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**Our Little Grecian Cousin**

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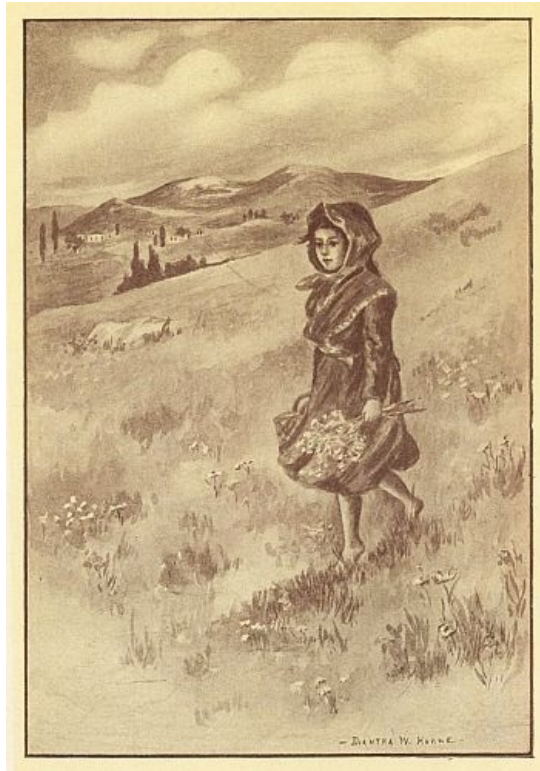
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"SHE TOOK HER BASKET AND RAN DOWN THE HILLSIDE." (See [page 11.](#))

## Our Little Grecian Cousin

By  
Mary F. Nixon-Roulet

*Author of "God, the King, My Brother," "Our  
Little Spanish Cousin," "Our Little Alaskan  
Cousin," "Our Little Brazilian  
Cousin," etc.*

*Illustrated by  
Diantha W. Horne*



Boston  
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TO  
**Mary and Julia Rhodus**  
TWO LITTLE FRIENDS

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## Preface

Of all people in the world the Grecians did most for art, and to the ancient Hellenes we owe much that is beautiful in art and interesting in history. Of modern Greece we know but little, the country of isles and bays, of fruits and flowers, and kindly people. So in this story you will find much of the country, old and new, and of the every-day life of Our Little Grecian Cousin.

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OUR  
LITTLE  
GRECIAN  
COUSIN

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## Our Little Grecian Cousin

### CHAPTER I ZOE



ZOE sat in the doorway tending baby Domna as she lay asleep in her cradle. She was sleeping quietly, as any child should who has the cross on her cradle for good luck. Her skin was as white as milk, and this was because Zoe had taken care of her *Marti*. On the first day of March she had tied a bit of red ribbon about her little cousin's wrist, for a charm. The keen March winds could not hurt the baby after that, nor could she have freckles nor sunburn.

Early on the morning of April first, Zoe had dressed the baby and carried her out of doors. The dew lay over the flowers, the sun was just up, and his rosy beams turned the blossoming lemon trees to beauty. Zoe had sought the nearest garden and there hung the *Marti* on a rose bush, plucking a rose and pinning it to Domna's cap. [2]

"Now, Babycoula,"<sup>[1]</sup> she had said, clapping her hands, "you shall have luck. Your *Marti* is upon a rose bush kissed with dew before the sun is high. The summer's heat shall not touch you and you shall be cool and well."

It was fortunate for Zoe as well as for the "Joy," which the Greek word for baby means, that Domna was a quiet baby. As most of the little girl's time was taken up with caring for one or another of her aunt's children, when they were cross it left her but little time for thinking and dreaming. Zoe's thoughts were often sad ones, but her dreams were rose-coloured. When the little girl thought, she remembered the home she had once had. It was far in the sunny south where lemon groves lifted golden-fruited arms to the soft winds, and hillsides gleamed with purple and white currants. [3]

Her father had met with ill luck and men had told him of a land beyond the seas, where people had plenty to eat and found gold pieces rolling in the streets. He had sent her mother and herself to live near Zoe's uncle and she had seen no more the bright, gay father whom she loved. Then her mother died, and this, her first great sorrow, made her into a quiet, sober child with a dark, grave face. At ten she was a little old woman, taking such good care of her aunt's babies that that hard-working woman did not begrudge the orphan the little she ate.

Uncle Georgios was a kind man. He loved children, as do all Grecians, who say, "A house without a child is a cold house." He worked too hard to pay much attention to any one of the swarm which crowded his cottage. Aunt Anna had so many children that she never had time to think of any of them except to see that they had food and clothes. Zoe was but another girl for whom a marriage portion must be provided. Every Grecian girl must have a dowry, and it would be a great disgrace if none were ready for her when she was sought in marriage. Fathers and brothers have to earn the necessary money, and the girls themselves make ready their household linens, often beginning when only ten years old. [4]

Zoe had not commenced making her linens because her aunt had not been able to give her thread or even to take time to teach her to spin. So the little maid's hands were idle as she watched the babycoula and that was not good, for a girl's fingers should always be at work, lest she have too much time to think sad thoughts. But, if her thoughts were dark, her dreams were bright, for she saw before her a rosy future in which she lived where the sun shone and everyone was happy. [5]

Baby Domna stirred in her cradle, for flies were crawling over her little nose. Zoe waved them off singing, "Nani, nani, Babycoula, mou-ou-ou!" The baby smiled and patted her hands.

"You are a good child," said Zoe. "The best of tables was set out for you the third night after you came from Heaven. There was a fine feast for the Three Fates, even a bit of *sumadhe* and a glass of *mastika*."<sup>[2]</sup> You must have good fortune.

"Palamakia,"<sup>[3]</sup> play it, dear,  
Papa's coming to see you here,  
He brings with him *loukoumi*<sup>[4]</sup> sweet  
For Babycoula now to eat.

"It's time you went to sleep again, Baby," said Zoe, her foot on the rocker, but the babycoula gurgled and waved her fat arms to be taken up, so the patient nurse took up the heavy little child and played with her. [6]

"Little rabbit, go, go, go," she said, making her little fingers creep up the soft little arm, as American children play "creep mousie," with their baby sisters.

"Dear little rabbit, go and take a drink,  
Baby's neck is cool and clean and sweet,"

and the little girl's fingers tickled the warm little neck and Domna laughed and gurgled in glee. Zoe danced her up and down on her knee and sang,

"Babycoula, dance to-day,  
Alas, the fiddler's gone away,  
He's gone to Athens far away,  
Find him and bring him back to play."

The pretty play went on, and at last the tiny head drooped on Zoe's shoulder and the babycoula slept again. Then her little nurse gently laid her in the cradle, tucked in the covers and sat slowly waving an olive branch above her to keep away the flies. [7]

Zoe's uncle lived in Thessaly, that part of Northern Greece where splendid grain fields cover the plains, a golden glory of ripened sheaves.

Uncle Georgios worked in the fields in harvest time and the rest of the year he was a shepherd, herding sheep and goats in the highlands. The boys worked with him. There were Marco and Spiridon, well grown boys of eighteen and twenty, working hard for their sisters' marriage portions, which must be earned before they themselves could be married. After Spiridon came Loukas, a sailor, who was always away from home, and then Maria and Anna. Another boy, mischievous Georgios, was next in age to Anna, there were two little girls younger than she, and then Baby Domna, Zoe's especial charge.

It had been a hard summer. The sirocco had blown from Africa and made the days so hot that all field work had to be done at night. Now the threshing-floors were busy and Uncle Georgios was working early and late to get in the grain. [8]

"Zoe!" called Aunt Anna from within the house. "It is time to take your uncle's dinner to him."

"Yes, Aunt," said Zoe, rising from the doorway, and hastening to take the basket Aunt Anna had prepared. There was black bread, fresh garlic and eggs. Then she ran quickly along the path which led to the fields. It was a beautiful day and the air was fresh and sweet.

"I am Atalanta running for the apple," laughed Zoe to herself, as she sped up the hill, reaching the threshing-place just at noon. The threshing-floor was very old and made of stone. It was thirty feet across, and over its stone floor cattle were driven up and down, with their hoofs beating the grain out of the straw. Zoe stood and watched the patient creatures going back and forth yoked together in pairs. [9]

"Heu! Zoe!" called Marco, with whom she was a great favourite, "Have you brought us to eat?"

"I have, Cousin," she answered, gazing with admiring eyes at the tall fellow, with his slim figure, aquiline nose, oval face, and pleasant mouth shaded by a slight moustache. Marco was a true Thessalonian, handsome and gay. He had served his time in the army and had come home to help his father bring up the younger children.

"Why don't you put muzzles on the oxen, they look so fierce?" said Zoe, looking at the great creatures as they passed and repassed.

"Oh, they are never muzzled," said Marco. "It was not done by our fathers. It reminds me of what I read in Queen Olga's Bible, 'Do not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the grain.'" [10]

"What is Queen Olga's Bible?" asked Zoe. She was not afraid of Marco. With her other cousins she was as quiet as a mouse, but she chatted with Marco without fear.

"The good queen found that the soldiers had no Holy Scriptures which they could read," said Marco. "Because all the holy books were in the ancient Greek. She had them put into the language we talk and printed for the soldiers. Then she gave one to each man in our regiment and I have mine still."

"How good she was!" cried Zoe. "Did every one love her for her kindness?"

"Not so," said Marco. "Many people were angry at her. They said she was not showing respect to the Scriptures and was trying to bring in new things, as if that was a sin! All new things are not bad, are they, little cousin?"

"I do not know, it is long since I had anything new," said Zoe.

"That is true, poor child," said Marco, kindly as he glanced at her worn dress. "Never mind. When we get Maria married you shall have something new and nice." [11]

"Oh, thank you, I am very well as I am," said Zoe, flushing happily at his kindness, for she was a loving little soul and blossomed like a flower in the sunlight. "I must go home now," she said. "Baby will be awake from her nap and Aunt Anna will need me to tend her."

"Are you never tired of baby?" asked Marco.

"Oh, I love her," said Zoe brightly, as if that was an answer to his question, and nodding gaily, she took her basket and ran down the hillside, where buttercups and bright red poppies nodded in the sun.

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## CHAPTER II

### MARIA'S WEDDING

MARIA was to be married. This was a very great event in the family and all the little Mezzorios were wild with excitement. Maria was the favourite sister, and she was tall and very beautiful. Her hair and eyes were dark and her smile showed through gleaming white teeth. Her marriage chest was ready, her dowry was earned, and a cousin of the family had acted as "go-between" between Uncle Georgios and the father of the young man who wished to marry Maria. His name was Mathos Pappadiamantopoulos, and he had seen Maria as she walked spinning in the fields. [12]

Generally in Greece the parents arrange the marriages and the young people scarcely see each other before the marriage ceremony binds them together. Maria's, however, was quite a love match, for she and Mathos had grown up together and had been waiting only for the dowry to go to housekeeping in a little white cottage near to that of her mother. [13]

Mathos had often been beneath Maria's window and had called his sweetheart all the fond names he could think of. She was in turn "cold water" (always sweet to a Grecian because good water is so scarce in that country), a "lemon tree," and a "little bird." He had sung to her many love songs, among them the Ballad of the Basil.

"If I should die of love, my love, my grave with basil strew,  
And let some tears fall there, my life, for one who died for you,  
Agape mon-ou-ou!"

Maria's *prekas*<sup>[5]</sup> was a fine one. Her father and brothers had determined that.

"She shall not be made ashamed before any man. If I never marry, Maria shall have a good dowry," said Marco. [14]

When the list of what she would give to the furnishing of the little home was made for the groom there was a strange array, a bedstead, a dresser, a chair, sheets and pillowcases, blankets and quilts. There were copper kettles and saucepans of many sizes and shapes, and the lovely homespun linens were beautifully embroidered.

Early in the morning of the wedding day, Mathos' friends helped him carry the *praekika*<sup>[6]</sup> from the bride's old home to her new one. Not a single pocket handkerchief but was noted on the list Mathos' best man had made, and it would have been a disgrace to all the family of Mezzorios had there been even a pin missing from all that had been agreed upon when the match was arranged.

Musicians played the guitar and mandolin, as Maria sat straight upright upon a sofa. She was a little white and frightened, but looked very pretty in her white dress embroidered in gold, her yellow embroidered kerchief over her head. Zoe, with the other children, had been flying around the room ready, whenever the *mastiche* paste was passed on a tray, to take a spoon from the pile and gouge out a taste of the sweet stuff. [15]

"Maria looks lonely," she said to Marco. "I'm glad I'm not in her place."

"She'll be all right now," he said as the cry "He comes!" was heard outside. Zoe ran to the door. She had never seen a wedding in Thessaly and was very curious to see what it was like. Little Yanne Ghoromokos was coming up the street carrying a tray on which rested two wreaths of flowers and two large candles tied with white ribbon. Behind him was Mathos, looking very foolish, surrounded by his friends.

"I shall not marry a man who looks like that," said Zoe to Marco, who stood beside her. [16]

"What is wrong with him?" asked Marco, who liked to hear his little cousin talk, her remarks were so quaint and wise.

"He looks very unhappy, as if this were a funeral," she said, "or as if he were afraid of something. When I marry, my husband shall be glad."

"That he should be," said Marco smiling, and showing his white teeth.

Mathos meanwhile made his way into the house and sat down on the sofa by Maria. He did not look at her, for that would have been contrary to etiquette, but over the girl's face there stole a warm and lovely colour which made her more beautiful than ever.

All the men present looked at her and all the women, old and young, kissed the groom, and each woman made him the present of a silk handkerchief. Then it was time for the wedding ceremony and Zoe's eyes were big with wonder. [17]

On the table were placed a prayer book, a plate of candies, as the priest, old Papa Petro took his stand near by. Maria came forward with her father and Mathos and his best man stood beside her. To the child's great wonder and delight, Zoe was to be bridesmaid, for Maria had said to her mother,

"Let Zoe be bridesmaid. It will please her and she is a good little thing." And Aunt Anna had answered,

"What ever you want, my child."

Zoe, therefore, in a new frock, with a rose pinned in her black hair, stood proudly beside Maria at the altar. She watched the queer ceremony in silence. First Papa Petro gave the groom a lighted candle and asked him if he would take Maria for his wife; then Maria received a candle and was asked if she would take Mathos for her husband, after which the priest sang the *Kyrie Eleison* and made a long, long prayer. [18]

He blessed the two rings laid on the tray before him, giving one to the bride and one to the groom. The best man quickly took them off the fingers of each, exchanged them, and put the bride's on the groom's finger, giving his to her.

Papa Petro next put a wreath on the head of each and the best man exchanged them, and the ceremony continued, but of it Zoe saw little. She was so overcome by the sight of Mathos' red, perspiring face, surmounted by the wreath of white blossoms, and looking silly but happy, that she had all she could do to keep from laughing.

She was so astonished a moment later that she nearly disgraced herself, for the rest of the ceremony was like nothing she had ever seen before. The priest took the hand of the best man, he took that of the groom, and he held his bride by the hand, and all, priest, best man, groom and bride, danced three times around the altar, while the guests pelted the dancers with candies, and Zoe stood in open-mouthed amazement, until Marco threw a candy into her mouth and nearly choked her. Then the ceremony was over and everybody kissed the bride and her wreath, which brings good luck.

[19]

"What do you think of being bridesmaid?" asked Marco.

"It is very nice, but I was afraid I should laugh," answered Zoe. "What do they do now, Marco?"

"Maria must go to her husband's house. She is starting now. Come, let us follow."

They went with the bridal couple down the village street, and at her door lay a pomegranate. Upon this the bride stepped for good fortune with her children. Then Mathos' mother tied the arms of the two together with a handkerchief and they entered their own home. They drank a cup of wine together and turned to receive the congratulations of their friends.

[20]

"Marco, it is your turn next. Beware lest a Nereid get you," said Mathos, laughing.

"I am not afraid of a Nereid," said Marco hastily crossing himself.

"Once I saw one upon the hillside when I was watching the sheep," said an old man. "She was so beautiful I crept up to seize her in my arms and behold! she turned into a bear and then a snake. The bear I held but the snake I let go. Then I saw her no more."

"Upon the river bank of Kephissos," said an old woman, "dwell three Nereids. They are sisters. Two are fair but one is ugly and crippled. My mother lived there and she has often told me that she heard the fays talking and laughing in the reeds along the shore. The pretty sisters like children and love to play with mortals. Sometimes they steal away little folk when they have stayed out at night in disobedience to their mothers. They take them to their home in the reeds, but the lame sister is jealous of pretty children and when she is sent to take them home, she pinches them. My mother has with her two eyes seen the black and blue marks of pinches upon the arms of children who did not always stay in the house after dark. And where my mother lived they say always to naughty children, 'Beware! the lame Nereid will get you!'"

[21]

"Be careful, Zoe," said Marco. "Be a good child and keep within when it is dark, else you shall see the Nereid."

"God forbid!" said Zoe, quickly crossing herself, "I should die of fright."

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## CHAPTER III THE ANTIQUE CUP

[22]

FALL had come with its cool, sunny days and Aunt Anna was cooking beans, symbols of the autumn fruits in honour of the old Feast of Apollo. Olive branches were hung over the door of the house to bring luck, as in the olden times olive boughs hung with figs and cakes, with jars of oil and wine were carried by youths to the temples. Upon the hillsides the vineyards hung, purple with fruit and winter wheat was sown in the fields.

Zoe had begun to go to school and the baby could wept for her. She did not at all believe in education since it took away her willing slave and devoted attendant, but in Greece all children are compelled to go to school and learn at least to read and write and do simple sums.

Zoe enjoyed the school very much. She liked the walk in the fresh morning air and she liked to learn, but most of all she liked the stories which her teacher told whenever they were good children, stories of the days when Greece was the greatest nation of the earth, her women were famous for beauty and virtue, her men were warriors and statesmen.

[23]

She learned of Lycurgus, the great lawgiver, of Pericles, the statesman, of Alexander, the great general, and of the heroes of Thermopylæ. All these tales she retold to her cousins and many were the hours she kept them listening spellbound.

"It was not far from here, the Pass of Thermopylæ," she said. "Some day I shall ask Marco to take us there. The story tells of how Leonidas was king of Sparta and the cruel Persians came to conquer Greece. Xerxes was the Persian king and he had a big army, oh, ever so many times larger than the Grecian. Well, the only way to keep out the Persians was to keep them from coming through the Pass of Thermopylæ, so Leonidas took three hundred men and went to hold the Pass. For two days they held it, and kept the Persians from coming in, and they could have held out longer but for treachery. A miserable man, for money, told the Persians a secret path across the mountains, so they crept up behind the Grecians and attacked them. When Leonidas

[24]



found they were surrounded, he made up his mind that he and his men must die, but that they should die as brave men. They fought the Persians so fiercely that the Pass ran with blood and several times the Persians fell back; others took their places, but these too turned back, and the Persian king said,

"What manner of men are these who, but a handful can keep back my whole army?" and one of his men replied,

"Sire, your men fight at your will; these Grecians, fight for their country and their wives!" [25]

"But at last the end came. Leonidas fell, covered with wounds, and without him his men could withstand no longer. One by one they fell, each with his sword in hand, his face to the foe, and when the last one fell, the Persians, with a great shout, rushed through the Pass over the dead bodies of the heroes."

"That's a fine story," said Georgios. "But I sha'n't wait for Marco. I shall go to see the Pass for myself."

"No, no!" said Zoe. "You must not. Aunt Anna would be angry. It is quite too far and it is in the mountains; you might meet a brigand."

But Georgios said only, "Pooh! I can take care of myself," and looked sulky. It was rather hard for Zoe to look after him. He was a mischievous boy, only a year younger than she was, and he thought himself quite as old. He did not like it at all when his mother told him to mind what Zoe said and often he did things just to provoke her. This particular Saturday he was in bad temper because he had wished to go to the mountains with Marco and his brother would not take him. [26]

"Another time I will take you," said Marco. "But to-day I am in haste. Stay with the girls and be a good little boy."

"Stay with the girls!" muttered Georgios. "It is always stay with the girls. Some day I will show them I am big enough to take care of myself."

So he felt cross and did not enjoy Zoe's stories as much as usual.

"Not long ago," said Zoe, for the other children were listening with rapt interest, "some shepherds were tending their flocks on the hills and one of them dug a hole in the ground to make a fire that they might cook their food. As he placed the stones to make his oven, he saw something sticking out of the ground and leaned down to see what it was. It looked like a queer kettle of some kind and he dug it out and examined it. He cleaned the dirt from it and it turned out to be an old helmet, rusted and tarnished, but still good. He took it and showed it to the teacher in the village and he said it was very, very old and might have belonged to one of Leonidas' men. So the master sent it to Athens and there they said that it was very valuable, and that the writing upon it showed that it had been at Thermopylæ. They put it in the great museum at Athens, and paid the shepherd a great many *drachmas*<sup>[7]</sup> for it, so many that he could have for himself a house and need not herd sheep for another man, but have his own flocks." [27]

"Wish I could find one," said Georgios. "I heard my father say we needed money very badly. There are so many of us! I wish I was big!" and the boy's face grew dark. Zoe's clouded too. [28]

"I am but another mouth to feed," she thought; but Aunt Anna's voice, calling them to come to the midday meal, put her thoughts to flight.

It was not until after the little siesta they all took after luncheon that she thought of what Georgios had said.

"How I wish I could find something of value," she thought to herself. "I am not of much use except that I try to help with the children. Oh, I wonder what Georgios is doing now!" she thought suddenly. She could not hear him and when Georgios was quiet he was generally naughty.

"Where is Georgios?" she asked the children, but they did not know. Only little Anna had seen him and she said that he had run quickly down the road a little while before.

"You must stay with the babycoula here on the door step," Zoe said to the little girls, calling to her aunt within the house, "Aunt Anna, I am going to find Georgios, he is not here." [29]

"Very well," said her aunt, and Zoe set off down the road. "Georgios!" she called. There was no answer, but she thought she saw the tracks of his feet in the dust of the road.

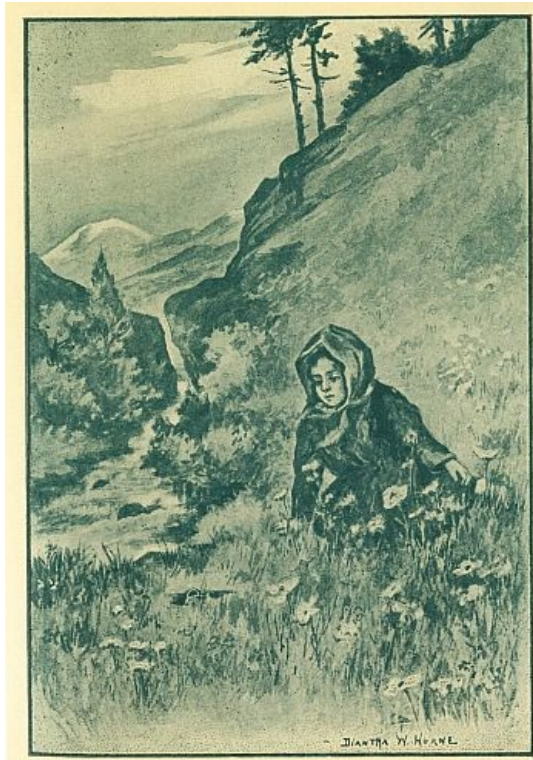
"Perhaps he has gone to the river," she said to herself, "to try to fish," and hastily she ran to the bank but there was no little boy in a red tasselled cap in sight. She hurried back to the road.

"I am afraid he has tried to go and see the Pass," she thought. "It would be just like him, for he said he would not wait for Marco. Oh, dear! I must find him. Aunt Anna will think it my fault if he is lost or anything happens to him." She hurried onward, calling and looking everywhere but found not a trace of the naughty little boy. It seemed as if he had disappeared from the face of the earth, and she murmured to herself,

"Oh, if he has gone to the river and a Nereid has stolen him! Perhaps he has run to the mountain and a brigand has found him! I must bring him home. Good St. Georgios, who killed the terrible dragon, help me to find your name-child! Oh, dear, of course the saints hear us, but it [30]

would be ever so much nicer if they would answer!" she thought. Then she had little time to think more, for her whole mind was bent upon finding the naughty boy whom, with all his naughtiness, she dearly loved. She hurried up the hill, peering under every bush, behind every tree, beginning to think that perhaps something had happened to the child. She went on and on until the shadows of twilight began to gather and she grew more and more frightened. Beneath her on the mountain-side flowed a little stream and she peered into its silver depths wondering if perhaps Georgios could have fallen into it. Then in her eagerness she leaned too far, lost her balance and fell. Down, down she tumbled, rolling over and over on the soft grass until she reached the bottom of the hill. She lay still for a few moments then sat up and looked about her.

[31]



**"SOMETHING LAY THERE HALF COVERED WITH EARTH."**

She was in a spot in which she had never been before, a pretty little glen, where the silvery stream ran over white pebbles with a soft, murmuring sound. Ferns grew tall and green, delicate wild flowers bloomed among them, the air was fragrant with the pines which grew overhead, and the whole spot was like a fairy dell. She tried to rise, but frowned with pain, for she had hurt her foot. So she sat thinking, "I will rest a minute and then go on and find Georgios."

As she sat thinking she noticed a queer place hollowed out by the water. Something lay there half covered with earth and she stooped to see what it was.

"Perhaps I shall find something like the shepherd did," she thought, but with sharp disappointment she found that the object which had caught her eye was but a queer little cup black with red figures around the rim, and with two handles, one at each side. It had the figure of a woman at one side and Zoe thought it rather pretty.

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"It is not of any use," she said to herself, "It is but someone's old cup. But I shall take it home for the babycoula to play with. She will think it is nice." So she tucked it into her pocket and got up to go. Her ankle hurt but not so badly that she could not walk. She wet her kerchief and tied it around the swollen joint and climbed up the hill which she had rolled down so unexpectedly. At the top she stopped and

called as loudly as she could, "Georgios, Georgios!"

An answering shout of "Zoe!" came from below and her heart gave a glad leap. She turned her steps downward and Marco met her ere she was half way down.

"Child, what are you doing here?" he asked.

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"Is Georgios found? I came to seek him!" she cried.

"He was not lost, that bad boy!" said Marco. "When I reached home I found my mother disturbed in her mind because you had disappeared and the little girls said you had gone to the mountain to find Georgios. Him I found by the river fishing and he said that you had called but that he had not answered. He will answer the next time," and Marco's voice told Zoe that he had made it unpleasant for Georgios. "Then I came on to seek you. Poor child! you must have had a hard climb."

"Oh, I did not mind," said Zoe. "Only I fell and hurt my ankle. I am glad Georgios was not lost. He might have answered me, though," and her lip quivered.

"He was a bad boy," said Marco, "and did it just to tease you. Let me see your ankle. It is badly bruised, but not sprained, I think. Come, I will help you home," and he put his arm around her.

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It took Zoe some time to get home for walking on the lame ankle tired her and often Marco stopped her to rest.

"What is it you have in your hand?" he asked her, as they sat down to rest beneath a giant fir.

"Oh, it is nothing," she said. "Just a queer little cup I found and thought Baby Domna might like to play with."

"Let me see it," said Marco, and he examined it carefully. "Where did you find it?" he asked at length and Zoe answered,

"When I fell by the river it lay in the dirt. Is it too dirty for the babycoula?"

"Zoe," Marco looked strangely excited. "I believe this old cup is of great value."

"Oh Marco!" the little girl could say no more.

"Yes," he said. "I may be mistaken, but I think it is very old and that it is like some cups I saw in Athens. They were sold for many *drachmas*. They were black like this with a little red on them, in lines and figures, and with two handles. A man in my regiment said they were of ancient pottery and that they were dug up out of the earth. He said the museum at Athens paid good prices for such things."

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"Oh Marco!" Zoe's eyes were like stars. "If it would only turn out that this was worth something, even a little, how happy I should be! I want money so badly."

"What do you want it for?" Marco looked surprised.

"To give to Aunt Anna, of course," said Zoe, surprised in her turn. "Georgios said to-day that your father needed money and Aunt Anna needs many things." The child said it so simply that one would have supposed she never needed anything for herself, and Marco caught her hand with a sudden impulse.

"You are a strange little one," he said. "If this turns out to be worth any money, you shall have it all to spend, every cent."

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"For whatever I want?" asked Zoe in surprise.

"Yes, indeed," said Marco.

"Then I shall buy a dress for Aunt Anna and for each of the little girls a new one that has not been made over from someone's else. And something I shall buy for each one of the family, most of all for the baby, since I meant to take the cup to her. And all the rest I shall give to Uncle Georgios, for I am such an expense to him."

"That you are not," said Marco. "My mother said but yesterday that she did not know how she would ever get along without you."

"Did she really?" Zoe's face flushed with pleasure. "My foot is much better, we must go on now, it grows so late."

So they hastened home and Zoe met a warm welcome, even Georgios hugging her and saying he was sorry he had sent her on such a wild goose chase. Her cup was displayed and wondered at, and later, when Papa Petro sent it to a priest in Athens and he sold it for many *drachmas*, Zoe was delighted and insisted upon giving the money to her uncle for all of them to share. Many comforts it brought for the family, besides paying the debts which had been worrying her uncle. And mischievous Georgios said airily,

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"It was all due to me that the cup was found; for, if Zoe had not gone to find me, she would never have fallen down the hill on top of it."

"Nevertheless," said Marco sternly, "do not let me catch you playing any such tricks on your cousin again, or you will find something not so pleasant as antique cups. She's too good a little girl to tease."

And Zoe said in her soft little voice, "Oh, Marco."

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## CHAPTER IV THE "AGIASMO"

[38]

MARIA had a little son. Mathos was almost beside himself with delight, and the young mother was beautiful in her happiness. Her pretty face, always sweet, took on a deeper loveliness as she gazed on the little creature, so pink and white and dear, and Zoe thought she had never seen anything sweeter than her cousin and the baby together. Zoe had cared for her Aunt's babies so well that she was quite an authority and Maria trusted her with the little treasure when she would look anxiously at anyone else who took him up. He was indeed a joy. Serene and healthy, he lay all day, quite happy in the fact that he was able to get his tiny thumb in his mouth.

Maria had made her visit at Church on the fortieth day after the baby was born and Papa Petro had taken the little angel in his arms and walked thrice around the altar with him. Now the time had come when the good old priest was to christen the baby, and all the relatives and friends assembled to see the ceremony.

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Papa Petro came riding down from his house on a tiny donkey. He was a dear old man with a wise, kindly face. He had been all his priestly life over the one parish, and his people were dear to him. They in turn loved him devotedly and he was always welcomed joyfully at any festivity.

Before the christening he blessed the house, performing the *agiasmo* or blessing, with great earnestness. First he took off his tall hat and let down his hair which was long and snowy white and usually worn in a knob at the back of his head. Then he set a basin of water and some incense before the *eikon* which was hung in a corner of the room. Every Grecian home has its *eikon* or picture of a saint or the Blessed Virgin. The incense he placed in a bowl and lighted it, the smoke rising and filling the room with a strong perfume. He read the prayers which keep off the evil spirits in an impressive manner, and then

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turned his attention to the christening.

Baby Mathos, very cunning in his new cap, was set down before the *eikon* which bore the pictured face of the saint to whom he was to be dedicated. That was the signal for all the women present to rush for his cap, the one who secured the coveted bit of lace and muslin being the godmother. Zoe was the lucky one, and she stood proudly up beside Maria and the godfather, who had been Mathos' best man. The *nounos*<sup>[8]</sup> had given baby his fine new dress and had come prepared for all that a godfather must do.

The babycoula was then undressed and held up to the priest in Zoe's proud arms for Papa Petro to cut three hairs from the tiny head and throw them into the baptismal font. This was filled with water into which the godfather had poured a little olive oil.

Baby Mathos was then held to the west, to represent the kingdom of darkness, and Papa Petro asked three times, "Do you renounce the devil and all his works?" To this the godfather replied, "I do renounce them." At this the priest and godfather turned toward the east with the baby and the baby was plunged three times into the water. Baby squealed and kicked, and Zoe smiled, for if a baby does not cry at the water it is very bad luck, showing that the Evil One has not gone out of him. The babycoula did his little best to assure the company that he had no evil spirit left within, howling wrathfully after he was dried and anointed with holy oils, refusing to stop even when prayed over at length, only smiling when, the ceremony over, the *nounos* gave some *drachmas* to his parents and threw a whole handful of *lepta*<sup>[9]</sup> among the children present.

"He is generous with his witness money," whispered Zoe to Maria and she smiled happily.

"Our little one will have the best of godparents," Maria said sweetly. "You to love him and Loukas to think of his welfare."

Papa Petro dipped an olive branch in holy water and sprinkled the rooms of the little cottage, then he sat down beside Maria, tied up his hair and took a cup of coffee. Everyone was served to glasses of water and sweets and everybody talked and laughed and said what a beautiful little Christian the babycoula was! As each one admired the baby Maria coloured and looked anxious and fingered the blue beads about her darling's neck.

"What have you for a charm against the evil eye?" asked Papa Petro, kindly. "Ah, I see, the blue beads. Well, that is good. Blue is the Blessed Virgin's colour and the Panageia<sup>[10]</sup> will be your help. However, I have brought you a bit of crooked coral which I have always found good."

"It is most kind of you," said Maria prettily, as she hung the precious spray of coral at the babycoula's throat. Zoe smiled to herself. She had not intended to run any risk that her cousin's little baby should be marked with the evil eye, which can be put on a child just by admiring it. So, for the baby was so pretty she had felt sure it would be admired all day, she had put a bit of soot behind his ear, for that will ward off any evil eye. It is a sure charm. Therefore she felt quite satisfied even though every one present did say that the baby was perfectly beautiful. Then she held the little thing up before a mirror, for that would insure another baby in the family before the close of the year, and as the Grecians love children dearly they are glad to have many of them.

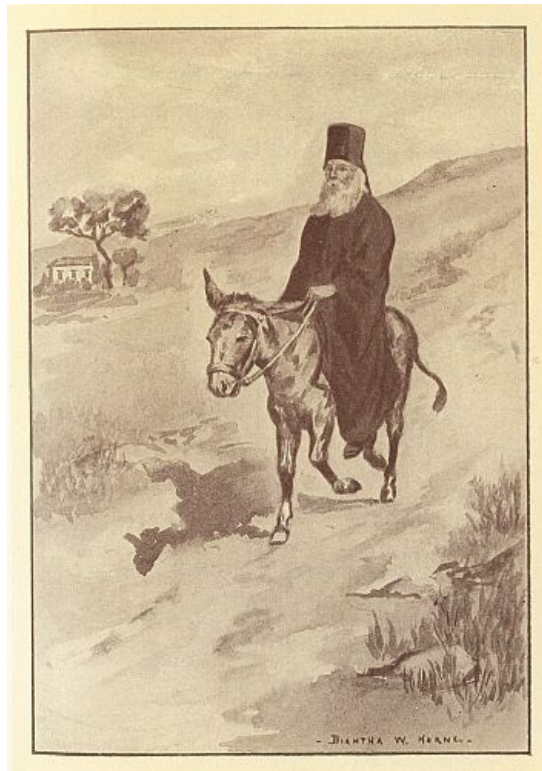
The baby had so many pieces of white stuff given to him that the little house looked as if it had been in a snow storm. No polite person would come to see a new baby and not give it something white, even if it were only an egg, for such a gift insures to the infant a lovely fair complexion.

Thus was Baby Mathos started on his journey as a Christian with all good omens, and his little godmother went home in the cool of the evening, happy in all of the pleasures of the day.

"It was lovely, Aunt Anna!" she said to her aunt. "Was it not? Maria's baby is a dear little fellow. He is my own godchild and I love him dearly, but of course not more than our own babycoula," and she buried her face in Baby Domna's neck. The baby crowed and cooed and patted Zoe's face with her tiny chubby hands and pulled her hair and acted in the entrancing way in which only a baby can act and Zoe laughed back at her and hugged her tight.

"You're my own babycoula," she said. "And I love you better than anything."

"Better than you do me? Oh shame!" said Marco teasing, while Aunt Anna, like every other good mother pleased with the attention her baby received, smiled upon her. Marco, however, looked very solemn and said reproachfully,



"PAPA PETRO CAME RIDING DOWN FROM HIS HOUSE ON A TINY DONKEY."

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"I thought you would never like any baby better than me!"

"But you are not a baby," said Zoe, and Aunt Anna said,

"I am not so sure that he is not. But do not mind him, he is only teasing. You are a good child, Zoe," and little Zoe went happily to bed her heart warm at the thought that everybody seemed to love her, if she was an orphan and far away from home.

"It is only love that counts," she murmured to herself sleepily and fell asleep with a smile on her face, as the silver moon streamed through her window and the air came in soft and kind, fragrant with the breath of spring. [46]

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## CHAPTER V A VISIT TO MARCO [47]

THE winter passed quietly to Zoe and spring came with its glories of cloud and flower and sunshine. Men began to plough in the fields with quaint old-fashioned, one-handed ploughs, drawn by great strong oxen. Snows still crested Ossa and Pelion, and beautiful Olympus, in snow-crowned grandeur golden in the morning's glow, turned to rose in the evening sunset.

Marco had gone far up the mountain side to herd for a rich farmer who had many goats. He watched the herds all day and, when they were safely housed for the night, camped in a rough little hut on the hillside.

Zoe missed him from the cottage, for of all her cousins she most loved Marco. She was very happy therefore when her Aunt Anna told her one day that she might carry a basket of food to the mountain. [48]

She started off happily, running along the village street into the open country, going more slowly up the hillside, where the early wildflowers were beginning to bloom.

She reached the little hut where Marco slept, nearly at sundown but he was not there, so she sat down to wait for him. The sun was streaming in a golden glory and the Vale of Tempe opened before her as fair as when the god Apollo slept beneath its elms and oaks, wild figs and plane trees. Zoe loved everything beautiful and she sat and looked eagerly at the lovely scene.

"It is almost as pretty as my own Argolis," she said aloud, and then gave a little sigh.

"Still homesick, little one?" Marco's voice said close behind her, and she sprang to her feet in astonishment. He seemed to have sprung from the ground, so quickly had he come upon her.

"Oh, Marco!" she said. "I did not hear you come. I am so glad to see you. It has been lonely at home without you." [49]

"I have missed you, too. It is good of you to come to see me," he said.

"Aunt Anna sent me with fresh cheese and eggs and bread for your supper," she told him. "This is a beautiful place isn't it, Marco?"

"It is indeed," he answered. "Like a fine old man, Mt. Olympus always has snow upon his head. See how the clouds float about the summit; you know that was the home of the gods in the old days. 'Not by wind is it shaken nor ever wet with rain, but cloudless upper air is spread about it and a bright radiance floats over it.'"

"Papa Petro says we must not talk of the gods of olden times, for they were heathen," said Zoe primly. "But they were interesting. Where did you learn so much, Marco?"

"It is not much I know," he said with a laugh. "But when I was in Athens I took service with a man from America. He knew much. He read ancient Greek and when I told him I was a Grecian from near Mt. Olympus, he asked many questions about Thessaly and the way we live here. In return he told me much of our Ancient Grecian stories. He told me of Jason and his adventures after the Golden Fleece, of Perseus and Theseus and many others." [50]

"Tell me some of them," demanded Zoe eagerly.

"Well, Perseus was the son of Danae, and a god was his father. He was taller and stronger and handsomer than any of the princes of the court and the king hated him. But Pallas Athene, the beautiful goddess of wisdom, loved him and helped him and took him under her protection. She gave him a task to perform, to rid the land of the horrible Gorgon Medusa, whose hair was a thousand snakes and whose face was so horrible that no man could look upon it and live. That Medusa might not kill Perseus, Athene gave him a magic shield and told him to look into the shield and seeing there the Gorgon's image, strike! He was to wrap the head in a goat's skin and bring it back. She gave him also Herme, the magic sword, and sandals with which he might cross the sea and even float through the air. They would guide him, too, for they knew the way and could not lose the path. [51]

"So Perseus started out, and he flew through the air like a bird. And many were the dangers which he met, but all he overcame. Far was the journey, but he made it with a light heart. He



went until he came to Atlas, the giant who holds the world on his shoulders, and of his daughters, the gentle Hesperides, he asked his way. And they said to him, 'You must have the hat of darkness so that you can see but not be seen.'

"And where is that hat?' he asked. And Atlas said to him,

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"No mortal can find it, but if you will promise me one thing, I will send one of my daughters, the Hesperides for it.'

"I will promise,' said Perseus. 'If it is a thing I may do.'

"When you have cut off the Gorgon's head, which turns all who see it into stone,' said Atlas, 'promise me that you will bring it here that I may see it and turn to stone. For I must hold up the world till the end of time, and my arms and legs are so weary that I should be glad never to feel again.' So Perseus promised, and one of the Hesperides brought him the hat of darkness, which she found in the region of Hades. Then Perseus went on and on until at last he came to the Gorgons' lair. And he put on the hat of darkness and came close to the evil beasts. There were three of them, but Medusa was the worst, for he saw in the mirror that her head was covered with vipers. He struck her quickly with his sword, cut off her head and wrapped it in the goat's skin. Then, flying upward with his magic sandals, he fled from the wrath of the other two Gorgons, who followed fast. They could not catch him, for the sandals bore him too swiftly. Remembering his promise he came to Atlas, and Atlas looked but once upon the face of Medusa and he was turned to stone. They say that there he sits to this day, holding up the earth. Then Perseus said farewell to the Hesperides, thanking them, and he turned away toward his home.

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"He flew over mountains and valleys by sea and land for weary days and nights. As he came to the water of the blue Aegean sea, there he found a strange thing, for, chained to a rock, was a maiden, beautiful as day, who wept and called aloud to her mother.

"What are you doing here?' demanded Perseus, and she answered,

"Fair youth, I am chained here to be a victim to the Sea God, who comes at daybreak to devour me. Men call me Andromeda, and my mother boasted that I was fairer than the queen of the fishes, so that the queen is angry and has sent storm and earthquake upon my people. They sacrifice me thus to appease her wrath. Depart, for you can be of no help to me and I would not that you see the monster devour me.'

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"I shall help you, and that right promptly,' said Perseus, who loved her for her beauty and her sweetness. So he took his sword and cut her chains in two, and he took her in his arms and said,

"You are the fairest maiden I have ever seen. I shall free you from this monster and then you shall be my wife.' And she smiled upon him, for she loved him for his strength and for his brave words.

"The sea monster was a fearful beast. His jaws were wide open and his tail lashed the waters as he rushed toward the maiden. She screamed and hid her face, but Perseus dropped down from the rock, right on the monster's back, and slew him with his gleaming sword. Then Perseus took Andromeda and flew to her home, and her parents received him with joy, giving him their daughter and begging him to stay with them. That he could not do, because of his promise to Pallas Athene. So he took his bride, and her father gave him a great ship and he returned to his mother like a hero, with his galley and much gold and treasure, the marriage portion of Andromeda. The wicked king was not glad to see him and would have had him killed, but Perseus held up to him the head of Medusa and it turned the king to stone. Then Perseus reigned in his stead, and one night in a dream Pallas Athene came to him and said,

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"You have kept your promise and brought back the Gorgon's head. Give back to me the sword, the sandals, the shield and the hat of darkness, that I may give each to whom it belongs.' And when he awoke they were all gone.

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"Then he went home to his own land of Argos and there he lived in happiness with Andromeda, and they had fair sons and daughters, and men say that when they died they were borne by the gods to the heavens, and that there one can still see, on fair nights of summer, Andromeda and her deliverer Perseus."

"Oh!" exclaimed Zoe, with a long drawn breath of delight. "What a lovely story! But, Marco, why don't people do such brave things as that now days?"

"There are just as brave men now as there were in the old times," said Marco, his eyes kindling. "In my regiment they tell a story of a Grecian soldier in our War for Independence. Beside him marched a comrade, a man from his own island. They had played together as boys and had always been friends. But the other fellow had married the girl whom Spiro loved, and he had a sore heart about that. The regiment was up in the mountains and was attacked by the Turks and Spiro's friend captured. Spiro wept, but that was not all. He went to his captain and begged that he might be sent to the Turks in exchange for his friend. His captain said it was impossible, that the Turks would not accept him in exchange, but would kill both. Spiro said, 'My captain, if they did accept me it would be well. Let me go.'

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"You are a silly fellow,' said the captain. 'I cannot give you any permission. If you can get word to the Turks and they will accept you, then you may go.' This he said because he was sure the Turks would but laugh at such an idea of Spiro. But Spiro thanked him with tears of joy. Then he

went to a man in the regiment who could write. 'Will you write a letter just as I say it?' he asked and his friend said that he would. Here is the letter,

"To the most noble general of the Turks,' it began,

[58]

"I am Spiro Rhizares of the — Grecian Infantry. I salute your Worship. You have captured a man of my regiment, one Yanne Petropoulas. He is a better man than I am but I am good enough to kill. I am taller than he so there is more of me to die. He has a wife and I have not, so there is more need for him to live. Wives take money; he should not be killed, for then there is no one to buy bread and garlic and embroidered kerchiefs for Evangoula. She is a good wife, but even good women must have loukoumi and coloured kerchiefs to keep them good. I ask you therefore to have the great kindness to kill me, *Effendi*, in place of Yanne, and I think he would not object. If therefore, your Worship will consent send me word, but do not speak of it to Yanne, since he might feel a disappointment that he might not die for his country at your most worshipful hands. Asking your Graciousness to send me word when I shall have to the pleasure to be killed, I sign myself, through the hands of a comrade, since I am too ignorant a fellow to write (you see I am fit only to kill),

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With respect,

"SPIRO RHIZARES.'

"This letter Spiro sent through the mountain passes by a shepherd boy and awaited an answer. At last one came. It was short.

"To one Spiro Rhizares, —th, Grecian Infantry.

"SIR:—Since you are wishing to feel the edge of a Turkish scimiter, come and be killed. When you are dead your friend shall go free. This on the honour of a Turk. I promise because I know you will not come. You thought to work on my heart. I have no heart for Greeks. As we will kill all your men in a few months, you may as well die now if you like. Your friend I will send back.

(Signed) SELIM PASHA.'

"Spiro was like a fellow mad with joy. He sent all his money to Evangoula, gave his things to his comrades, and, lest he be hindered, stole off in the night. He reached the Turkish camp and smilingly asked to die quickly that Yanne might quickly go home. But the Turks had other ideas. They tried to buy Spiro to talk about his regiment and tell secrets of the army, promising that both he and his comrade should live, but he said only that he came to die and not to talk, and they could get nothing out of him though they tried in many ways. So at last they cut off his head and set Yanne free. He was in a terrible rage. He said that he never would have consented had they told him. But they only laughed at him and set him outside the camp. And he came back to the regiment, but he was not happy. He grieved for Spiro and made himself ill. Then the captain spoke with him. He told Yanne that Spiro had died for him and that now he must make the life that Spiro had saved of some account. His time in the army was nearly up. He should go home and care for his wife and thus do what Spiro would wish.

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"This will be the only way to win happiness,' said the captain. 'For if you do not do this, your wife will say that Spiro was the better man and that he should not have died, but you.' And Yanne wept, but he did what the captain had said. And that is the end of the story. But all the regiment drink to the eternal health of Spiro Rhizares, the hero."

"Oh, the brave splendid fellow!" cried Zoe. "Indeed, he was as poor, as Perseus. That is the nicest story I ever heard. Thank you so much for telling it to me.

"How did there come to be war with Turkey, Marco?"

"That is a long story, child, but one that you should know. Once, you know, Greece included Macedonia and all the strip of land along the sea as far as Constantinople. But the Turks always wanted Greece and in the year 1453 they came down upon us in a frightful war and took the land. The Turkish rule was horrible. Their rulers knew nothing but to wring money out of our poor people and many Grecians fled to the mountains and became *klephts*.<sup>[11]</sup> These fought always against the Turks and kept ever within them the spirit of freedom. At last they formed the Hetaeria, or Revolutionary Secret Society, and soon Greece was fighting for her independence. Such terrible battles as came; such heroes as there were! It makes one want to shout at the very name of Marco Bozzaris, who surprised the Turks one night at Karpenisi and overcame them.

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"Our people fought like the ancient heroes, but they could not get money to carry on the war. The Turks brought in hordes of soldiers; Greece was plundered and burned; people starved by the roadside, women and children were murdered. At last the nations of Europe said that such things could no longer be, and they joined together to compel the Turks to allow Greece to be free. This the Turks did not wish to do; but France, Russia and England compelled them to permit Greece to have her own government. The Turks gave us back a part of our country and a king was chosen to reign over us.

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"This was better than belonging to Turkey, but it was not enough. We wanted all the land that belonged to us and this we could not get. The island of Crete especially wanted to be Grecian but the Turks would not let it go.

"At last in 1897, came the war in Macedonia, in which our poor soldiers were shot down by the hundred and we had to turn our backs upon the foe. It was then that Spiro Rhizares fought and died, and many, many splendid fellows as brave as he. It was a terrible war, Little One. War is easy when a man marches toward the foe. He is never tired or hungry or footsore. But when he is ordered back and must march away, his knapsack grows heavier at each step; he is hungry and cold and weary, and his heart is within him like lead. Our men could have fought like heroes and Macedonia would now be ours; but the orders came always, 'Retreat! Back to Velestino!' and what could they do?"

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"The Powers forbade the Turks to conquer further, or we might be slaves again. Never mind, the day will come when every Grecian shall arm himself, and the detestable Turks shall be swept from our borders and all Greece shall once more be free!"

Marco's eye kindled and his face flushed.

"Thank you so much for telling me about it, Marco, I hope you'll never have to go to fight, but I wish Greece could have all the land that belongs to her. I am afraid I must go now. Aunt Anna will be displeased if I am late. It is growing dark. Are you not afraid all alone here in the mountains?"

[65]

"Afraid of what, Little One?" asked Marco, his hand on the hunting-knife which he carried in the soft sash at his waist. "You see I am not alone, I have a good friend here."

"Yes, but you might see a bear or a brigand!" she said. "Oh, Marco, what is that?" A tall figure appeared as she spoke from out of the rocks above them. "It is a brigand I am sure!" she whispered and clung close to her cousin.

"Nonsense," he answered. "Nobody ever sees brigands now, Zoe," but as he spoke he tightened his grasp on his dagger and put his arm around his cousin, for every Grecian knows there are brigands in the mountains of Thessaly, though they are much less frequently seen than they used to be.

Zoe gave a frightened gasp, "It is, I know it is! *Pana yea*,<sup>[12]</sup> save me!" she said as the stranger approached, but Marco said pleasantly,

[66]

"*Kalos orsesate!*"<sup>[13]</sup>

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## CHAPTER VI

### TEA WITH A BRIGAND

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THE stranger replied to Marco with "Tee Kamnete"<sup>[14]</sup> and came up close to them. Zoe blessed herself and said not a word.

"Kala,"<sup>[15]</sup> Marco said briefly, and the stranger said,

"It is late for you and your sister to be on the mountain. She is a pretty child."

"Na meen avosgothees,"<sup>[16]</sup> whispered Marco to Zoe, then to the stranger, "Not later than for you."

"But I have business here," he said with a smile.

"And so have we," and Marco's tone was a little curt.

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"My business is to eat supper," said the man. "Will you join me?"

Marco was surprised, but Zoe whispered, "Do not make him angry," so he said,

"Thank you. Zoe has brought me to eat also. Will you not share with us?"

"We will eat together," said the stranger, so they seated themselves upon the green grass and Marco took from the basket Zoe had brought, black bread and cheese for all three.

"This is the best I have, but I am glad to give," he said, for he thought to himself, "He has not a bad face now that one sees him close. In any case it is best to be civil, for bees are not caught with sour wine."

The stranger threw aside his cloak and stood before them in the beautiful national costume of Greece. Zoe thought that she had never seen anything so fine as his clothes. He wore a white shirt, a little black jacket and *fustanellas*, the full white petticoat reaching to the knees, to which Grecian men cling in spite of the fact that it can be soiled in ten minutes while it takes a woman almost as many hours to make it clean again.

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He carried a leather bag over one shoulder, and from this he took a parcel, seating himself beside Zoe and opening it with a gay smile.

"I did not think this morning, when I had this put up, that I should eat it with so dear a little girl," he said. "Perhaps I should have put in Syrian *loukoumi* had I known that you would be here instead of *halva*<sup>[17]</sup> and *tarama*.<sup>[18]</sup> Should I not?"



**"STOOD BEFORE THEM IN THE BEAUTIFUL NATIONAL COSTUME OF GREECE."**

"Halva is very nice," said Zoe shyly. "And I have never tasted *loukoumi* of Syria."

"Have you not? Poor child! Tell me where you live and I will send you a packet of it." [70]

"I live in Karissa, near to Volo," said Zoe with a sweet smile. "The gentleman takes too much trouble."

"I shall certainly do it," he said, "unless I am wrestling with Charos." [19]

"When your soul shall be a Petalouda [20] and your dust shall become myrrh," said Zoe. "On the third day I shall carry raw wheat and a candle to Papa Petro, that he may say prayers for you."

"You are an angel of a child!" there were tears in the man's eyes. "It matters little when Charos comes, since God sends Charos to take souls. It is well if we leave behind us some grateful hearts to say 'may your dust become myrrh.' Come, let us eat. Here is a bottle of *resinato*, [21] bread and *tarama*, with olives and garlic and *halva* for dessert. It is a feast for the gods, yet the best Christian may eat it in Lent." [71]

They ate, the two men chatting together, Zoe listening in silence. It had been long since she had seen such a feast, for bread and eggs were often all that was to be had in her aunt's house, and sometimes there were no eggs.

They sat beneath a giant tree on a carpet of maiden-hair fern; scarlet anemones and heath, orchids and iris bloomed beside them, and the silver tinkle of a waterfall came softly through the evening air. The fragrance of violets was there, and a few early asphodel raised their star-like blooms toward heaven.

"There is no place in all the world like Greece," said the stranger, as he looked down over the beautiful valley. "It was near to here that Cheiron's cave lay, and one can almost see Olympus, home of the gods." [72]

"Who was Cheiron?" asked Zoe.

"Do you not know the story of the Golden Fleece?" said the stranger. "Shall I tell it while we eat?"

"Oh, if you only would?" cried Zoe, and he began.

"Long, long ago, when the gods lived on Olympus, there was a cave in the depths of old Mount Pelion and it was called the cave of Cheiron, the Centaur. Cheiron was a strange being, half horse and half man, for he had the legs of a horse but the upper part of his body was that of a man. He was wise and kind and men called him 'the Teacher.' Many men sent their sons to him to be taught, for he knew not only all the things of war, but music and to play the lyre, and of all the healing herbs, so that he could cure the wounds of men. Among his pupils was a lad named Jason, whose father was Æson, king of Iolcos, by the sea. The wicked brother of Æson had cast him forth from his kingdom, and fearing that Jason would be killed, the father left the lad with Cheiron. Cheiron taught him much, and he learned quickly. He learned to wrestle and box, to ride and hunt, to wield the sword, to play the lyre, and even all that Cheiron knew of healing herbs Jason learned. Jason was happy with Cheiron and loved him, and the youths who dwelt in the Centaur's cave, these he loved as brothers. He was quite content until one day he looked forth over the plains of Thessaly to the south, and as he saw the white-walled town beside the sea, something stirred within him, and he said to Cheiron, [73]

"There lies my home. Now I am grown, I am a hero's son, let me go forth and take my heritage from that bad man who cast forth my father, for I know that one day I shall be king in Iolcos."

"That day is far, far away," said Cheiron, who could read the future. "But it will come. Eagles fly from the nest, so must you fly hence. Go, but promise me this. Speak kindly to each one that you meet and keep always your promises." [74]

"I promise you and I will perform," said Jason, and he bade Cheiron farewell. Then he hurried down the mountain-side, through the sweet-smelling groves where grew the wild thyme and arbutus, beyond the vineyards green in the sun, and the olive groves in fragrant bloom. He came to the river bank, a stream swollen with spring rains and foaming to the sea. Upon the bank was an old woman, wrinkled and gray, and she cried to Jason,

"Good sir, carry me across this stream."

"Jason looked at her, and at first he thought to leave her, for the stream was broad and it

roared over cruel rocks and was heavy with the mountain's melting snow. But she cried pitifully,

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"Fair youth, for Hera's sake, carry me across."

"Now Hera was queen of all the gods who lived on Olympus, and Jason said,

"For Hera's sake will I do much. Cling upon my back and I will carry you across. That I promise you." Then he remembered Cheiron's word and was glad he had answered her softly. He struggled through the foam, but the old woman was heavy and she clung about his neck and seemed to grow heavier. He buffeted the waves and struggled, and twice he thought he must let the old woman go, but he remembered his promise and held her fast, and at last he reached the farther shore and scrambled up the bank. And as he gently set his burden down, lo! she was a fair young woman, and she smiled upon him and said,

"I am that Hera for whose sake you have done this deed of kindness. I will repay you, for whenever you need help call upon me, and I will not forget you." Then she rose up from the earth into the clouds, and with awe and wonder, Jason watched her fade from his sight.

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"Then he went on to Iolchis, but he walked slowly, for he had lost one sandal in the flood. He went into the city and spoke with the king, demanding his realm, and the king was afraid of him, for soothsayers had foretold that a man wearing one sandal should take the kingdom away from him.

"But the king spoke to him kindly and gave him food, and said to him, 'Your father gave me the kingdom of his own free will. See him and ask him if this is not true.' Jason said that he would do so, and he ate with his uncle, and at last the king said,

"There is a man in my kingdom whom I am afraid will cause me trouble if he stays here. What would you do with him were you I? I ask because I know you are wise."

[77]

"I think I would send him to bring home the Golden Fleece," said Jason.

"Will you go?" said the king, and Jason saw that he was caught in a trap, and that his uncle had meant him.

"I will go, and when I return I will take the kingdom," he said, and straightway he made ready. He made sacrifice to Hera, for in those days people killed a lamb in honour of the gods, as we today burn a candle at a shrine. Then he fitted up a ship and sent word to all those princes who had been with him in Cheiron's cave that they come with him on this glorious quest. And they came and all the youths set forth upon a mighty ship. Of the many things that happened to them I have no time to tell, but at last Jason came to the shores of Cutaia, where the Colchians lived. There was the Golden Fleece, but guarded so that no man might take it. There it had been for many years, since King Phrixus had slain the Golden Ram and offered it in sacrifice, and since then all the world had longed to possess the wonderful Golden Fleece.

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"Medea, the king's daughter, saw Jason, and loved him because he was fearless and brave. She was a witch and she helped him with her witchcraft, giving him a magic salve with which he rubbed himself so that no weapon could hurt him, and his strength was as the strength of mighty hills. He who would possess the Fleece must first wrestle with two terrible bulls, then he must sow serpent's teeth in a ploughed field. From the teeth sprang up a field of armed men, and these must be overcome, and then the deadly serpent which guarded the Fleece must be slain. All these things Medea's magic helped Jason to do. He fought with the bulls and conquered them; he harnessed them to the plough and ploughed the field. He hewed down the armed men as if they were stalks of wheat and last of all he sought to slay the serpent. Orpheus, who had been with Jason in Cheiron's cave, went with him to the tree where hung the Golden Fleece. He was the sweetest singer in all the world, and he played soft and sweet upon his lyre and sang of sleep, and the serpent closed his eyes and slumber stole upon him. Then Jason stepped across his body and tore the Fleece from the tree, and he and Orpheus and Medea fled to the ship and away they sailed to Greece again."

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As he finished a sudden sound reached their ears and Marco sprang to his feet.

"A wolf is at my goats!" he cried. "I must go. Zoe, fly quickly down the mountain; but no—it is too late for you to go alone, there are wild beasts abroad. You should not have stayed so late!"

"Go quickly to your goats, Marco. That is your duty. I shall be safe, for I shall pray to the saints and the Holy Virgin, and I shall run very fast."

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"Go to your herd, good shepherd, and I will take your sister home," said the stranger, putting up the remains of his meal, but Marco did not look reassured. He looked helplessly from one to the other. "I may be out all night," he said, when another squeal, sharp and shrill, came through the air.

"Go at once, Marco, I shall be quite safe with this gentleman," said Zoe.

"I will promise that she shall go straight home," said the stranger, and Marco unwillingly turned to the mountain.

Zoe and her strange companion walked hastily down the steep path which led to the village.

"Child," said the stranger, "why did you tell your brother to go? Are you not afraid of me?"



"He is not my brother, but my cousin, and I am not at all afraid," she said.

[81]

"But you were afraid at first," he said. "You thought I was a brigand."

"That was before I had seen your face," said the little girl. "And now that I have seen you and heard you talk, I know that you are not."

"How do you know?" he asked.

"You are a good man, because you keep the Lenten fast, you speak well of God and you are kind to a little girl. So I know you have a white heart. You may perhaps be a brigand, but you are a good one."

He threw back his head and laughed aloud.

"You are a strange little one," he said. "Tell me your name."

"I am Zoe Averoff, of Argolis."

"Zoe Averoff of Argolis! Child, what are you doing here?"

She looked at him in wonder as she answered, "My mother is dead, my father is gone and comes no more; he must be dead too. I live here with my uncle, the father of Marco."

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The stranger's eyes were fixed upon her and she saw them fill with hot tears.

"Child," he said, "I believe you are my little niece. I am Andreas Averoff, and your father was my brother. I feared that I would fail to find you, since all they could tell me at your old home was that you had gone to Thessaly. Do you remember me, since I went to your house once long ago?"

"I know that I had an Uncle Andreas," said Zoe, scarce believing her ears. "But I do not remember him."

"I am that uncle," he said, "and I have come to take you with me to my home. I have a wife and son in Argolis, but our little girl we lost. Will you come and be our daughter, or are you too happy here?"

"I am not too happy," said Zoe, "but it would be hard to leave Marco. He is so good to me."

[83]

"Perhaps your Marco will come with us, for I have money and we can find him better things to do than to fly to the mountains with the shepherds each St. George's Day. Now, take me to your home and tell your aunt what has come of your taking tea with a brigand."

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## CHAPTER VII

### ZOE TAKES A JOURNEY

[84]

THE next few days seemed to Zoe to pass as in a dream. So many things happened which she had never supposed could come to her, that she was almost dazed. Uncle Andreas was such an energetic person that he carried everything his own way. He silenced all objections to his plans, and before the child fairly knew what was happening she had said good-bye to her Thessalonian relatives, and with her new-found uncle and Marco was sailing out of the harbour of Volo on her uncle's ship. She wept a little at leaving her cousins, especially the babycoula, but that Marco was to be with her robbed the separation of half its sting. The future opened before her with much of interest. Unknown lands were to be explored, and to Zoe this in itself was charming.

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"Do you feel as if you were setting out to find the Golden Fleece?" asked Marco as the two sat upon the deck and watched the hills of Thessaly fade in the distance, as they sailed over the blue Gulf of Velos.

"I feel very strange and full of wonder as to what will come next," she said.

"Well, Little One," said Uncle Andreas' hearty voice, "what kind of a sailor are you going to make?"

"Oh, I like it on the sea," she answered brightly. "When we came to Thessaly, Mother was very ill, but I was not at all. I love the salt air, the spray and the feel of the wind on my cheek. It is like a kiss."

"Good girl," her uncle smiled at her. "You are just the one to have a sailor uncle. Many a fine sail shall we have together when we reach our own Argolis. Marco shall be a fisherman and we three shall sail and sail in the roughest weather. They do not know the sea who know her only when she is calm. She is most beautiful when angry. Shall you tire of your long voyage?"

[86]

"Oh, no, Uncle Andreas, I could sail for ever."

The time passed pleasantly for Marco told Zoe pleasant tales of their own beautiful Greece, and her uncle told of roving from shore to shore. He had been a sailor for many years and now owned his own sloop, in which he sailed over the Mediterranean with cargoes of currants and lemons. He had had many adventures, had been shipwrecked upon one of the little islands of the

sea and in his youth had even sailed to America.

"I do not believe that your father is dead," he said to Zoe one day. "He may have written letters which you have never received, but I think if he were dead we would have heard of it. Some day he will come back or we will go and hunt him up." [87]

Zoe's eyes grew large and tender.

"If my father would only come back," she said, "I should never ask the saints for anything so long as I live. But I know I will be very happy with you and Aunt Angeliké."

"Especially as Marco will be there," laughed her uncle, and Zoe laughed too.

"Marco has been so good to me that I would be a strange girl could I be happy without him," she said.

When they sailed into the Gulf of Athens and, rounding the point, she saw the "City of Sails," as it is called from the many boats in the harbour, the little girl could hardly contain herself. She saw for the first time the wonderful marble buildings of the city of Athens, with the Acropolis and the Areopagus, where gleamed the famous ruins of the Parthenon; and to the child, her mind filled with the lore of the long ago, every marble was peopled with heroes, every leaf and bud and bird sang of Pericles and other famous Athenians, as Mt. Olympus and Tempe's Vale had whispered of the gods of old. [88]

Athens is perhaps one of the most interesting cities in the world. The ship anchored in the harbour of Pireas and the three landed in a small boat rowed by Uncle Andreas' stout sailors. Then they drove in a cab between the long rows of pepper trees, Zoe bouncing from one window of the cab to the other in a frantic effort to see both sides of the street at once. The driver drove very fast, calling "Empros!" to any passer who chanced to cross his path, and Zoe wished he would go slowly so that she might see all the wonderful things they passed.

"Oh, Uncle, what is that?" she cried as they passed a procession of men carrying something on a bier.

"It is a funeral," he said.

"Why isn't the coffin covered?" she asked, for as they drew nearer she saw that there was no cover and the dead man lay covered only with flowers. [89]

"The custom of burying the dead without cover arose in the time of the first Turkish war," he said. "The Turks feared that soldiers would get outside of the wall by pretending to be dead and being carried out in coffins. Several famous leaders got out of the city in that manner and stirred up the country people to revolt. So they made a law that people who died must be carried through the streets uncovered and a lid put on the coffin only as it was lowered into the grave. Miserable Turks!" and Uncle Andreas spat on the ground, as every good Grecian does when mentioning the name of his hated enemy. The Turks have always coveted Greece and in the bitter wars between the two countries has been bred a hatred which does not die out as the countries grow older.

"Oh, Marco!" cried Zoe from the other window, "See them cooking in the street! I never heard of such a thing." [90]

"That is quite common," said Marco. "It is not good to have fire in the house, you know, so men make their living by taking stoves around from house to house and cooking whatever people wish for dinner. You see many of the houses are built without any chimneys for the smoke, and when they have stoves in them they have to let the smoke out through a pane of the window. Often it blows back into the room, and so people do not care for stoves. Heat in the house is very bad for the health, you know, so these travelling stove-men make a good living."

"Nearly everything is brought to your door in Athens," said Uncle Andreas. "The street sellers peddle not only everything to eat, but dry goods, notions, hats, shoes, and nearly everything else, from trays hung around their necks."

Suddenly their cab stopped and drew up at the edge of the sidewalk. Zoe wondered what was the matter as she saw the driver take off his cap, and her uncle exclaimed, [91]

"Well, Zoe, you are in luck! Here comes the royal carriage."

"Oh, Uncle, is it the King?" she cried, bouncing up and down with excitement.

"His Majesty, the Queen and Prince Constantine," said her uncle as a handsome carriage drove by. Zoe had a glimpse of a fine-looking man, and a sweet-faced woman gave her a bright smile. Then the cab drove on again and she sat down with a gasp of astonishment.

"Is that all?" she said. "Why, Uncle, it was only a two-horse carriage, and there wasn't any music or soldiers or crowns on their heads or anything!" Her uncle and Marco laughed heartily.

"You are all mixed up, Little One," said Marco. "Crowns on whose head—the horses? Our king is the most democratic monarch in Europe. He often walks around Athens without any one with him at all. He is quite safe, for every one likes him. He likes a joke and does not care at all for fuss and ceremony. They tell a story that one day he was out walking and met an American, who stopped him to ask if it was permitted to see the royal gardens. Of course the American did not [92]

know to whom he was talking, but the king said, 'Certainly, sir, I will show them to you;' and he took him all around the gardens, talking with him pleasantly and telling him many interesting things about Athens. At last the American said,

"What kind of a woman is the queen?"

"She is beautiful and good as she is beautiful," answered the king.

"What about the king?" asked the stranger.

"Oh, he isn't of much account," said King George. "He hasn't done much for the country."

"That's strange," said the American. "You are the first person I have met in Greece who did not speak well of the king." [93]

"Indeed," said the king with a laugh. "Well, I know him better than most people." The man found out afterwards that he had been talking to the king, and he was very much astonished.

"When the king first came to reign," said Uncle Andreas, "people thought he would not be popular. He was a stranger, the son of the King of Denmark, and brother of the Queen of England, but he brought to our country such a magnificent present that our people felt kindly to him from the first. You know the miserable Turks had taken away from us the Ionian Isles, and England had taken them from the Turks and ruled well over them for the years in which they occupied them. When the king came to us he brought to us, a free gift, those beautiful islands, the loss of which every Grecian had mourned for years." [94]

"It is no wonder people like him," said Zoe. "I am so glad I saw him. He has such a nice, kind face, and the queen is lovely."

"She gives much to the poor and is greatly beloved," said Uncle Andreas.

"It should make her very happy to be surrounded by so many who love her," said Zoe softly.

"Angel of a child!" said her uncle. "You shall never be unhappy again if I can help it."

"Oh, I am very happy," she exclaimed. "I was not unhappy at Marco's home, not very," she added truthfully. "Only I wanted my mother, and sometimes I wanted to be where we had been together. I think there are always things we miss, no matter where we are. Now I shall be happy in my own dear Argolis, but I shall still long for my mother and father, and I shall miss the baby-coula."

"You will have your cousin Petro to play with," said her uncle. "He is about your age, and will love you like a sister and tease you like a brother. Come, I know that you and Marco are thirsty. Let us stop here and take a cup of coffee." [95]

"That will be nice," said Zoe who had never seen a coffee-house. They got out of the cab in front of a little shop with little tables at which sat a number of people. They sat down to one of the tables and Zoe watched with delight the making of the coffee. Grecian coffee is made in a peculiar way. The coffee-machine has a round brass cylinder which pulverizes the beans till they are fine as powder. A teaspoonful of powder is used to each cup, and the powder is put in a brass dipper with an equal quantity of sugar. To this is added boiling water and the mixture is put over the fire until it boils. Then it is beaten to a froth and boiled again, beaten again, and boiled and beaten a third time, when it is a thick and delicious syrup. It is said to contain all the good part of the coffee, and taken in this manner not to be injurious at all. In Greece it is taken in great quantities, and this may account for the fact that one almost never sees a drunken man in Greece. Zoe sipped her coffee with delight and ate the *loukoumi* and the handful of pistachio nuts served with it. Then as they sat so quietly, there came to Zoe the greatest excitement of her life. Suddenly there was a great commotion in the cafe; men jumped from their seats, the waiters ran to the door, in the street children shouted and waved their caps, as a cab drove up and from it emerged a young man. He was of medium height, dark-haired, dark-eyed, with a strong, keen face and an air of great simplicity, seeming rather abashed at the shouts which rang through the air, [96]

"Zito, Loues! Spiridione Loues!"

"Zoe, good fortune goes with you!" cried her uncle. "It is Loues, the winner of the Marathon," and he lifted her high in air to see the hero. All Grecians rejoiced to see him, for he had won the Marathon race, when all the other prizes of the Olympian Games had been won by Americans. [97]

"Since the first Olympian Games," said Marco, as the noise quieted down and Loues was allowed to take his coffee in peace, "there has never been such an excitement as there was over Loues."

"Why do we have the Games?" asked Zoe, who could not understand why there was so much fuss over a young peasant whom she thought not nearly so handsome as Marco.

"It comes from the days of ancient Greece," said Marco. "I will tell you of it while we wait for your uncle, who must speak with a friend over there on business."

"In the very old days when men worshipped the gods, there was at Olympia a temple of Zeus, and here men gathered every year to do him honour. The Greeks loved all manner of sports. They wrestled, ran, jumped, and threw the discus better than any people in the world. Their bodies [98]

were strong and beautiful, as we know from the wonderful statues which have been kept in the museums. They loved beauty so much that they did everything to keep their bodies beautiful, fasting, exercising and loving all fine, manly sports. So every four years they had the Olympic Games; and men came from all over Greece to try to win the prizes, for to have the laurel wreath of victory at Olympia placed upon his brow, was the highest honour a man could wish. Envoys were sent out early in the year of the games to invite strangers to witness them, and people came hither from many lands. The victors were crowned and carried in procession with shouts and hand-clapping, honoured by all.

"The games were stopped in the time of the Emperor Theodosius, because he thought them too pagan, and he wished Grecians to put aside pagan things and become Christians. They were begun again in 1896, and now the King takes great interest in them, and so does Prince Constantine. [99]

"Loues won the Marathon race, which is the most exciting of any of the sports. Many, many years ago the Persians were at war with Greece. They had so many soldiers that the Grecians felt certain that their enemy would conquer, but they determined to fight to the death. It was in the fifth century before Christ; Darius, the Persian king, led one hundred thousand men against Miltiades and the Athenians, who numbered only ten thousand men, and they fought a terrible battle on the plains of Marathon. At home the wives and mothers, the old men and children waited, feared and trembled.

"Is there no news from Marathon?' they asked each other. 'Is all lost?' But no answer came. At last they saw a speck of dust in the distance and they held their breath. Was it defeat, dishonour, captivity, which came flying to them from Marathon? None knew. The speck came nearer and nearer, no speck but the figure of a man, running as never man ran before. Breathlessly they waited, no one daring even to speak, as he dashed to the city gates. White with dust he staggered within the wall with one wild cry of 'Victory!' as he fell fainting upon the ground. How men honoured him, the fleet runner who had brought the news from Marathon, where Darius' men lay in mighty heaps of slain, and Greece was free. [100]

"So they made in honour of this victory the Marathon race at the games, and Loues was the proud winner, the prouder because all the other contests, even our Grecian disc-throwing, were won by men from America."

"I am so glad I have seen him," said Zoe. "And thank you for telling me all about it." [101]

Then they started again on their drive and found that the sun was setting. As they drove to the inn where they were to spend the night, he was clothing with a rosy glow Hymettus and Penteligos, the two mountains on either side of Athens. Then the glow faded and a deep purple spread over the sky, deepening into violet. Zoe thought she had never seen anything so beautiful, and she sank to sleep that night, tired but happy, murmuring to herself, "It is my home, this lovely Greece of ours. How glad I am that I am a Grecian."

The two days spent in Athens were full to the brim with delight for Zoe. Her uncle seemed to have money enough to spend freely, and he bought her a new frock, a new hat, and—wonder of delight! red shoes stitched in gold. These came from Shoe Street, where all manner of shoes hung in pairs outside the small doorways of the shops. Her uncle had some business to attend to, and she and Marco wandered about seeing the ruins of the ancient temples, with their wonderful marbles and carvings, which have made the Parthenon of Athens famous all over the world. [102]

The most wonderful things Zoe saw were the peasant dances, and these she stumbled upon quite by accident. Uncle Andreas had gone out to a village north of Athens to attend to some business and had taken Zoe with him. On their way home they saw a crowd at a small village through which they passed.

"I wonder what is happening here?" said Zoe, and her uncle asked the driver of their carriage.

"It is the time of the peasant dances," he said. "If you have never seen them you should stop, for they are very beautiful." So they stopped the carriage and watched the dancing, which was held on a smooth bit of green sward outside the town. Men and maidens danced, hand-in-hand, in long lines, with a slow, dignified grace of motion, the men in *fustanellas*, or some of them in plain European clothes, but the women's clothes were the most beautiful things Zoe had ever seen. Especially lovely were three girls who danced particularly well and were beautifully dressed. Round and round they circled, in a slow, stately movement, to the music of a drum, clarionet and flute. The costumes of the girls were loaded with embroidery, all the work of their own fingers. Their dresses were white, but the embroidery, which reached to nearly a foot above the hems of the skirts, was of coloured woolen, green, blue and gold in the richest of designs. Over the skirts they wore aprons, also embroidered, and sleeveless jackets of white, with red borders embroidered with gold thread. There were caps on their heads, covered with veils which floated back and gave a bride-like appearance to the dancers. Bangles of gold and silver coins hung as necklaces around their throats, and the driver explained that these coins were the girls' dowries and showed how much they were worth to the man who married them. [103]

"I should think anyone would be glad to marry them without any dowry," said Zoe. "They are so beautiful."

"Yes," said her uncle laughing. "But even beauty has to be fed and clothed, and a fair woman is fairer with a good marriage portion." [104]

At last came the day for their departure and they were up and away on the ship, sailing over the blue water.

"Tomorrow we shall be in Argolis, and you will see your new home, Zoe," said her uncle, and she answered, "My old home, too, Uncle. Thank you for bringing me back to it."

They reached the harbour as the moon was rising in the sky, a slender, silver bow such as Diana wielded in the forests of Ephesus. A soft, hazy twilight breathed of fays and nereids, and Zoe imagined that she heard them laughing in the crested waves. She was tired and very sleepy, and her uncle said,

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"We shall soon be there, child, and your aunt will be waiting for us with a good supper."

She smiled a little, but her footsteps lagged as they walked up the steep village street. Marco bent down to look at her face, then he stooped and lifted her in his strong arms.

"She is tired out. I will carry her," he said, and Zoe heard nothing more, for her head fell on his shoulder and she fell asleep, until a kind voice said,

"Oh, Andreas, is that you?" Then two warm arms were around her and a soft voice said close to her ear, "Is this my little girl?" She looked up to see a lovely woman's face above hers; then she cuddled down in the tender arms of Aunt Angeliké happier than she had been since her mother died.

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## CHAPTER VIII BY THE SEA

[107]

A MONTH in Argolis found Zoe rosy, happy and quite unlike the sad-faced little maid who had tended the babycoula in far-away Thessaly. Uncle Andreas soon went to sea again, taking Marco with him; but Aunt Angeliké was kindness itself and Zoe's cousin, a merry boy of ten, proved such a delightful playfellow that the two soon became fast friends.

Their home was on a pleasant village street, where a huge plane tree hundreds of years old shaded the little balcony which extended from the second story out over the street. Near-by was the village fountain, a meeting place for old and young, for all the water used for cooking had to be carried from the fountain in water-jars.

[108]

Aunt Angeliké was young and full of laughter. She was much younger than her husband, and seemed to Zoe almost like her cousin Maria. She entered into everything the children did, and added to their enjoyment by her pleasure in their happiness. She made play even of work, and Zoe enjoyed nothing more than the family washing-day. This occurred only once a month, but that was far oftener than many of their neighbours washed their household linen.

Aunt Angeliké went to the mountain stream which gurgled down to the sea over rocks and pebbles, clear and limpid, reflecting the blue sky and white clouds.

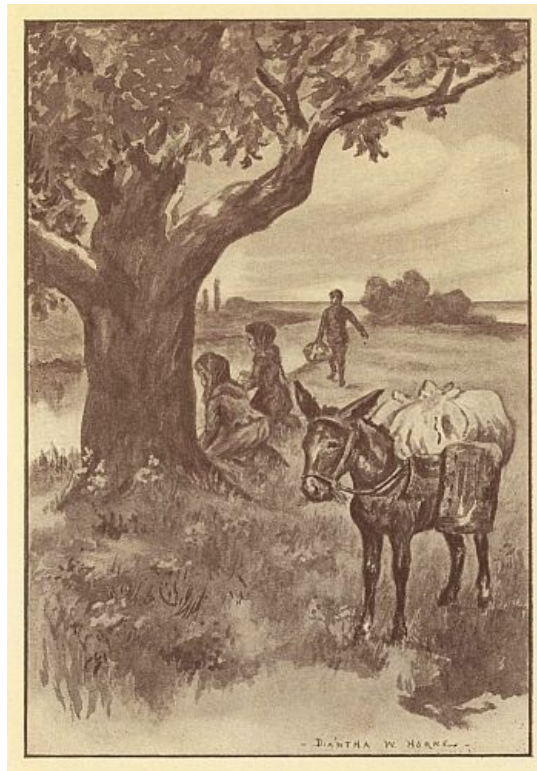
They washed beneath a huge plane tree, the largest one Zoe had ever seen, and about whose trunk she and Petro together with arms extended could not reach. The linen had been brought up the hill on the back of a little donkey which the children often rode. First Aunt Angeliké soaked the clothes in lye water, then boiled them and laid each piece upon the stones to be beaten with a paddle.

"Now, Zoe and Petro, it is your time to help," she said laughing. "Beat them until they are clean and white. Your uncle's *fustanellas*, Child, take great pains with them. Of all things they must be clean."

"I shall make them perfect," said Zoe, "and Marco's also." And she beat and paddled the skirts until they were as white as the snow on Mount Olympus.

"There, that will do. Now spread them out to dry," said Aunt Angeliké, and Zoe and Petro laid the clothes about on the grass and bushes, the *fustanellas* alone covering yards and yards of the green.

"Let us rest," said Petro, throwing himself down beneath the tree. "I am tired."



[109]

"THEY WASHED BENEATH A HUGE PLANE TREE."



"You are a lazy one," said his mother, seating herself beside him. "Next you will want to eat."

[110]

"That I do," cried Petro, sitting up hastily and forgetting his fatigue. "What have you, little mother?"

"Now you are a greedy," said his mother, laughing at him.

"But tell me," he said coaxingly, laying a hand on her arm.

"Nay, Zoe is quiet and polite, she shall be helped first," said the mother, and she drew a basket of luncheon from its hiding-place within the hollow trunk of a tree. There was bread, cheese, olives and fresh *moussoula*, the most delicious of Grecian fruits, yellow as gold, with four huge seeds within and a juice cool and refreshing. They ate with health and laughter for sauce, and then Zoe begged for a story. "Just one, my aunt, before we take a siesta."

"I shall tell you of the good Saint Philip," said the aunt, who was very pious and thought that children should always be told holy tales to make them think of good things.

[111]

"St. Philip was always very sorry for the poor. He was himself very good, and though he had once had many *drachmas* he had given away so much that he had hardly a *lepta* left. He had even given away his food, and kept for himself only a cow, living upon the milk to keep himself from starving. One night he slept and dreamed a strange dream. He thought that he went to heaven and that our Lord did not smile upon him. Instead he turned away his face. But the great St. Petro said, 'Our Lord, this is Felipo, lover of the poor. Wilt thou greet him?' 'He loved the poor, but himself he loved more,' said our Lord with sadness, and St. Philip awoke with a start. At that moment there came a loud 'moo!' from without his hut, and he jumped to his feet and said,

"'It is the cow! I have no need for a cow when God's poor starve! I will kill her and let the starving eat!' So with grief in his heart, for he loved the animal dearly, he slaughtered her and divided the meat among his poor. That night he went to bed hungry, for he had no milk for his supper, but his heart was full of joy, for he felt the satisfaction of those who 'give to the poor and lend to the Lord.'

[112]

"He slept without dreaming and was awakened in the morning by a familiar sound. It was the 'moo moo' of his cow without his door, and he said to himself, 'Of a truth I dream, my poor cow is dead!' but again he heard the call, 'Moo moo!' and he looked out of the window. There stood his friend and favourite, at the door of her little shed, awaiting her morning meal. He could not believe his eyes, but the cow was hungry and did not at all like being left to stand at the door until her master made up his mind that she was not a ghost. She stamped the ground with her foot and mooed again, this time very loud. 'It is indeed she,' cried the saint. 'Now is the good God good indeed! I have fed his poor and he has rewarded me by restoring life to my favourite. Always hereafter shall I believe in his mercy.'"

[113]

"Oh, what a nice story!" cried Zoe, but Petro said,

"If God could do anything, why didn't He keep the cow from being killed. It must have hurt her!"

"You are a heathen!" said his mother. "You talk like an unbelieving Turk! Since God can do anything He doubtless kept the knife from hurting her when she was killed. It is not well to talk so of the stories of the saints."

"I like stories of battles better," said Petro, still dissatisfied, but his mother said,

"I tell no more stories to boys who do not like holy things, and now it is siesta time." So they slept beneath the great tree, and all was still, save the splash of the waterfall and the hum of the bees, in the hearts of the scarlet poppies. When they awoke it was late in the afternoon and many of the clothes were already dry.

[114]

"Let us go down to the beach and fish!" said Petro.

"But you will fall in!" said his mother.

"Oh, no, Mother," said Petro. "But if I do it will not hurt."

"Wait a little and I will go with you, that at least I may be there to pull you out," said Aunt Angeliké, laughing. She had not great faith in her boy's promises, for she had lived with him for ten years and knew that he was always in head-first when there was any danger. Petro was a gay little fellow—happy and full of laughter, and he and Zoe played together always pleasantly. So they ran about under the trees while Aunt Angeliké sorted her linen into piles ready to pack upon the donkey's back for their return.

[115]

"We shall catch a fish and roast him for supper, then go back by moonlight," she said, always ready to give the children pleasure, and both thought the plan delightful.

"You can't catch me," shouted Petro as he darted away from Zoe, and she chased him about until both fell panting upon the grass.

"See that boat," said Zoe. "How pretty it looks! Its sails look like great wings spread over the sea. Look! It is coming here!"

"No," said Petro. "I think it will anchor and send in a boat. Yes, there come two men. They have

a fishing-net set here and are coming to see what they have caught. See!"

Two sailors sprang from their boat on the beach and started to haul in a seine. Zoe gave one look at them and was off like an arrow from a bow, crying, "Marco! It is Marco!" Petro following not less quickly, calling, [116]

"Father! We are here! Mother and I are here!" The two men turned in astonishment to see the two flying figures, and gay Uncle Andreas cried,

"Beware, Marco! The Turks are upon us!" As the two little folk hurled themselves into the arms awaiting them.

"Oh, Marco, my own dear Marco! I am so glad to see you! It is so long since you went away!" cried Zoe, while Petro said,

"Were you coming home tonight? What did you bring me?"

"We were coming home tonight to surprise you, but it seems we are the ones to be surprised," said his father. "How came you here?"

"Mother brought the washing and we have been here since morning," said Petro. "We hoped to catch a fish for our supper and walk home by moonlight."

"We shall do better than that," said his father, as his mother came hastily down the hill to greet them. "How would it please you to eat one of my fish, when we have cooked it, and then sail home with us in the boat?" [117]

"Oh!" squealed Zoe.

"That will be fine!" cried Petro, but Aunt Angeliké said,

"The fish and the supper, yes—but what will we do with my white clothes and the donkey?"

"We shall send the donkey home on his four feet and the clothes on his back, both in charge of one of my sailors," laughed kind Uncle Andreas, and so it was settled.

They had a merry supper on the beach, and the fresh *lithrin*<sup>[22]</sup> made a delicious meal, roasted over a fire laid on the stones. Other good things were brought from the ship until Zoe declared she had never seen such a feast.

"Does she not look well, Marco?" said Aunt Angeliké, and Marco replied, [118]

"Like a different child. Naughty Zoe, you did not like Thessaly!"

"But I like you," said Zoe sweetly, and Uncle Andreas said teasingly,

"Thessaly! Who could like Thessaly! It has been ruled by the Turks! Our Argolis has never known the heel of the Unspeakable!"

"Then it was not worth their wanting," said Marco in return. "And Thessaly has cast them out!"

"Do not quarrel," said Aunt Angeliké. "It is all our own land and the sea is always ours."

So they started homeward over the dancing waves, blue as heaven and as peaceful, and Zoe's little heart was filled to the brim with happiness.

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## CHAPTER IX

### AUTUMN PLEASURES

[119]

THERE WAS no lack of work in the little house beneath the plane tree. Aunt Angeliké was a busy housewife and cared not at all for drones in her hive. She herself worked, and those with her must work too, but she had a happy fashion of making work seem like play. She knew how to spin and to weave both cloth and carpet, so her loom was kept busy with its cheerful whirring. She also sewed and embroidered, and all this useful handiwork she taught to Zoe.

"Soon it will be fall, and you will go to school," she said. "Now is the time to learn things of the house. Girls should not learn too much of books. It is not good for them. I knew a girl who could read hard books with very long words, and what came of it? It made her no fairer to look upon, and her father had to give a large dowry to get her married. Often I saw her at midday with a book in her hand and the house not half neat. Do you think it pleased her husband? His time was spent in the coffee-house, where it was pleasant and people talked instead of reading. It is best for women to talk and spin and cook; these things are of some account. Men cannot do them, so leave to men the books." [120]

So Zoe learned much and worked happily, but played also. Petro was a delightful playmate, and the two ran and raced in the sun, happy and gay. To be sure they got into mischief. Petro could think of more things to do in a minute than poor little Zoe could in an hour. She never intended to be naughty, which, however, could not be said of her cousin. He enjoyed more than anything finding out what would happen if he did things, and he dragged Zoe with him into many [121]

a scrape, knowing that he was not likely to be punished if she was with him in any iniquity.

He was really the village mischief, but so friendly a little chap, with such an engaging smile for all the world that he seldom got his deserts. To be sure, he was a kind-hearted boy, and his mischief seldom hurt anybody. He tied a bell to the wrong goat so that the herd which brought milk to the village (for the goats were milked in the streets every morning instead of the milk being carried around in a cart) went blindly after the bell-goat and lost itself by going to the wrong stable. Another day Petro persuaded Zoe to fish, and left her to watch the lines while he went off and forgot all about her in some new prank. She caught a devil-fish, and as Petro had told her on no account to let go of the line if she had a bite, but to pull in as fast as she could, when she felt a pull at the hook she obediently pulled in the horrid thing. Then she screamed in fright.

[122]

"It is the Old Get Away From Here!"<sup>[23]</sup> she screamed. "Petro! Petro!" Naughty Petro was far away and did not hear. The beast was black, with long legs which wriggled and squirmed and sprawled over the sand until she was sick with horror. It seemed like a dozen snakes all joined to one body, and Zoe had never seen anything so horrible. It tried to reach the water, and the little girl thought it was coming for her. She screamed again in such an agony of fright that a man passing ran to see what was the matter.

"It's surely the Old Get Away From Here I have caught!" she cried. "Oh, please take him off my hook and throw him back into the sea."

"It is but a devil-fish, child," he said. "They are good to eat. I will take him off and kill him for you, and you will then have a good dinner."

[123]

"Oh, I could not eat it!" said Zoe. "Thank you ever so much," and she took her lines and ran home to Aunt Angeliké. That good woman threatened dire things to Petro, but as he was not on hand to receive them she had forgotten all about it when he did appear. Truth to tell, Petro seldom received a back judgment that was due him, for there was always one right at hand, so that the past was overlooked.

The next scrape which overtook Zoe was of a more serious nature. She and Petro had gone one day to burn a candle in the little church, it being Zoe's saint's day. This accomplished, they sat down to rest under the great tree which held the church bell. These tree *campaniles* are often found in Greece and are very quaint and pretty. The bell hangs aloft under a little wooden roof, and is rung by means of a bell-rope which hangs down among the branches.

[124]

It was hot and Zoe was tired with the long walk up the hill.

"Let's take a little nap," she said to Petro.

"Very well!" said that youngster. If Zoe had not been so sleepy she would have suspected that Petro's unusual readiness to keep quiet meant that he was planning to do something especially naughty. But she merely thought he was tired, and closing her eyes, was soon sound asleep.

No sooner was he sure of her slumbers than Petro climbed up in the tree to see what the great bell was like. He had always wanted to do it but had never had a chance before. It was not very exciting up there, however, and he climbed down again. Then it occurred to him that it would be interesting to tie Zoe up with the bell-rope and see what she would do. So very cautiously, for fear of waking her, he tied the rope around her waist. Then he thought better of it and tried to untie it, but he had made the knot too tight and in working at it he wakened Zoe. She sprang to her feet, and in so doing pulled the bell-rope. The church bell rang with a wild clamour, Papa Demetrios came rushing from his house to see what was the matter, after him came the *papadia*<sup>[24]</sup> and all the children, while from the village a troop of urchins, followed by older people, came hastily up the hill.

"Is it a fire?" they called. "Has news come from the king?" cried another. "What is wrong in the village?" cried Papa Demetrios. Nobody could give any answer to these questions, and poor Zoe meanwhile rang the bell louder and louder in her efforts to free herself from the strange thing that bound her. At last she tripped over the rope, fell, and sat in a heap on the ground, crying bitterly, but otherwise quiet. So was the bell. So were all the people. Then Papa Demetrios spoke very sternly.

"What does all this mean?" Nobody answered, for nobody knew. At last Petro spoke.



[125]

"SHE SPRANG TO HER FEET, AND IN SO DOING PULLED THE BELL-ROPE."

[126]

"If you please," he said in a low voice, "I think it is my fault."

"Did you ring the bell?" demanded the priest.

"No," said Petro. Then with an air of engaging frankness, "but I caused Zoe to ring it. You see, I tied her to the bell-rope."

"You are a—" Papa Demetrios' words failed him. "I have said that the boy who rang this bell should be whipped."

"Yes," Petro's tone was respectful, but his eyes were dancing, "but Zoe is not a boy."

"That is true." The priest's face wore a puzzled look. He glanced at Zoe, now standing before him tear-stained and shame-faced; he looked at Petro. Then memory took the kind old priest back to the days when he himself had been the village mischief, and Petro met his eyes and found therein an answering gleam. [127]

"You are a naughty boy!" said Papa Demetrios. "But since you have told the truth and not had the meanness to hide behind a girl, you shall not be punished this time. Tell your cousin that you are sorry for what you have done to her, and beware that you do not touch my rope again."

"Yes, your Grace," said the boy. "But why do you let your rope hang down just where any boy would want to ring it?"

"That I do not know," said the priest, with again the twinkle in his eye. "I suppose it is too much for meddling fingers. Hereafter we shall remedy that." So he cut the rope off so short that no one could reach it, and he made a pole with a hook in the end with which to reach it himself, which pole he kept in the priest's house, so that no boys rang the church bell thereafter. And people went back to their work, shaking their heads and saying, "What will become of Petro Averoff? He will grow up to be a vagabond." To which one answered, [128]

"Doubtless he will go to America, so it will matter little!"

Aunt Angeliké was anything but pleased with Petro's escapade and said severely,

"You are indeed a naughty boy. You shall be punished by staying home tomorrow while I take Zoe to the currant picking."

"Oh, mother!" Petro's face fell.

"Oh, Aunt Angeliké!" cried Zoe. "Please let him go! I would not enjoy it without him. Besides—" she added in a whisper—"what do you suppose he would do in mischief if you left him behind?"

"God only knows," she responded. "Really, I dare not leave him." But aloud she said, "Since your cousin insists, I shall take you," and Petro grinned, for the whispers had by no means been lost to him. [129]

The time of currants is one of the happiest seasons for little Grecian children, for the fruit is delicious and it hangs in great clusters upon the bushes. The fruit is called "Corenth," named from the city of Corinth, and the currant trade is among the best in Greece, over a hundred and seventy tons being gathered each year.

The currant bushes are planted in rows three feet apart, like the Italian grape-vines, and grow on a single stalk which is trimmed down each year so that the roots may be strengthened.

Shoots spring up in March and April, and by the last of August the bushes are loaded with fruit, light and dark varieties. Women break the earth and heap it around the bushes during the growing season, indeed, women do much of the field work in Greece, and it seems to agree with them, for Grecian women are nearly always healthy, though this may be due to the beautiful climate. [130]

Both drought and rain are bad for the currant crop, and the heavy winds often blow the fruit off the bushes, but even with these drawbacks, the currants are sent to England, America and France, besides the Mediterranean countries, and the finest currants in the world come from Greece.

Zoe helped her aunt with the picking, for Uncle Andreas owned a currant plot, and everybody was needed to help get the fruit in after it was ripe. It was a delightful outing into the country for the little girl, and she enjoyed the picking and the lunch in the open air, which they ate seated upon blocks of white marble, the ruins of what had once been a beautiful temple. Petro was on his good behaviour and did nothing worse than fall off a column and scratch his nose, and a fall from Petro was such an everyday occurrence that no one, least of all the boy himself, paid any attention to it. [131]

"Well, child," said her aunt, as they went homeward that night. "Have to-day's pleasures made up for yesterday?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. I have had a beautiful time," said Zoe. "Thank you ever so much for taking me to see the currant picking."

## CHAPTER X

### A HAPPY EASTER

[132]

IT was Easter time. All through the winter with its strict Lenten fast, Zoe had looked forward to the feast, while Petro had kept the fast days under his mother's strict supervision until he said he was ready "to eat a lamb's bones for Easter breakfast." All Grecians eat lamb at Easter time, and from every house in the village on Holy Saturday can be heard the bleating of imprisoned sacrifices ready to be slain for the morrow's festivities.

Uncle Andreas and Marco were to be at home in the early morning, and Zoe was happy in the thought of seeing them. The little house was clean and neat, and Zoe with a light heart followed Aunt Angeliké up the hill to the church, whose bells called sleepily to the midnight Mass.

[133]

Bright were the stars, and in the sky soft as the ocean, the moon full and radiant in beauty. The climb to the church at the top of the hill was steep, but many of their friends were climbing too, for all the villagers turned out to the service, since no Grecian would willingly miss it.

They reached the open square before the church just as the Mass began. Zoe entered behind her aunt and kissed the *eikon* at the door, taking from the server a long taper of yellow wax and holding it unlighted, as did everyone else. Then the priest came to the altar carrying a lighted taper, and all the altar boys, of whom Petro was one, scrambled excitedly to see who could get his candle lighted first. Petro was the lucky one, and it was his proud duty to light the candles of the waiting worshippers.

When all were lighted the priest led the procession, every one bearing his taper alight, out into the square. Zoe thought she had never seen anything so wonderful as the square all aglow with dancing, flickering lights, in the centre the catafalque of Christ draped in deepest black. Upon this had been laid the cross with the image of Christ sawed out of a flat board with the face painted on it. The Greek Church does not approve of the use of statues, taking literally the verse of Scripture, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," and this painted figure is the nearest to an image ever used in the Grecian churches.

[134]

The choir was singing their minor chants, the censers were swinging back and forth in a cloud of incense, the candles were flaring and flickering. As soon as one went out a bystander gave of his holy fire and it was relighted. One by one the worshippers came forward, knelt and kissed the cloth which covered the catafalque, blessing themselves as Papa Demetrios sprinkled them with holy water, and all the time the strange, rhythmic chant of the choir continued.

[135]

Zoe prayed earnestly and gave little heed to the service, so that she did not notice that in the crowd she was separated from her aunt. It was nearly time for the close of the service and she felt in her pocket to see if she had her hard-boiled egg. It would be a dreadful thing if she had forgotten it. But it was there, and she smiled to herself that the happy day would soon come.

All over Greece, in every province, thousands of Grecians break a hard-boiled egg when the bells ring on Easter morning, a custom which has been handed down for centuries. The Grecians say that one must always eat hard-boiled eggs on Easter morning, and bowls of them are found in every house on that day. The custom arose in memory of a miracle performed when the Turks ruled in Greece. A Turkish woman was carrying an apronful of eggs on Easter day and was met by a Grecian who politely saluted the infidel, "Christ is risen!"

[136]

"Risen indeed!" said the unbeliever. "I shall never believe that until these eggs in my apron have turned red."

"Open thine apron and see!" said the Grecian, blessing herself as she spoke, and lo! the eggs were red as blood! The unbeliever straightway believed, and from that day red eggs have been eaten at Easter.

Suddenly Papa Demetrios raised his hand and blessed the people, saying in a loud voice, "Christos Aneste!" Immediately the bell-ringer seized the bell-robe which hung from the great tree beside the church, and rang the bell in a wild and joyous clamour. All over the land, far and near, other bells were rung, and from every voice on the square went up the glad shout, "Christ is risen! Christ is risen!" Boys threw torpedoes at the white walls of the church and in the distance could be heard the sound of guns and fire-crackers, and everywhere was the wildest joy.

[137]

Zoe's taper suddenly went out.

"Aunt Angeliké," she said, "please light my taper." Her aunt did not answer, and looking hastily over her shoulder, Zoe saw that she was not there and around her surged the crowd. For a moment she was frightened, then she said to herself,

"There is nothing to fear. I must not be afraid. I shall soon find her," and she turned here and there, but could find no trace at all of her aunt.

"Can she have started home without me?" she thought, and tried to reach the edge of the crowd. Her foot caught against a branch of olive thrown down, and she stumbled and would have fallen had not a strong arm caught her.

"Oh, thank you," she cried as she struggled to her feet, to find herself in the grasp of a bearded stranger who looked at her so strangely that she wondered what was the matter.

[138]



"Your name, child, what is your name?" he demanded.

"My name is Zoe Averoff," she said. "I must find my aunt. Please let me go." He held her arm so tightly and looked at her so strangely that she was frightened.

"I shall never let you go!" he exclaimed. "Zoe! Zoe! do you not know me?" Something in the voice seemed strangely familiar. She looked into his face, into the dark eyes which looked with such love and longing into hers, then she gave a glad cry,

"My father! oh, my father!" and his arms closed around her.

"Such a happy Easter!" said Aunt Angeliké, as Sunday morning dawned clear and beautiful. "My husband and Marco at home, Zoe's father come back to the child, Petro behaving not worse than usual and the Easter lamb roasting a perfect brown as I baste it with the lemon dipped in lard." [139]

"Was it not wonderful that my father found me at Easter time?" said Zoe, a strangely radiant Zoe, with shining eyes and brilliant cheeks. "He had been ill for weeks in a strange place they call Chicago. There he met a Grecian from Argolis and from him he heard that the news had come from Thessaly that my mother and I were dead. At that he did not want to return home, but he wrote several times to Uncle Georgios to hear of us and had no answer. Of course those letters never came. At first he sold things from a little cart in the streets. Then he saved money and with another Grecian he had a shop with flowers to sell. The Americans are strange people. They have money to throw away! They buy fruit and flowers all the time. Think of so strange a country where one buys what here one may take with but a 'thank you' for pay! In the flower shop he made much money. But he was always sad. The money was of little good, since he had no one to share it with. Then he grew very homesick. He wanted once more to see Argolis and to sail on the blue seas of Greece. So he sold his flowers to his partner and took all his *drachmas* and returned home. He thought to spend his Easter here and go then to Thessaly to hear of my mother and myself and how we came to die. Then as Papa Demetrios said, 'Christ is risen!' lo! there was I risen from the dead." [140]

"I thought it was a miracle," said her father. "For though the child is grown older, she is just like the Zoe whom I left, and to see alive her whom I thought dead was indeed a marvel."

"Shall you return to that far land?" asked Uncle Andreas, "and take Zoe from us?"

"Not so," said Zoe's father. "I shall stay here and have a fishing-boat, for home is best and I think Zoe would not be happy so far away." [141]

"I am glad you will not take her from us," Aunt Angeliké said sweetly. "I have learned to love her as my daughter."

"I am glad, too," said Marco, and Uncle Andreas laid his hand upon her curls, saying, "We all love the child."

Zoe smiled happily and nestled up to her father.

"Such a happy, happy Easter," she said. "I have nothing in all the world to wish for."

"Then wish for dinner," said Petro. "It seems to me that lamb will never be done."

"You are a Turk!" said his mother, laughing, and all laughed too, all except Petro, for his mother had called him the very worst thing which one can call our little Grecian Cousin.

THE END.

### FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Pet name for a baby as we would say "Babykins."
- [2] Sumadhe is a sweetmeat and mastika a cordial.
- [3] The Grecian equivalent of "Pattycake, pattycake."
- [4] Loukoumi is a paste made of sweet gums, sugar, rosewater and nuts.
- [5] Dowry.
- [6] Wedding things.
- [7] A Grecian coin worth about twenty cents.
- [8] God-father.
- [9] Small copper coin.
- [10] All Holy One.
- [11] Brigands.
- [12] Holy virgin.

- [13] Welcome.
- [14] How do you do?
- [15] Well?
- [16] Said to avert the evil eye.
- [17] A kind of paste eaten on fast days.
- [18] A sea food.
- [19] Dying.
- [20] Butterfly, a Grecian superstition being that the soul becomes a butterfly after death.
- [21] Grecian wine with resin in it.
- [22] A Grecian fish.
- [23] Grecian way of speaking of the Evil One.
- [24] Priest's wife.

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[A-1]

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[A-2]

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[A-3]

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[A-5]

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[A-6]

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