man. The fighting in the dark against — what? Formless and awful powers, intangible, invisible things that beleaguered his will — this was a different matter. He wondered vaguely

what the day would bring forth, and the next. Here he stopped, the vista was lost in clouds that he dared not strive to dispel.

Once he cried aloud to the smooth-gliding sea, "Dorothy, Dorothy!" but the sound of his voice terrified him and he shrunk into silence. The spoken words had been like a charm, however: in a moment the spell of the Queen was dissolved, and he shook himself together in amazement. "What a fool!" he thought. "I pass for a man and yet I let a girl I have known four days rattle me like this!" He laughed and felt better. "This," he thought, "is the penalty of my adventure, the price I pay for giving up my old traditions and associations and throwing myself into a new and quite impossible life. Well, we will have done with it forthwith. Not the life — " and he started with a quick pain at his heart, "not the life but the penalty. We will live for the future reasonably, and as an ex-American should. We will submit no longer to sorcery but live sanely and sensibly." And for the moment he thought he should.

The dark mass of Rhodes to starboard, hardly visible in the night, broke down at last into the sea, and fell behind. Here and there lights gleamed in its gloom, and towards the end they gathered into a cluster on the pier. Around this the *Isigoné* circled, some five miles from shore, rounding the long, low, sandy spit that runs out from the island. As the ship

steamed slowly towards the south again, Northrop saw the faint glow of the city lights backed up with the silhouette of the island, dark against the rising moon, now in her last quarter. At about four miles from the light the *Isigoné* stopped, finding good anchorage, and waited for the dawn. It was not far away, for already over the Lycian mountains to the east the sky was growing silver. For some time the men had been busy all over the ship, preparing the guns and putting everything in readiness in case the city should offer resistance. Northrop mechanically watched the preparations, and then, conscious that he had had no sleep as yet, went below.

CHAPTER XVII

TURKISH TREACHERY

THE sun rose, and the white city lay palpitating in opal mist. In front the great towers of the Castle stood out against the pale terraces and dark masses of foliage of the unseen gardens of the new city on the slopes of the hills, feathery palms drooping here and there over the egg-shell domes, and around the slender towers of many churches. To the left the harbor curved away with a wide sweep ending in the new môle, the first public work of Constantine I. The air was utterly still: no sound came from the visionary city, and over all hung the indefinable atmosphere of Sunday; so silent, so peaceful, so sleepy with the drowsy magic of a day dream. Between the *Isigoné* and the town lay the republican fleet at anchor, dark shadows against the pearly vision beyond.

The Captain — for he steadily refused his new honors until the capture of the island should, as he said, confirm them — was on the bridge, with the Queen and the royalist officers, narrowly scanning the little fleet, and watching for sign of movement. They had to do only with the forces of the oligarchy, that was evident: no Turkish ships were in the harbor, and only the *Naïmé*, disabled as they well

knew, and the two old-fashioned gunboats with a small, slim vessel of the nature of which they were as ignorant as they were of her existence, formed the squadron. The flags of the alleged republic had appeared at the mast heads as the sun rose, and the *Isigoné* answered with a great flag of the five crosses at her fore. Other sign of action there was none.

The Queen's ship lay cleared for action. Already the gig was alongside with its crew, and Lieutenant Tsamados was preparing to go ashore under a flag of truce to demand the surrender of the city, when black smoke began to pour from the funnels of the unknown boat, and in a moment she was under half steam, a white flag floating from the staff.

The group of people on the bridge looked at each other in astonishment. This was a surprising manœuvre. If negotiations were desired a small boat should have come to them, but instead this little vessel, half overgrown steam launch, half gunboat, had been chosen. Captain Villiers held her under his glass for a moment, and then with a start spoke suddenly to Lieutenant Grosvenor. A moment later a shot from one of the six-pounders snapped a warning to the oncoming boat.

"There is treachery there," he said; "that is a torpedo boat, I believe, though where the rebels got her I am at a loss to know. Mr. Tsamados, will you go to her in the gig and see what she wants?"

It was a dangerous mission, but the Greek entered the boat at once, and in a moment was speeding over the waves toward the mysterious vessel which had now almost stopped, and was lying silent on the little waves. Every eye was fixed anxiously on the skimming gig as she sped across the mile that intervened between the vessels. As she disappeared behind the stranger, little puffs of smoke and sharp reports showed that the latter was saluting, and to the amazement of those on the *Isigoné* a royal flag was broken out on the flag staff.

Then everyone waited while the opal haze melted under the lifting sun, and the details of the city came clearer into view. The Queen stood motionless, her eyes fixed on her fair city. Tears chased each other down her cheeks, and her hands gripped the rails of the bridge convulsively. Northrop watched her with keen feeling. Her face was pale with longing and anxiety and trembling hope: she seemed utterly unaware of the presence of anyone, but stood drinking in every detail of the city she loved as her life. Dorothy stood beside her, her eyes wet with sympathy, and presently *Isigoné* put one arm about her waist, drawing her close.

"Dorothy," she said, her eyes still fixed on the radiant city, "Dorothy, how could they hurt me so? when I loved them, every life of them, Mussulmans as well as Christians; every stone of the city, every

tree of the gardens, every blade of grass in the fields? How could they?"

The girl's only answer was a quick, strong grasp of the Queen's hand, which seemed better to Isigoné than a thousand words, for she bent and kissed her tenderly.

Northrop gazed at them with hot eyes, his heart in anarchy, his brain a chaos. If he could only hate the Queen it would be good, but he could not, he knew that, and with her — he felt it definitely — it was a case of extremes. Hate or — .

A movement was noticed on the vessel of the oligarchy: she was signalling to the fleet behind her. One by one the flags of the republic fluttered down, and in their places rose the great banners of the Queen. Then from each vessel burst the guns of a royal salute, and the stranger once more got under way and forged slowly ahead, the smoke from her salute drifting to starboard, hiding the other ships at anchor.

Was it all over? Had the fleet surrendered, was the day won? It seemed so, and the Captain's hands trembled convulsively as he gripped his glass. Not a word was spoken on the bridge, but the Queen suddenly stiffened into rigidity, stepping back a pace from the bridge bulwarks. She spoke between her teeth.

"There is treachery there! Look out!"

The Captain gnawed his lip. From behind the advancing boat, between the reports of the salute, came the sound of the Rhodian hymn. The fleet was hidden in smoke. The gig had not returned. What was he to do? Fire into the advancing vessel? Fire on the Queen's flag? He stepped into the pilot house, with alert eyes, and in a moment the *Isigoné* began to move slowly towards the southwest across the bows of the approaching vessel, now hardly half a mile away. The stranger still kept on her course. Then the *Isigoné* swung a point nearer west, crossing the vessel of the oligarchy which also swerved some two or three points, turning towards the *Isigoné*. The smoke from the completed salute drifted away, and the ships of the republican fleet appeared, standing out to sea. At that moment the figure of a man shot over the side of the gunboat, disappeared in the waves, rose, and struck out for the Queen's ship. Instantly a rifle volley rattled from the stranger, tearing the waves around the head of the swimmer into spattering foam. Hardly had the report ceased when from the *Isigoné* hell burst on the treacherous ship. She was hardly six hundred yards away: it was point blank firing, and the shot and shell tore her into leaping splinters, enveloping her in impenetrable smoke.

Too late! A furrow of foam sped straight for the *Isigoné*. From every gun of the secondary battery

shot dashed against the torpedo, as the Queen's ship began to swing out of danger. Stunned, breathless, blind with smoke, the group on the bridge waited, frozen; Dorothy crushed in the Queen's arms. With a grinding crash the torpedo burst somewhere astern, dashing a deluge of water into the air and drenching everyone to the skin. The torpedo struck on the starboard side, just abaft the aft turret. Wounded and broken, the *Isigoné* staggered on, but it was not until Captain Villiers came back from investigating that there was any assurance that she was not going to her death. The report was reassuring. Apparently the injury was not fatal: the inner wall of the citadel had held, but some of the compartments had filled and already the ship was lower by the stern and heeling to starboard. The screws and steering gear were intact. Three men had been killed and several wounded.

The torpedo boat was gone, and where she had been, a vortex of white water filled slowly. Here and there dark figures bobbed in the water and a boat was despatched in the vain hope that one of them might prove to be Tsamados.

Meanwhile the deserted *Naimé* and the gunboats had stopped, evidently to see if the *Isigoné* survived the torpedo boat attack. The Captain gave them immediate evidence of the failure of the latest plan. Without waiting for the return of the rescue boat he

rushed up to the bridge and his eyes flashed over the wreck-strewn sea and the halting fleet. Then the forward turret sent a shell crashing into one gunboat, and almost simultaneously the quick-fire guns blazed away, hurling small shell and solid shot around the three ships. The warning was sufficient. One gunboat fled incontinently south, and the other, with the *Naimé*, stood in towards the port, while the sea quieted down and the air cleared slowly.

Pale and peaceful the city lay smiling in the sunlight. It was hard to believe that it had looked on sudden war, ending as abruptly as it had begun. No sign came from the deserted harbor, or from the castle walls, but everywhere was the silence of desolation.

Then the boat came back to the poor *Isigoné*, shattered so that she was no longer very effective, though still buoyant, and navigable to a certain degree. Eight or ten Turks had been picked up but none was found alive of those that had gone to the torpedo boat. All, including Lieutenant Tsamados, had given their lives for their Queen.

Tsamados was the first of the Greek officers so to die, and the Queen and Villiers felt his death deeply. There was no time to waste in sorrow however, or mourning, so as soon as the Turkish sailors who had escaped engulfing with the torpedo boat had been taken on board and imprisoned, the *Isigoné* started slowly and laboriously for the harbor.

With her stern low in the water she crawled cautiously in. By letting water into one of the port compartments, and moving some of her stores and armament to that side, she had been made to trim a little better, but she was still a sorry sight as she crept in to shore. As she drew near the abandoned gunboat, flames burst from the upper works, and quick explosions showed that she was fast meeting her fate. The *Naimé* had been scuttled in about ten fathoms of water, and the top of her funnel and bridge, with her shattered military mast, stood gaunt and black above the swaying sea.

Thanks to the work of Constantine I, the deepened harbor enabled the *Isigoné* to steam close in beside the north pier that ran out from the old Môle St. Nicholas. The city and harbor seemed deserted. Here and there a skulking figure would be seen sliding from the lee of one building to another, but otherwise there was little sign of life. The great warehouses on the Môle St. Nicholas and the north pier were silent, the castle gates were shut, and no flag floated from its tower. From the St. Nicholas battery came no sound of life, though the old smoothbores and the new six-pounders grinned savagely from the high walls. It seemed like a city of the dead, deserted and forgotten.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE QUEEN COMES INTO HER OWN

COUNT VILLARET, will you command the Queen's Guard?"

Northrop glanced up suddenly. He was standing in the battery on the hurricane deck staring curiously at the silent white city, wondering what course the Marquis of Calche meant now to pursue, confronted as he was by a dead town. The Captain — or rather the Marquis, as he evidently now acknowledged himself to be — had spoken with a touch almost of sharpness in his voice, and Northrop looked at him closely. There was something in his eyes, narrowed now to dark lines, not unlike jealousy, and Northrop saw and wondered.

"But why should I, Captain — or Marquis, I should say, since you insist on giving *me* my undeserved title? Surely that honor belongs to the Duke of Kalathos, if, as I think should be the case, you yourself act for the future as Commander-in-Chief."

"It is her Majesty's wish."

Northrop knit his brows. He could not refuse, but he wanted to. This action of the Queen bound him closely to her person, and he knew it. *She* knew it. That was why she had made the request. Was there

no escape possible from this net that was closing around him? None. He knew it and accepted the charge Isigoné had placed on him.

"May I ask now what course you will pursue, Marquis?" he said slowly.

"No, sir, not yet. None has been determined upon," and the Marquis turned on his heel.

Northrop shrugged his shoulders with a kind of sorrowful patience. Things were going to happen, but it was of no use trying to stay them in this story-book quarter of the world. "The curtain rises on the fifth act," he said to himself. "We shall find now if the play is a comedy or tragedy — or melodrama. Well, I didn't write my lines nor assign myself the part. I can only play it, and play it as well as I know how!"

Forty men had been detailed to him. They were the pick of the marines, and Northrop looked them over with satisfaction while waiting for orders. In a little time they arrived. The entire force from the *Isigoné*, except the Queen's Guard, was to land at once under the command of the Duke, and endeavour to obtain possession of the castle if access was not to be had to the officers of the oligarchy. In any event the *Isigoné* was to be for the time the seat of government. The customhouse was outside the gates, and this could be secured easily. The Queen's Guard was to remain on board as a reserve, to be called on only

in event of armed resistance. The treachery of the torpedo boat showed plainly that the loyalists had to deal with men who recognized no law nor principle, and at any time they might meet with further treachery, so it behooved them to stand on rigid guard.

The conformation of the city of Rhodes is peculiar, and needs a few words of description. It is divided into three, or rather four parts. In the midst, rising direct from the sea, lies the Old Town surrounded by a mediæval wall, and divided by a second wall east and west into two unequal portions. That to the north is the "Castello" of St. John, containing the Cathedral of St. John, the old palace of the Grand Masters, and the *auberges* of the different nations. After the liberation of the island this castle had been greatly strengthened by new walls, and well armed with quick-firing guns of small calibre. The palace itself had been enlarged and rebuilt, and under the kings had been the seat of the royal Court. Since the establishing of the oligarchy it had served as Government House. The larger division of the Old Town, which was once the Jews' quarter, had now become the residence of many of the Moslems, and was a crowded, ill-drained, evil place, worse even than it had been before the liberation.

To the north of the Old Town lay the piers and docks of the harbor, now of considerable excellence, together with the storehouses and warehouses, and,

on the low plain that ended in the sandy point where the main lighthouse stood, the shops, and such factories and manufactories as the city possessed. Southward, terrace above terrace, were the villas and public buildings of the new town that had grown up under the two Constantines. The defences of the city consisted of the batteries of the Castello, with some respectable modern guns varying in calibre from six-pounders to six-inch rifles, and a strong, well-built, and well-armed battery on Mount St. Stephen, a small hill rising to the west of the Old Town above the villas. The slope to this battery was long and gentle from the city, but to the west the fall was almost instant to the sea, or rather to a narrow road that skirted the rocky beach, and ran along the shore to Ialyssos. The St. Stephen's fort was armed with a battery of mortars, and a dozen quick-firing field guns. It commanded the city and harbor, and in a measure the hills to the south, while its guns could form a circle of shot all around the town itself.

Such was the topography of the city, and it will be clear from this why it was that from the docks the place might appear deserted. The walls of the Castello and Old Town rose almost directly from the southern edge of the piers, and effectually hid the city itself, except that portion on the sandy point, and the villas on the hills.

Why the land batteries of the Castello and Mount

St. Stephen had remained silent, taking no part in the attack on the *Isigoné* and failing to open fire on the dispersal of the makeshift republican fleet, was a mystery. Had they done so, the Queen's ship, shattered as she was by the fight at Calche and that that had just closed, would have been in a bad position. But for the torpedo that had breached her side she might have lain off shore to the west, and shelled Mount St. Stephen at her leisure, but she was in too precarious a condition to venture such a course now, and it was well for the royal cause that the batteries had remained out of the fight. Whether this was due to the possible collapse and flight of the oligarchy, to lack of ammunition, or to some unknown cause, was not evident, and at the council held in the Queen's cabin, the question was discussed with considerable interest, and little result. The Queen held that the Greeks had obtained possession, the Marquis that the supply of ammunition and the temper of the garrison would not justify such action, but against both these alternatives there were almost insuperable objections.

Just as Kalathos was about to effect a landing of his small forces, a solution was offered. The Water Gate of the Old Town opened, and from it came slowly a small knot of men, unarmed, and bearing a flag of truce. In the deep water of the harbor the *Isigoné* lay close by the south pier, and the flag of

truce was allowed to approach within hailing distance. The Queen, with her officers around her, stood by the starboard rail, and as soon as the white flag halted, demanded through Kalathos its object.

The reply was most encouraging. The oligarchical government, the Turkish officer with the flag stated, had collapsed, its members had fled, and he, the Minister of the Interior, was all that was left to represent it. He had come to negotiate terms of surrender, as the force at Mount St. Stephen had been seriously reduced by desertion, while the poorer population of the city was already exhibiting signs of disorder which he no longer possessed the power to quell. He demanded a general amnesty for the members of the oligarchy and its supporters, universal suffrage for the kingdom, and a responsible ministry. These terms the Queen rejected at once, and offered instead a general amnesty, excluding actual members of the unlawful government; temporary disfranchisement of all those who had upheld the oligarchy, and the Constitution as it had stood during the two years of her reign. After a little consultation, these terms were accepted by the officer with an alacrity which looked suspicious.

Thereupon the representatives of the defunct oligarchy were received on board, and a formal surrender was made of the island with all its defences. Djezif Pasha, the ex-Minister of the Interior, gave

assurances that the *Castello* was deserted, and that Fort St. Stephen would be surrendered the moment the Queen's representatives made application. He also drew a black picture of the condition of things in the Old Town, where lawlessness was fast getting the upper hand, and therefore he insisted that the Queen should send all the military force at her disposal on shore to protect life and property, as well as to assume the reins of government.

That this was pressingly necessary was evident, for no sooner were the gates open than refugees began to appear, pleading for protection of their lives and property from the Turkish inhabitants of the Old Town, who were already ravaging not only their own quarter but the residential sections on the hills. The sound of tumult was every moment growing louder: smoke was rising here and there, and imminent anarchy was evident. As soon as possible, therefore, the Duke led the main body of marines, with their machine guns, on shore, and, leaving a small squad to protect the extra-mural quarter to the north, disappeared through the Water Gate. Almost immediately the sound of firing showed that he was at work.

Scarcely had he gone when the Queen expressed her determination to occupy the *Castello* at once. The Marquis protested, but vainly. Isigoné was passionate with eagerness and exultation: nothing would

serve but she must once more enter her castle from which she had been excluded for two years, and that without loss of a moment, so, although with great reluctance, the Marquis made arrangements for fulfilling her wishes.

The firing had ceased when finally the royal party set out for the Castello, and as the Queen put foot on shore, the Rhodian flag rose slowly on the staff of the Jerusalem tower, where for two years the hateful tri-color, green, white and blue, had flaunted insolently. The *Isigoné* saluted it at once, and it was to the sound of crashing cannon that the Queen passed through the Water Gate into her rightful inheritance.

The Duke had settled matters in the old quarter promptly. Marines patrolled the narrow streets, now almost deserted, and though here and there smouldering fires and blackened walls showed the work of the mob, the danger was over, thanks to the stone construction of the buildings which prevented the spread of fire, and the cowardice and lack of united action of the Turkish cut-throats. The Knights' Gate of the Castello was still closed, and therefore the Queen entered through the Water Gate, the little party passing through the Old Town to the upper or Red Gate of the Castello. Already the Greeks were beginning to appear, even in the Moslem quarter, and their rejoicings were pitiful as

well as exhilarating. They swarmed about the Queen as at Calche, knelt in her path, kissed her feet, and would have lain down to be walked on if she would have let them. The Red Gate was closed, but the great iron-bound valves opened at the first summons.

Northrop was about to enter with his men as an advance guard, when the Queen stopped him with a word.

"Wait! I must go first, it is my city, my castle, no one goes before me."

Northrop protested in vain, urging the danger of treachery: the Queen silenced him with a look.

"The enemies of Rhodes are gone, did not Djezif say so? Who would lift a hand against me? Only my friends are left, my people, for whom I would give my life!"

She stepped within the gate, and knelt, kissing the stones of the rough pavement. Northrop was close behind, and instantly threw out his men to form a guard. The Queen flashed a fierce glance at him, but his action was not a moment too soon. A shot cracked from one of the windows of a house, and a marine fell heavily, receiving the bullet intended for the Queen. It was not necessary for Northrop to search out the traitor, for the Greeks, with a yell of fury, poured into the house, and as the Queen and her guard passed down the street, the body of a man

was tossed from a window to be torn by the loyalists below as hounds worry a fox.

The Castello was almost as Isigoné had left it. In the Street of the Knights the *auberges* had been restored by her father, and now formed a double line of solid and beautiful buildings, leading to the gate of the Palace, and the Cathedral. All seemed deserted: hardly a man showed his face as the party climbed the steep slope to the west, and when they entered the Palace they found the same desolation. The courts were empty, the doors and gates unguarded, and unwelcomed, unchallenged, they entered the state apartments, the Queen moving from room to room with ardent looks of recognition and impetuous words of satisfaction. By her side Northrop passed through the rooms that had once been her private apartments, but under the oligarchy had evidently been turned into a harem for the wives of some one of the officials, and so out on the terrace that rose to the north, looking over the harbor and the commercial section of the city.

It was late afternoon, and the sun was declining towards the level western sea. Over all the portion of Rhodes which was visible, lay a golden haze that turned to dusky amber where the Lycian mountains rose to the north. To the right loomed the "Arabs' Tower" with the silent guns of the battery, and to the left the bastion of St. Michael looked out over

the town. Below lay the still trees of the garden of Constantine, once the Pasha's residence before the liberation, and beyond were the grey roofs of the shops and factories, dwindling away as the land narrowed by the old "Frankish Quarter" until all ended in the great white pharos.

Everywhere the atmosphere of utter peace, of a sleeping city. As they stood so, silent under stress of crowding thoughts, bells began to peal in the city behind them, booming a welcome to the restored sovereign, and at the sound Isigoné turned to Northrop with melting eyes.

"Do you know what you have done, my friend? Do you? You have helped free a people, my people: you have saved my life, you have done God's work. But, O my friend, my — love, what doth it profit a woman if she gain a kingdom — and lose her own heart?"

CHAPTER XIX

DANGER SIGNALS

DOROTHY and the Queen's woman had followed Isigoné to the Palace shortly after it had been occupied by the royal guard, and before night fell something like order had been produced in the apartments so recently vacated by the usurping officials. The two years of the oligarchy had resulted disastrously for the Palace as well as for the State, and confusion and slovenliness had taken the place of the law and order of the royal occupancy. Still, for the time, the accommodations seemed well enough, and when at last temporary servants had been found, the little party arrived at a working basis.

About seven o'clock the Duke presented himself to report on the result of his work. He had tranquilized matters in the Moslem quarter, with little difficulty, and had already made an expedition into the upper town where he had found a sad condition of chaos. Many of the Greek residents had fled into the country, deserting their villas, several of which had already been looted and burned. Others had made frantic attempts at defence against the anarchy that had seemed so near. The question now was whether Fort St. Stephen should be occupied that

night or not until morning. It was already dusk, the troops were wearied by their exertions, and their number seriously reduced by the necessity of guarding property and establishing a police force for compelling order during the night. He had hardly forty men available, and the Castello was as yet unguarded, a duty that must fall to Northrop. The *Isigoné's* sailors were patrolling the lower town, and they could not be withdrawn. It was a puzzling question and the Queen knitted her brows. Djezif had said that the government had fled, and that the force at St. Stephen was reduced by desertion and mutiny, yet should they resist, of what avail would be the Duke's squad of marines without any of the siege or field-guns on the *Isigoné*? Finally, she advised that the occupation of St. Stephen be left until morning, that during the night the shore-guns should be landed from the ship, and that the Duke should take up a position before the fort in order that he might prevent treachery should this be attempted; from this camp the patrolling parties of the city could be relieved. The Duke approved of the plan, and shortly departed to put it into execution.

In the meantime, Northrop had been through the Castello from one gate to another, meeting no resistance, no sign of life. Every attaché of the rebel government had evidently departed, and the houses were deserted. At the gate of the Battery of Aubus-

son he found himself halted definitely. The gates were shut and no reply came to his demands for admittance. And yet it must be deserted. No sign of life had been apparent on the walls, and none was visible now from within the Castello. The walls of the new defences rose solid and silent, the gates resisted every attempt to force them. They might be blown down with ease, but Northrop was loath to resort to this expedient, for it seemed quite unnecessary that the Queen's own defences should be destroyed wantonly. If only a little daylight remained he would have known what to do; as it was, he was puzzled. Finally he sent down to the pier for a couple of machine guns, and placing them so as to command the closed gates, and leaving a guard to man them and cover this, the only entrance to the battery, reported to the Queen.

He found her in consultation with the Marquis of Calche, discussing the situation. The latter seemed suspicious and doubtful, and his fears redoubled with Northrop's report of the closed battery. He frowned furiously when Northrop told him of his failure to gain admittance.

"You were guilty of an error of judgment. Why did you not force an entrance?"

"And destroy defences which may be useful?"

Calche sneered. "That is unexpected caution and somewhat misplaced. Go force an entrance at once."

Northrop's face whitened. "Do you act as Commander-in-Chief?"

"By her Majesty's commands."

"That is sufficient," and Northrop turned on his heel after saluting to the Queen who stood troubled and wondering. He had not gone half a dozen steps when she spoke suddenly.

"Marquis, this breaks my heart. I cannot have dissension already among those to whom I owe my life and kingdom. I cannot think that Count Villaret is to blame for the course he has pursued. Will you not withdraw your order?"

"Does your Majesty supersede it?"

"You are Commander-in-Chief; of course not. I ask it, cousin, as a favor."

"That is, of course, a command. Very well, act on your own discretion in the matter, Count Villaret; I leave the command of the *Castello* in your hands. Do me the favor to report to me in the morning on board the *Isigoné*. I have the honor to wish your Majesty good-night."

Isigoné looked at Northrop in distress when they were left alone. "What is the meaning of this? Something has happened."

Northrop stood before a window, staring out into the colonnaded court where the electric lights gleamed with ghostly radiance. It was growing dark, dark in every way. Already he seemed to see the

culmination of a tragedy, and he was powerless to prevent it. Every instinct warned him to go away, to leave the Queen at once, but his reason told him that was impossible. He caught at every strand of fancy that floated around him, but each was unstable, and he felt himself falling into the abyss of chaos. If only he could take Dorothy by the hand and escape with her while there was time, but that was impossible. He was a subject of the Queen by voluntary action; he could not break his oath of allegiance, he had thrown himself into the maelstrom, and — there was no escape.

The Queen's voice aroused him.

"Let us refuse to allow anything of this kind to mar my first day in Rhodes. It is ominous and I fear it, for I fear myself. Well, we will forget it. This is the day of days. Give it a fitting ending: you will dine with me, will you not?"

"But I must command my men here in the Castello. I must go even now — I must enter the battery."

"No!"

"Forgive me, I must!"

"You shall not!"

"You will give me permission."

"I forbid it absolutely! Do I rule in Rhodes, or does the Most Honorable the Marquis of Calche?"

Northrop stood close by the Queen looking steadily

into her eyes. "For the welfare of the State, in justice to the man who has given you back your kingdom, for — my own sake!"

"For all these reasons I refuse. I owe the Marquis all — but my life, which I owe to you, which *is* yours — nevertheless, there is but one head to the State. That is myself. Calche serves the State through me, not by me. You will enter the battery tomorrow. I forbid you to speak of the matter further. If you wish to go through the Castello again, go, but return at nine o'clock. We dine at that hour."

Indomitable will shone through the Queen's eyes, and Northrop went away abashed, humiliated, disappointed in himself but acquiescent. In the ante-room he met Dorothy. Her frank eyes, her quiet smile, the warm pressure of her strong hand, crushed him with remorse and vague terror. He could not meet her glance, but wavered and stammered like a criminal. As the girl lifted her lips to part from him he caught her fiercely in his arms.

"Dorothy, Dorothy, let us go away, now, *now!* This is not a good place for us, we are out of our element. Come, it is not too late!"

The girl looked at him wonderingly. "Why, what do you mean? The work is not done yet, this is only the beginning. Why should we go? Have we not sworn allegiance to the Queen? We can't go now. And if we could — how?"

Northrop ground his teeth. "I don't know, but it must be; do you understand? *Must!*"

"But not yet! Jack, I don't know you. What is the matter? Surely you can see that we are bound to the Queen still. Why do you speak as you do?"

"Once for all, will you go *now?*"

"No."

"Very well. Good-bye, I am going through the Castello. We dine with the Queen at nine."

As he went out into the empty streets it seemed to him that he was utterly and finally alone, deserted by all that could save him, abandoned to rushing fate that was working itself out implacably and irresistibly. A dogged stolidity seemed to come upon him, and he abandoned himself to events with a sense of helplessness that was new to him and bitterly unwelcome.

He found the streets in perfect quiet, with his own men patrolling them at intervals. At the battery gate the machine guns were posted and manned, and the same silence of absolute desertion hung over the walls. Somewhat reassured as to the status of these matters under his present charge, but in wild foreboding as to the larger questions that were now the sport of destiny, he returned to the Palace.

The Queen was in the presence chamber when he entered, pacing to and fro restlessly. "Well," she said, "is all quiet in the Castle?"

"Perfectly."

"Kalathos has been here. He has tried to communicate with the troops at Monolithos, but the wires are cut."

Northrop started. "There is treachery somewhere, I know it. We must have St. Stephen and the battery before midnight. In the event of attack we are helpless. I must go now."

Isigoné laid her hand on his arm. "Djac," she said, with a little accent that was irresistible, "Djac, not now, not yet. You must dine first. I have set my heart on that. Then — if you like — "

Her face was close to his and he felt her quick breath, saw her swimming eyes and quivering lips. Strength seemed to go out of him with a rush, and forgetfulness take its place. Without a word he took her hand and led her towards the small dining room that, opening from the north side of the presence chamber, formed a connection between it and the private apartments that had once been Isigoné's. There was no sign of the marks of two years; the room was almost as the Queen had left it, and in the midst stood a small table lighted by many candles, and with covers laid for two. Northrop stared confusedly. "What is — I thought — "

"For tonight, alone. Don't deny me! Remember it is my first day of new life. We will break bread together — and alone. Come!"

Around and around, circling like busy dreams, half

memories of things done, of things left undone, drifted round Northrop. He saw the battery gate and his men before it resting by the machine guns. He saw the silent ship at the pier with the Marquis gnawing his heart; saw the vision of Dorothy, still, calm, trustful, with confiding, unaccusing eyes. And then the visions vanished, the mists whirled into unfathomable space, and from the heart of the vanishing dusk flamed the ardent and flashing face of Isigoné, as she sat opposite him, her hands clasped tight at her throat, her lips parted, little flecks of curls straying around her face. The tall candles flared quiveringly, the perfume of roses on the table rose up and choked him. It was a dream born of hashish, of the opium of hell, but it was a dream, such a vision as men give their lives for, and he accepted it blindly, helplessly, knowing himself to be the sport of fate, the child of malevolent destiny.

CHAPTER XX

GARDEN OF DREAMS

IT was still without, still and sultry. The faint wind from the sea hardly served to stir the heavy curtains, and the tall candles burned steadily, though the windows were open on either side to the night air. From the garden of Constantine far below, a drift of perfume, mingled jasmine and honeysuckle, crept lazily aloft, tinging the still air with its slow sweetness. Now and then came the far cry of a sentinel, the boom of a bell, and once the sharp snap of a rifle.

But the fight, the bitter warfare, was not without in the city streets or the alleys of the Castello: it was here in the golden, Rembrandt gloom of the Queen's palace where the candles made a centre of amber light in the heavy shadow: a fight between impulse and will, of inherited instinct and acquired inclination, of East and West, of man and woman.

The finger-bowls of old Cypriote glass were brought, the servants disappeared, and across his tall, fantastic glass where the jewel bubbles still rose in the pale wine, Northrop stared into the deep eyes of the woman who leaned to him above the fading flowers, leaned to him out of the past, out of the dead centuries of passion and unhampered impulse.

Presently her hands crept towards him along the

white cloth, and he noticed dimly how the fallen rose leaves lay around the slim, lingering fingers.

“Djac!”

“Isigoné!”

It was the first time he had spoken so, and the Queen’s lips parted with a quick little breath, dear to see.

“Djac, you hate me. Why?”

“Shall I tell you, shall I?” His hand closed sharply around the slender glass and the slim stem snapped. The Queen’s eyes gave answer.

“Because I love you!”

The little hands in the rose leaves were very close now, and fell easy prey. Northrop’s eyes burned fiercely.

“Look! I neither understand you nor believe in you, but I love you. Damn you, I love you! Is there any more of me you want to kill? My conscience, my will, my soul, all are dead. Will you have my memory? It would be cruel to leave me that, if — Kill it! Do you think I *dare* to remember? Come, forget, forget! There are poppies for us below in the garden, shall we eat of them? Beloved, shall we? Yes, I hate you, because — I love you!”

Isigoné drew back with frightened eyes. “You — hate me? Why that, and you say — how can both be true? Oh, let it be only one, one, and that not hate, for — I love you!”

Northrop leaped to his feet and sprang to the Queen's side, crushing her hands to his breast, looking down at her with love as strong as hate, and hate as fierce as love.

"Which are you, devil? are you the Queen or the woman? All hangs on that. For God's sake guard yourself, guard *me*, with a royal crown. That is defence, a talisman against the devils and demons of this night. Don't forget! you, *you* are Queen, and I am John Northrop of Baltimore, U. S. A."

He laughed harshly: the idea was sufficiently ridiculous, but its absurdity was lost on Isigoné.

"I am tired, so tired of my crown. It burns into my brain, it binds itself like an iron band. Let us lay it away for a little? Must I wear it always?"

"For God's sake, yes!"

"For your sake, no!"

Something like lightning seared Northrop's eyes. He seemed to grow blind, and in the hot darkness he crushed a throbbing body close, and felt soft lips cling to his, while day followed night, and the night came again.

Isigoné wrenched herself clear of his grasp and swept to the window, wrapping the curtains about her. When she spoke it was in a voice full of tears.

"You don't, you can't, understand me! You think me shameless, wanton, wicked. I am not, I am just — a woman, and a Greek. Neither was made to

obey laws, but to live without them, above them, what you will. I can enjoy everything that is in the world, every pleasure, every delight: and for years I have been a bird in a narrow cage. Do you remember what I said to you on the ship — that night before the city fell? Well, that is true. There is one thing in all the world that I want, and that is — love. Djac, I would give you this kingdom tomorrow, I would throw it away — for love. I starve without it. Why should I, a Queen, be denied that which every peasant may command? Tell me that! Must I grow old without love? Must I see the beauty God has given me wither and decay? Must I give my life for laws that are arbitrary and man-made? Must I starve, *starve*, in the midst of plenty? I will not! I *will* have love, and you — ” She swam from the whirling tapestry and came to him with outstretched arms and quivering lips. “You, heart of my heart, you who gave me life again, shall give me life once more, for — I love you.”

For an instant she quivered in Northrop's arms, then flashed from him with a soft little laugh, and disappeared through curtains to the right. The man stood silent, motionless, trying not to think, not to remember. It was so still he could hear the waves fretting against the pier with the incoming tide. Then the vibrant notes of a harp broke the stillness, and through the closed curtains came the words of a

little French song he had never heard before. The voice was throaty, velvety, a golden contralto, and the chords of the harp seemed only to prolong the tone.

Was it Circe within, there where the hangings of green tapestry fell close? There was magic in the air at all events, intangible, irresistible, and his feet drew along the floor, inch by inch, until his hands crept over the rough threads of the hangings, and the golden voice seemed close in his ears. He passed from the candlelight into thick dusk, and the tapestry fell behind him noiselessly.

The dark was full of music, of a sad, longing voice that quavered away in a half sob. Northrop fell on his knees, and crept so until his groping hand touched the tense harp-strings that sighed in faint echo. Then silence, and his head fell in the Queen's lap as her hands crept close around his throat.

Very slowly he lifted his head, staring up into the impenetrable dark. A rose leaf fell on his lips, and then, loosened from all control, heavy masses of hair dropped coiling around his face. Warm breath beat on his eyes, and groping lips sought his in the still night.

A flash of memory burned his brain.

"Let me go, now! Do you hear, *now!* I *will* go — to my men. This is hell, the end of the world — "

"The beginning of love!"

“And death. Look, this is the crisis, all turns on this: life and death, honor and shame, heaven and hell, God and the devil. Dear heart, answer me! Shall I go?”

“No.”

“Wait, wait! Do you know what this means? Do you? Think! for you know, you know! Sweet, shall I stay?”

“Yes.”

CHAPTER XXI

THE AWAKENING

HOUR after hour the bells boomed in the tower of St. John's. Midnight! One. Two. Then the heavy silence was broken by a thunderbolt from the direction of Fort St. Stephen. A dull roar of artillery, followed by rattling volleys and scattered shots. Then the fitful tumult of sustained action.

Northrop staggered blind and wondering to his feet, groping instinctively for his sword belt and revolvers. The Queen sprang up and stood frozen, listening. A window opening to the west, overlooking the city, showed clear of curtains, and its grey square flushed with fitful light echoing the heavy firing on the hill. Through the distant roar came the clash of sudden alarm bells all around them, and a signal gun banged from the *Isigoné* in the harbor below.

Reason seemed to abandon Northrop, and he stood staring at the telltale flicker of light in the west window. The Queen spoke first.

"Treachery! Djezif lied! We are trapped! Go to your men!"

Reason came back, and Northrop awoke.

"If this is the end, I have killed you!"

"I have killed *you*, my people, myself. Well, the

game isn't lost yet. Head your men and defend the Castello. We have still the battery!"

"Good-bye. I will rouse the servants, and send you some men. You can hold the North Tower? Good! If we are driven in, I will fall back there."

"Can you give me some rifles and ammunition?"

"I will send them."

He leaped out into the banquet hall. A single candle, guttering in the tall holder, threw flickering light on the disordered table, the drooping roses. Buckling his sword belt, Northrop strode towards the stairway. A pale figure fluttered towards him, seizing his arm. Dorothy: and he had forgotten her! He looked down with chattering teeth.

"Jack, what is it? I am brave."

"Treachery. We have been trapped" — the Queen's words — "We can do something, perhaps. Can you gather the servants? Take them to the Queen, and go to the North Tower. I will send some rifles and ammunition. Here!" He drew his revolvers and threw them, with a lot of cartridges, in the midst of the glass on the table. "You can use these. If I never come to the Tower — if the Turks come instead, use them — for *her* and yourself. You know how."

"I know. Good-bye. Kiss me; perhaps it is for the last time."

"God, no!" and Northrop wrenched himself away and sprang down the stone stairs.

In the court frightened servants were running hither and thither. With a sharp word or two Northrop sent them to the Queen. An orderly came panting out of the darkness, his face white with horror, reproach, amazement. He saluted sharply.

"The battery is full of Turks. We hold them at bay for the moment with the machine guns, but they are bringing gatlings against us. Will you command?"

"God damn you! who else? How many of the Queen's guards are in the Castello?"

"Forty."

"Any Greeks?"

"About the same number."

They were threading their way through the dark alleys of the Castello towards the battery. The heavy booming from the hill had ceased, but the crackling of rifles rose louder, growing nearer.

Northrop ground his teeth. "Villiers is driven in!" he muttered with a savage oath.

In front of the battery gate, torchlights flashed on the two guns, and on the white faces of a little knot of men standing alert. The gates were closed, but from within came a dull mutter of confused sounds, the clamor of voices, the rattle of arms, the clank and rumble of trundling guns.

In a moment a squad of men was sent down to the pier to bring up the available rapid-fire guns and

more ammunition, together with all the men who could be spared from the defence of the ship, and such Greeks as could be pressed into service. They were to avoid the Old Town and enter the Castello through the East Gate, or should access here be cut off by the victorious troops from the fort, through the castle gate giving on the Garden of Constantine. Then the guns were rushed back out of direct line with the gate, and the men thrown into shelter of the buildings that crowded close.

The manœuvre was not a moment too soon, for hardly were the guns in position to rake the gates instead of confronting them with a direct fire, when a spout of flame shot through the splintering wood and leaping metal, hurling shot and flying missiles across the open, but just vacated by the men. In another moment the valves of the gate swung apart and two gatlings lunged through. Instantly the machine guns opened on the mass of men that poured out between them. The Queen's Guard, from their shelter in the deserted houses, launched a hell of fire against the rush of Moslems, and in a moment the port was lumbered with fallen men. One by one, the sharpshooters picked off those who fought fiercely to man the guns, and after the volley through the gates not once were the gatlings fired.

Ignorant of the force within but quick to seize his chance, Northrop jumped forward against the

wallowing mass with a sharp word of command. Death was what he wanted for himself, but not quite yet, though it was welcome at any moment. With a rush, the little body of forty of the guard with half as many volunteer Greeks, sprang over the rampart of dead and wounded, secured the gatlings, and in a moment had them in action, spouting fierce death into the black cavity that yawned before them.

Again the garrison made a rush, blindly, insanely, against the streams of fire, and for a moment it was hand to hand work on the quivering mound under the stone arch. Attempt at sortie was useless however: the Moslems were mowed down like grass, and soon the gate lay black and silent. Over the heaped bodies, into the long passage, the little band of Queen's men clambered, trundling the captured guns, and though a little resistance came from scattered Turks hidden in embrasures and behind piers and buttresses, resistance was useless, and in five minutes Northrop stood breathless on the ramparts among the long guns.

The firing at Fort St. Stephen had ceased, but the crackle of rifles, the flush of light on the tops of buildings in the Old Town, with puffs of smoke that rose in the darkness illuminated by the flash of guns, showed where the Marquis and his men were retreating through the narrow streets, contesting every inch. From the direction of the harbor came the sound of

approaching reinforcements, while the searchlights of the *Isigoné* glared fiercely on the pier and on the towers of the battery. Hurriedly assuring himself that the garrison was practically exterminated, and sending a man down to the pier to divert the rapid-fire guns from the West Gate into the Old Town where they could reinforce the retreating troops, Northrop gathered his own men, and, leaving a squad with the captured gatlings to guard the Castello gate and open for Calche, should he be driven to this refuge, led them out into the Old Town, the two machine guns rattling behind.

Guided by the distant tumult, he led his men through deserted alleys a little to the west of the evident seat of action, in order that if possible he might get behind the Turks and so relieve Calche by a flank attack. Bitterly did he regret his lack of knowledge of the lay of the land. Twice the little body of men found themselves in a *cul de sac*, but at last, after many trials, he struck a direct road, and in a moment more found himself in a narrow street which evidently joined the road down which Calche was retreating, in the shape of a "V." At all events, its darkness ended in a fitful light and drifting smoke, where a dense body of men was pressing forward toward an unseen enemy. The front was plainly some distance away, for the firing here was only on the part of scattered patriots in the tall houses under which the

troops passed. Now and then the Turks gave reply to this casual fusillade but the firing was sporadic and fitful.

No better spot could Northrop have found. The alley was black, the enemy pressing on away from him. In a moment the guns were unlimbered, the men ordered to lie flat on the paving stones, and the attack commenced. In the narrow line which the guns commanded, the rushing Moslems went down in a solid mass as the two machines began pumping six hundred shots a minute into their ranks. The distance was an hundred yards, the slaughter comprehensive. Under the impulse from behind, the doomed men were urged into the line of death with shrieks like the cries of the damned in hell. [Then the advance stopped and the street lay clear. They had cut the enemy in two. What next? Was the body in front of the dead line too strong for the Marquis to cope with? He would have the reinforcements from the *Isigoné* — good guns but few men. If the enemy were intelligent, he would throw his rear line back to the Castello gates, and retreat would be cut off. There was no time to think of this, however, and the little battery advanced.

Half way to the main street another alley struck off to the right. Across the end of this Northrop caught sight of a mass of retreating men, and he hurled a turn or two of shot into it for a parting kick.

The rear flank turned and crashed a rifle volley into the Queen's men, but harmlessly, and then the rebel force disappeared.

Further on, the main road was blocked with dead and wounded. The danger to the little squad was great if they tried to fight their way through wounded Turks, and their number would allow no risk. Once more they struck into another alley to the left, but though for a time it led in the right direction, it shortly swerved to the left again, towards the Castello. There was no choice. It must be onward, at all events, and luck go with them!

No road to the right, and Northrop ground his teeth. Presently he thanked God for what he had thought a misfortune. The alley led back to the Castello gate, and even as he looked, the rear troops, turned back by his flank attack, charged across the open and hurled themselves against the gates. Once more the little guns spouted their streams of death into the Moslems, and then the panic began.

Dismayed, bewildered, blind with terror at an enemy that seemed ubiquitous and irresistible, the Turks shrunk back, and at the instant a new roar of machine guns burst out to the right. So the reinforcements from the *Isigoné* had arrived? That settled it. In a flash Northrop's company came down to the gates just as Lieutenant Grosvenor, with three machine guns and a Hotchkiss one-pounder, rattled

into position. There was no time for greetings. Where was Calche? Fighting his way back to this very gate no doubt, but where? The sound of the firing gave indication, and in another instant the united forces, with what was now a formidable battery, had thundered into Rue des Anges just in time to receive the shattered remnants of Calche's command. Twenty men, with the Marquis himself in the midst, who staggered into the shelter of the guns.

Before came a flood of flame and smoke rolling on them irresistibly. Two hundred feet, one hundred, fifty — and then the battery launched its hail, and the solid front was torn into leaping fragments. Many of the Turks had got by the narrow range of the guns, and it became work for swords and revolvers. At three of the guns the men went down at the first rush. Only one continued its fire. Hacking like butchers, blind with blood, staggering among writhing bodies that rolled under foot and stabbed upward with long knives, Northrop and his men fought, while the one machine gun swung slowly back and forth, belching hell in a lurid stream.

The first rush was over. The single gun held back the enemy: the last of the men who had come to close quarters rolled kicking into the gutter, and once more the silent guns were manned and the Moslem mob driven back for the last time.

They vanished into the night; the guns ceased

their savage chatter, and darkness came down. Darkness and silence, or what seemed like silence after the hideous din. Only the grating groans, the harsh intaking of breath, the thin cries of wounded men, broke the silence of the night.

Northrop leaned, dizzy and sick, against the hot barrel of the Hotchkiss. Out of the night came a dark shape that caught him in its arms. Black with smoke and foul with blood, Calche crushed the man to his breast. There was neither jealousy nor hate nor suspicion in his flashing eyes.

“My boy, my boy! you have done good work tonight. You have saved the Queen, the State. You are the hero of the day, and I take second place. Forgive everything I have said or done. I was wrong, I ask your pardon. Will you give it?”

And Northrop, dropping his reeking sword, sat down on the stones, and burying his face in his hands, cried like a little child.

CHAPTER XXII

DIES IRÆ

THERE was none to surrender Fort St. Stephen that morning, when, an hour later, just as the sun was flushing the domes and towers of Rhodes, the Marquis himself, with such men as he could gather from his shattered and exhausted forces, climbed the long slope and summoned the garrison. After the crushing defeat of the Battle of Rhodes, the Moslem troops, with the treacherous members of the oligarchy, had vanished. Blazing villas on the terraced hill, and the bodies of slaughtered women and children, showed for a short distance the line of retreat towards the interior of the island.

Not a Turk was visible in the streets of the city: even the Moslem quarter was deserted, and none but royalists remained.

In both the fort and the battery of the Castello was a great store of arms and ammunition, larger in fact than the Marquis had anticipated, and before noon all the defences were fully manned by volunteers, and already the beginnings of an army had appeared. No word had come from the troops at Monolithos, but they must number at least five thousand, and no one feared for them, even though they might be engaged by the retreating Moslems.

Word had come to all of the officers that the Queen desired their presence at a council at eleven o'clock. Only one man disobeyed her summons: Northrop.

At the hour set for the council he was striding along the sea road down the west shore of the island: thoughtless of destination, hungering only to escape from his torturing thoughts. His bloodshot eyes stared forward, hard and hopeless: his teeth showed white through his drawn lips: his unsheathed sword was still clutched in his hand, and the grime of battle was on him. Every now and then he met a peasant, in his onward rush, but though they cried out in terror or shrank fearfully into the thicket along the land side of the road, he did not notice them, nor did he slacken his pace.

He had been walking since dawn, but not until the middle of the afternoon did he think of fatigue. Then the consciousness of physical exhaustion came on him with a rush, and, like a dumb animal that feels the coming of death, he struck to the right into the forests that crept down to the edge of the sea on this side of the ridge of mountains. In the depth of the wood he dropped exhausted beside a little torrent where it had filled a small basin in the rocks with a pool of dark water.

For some time he lay as one dead on the brink of the still pool, while the sun crept down, slanting its levelling rays through the forest. It was very still,

and the silence seemed to tighten like an iron band around his forehead. Finally from sheer fatigue he fell into a dull sleep, and it was nearly sunset when he awoke. He pulled off his torn uniform and leaped into the pool, as cold and exhilarating as the sea. The icy water washed his mind, freshened his body, brought back something of his scattered reason, and as he dressed again he felt there was more of the man in him: that he could think rationally once again.

He must be miles from Rhodes, and the night was coming fast. He could speak only a few words of Greek and he knew nothing of Turkish. Manifestly, he must eat and then go back. His wild flight had ended in nothing, and he cursed himself for a madman and a coward. Was he the man to run away from his own misdeeds? He almost blushed with shame, and started hurriedly through the glow of sunset back to the sea road. There were plenty of wild fruits for food, and some of them he knew to be harmless. He ate ravenously, and then sought refuge in his pipe, the one palliative for all spiritual ills. Then he started on his lonely way back towards the city.

As the twilight grew around him, and the sea burned itself out under the flaming clouds until it lay grey and ashy beneath the purple sky, Northrop tried to straighten out the woeful confusion of his brain. For a moment his eyes would flash with ex-

ultation and he would catch his breath in a long quivering gasp. The next moment he was overwhelmed with a rush of despair and horror. Then he would stretch out his arms in the dusk towards the vision of the radiant Queen, as he had seen her in the soft candlelight, the rose leaves about her creeping hands. Unconsciously he cried aloud, "O my love, my love!" and then black shame struck him in the face, making him stagger and shrink as he remembered how he had refused to kiss — *her* — when she flew to him at the sound of the first firing. Refused, even though for the moment he believed he should never see her again. What was he anyway? a man or a scoundrel? What had he done? Well, he was not the first who — "Cad!" he snarled at himself, "Cad and coward!" "But here is a situation to be confronted," his reason said. "You can't go back? The day is over, and the night. Another comes. You can retrace no step, blot out no deed. Another day comes: what will you do with that?"

Yes, that was the question. Once he had known a man who had betrayed a great trust that had been placed in him. Afterwards he had shot himself, and Northrop remembered how he had condemned the man's action. There was another who "went out and hanged himself" — *He* could not do this, what would become of — of *her*? He could not leave her alone in this strange, this utterly demoralizing land,

this impossible kingdom of romance. Of course, it was all over with him so far as she was concerned: he could never look in her clear eyes again. That, of course. But he had a duty towards her still, he could take her back, back to the reason and sanity of her own country. And then he could say, "good-bye." After —

And what of that other? He had voluntarily sworn allegiance to Isigoné. Could he break his oath? He laughed bitterly to himself. Now that he was breaking oaths, what difference did another make? No: it was escape, flight, anything, so it meant home again. And here he rested. It was too dark to see further.

As he looked with desolate eyes out across the dark water, he saw lights gleaming on the surface of the sea. At first he thought them only the lights of fishing boats, but as he advanced along the road, he began to distinguish a darkening of the shadow that moved uncertainly on the beach. He paused by the wall that rose above the gravelly shore, his suspicion awakening instinctively. Something was on foot: from the silence of the proceedings, and the hour chosen for their development, he instantly scented danger. He could not have gone down the coast far enough to meet the parties of volunteers from Calche: no loyalists would come from Rhodes by sea, even in pursuit of the flying Turks. Was this some plot

against the Queen? If so, what was its nature? He stared down at the beach below, remembering nothing but his allegiance to the throne of Rhodes.

Torches were moving to and fro, boats were constantly approaching the shore and unloading men, then going to sea again, vanishing in the darkness where, far away, a line of lights gleamed motionless, not moving constantly like those nearer at hand.

Presently the dark mass on the edge of the water broke up, and in small groups men began to come up the rattling beach. They were all armed, and Northrop saw by the flash of torches, the red fez that was more significant than a battle flag. This was enough: he had stumbled on the preparations for a land attack by Moslems—probably by Turkish troops. In a moment he was crouching low and running as softly as possible. Could he get by before the men who were climbing to the road should be able to cut him off? He must: that was all. He rushed into the darkness before him, hearing the chatter of low conversation and the rattle of pebbles at the foot of the wall. The road swung to the left, and he turned the curve only to see dark figures topping the wall just in front. "I must strike for the hills," he thought, "but God knows if I can find my way to Rhodes in time to warn the city. It is the only chance, however."

He threw himself down and crept across the wide roadway. Just here, unfortunately, there was no

forest, only cultivated fields, with an olive grove terraced above. Noiselessly drawing his sword to cut a breach through the hedge of prickly pear, he rose cautiously. All the time the Turkish troops were crossing the sea wall in increasing numbers; below he could hear the sound of heavy wheels on the shingle; guns, or caissons, or ammunition wagons. He cut cautiously at the fleshy paddles of the six-foot cactus hedge. Then with a rush the Moslems were on him. He heard them coming and whirled back to the hedge, but in a flash he found himself surrounded by a circle of rifle barrels, the torchlight flashing on the black steel. An officer shouted at him in Turkish, then in Greek. Northrop understood neither, but he stood still waiting for death.

Again the officer spoke to him, interrogatively: and Northrop thought best to make some kind of a reply. "I do not understand," he said in the best Greek he could think of. "I am not a Greek."

"Then do you speak French?"

"Yes."

"Good. Now answer me. Who are you? What are you doing here?"

Northrop hesitated. He could not lie; it would be more than useless, for his uniform was an unmistakable proof of his principles. It would seem that this was the end, and it appeared rather ignominious. Still, the choice was not his.

"I refuse to answer."

"Then you will be shot."

"Go ahead!"

The officer bit his lip. He wanted information. "Look!" he said, "you are in the service of the ex-Queen, and you have been fighting. I judge from the fact that you are out here so far from the city, that you are either a deserter or a scout. Whichever you are, you can answer questions. Very well, you will either answer them quietly or you will be forced to do so. In the first case your life will be spared and you will go with us. In the second case you will be shot after we are through with you. Will you answer?"

"No."

The officer gave an order in Turkish, and a dozen men leaped at Northrop. His sword flashed twice only before he fell beneath a crushing weight. In a moment his sword was twisted out of his hand, and his arms bound behind his back: then he was pulled roughly to his feet.

In the midst of the road two men were building a fire: all around was a solid ring of men, hundreds of them: and all unmistakable Turks. Every minute the crowd increased. Every man was perfectly silent: it seemed like a nightmare.

"Lie down!" the officer commanded.

Northrop obeyed. Two soldiers approached, and

before he knew what they were about they had pulled off his boots and were dragging him feet first towards the fire.

"O God, let me die like a man!" he cried to himself, and closed his eyes, calling every faculty to his aid to give him fortitude.

The men ceased dragging him on the hard earth, and again the officer spoke.

"Will you speak now, or shall I make you? How many men are under arms in Rhodes?"

"Forty thousand."

"That is a lie! To the fire!"

Before the men could seize him he heard a shout, and a man ran from the circle of soldiers and stared down into his face.

"Guide save us a'!" roared a familiar voice, "if it is na' the puir castaway I've e'en had the distinguished plaisure o' knowin' on board they dees-reputable *Isigoné!* Captain dear!" and he turned to speak over his shoulder in a choice line of Highland Scots, "you'll gain nothing from the boy by the fire. I know him well. Speak, man, is it not so?"

"He is right," Northrop said wearily. "This is Dr. McCraik. I know him."

"Will you just give him to me, Captain? If he knows anything *I'll* get it from him. You will? Come on then, my birkie, I'll e'en help ye off wi' that bit twine on your wrists. There noo! An' your boots?"

Aye, juist here. An' noo, wi' your kind permission, we'll reshume our very benefeECIAL acquaintance!"

Together they passed through the circle of troops, and, reaching the sea wall, sat down.

Northrop was still dazed by the rush of events and his sudden rescue at the hands of the one man whom he least of all expected ever to see again. Below him the men were constantly crossing the shingle, dragging small field guns and loads of ammunition: in front the road was fast filling with troops as the men fell in. He was dizzy and confused. Things happened too fast for him in this story-book land. McCraik gave him no pause, however, and with a pipe between his teeth, and his pudgy hands clasped across his capacious body, plied him with hurried questions. He ended: "An' that's a'. Noo will ye answer me in a word?"

"Not yet: tell me first how in God's name you came here, and what these men are for."

"Ou, aye, ye'll e'en be carefou to the last I'm thinkin'. Ye're a fine canny lad! Ah, weel, I'm juist followin' the fortunes o' the winnin' side. We're bound for Rhodes to set up the legeetimate government again, an' I'm Surgeon General!"

"Are you with the Turks?"

"Weel, lad, it's that, or they Turks are wi' me. I know not."

Northrop stared at him with a kind of horror.

“Do you mean to tell me you have gone over to the enemy, a deserter?”

The Doctor's eyes bulged. “I'm na' findin' your words too ceevil for a man to address to his preserver — but I'll waive that for the sake of information. If ye'll go back a bit ye'll e'en ca' to mind that the last time I had the honour o' a word wi' you, we were both deserters, an' the bonny leddy as well. We were a' in the same boat — to speak in a figure o' rhetoric, for as a matter o' fact we were *not*,” and McCraik grinned.

“You are right, of course you could not know. Well I can tell you this. We were all wrong, and the Captain right. I saw this and joined him. I am fighting for the Queen.”

“Ye mad cretur'! But I expected no less. Weel, I'm against her, an' if I may venture an opeenion, for the moment I count more than yourself, ye feckless bairn!”

Northrop shrugged his shoulders. “That is not the point. How did you get here?”

“Ou, on a bit steamer that sailed for Smyrna from Ceuta three hours after the *Isigoné*. I took the precaution o' telegraphin' to the same town the fact that I had certain information to lodge wi' the authorities — for a consideration — and wi' the luck o' the McCraiks, a sma' message came fra Rhodes while the gentlemen in red caps were considerin' my propo-

sition. Man! I admired at the loony Captain, for that he had taken Calche and sunk three ships; it was verra weel done, though a bit unprofessional. Weel, the puir Captain o' the *Naimé* was juist howlin' for troops an' ships. There was plenty o' the first, but the supply o' ships was leemited. However, here we are, an' I'm thinkin' we'll have a fine bit o' work tomorrow, for the *Isigoné* can't rin abune the land, an' we're seven thousand — I mean *fourteen* thousand troops. Ou, aye, it'll be a verra fine day."

Northrop fell silent. How could he block this infamous game? It seemed to him that the accidental encounter was providential. How could he turn it to account? He was a prisoner, but if he were crafty he might escape. Besides, could he not lead the enemy astray, lose them for a time and so delay their attack on the city until he could find a way of sending the alarm? It was worth trying. The Doctor was plying him with questions, and he devoted himself to answering them in accordance with the interests of the Queen, without arousing the suspicions of McCraik as to his honesty. He gave his garbled information hesitatingly and with apparent reluctance, allowing the Doctor to think that his clumsy strategy was effectual. To his appeals that he forsake the Queen's cause, he was stubborn, and after a long argument the Doctor exclaimed:

"Noo, I forsake ye, ye reckless birkie. Ye'll have

to go as a prisoner, that's certain. An' ye'll be well guarded, I promise ye. We're goin' the noo. Ye'll ha' a bit rope on your wrists as a slight measure of precaution, but no harm will come to ye if ye carry yourself in a carefou an' conscientious fashion. If ye try to escape, I'll answer for naething. Mind ye that?"

The word of command was given and the expedition started. Northrop, his hands bound behind him, plodding along in the midst of a troop of mounted officers, the Doctor behind him with watchful eye and garrulous tongue.

CHAPTER XXIII

FOR GOD AND THE QUEEN

FOR a time the troops followed the sea road towards the city, and Northrop began to hope that the fatal mistake would be made of approaching Rhodes beneath the inaccessible slopes below Mount St. Stephen. About midnight, however, the army halted, and then struck into the fields and orchards to the right, evidently in order that they might intercept the highroad that led through the centre of the island to the capital. Apparently the attack on the city was to be made just before dawn, and through the suburbs on the heights. If no obstacle intervened, this would be quite feasible, as the city could not be more than three hours' march away.

Northrop stumbled on, unconscious of the rough path, heedless of McCraik's babble of conversation. With every step the chance of his being able to warn the city was growing smaller. Escape was out of the question: if he feigned illness or accident in the hope of being left behind, it would result simply in a bayonet between his ribs, or a Turkish knife across his throat. Besides, were he free, he knew nothing of the lay of the land. He was helpless. That was unquestionable, but he could still think. Think?

his head ached from his impotent thoughts. In any case, this was not the end: it could not be. If ever cause had shown the protection of heaven it was this. Was the aid of God withdrawn now, just because — what nonsense! His reason revolted against the subtle suggestion of his conscience. Rhodes was not lost — yet. He would wait — and watch.

The olive orchards gave place to vineyards where the men snatched eagerly at the early grapes. The vines passed, and on the gently sloping uplands wheat fields intervened. The night was very dark, but the guides had led unerringly, and just above lay the highway. As the group of officers, with Northrop between, rode on in advance of the men, a scout hurried back and said something to Achmet Pasha, who suddenly reined in his horse and hissed the command to halt back to the long sinuous mass of men that vanished in darkness.

Northrop glanced up: along the height of land where the road lay, a dark line was reaching out towards the north, advancing rapidly along the highway. What was this? In an instant he knew, and he could have shouted with delight. The volunteer army that had formed at Monolithos! It *must* be. The refugees of the garrison would not return.

“Who are these men?” said the leader of the Turks to Northrop.

“How do I know?”

"You *do* know. Are they Queen's men or friends?"

"They may be the garrison that fled yesterday, returning to the attack."

"Has the Queen a land army?"

"No."

At that moment a horse beside him neighed loudly. There was a quiver in the dark line above, the rattle of arms, and the unknown forces halted.

"Who goes there?" shouted a voice in Greek. "Friends or enemies?"

With all his strength Northrop yelled in reply, "Death to the Queen of Rhodes!"

An officer struck at him with his sword, but Northrop leaped aside under the belly of McCraik's horse. A sharp command swept the leading companies from column of fours out into company front; the staff pulled their horses back towards the troops, but in the midst of the confusion a scattering volley rang out from above, turning the crest of the hill into a line of fire. The bullets sung over the heads of the Turks, and in a moment they were replying, firing at the flashes from the enemy's line. Meanwhile the troops were deploying on the left, but the darkness, the thick grain and the complete surprise prevented either rapid or accurate movement. The skirmish line stood its ground however, and as yet the fire from above did little harm.

Suddenly the crackling fusillade from the road was

varied, and from three points burst the steady rattle and darting flame of gatlings. The staff were in the line of fire of one of the guns, and three horses went down, McCraik's among them. The skirmish line flung itself back, broken and demoralized, the officers were swept along with it, and in a moment Northrop found himself crouching beside a quivering horse, between the lines but forgotten. The poor brute kicked convulsively and lay still. Beside him a Turk choked and gurgled, with a bullet through his throat. In the sulphurous flare of the firing, Northrop saw that the man was an officer and that his drawn sword lay on the ground beside him. In a flash he had twisted himself across the blade, and careless of the deep cuts that slashed his hands, sawed the knotted rope back and forth until it gave way. He raised his head cautiously and looked around.

The Turks had divided into three sections, achieving a respectable formation at last. One was swinging out towards the north, another to the south, while the third, in open formation, was advancing up the hill. There could be no doubt that they greatly outnumbered the men from Monolithos, and moreover they were probably tried troops. If the Queen's men would fall back, leaving the Turks to advance along the city road—that was it! and in a moment Northrop was running through the trampled grain towards the south in order that he might join the loyalists.

Stray bullets zipped around him, but he escaped untouched. As he ran he saw that, as he had hoped, the Queen's men were really falling back, evidently to prevent being flanked by the right wing of the Moslems. By this time the centre had reached the highway; a thick wood had intervened between the loyalist force and the flanking party of Turks. The fire was now straight along the road. Panting with exertion Northrop plunged into the thicket and made his way breathlessly in the direction of the highway.

Through the trees a line of men crashed towards him, swung out under cover of the wood to check the advance of the right wing of the Turkish army. Only the officer who led them was in uniform. Northrop made for him between the tree trunks, shouting "Life to the Queen, to Isigoné!"

The officer covered him with his revolver. "Who are you?"

"Northrop — Count Villaret!"

"What are you doing with the Turks?"

"I was a prisoner. I have escaped. Where is your leader, Captain Hay? I have information for him."

"I remember your face, my lord," and the officer saluted. "I was a marine on the *Isigoné*. General Hay is at the front. I can stop no longer, my duty is here!" and in a moment the men were sliding between the trees towards the edge of the wood.

Northrop found that the recruits had retreated to

a point where the little wood on one side protected them from the right wing of the enemy, while a rise of land to the right allowed them to open out into a respectable line of battle. The enemy was compelled either to advance along the narrow road which, just between the lines, crowned a slight ridge, or else to charge through the small forest. The conformation of the land was singularly advantageous for the Queen's men, and it looked as though, even with their inferior numbers, they could hold their ground unless the Turks could flank them, in which case they would be in a bad position. However, every man of the volunteers knew the ground thoroughly, and this was an immense advantage considering the darkness.

In the curve of the road, by three of the machine guns, Northrop found Hay. In a few words he told him of the fall of the city, his capture and escape. "General," he said, "there are about seven thousand of the Turks. Can you crush them?"

"I have less than four thousand, all recruits."

"It would be a waste of men to try. May I make a suggestion?"

"Of course."

"Hold this line you have formed with its left on the wood, its right on the plateau, until you can draw off the rest of your men and retreat along the road. The Turks will not follow you for they have no cavalry: besides, they must attack Rhodes before dawn.

Unless they surprise the city they may fail, and they know it. Make them think you have retreated, and hold your men about four miles back. As soon as the Turks advance on Rhodes, follow them as closely as you can in safety, you can then fall on their rear as soon as the attack begins on the city."

"Why not engage them until dawn, sending a courier by the south road to raise the city?"

"A better plan if you can hold this position; but can you? Remember they are regulars, and outnumber your volunteers two to one."

"You are right, they can flank us and crush my men between them. We might sacrifice the army to delay the attack on the city, but they will need us at Rhodes later. I accept your plan."

"One other point: send another courier by the sea road on the north, the Turks will throw out scouts in every direction in anticipation of just this. One man may get through — by a miracle."

"It shall be done."

"Good. Give me a horse and let me go by the north road. I can find the way."


"You will perhaps be throwing away your life."

"Mine as well as another's and a more valuable."

In a few moments Northrop was dashing down the road to get beyond the right flank of the enemy. As he glanced back before plunging into the forest he saw the unwilling army already in retreat towards

him, although the firing was still continuous at the front, and the clouds of smoke that rose above the trees were tinged with a fitful flare. Close at his right the skirmish line of the loyalists was holding the enemy's right wing in play, and bullets zipped constantly over his head, or buried themselves in the branches of the trees. General Hay had given him a nervy little horse, and when he at last emerged from the thick undergrowth into the wheatfields, and found himself astride the little beast, he felt a thrill of exultation. This sort of thing was more to his liking than chafing on the narrow decks of an iron-clad or leading his men on foot through tortuous streets.

He struck across the sloping fields about a half mile below the course he had taken to join the loyalists. Above him the Turks were pressing on towards the skirmish line of the Greeks. This was a good sign: he would have a fine start, and if he met no obstacle, he could reach the city at least two hours before the Turks. If he remembered the maps he had studied on the *Isigoné* it was about eight miles down the hills to the sea road, and sixteen to the city. Allowing an hour and a half to the road, and a little less for the sixteen miles of fine highway, he would reach Rhodes at four o'clock. That would be late, but the Turks could not cover the twelve miles in less than the same amount of time, even if they started now, and he could trust Hay to hold them in play for an hour.



Still — why could he not save the rough descent through the orchards by striking for the upper road ahead of the Turks: they were engaged just now anyway.

In a moment he had reined to the right and was galloping up the slope towards the highway, crossing in his path the very spot where he had made his fortunate escape.

He reached the hard road, and was soon galloping down to the city, the dull rattle of the action behind him. It was now one o'clock: in an hour he would be in Rhodes. Luck was with him. He plunged on in the darkness, but in ten minutes he pulled up sharply. What was that ahead? He strained his eyes in vain, but his ears told him that a big body of men was marching on in front. What was all this? In a moment he knew. The Turks had divided, leaving a small detachment to engage the Greeks and mask their own advance. It was the Moslem army before him. Here was another crisis: he *must* pass it! But how? He could take to the fields, but it was very dark, he could scarcely help losing his way in this region he knew only from maps. And to ride at a gallop through utterly unknown country, on a strange horse, in perfect blackness! — no, it would not do. He cudgelled his brain while he rode on cautiously, dogging the rear of the enemy. Suddenly his horse reared and swerved to one side: looking down Nor-

throp saw the body of a Turkish soldier huddled in the midst of the road. A man dropped out of the ranks, wounded probably. Then a plan flashed over him: he leaped from his horse and knelt beside the soldier. Yes, he was dead, or unconscious, and without a moment's delay Northrop stripped off the man's coat and fez, rubbed his own face with dirt from the road, and leaping into the saddle went galloping at full speed towards the Turkish force — a courier from the rear to Achmet Pasha.

In one of his pockets he found an old letter, and with this in his teeth he dashed boldly up to the rear guard.

“Achmet Pasha!” he cried through his shut teeth, and then with his heart in his mouth made a try at the countersign which he had already heard and made a mental note of. It was evidently satisfactory for the sergeant pointed forward and said something quite unintelligible. Northrop nodded and rode fiercely on, between the lines of marching men and the high cactus hedges. The column seemed interminable. Where were Achmet and his staff? Would the advance guard be before him, or would he ride in front, with only scouts ahead? In the former case he, himself, must break for the fields, and he measured the hedges with the corner of his eye.

He passed the main column, caught up with the advance guard, rushed by, and saw before him the

group of horses of the staff. He pressed forward towards the tall figure he recognized as Achmet, saluted and held out the letter.

The general stared at him, took the note and opened it, but it was too dark to see, and he said something, evidently asking for a light. At that instant Northrop jabbed the point of his sword into his horse's flank, for he had no spurs, and the animal, with a snort of pain, leaped on into the night.

The surprise was complete, and Northrop reached the line of scouts before bullets whizzed after him. In a flash he was in the midst of the men, taking them utterly unawares. His sword whirled from side to side, his savage little horse yelled like a demon. The men fell back in dismay, bewildered by this extraordinary onslaught apparently from the heart of their own troops. In a moment he was through, and the road lay clear before him. He stretched out along his horse's back, for the rifles were cracking behind, and rode for life and the Queen.

Before him the sky was already turning pale above the hilly road. The air was cold, and sweet with the morning breath of orange blossoms. One by one the stars faded as the silver light before him grew brighter and more distinct. He could see the road now, unwinding itself like a pale river before him. His horse was a hero, and already the advancing army was left behind, for there was none to pursue him but the

staff, and even there the horses were few enough.

Three o'clock: and the light in the east was clear before him. Rhodes could be less than three miles away, and already he began to pass white villas in their rank and luxuriant gardens. He met no one, saw no sign of life, though here and there smoking ruins showed that the Turkish garrison had fled by this very road, wrecking its impotent wrath on the estates of the loyalists in its headlong flight.

Dark on the silver sky the domes and towers of Rhodes began to lift themselves, and Northrop threw away his fez and coat for now he was in loyal territory.

Still running gallantly, the little horse topped the last hill above the city, and Northrop caught his breath at the beauty of the vision. Terrace below terrace, Rhodes fell away beyond him down to the great pavement of purple sea that rose black to the arc of silver in the deep sky. The towers and domes and delicate palms were silhouetted on the unearthly light, and just over the great tower of the Castello a little cloud seemed to rest, already lightening with pale gold.

Well content with his ride, he started down the wide street beside the white colonnade of the Tragic Theatre. A sentry barred his way, and men rose quickly out of the twilight. It was not hard for Northrop to convince them of his identity, and after tell-

ing them to spread word of the coming attack, and ascertaining from them the whereabouts of the Commander-in-Chief, he pressed on into the city.

He had thought once he should never see it again, and he knew now that already he loved it; looked on it as *his* city. The violent action of the night had washed his brain and he felt a man again. By and by he would think once more: now, thank God, he could act.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SIEGE OF RHODES

AN hour later, just as the sun left the edge of the sea, the Turkish army, fatally delayed by the encounter with the troops from Monolithos, came down over the hills and made a dash for the Avenue de Lusignan. They found themselves halted by an impromptu barricade of earth and paving stones, and the fierce fire of the gatling guns that shattered their front ranks disabused their minds of any hope of a surprise. The city was not to be taken with a rush, and after the first attempt the troops were drawn back and preparations made for a carefully planned assault.

Northrop had found the Marquis of Calche in the Castello at the auberge of the French Knights, which he had made his headquarters. He had issued orders for the preparation of such defences as were possible, even before Northrop had finished giving his information. The force at his disposal was numerous, but desperately deficient in training. The stock of arms and ammunition was more than adequate, and most of it was fortunately of a kind the Greeks perfectly understood.

During the preceding day a start had been made

at the labor of landing the stock of arms on the *Isigoné*, but at the time of Northrop's return most of this had not left the quay. The machine and light field guns were all available, but the heavier ordnance was useless. The two forts — St. Stephen and the Castello battery — were in good condition, but only the former was of use against a land attack.

By the time the Turks put in an appearance, the principal streets leading to the heights had been barricaded, and the Marquis' stock of light guns made it possible to arm them and make them really formidable. In order to obtain an effective force to oppose to the Moslems, Calche had reduced the garrison at St. Stephen and in the Castello to the smallest dimensions. Even so, he could only count on about eighteen hundred men, fifteen hundred of whom were volunteers, though perhaps a third of the latter had served with the colors before the revolt. With time he could have organized and armed ten thousand troops, but the attack had been amazingly sudden, and now he could only send through the city, rousing the men and ordering them to come to the Castello for arms and ammunition. In the upper stories and on the roofs of the houses this aid might be very useful if he could hold back the Turks for an hour or two.

Northrop believed that the loyalist army would cut its way through the detachment of Turks and

advance to the relief of the city. There was only one doubt: that General Hay might not discover the ruse played on him, but content himself with holding the enemy in play under the impression that he was detaining the entire army.

In any case, the Turks must be held in check as long as possible: outside the city if it could be done, but in any case outside the Castello. This latter chance seemed good, for to Northrop's knowledge, the Turks had no siege guns, and against infantry the castle was practically impregnable. Twice the number of Turks in the field could not capture St. Stephen, and the range of its guns cut off all chance of any attack on the city from the point or from the quays. No army could pass either side of the fort, and the Castello stretched right across the tongue of land, from the water on the east to within a half mile of St. Stephen. The only assault could be made from the heights through the new town, and here the volunteer troops were placed behind the breastworks in each street.

Simultaneously with the building of the first barricades, work had commenced on second and third lines of defence in each street, and twenty minutes after Northrop reached Calche, men, women and children were toiling in the early dawn, tearing up paving stones, digging trenches and raising thick breastworks. If any barricade was carried the men

were to retreat, with the machine guns, to the next line, and so fall back on the Castello, where as a last resort, all the defenders were to rendezvous, and where already the women and children were gathering to be safe from the unspeakable cutthroats, the nature of whose atrocities they already knew too well.

Northrop had assumed command of the Guard he had so madly deserted, and now held them inside the first line of defence, in the long, curving Street of Ionia that stretched just behind the barricades, ready to give what aid was possible at any weak spot.

When he reached the defences with his little squad, just after the repulse of the first assault, he found a curious scene. At the entrance to the seven streets that opened out of the wide avenue between the water on the east and the west cliff, were heavy breastworks, and behind them were the guns and the detachments of volunteers, the latter all well armed and utterly fearless now that they were fighting for their wives and children as well as for their sovereign. At every moment men were running into the avenue from the lower city, newly armed from the Marquis' stores, and as fast as they arrived they were formed into companies by the Duke of Kalathos who had command of the forces. The avenue formed an excellent line of defence, for the villas which lined it on both sides stood each in its high walled garden, and as fast as possible they were occupied by small com-

panies of men who cut rough loopholes in the thick walls, and in comparative safety picked off every Turk that came within range. It was by no means an impregnable line, but it served well against a force which was without artillery, save perhaps two batteries of light field guns.

The marines from the *Isigoné* officered the recruits, and they were a motley force; none in uniform, but armed just as they had come from their homes at the alarm that had rung through the city. Every face was tense with excitement and desperate devotion, and the officers had hard work to keep the patriots from recklessly exposing themselves, by leaping the barricades to die madly in futile assaults on the Turkish army, now withdrawn behind the many villas.

Every now and then, with a rattle and a rush, a new gun would hurry up from the quay and lumber into position. Beyond the barricades, smoke was rising from the villas the Turks were burning and looting. From Fort St. Stephen came the roar of the big guns as the garrison tried to get the range of the Moslems: the distance was too short, and the intervening space too encumbered with public buildings and dwellings to make very effective work possible however.

The avenue was filling fast: if the enemy held off a little longer the Marquis would have a respectable

force as far as numbers and valor were concerned. Northrop had drawn the Queen's Guard into the Avenue de Lusignan, midway the line of defences, and all ready for the assault that could not be delayed much longer. All his old martial spirit had come back: he hungered for action.

Suddenly he heard a burst of cheering, and looking back saw a strange sight. It was a new body of recruits, but somewhat different from the others. At the head strode a man of gigantic stature, clothed in a long robe, his grizzled beard covering his chest from shoulder to shoulder and reaching halfway to his waist. Three great gold crosses shone on his breast, on his head was the black, rimless hat of the Greek priests, beneath which long white hair fell on his shoulders. It was the Patriarch of Rhodes, a sword buckled around his waist and a rifle in his hand. Behind him pressed a crowd of priests and monks in all manner of vestments and habits, a huge embroidered banner flaunting above them, and a rifle in every man's hand.

Hardly had they passed when another roar of shouts drew Northrop's attention, and he caught his breath with astonishment and dismay. The street was blocked with a surging crowd, and in the midst, astride a great horse — the Queen! In a flash he had swung his men around and had galloped into the crowd of shouting Greeks that opened before him.

He reached the Queen's side. Isigoné spoke first.

"Is everything well thus far? Have the barricades broken at any point?"

"Everything is well. Why are you here?"

"Where else could I be? These are my people. I am with them in life or death."

"There is great danger."

"I am no coward — as you should know."

"But if anything happens to you the cause is lost."

The Queen flashed her blazing eyes on Northrop until he was compelled to meet their glance. Was this the face that had lightened to him in the glimmering dusk; this? It was impossible. The Queen straightened in the saddle.

"No harm can come to me until Rhodes is free. I am the sword of God, and in His hand I am the weapon that liberates His children. I cannot die!"

In his heart Northrop half believed this. "In any case recklessness would be a crime," he said in a low voice. "If you insist on remaining at the front I must go with you, with these men who are your guard."

"I consent to that. Let us go on."

Together, with the men following close, they rode from one end of the street to the other, while the smoke drifted in clouds about them, the shells from St. Stephen whistled overhead or burst beyond with a rending crash; while the sun rose higher and higher,

turning the sea into sparkling sapphire, and glowing on the white and gilded domes and towers of the magical city. At every barricade the Queen spoke to the men, cheering them, exhorting them, and they in their turn shouted in loyal devotion, thronging around the splendid figure on the big horse, that they might touch the hem of her garment.

They were returning to the Avenue de Lusignan when the long delayed attack began. There was a yell from the enemy's line, and from the de Lusignan barricade the gatlings opened fire with their whirring chatter. Instantly the Queen was galloping towards the action. Northrop caught his breath.

"For God's sake, what are you doing?"

"Let go your hand! Once for all I am Queen — today. You will follow me, not question me!"

In a moment they were in the midst of the men. Standing in her stirrups, a sword flashing in her hand, the Queen shouted like an Amazon. At the sound of her voice the Greeks seemed turned into devils, and though a thousand men hurled themselves on their scant hundred, they held them back. Reinforcements were coming from every direction, and though twice the Greeks were beaten back into the avenue, they rallied each time, and with the aid of the reinforcements drove the Turks back across the barricades, losing no guns. At the second charge the Queen burst from Northrop's side and dashed into the thick

of the fight. He was after her at a gallop, but not until the barricades were taken again could he reach her.

At that moment firing began at the foot of the avenue towards the sea, and then on the heights to the west. It was an attack all along the line and the barricades must give way somewhere. The Duke commanded the left wing, Grosvenor the right, while the Marquis held the centre. Where would the break come? The question was answered at once, for the Greeks came rolling up the hill in a cloud of smoke.

Whirling his available guns into position across the avenue just below where it was intersected by the Avenue de Lusignan, the Marquis waited. The instant the Greeks of the reserve and the three east batteries were behind him, he opened on the solid mass of Turks, and for a moment the gatlings held them back. He tried in vain to crush them, but they fought well, though from every cross-street the Rhodians were attacking them savagely. The western barricades still resisted: how long this would hold good was a question. The line was hopelessly broken, however. They must retreat behind the second line, shorter to hold, and easier because of the closeness of the houses.

For a moment there was breathing space, and the Marquis rode up to the Queen.

"It is impossible for us to withstand this force. I shall order the retreat to the Castello."

The Queen's eyes flashed. "It breaks my heart to do that, but you must judge. Save the lives of my people if you can, but save the State in any case."

An hour later the Castello, already thronged with women and children, was crowded. Nearly all the population of the city was packed within the high walls. One by one, the detachments of men had been withdrawn from the barricades, and at last, shortly after noon, the Marquis fought his way back to the gates with the last hundred of his men and the guns of their battery. The city to the south of the castle was in the hands of the Turks, but the Castello was still safe, and St. Stephen, while the commercial town on the point was secure for a time, protected as it was by the castle and the fort.

As for the Castello, it was almost an ideal citadel, nearly impregnable except against modern heavy artillery, and this the Turks did not possess. In shape it was an irregular square surrounded by mediæval walls breaking out into bastions towards the north. Four gates only gave ingress, one on each side, and these were all well defended by towers or bastions where light guns could be mounted readily. It was indeed, a small town in itself, with walls nearly two miles in circuit, and with streets, storehouses and dwellings as well as the battery and the palace, and the old Cathedral of St. John.

Outside the walls, on the south, the houses had

been cleared away before the revolt, and a wide street stretched from the watergate to the bastion opposite Fort St. Stephen. On the north the Garden of Constantine intervened between the castle and the commercial town. A subterranean passage communicated with Fort St. Stephen, and another descended to the customhouse on the quay. From an enemy such as that which confronted them, the refugees had little to fear, and since the stock of provisions in the Castello was very large and included one of the big State granaries, it was possible to look forward to a siege with comparative equanimity. Not that this possibility seemed very near. Calche felt sure that he could crush the invaders as soon as he had organized the crowd of men now within the walls, and if he could keep the enemy from penetrating the commercial town, or capturing the *Isigoné*, he felt confident of ultimate success, even if the army of Monolithos did not come to his relief, as it was almost certain to do.

CHAPTER XXV

A VEIL IS TORN AWAY

ALL the afternoon there was a little desultory firing around the walls, the Turks trying the effect of the captured two-pounders and gatlings on the gates. This attack only resulted in the loss of men, and towards sunset there was complete silence. The experiments of the Moslems had not hindered the carrying on of the measures of defence, and until nightfall the Castello was a scene of turmoil. Men arming and being formed into troops, the refugees seeking temporary quarters in the *auberges* and dwellings of the Citadel, the rattle of guns as they were hoisted into position on the walls, all the din and confusion of a fortress unexpectedly assaulted.

As commander of the Queen's Guard, Northrop had been assigned to the palace, with his guard and two hundred of the volunteers, and it was not until sunset, when he had organized his force of men, and realized that at last he could rest, that he thought of Dorothy. All day he had been possessed with the madness of fight, and he had thought of nothing else. Twice indeed he had asked for Dorothy, once when he reached the city after his ride through the night, once when the last man entered the Castello from the

retreat through the city. Each time he had been assured of her safety, and that was enough. *Was* it enough though? He cringed with shame, and setting his teeth, started for the part of the palace that had been turned into an hospital, for his instinct told him that here he would find the girl he sought.

He was quite right, and when at last he saw her kneeling beside one of the improvised cots on the floor, he could hardly speak as he looked down at the little brown head bending before him. Dorothy felt his gaze and jumped up with a low cry.

"Jack, my dear!"

She stood with her hands on his shoulders looking up at him with glad eyes and lips that trembled a little, and as he gazed into her frank, bright face, and saw the depths of her eyes welling with perfect love that was unashamed, he felt a great ache in his heart, and his eyes fell. And he had forgotten this girl who was all that was true, and strong, and good! Forgotten her: and for what? He stood silent for a little, and then looked up with tired, lifeless eyes.

"Forgive me. I think I have been quite mad, or else asleep, for forty-eight hours. But I have been fighting."

"Of course you could not come, you dear, brave boy. I know that, and I knew too that nothing would happen to you. I haven't been anxious a bit. Besides I have been busy: this has been a hospital

you know, since yesterday morning. I have been helping the Queen. *Jack*, she is an angel! When she hasn't been working over the details of the reorganization of the government, or with the troops, as she has been today, she has been here, nursing the men like the rest of us. And she always knows just what to do! I love that girl more and more, and if the whole dream is shattered, I really shall be quite content to die here, for we can die with her, and that won't be very hard, will it, *Jack*?"

Northrop felt each word burn into him like a white-hot dagger.

"It will not come to that," he said in a dull voice, "we can crush this army in twenty-four hours."

"Can we? and free the island? Then all is well. And now I am going to take *you* as a patient, for you need me badly. You must be dead with fatigue and want of sleep. Aren't you? Oh, and I must know what has happened to you since that awful night here in the Castello — it was only night before last. It seems a month!"

She gave a word or two of instructions to one of the nurses, a Greek, evidently of high social rank in the island, stopped to speak softly to a young fellow who was tossing feverishly on a mattress, and then taking Northrop by the hand, led him to the little terrace over the bastion of St. Michael where they could look out over the deserted lower town

and across the darkening sea, to where the mountains of Lycia lay like crumpled rose leaves on the edge of the water.

They talked for a long time, while the night crept in from the sea and the city grew perfectly still. It was almost impossible for Northrop to look at the girl, and he spoke with lowered eyes, slowly and constrainedly. He could not explain his wild flight from the city after the battle in the night: he could only excuse it as the result of the madness of battle. And Dorothy believed him; he felt that, and his shame choked him. He was playing a part, they could never be on the old footing again, a thing had come between them that cut them apart forever. And Dorothy knew nothing of this! To her he was the same man he had been when he fought for her life in the boat of the *Fleur de Lys*, only now — he knew it — in her eyes he was the more a hero, in that he had fought bravely, done deeds of daring that, more than any others, perhaps, had worked for the salvation of the island — if saved it should prove to be.

Once he broached the subject of a return to America, and the girl stared at him in deep surprise. She could not understand his idea. Go now, now when the work was half done, now when the Queen and the Rhodian people were becoming so dear to them both?

“Why, Jack!” she cried, “I was just beginning to

feel that this was more my country than any other! I, who have done nothing. How can you want to cut all the ties that bind us so close to these dear people, when every blow you have struck must have drawn you closer to the nation for whom you were fighting? Besides, we are prisoners just now, we *can't go.*"

Northrop laughed in a dull and mirthless way. "Of course you are right. We can't, but the moment it is possible we must go. Believe what I say, for I know of what I am speaking. This is no place for us."

A little later the Queen came to the terrace with two of her women. She started slightly as she recognized the two figures in the shadow, but she sent her women away and came forward slowly as Dorothy and Northrop rose to meet her. When she spoke there was almost a tremor in her voice, and Northrop shuddered instinctively.

"Are you resting, Dorothy, and you, Count Villaret, after the wonderful things you have done this day? I cannot wonder. You are a hero, an agent of God. It seems that Rhodes is to be overwhelmed by the debts you are placing on her. Can you not leave something for the Marquis, and for my own people?"

Northrop moistened his lips to speak, but the words would not come. The cool, friendly voice of

the Queen staggered him. Dorothy relieved him for a moment from his embarrassment.

"Madame," she said, "long ago — almost two weeks — on the deck of the *Isigoné*, both Mr. Northrop and I swore allegiance to the Queen we had never seen before. If you knew Jack as well as I do, you would see that there is nothing else he could do — if he would — but fight for you with his last breath. That is the way he does things you know."

The Queen spoke very softly: they could hardly hear the words that seemed more like an audible thought than a question, "Is he then so faithful, faithful even to death?"

"Even to death. And my own will is strong to that end, though I can do nothing. But, Madame, we are alike in our absolute love and devotion to you, and we could both die in perfect content if it were for you."

Isigoné's voice was thrilled with emotion as she said, "But how could this be? What have I done, what am I, to win so instantly the love of you two great hearts?"

Dorothy rose swiftly and knelt before the Queen, looking up into her twilight hidden face. "Does it matter how this has come? The fact remains, and I can't restrain the impulse that drives me to say that from my soul I believe you are the greatest Queen and the noblest, truest woman in all the world."

The Queen bent over the kneeling girl and took

her face between her hands, kissing her lips. "And you," she said, with a voice that was almost broken with a little sob, "you are more to me than my own people. I love you, Dorothy. Be my sister, for I am very lonely. You don't know the sorrow of being a reigning monarch. It is the most beautiful thing in the world to be a woman, and that a Queen must put away when her head is bent with the weight of a crown — even a little one like mine!" And she laughed softly. "It is only now and then, at night perhaps, when all the woman comes back and the monarch is forgotten, it is only then that I can really live and then — then —"

She paused with a little indrawn breath, and Dorothy felt a tear splash on her hands where they lay between those of the Queen. She bent and kissed it away, and Isigoné went on very suddenly: —

"Stay with me, don't go away when we are free again. You and M. de Villaret are a kind of link that holds me to humanity. Stay with me! Let this be your country, your home. You can ask for nothing I will not give you, and — the Count knows the same is true in his case. We will all work together, and with the generous aid of that great-hearted Calche, we will change this devastated island into an Eden. And then — by and by you will love some one of my Court, and so you will be tied even more closely to this island, though no more closely to me!"

Dorothy laughed up at the Queen with perfect trust and confidence.

"Ah!" she cried, "but that is settled already!"

Northrop sat dull and motionless. It was come at last; but what did it matter? Would it not be a relief to feel that he was no longer a perjurer and a traitor masquerading under a fair disguise he, himself, had not the power to cast off? Yes: and he waited, still and numb, for the crash that was to sweep him out of life, away from all he cared for on earth.

"What, so soon?" and Isigoné drew the girl's face nearer to hers. "Who is it, then, that is so infinitely happy?"

"Don't you know? Has no one told you? But who should? Why should you busy your great soul with us poor servants? May I tell her, Jack? May I? — How still you are, why don't you speak? Yes?— Why, Madame, it is Jack of course — Mr. Northrop, Count Villaret, though I can't think of him under that title. Who else *could* it be?"

A night-bird whirred by them in the dusk. Again the scent of heavy flowers was in the still air, as before. The palm branches rustled delicately below in the Garden of Constantine. But it was very still: like the stillness that will come on earth when the night falls on the Day of Judgment. Nothing mattered much now, but Northrop wished it might be over. The rest seemed a kind of formality, like the

pronouncing of sentence after the verdict was declared. He wanted to go away somewhere and end it all. Well, there was time for that. There first must be an interval of chaos and ghastly horror.

“Why do you not speak, Madame?” said Dorothy shyly. “Are you not pleased? How could it be otherwise? We have loved each other for very long — longer even than Jack knows — and we found it out that night in the storm that sent us to the *Isigoné* — and to you!”

Again there was a long, noiseless pause, but when the Queen spoke it was in an unchanged voice, and she still held the girl’s hands, though more closely. “I did not know this, it was my fault. Forgive me.”

She rose, tall and straight, and the stars in the deep sky glittered around her royal head, a coruscation of splendor.

“I am going in now, for I am tired; more tired and weary and sorrowful than you can ever know, little girl. You also must be very weary, so you need not attend me. Good night.”

She was gone; walking slowly but without a tremor. Dorothy followed in spite of the Queen’s wish, and Northrop still sat by the parapet wall, motionless. His eyes were fixed on the glow worms down in the Garden of Constantine, and he counted them slowly. It vexed him that they should shine so fitfully, it made them so hard to count.

CHAPTER XXVI

FINIS CORONAT OPUS

THE sun swam up out of the purple sea, and still Northrop sat gazing out across the Garden of Constantine where the thin morning mists, flushed with the bloom of sunrise, drifted through the awakening trees. It seemed much easier to sit thus while the hours dragged haltingly onward, one after the other, than to take any active part in life. Indeed, he felt almost that he had nothing to do with it anyway! He was out of the thing, and that ended it. Now and then in a whimsical, half curious way, he thought of himself as he had been a month before, and then of the utter ruin and chaos that had taken the place of his former vigor and stability. It was almost a pity—but then, after all, it didn't matter.

Out where the sea mists drifted along the waves, two ships were steaming in towards Rhodes. He watched them carelessly, wondering in a dull sort of way who they were, and what they were for. They ploughed along until they were about three miles off, and then stopped. A string of signals ran up to the mast-head of the leader, and he looked across to the Battery tower to see if they were answered. Only the great banner of Rhodes fluttered in the light wind,

but men were clustered on the ramparts, and running about in a strange sort of fashion. A gun banged from the enemy's lines, away on the heights to the south, and then a great cloud of black smoke burst from the forward ship, and as the report of the discharge boomed over the sea, a crash shook the Castello, and an answering cloud from a bursting shell leaped into the air from the commercial town on the point.

Northrop sat still, trying to reason the matter out. What was it all about, anyway? A thunderclap echoed from the direction of Fort St. Stephen, and a jet of foam spurting into the air forward of the two strangers, followed by smaller spots of white in a long line across the waves, showed that it was war again.

He rose wearily to his feet. "Can't they let me alone?" he thought peevishly. "Can I never drop quietly out of this hell — into that other where I can act a more passive part?" He stumbled off stiffly towards his command: blind, like a man just awakened from heavy sleep. The sight of his men pulled him together a little, and after a few instructions to his lieutenant, he started to find Calche, to report for orders.

The Castello was in a tumult: armed men were hurrying in every direction, small parties of volunteer troops were marching rapidly through the tortuous streets, women and children were rushing

hither and thither in blind panic. Every now and then came the dull roar of guns from the ships, and the answering thunder from the fort, with the racking crash of a battery gun, now in action. Once a shell burst high overhead and a fragment of metal buried itself deep in the ground beside him. As he entered the battery gate, a rattle of rifles and small guns burst out on the city side, and the one-pounders of the garrison cracked in instant reply.

The Marquis was on the platform of the battery, his face white and his teeth set as, with Kalathos and a group of other officers around him, he stared out towards the enemy's ships, moving now in the shape of a great figure eight, firing steadily, now with the starboard, now with the port guns. Northrop waited until the Marquis turned, and then saluting, asked for instructions. Calche spoke quickly and clearly.

"This is the final ordeal. Passed, we are free. The Queen is in your charge. Guard her. The Turks haven't our range yet, and there is no danger here. If shell fall in the Castello, take the Queen through the underground way to the fort. Keep her under cover. How many men have you?"

"Eighty-four of the guard and two hundred and six armed volunteers."

"Do you need more?"

"Not unless the Turks enter the Castello, not then if the Queen will go to St. Stephen."

“You will take her there if, in your judgment, it is better. Under no circumstances is she to leave the palace except to go to the fort.”

Order had been restored inside the walls when Northrop left the battery and entered the Street of the Knights. The terror-stricken refugees had been confined in the houses of the Castello, and the defence of each gate had been completed. The attack from the land would mean nothing, and as yet no shell fell inside the walls. The arrival of the two ships did not seem a great danger. They were probably those that had convoyed the transports that landed the troops down on the west shore. They could be nothing but cruisers at best, and the fort and the battery ought to be able to take charge of them. Northrop felt that the situation was not necessarily serious, and he hurried on to the palace to look out for the Queen. As he slowly ascended the worn stone steps to the royal apartments, the Queen herself met him at the head of the stairs.

“Where is the Marquis?” she asked sharply.

“I will send for him if your Majesty wishes.”

“No, I will go myself.”

“Pardon me, your Majesty, but that is impossible.”

The Queen stared coldly. “What do you mean, Sir?”

“The Marquis has placed the Royal Guard here

in the palace for your Majesty's protection: it is his order that you should not venture your life outside, but that you should allow me to guard you and conduct you to the fort should shell fall in the Castello."

The Queen clutched the tapestry on the wall beside her, and stared down at Northrop on the steps below, her face white, her eyes narrow and almost savage.

"You are insolent, M. le Comte," she said in a low voice. "I am Queen, and I reign still, unless I am mistaken. You may send a lieutenant with a detachment of men with me, for I shall go to the Marquis, *now!*"

She came down the steps, a splendid fury, but Northrop did not move: he met her glance quietly and coldly. "Your Majesty," he said, "I am under orders. The Marquis is acting for love of you and the good of the State. It is useless to go down. You cannot leave the palace unless you let me conduct you to the fort."

For a moment they stood thus, face to face, gazing into each other's eyes in deliberate defiance: fierce and tigerish on the one side, cold and unmoved on the other. Outside was the muffled thunder of battle and a thin smell of powder hung in the air. Presently the Queen turned silently, and without a word ascended the stairs and disappeared.

As Northrop was traversing the arcade of the

second story of the courtyard, he came face to face with Dorothy. Her bright hair was in golden disorder, and her lips were white, while her eyes seemed strangely large and dark. She smiled bravely as she clasped her hands on his breast.

"I am going to the Queen," she said simply, "she has sent for me. Can you tell me in a word what all this means?"

"Nothing fatal, it is simply a part of the Turkish attack; the ships are only to back up the assault of the army. We can sink them by noon, and by that time General Hay should be here."

"Then there is no danger?"

"None that is immediate. If the Turks get our range enough to drop shell in here, we must go to the fort. You will be with the Queen?"

"Of course."

"I will come for you if there is danger."

"And you will be careful?"

"No, but it will make no difference."

He went on his way, and after looking to his men who were placed as advantageously as possible in the court, with a machine gun at the main gate, he went up to the top of the Jerusalem tower to note the condition of matters and the marksmanship of the Turks. To all appearances it seemed better than that of the gunners in the fort and the battery. No harm seemed to have come to the ships as yet, though the

loyalist guns were firing steadily. On the other hand, shells were screaming close over the city, though the heavy old fortifications towards the north effectually shielded all but the domes and towers and the upper part of the palace. The city on the terraces to the south was suffering badly, however, as he could see whenever the smoke of the firing under the walls broke sufficiently. A shell shrieked by him, buried itself in the campanile of the old cathedral, and exploding, sent the bricks and stone crashing down on the roofs below. Clearly the palace was no longer safe, and he turned to descend that he might take the Queen to the fort, by force if necessary.

At that moment a rending explosion thundered from the battery and it vanished in smoke. Northrop clutched the stone battlements, leaning out far and straining his eyes to penetrate the dense cloud that slowly drifted towards him. The firing from the battery had ceased. Was it demolished? A shell had struck and exploded, but with what results? The Marquis was there, and Kalathos, and many other officers. Were they involved in the general ruin? He waited long enough to see the wreck of the battery appear through the smoke, realized that it had been hopelessly disabled, and that only the fort remained for defence, and then leaped down the winding stairs to find the Queen. The palace was now out of the question: at any moment a second shell might pene-

trate its walls and repeat the devastation he had just witnessed in the battery. The Queen must go to St. Stephen, and instantly! He ran through the presence chamber, and entering the private apartments sought through one after the other for Isigoné.

At last he found her, pacing swiftly up and down, her hands clutched, and her face very white. Dorothy was standing helplessly, watching the Queen with keen distress. Northrop did not notice her, but walked straight to Isigoné.

"Come!" he said shortly. "We are no longer safe here. The Turks have got our range, and already a shell has fallen in the battery. Another may burst here at any moment."

"I shall remain here."

Northrop strode up to her and, regardless of everything, seized her clenched hand in his. "Listen!" he said softly. "This is the madness of a child: it is utterly unworthy, both of a Queen and of Isigoné. There is no man in the castle who would not allow himself to be blown from the mouth of any cannon in St. Stephen if it would gratify you or aid your cause. Now it is different. In you are concentrated all the nationality of Rhodes. You are the last of the royal line. To stay here is not suicide, but murder! The lives of all your people are in your hand. Will you sacrifice them for a wilful whim?"

Isigoné wrenched herself away, and stared at him.

"I do not know why I have covered you with honors, why I have voluntarily placed myself beneath your feet, why I have given you what I have never given before, if it is for this. You presume too much on a sudden madness that led me to — words are out of the question. Leave me, *now!* When this thing is over I will remember you — if I have still any men who respect me enough to obey me. Do you hear me? I order you to leave this room!"

Northrop turned a little. "Dorothy, for God's sake say something to make the Queen see reason. If not — "

"Well, if not?" and Isigoné drew herself up with all the pride of a Queen of France.

" — I shall be compelled to convey your Majesty to the fort by force."

There was a moment of silence but for the roar of artillery and the crash of exploding shells that caused the fabric of the palace to shiver as in an earthquake. Before the Queen spoke the Marquis entered and hurried to her side.

"A shell has wrecked the battery, disabling all but one of the guns and killing our best gunners. I have just received word that the ammunition at St. Stephen is nearly exhausted. One of the ships is unharmed, the other is, I think, sinking, though she is still in action. There is but one chance of life, and I shall take it. Unless we can sink the enemy's ships

all is lost. I shall bring the *Isigoné* against them. She is shattered and liable to go down at one well-placed shot, but I must take the risk. I may succeed. If not, I shall die for one for whom I only long to give my life. If I do not return, I beg you to let Count Villaret take my place. Good-bye!"

He fell on his knees before the Queen, kissing her hand, then leaped up and strode down the long room towards the door. *Isigoné* stood motionless for a moment, and then ran swiftly after him, seizing his arm.

"No, no," she cried, "not that, it is death for you!"

"It must be!"

"Is there no other way?"

"There is no other way. Do not question this. I shall come back victorious, or I shall go down with my ship — victorious also, for I swear before God and before you, *Isigoné*, whom I love not only as my sovereign, but as my child — I swear I will not die until the ships have sunk beneath the sea. Once more, God bless you — and good-bye."


The tapestry closed behind him, and the Queen stood quite still, her hands clasped over her eyes. Northrop turned and spoke softly to Dorothy.

"Make her promise to go to the fort, you can do it now. It may be it will prove safer to stay here if the ammunition at St. Stephen is really exhausted. I will go and find out."

The situation in the Castello was unchanged when Northrop came down into the streets. He had sent an orderly through the underground way to find out just how matters stood at the fort, and while waiting for his return he went rapidly through the castle, satisfying himself that the defences were in good order and well manned, and that the fire from the ships was doing as yet little damage within the walls. Outside, the enemy were in force among the houses across the boulevard, but their fire was comparatively harmless, and unless they could destroy one of the gates there was little danger to be feared from them.

The report from St. Stephen was not encouraging. The ammunition for the big guns was practically exhausted. The supply for the secondary battery was adequate, and the works were of course impregnable, so far as the land force of the enemy was concerned. On the other hand, the fort was the special target of the ships now that the Castello battery was silenced, and since he had been in the streets, not a shell, so far as he could tell, had fallen within the walls. He returned to the Queen, almost convinced that the palace was the safest refuge after all.

When he entered the presence chamber, the Queen and Dorothy were crowded in one of the windows overlooking the sea, Isigoné standing rigidly, her hands clenched at her sides, Dorothy kneeling on



the wide ledge staring out over the roofs and treetops below.

Creeping slowly along, still hidden from the enemy by the commercial town, was the *Isigoné*. Breathlessly they watched her advance, slowly and painfully. In spite of the fact that she had discharged all her munitions of war, she lay low in the water, her bows rising dangerously high. Inch by inch she crept along, and finally vanished behind the storehouses. The Queen caught her breath.


"I must see!" she cried, "this is stifling! To the Jerusalem tower! Come!"

She sped away, and Northrop and Dorothy followed her up the winding stone steps of the tower Northrop had descended only a little while ago. They reached the top, and came out on the broad platform. Overhead was a sky of unfathomable blue, beyond lay the still bluer sea, but all around them drifted low clouds of sulphurous smoke, almost hiding the city close below. The *Isigoné* was just rounding the point by the ruins of the pharos; they could see her sliding through the slow-moving smoke. Scarcely was she clear when she opened fire, and white foam flashed into the air around the enemy's ships. For a moment their fire ceased as the guns were trained on this new foe whom they had thought at the bottom of the sea: then they vanished in belching smoke.

Isigoné had caught Northrop by the hand, her left arm was around Dorothy, and breathless, cold with terrible fear and apprehension, the three leaned across the battlements, striving with aching eyes to pierce the eddying smoke. Now and then it would drift away, and they would catch a glimpse of one of the Turkish cruisers, evidently suffering heavily, or of the crippled *Isigoné*, one funnel shot away, lying motionless, but firing regularly, fighting like a dying veteran.

The fort was still active, and after a time one of the ships turned her attention to it, and once more shell began to scream over the city, now and then close even to the tower. In the meantime her consort was steaming down on the *Isigoné*, whose fire was reduced now to that of the secondary battery only, either through the disabling of the turret guns or lack of ammunition.

Then the fire of the light guns ceased, and the Queen's ship lay silent with the Turk bearing down on her. A ghastly fear swept over the three watchers. They dared not look at each other. Was this the end? Was the poor *Isigoné* now nothing but a floating wreck, incapable of movement, of firing? Was she to fall ignominious prey to the advancing Turk? Must they watch thus for the end, helpless on the tower of the castle? Watch with unbeating hearts until the ram of the enemy crushed through the side



of the ship they loved as their lives, and she went down, bearing the man who would have been the saviour of a nation?

So intent were they, watching the steady advance of the destroyer, that they did not hear a sudden explosion behind them nor did they see the cloud of smoke that rose from the South Gate, nor yet the sudden rush of Turkish troops across the boulevard towards the spots where the smoke lifted slowly.

At that moment they saw only the silent *Isigoné* and the rushing Turk bearing down upon her. The ships were scarcely half a mile apart when the *Isigoné* awoke. Several of the guns Northrop had thought silent forever, crashed in quick succession, and at that range there was no missing. Every shell struck home, and when the smoke cleared the Turk was ploughing onward still, but only under the impetus of her rush. Her bow was shattered, and already she was trimming by the head, heeling at the same time to starboard. The *Isigoné* did not fire again, but lay still, waiting. Heeling more and more, the shattered cruiser came at last to a standstill, and then the Queen's ship launched a torpedo that ended the action. The Turk was blotted out by the chaos of water and smoke and spray that surged into the air, and when they saw her again it was for the last time. She was then half submerged, and in a few moments she rolled slowly towards them and disappeared

in a vast vortex of green water and seething foam.

A yell of exultation burst from Northrop, but it died on his lips. Behind him he heard, at last, the rattle of rifles and the deadly cries of terror and despair that told him that the worst had happened. He sprang to the other side of the tower and stared down into the court. It was black with men, fighting like demons. Pouring in through the gateway was a solid mass of Turks, and the flash of swords, the crackle of rifles, and the cloud of smoke that poured upward, showed only too plainly that the gallant fight of the *Isigoné* was fruitless. The castle was taken! How, he knew not, but there was the fact. He shut his eyes to think. Could he reach the underground passage? The entrance was from the base of the battery tower. If they could gain the second story of the palace they might be able to reach the ramparts and by a miracle get to the battery.

He turned to the Queen. She also had seen, and this new horror piled upon them just when victory seemed assured, had crushed her. She stood silent, holding Dorothy in her arms, nothing now but a weak and defenceless woman, doomed to awful death.

"Follow me!" And Northrop sprang down the stairs. They reached the fourth story, then the third. Below they could not go, for through a stair window they could see the Turks invading the palace like rat-hunters; their footsteps and clanking arms

sounded on the circular stairway below, and in a moment the refugees were climbing again, back to the tower roof, blind with the panic of actual, undeniable fear. Fate was against them: hell had risen up invincible before them, and this was the end. There was no defence possible. The north tower was uninhabited: it was only a series of rooms, one above the other, with a winding stairway on one side, communicating with each floor by a doorless opening. This stair rose above the roof in a low turret to give space for the highest door of all giving on the platform. They could make no defence. They could only wait for death.

Northrop stared around him with haggard eyes when once more they were on the roof. There was no room for doubt. If their refuge were discovered it was only a choice of deaths: at the hands of the Turks, or by their own action, and the latter was preferable. But he would fight to the end, that was sure.

He glanced at Dorothy, standing there white and brave, with the Queen's head buried on her shoulder, and a great sorrow and pity surged over him. All the real love came back with a rush, and he thought only of the girl whose trust he had betrayed. He spoke quickly and very quietly.

"Beloved, I think it is almost over. I have been unworthy of your love. I have been a cad, a scoundrel, and a coward, but death is very close,

and from my soul I love you. Say, 'I forgive you.' "

The girl looked in his face with clear, unfaltering eyes. "I do not understand," she said simply, "but I forgive you, Jack, if you need my forgiveness. Will you see that — we are not made prisoners, Isigoné and I — or shall I jump?"

"Wait until the last moment. If I am not down I will do it. If I can't, you must act. Take the side towards the garden, it is farther down and there are no Turks there."

He kissed her on the eyes and mouth. Isigoné's face lay close, but he did not think of her. Then he gave one last look around. The firing at sea had stopped, and he saw that the second cruiser was sinking. So also was the *Isigoné*, and in his heart he said "Good-bye" to the faithful Villiers. The *Castello* was a hell of shrieks and gunshots, and he knew that a ghastly massacre was running its red course. As his eye swept the outskirts of the city, he saw a mass of troops pouring down from the hills. Then he straightened up with sudden courage.

"Dorothy, the men from *Monolithos* are here: in ten minutes we are saved, and by God! I will hold this tower till then!"

He placed the women in the angle of the turret and the battlements, and with a revolver in each hand waited by them, his eyes riveted on the turret door.

Hold the tower for ten minutes? He felt capable of holding it for days, unarmed. He had the power and the will to tear every Turk limb from limb! He howled with fury and exultation when he shot down the first man that leaped on to the platform, and saw him pitch forward on his head. Twelve times he fired and each shot told. Then he threw his revolver to one side and leaped behind the rampart of quivering bodies, his sword shrieking through the air and forming a curtain of leaping steel across the door. Shots flashed from the stairway, and he felt a keen, cold flash of pain in his left arm. What did he care for that? He heard the firing redoubled below, and knew that the Greeks were at the gates. Now it was only for a few moments at most. There was a flash of fire full in his face, and the floor of the tower began to whirl swiftly under him. Then it rose like a wave, and he felt himself fall. A vast figure seemed to loom over him, and he saw a sword dart at his throat. Then an angel came down from heaven and parried the blow, standing over him, fighting with the strength of God. "How much like Isigoné she looks," he thought, and as darkness closed in around him he watched the angel fight with swift and deadly blows. "God is with us and the girls are saved, but for me it is good-night — Dorothy — good bye!" And he fell unnumbered miles through the cold dark.

CHAPTER XXVII

SHADOW OF DEATH

BY and bye he stopped falling, and opened his eyes. His glance travelled curiously over the white walls around him, and the great dark beams above: then it fell on a face he was sure he knew, and rested there. He tried to remember the name, but his head felt queer and he couldn't think very well. Then the eyes he was staring at smiled faintly, and he remembered.

"Why, it's Dorothy!"

"Yes, dear, and it is all right."

He began to remember at last, and the whole thing rushed over him. "The troops came?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes, and the island is free!"

"The Queen?"

The girl's face whitened, and she spoke very softly.

"She — lives."

"The *Isigoné* — and Villiers?"

"He is safe, but the dear ship is gone."

"Tell me what happened after I went down."

"Are you strong enough to listen?"

"Fit as can be, only my arm aches and my head feels queer in all these bandages. Was it the Queen

I saw fighting over me, or did I dream that while I was falling?"

"Yes, Jack, it was *Isigoné*, fighting like a tigress. She saved your life, and mine."

"And her own?"

"Oh, I hope so, I pray so, but I don't know."

"What! Is she hurt?"

"Yes, dear, but don't think of that now."

Northrop felt a stab through his heart, keener than the ache in his arm and the fierce throbbing of his head. He sat up a little wildly. "I must go to her, now!"

"No, no! You can't, Jack, not yet."

"Is there danger?"

"I fear so."

"Dorothy, you are telling me the truth? She is not dead?"

"No, no, but she is wounded. Shall I send and find how she is?"

"Yes."

Northrop lay still, his hand in that of Dorothy, trying to gather strength. He felt that he must go, and he struggled to pull himself together. While he waited anxiously for word from the Queen, Dorothy told him as quietly as she could of the coming of the Greeks, the defeat of the Turkish army, the sinking of the *Isigoné*, and the escape of the Captain, as she went down. Her voice was very grave, and she could

not smile, and Northrop was sure she felt that the Queen was dying.

He knew this when the nurse came back and whispered to Dorothy, for tears fell slowly down her pale cheeks. She spoke in a voice that ached with grief.

"Jack, are you strong enough to go? Isigoné asks for you."

"Send some one to help me dress!"

It was only a few moments before he entered the Queen's chamber where Calche, the Patriarch of Rhodes and Fr. Norton stood around the great bed with its hangings of faded silk. The Marquis threw his arms around Northrop, and he saw how his face was white and drawn; he looked like an old man.

Then the three men went softly away, and at a movement of the Queen's eyes the attendants also. Northrop came close and knelt by the Queen's side. For a little neither spoke, and Isigoné lay quite still. She seemed more beautiful than the angels of heaven: her glorious hair lay in sultry masses about her face, and her eyes blazed like great stars. As Northrop knelt so, gazing at the still, white face, so supremely beautiful, so transfigured by the wings of death, the tears gushed from his eyes, and he bowed his head on the Queen's hands, shaken with bitter sobs. All the cruel tragedy of the girl's life, so persistent, so implacable, rose up before him. Why must it be

written in the destiny of things that this wonderful life should be blotted out, now when the awful fight was won and the demand for this woman's power and genius was so intense? The ache in his heart stifled him, and he crept close to the Queen's side, winding his arms about her as though he would shield her from Death.

Isigoné pressed her cheek to his with a little sigh, but her deep eyes still gazed upward, questioningly. There were no tears there, and her parted lips were still.

There was perfect silence in the chamber, and the stillness, after the crash of the ended conflict, seemed heavy and almost crushing. Once more the odor of orange blossoms and myrtle crept in through the open window. It was nearly sunset, and the air was amber. Very slowly the shadow closed around them, and a certain calmness came over Northrop so that he also lay quite still, waiting. Why could they not go out together into the purple shadow? He would be well content.

Isigoné felt his thought and said, so softly he could hardly hear her: —

“No, I must go — alone.”

“I *can't* let you go, not now, nor ever!”

“It is better so. Oh, so much better so! I have climbed a little of the way and I can look back — over it all. It seems to me now there is no other way.

This had to be. I am a Queen no longer, for the end is very, very close. Let me be only Isigoné now until — until you say 'good-bye.' Then remember me only as the Queen."

"Isigoné now and always!"

"I would rather not: the memory of the Queen you may respect, the memory of the woman — no."

Northrop tried to protest in broken and blotted words, but Isigoné hushed him with her deep eyes.

"Be good to me, Djac, now, for a little, for I must go so soon. I must tell you things first though, and I want to forget nothing."

She put her hand on either side of the man's face and spoke softly, her mouth close to his.

"I have done all I could to hurt the two whom I loved best in all the world, but I shall harm you no more. I — I didn't know, dear, tell me you believe that — "

"Oh hush, for God's sake, hush!"

"I didn't know, Djac. Now that I am going away it will be well again and you will forget — "

Northrop shook his head, biting his lips to keep from crying out with the pain that gnawed in him.

"Please! Why should you not? I should like you to remember me a little, but not that way, for I shall be gone from between you and Dorothy. It was terrible for me to come between, but — I loved you, dear. I loved you so that everything seemed right.

I might have been so happy but — I know *you* never could have been, and so it is better this way.”

She ceased speaking, and together they watched the shadow closing in. When Isigoné spoke again her voice sounded faint and far-off.

“Lift me a little, Djac. I want to see the light go away, for I think I shall never see it come again, and I loved the light. Perhaps there will be light always by and bye. I should be afraid if it were dark. It doesn't seem so very hard to die, now that my people are free; and I am very tired. Will they let me rest?
.”

“And now I want you to promise me something. Will you stay here close by me until — I go away? I can't bear to think of anyone else. I have ceased to be a Queen, and Isigoné wants to go to sleep very quietly in your arms,—dear love!” . . .

“Yes, I am glad to have lived, for I have loved you — you who could never have really loved me. Isn't that strange for me to say, who was once a Queen? But it is true and I think you will understand.

“It is growing dark very fast — and cold. I shall be lonely tonight, and I think it is very far: and I am so tired! You are crying, dear heart, and I can't comfort you: we can only wait, wait until the call comes for me to rise up and go out into the night. Don't grieve for me. I have made my confession. God will forgive my soul now that my body has paid

the price of sin. . . . Turn my face to yours — so. Now kiss me, Djac; tell me you forgive a woman who forgot she was a Queen, just because she loved you. . . . You tried to save my life, beloved, but I would not let you. It was — my fault. . . . How long ago it was — when we fought side by side at Villaret. Two weeks? And we were so glad then when we won. Well . . . Djac! I think it is coming! . . . again! Don't let them come! Closer, beloved! — I cannot see you! Dearest, — Good-bye! — I love you.”

CHAPTER XXVIII

"WE HAVE DREAMED"

THE *Baltimore* altered her course, and the blue hills drew across the white terraces of Rhodes: a violet mist seemed to grow in the east, closing around the island until it dissolved in vapor. Standing together, Northrop and Dorothy watched the last blue vanish in the crowding twilight. Beyond lay the great glory of sunset, and the West, but behind stretched the intangible, unfathomable East.

"It is not for us, is it, Jack?" and Dorothy turned her tired and sorrowful eyes towards Northrop as he stood leaning heavily against the rail, staring with hopeless eyes into the following dark. "It is not for us — that East, for we are of other times, of other people."

"Of other times, of other people. Behind us is an implacable line of ancestry that shapes us, conditions us. If we leave the realm of convention, materialism, modernity, we pay the price."

"That does not seem right," said the girl wistfully. "Our ideals are not wrong, are they? Do you not think that we could have stayed in Rhodes and adapted ourselves to that life which *must* be nearer right than that to which we are returning?"

"It is nearer right, but we could not have lived there — apart from personal reasons which made it impossible. We cannot transfer ourselves from one element into another in an instant of time. Perhaps by and bye the change will have wrought itself out by slow development in our own country, and then life will be beautiful and real."

"We shall never see it."

"No, we shall never see it. We are going back to all that we hated, all that hurts us so. We must live and die in that environment."

Dorothy put her hand on Northrop's, saying very gravely, "Jack, I can understand your grief — I am almost brokenhearted when I think of — of her. But there is something else. There seems a barrier between us. Tell me, is it true — and am I to blame?"

"No, Dorothy, you are blameless. There is that between us which is impassable. We are severed by an awful gulf. Let me think things out before you ask any more. All the world seems to have gone to pieces around me. I no longer know myself. All my feelings seem shattered by the horror we have gone through, all my nerves deadened. I can hardly think. I don't know myself. Two months ago I was a man, now — I don't know what I am. I feel as though I had wrecked my life, sold my soul, and all in a few weeks' time. Before we get home I will tell you: now I can't. Do you understand?"

“I am not sure, but I think so. At all events, I can do as you wish, Jack.”

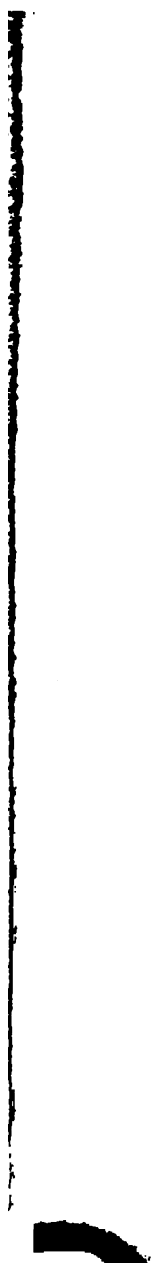
“You will have a great deal to forgive me.”

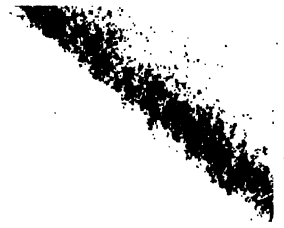
“That is God’s province, not mine, Jack! I think some day we shall wake up and find that this all has been a dreadful dream. Can we not call it so? I am willing. I have absolute confidence in you, and I refuse to condemn actions. I must judge motives only. Let us look in each other’s eyes tonight and say very sadly and very solemnly, ‘We have dreamed.’ Then all that has been since we first stepped on the deck of the — the ship, shall be blotted out and we will begin again. Shall we?”

Northrop took the girl’s hands in his and drew her to him. “Can you do that? Then let it be so. *We have dreamed*. Sleep is over and we must wake and work. Do you remember the words we chose for our guide that night off Ceuta? Well, they will serve for the old life to which we go back. They may pull us through. At all events, Dorothy, we will do this thing, ‘Trust in God and go on!’”

THE END

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