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LETTERS FROM CRETE.

LETTEBS WRITTEN DURING THE SPRING OF 1886.

BY

CHARLES EDWARDES.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.
1887.

TO

COUNT ANGELO MANZONI,

OF BOLOGNA AND SAN ZACCAKIA.

My clear Manzoni,

It increases the pleasure of my memories of Crete that I am able to share them with you by thus signing myself

Affectionately yours,

CHARLES EDWARDES.

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INTRODUCTIQN.

CRETE is so charming a country that I hope I may find forgiveness for imposing upon the public a memorial of the bright days I have spent in it. The pity is that this beautiful land should perennially be in a state of political unrest. Hard things have been said of Crete and the Cretans ; but in relation to this island, Fate seems even more unkind than man. In the first ages of European history, a prey to despots of the most despotic stamp ; and now, in these latter days, still a slave, though a privileged one ! Strange that a country which classical myth has honoured above every **other division of the world, should** have suffered so much in the past, and should know so little of the happiness of contentment in the present !

As for the political future of Crete, that will be **a** matter of schemes and conjecture so long as the Ottoman **flag** flutters dominant over the towns of the island. Thirty years ago the Emperor of

Russia thought to gain British sufferance and goodwill by promoting (as part of a *quid pro quo)* the cession of Crete from moribund Turkey to Great Britain. But the Crimean War proved the visionary nature of this little plan of Nicolas I. Even now, in 1887, the Turkish Empire still holds together, after a fashion. To the majority of the Cretans themselves, no doubt it seems the most obvious thing in the world that they should revert to the King of the Hellenes as soon as they have slipped off the loose chains of the Sultan. France openly backs them in this assumption ; but it is hard to say if France is quite so disinterestedly Philocretan as she pretends to be. The political agents from Athens have dinned it into their ears until they have accepted it as their inevitable lot. But the simple-natured Cretans have no real conception of what would come upon them with such a change of suzerainty. They are fatally susceptible to rhetoric, and are, therefore, to a great extent, puppets in the hands of the rhetorical Athenians, who come to them with all manner of plausible words on their tongues. They listen only too ingenuously to these intrigants of modern Greece, who profess such hot and generous eagerness to enlarge the bounds of the kingdom of Greece — seemingly heedless or

unaware that the maladministration of a small territory affords no very reasonable claim to the administration of a larger territory. However, time will settle the question, and it is well for Crete that certain of the wiser and more philosophical Cretans are content to leave such settlement to time. Why should they not, to the very last moment, enjoy the unique pleasure of attracting the sympathies of every enlightened European, and the consciousness all the while that in every essential particular they are happier than they can hope to be when there is no Sultan at Constantinople? But of course the day is not with the philosophers; and so we may at any hour look for the outbreak, upon one pretext or another, of the last of the long list of insurrections, for which alone unhappy Crete has been famous during these latter centuries. The Cretans have an appalling record against their rulers, and until human nature is displaced by divine nature, they are not likely to forgive the Turks their wrongs of the past. The writer will be glad if the following 'Letters' may in any degree serve to inform Englishmen of this relationship, in the past and the present, between the Christians and the Moslems of Crete.

In conclusion, my best thanks are due to Mr.

Kopassis, of Canea, for the use of his library of Cretan books; to Madame de SchWartz, Mr. Biliotti (her Majesty's Consul in Crete), and Mr. Almond, for the invaluable help *1* received at their hands; and to Lord Rosebety for allowing me to examine and extract from ft recent consular report, at present among the imprinted MSS. of the Foreign Office, on the conventual establishments of Crete. Mr. Stillman's account of the last insurrection has also been very useful; and whoever possesses Mr. Curzon'i* ' Visits to the Monasteries of the Levant/ will see at once that I owe not a little inspiration *to* that excellent work.

WOLVERHAMPTON,
February 22, 1887.

LETTERS FROM CRETE.

*****

LETTER I.

Steamship *Tibisco*—Company on Board—First Look at Crete—Difficulties of Speech—The Corfu Schoolmaster—Ashore in Canea.

As a beginning, you will probably want to hear what I have to say about Athens. But, I pray you, do not press me on this subject. Rather, choose a time when you do not feel very well, or have had a disappointment the bitterness of which seems immeasurable, and find yourself strangely melancholy. Thus conditioned, take Wordsworth's 'Greece' (for the sake of the pictures) and as many handbooks as you can discover (for the sake of the facts, or their diversity of reasoning about the facts), and lock yourself up for a steady spell of reading. After this, the difference between us will be one of degree only : your ideas will be my impressions.

We left the Piraeus for Crete just a day late.

The weather was mirky, and the sight of Hymettus, the Plain, the Rock of Lycabettus, and even the sacred Acropolis itself, was hardly more emotional than Woolwich or Greenwich in a fog. A steady drizzle soon made the deck so slippery that I was glad to go below.# Our ship was an old Danube steamer called the *Tibisco,* able to roll in the calmest sea, and quite used to being execrated by every passenger who crosses the Ægean in her. The ship's officers had not a good word to say for the poor thing ; a sly smile and a shrug of the shoulders was the nearest approach to praise they could bestow upon it.

Our company was small indeed : a lady' whose husband is in the Cretan Consular Service; an Athenian young gentleman whose aims soon declared themselves, though he was diplomatically cautious at the outset;. and, lastly, myself. The lady was a Russian, with a most marvellous talent for conversation. She talked with everyone, and, without saying anything very informing on her own behalf, she cleverly unkernelled her interlocutors ; so that after a while she was looked at a little askance. I was an infant in her hands. At first I pleaded ' poor French;' and she knew no English. But at dinner she soon found out that my French, bad as it was, could be understood.

[6] So you are going to Crete, monsieur, without any political mission, but for pleasure alone? Oh, how charmed you will be with the beautiful country! And you think nothing will happen to embarrass you while you are on the island *V* ,

I assured her I had nothing to do with Mr. Gladstone, and her brisk rejoinder of 'Certainly not, monsieur/ clinched the matter, and betrayed her Philottoman tendencies.

The young Athenian was going to Crete to stir up an insurrection, if he could manage it. He was already very exasperated with England, and made a great noise with his patriotic orations when coffee was on the table.

'She is little, and she is brave! She is willing to fight and suffer the consequences if Turkey wins. Why, then, do not the Powers let us fight it out by ourselves *V*

He here alluded to Greece, not Crete; but with him it was all one; nor would it be his fault if the two nationalities did not make common cause against their common enemy.

His curiosity about me was delightful. * What, sir, *are* your affairs in Crete *V* He could not understand that an Englishman's whim should take him there for other than political reasons, and eventually

he dismissed me from his mind by saying, as if to himself: 'Then you are concerned with the ships at Suda.' It is no use feeling angry about this sort of cross-examination. One must take it for granted that Southerners are interested in what does not concern them.

In the second-class part of the ship were two or three bronzed nondescripts, and two fat, thick-lipped Jews from Trieste. They shared the upper deck with us, ate with us, and went under the tongue of our consular lady. The Jews were amusing. They were as inquisitive about my business as everyone else.

'And pray what are your affairs in Crete *V* I retorted, without enlightening them.

They smiled at each other, and even winked, I believe ; then one of them whispered something. The rascals were bound for the little town of Suda, where they intended establishing a roulette-table for the sailors and marines who chanced to come ashore. At a word, they were ready to play ecarte, or anything else, there and then, while we were steaming away from the mountains of the Morea.

'PoUr passer le temps, monsieur f with a gesture that told how it would bore them, in fact.

For the rest, the lower-deck of the *Tibisco* was littered with other and poorer Jews, Albanians,

Greeks, Cretans, and others, who were to sleep and victual as best they could under the tarpauline contributed as a canopy by the ship's officers. They ate lettuces and olives, smoked cigarettes, scratched, sang, said their prayers, and told stories, all huddled together in a romantic commixture of dirt and picturesqueness. One stout Turk, squatted in their midst, haunted me through the night. He had a cast in both his eyes, and was besides as ugly as one of Brahma's incarnations; and there he sat motionless for two or three hours, looking Heaven knows where, with a string of yellow beads in his hands. His sins could hardly have been as ugly as himself, poor fellow I but they were very engrossing to him. The young Athenian glared at the Turk whenever his steps took him within the radius of the other's eyes; but it did not disturb the Turk. 'The Englishman's innate dislike for a Greek' is a current phrase; but I think one's innate affection for a Turk is not strong enough to make good the antithesis.

It cqme on to blow in the evening. With the ship's officers, there were seven or eight of us in the saloon, smoking and drinking tea with cognac in it, and the consular lady was in our midst, talking as hard as the wind. But the rolling soon despatched us each and all to our cabins; and for

the next eight hours we were bowled from side to side, like a log in a rapid, without intermission. Through my little window, I could see that there was a vexed moon in the heavens. Whenever she tried to peep for a moment at the tossing ^Egean, a fresh mass of scud blew across her face, dyed with divine tints. Gusts of wind and rain also came upon us in the course of the night, and the timbers of the superannuated old craft wailed beseechingly to be put out of their misery. In short, it was something like Mr. Irving's Walpurgis Night, without the fire, and without, I hope, the devil. Early the next morning, however, we slackened speed, and the rattling of chains made me tumble out of bed. Looking through the port-hole, I could see an amalgam of purple rocks, placid blue sea, and snow mountains in the background, so that it was apparent our voyage was over. And I was very soon on deck enjoying a first sight of the Turkish capital of the island, Canea, a gay little town level with the water, its windows all sparkling in the face of the sun, with some tall green and ochre houses, so like those of Corfu that they were instantly marked as relics of the Venetian times, and studded here and there with white minarets and domes. Behind the town, seeming to press it closely, was a ridge of high dark land; while

immediately behind the ridge was a superb group of snow-peaks, so clear in the morning light, **and** so dazzling, that it made one blink and sneeze to look at them.

The hills in the foreground are really four or five miles from the town, and not more than two or three thousand feet high; but the Madara Vouna or Bare Mountains, sometimes also called the White Mountains, or Mountains of Sphakia, are eight thousand sublime feet in height, and about ten miles from Canea. I fancy Canea must be one of the most beautiful places in the world—viewed from the sea.

The harbour is very tiny and neglected : a fair circle, with an inner loop to the left. The *Tibisco* crept in timidly, and her long lean body seemed to cut the port in two. Then, in an instant, we were surrounded by the usual swarm of earnest boatmen, banging each other's boats and the ship's side, cursing and screaming at the top of their voices, and inviting, nay, compelling the passengers to face half a dozen respectable chances of accidental death if they wished to land without delay. I sat and smoked, and let the world wag for a time. The consular lady, very pale and tired, but talkative and impressive as before, expected her husband. She bemoaned the trials of the night **and** de-

nounced the *Tibisco,* until a green-striped boat coming towards us put her on a new tack. It was her husband; and for several minutes the re-united couple looked exultantly at each other from their respective craft. The lady vowed she would never leave him again—*'jamaig! jamais!'*—but the gentleman, who was a short, rough-looking, taciturn Russian, with an ursine smile, said nothing to this. At the lady's bidding, we exchanged bows ; but I never saw the man again. I heard later that he was not the kindest of husbands, and that the poor lady was always glad to get away from him on a visit to her friends in Russia.

That ancient worthy, Dr. Kitchener, says in his 'Hints to Travellers' : 'When you arrive in any Town, begin with ascending the highest edifice, or the highest neighbouring ground/ Perhaps he never visited any except Christian lands and Christian cities, where he would be shown to the top of the church readily enough. In a Turkish city it is not so easy to climb to the top of a minaret, which is certainly the loftiest building of the place. Here in Canea, however, the Customs authorities first claimed a little time. We spoke by signs, and with a patchwork of Italian, French, **and** English, to which the boy who rowed me ashore contributed. Turkish and Cretan Greek

are the languages in vogue, the latter predominating. The officials, when they were satisfied that I had no dynamite for the subversion of the Ottoman Empire, and was on the whole a man of fair respectability, demanded my passport to settle the matter. But they could not read it when it jvas given to them. They handed it from one to the other, with elegant upliftings of eyebrows, and an evident readiness to shirk the responsibility of interpreting it, until at length, having held it upside down for about a minute, with a very sapient look on his face, one of them discovered the lion and the unicorn, with which he had a bowing acquaintance. I then offered them a letter of introduction in Latin characters, but their numbers diminished so immediately and the residue of them were so much dismayed and mystified, that I at once perceived they could not read a word of the superscription.

It would certainly seem well, therefore, to have a few words of colloquial Greek at command before coming to Crete. A dozen breakfasts with Professor Blackie would be a great comfort and relief to one's anxieties, or a steady three months' course of Geldart's ' Modern Greek Grammar.' However, I shall face the difficulty as best I may even now, with Geldart and the dictionary. At Brindisi I met with a cordial but eccentric old pedagogue of

Corfu, who spent half an hour one afternoon in driving a few commonplace phrases into my head. I feel more grateful to him now than I felt then, for it is something, though not much, to be able to remark that it is fine weather, that the sun is hot, or that it promises to be rainy, when this or that questioner is puzzling himself to know how to address a single intelligible word to one. This grim old pedagogue invited me to spend a week with him at his schoolhouse in Corfu. How I wish I had gone, even though it might have been to mix on terms of sad equality with small brown urchins of six years and seven, just stumbling up the scale of Alpha, Beta, Gamma ! He assured me that a week would work wonders, if I were cut *off* from all communication with my native tongue. And no doubt he spoke sense. How the old gentleman laughed, to be sure, when I asked if he were a severe disciplinarian ! And with what gross but emphatic pantomime he showed how he was wont to treat those of his scholars who were remiss, either from laziness or natural dulness ! I think it was the horrific spectacle he presented in the portrayal of this feature in his professional life that made me wish him a curt ' Good-afternoon/ and summarily dismiss from my mind the shy thought that had already occurred to me of en-

rolling myself as a large and very stupid scholar under his roof and ferule. At any rate, I have not thought of the old gentleman since ; and now that the need occurs, of course the opportunity is lacking.

I believe the inflection and terminology of Turkish are not a very profound tax on the intellect of a student. But, nevertheless, Turkish as a language for use during only a few months of one's life is quite out of the question. And as for learning it merely as a pastime, I think I will wait until it seems advisable to oust some great grief from my mind by the installation of a greater.

But even the Greek of the Corfu pedagogue might not serve very successfully down here. For Cretan Greek differs so much in sound from Athenian Greek, that a subject of King George is often mystified by a Cretan's tongue. On this matter, perhaps, I may have more to say by-and-by.

I must now make an end, as I want this to return with the *Tibisco.* The boat is such an old miscreant that no port keeps her more than a few hours, unless she is going under repair. For to-night, at all events, I am at an hotel, in a narrow street of shops, where I see pots of Cretan honey for sale side by side with great heaps of

seductive Turkish tobacco. The hotel has an inner courtyard of no great interest; but its windows look further into a Turkish graveyard of painted tombs, with a fountain, and sundry other attractions which keep the place populous.

LETTER II.

The *HStel de Constantinople*—Sights and Sounds in the Streets of Canea—The Walls and Suburbs of Canea—The Madara Vouna—Hopes rebuffed—A First Bargain in the Bazaar—Bedroom Counsel.

I MUST say a few words about what I have seen of Canea, and its far pleasanter suburb Khalepa, where the consuls and more respectable Greeks and Turks have their residences. The hotel here is called * of Constantinople/ It is, however, a hybrid concern. The anteroom is furnished with some tall presses, containing articles of European usage, such as calico shirts, gilt studs, pomatum, tinned salmon, and dress shoes; and opposite these presses are two nice broad benches upon which I sat for an hour or two, awaiting the decision of the genteel Greek in a fez who owns the inn, and was considering whether he could receive me as **a guest.**

[1] It will be awkward,' he made me **understand,** [1] because it is fast-time, **and** only the sickly **lambs**

will be killed, and you will not like eating as we eat. Again, I am not sure that I can give you a room/

I assured him that he need not be anxious. I did not purpose staying with him long enough to suffer from the inconveniences of his establishment.

Happily, my gambling Jews then came to set things straight between us, by acting as interpreters. One of them had spent the few hours he hacl been on shore in getting into a state of tipsiness that tempted me to kick him. He hiccuped in my face while renewing the old inquiries about my business, and turned his face that he might roar with drunken laughter about what he thought my extraordinary position, stranded in the island of Crete, with no very certain plans on my hands.

With some to-do I got breakfast at this inn. It was the custom, they explained, for guests to go into one or the other of the little dens in the highway, and feed at feeding-time only ; but I was Inglese, and so—Well, they took me to the kitchen, a large rickety room, filled with uncouth Oriental culinary implements; and there I was attended by a fierce-looking Cretan, with a dagger in his belt, who watched my every movement, the better to anticipate my wants, and quarrelled three or four times with his master about this thing or

that which he wished me to have, but which his master would have denied me. The man was so affectionate and devoted that I conceived a liking for his fellow-countrymen there and then—a liking which circumstances have not yet made me adulterate. You will want to know what I had to eat in this hostelry. Well, I am sorry I cannot tell you. It was like hare and tomato sauce, and afterwards they gave me a Turkish pie of some kind. This, with some bread, some salt in crystals nearly as large as dice, and a flask of famous Cretan wine, put new life into me after the night's racket. My Cretan placed his hand to his heart, and bowed sweetly when I rose from the table; his civility, contrasted with his bellicose face and the dagger, seemed to me rather odd.

After the breakfast I was provided with a bald-headed Arab with an eye like an eagle's, bare legs, and a wrapper of gay-coloured raiment about his loins and stomach : he was to guide me through the town and out to the British consul's house. It was a walk, completely charming for its novelties, but fatiguing in the extreme. The town is old, still about a quarter Venetian, I should think, with narrow streets paved with abominable large cobbles, over which men and asses, dogs **and** horses and mules slip and splash to and fro all

though the day. And such an assortment of human beings 1 They say Canea can beat any place in the Levant for the number of its nationalities ; and I can believe it.

There were Greeks from the mainland in frowsy broadcloth and top-hats or billycocks ; looking, oh, so very remote in dignity from the conception one forms of their notable ancestors !

There were Turks of all ranks and conditions ; from the imposing though a trifle sleepy-looking Bey on a long-tailed thoroughbred swaddled in valuable trappings, to the very undignified Moslems who sat in the doorways of their shops or warehouses smoking chibouks, and exposing their obesity. Turkish foot-soldiers stood at the gates of the city and challenged me ; but, of course, my Arab had the countersign or pass-word, if that were part of the routine of Canea life.

Then there were Arabs, men and women, dressed precisely as if they were living in their native desert. There is a colony of them outside the city; and also of Bedouins who, according to report, would make nothing of tearing an inquisitive European to pieces and throwing him to the chickens : s8 untamed and unamenable to civilized influences are they !

By the fountains in the city we came upon little

clusters of fat Nubian ladies, sitting elegantly upon their haunches, with store of lettuces, radishes, and other more mysterious greens for sale. Occasionally one of them would scream, and make me jump to one side; it was her method of advertising' the freshness of her kitchen-garden stuff. Their faces, black though they were, glistened to such a degree that I fancied I could see my reflection in their fat cheeks.

At these same fountains one saw, moreover, all the picturesque bustle and movement which makes such places interesting in the East. Porters were bending under a long pole supported on their shoulders, from which two or three big barrels of water were suspended. Others were filling sheep or lamb skins, until the shape of the deceased owner of the skin was pathetically reproduced.

Then there were purveyors of different trifles standing here and there in the open places: lemonade-men, tart-men (I was not tempted by their tarts, I can assure you), honeywater-men, and others; and each and all screamed to attract passers-by towards their goods.

Add to all these, the Cretan peoflje proper, a fine stalwart race, with independence in their eyes, and ten times as manly as the mainland Greeks who come over to teach them the A B C of con-

duct; multitudes of little boys in blue cotton gowns and breeches, going to school or what not; little boys in fezes, with countenances showing forth some problems of birthright, though their Turkish paternity is plainly written on them; and lastly, a staring sailor here and there from the Fleet, with commissariat work on his hands which he would give the world to be creditably quit of, and a sprinkling of black coats representing the different employes of the consular houses—and you may get a fair idea of the tumult of tongues and the variety of colour in these streets of Canea.

Nor must I forget the animals of the place, poor brutes! The horses are bad, lean, wounded, and small. 'Get on horse, signor! Fine horse, signor! Come, jump him, sir f These are the cries one has to run the gauntlet of in the horse part of the city: so much has the presence of the Fleet demoralized the Canea livery-stablemen! But the horses are in superb condition beside the hapless asses! I cannot sufficiently pity these miserable little creatures. They are piled high with all sorts of weighty things, so that their backs are bent horribly and bowed out of all natural shape; and they are whacked, and whacked, and whacked from morning to night. I have never

felt the devil move to stronger purpose within me than when following an impish Arab boy, half naked, exuberant with health and spirits, laughing and flashing his white teeth from unconscious happiness and contentment, and swinging a bludgeon upon the poor bony hindquarters of the meek little ass he is driving before him. These asses are not only covered with sores in many cases, but the fur is thrashed from their skin, and their buttocks, with the constant friction, shine like ebony, or the Nubians' faces. I trust that a merciful Providence knows how to deaden the sensibilities of beasts whose life must be perpetual suffering.

The mules are better treated—perhaps because they are more apt to resent ill-treatment. They are a fine stock of animals, large and powerful, and fully as valuable as the average class of horse here. But the people know how to make them work, no less than the asses.

And now we come to the dogs. I cannot positively aver that there are fewer dogs than people in Canea (and there are about 15,000 souls in the city), but their number is so appalling that any wise administration would start a Lethe Chamber for their decimation. Their struggle for existence, too, is a terrible one. Such yellow, half-starved, mutilated, blood-stained, and low-

spirited curs are a pain to the eyes. They prowl about the city in bands of scores, with serrated arched backs like London cats, their ribs sticking through their skin, and some of them half flayed, or dragging a fold of their torn hide after them. If a Greek does but look at them they cower away with a yelp, and wind out of sight through the maze of human legs. With the Turks it is different, of course. The Koran enjoins kindness to animals, as you know ; therefore the dogs are not put to death, but allowed to propagate at discretion. But the Turk's goodness is passive, while the Greek's cruelty is active. Therefore, they increase and starve. I look forward to the day when Anglo-Saxon notions, if not individuals, shall have spread to the east of Europe, and regenerated such nests of infamous, iniquity as Naples, and Constantinople, and Canea. I will talk about the shops and buildings of this place later on.

It was getting very warm when the Arab and I left the city behind us. For a while we proceeded by a dusty road skirting the moat which defends the land side of Canea. Don't imagine a petty ditch such as the sites called moats round our homebred castle ruins, but a space of ground thirty or forty yards wide, with the brown walls of the city towering sixty feet high on one side, and

Turkish soldiers gathered on the battlements washing their pots and pans, singing and blowing their bugles. In the level of the moat is the prime kitchen-garden of the district. The Canea folk send their sewage percolating through its midst, and though one has to be alive to the possibility of typhus or other germs rising from the sluggish stream, one must also admit that the fig-trees, radishes, cabbages, lettuces, etc., not excluding plenty of weeds, are all of remarkable size.

When we had done with the city walls, we passed between the settlements of the Arabs and Bedouins ; the latter a congeries of dark-coloured oval huts squatted upon the sand, decorated with fluttering bits of coloured cotton and rags, and half protected by a bamboo and cactus stockade the like of which is not to be seen elsewhere in Europe. Some small Arabs tried to hitch themselves on to our procession, but my guide sent them about their business smartly.

We then came to a wide sandy piece of ground on one hand, with a large building in the distance. Troops were exercising here with the blind, heavy precision that tells of good bodies but unthinking minds. The building was a barrack, being enlarged as if to show that the Sultan had no notion of

ceding Crete to anyone for many years to come. On the other side of us was the sea tumbling upon the shore with a merry glint and splashing. And at this point I had a most charming view of the country inland from Canea to the hills and the mountains. I cannot tell you how superb are these Madara Vouna, with their snowy crests veiled, but not hidden, by the thinnest of gauzy clouds; nor can I dare to try and give you an idea of the fresh greenness of the plain-country in the foreground, with its olive-woods, almond and fig-trees, grain already two feet high, and its many flowers, new to me, which grow wherever a little moistened soil gives them a hold on life. Far away seawards the scarlet humps of the Akrotiri promontory peeped round the hither mass of Khalepa, and made me vow I would soon be on the top of them. Everything of nature here is amazingly beautified by the clearness of the air and the purity of the sky. I could count the very spikes on a cactus a good many yards distant. In England, by the way, one makes use of hawthorn hedges as roadside boundaries, whereas here one has clumps of aloes or cactus six or seven feet high, with formidable needles that would tear one's clothes into ribands rather than give way to pressure. The prickly pear, too, grows here in enormous clusters. Brindisi can boast in

this respect; but Crete dwarfs the Brindisi products.

I was profoundly glad when we reached the Consul's house. The Arab led me to the house of the late Consul at first, and though the distance between the right house and the wrong was not more than half a mile direct, the deep ravines which score the country and had to be crossed gave us a long hot toil. My guide looked as if he had been dipped in an oil-tub at the end of it; and his temper had suffered.

Perhaps not unnaturally, I hoped that my anxiety about the immediate future would now be effectually allayed. Of course I did not expect to be bedded and boarded with the Consul, but I had so lately left Europe and European conditions of life that I was unprepared to realize how differently affairs are managed in lands seldom visited by 'infidel dogs/ The Consul had been forewarned of my coming, and he received me kindly indeed, but with a serio-comic lifting of the shoulders and eyebrows.

[1] My dear sir,' said he, 'I do not know what will become of you. You cannot stay in Canea; it is dirty and unhealthy. And my* house is so small that I cannot even offer you a bedroom. As for apartments, there is no such accommodation

heard of here in Crete. No one comes here, and therefore preparations are never made for travellers like you.'

This was the sum of our conversation as far as it concerned me. I was to try my luck with the Baroness de S., who, as an old resident, might have something more encouraging to suggest, and return to dine with him when he had made his visit to the Fleet. The mail had brought important despatches, and he had to see the Duke of Edinburgh.

But if the Consul had disheartened me, very few words from the Baroness made me begin to despair.

' It is quite impossible for you to stay,' she said forthwith. [1]1 had written to warn you not to think of coming to Crete, and now my advice is —take the *Tibisco* back to Greece.'

This was a bitter blow, but I laughed in the midst of my disappointment. Unless for the best of reasons, I did not purpose retreating with such desperately humiliating speed.

' Well, then,' said Madame de S. (she was testing my spirit, I believe), * we will do what we can for you/

That very moment her manservant (as we should call him, though ' bodyguard' were the

more exact term), Houssein, was requisitioned to go through the village and discuss the matter with certain householders, who were considered sufficiently honourable to be trusted with the life of a lone European. The Consul also put his servants in motion, and the result was to be announced to me.

' There will be all manner of hardships to suffer/ said Madame de S. bodingly; and I confess, knowing that she was herself a singularly brave woman, who had faced perils of war and travel of no mean calibre, I did a little quake in my shoes.

In the meantime, after dinner, I returned to my hotel in Canea. The size and fine complexion of the oranges in the bazaar tempted me to try a first tussle with a nativ^ merchant on the way. I pointed. Straightway the scales were brought to the front; a metal weight put in one scale, and oranges as large as my two fists in the other. There were ten oranges, and I got off with them for a fraction under a penny ! I think I shall feel shame every time I pass the merchant's store.

Before going to bed, I had an argument in pantomime and monosyllables with the hotel-keeper. He is one of those unfeeling creatures who batten contentedly under any flag and in any

latitude. The rumour that Crete is to be ceded to England had put light into his eyes. Not that he loved England or English rule.

' Turchika governmente—no money, non bono ! Ellenika ' (Greek) ' governmente—little money, little more bono ! Anglika ' (English) ' governmente bono—plenty money !'

He stammered and stuttered a great deal in an effort to ask me a question, the answer to which he and three or four more awaited with open mouths. But I did not help him out of the bog, and said ' Good-night' ere he had had enough of it. I haven't a doubt he, too, is anxious to know why I am in Crete.

I copy and translate the following lines from my bedroom door in this hotel. They were in Italian, and left unobliterated, as if they were regarded by the Greeks as a sort of recommendatory advertisement :

' DEAR SIRS,

' Look out lest the fleas carry you away, clothes and all.

'Postscript.—You are also informed that the *"padroni" 6i* this hotel are a band of " *ladroni"*

'Make haste from Canea, or else they will gobble you up, including your umbrella/

Such a consensus of bad opinions about Crete and Canea made me get into bed in no very happy state of mind; and the very braying of the asses in the street comes to me as of evil augury. As far as the fleas are concerned, I dare not doubt that the warning of my predecessor will be a truthful prologue to experience. * And so, good-night.

LETTER III.

Established as a Householder—Situation and Appointments of my House—Sorrows of Furnishing—A Grateful Confectioner—My First Night in my Cretan Home.

I HAVE taken a house and furnished it after a fashion; that is what one has to do in Crete, if possible. For its simplicity and limitations, my establishment might attract the envy of the members of the latest Yankee domestic sect. It came about in this wise. Both the Consul's servants and Madame de S.'s kavass Houssein were unable to get anyone willing to take me as a lodger: I believe a good Cretan would as soon receive a box of explosives into his house as an Englishman just now. Therefore the larger step had to be taken: the village was scoured to see if an empty but fairly habitable building could be found.

Now it chanced that a thrifty mason, aided by his dark-eyed boys, had used his spare time in putting up a second house by the side of the family

well, and modelling the house upon that inhabited by himself and family on the other side of the well. Both houses stood inland at the southern end of the village, and on the edge of a steep gulley. The new house was the house of an amateur. The mason was for hire at so much a ,day, for mason's work ; but here he thought to play the Jack-of-all-handicrafts : he was his own carpenter, mason, smith, and everything else. And so the house stood up, after a while, complete to the eye, the apparent twin of the other. But, up to my arrival in Crete, it was untested as a residence. It might be strong and waterproof, or it might be draughty, or apt to collapse like a card-castle with the shock of a heavy foot. Who was to prove it? That was the question. • When, however, it came to the mason's ear that a stranger, an Englishman, was seeking a house, and was willing, of course, to pay for the accommodation, and to pay for such attendance as he in the guise of dragoman could give, and his wife and children in the guise of dragoman's assistants could tender, he seems to have hailed the chance as providential. And this day we have come to terms whereby I am to be sole occupier of this white house on the hill, and the mason and family are to wait upon me from the other side of the well.

Our conference of arrangement was a solemn one. The mason, of course, knew no language save Cretan Greek, and so an intermediary' was necessary. This was found in the form of a good-hearted Venetian gentleman who has retired from active life, and passes his hours in a laboratory he has built at Khalepa, with his books and experiments. The Venetian came to the mason's, and all the parties to the contract mustered in the basement-room of the house that was to be let : the natural level of the rocky ground was there, so that it could not be otherwise than secure.

No such chance of extraordinary emolument had hitherto come to the mason and his family, if they might be judged by their expressions. There was the wife, a handsome Juno of a woman, her lips quivering with anxiety and nervousness lest they should inadvertently name too small a sum for the weekly or other washing to be done ! And the mason's four dark-eyed boys, Georgio, Michaelis, Demetri, and another, in blue smocks, slyly nudging their father, and whispering into his ears words which resolved themselves into figures 1 And the mason Jiimself, distraught with happy trouble, in a tremble as to his hands and legs, while setting forth the various particulars of his demand, now and then thumping the outer wall to show what a

fine substantial piece of work it was! And the Venetian gentleman, patient but amused, interpreting their Greek into French, and my invertebrate French into Greek! It was a complex business, believe me, considering that we had to discuss every detail of the furnishing, and the plan of my daily eating and drinking as well.

But, after all, to European understanding, my bargain was not a rough one. I had the house on my hands to do what I pleased with, certain small outside appurtenances, and half the garden of the mason (including vested rights in an orange-tree, an almond-tree, a patch of barley, and some growing onions), all for the sum of a napoleon the month. Extras brought the rent to about thirty shillings. I agreed cheerfully to everything, whether it touched my comprehension or whether it did not. Then the mason's wife and the daughter (her name is melodious, but not to be spelt without an effort you must excuse me from making) sped back to their own building, threw olive-twigs on the fireplace, kindled a blaze, heated water, and ground the coffee-berries, so that all the parties to the matter might take a cup of coffee in my house before separating. It was a gracious piece of politeness done in my name: an inexpensive kind of house-warming. And after it I was left alone for

awhile to pace my bare boards, look from my windows at the snow mountains, of which I have an unobstructed view (the sun's heat had already seared their flanks with glistening lines which told of rapid liquefaction), and at distant Canea, a pure pearl set by the blue Levant, and with a land frame of purple hills and green depressions, though in reality, as you may imagine, a city malodorous and uncleanly in the extreme. Far to the west are the sharp ridges of the promontories of Spada and Grabusa, with one conspicuous mountain-cone standing isolated above them both. And behind this cone I suppose I shall see the sun, like a live coal, disappear night after night.

I think I am pleased with the house, though I am certainly oppressed with a feeling of forlornness. For a man and his wife it were an admirable temporary camping-ground, but a solitary bachelor may find it dull.

The house consists of three rooms : one large earth-floored room below, and two boarded ones over it. I abandon the lower room, and intend living exclusively in the upper suite, which is made continuous by a rickety door, and which affords me fifteen good paces of a walk. The windows of the house are more remarkable for their outlook than for their security : some of the panes are

broken and stopped up with bits of tin rubbish that will come clattering down with disturbing tumult at the first nocturnal gale. But I must forget these trifles, and tell you about the furnishing, which was a trial that almost broke my heart.

The Venetian gentleman gave me a recommendation to a merchant in the town. Georgio, my attendant, hired an ass, and accompanied me to this merchant, from whom I hoped to get all the things needful, and end the business at a blow. But the merchant was away, and no one could attend to the matter in his absence. Then, as my furnishing could not be postponed, we went from this quarter of the town to that, I seeking what I thought necessary, and Georgio and the ass carrying what I purchased. But I trust in mercy I may be spared such another series of wrestles of wits and tongues, handicapped as I was with no adequate knowledge of Greek. How, for instance, would you express that you wanted your bed to be of wool, not feathers; that you were not fond of green counterpanes as compared with purple; that you felt sure the price for such and such a thing was outrageous unless there was good reason for contrary argument, and so on—all by signs and frantic attempts at onomatopoeic illustration? I simulated lying on the counter when I wanted a

mattress, put my cheek in my hand for a pillow, and tucked the shopman's coat up to my neck to symbolize counterpane, blankets, etc. And the way it amused everyone except myself made me the more impatient! Georgio grinned without ceasing; and tfyere was so much general laughter, that even the weak ass took heart of grace and indulged in several discordant prolonged brays which sounded derisive.

It was better in the comestible quarter of the city. There one sees everything that the shop contains : barrels of olives, salt herrings, packets of dried cod, octopus, etc., etc., are all set in front for the purchaser to choose from. But I soon got so tired of this pettifogging business, buying loaves of bread, penny worths of figs, nuts, almonds, eggs, rice, etc., that I signalled to Georgio to do what he liked. The next minute he was stowing in his basket a mass of such mysterious brown confection that my curiosity was kindled afresh. I pressed for information, and when I understood that this was the Canea apology for butter, I took over the control of my affairs once more. Georgio had learnt the one word 'Bono;' and he soon habituated himself to blocking my every inquiry about this thing or that, however conveyed, with his mendacious 'Bono f

I soon found that the English are much liked in Canea town ; though elsewhere in Crete they are scowled at as the friends of the Turk. The Fleet in Suda is spending here no less than three thousand pounds sterling every week in meat, fruit, bread, vegetables, wine, and such trifles, so that the tradesmen are making their fortunes, and increasing the common hatred of us Europeans by raising the price of everything on the plea of excessive demand and limited supply.

I led Georgio and the ass to the leading confectioner of the place, whose shop is on the Marina, where people resort to chatter, drink coffee, look at the fishing-smacks in the little bay, or lounge away the hours in mild pleasure on fragile-boarded piers, which the khan proprietors thrust out over the water at an hour's notice.

* What you want, signor?' asked the proprietor of the shop, coming forward at the moment of seeing my strange cut of clothes ; and he could not have beamed upon me with a more kindly radiance if he had been an indulgent parent.

I mentioned tarts, and looked here and there at his jars of honey, quince jam, bottles of wine, peppermint, etc., and tried to think how he and my larder could co-operate.

Tarts of many kinds were soon forthcoming,

brought in a cloud of steam straight from the oven by a lad in a white apron, and with his hair cropped almost off his head. I was amazed at the variety, and contrived to express my astonishment.

* It is in this way, signor/ said the man; and then he explained that as long as the tension in Levantine politics lasted he had a standing order for four hundred tarts per diem from her Majesty's ships, and others in the Bay of Suda. His admiration for the Greek minister, whose procrastination and timidity have made him ridiculous in the eyes of Europe in general, was unbounded.

Well, I made my selection, after refusing to taste a number of sweet compounds that the confectioner tried to press upon me, and then I asked for the bill.

[1] Nothing, signor/ said this remarkable merchant ; ' I do not take anything from an Englishman/

[1] But I do not belong to the ships' said I.

' Perhaps not, signor ; but it no difference', was his reply. ' I fond of the English. Signor, the captain of one vessel, he come in one day and he not know me before, and he order cakes of this and cakes of that, and I send them ; and he come again and say he pleased, and I may go on to send them. And it was the same with other signors the

captains ; and it is by them that I have plenty to do—and I have a heart, signor, and am grateful.'

This was charming, even though one might doubt the visit of the captain of any such vessels as H.M.S. *Iron Duke, Hecla,* etc. ; but, nevertheless, I insisted on paying, and was properly rewarded for my obstinacy by being asked in a careless way for twice the current worth of the things.

But the good man was determined that we should depart in his debt. He came towards Georgio and me outside the shop, with a long strip of pink Turkish delight dangling from a finger and thumb, broke it in two, and gave each of us a piece with a very amiable smile suffusing his face. Half a dozen solemn Turks were smoking and sipping coffee during our business colloquies ; they watched all the details of our combat with unchanging countenances, even to the Turkish delight at the end.

Enough of this catering, however. I was heartily glad when it was all over, and we had safely steered our loaded ass through the throngs of the streets out into the country, and up the rocky steeps of Khalepa to my house. Everything was then conveyed into my apartments, and as the day began to wane we managed to get things into order for the night.

I find to my discomfiture that the doors are all unprovided with fastenings. This must be remedied, and in the meantime I must unpack my revolver. Not that there is any danger, I suppose, in reality, though my position here is so unprecedented that one cannot tell for certain.

Here is the tale of my furniture: a bed, with all necessaries; three chairs; a table; two candlesticks; and the usual toilet crockery. Could anything be simpler? And yet you would be surprised to know how many arrangements and re-arrangements these few things have undergone. My lessors run backwards and forwards between the two houses to see what I am doing, and to recount their experiences. I am supplying them with much innocent merriment. As it is a little chilly I have ordered a fire, which is brought in a large red earthen pot, the fuel being olive-twigs; and, having eaten my frugal supper of boiled eggs and bread, with plenty of native wine, I am now smoking and writing to you with the firepot on one side, a strong draught from the three windows which command me when I sit at table, my two candles flanking a large nosegay of blue and crimson flowers gathered by Demetri for the stranger, and with the ghostly monotonous croak of an owl coming to me every now and then from

the very window-sill of my establishment, A north wind is rising, and for all I know I may have the house about my ears before the morning. Save for the whistling of the wind through my many chinks and crevices, the stillness is very solemn. And it is made the more so to me by the sight through my bedroom windows of the White Mountains, a row of silver peaks against the dark ground of night: for the moon is shining peacefully upon their thick covering of snow.

LETTER IV.

Cretan Schoolboys—A Cretan Shepherd—Business of the Day—Cretan Pronunciation—Political Hopes, Fears, and Suspicions—My Unfortunate Neighbour—Domestic Amusements and Anxieties—The Noises of Khalepa.

I FEEL quite at home in Crete now. There is a warm friendship between me and my landlords. They are always scheming how they may satisfy the aspirations of their tenant. When I rise in the morning and throw back my shutters, the little boys rush into their house to warn the mother that she must set to and prepare the signor's breakfast. The children play cards on the stone terrace by the well, under the shadow of the vine which is trellised over the well ; they appear out of doors as soon as the sun, I believe ; and, having breakfasted, gamble away the hours until school-time, when each throws a blue bag over his shoulder, and decamps heavily through the gate. I see knots of these small Greeks going to and returning from school by a lane enfiladed by one of my

windows, and many other trivial but pleasant sights of the kind. In the ravine on the other side a flock of ewes and lambs feed and sport through the day, under the charge of a shepherd in a tight-fitting olive-grey tunic, loose blue trousers, yellow leather top-boots, a scarlet waistband, and a white turban. This shepherd carries a mandoline as well as a crook ; and when the sun is hot and the flock properly subordinate, down he sits under a gnarled olive, and thrums at the mandoline, accompanying its timid, tender notes with stentorian vocal shrieks. The Cretans are great singers, but all their art seems to consist in the effort to make their voices rise and fall as often as possible within a given time. It is a very unresting sequence of sounds, and if Schopenhauer's idea _pf the parallelism between life and music be founded on truth, there must be much more dissatisfaction than satisfaction in the life of the average Cretan, which is not credible, on the whole. I mention this shepherd and his sheep mainly because I have a personal interest in the flock. There is a shapely brown ewe in the herd which gives me her milk day by day, and that, between times, I may not suffer by her wanderings into places of contamination, they tie up her udder in a bag. I can thus distinguish her while grazing or going in quest of her friends by

the unnatural stiffness of her movements. She is a pretty animal, and her milk is very rich and good.

My landlady opens the business of the day when she brings me my breakfast, with an anxious * which straightway brings care crushing into my brain. I have to think of what I want for the day's provision, if it be a reasonable want, considering that I am in Crete, and then of its verbal equivalent in French. I write down my wants, and the paper is carried to the Venetian gentleman, who forthwith expounds it to my landlady, who sets her husband or boy in quest of the things. In time, no doubt, my Greek will make me independent of this long-winded method, and also enable me to comprehend at first hand the slip of paper which Georgio brings me towards bedtime, representing the expenditure of the day. I hope the boy is honest. He is very intelligent, and very eager to change my napoleons into Turkish medjedies and piastres ; but one does not like to see such precocious sharpness in a boy of ten or so. He is teaching me Cretan pronunciation, of which the most vital characteristic is the sounding of the letter , whereby becomes *che,* and (good weather) becomes *chairon;* and when the mason's day's work is over he looks in for a

* What do you want ?

cigarette, and to warm his hands over my firepot, while talking slowly that I may catch the sense of his intonation. So, you see, life here is somewhat academical.

But when I am not enjoying the luxuries of civilization at Madame de S.'s, I like best to be in Canea town, or out on the hills towards Suda. There is a very lively undercurrent of excitement in society at present. It is said positively that England is negotiating for Crete, that the Sultan is to take back Cyprus and give us Crete, and that we give him a few hundred thousand pounds to equalize the exchange. Even the Consuls do not know what to make of this talk. They await the weekly despatches anxiously, and in the meantime ask each other, ' Avez-vous des jiouvelles *V* just as often as they meet. As I have come here at this conjuncture, it is perhaps natural that I should be looked at suspiciously. This is the fact, at any rate. The French Consul, who is a correspondent of the Parisian *Le Temps,* demands to know why I am here. I met him at a Friday reception at Madame de S.'s, and the caution with which I moulded my French sentences has convinced him that I am a diplomatist. The English Consul tells me that this gentleman has made a representation to the authorities in Paris about me, and that in all like-

lihood notes will be exchanged between M. Gravy's Foreign Minister and Lord Rosebery on the same interesting subject. But this may be chaff on our Consul's part. It is certain, however, that the patriotic Cretans are greatly disturbed. For example, this morning I went into the coffee-house in Canea, where six or eight of them were holding earnest confabulation, and they were dumb in an instant, glancing at me oddly, first one and then another. And when they were joined by fresh conspirators, these too were warned into silence by depressions of eyebrows and eloquent whispers; and these too, one by one, peeped over their shoulders at the innocent but amused cause of their disquietment. For half an hour I sat smoking and sipping coffee, now and then touching a sketch of the Bay of Canea, for the making of which this coffee-house offers good vantage-ground. I did my work purposely on my knees so that these good fellows could not get a peep at it; and I feel sure I shall be reported to the Pasha for making plans of the fortifications of the city, or what not. They did not dare to gird at me openly, I suppose; but I was no sooner out of the door than their tongues clanged together like so many tuneless bells.

The Duke of Edinburgh in Suda is as much in the dark about political events as anyone else. He

sends to our Consul every day to ask if anything fresh has transpired. It is notorious that the Athenians are trying to make the Cretan mountaineers take up their guns and open the campaign of a new insurrection. 'We in Greece will declare war upon Turkey at the first shot you fire', say they. But the brave fellows of Sphakia are, it is to be hoped, too wise to be made cat's-paws in this style. 'Why don't you begin it?' they ask in retort. 'Then we will rise without much delay, and take our chance.' All things considered, the country is too unsettled to make travel advisable, even if the snow were not too deep to make mountain excursions possible at present.

Mr, Stillman, the *Times* correspondent at Athens, is expected here soon. He is ultra-Cretan, but will not advise the Cretans to rise unless they have about a hundred chances per cent, of throwing off the Turkish rule once and for all. I saw him in Athens. He is convinced that the Cretans will get their independence soon, but not through the mediation of the Greeks, whom he thinks but lightly of. Mr. Stillman was here through the insurrection of 1866 as American Consul, and his advocacy of the Cretans and open challenge of the successive Pashas who tried to extinguish the war must have made him hated in an uncommon degree

by the Moslems here and in Constantinople ; and therefore his coming here now will be an important matter for those Cretans who regard him as their final court of appeal.

I would ask you to increase my supply of cartridges if Icwere sure of getting them through the Turkish Custom-houses. Bribery is so much in vogue among officials here that I was told the other day of an elephant being successfully smuggled ashore at Candia. I do not quite know yet, however, what proportion of falsehood may be taken for granted in such talk in Crete.

Sad news has just been brought to me by the grinning Georgio. My other neighbour is a Turk, for whom I have had no particular esteem hitherto, as he sends his sewage trickling down the sides of his house within two yards of one of my windows, and whom I have never so much as seen, though his egg-shells are a familiar spectacle. This Turk was seized with an indisposition yesterday. I remarked the passage of several portly ladies, veiled and in black, past my house to the Turk's house; and J understand that they are his wives, who have come from the town-house to see the end of their lord and master. I could hear a great tumult as I lay in bed—a bustling of bodies and a prattling of tongues. And now Georgio trots up the stairs,

as merry as if he had come out head of his class at school (I hope that would rejoice him, as it ought to do), to tell me that the Turk is dead. There is fearful wailing going on next door while I write, and the school-children, the bakers, and wine-sellers who pass by my lane, all turn to look at the windows which let light upon the dismal scene. The hired mourners will be here in a twinkling; but they will have to scream their best to out-scream the bereaved wives.

Georgio would like to kill off all the Turks in Crete as easily as flies. He draws his fingers across his throat and bares his teeth when his mind dwells on the thoughts of an insurrection. Not that he is unprepared to fight, if need be. He has a cavalry-pistol, left him by his grandfather, who used it in two or three outbreaks, and it delights him to haul the cumbrous piece of artillery into my presence and go through sundry little acts of imaginary bloodshed with it. And when he is tired of slaughter he twangs at a home-made lyre with a bit of quill, and sings nasally to his own accompaniment. I have ascertained from him that, in event of a disturbance, his father will carry the entire family off into the mountains to a certain hill-retreat where they have friends. But the good mason is so irritated by the thought that

he might be called away from his work at three shillings a day, and lose the stranger, and have to abandon his establishment, that he meets all inquiries about the state of affairs with a testy ' Oish p6lemos f (no war).

Thanks to the Fleet, already the native Greeks and Turks have to pay just twice as much for their bread as before its arrival; and the Governor-General tells of many children being obliged to go to school without breakfast.

There is- not the quietude here I thought to find. Except at night, when my owl always begins to croak, noises of different kinds are constantly in the air. The ships in Suda are very fond of cannonading. It seems that anniversaries occur every day, or visits of ceremony are taking place, or it is twelve o'clock, or what not. On one pretext or another, we have this sort of "thunder reverberating about us, and echoing back from the mountains almost daily. Then the asses here are, without exception, the greatest chatterboxes of their kind : they bray from Khalepa to their friends in Canea, two miles away, and the answering brays come wafted back. This braying excites the multitudinous dogs who lie in the rock-holes of the village, and growl by dozens when a decently trousered leg comes within their vision : they bark first at the

donkeys' tumult, and then at the echo of their own noise. But worst of all is the incessant bugling of the Turkish soldiers, wherever three or four of them are together in company with a trumpet. They start the concert early in the day, and go on vigorously till dinner-time ; then, after a rest, their lungs go at it again until the sunset-hour or the muezzin-cry sounds from the minarets. If there were any art in their bugling it would be less intolerable ; but to see and hear these great idle lubbers seated with their legs dangling over the battlements of the city walls, blowing note after note heedless of discord, like big children, is quite maddening. A party of them come, evening by evening, to rinse their copper feeding and washing pans, knives, forks, and spoons, on the sward under the window of my neighbour Turk. They have a bugle between them. Sometimes they play hide-and-seek, and rush about as friskily as the lambs in the gulley. At other times they squat in a circle, and listen to the story-telling of one or other of them, until the word is given to return to barracks. These men are indifferently clothed in patched garments, their naked toes often stick through their shoes, and their general appearance is not soldierly ; but they are fine animals, with an average physique better than our average, probably.

Their intelligence may not be high, but they would **fulfil** the order to ' rape and ravage/ which always comes when there is trouble in Crete, with unquestioning obedience.

R S . — I hope I may never pass a more doleful night than the one I have just lived through. The sobs and screeches of the ladies next door came to me in fitful bursts, as distinctly as if the wake were being held in my own house.

Early this morning, however, I espied the approach of a donkey, laden with a long yellow coffin, inscribed with some Turkish hieroglyphics. **The** screams intensified when the ass stopped outside my neighbour's building, and the mourners knew that their task was nearly done. Half an hour afterwards my Turk was carried away, in the midst of a volley of piercing lamentations from his wives ; and he now rests in peace in the flower-studded cemetery of Canea.

LETTER V.

The Cretan Patriots—The Governor's Palace and Attendants—Savas Pasha, Governor-General of Crete—His Amiable Levity—The Governors Secretary—A 'Meltem'—Work for British Engineers.

THE Cretan patriots, independents, or what they please to call themselves, have done me a good turn. They have complained to the Pasha that I am a spy on behalf of her Britannic Majesty.

'Is your Excellency going to permit of the corruption of his Majesty the Sultan's Cretan subjects by the many bags of English gold which this Englishman has brought into the island *V* 'And, if the matter has gone so far between the Courts of London and Constantinople that this cannot be opposed, at least, your Excellency, tell us when the cession of Crete to England is to take place, according to the tenor of the parchment which this diplomatist has with him for the Sultan's signature.' Such are the questions which these Cretans have put before the Pasha; and

they so worried the good gentleman that in self-defence he asked our Consul to tell me to pay him a morning call, when the suspicions could be thrashed into nothingness for the public ear. Until these coffee-house politicians began to talk, it seemed to me that I had no excuse for intruding upon the Pasha. Thus I feel grateful to them.

The Palace stands in the highest part of the town, much above its common smells, and is a stately Venetian building on the brink of the harbour. On the way to it, we passed stone arches and doorways still bearing the crests of those old signori who were turned neck and crop out of the island which they had used so shrewishly two and a half centuries ago. Over these crests one may see the wooden lattice of the harems which nowadays take the place of the Venetian family circles; and as there were many Venetians who preferred to apostatize, to exchange Christianity for Mohammedanism, rather than leave Crete and their wealth, it is like enough that these harems are part of the establishment of men whose ancestors would have flushed angry red at the thought of polygamous sons and- grandsons. The houses are very lofty and substantial; the streets narrow, and paved with big irregular stones, so that the notables who ascend on horseback to pay their respects to the

Pasha have something to do to save their horses from broken knees. In the courtyard a body of infantry were exercising, with flags flying and a flashing of swords, which the officers seemed to sweep unpleasantly near to the nose of this or that stubborn, stupid, or refractory private. A few gentlemen in European frock-coats and Turkish turbans flitted to and from the Palace and the courtyard gates, with papers in their hands and the mark -of officialism on their set faces. But, else, Savas Pasha, the Governor-General of Crete, is attended by little of the pomp with which viceroys are fond of surrounding themselves.

At a word to the soldiers on guard, we were admitted into the building. An insulated staircase, ascending a few steps, and then diverging due right and left, stood in the middle of the room. Certain * bits of old armour adorned the walls, with pikes, swords, and old-fashioned tufeks flanking them. But, on the whole, the Palace promised to be a naked, dusty, and shabby abode for the Sultan's deputy. The guard themselves would have been better for a bath apiece, and a little stitching here and there about their persons. Fancy one of our grenadiers standing in stiff pomp at the public entrance to St. Janofes's Palace with a large rent in his breeches, exposing his naked knee ! But these little matters

of detail are essentially trifles with the Ottomans. The enlightened Moslem officers think nothing of driving their burly soldiery from plains to snow mountains when a campaign is on foot, and expecting them to bear a thermometer at zero as easily as a thermometer at seventy degrees, with not a shirt the more upon their backs ; no wonder, therefore, if in times of peace appearances are a little neglected.

The worm-eaten banisters of the Palace shook as we leaned on them. They were as rickety as the fittings of a decrepit old English manor-house which has been left in the hands of housekeepers for half a century. The ancient felt which half-covered the stairs had lost its colour, and here and there we stepped upon oases of bare boards, where the carpet had been trodden away by the friction of a generation of many kinds of boots and shoes. Methought this was all eloquently illustrative of the feebleness and poverty of the trunk of which Crete is a limb, though a loose limb. Savas Pasha is reputed to get ten napoleons a day for his stipend; and a British housewife, who has to be respectable on two hundred a year, would be ashamed to show premises as bald and untidy as the Governor-General's Palace.

We found ourselves in a small crowd of suitors,

ushers, and others in a large anteroom at the head of the stairs. The only furniture here was a table with a cloth as red as the Ottoman flag, affording matches and a tray for the ash of cigars, and a divan or two against the wall. A number of doors opened on the right hand and the .left into rooms, which were sedulously protected by thick leather and fustian pads and inner curtains instead of doors ; and a dark-skinned attendant now and then beckoned to one or other of the suitors, who vanished promptly behind the screens. I should like to have looked at these people a little—they were so heterogeneous in class, dress, and colour—but we were not kept waiting long enough for that. The curtain of the chief room was noisily drawn back, and with a bow ajx. attendant gave us the Greek entreaty to enter and confront his Excellency. For aught I knew to the contrary, I might thereafter have looked for a bow-string instead of the Pasha.

A large much-be-windowed room, carpeted, though not aesthetically, having a long divan bisecting it in the middle, and with other lesser divans here and there, and little tables suggestive of convivial usage standing near—this was the Governor's reception-chamber. And, from one of the divans close to a bow-window, we were met half-

way in the room by Savas Pasha himself—a white-haired, roundish man of middle age, in European dress and black felt slippers! Nothing could exceed his Excellency's amiability, and he pressed my hand as it has not been pressed since I left England. ' Charme, Monsieur E. !' he said, and made me sit beside him.

There were twelve or fifteen other gentlemen in the room, all wearing the fez, and all in the Government service, I imagine. At first they were standing in groups, talking ; but now, as if expectant of hearing something good, they sat down in a row on the middle divan, held their tongues, and looked towards the Pasha and me. It was clear that a real conspirator would have had no chance, if he meditated a *coup d'etat* in the Palace.

• From the window we looked out at sea, where the white horses were running fast this day. The pennon of a trading schooner at anchor in the little harbour under the window, fluttered on a level with our chins, and the mast lurched and swayed in the troubled waters. A pair of opera-glasses were near the window, so that his Excellency could distinguish at a distance any bold Greek torpedo or other war vessel which presumed to approach the capital Only the other day that

ancient eyesore to the Turks, the *Panhellenion,* a Greek steamer which did good service to the Cretans in the last war by running the blockade time after time with provisions, ammunition, etc., put into Canea harbour. Her aim and progress were pacific enough—she wanted a cargo of oil or something of the kind ; but that she should turn up at such a time made some talk, and it is not unlikely that several wise women of the mountains will be requisitioned to say what it implies. Just now, however, he would be a venturesome mariner that would run any ship of more than a hundred tons through the high seas which form the very narrow channel into the port of Canea.

I was taken with the Pasha at once. Doubtless he, like all other Turkish officials, is flatulent in his promises and professions ; but it is some consolation to us imperfect ones if we have the gift of pleasing in spite of our pregnable virtue and uncertain honesty. I had already seen the Pasha out of doors, lying back in his brougham, with an expression of stern authority on his face; and preceded by a quartet of mounted riflemen, riding mettlesome horses. He had then quite the look of a man to whom a head more or less among his retinue or subjects was a matter of no care. But he was different here. Having bent his right leg

under him so that he could sit on his toes, he allowed his other leg to swing to and fro by the divan-side, while he seemed as if about to throw one arm round my neck, and talked with the cordiality of an old friend.

I said I was *sorry to have been the cause of a scare among the politicians of the town—the innocent cause.

He laughed heartily.

'Not a word more about that', said he. 'I have wished to see you, certainly; but that affair is finished. You are no conspirator, I am convinced'.

At this, the other gentlemen glanced at each other, and some of them smiled. Naturally interested in the dissipation of rumours which concerned them not a little, perhaps they would nevertheless have welcomed' a bubble that was less easily pricked.

After sundry commonplace inquiries about my impressions of Crete, intentions, etc., the Pasha dropped to a subject which I had not expected him to mention in full conclave. I had already heard of his Excellency's admiration for a certain European young woman, lately arrived, in a house at Khalepa. The admiration itself was justifiable enough. I had access to the house where the girl

lived, and this the Pasha knew. I even admired her myself; but that, of course, the Pasha did not know, nor was it any concern of his.

[1] Tell me/ he said, stooping his head, and speaking in a solemn whisper, ' what do you think of her *V*

[6] In my opinion she is a very pretty girl, Excellency.'

I could not say less. I did not wish to say more. It seemed to me rather reprehensible in his Excellency to refer to the girl on such an occasion, with a score or so of men, Turks and Greeks, in the neighbourhood, ready and eager to stretch a flaw in the reputation of any maid, Christian or Turkish; and perhaps I showed a little Puritan spirit in my face when I spoke. Be that as it may, the Pasha was delighted. He repeated my words for the hearing of his subordinates, and he and they fell into fits of violent laughter, with much strange bodily contortion, and much twinkling of black eyes.

Had I not known that the Governor was a single man, of good morals, not to add a Christian, and that most of the Government employes were, like him, Greek in blood, and perhaps, therefore, not grossly libertine by nature, I might have fancied I was in company with a number of repro-

bates who had inherited the atrocious principles of the Cretan Beys earlier in the century. The Pasha had complimented the pretty maid in question in so forcible a way that her conceit thereafter had made her somewhat of a nuisance to her mistress, who epnsidered, moreover, that her responsibility was thereby considerably increased; but it was now evident also that his Excellency thought of her when he ought to have been thinking of more important concerns. It was not unnatural, under the circumstances, that he should try to shift his weakness on to the shoulders of the person who sat nearest to him.

'I believe that you are conspirator, Monsieur E./ he remarked slyly, 'though not perhaps political conspirator.'

I assured his Excellency that I would not stand in his way, in spite of his insinuations. At this they laughed afresh. But the indecorousness of their conduct now seemed to occur to them, and when they had twitched and convulsed to their hearts' content, and wiped their spectacles again and again, the subject was changed.

After a while an untidy Turk in uniform appeared with a tray of confectionery, of which I tasted a little preserved citron. In some houses, what they offer you is nothing more nor less than a pot of

jam. It would seem eccentric in England to f6te a visitor in this way. One always drinks a drop of water after such indulgence, and leaves the spoon in the tumbler after drinking. A glass of mastick or raki is by no means a distasteful substitute for the water. I shall not forget my first experience of the raki. I drank the dose at a draught, supposing it to be water of uncommon quality ; and felt for the ensuing minute exactly as I should imagine one would feel after swallowing a glassful of boiling water. I wept and gasped as unaffectedly as possible ; tried to speak, but found that my voice had gone; fancied for a moment that I had been inveigled into taking poison, and that it was nearly all over with me, and then suddenly realized that I was none the worse for it. The ecclesiastic who had tendered me the stuff observed that it was good raki, and I acquiesced; but he was very merry about its consequences upon me.

The Governor was then good enough to help me to light a cigarette.

'Tell me/ he said, 'when you intend to see a little of the island.'

'If your Excellency is really willing—?—'

'No, I am not afraid to let you out of my province now/ he continued, interrupting me. 'On the contrary'—here he looked very wicked.

[1] Your Excellency is quite satisfied V

[i] Perfectly. I am convinced, as I said, about cette autre affaire—c'est finie.'

I tried to find out what the Governor thought about the chances of war or peace, but he had a winning way of turning the matter off, and making sly allusions to the pretty girl that set me laughing; and then he laughed, and they all laughed. I had no idea that Turkish Pashas were such a waggish class.

The entrance of a tall humble-looking Turk with a plaintive stoop of the shoulders disturbed us again. He gave us a greeting as sober as his demeanour, which it seemed civil to acknowledge. But the Governor put a stop to my courtesies with a brisk [i] Asseyez-vous, je vous prie,' and resumed his remarks, while the forlorn Turk also sat down, on the edge of the middle divan, with the aspect of a man completely extinguished, mentally, morally, and physically, folded his hands in his lap and gazed upon his fingers. Probably the poor fellow had suffered some irreparable domestic loss, or was in temporary political disgrace.

We snjoked several cigarettes in succession, so that I began to fear I was wasting his Excellency's time. It was Friday, the day on which visits of ceremony are made universally in the Moslem

cities, and doubtless there were other claimants on his Excellency. But coffee appeared, in very diminutive and fragile cups, set in saucers like egg-cups, and protracted the interview a little longer. And excellent coffee it was. One intelligent look at Savas Pasha fully indicated that he was a man who thought no evil of good things ; I fancy he was a little gouty ; and his coffee was the best of the many famous 'grinds' I had already tasted in Crete.

Before I departed the Pasha promised, kindly enough, to do all he could to help me if I proposed going into the island. That, of course, means a 'safe-conduct' and letters, which will be invaluable here. So that when at length it was incumbent upon me to say 'good-bye,' I made my adieux in a manner that I hope showed how I appreciated his Excellency's general good-nature. After a cordial shake of his fat white hand, and the interchanging a fatiguing number of bows, I found myself again in the antechamber.

Here I was met by the Governor's secretary, a very amiable Greek, to whom I was lucky enough to have an introduction. He is one of the most cultured men in the island, and showed me in manuscript a book he has been engaged upon for many years. It is about the Hundred Cities of Crete,

and is sectioned into three parts ; the first giving a description of those of the hundred whose site is incontestable ; the second discussing the doubtful remains which yet are ascribed to one or other of these cities ; and the last saying what can be said about the cities of which no trace, either material or topological, can be found. No one in Crete is in a better position for obtaining archaeological and legendic information about these ancient places, and his notes include old ballads and proverbs which would no doubt be welcomed even as much as his more erudite work. I urged him to send the book to the Athens press with as little delay as possible ; but he is one of those scholarly men who find faults in their own work whenever they glance at it, and in course of time become so diffident about their abilities that they persuade themselves it is not worth while to publish after all.

This gentleman's library is, I believe, the choicest in the island, for its Cretan works. He has also numbers of different amphorae, coins, bits of old metal-work, weapons, etc., of the different dynasties in Crete. He placed his books at my disposal, and I did not hesitate to carry an armful of them away with me. The British Museum is less rich by far on Cretan authorities, and I have. now by my side the histories and records of

Cornelius, Cornaro, Valiero, Sieber, and others, as well as the English works of Pashley, Spratt, Stillman, and Skinner, so that it will be odd if I am not able to give you a fair summary of the latter days of this poor harassed island, in one or other of my letters. [3]

All this day we have been blown on by a wild north wind—a 'meltem,' as it is locally called. The sea has come roaring in with an energy and waves of a size that would do credit to our Hyperborean islands. Of course, no fishing-smacks have gone out, and consequently there is no fish to be had. By-the-bye, Canea is very ill-provided with fishermen. There are six boats, owned by Italians or Maltese, and these have the monopoly of the place. When it is fine their red sails, all in a line against the blue sea, are a pretty sight ; but they are excessively prudent, and never go out far enough to catch anything big. Octopus, cuttle-fish, shell-fish like brown mussels a foot long, and a certain small pink fish of a very delicate flavour when fried and eaten with olive oil and lemon-juice : these are the more general spoil of the Cretan sea. But to-day the sea has swept over the Marina, and no fisherman will imperil his life, to whatever saint he may have dedicated his figure-head. As a consequence of this wind, the moun-

tains are almost wholly massed round with great black clouds, through the interstices of which their white sides gleam very effectively, and the plain-country is quite in shadow. I climbed the hill to look down at the Suda squadron; but though the water was ieaden and heaved a little, it was not rough enough to hinder the different cutters of her Majesty's ships from racing hither and thither, seemingly for no other reason than the exercise. The *Thunderer* is a new arrival in the bay, with Prince George on board. Certainly Suda is a magnificent roadstead ; and if we ever do appropriate Crete, it will come to be one of the most valuable of our harbours. The old Venetians thought that if they retained their fort on the islet which guards the bay, their losses elsewhere in Crete would not be irrecoverable. But they found out their mistake. The Turks, on the other hand, have as much under-estimated the value of Suda. It will be left for England to turn it to proper account, and by draining the pestilential salt-marshes which poison the small town of Suda, fit the place for its proper growth as a seaport of the first rank in the Mediterranean, and Crete's commercial emporium. So muqh for British impertinence!

LETTER VI.

The Leper Village—Constantinos the Leper—Equestrians on a Cretan Thoroughfare—The Cool Tomb of a Turk—An Awkward Discovery.

I HAVE been spending an hour with the hapless lepers of Canea. People talk of the danger of intercourse with those who are leprous, but without the predisposing state of health I do not believe there is the least likelihood, or even possibility, of becoming a leper from contagion. Father Damien, in the Sandwich Isles, may in time fall a victim to his position ;* but it will be due to many influences which do not concern the man who sits with a leper for an hour or two merely.

There are nearly a hundred of these poor people here. They are banished from the city, of course, though they get as near to it on the banks by the roadside as the authorities will permit, The same rule of hardness holds here as in Cyprus. Let a man, woman, or child in town or village show but

* As in effect he has fallen a victim.

the faintest mark of the leper, and the neighbours hale the 'suspect' before the demarch or mayor of the district. The poor creature is then examined. The neighbours bring all the condemnatory evidence they can against him: he has been torpid for some time previously,[0] complaining of fatigue without due reason, sleeping badly at night, subject to shivering fits, etc. These are the monitory symptoms; and when the small circular spots of a darkish hue come out on the flesh, they will tolerate the sufferer no longer. And once let the authorities determine that they have been right in believing such an one to be tainted, the victim is expelled from his home as ruthlessly as if he were the vilest of criminals. Mothers and fathers thus part with their children; or their children with their parents. The leper must go and live apart with the other lepers: though 'live' is hardly the word, for he may not work for his bread (who would employ him?); he must beg halfpence that he may buy bread to drag him through the miserable remnant of his days. Think of it for two minutes, and you will be less in fcharity with this Moslem rule, which knows nothing, or next to nothing, of true humanity.

The dusty road from the western gate of the city soon brings one to the reddish earth-banks and refuse-heaps, which are the daily couch of

those of the lepers who get nearest to Canea. They are swathed in rags or clothes in fair condition, according to the time that has elapsed since their expulsion from their homes. Some are dressed decently enough, therefore. But others are half-naked, women as well as men, and, taking the cue from their relatives, they have become so callous that they expose their diseased bodies for hours at a time. Nothing can be more unsightly than the blotched and bloated copper-coloured face of a badly-stricken leper; add to this the vague and even mechanical stare of appeal in the eyes, and you will wonder the less that few good Cretans pass the lepers' quarters without contributing a coin to one or other of the petitioners. I felt thoroughly ashamed of my own health in the midst of these poor creatures, all crying out for 'Pity! pity! and a little help'.

But it is not often that the leper's face is so deformed out of human semblance. Usually, the limbs are the affected parts. Legs and arms swell, go a deep purple or copper colour, become scaly; and this slowly spreads to the trunk, and saps the strength of life. I saw one young woman of perhaps eighteen or twenty years of age, beautifully shaped, with a winning expression of face, and large tender eyes. She sat with the rest on

the bank, her left hand supported in the right, the **palm** upwards; but she looked steadily before her, and said not a word. The tip of a bandage on one of her feet showed where the evil had touched her; but it seemed a cruel shame that such a girl should be relegated to such a life as incurably leprous.

'Nothing can be done/ said a local doctor, to whom I talked on the subject. * It is due to the salt-fish they eat, and the quantity of olive-oil they take with everything, because it is so plentiful. This thins their blood. It is hereditary, too, and the child who has put his father among the lepers may always fear it himself/

This is all very well as a tradition, but it does not commend itself as very reasonable. Our good Western doctors must put an end to such weak doctrines of surrender. According to the great Moses Chorensis, Constantine the Great had a touch of leprosy. In his days a bath of warm blood drawn from the bodies of little children was thought to be the best possible remedy. The little children were therefore selected, and as good as doomed, when it happened that the king dreamed of a better remedy still. He was a Pagan ; but in his dream he was bidden to become a Christian, **and** see what would then become of his leprosy. **Thus** he was cured. This tale may have satisfied

Moses Chorensis, but of course it will not be recorded in a dictionary of therapeutics. In Crete it is the Christians who suffer most; the Moslems seem to find a safeguard in free-living, lethargy, and a plurality of wives.

A little way from the city the soad bifurcates, and the point of bifurcation is the apex of the triangular hamlet of the Canea lepers. Twenty or thirty square white houses (like big bandboxes) line the adjacent sides of the two roads for about a hundred yards. The houses are of a uniform size, and contain but one room, a cell about twelve feet square. They are of earth and stones, cemented and whitewashed, with walls of good thickness, but dirty indeed, and naked of furniture. For a chimney some of them use an ancient water-jar turned upside down, with its bottom knocked out. Here, in these huts, the lepers congregate, and find what comfort they can in a society which knows nothing of social grades, and where the richest man is he who has picked up most halfpence during the last twelve hours. I found a veritable family in one hut—father, mother, grown daughters, and little children. They herded together like cattle in a stall ; and yet, as far as I could ascertain, the children were not tainted. Their parents had married in the community, been blessed by a Greek

priest, and given birth to them with this fearfiil sentence upon their heads. But, for the most part, the houses are inhabited by solitary individuals, who lie out in the roadway, begging alms, while it is daylight, and creep into their dens for the watches of the jaight.

On the pretext of a light for a cigarette, I entered one of these houses. The occupant was a fine fellow of about forty, with curly hair, but a woebegone expression. He was so much astonished when I asked if I might come in that he stared and said nothing ; but he understood when I pointed at my cigarette. He was crouching over a tiny earthen fireplace, boiling some coffee, but got up at once and offered me his seat, with a very saddening look of gratitude in his face. It would have done you good, however, to see how simply he was made happy with a few cigarettes, one of which he consented to light and smoke with me.

I asked him if he lived alone.

i Mdlista' (yes), said he, with pitiful shaking of the head. He pointed to his leg, as if to tell me that, conditioned as he was, he was likely to be alone, always. The leg was swollen, and the foot too ; but otherwise he was a strong, hearty-looking man.

Of course we could not talk much, but my few

Greek words of inquiry soon made him prattle away* He talked slowly, too, the better to let me understand him. There was a diminutive shrine in one corner of the room, over the pile of discoloured clothes and sacking upon a heap of olive-boughs which served him for a bed, and he nodded towards the picture of 'Maria/ I fancy the poor fellow was telling me that he found his consolation in the picture, and I hope it was so.

Besides the bed, there was little in the room. I sat on an old pot; he on a low stool. A water-jar hung on a nail from the wall; a tin lamp of ancient design stood on a rude shelf, and a bottle of oil by the lamp. The floor was of native earth trodden hard. Four or five halfpence lay by him, representing his accumulated store ; when these were spent he would have to join the others on the bank, crying, 'Pity! pity!' all the day long. And a lump of barley-bread was at hand, ready to be eaten when the coffee was made. From the open doorway we looked at a hedge of aloes, five feet in height, on the other side of the road ; but the mountains shone through the dark green leaves. A circumscribed area, and a circumscribed life ! With the coming of the stars, the leper would throw himself, dressed as he was, on the uncleanly heap in the corner, there to sleep until the beggary and

tedium of a new day dawned upon him ! At parting, I gave Constantinos (as my leper was called) a shake of the hand that seemed to surprise him as much as my apparition in his house had surprised him at the outset.

One need nat suppose that the average leper suffers much acute pain, for, with all their disfigurement and poverty and degradation, they are not a morose community of people. I heard not a little hearty laughter while I was resting with them. Constantinos complained of a heaviness in his diseased leg—if I understood him rightly, he spoke of it as a dead limb—he stamped on the ground with it and lifted his eyebrows, shaking his head negatively, as if to imply that he felt nothing from the shock; and this numbness is probably the sensation which ordinarily goes with the malady.

Incorporated with the lepers' village is a tiny paddock where the grass grows high under the shade of a knot of trees which stand by one side of it. This is the cemetery which is destined to receive them all. They have it always before their eyes ; but it is not an obtrusive burying-ground; four humble upright stones among the grass are its sole monuments.

When I left Constantinos I was ashamed to run

the gauntlet of his fellow-sufferers a second time, and so continued out into the country between vineyards, olive orchards, and orange gardens, until I came to a byway which might take me back to Khalepa, by Suda. It was a hot damp day that made walking a tiresome labour; but the mountains were a magnificent sight, with their white peaks in contrast with the purple-black colouring of the nearer slopes, riven as these are by terrific ravines. And to and fro on this highway trotted many a mule or long-tailed horse, with a freight as picturesque as the country. Among these, the Greek priest in his tall square hat, bestriding an animal so small that his pantalooned legs all but touch the ground, is unconsciously a very mirth-inspiring figure. He jogs up and down at great personal inconvenience, without moving a muscle of his face; now and then rebinding his pigtailed hair (the unshorn growth of a lifetime) which the irritating movement has displaced. A good many Turkish dames were also to be seen. These ladies would doubtless be kept at home if they were remarkable for their youthful beauty; but as it is, they endeavour their best to stir the imagination by covering their bodies wholly from sight except their sparkling dark eyes, and their thick noses which are often, however, somewhat

daintily *retrousses*. It is in the mouth, methinks, that these ladies are thorough failures; and so one rarely sees that part of them. But I hope I may be able to give you more particulars about the race subsequently. Many of my friends on their mules were dressed in spotless white muslin, and they held modern green cotton umbrellas over their bandaged heads. But the Cretan country gentry (they really deserve the term) are by far the most engaging spectacle of humanity in Crete. Their demeanour is almost aggressively self-respectful: they seem on the eve of challenging some one to have a fight with them. They are, as a rule, moreover, splendid fellows physically, and their dress sets them off as no civilized black raiment could. They wear a kind of fez with a droop, from which a long blue tassel sweeps the shoulder ; open vests of costly material such as blue silk or satin cloth, embroidered with much silver lace, and studded with a remarkable number of buttons; short Eton jackets which are never buttoned ; a loose waistband of great length, which they wind round them several times, and which hides the juncture of their blue bag-breeches ; and their feet are encased in yellow bluchers of a kind peculiar to Crete. They often show valuable jewellery in their starched shirt-fronts, which are

frilled in the fashion now obsolete in England; festoons of silver chains go from their watch-pocket to the neck, and in their waistbands they carry the Cretan knife or dagger in a silver sheath engraved all over, and perhaps a clumsy pistol or two as well as the knife. One can say nothing .definite about their other valuables—the charms against diseases, vampires, and the evil one with which they are frequently fortified ; for these are out of sight, close to the skin.

The Cretan is very proud of his horse, if he has a good one ; and he is prouder still of showing that he is master of his horse, which he loves to spur oft* at random at a madcap pace until the foam from the animal's mouth lies scattered far in its track, and then as suddenly pull it on to its haunches, and curb it into the staidest of market-cart paces. It is necessary to be wideawake on these Cretan highways ; equestrians are so very hot-headed and inconsiderate. At one moment a gentleman with a very red face will come galloping round a corner as if his life were dependent upon his horse's speed. He has been taking too much of his country's excellent wine, and now he is bawling a drinking-song as he races along to the jingle of his stirrups and personal adornments. The next minute, perhaps, a row of 'Soubaries'

(Turkish mounted gendarmes) will show in the rear. They are fine fellows in their way, but it is as likely as not that they will be in **a** humour for sweeping the road-space as they proceed, or that their horses will become furiously restive under the rough handling by which the Turk thinks to get his charger's respect and obedience. These incidents are acceptable enough, however, in Crete. They agreeably enliven one's walks.

It was so sultry to-day that I had to rest very soon, and the coolest spot I could find was the whitewashed tomb of a famous Turk, standing away from the road in a barley-field. I wish I could have deciphered the Turkish words inscribed on this tomb, that I might have expressed my gratitude to its occupier. There was a fountain in the courtyard which formed the lower story of the building, and two sickly orange-trees and a substantial wooden seat, over which a vine was trellised, to put it into due shadow. Upstairs lay the Turk, with Moslem flags, a little tattered, just stirring in the feeble breeze that moved over his bones. Very likely the deceased was a man who had been well cursed in his lifetime by the Cretans, whose country he may have helped to ravage. He had chosen to be buried in a part of the plain **of Canea** through which the troops march of necessity

when there is an insurrection in the island. Perhaps he had fallen dead here, shot by the foremost of the insurgents in their skirmishing from the roots of the mountains where their strongholds were situated. But though it is probable that he was a man who well deserved to die a violent death, his cool tomb made me think of him with appreciation. His orange-trees grew none but abortive fruit, I am sorry to say.

After leaving the sepulchre, I lost my way. There are no trespass-boards in Crete, and so I marched, without demur, in a line for the nearest house, plodding laboriously through tall weeds, stiff red land ploughed into ridges, cactus-hedges, and thickets of brambles and vines, until the building was at hand. But I soon stopped abruptly, for seated in the doorway of the house was a girl of sixteen or seventeen, stripped to her waist for some reason or other, and with a little child on her knees. I believe I would have gone elsewhere for a direction rather than alarm her by showing myself; but it was too late. The girl stood up with the gesture and deportment of a young Amazon, and warned me off with a torrent of ill-sounding words. She was a pretty creatftre ; but that did not mend matters. I never saw such a little fury. And when I opened my mouth for a

brief word or two of explanation, I thought she **would fly** at me. There was nothing for it but to retreat as humbly as possible, and make the best of the dilemma. The girl was Cretan, and the Cretans have their memories fully charged with the recollection of brutal outrages wrought periodically by their Moslem rulers.

It is due to this that one sees so few Cretan women and girls outside their houses. For the same reason, in fact, they do not sing, like their brothers and husbands. They abstain from whatever is likely to bring them into prominent notice. This comparative seclusion is less strict in the country; but in the Cretan towns the native women are content with looking out of their windows, and talking thence to this or that acquaintance over the way. And no doubt it is their parents.and grandparents who have taught them that they are safer at the upper than the lower windows, and that distance robs a pretty face of some of its allurements. I chanced to be wearing a fez to-day, and perhaps the young mother was excited by the fez.

LETTER VII.

The Venetian *Castello*—Records of the Venetian Occupation of Crete—The Venetian Tyranny—The Moslem Tyranny—Cretan Insurrections and Petitions—The Last Insurrection.

WITHIN a quarter of an hour's walk from my house is a fine old thick-set Venetian manorial building. The lane to it is bordered by native rock, honeycombed with holes which the Khalepa dogs that have no home appropriate and use as a nursery for their numerous offspring. One has therefore to step softly between files of snarling matrons, who show their white teeth over the heads of their babies in the doorway.

This manor-house has quite fallen from its old dignity. It is higher than the town, and its turrets have even now something of menace in their look ; but the hoary olives which grow round about it no longer contribute to the coffers of a single imposing despot. A multitude of sad vagabonds are domiciled in its different stories. They lie out on the lower roofs, sunning themselves and

their tatters, or searching for unpleasant finds in the tangled hair of each other's heads. With one of them I am on fair terms of acquaintance, and he is a type of the rest. I meet him driving a donkey from the woods, laden with the dead twigs of the olives, for fuel. As a costume he affects the cast-off red coat of a Turkish private, the short fez of a Turk, the customary blue breeches with unfilled material enough flapping between his legs for the stowage of half his donkey, and long top-boots. He likes to carry the coat loose, with its sleeves tied round his neck : this seems to give him more freedom to use his switch upon the ass's flanks. When we came face to face for the first time, he smiled and posed me with the one word ' Sir !' It is all the English he knows, and he never misses the chance of using it, though he soon spurs headlong into a mesh of mixed Italian and Greek, to give himself further pleasure. But as his ass does not stop for him, and I do not care to try and unravel his dialect, our interviews are always short.

No doubt the castle is in the hands of these low-born Cretans as a fee simple. Their numerous babies join the dogs in their cries when a stranger approaches the place. For sustenance they are content with little : a bit of bread, a score of olives, and a drink of wine will carry the average Cretan

through twelve hours without much complaint. In the basement of the building is a big wooden press, I know not how old, for the crushing of the olives at harvest-time. The rogues may do a little work then, and when the barley between the olives is ripe; but the spring of the year serves them finely as a season for unlimited card-playing, cigarette-smoking, whistling, singing, and lounging supine or erect in the shade at noon, and on the warming stones earlier in the day. Amid the wrack of dirt and dust, orange-peel and bones, which bespread the courtyard of the castle, one sees many a Jack of diamonds and Queen of hearts torn in twain, with innumerable fragments of common cards. Glistening lizards skim over and under these unhallowed bits of paper, on their way to the hot walls of the lane.

Now and then I espy one of these lovers of idleness treading on tip-toe between the olive-trees, and peering up into the boughs. On his shoulder he carries a long gun of the time of the patriarchs, and when he sees anything in the trees worth shooting he assumes an heroic attitude, brings his gun to the front, and fires. The Cretans are reputed to be the best marksmen in the Levant—they have had so much excellent practice at the Turks; so that as often as not the sportsman **will**

wend his way back to the castle, finely elated, with an unfortunate little sparrow, or other bird no larger, hanging, dead, from his forefinger and thumb. The other day, one of them was more lucky. He had shot a large white owl. I met him and his companions returning with the booty. The great round yellow eyes of the poor bird haunt me now, for the unfeeling brutes were holding it by one wing, which they had shattered at the joint. They asked me to accept it—that is, buy it. But I tried to make them understand that they would do far better to kill it without waiting for a purchaser.

The shooting round about here is fairly good, I imagine. In the Canea market one sees plenty of scarlet and white birds which they call partridges. They are about as big as partridges certainly, but otherwise not like our russet friends of the turnip-fields. I asked a stray vendor what he would sell a brace of his so-called partridges for. 'Two medjidie, signor' (about six shillings and eight-pence), said the man. But before I could turn on my heel, he offered them for a single medjidie. It is not pleasant to haggle pertinaciously with every man, woman, or child from whom you want to buy anything; but one must do so here, if only to retain one's self-respect.

Besides partridges, there are many quail on the uplands towards Suda Bay. An agreeable young Turk, a neighbour, spends an hour or two every day popping at these birds; and he brings home a pocketful most days. My landlady and Georgio, the boy, do their best to cry down the quails* What is a quail by the side of one of the plump tender cocks or hens which feed among the barley in our garden, or roost in the almond-tree ? If I want quail, surely I may select a fair hen, eat that as quail, and be the gainer by the fancy! And so I am obliged now and then to descend into the garden, and prick down this or that be-draggled bird for instant death. If it is a hen, it proves to be one that has laid eggs until she can lay them no more ; if a cock, an ancient bird, the rheumatism of whose stiffened joints makes him the last in the general scamper of escape from an inspection that might prove fatal to any one of them.

But to return to the Venetians, whose castle at Khalepa is a solid monument of their energy. They held Crete, as you may or may not know, from the beginning of the thirteenth century until the middle of the seventeenth century, it was a speculative purchase of theirs from Boniface of Montferrat, who had it in grant from the Christian

Emperor of the Eastern Empire, to which it passed when Rome fell apart from Constantinople. The Venetians were bitter bargainers. To them it mattered little who suffered, so they gained. The native Cretans were held in a state of slavery, and portioned out ,as human appanages of the gentry sent by the Council of Venice to possess the land. Sixteen hundred and fifty of these cavaliers set foot in Crete, and, with utter disdain for the feelings of the old stock, schemed how they might speedily enrich themselves, and live in luxury in the meantime. The tyranny that ensued was more crushing in its effects upon the spirits of the people than the later ravages of the Turks have ever been. The rule of the Venetians had nothing of compromise about it. They had bought the island, and they deemed that the bodies and souls of the inhabitants were part of their purchase. Every native Cretan had to work for his lord twelve days in the year, and twelve other days at the nominal pay of a penny a day. The man who had horses or mules held them always at the disposition of his lord. The vineyards were mulcted in a full third of their produce for the pocket of their lord, who was even mean enough to take further levy for the very winepress standing in the fields, on the plea that its superficies represented so many feet of soil

deducted from the other vine-bearing lands. When a cavalier travelled, he had free quarters wherever he went. It was the same with the Church dignitaries and the State officials. And though the poverty of the miserable Cretan thus oppressed by the visit of his feudal superior might be extreme, it was expected of him to receive his lord with suitable style. In one respect only were the Cretans better off than when the Turks succeeded the Venetians. They were poor as the niyats of India, but their wives and daughters were tolerably safe from violation.

Insurrection was tried but rarely under this iron despotism. One province broke loose at one time, and held its own. But the matter was accommodated by a trick of rare treachery on the part of the Venetians. These got five hundred of the leading Cretans into their power at a feast, and there puf an end to them with cold steel. This massacre was bad enough, but to make it more emphatic, a number of Greek primates were publicly hanged, pregnant women ripped open, and other atrocities wrought of the kind practised by the barbarians of Ireland in their Great Rebellion. Moreover, sentence of death was then passed upon every inhabitant of the district; a sentence evasible in one way only—by the delivery to the Venetian

authorities of the head of a father, or brother, or cousin, or nephew. Was ever such a cursed instigation towards the breaking of Christian commandments conceived by men calling themselves Christians?

The upshot of this prolonged misery was that the Cretans did not like the Venetians. A commissioner from Venice, reporting in 1586, avers: '1 can say truthfully that, with the exception of the privileged classes, they desire a change of government; and though they know that they cannot fall into other hands than those of the Turks, yet, believing that they cannot worsen their condition, they are inclined even towards their tyrannical rule.' The discontent grew as the Venetian power seemed to wane. Thirty years later, Paolo Sarpi, that benevolent father in God, advised the Council to have a care of the Cretans. 'Let bastinadoes be their portion, and postpone good intentions. Granted that our good Venetian cavaliers may be a little rough with these islanders, who have inherited a bad nature from their forefathers—the best thing to do is to pretend not to notice their conduct;' while, 'on the other hand, if they (the Cretans) offend in anything, it will be well to chastise them severely/ After this, one is heartily delighted to hear the wail of a Venetian

senator, when the Moslems are hard at work besieging Candia : 'Tutti i principi cristiani erano poco amici deVeneti . . . .'

It may not be generally known that the Venetian historians of the seventeenth century believe that they lost Crete, which they considered the jewel of the State, at least as much through their impolicy as because the Turks were the stronger power. If their capital, Candia, could hold out for a score of years against the pick of the Ottoman soldiers and generals, it was evident that, with the native Cretans on their side, they could have ousted the Moslems from the island for good and all whenever it pleased them to co-operate strenuously. But the haughty cavaliers who had regarded the populace as only so much humanized soil, out of which they were to tread a luxurious living for themselves and their partisans, were misguided statesmen as well as bad men. With a very little tolerance of the Greek faith, which they found established in the island, they might easily have set before the Cretans in a strong light the perils of religious persecution to which they would be doomed if they fell into the power of the men of Mahomet. They could have played superbly on the feelings of these brave, superstitious people, whose spirit was at such a

lamentably low ebb. But they missed their chance. They deserved so to miss it And thus they fell.

I have translated the following extract from the Italian history of Valiero, one of the Venetians who had a good deal of personal interest and experience in the war which ended with the surrender of Candia. The whole book, which is very long, is a moan about the falling fortunes of Venice, a moan that would be pathetic if it were concerned with a better State than the Venetian. But this one paragraph seems worthy of being preserved. It relates to the time when the Turks were masters of Crete, or as much of it as they cared to be in actual control of, with the exception of Candia. All the world believed Candia to be impregnable—except the Turks. And the Turks themselves were becoming a little depressed, for several of the twenty years which they were to spend round the gates of the city had gone by, and they seemed no nearer the end.

[1] A certain " papas," or priest of Canea, went to Cusseim, the Turkish general, and told him that if he desired to gain the goodwill of the Cretan people, *and bring detestation upon the name of Venice, it was necessary for him to bear in mind that the staunchest of the links which keep

civilized society* from falling asunder is religion. It would be needful for him to act in a way different from the line followed by the Venetians. These did their utmost to root out the Greek faith and establish that of Rome in its place, with which intent they had made an injunction that there should be no Greek bishops in the island. By thus removing these venerated and authoritative shepherds, they thought the more easily to gain control over the scattered flocks. This prohibition had caused such distress in the minds of the Cretans that they were ready to welcome with the extreme of joy and obedience any sovereignty that would lend its will to the re-institution of this order in their hierarchy—an order so essential for the proper exercise of their divine worship. He added, that it would be a further means of conciliating the people if they were assured that they would not only be confirmed in the old privileges of their religion, but that new privileges should be granted to them.

' These arguments seemed to Cusseim so plausible that he wrote at once to Constantinople with a statement of them. Here they were approved,

* One can hardly imagine a native Cretan priest talking about ' civilized society' in this doctrinaire manner; it is a phrase that would have little meaning to the mind of the ordinary Cretan ecclesiastic even now.

and the Greek Patriarch was bidden to institute an archbishop who should be Metropolitan of the Province of Candia. Under the Metropolitan, seven other bishops were also to be nominated. As the price of his perfidy' (wails the noble Venetian)' the above-mentioned " papas " himself received the higher dignity, and had the nomination of the seven bishops, his subordinates'.

A scandal, indeed, that in times comparatively so modern, a Christian people should go gladly, even ecstatically, into allegiance with Moslems, to throw off the Christian yoke, that they might the rather put on that of an effete barbarism ! Serve the Venetians right, one may say heart and soul ; but none the less, there is something very pitiful and depressing about this episode in the history of poor trouble-torn Crete. If the influence of environment be but half as vast upon the formation of character as our moralists say that it is, what fearfully perverted moral natures the Cretans of the Middle Ages, and later, were destined to pass on to their posterity ! Even now I suppose that several generations of mankind will have to go into the world of shadows ere there is a chance for the Cretan to realize that honesty and truth are virtues better worth cultivating than the habits of craft **and** lying which are still so much esteemed here.

Success is the criterion of creditable cunning here, as in London city; and so I have learned to understand why my boy Georgio gives himself airs that he did not dare to put on during the earlier days of my residence in his father's house. Of late the child has been doubling his charges for two or three of the articles I use daily, and the look of sorrow I have cast upon him, with a shrug or two of the shoulders, have not by any means affected his conscience or his composure. It is no use trying to convict him yet. Neither an argument nor a diatribe in monosyllables would have any result, except to make him laugh. And so I lay it all at the doors of the Venetians, and of the Turks, who have still further debauched the Cretan character since they turned out the Venetians in 1669,

And what have the Turks done for the good of Crete during the last two hundred years? it may be asked. Truly, nothing at all. They have used the roads made with infinite labour by the Cretan serfs under the direction of the Venetians—used them until they have fallen to pieces; and then they have left them to take care of themselves. They have profited by the aqueducts of the Venetians—admirable stone works, carried from the mountains, over plains and valleys, to the cities

on the sea-shore—and suffered these also to fall into ruin, without a thought of repairing them. The very houses which the Pashas use as palaces are Venetian ; the walls of the town are prodigious works of the Venetians ; and when the Turks rush in frenzy upon the Cretans in a time of revolt, like enough they still collect some of the Venetian cannon-balls which lie amid the stones and grass where they fell when Crete was under the power of the lion of St. Mark.

The harbours of the cities of Crete are as they were when the last of the Venetians sailed away disconsolate to Venice. Nay, they are rather in much worse plight : for not only are they far less available for commerce than they were (considering the difference in size of the merchant vessels in use then and now), but the most rudimentary of harbour works are neglected. They are allowed to accumulate silt, and otherwise to imperil the safety of the adventurous captains who dare to traffic in Cretan ports. Shipowners do not care to incur these risks ; the Porte promises, but does nothing to diminish them ; consequently, Crete is but a quarter exploited, and the wise administrators of the island lose the legitimate Custom dues which would certainly be the recompense of a proper amount of public works. There is four times as

much smuggled tobacco, for example, brought into the island as tobacco paying duty. The laxity and laziness of the Turkish authorities are completely responsible for this.

But if the Turks have done nothing for the positive improvement of the condition of the Cretans, they have, on the other hand, degraded them just as much as they dared. Until Greece astonished the Porte by breaking loose from it, the rulers in Crete, as elsewhere in the Christian domains of the Sultan, did what they pleased. They were possessed by no appetite, natural or unnatural, which they did not call upon the Cretans to satisfy. There seems to have been a certain nobility of character about the earlier followers of Mahomet, and when their European Empire was but newly snatched from the power of the Greek Christians; but nothing can be more ignoble than the brutality and ill faith with which pasha after pasha and his subordinates treated these islanders during the eighteenth century, and for the greater part of the nineteenth century also. And to the Cretans it grew the more insufferable as they became conscious of their own numerical strength, and the power of self-assertion which the Venetians had never let them so much as realize. They were encouraged not to be too meek, moreover, by those members of their

hierarchy whom the Turks had reinstated in Crete. While, lastly, the very flesh and blood of their bodies revolted against the license of promiscuous outrage which seemed to be part of the patent of authority under which every petty governor of a district presumed to exercise his vile rule.

In those days ' every rayah was utterly at the mercy of his aga (captain of a band of Janissaries), who could kill, rob, or torture him at will, without responsibility before any law, or any obligation towards him. If the aga wanted money, he went to any rayah he suspected of being possessed of any, and ordered him to hand it over. If he wanted work done, he ordered the rayah to do it. If he fancied the rayah's wife or daughter, he went to his house, and ordered the man out of it, and if any resisted, he was killed like a dog. If a Christian celebrated his nuptials with a girl of great beauty, he received from the aga a handkerchief with a bullet tied in the corner of it, and if he did not at once send his bride to the aga, he paid the penalty with his life ' *(Stillman).*

Is it a wonder that the sons and grandsons of such illused mothers and fathers, grandsires and grandams, should be obstinate in the intensity of their hatred for everything Turkish ? and deaf to the representations of extra-Cretan politicians,

who calmly lay down reasons of international prudence why Crete should continue to resign itself to being ruled by the Ottomans, now that these have lost the power to wound them as they wounded their ancestors ? Since 1878 the Sultan has made Crete practically autonomous under the headship of a Pasha ; it has its House of Deputies, freely chosen ; the Government officials, except the highest, are native-born ; it is taxed hardly at all ; the tide of tyranny has ebbed and flowed, and now it is the Moslem Cretans who are bullied by their Christian neighbours : in short, the Cretans have all the liberty they wish for. But they are still Turkish subjects, and they remember the past.

Here are two more stories on the same text of Moslem brutality. As far as I know, they have never yet appeared in English :

' Many years ago, a certain rich Bey lived in a country house at Khalepa. Like most of the Cretan Turks, he was a drinker of wine, and often, when he wished to intoxicate himself more briskly, of brandy. He was a good enough fellow when sober, but, once drunk, he stuck at ifbthing. One day he learns that a certain Christian maiden, one of the most beautiful girls in the island, was

to be married, two days later, to a young Greek, the most active, vigorous, and engaging of the Khalepa lads. The Bey there and then sends a couple of his attendants in quest of the girl and her father, that he may have the pleasure of congratulating them upon the approaching marriage. They had no resource but to obey this mandate, especially as the young man, who might have interposed, happened to have gone into the town to buy some wedding presents.

'The poor creatures are thus brought trembling into the presence of the Bey, who invites them to come near to him, and then addresses compliments the most gross and brutal to the girl. From very shame and fright, the blood rushes to her cheeks. Unfortunately, this does but increase her beauty, and, excited by a frenzy of passion, the Turk at once commands his ruffians of servants to take away the girl's father, and leave him alone with the girl. The old man struggles vainly in the strong arms of a dozen soldiers; they drag him out of the room, beating him as they go, and throw him outside more dead than alive. . . .

[1] When all is over, the Bey mounts his horse to clear off the fumes of the wine he has taken, and, followed by his Janissaries, he gallops along the road between Khalepa and Canea. On the

way, whom should he meet but the intended bridegroom of the poor girl he has dishonoured, returning with the presents he has bought for her. Without ado, the Bey draws a pistol, fires it point-blafik at the boy, who falls dead at his horse's feet.'

This excellent specimen of the more amiable of the Turkish Beys was killed by the native Cretans in one of the insurrections.

Again: *i* There dwelt at Canea a certain Christian, by profession a baker, who had got wide renown for his skill in making a peculiar kind of cake. With his compatriots, however, he was famous for something else : he had an extremely beautiful wife, whom no Turk had ever seen, because, like most Cretan townswomen, she never left the house.

' One morning, a certain Bey of Canea enters the baker's shop. He was a man who inspired much fear, and no one dared disobey him.

* " I want a fine cake for this evening," he says to the poor man. " I shall come with some friends and eat it here. Get the table ready for two o'clock to-night, and see that you have some good wine, and strong brandy. You shall be well paid **for your trouble."**

'The baker was profuse in his thanks; he was overwhelmed by the honour his Excellency deigned to confer upon him; his Excellency should be obeyed—and so forth. As a matter of fact, however, the business bothered rather than frightened the man. For it was customary with those Beys who had not lost all respect of man, and who did not care to violate the laws of Mahomet before their wives and servants, to entertain themselves with these little nocturnal parties behind the tightly closed windows of some secluded coffee-house. What the host bad ordinarily to fear on such occasions was that he would not be paid, or paid but insufficiently for his trouble.

'Without disquieting himself, therefore, the baker makes his cake, and puts everything in order, that he may please the Bey and his guests. At the appointed hour these arrive, seat themselves on the carpet, and begin to drink. After a while, the master of the house begs to be excused, on the plea of attending to his ovens, and finishing the cookery.

[1]"Then send your wife to wait on us," says the chief of the Beys, imperiously.

'The poor wretch now begins to understand what is come upon him. He swears again and again that he cannot yield to their Excellencies'

wishes ; his wife is not at home. But they refuse to listen to him. If he does not immediately obey, he will be killed, and his house sacked. If, on the other hand, he is accommodating, no one shall be harmed.

' Stupefied by these menaces, the baker submits, and goes to fetch his wife ; and he has but just brought her, quivering, before the men, when a knock at the outer door is heard.

[1] " Go and open it," they say to the husband. " It is another guest. We expect him."

' He hurries to the door, so that he may the more speedily return to protect his wife as much as possible. But no sooner does he open it than a band of Turkish soldiers fall upon him, stab him repeatedly, and finally leave his body, lifeless, in the street.

[1] Then the door is shut, and the night's debauch begins. It may be imagined how the miserable young wife fares in the very hour of her widow-hood/

These stories are not pleasant reading, but they are in their way important as justifying the unappeasable hatred of the Christian for the* Moslem inhabitants of Crete.

If such deeds were done in times of peace or

truce, the imagination alone can fitly give account of the barbarities that ensued whenever the Cretan Christians tried to shake themselves loose from the Sultan. A trail of Cretan maidens, bereft of reason, marked the progress through the land of an avenging army of Moslem soldiers. The Christians were kinder in their mercilessness. They used to kill their female prisoners, *i* improper familiarity between their own warriors and any woman who had not received Christian baptism * was with them a more heinous offence than such slaughter.

In 1820 the Christians of Crete thought they saw a chance of independence. They struggled for five years. If Greece was able to free herself, why should not Crete also be able? Had Crete less claim upon the classic sympathies of statesmen who read their Homer than the country of Pericles and Plato? But the Powers which, by the Treaty of London, acknowledged the national status of the Greeks of Greece, had not much solid comfort to offer the Cretans. They attached Crete to the pashalik of Egypt, whereby the Cretans came under the care of Mehemet Ali, already independent of his master the Sultan as far as Egypt was concerned. From this time dates the importance of the European consular element in the island.

The war of 1820 to 1825 soon developed into a series of religious massacres, of the direst details of which the world knows little or nothing. Entire families and corporations of families, as numerous in their headships as the old Scottish clans, disappeared. Their blood stained the rocks and soaked the heather of the Cretan mountains. For example, at the outset, sixty-four men, women, and children bore the name of Kurmillidhes. Of these, fifty-nine died during the war, three were publicly executed (rejecting the pardon that was offered to them on the scaffold if they would apostatize), and only two survived. It was the same with many other households, no less patriarchal. And when at length human nature's capacity of endurance was sapped to the last drop, and there seemed not a ray of hope for the surviving Cretan Christians, they threw down their arms, and many of them exiled themselves in despair.

For a while Mehemet Ali's administration of Crete was more prudent. By running counter to the Christians in everything, this shrewd statesman knew that he could gain little profit. Better far to lull them into an apparent security, to get the ravaged lands cherished into fruitfulness once more, to let the tendrils of home-life bind the hearts of the sturdy warriors, and perhaps effeminate them

in a measure. A few years therefore elapsed before the wily Egyptian suzerain unmasked his plans. Then he proceeded to grind Crete with extortionate taxation, as if he were determined to make amends for his previous weakness.

Again the Cretans rose in protest. This time they used the old privilege of assembly, which has been theirs from Homeric times. They met in the plain by Canea, to talk about the evil with which they were menaced anew. They were unarmed. They did not even propose to apply force on this occasion. They considered that, though nominally under the Sultan's Egyptian rule, they were virtually under the protection of those amiable Powers that had done so much for Greece. They looked towards the Consuls at Khalepa as they might look towards the commanding-officers of an army pledged to see that no harm came to them.

But Mehemet Ali was in no humour for such platonic opposition as was implied in these meetings of the Cretans. It was rank insurrection whether they assembled according to old custom or not, whether they carried muskets or came unarmed. It was rebellion in the spirit, if not sanguinary rebellion. The Consuls failed the Cretans. The Egyptian Viceroy bade his deputy, Mustapha Kiritli, use the strong hand, and, having dispersed

the meeting unsatisfied, to make a few examples. As a result of this command, Mustapha (known otherwise as the 'Albanian Butcher'), the Governor-General of Crete, hung notable Cretans by the score. He hung them from the trees which had sheltered the petitioners during their pacific assembly ; and they stayed suspended, swaying in the wind, until the surrounding country was poisoned by the stench of their bodies. This sort of answer should teach the Cretans that they had no privileges except such as their actual masters chose to ratify or create. The islanders were obliged to curb their anguished spirits : they could do nothing against Mustapha in their then weakened condition.

From 1830 until 1866, there was comparative tranquillity in Crete. Twice or thrice in the mean-time an insurrection was imminent. Individual Englishmen, with their national admiration for pluck, somewhat unwisely urged the Cretans to stand up for their natural rights, and helped them with muskets ; but the Pasha was beforehand with his subjects. Again, in 1858, war all but broke out. This time, it was politic for the Sultan to make concessions : he had other trouble on his hands. As far as mere statecraft is concerned, it had been better if the Sublime Porte had crushed

the Cretans once again, and ground their bones into the soil. The confession of weakness or timidity was fatal to the Moslem power in Crete. And from 1858 the Cretans held their heads high, submitted to the exactions of their new Pasha, Ismael, not without audible menaces of revenge *when the time should come', and made preparations of a very unequivocal character for the decisive struggle they purposed making when the time should come. The farther the nineteenth century advanced towards its completion, the nearer, thought the Cretans, is the doom of the Turks in Crete. And thus, once more, they ventured to convoke a national meeting for the discussion of the national grievances. The Pasha, with the fear of the Consuls upon him, did not dare to be decisive. The nationalists sent their petition to the Sultan, implicating Ismael ; and Ismael sent counter-petitions. The times had changed somewhat !

(With a view to an impartial investigation of all the above-stated grievances on the part of your Imperial Majesty's faithful subjects in this island, we venture to submit that an upright person be sent hither for the purpose.

' We beg leave to express a hope that your

Imperial Majesty may take pity on this poor people, which suffers so unjustly, and which implores that its prayer may be soon transmitted to your Imperial Majesty.'

These are the concluding paragraphs from the first of the 1866 addresses from the Cretans to Abdul Aziz. The grievances were genuine enough ; but the petitioners had so little faith in any redress being granted that on the following day another petition was prepared and sent to the Queen of England, and a similar petition to the Emperors of France and Russia :

'Madam' (runs this naive composition, which is not without a touch of pathos), 'long experience has proved that, from the manner in which our island is governed, all improvement and all advancement are impossible for this wretched country.

* *We,* consequently, entreat your Majesty, and their Majesties the Sovereigns of the two other Protecting Powers of the Greek nation, to deign to excuse our one wish, viz., union with our brethren of Greece.

'It is only under this condition that we can be happy ; and contribute to the advancement of our race/

It was probably not without a touch of pardonable pride that the brave fellows penned the following words in this same petition :

'Moreover, in order to keep the country in subjection, Turkey is obliged to retain an army and a fleet, and to spend enormous sums of money, without the result of much service to her, whereas Crete, if united to Greece, would confer great advantages on the whole Greek race, and would be able to embark on a system of civilization. If the creation of an Hellenic kingdom has for its object the regeneration of this people, Crete, which is a purely Hellenic country, would become one of its foundation-stones. . . .'

And so on. I am the less loth to extract from this petition, because the same thoughts are ready to drop from the pens of the leading Cretans in the present day; and an Englishman in the island, though not exactly loved just now, is respected as one of a nation whose Queen might, in their opinion, do such a noble work for them, if she would.

The reply of the Cretan Committee to the Grand Vizier's answer to their petition (in the form of an injunction to the governing Pasha to disperse the meeting and meet opposition with

reprisals in kind) is strong, not without humour, and wholly the mark of a people who have resolved to have done with their old servitude once and for all :

'In what concerns roads, schools, and hospitals, we do not doubt the benevolent intentions of his Majesty; but the unfortunate inhabitants of Candia see with sorrow that the execution of these generous intentions is indefinitely postponed, notwithstanding the oft-repeated promises of the Sublime Porte.

" T T

It would be absurd, your Highness, almost childish, to assume that the Representatives of the Christian population of 'Candia have obeyed or obey the suggestions of foreigners, and that the Central Committee is exciting the people and acting in a seditious spirit.

# # # # #

' Finally, we, the undersigned, the Representatives of the Candiote people, not considering ourselves as rebels, cannot answer for the future by solemn declarations in the name of a people which has only confided to us expressly and in writing a limited authority, namely, to forward its petition,

and to receive the answer which may be returned thereto.

'It is this answer alone which we have in consequence bound ourselves to bring to the knowledge of the people. . . . It is for your Highness to arrive at such a decision as may be dictated by a sense of justice and conscientious feeling.'

The same day, the Cretans addressed the European Consuls at Canea, begging them to bear witness that they did not take up arms without due provocation; and thus began the most bloody of all the insurrections in Crete. The narrative of it belongs to modern history. Mr. Stillman, who lived through several months of it in a state of siege at the hands of the Moslems, is the only English writer who has told the record of it with any degree of amplitude, and his account was published in America. Still, I shall not attempt to wade through all this blood. Early in the strife, some Moslems were besieging a party of Christians in a village in the west of the island; they thought the besieged were all but starved. 'Not so', cried the Christians, when they were taunted by the Moslems, *see !-' They had killed a Turk, a prisoner, cut him up like an ox, and hung his joints from the walls, in witness of their abundant supply of meat.

Straightway, the Moslems treated six Christians, their prisoners, in the same manner, and confronted the dead limbs of their fellow-countryman with the dead limbs and trunks of the Cretans. This may go for a sample of the horrors of this Cretan war, which lasted until 1869.

At one epoch in the war, when Turkish generals had been successively foiled, humbled, and their armies cut to pieces by the mountain insurgents, so that the Sultan was desperate, Crete had all but gained its independence. At Constantinople the ambassadors, except the British Ambassador, counselled the abandonment of the island. But this step was not taken. The war was prosecuted with fresh battalions, unpaid for months; but what did that matter, seeing that they would doubtless die under the rifle-shots of the Cretans, and thereby score off their claims? And in the end it was only by this continuous wearing out of the Cretans and their Greek allies, and the gradual portionment of the island by the building of block-houses in the mountains, and permanently garrisoning these forts, that the Sultan was able to keep his hold of the island. The country was strown with dead bodies. Hundreds of towns and villages were burned and wrecked utterly. The vineyards and olive-orchards had been laid waste by the

square mile. In short, it seemed that the insurgents, when, in default of any other course, they expatriated themselves, were, leaving behind them an island as dead as their comrades.

But the war did its work for the living Cretans who stayed in Crete. Since 1869 there has been no tyranny, nor any semblance of tyranny in the land; and, as I have said before, the Cretans now enjoy as easy and respectable a government as any other community in the wide world. Their wish—nay, longing—to turn out the Turks is unreasonable in the extreme; but it is natural.

LETTER VIII.

My Landlord as a Merrymaker—The Akrotiri Peninsula—The Conventual Establishments of Crete—The Monasteries of the Agia Triadha, and the Agios Joannis.

WE started yesterday for an excursion that has proved to be very delightful. By ' we', I mean my worthy landlord and I. It was Sunday, the only day on which my landlord had nothing to do at the walls of a very important house he and his fellow-masons are building by the sea-shore near Canea. Whenever I pass this house on my way into the city, I hear a cheery ' Hallo, kalos orizete *V* (' How do you do ?') from the bricks and mortar high over my head. Looking up, I see my landlord in his gay native attire, with a trowel in one hand, and a brick in the other. And, having attracted my notice to his smiling face, he peers round at his companions, glad of the excuse to stand idle with their trowels for a moment, as much as to say, ' Look here ! I am on speaking terms with one of these Europeans Who are going to take

Crete for their own. That is more than any one of you fellows can say, I wager.'

My landlord is a man for whom I have not a little affection. He is very subordinate to his wife at home, and now and then finds his boys, Georgio, Michaelis, Demetri, and the other, too much for him ; but he is an excellent fellow at the heart, and in the honesty of all his dealings with me sets an example to Master Georgio that the boy has no intention of profiting by. Indeed, I rather think Georgio contemns his father for what he regards as his lack of shrewdness in not picking the stranger's pocket whenever he has a chance.

It was an ideal day ; that is, hot. and clear and cloudless, except a few ribands of transparent cirri lying idle along the sides of the glorious White Mountains. Before I had thought of getting out of bed, I could see the glistening runlets of melting snow scoring the sublime peaks. It was a day that would much help to bare numerous rocky edges on which the snow lay shallow ; and, in fact, the aspect of the mountains has changed considerably.

My landlord went to early service at the church of Khalepa, an ancient building, with an iconostasis or rood-screen of curiously carved wood ; such work as one might ascribe to the rudest of those

Cretans whom the Romans first set eyes on. He pressed me to accompany him to church, so that our excursion might be the more hallowed, I suppose. But I excused myself on the plea that I did not like such early rising. Five o'clock is a late hour in the morning for a Greek priest, but it is by no means late for the commonplace Englishman, I think; and I should not have edified their reverences by my gaping.

And our destination? The Monastery of the Agia Triadha (the Holy Trinity), situated near the sea-coast of the Akrotiri promontory, which the map will show you as the third big cape of Crete from the west, and which laps over the Bay of Suda to such very good purpose. It is a monastery famous for its lovely situation, its honey, its wine, and its antiquity. As it is also within walking-distance of Suda, it has seen more English faces than any other of the Cretan monastic establishments; and therefore I hoped I might not be called upon to go through the painful course of mental gymnastics entailed in the expression of my few ideas and wishes in fragmentary Greek.

It was long since my landlord had been privileged to take an entire day's holiday away from his wife and family. He was as nervous about it as a kitten newly turned into a highway of various life.

The wife gave him a huge stick of natural olive, and laid down the law with such a tumult, and so much gesturing, that one would have thought we were bound for the world's end. The poor man nodded vaguely, smiling somewhat faintly whenever he met his lady's large unwinking eyes. A loaf of wheaten bread was crammed into his wide breeches-pockets. It was for my service. The monastery bread was sure to be 'psomi mavro' (brown, or barley-bread), as distinct from the 'psomi aspro' or white bread of civilized usage; and the landlord was not neglectful of my comfort. This, with a pinch of salt screwed up in a bit of newspaper, and a small knapsack, holding my necessaries for the night, completed our outfit.

We set forth amid a chorus of 'Good journeys' from the family, who watched us anxiously to the end of the lane; but no sooner were we out of their sight than my good landlord became a changed man: he grew two or three inches higher, purred upon me as pleasurably as an old tabby, smiled with an intensity that transfigured his kind but rather sallow face, used his stick like a man who is resolved to get full enjoyment from it, and at last ran aside boyishly into the house of a Turk to get a match to light a cigarette. You must forgive me if I weary you with these trivial observations on

human nature. I myself take such a lively interest in details of this kind, that it gratifies me to reproduce them, though even at your expense. We passed through the olive-woods, the vineyards, and the fertile orange and fig gardens of the outskirts of Khalepa, until the grey and reddish rocks of the western side of the Akrotiri plateau confronted us ; and, all the time, my landlord puffed, and smiled, and looked about him with the air af a man who had digested his 'Horace' to the very last line.

I wish I could paint the picture of Western Crete, the mountains and the sea, as we saw them from the broken steeps of Akrotiri this day. It will live in my memory till I die. The sea, a pale blue, calm to the horizon, but marked with a maze of wavy lines like inlaid canals of polished steel ! A single Levantine barque was set in its midst, with one deep vermilion sail, which might as well have been reefed for all the wind it drew. The red earth of the vineyards of Khalepa at our feet, with the different shades of spring-green from the leafing vines, the fruit-laden fig-trees, the budding olives, the almond, orange, and other trees ! The grain, aglow with patches of poppies, set in tht olives and elsewhere, a cheerful sight ! The plain of Canea, with the white city by the sea-shore, and

the farther fringe of pink sand at the meeting of the island and the sea ! The dark rock of Theodoro, with its puny satellite, close to the town, dominated by the ridge of mountains of the Dictynnean promontory, running ten miles into the sea ; and this promontory, in its turn, capped by the sharp heights of Grabusa, the westernmost headland of Crete—all a soft purple in the clear atmosphere, with every peak well defined ! Lastly, the Madara Vouna, so near that I was fain to jump over the stony ravines and groups of wild olives which separated us, and yet so sublime that they held one spell-bound and self-forgetful ! Handfuls of woolly clouds rested on the slopes, inducing those ' clear-cut patines of golden light on a towering mountain of snow,' which are the divinest of natural beauties. Oh ! it was superb ! And I was irresistibly forced upon the old apologetic mode of signifying how limited is our human capacity for appreciating the good things of life : I felt assured that there could be no more entrancing prospect within the compass of our globe. We sat and looked in stillness—or, rather, I did, for my landlord was phlegmatic about scenery—with the buzing of bees around us, and the bugling of the Turks on the city walls reaching us with a softness that made the discord almost harmonious.

THE AKROTIRI PENINSULA.

I think you must try and figure to yourself this Akrotiri peninsula, before I go any farther. It is a cape shaped like a tadpole, with a length and breadth of about eight miles, and a neck not more than two miles across. The whole area is above sea-level, except in a little bay on its western side. Its rocks on the south frown down at our ships not very graciously, and I have been puzzled to account for the presence of our blue-jackets in parts of it where landing in the neighbourhood seems next to impossible. But the chief feature of the headland is its mountain-range along its northern coast-line. The hills are not high—perhaps a couple of thousand feet ; but the bright scarlet patches on their finely-curved slopes, and the curious look of the black specks dotted over them, give them a good deal of individual character. These specks are the wild olives which cling to the hard rock, face to face with the vile sirocco when this enemy to human comfort chooses to blow.

We had no sooner got to the top of our rocks than the area of the peninsula lay before us, visible completely—a space of some fifty or sixty square miles. At first sight, it is as naked as can be, and one prepares to traverse a desert. * But a little patient inspection resolves the shadows and depressions of this great dish of land into villages,

cornfields, and olive-woods, seeming to be planted in the grey surface. And from our post of vantage, as it were on the rim of the basin, we could distinguish good-sized plots of cultivated ground, sunk considerably below the level surrounding them, having all the appearance of the Dutch polders. Closer acquaintance afterwards showed us that these old beds of water now drain their surplus rain by deep-cut ravines. They are luxuriantly fertile, as may be imagined; but I should like to live in them neither in wet weather nor dry. In the latter case they draw the heat like hot-beds, and they get none of the breeze that blows so refreshingly across this exposed upland. Yet, though in reality very kind to what vegetation it does produce, the Akrotiri is mainly a great garden of wild herbs and wild flowers matting themselves thickly together in the red earth which lies thinly on the substratum of hard rock. The air comes to one's lungs fresh and perfumed, and there is no odour of civilization to which this Akrotiri perfume is to be likened. The mandragora, with its tight-packed lilac flowers and thick hirsute leaves, grows here, but not so profusely as in the ravines below Khalepa, Asphodels are in the same case with the mandrake: the prickly herbs seem to bruise those

stately necks of theirs which carry their pale pink head-clusters. But there are myriads on myriads of balsamic roses with viscid stems ; tiny crocuses, intoxicatingly sweet, and with black pencillings on their blue petals as delicate as their scent ; tender anemones, scarlet, crimson, blue, and white as the snow-mountains which look upon them ; orchids of kinds I have never seen before, and of many colours ; and masses of yellow honey-flower which the bees take in quick succession, and never fail, it would seem, to find rich in sugar secretions. These are some of Akrotiri's bloom. Its wild thyme, mint, and other herbs, are to the full as powerfully sweet as its flowers. So you may conceive that a walk here has its charms.

There is one other presence that has to be acknowledged—that of Mount Ida, sixty miles away. I had looked at this holy hill again and again while we were going along, but had not recognised that it was at all concerned with the earth on which we were treading. Far away, over the nearer hills, there was a grey mist where earth and sky seemed to meet, and in one place this mist was white instead of grey. Gradually I caught myself tracing a shadowy form througn this uncertain atmosphere, and at last I understood that this etherealized shape was not essentially ethereal.

[1] What is it V I asked of my landlord, pointing.

' Psiloriti,' said he.

Psiloriti is the local name of the mountain which helped Zeus into life. And it soon yielded its proper majestic outline, now that I knew what it was. For about five thousand feet, its long sweeping back, where it rose to the cone of the mountain, was an unbroken covering of snow ; and the whole of this white part of it was within reach of the eye. Believe me, there was something so dreamily attractive about Mount Ida that my energies were weakened from the moment of seeing it. And it was quite useless for my guide to remark that the White Mountains close at hand were better mountains than Ida, and that if we did not smarten our pace we should be too late for the conventual dinner at twelve o'clock, and it might then be awkward, especially if the papds to whom we were bearing a letter of recommendation chanced to be out of the way. This was all light talk on my landlord's part, for in a Cretan monastery a stranger is received and fed at any hour, and a letter is no more needful to ensure his reception than it would be in England for the conciliation of the host or hostess of the Blue Boar or the White Lion.

But there was every excuse for my landlord in

wishing to bring our walk to an end. It had grown blazing hot, and we had no shadow for a while. The track could not have been more rugged : it was simply the long mark worn in the herbs and red earth until the rock was reached, and the rock was jagged, rising and falling uncouthly every minute. We came to the ruins of two or three monasteries of a humble rank. The dome of the church was spared, but otherwise the whitewashed stones lay tumultuously one upon another. The Turks had cast these buildings to the ground in 1866 or thereabouts, and scattered or slaughtered those of their inmates who had not taken themselves out of the way.

We strode through a village of square white houses, half of them ruined like the monasteries, and by the same agency. Almond-trees lined the rough walls which pent the thoroughfare, and my landlord helped himself to the unripe fruit. The curs of the village slunk through the crevices of the wall, and wailed at us ; and after this harsh note of warning we could see the half-clothed brown bodies of men, women, and children peeping at the passers-by, as if they feared to expose themselves altogether. From the village we descended to a stretch olive-wood. Poor trees my landlord pronounced

them, when he had pinched the blossom from one of them, to vivisect it ; but I never felt stronger affection for a forest. There was soft turf under our feet, jewelled with asphodels and anemones, and the olives shielded us from the sun. It was the year for the olive harvest, which comes in alternate years ; and from my guide's critical examination of every group of trees in our way, I soon began to respect him as an arboriculturist, as well as a mason and a man.

Hereabouts we got our first view of the monastery towards which we were trending. Two thick white lines stood forth from a mass of greenery at the feet of the red Akrotiri Mountains, where the land seemed to curve into an incipient valley. My landlord stopped and exclaimed 'Monasterio !' in a soft tone of veneration.

A tiny schoolhouse next came in our way. It was a recent erection, as the Greek inscription over the porch told to the world ; and it rose in the midst of the aromatic rocks, where, to the eye, there could be but few scholars for the schooL But when I passed the house on the following day, a babble of tongues sounded forth from it; and, without going to its door or windows, I could see a cluster of smooth-clipped heads bending over slates and books, and the tall hat of a priestly

teacher with something like a cane in his hand.

The square white castle of a Turk stood up like a mediaeval fortress from the sea-coast, not far from the school. It had borne siege already, with good show of resistance ; and from its battlements a knot of determined marksmen could pick off their foes with the calmness of assured strength, unless these had a Krupp or other heavy gun with them. A slight blue inlet ran from the sea hard by the castle, so that the Moslem inmates were as well guarded from harsh contingencies as men in their circumstances could be. One could not but feel some sympathy with them in their chill isolation ; and the beauty of the mountains, the sea, and the verdure round about them was, it is probable, nothing in their eyes.

Thus, in course of time, we drew near to the monastery precincts, which we approached finally through a wide expanse of olive-woods, and a stately avenue of tall cypresses leading to the white portals. One of the trees had been blown down quite lately : it lay across the path, and we had to clamber over it. My landlord gave me to understand that the monks intended to rear the tree into its place again, to give it another chance. A cypress of such girth was not to be abandoned

to the cabinet-makers without the surest proof of its decease. Meanwhile, there it lay, with its roots among the vines it had levered out of the ground in its fall, and its pointed head thick in some fruit-trees many feet away on the other side. A bustling swarm of bees were reconnoitring the hole it had left: they conceived they had discovered a rare storehouse for their honeys, no doubt.

My landlord paused when we had climbed the steps which led to the entrance into the court-yard of the Agia Triadha. We were late ; for the echoing boom of the twelve-o'clock gun from the Suda Fleet had come to us long ago. Then he rang a big bell, and, looking up at a faded painting of the Virgin over the threshold, he crossed himself again and again, and murmured prayerfully, until a young man, dressed all in blue, came to answer the bell. A few words of common talk made this porter's eyes sparkle, and, having opened the gate, away he sped in quest of one or other of the priests. My guide and I then found our way into the cool quadrangular cloister of the monastery, with its fountain in the middle, and three or four tall, lanky orange-trees, aglow with sour fruit, pressfng the fountain tightly. The church faced us, with open doors, through which the gold and scarlet of the conventual paintings and sqreen-

decorations, and the gilding of the lamps, showed with a mild degree of sumptuousness. But I was too tired to think much of the church at that moment. My landlord led the way into a long fine apartment, with three great windows looking across ten miles of country, hot with meridian sunlight, at the Madara Vouna. Here were divans and two or three chairs to rest us.

The present seems a good opportunity to make use of the documents and information about the Cretan monasteries that have been placed at my disposal, by givinga brief digest of them. The few following pages may be more dry than their companions, but they ought to be of a certain value, as assuming to give a truthful record of an important religious establishment, in a land where religion, and the formulae of religion, keep their ancient hold over the people.

Voltaire's caustic definition of a monastery as 'a large, fatherless and childless family, which is perpetuated at the national cost', cannot nowadays be applied censoriously to the conventual establishments of the Island of Crete. Whatever may have been the origin of their territorial wealth (now vastly lessened), the Cretan monks can hardly be charged with living idly on the fat of the land. In their religious observances, they strictly conform

to the many exacting fasts of their Church calendar, and pass several hours of the twenty-four of each day on the cold flags of their cheerless churches. At other times, they work in the fields, at their vines, fig-trees, and olives ; barter the honey of their hives, their crop of olives, or the rich wines of their cellars for more substantial necessaries, or current coin ; make boots and clothes ; mend the monastic furniture ; scrub and clean (though they are but half-hearted scrubbers) ; and generally adapt themselves for the personal satisfaction of the rude needs of their simple and tranquil life. As if to rebut emphatically any charge of luxurious exclusiveness which might be brought against them, the monasteries, one and all, keep open doors, and offer board and lodging to whomsoever requests them, be he Jew, Turk, infidel, or heretic. An exception is made to women, however, who are not supposed to act the part of pilgrims ; and who might chance to be welcomed as St. Anthony welcomed the devil. In truth, Crete could as ill dispense with its monasteries as England with its inns and hotels. The superior of the Cretan monastery, moreover, in bidding his guest 'God speed', blesses him instead of presenting him with a bill, and accepts money 'for the .good of the church' as a quite supererogatory acknowledgment

of the hospitality afforded. It is manifest, therefore, that these establishments are not yet consumed by that internal canker which is believed to be the predestined doom of all celibate communities.

Nevertheless, there is a great difference between the number and standing of the Cretan monasteries now and in the time of the Venetians. They were, for the most part, founded when the Byzantine Emperors held the island, and Crete's proximity to the Holy Land no doubt accounts for their establishment at a time when the Crusades were urging the pick of Western mankind to sow their blood and lucre broadcast that they might reap abundantly in an after-life. Thus, in spite of the hard hand of the Venetians, the Middle Ages were the era of the greatest vigour and affluence of these monasteries.

The population of Crete, before Venice began to lay intolerable burdens upon the people, has been reckoned at a million and a half. It is now about three hundred thousand; and with the decay of life among the people there was sure to be a correlative loss of force and income with the priests, who may even be said to have ruled the people conjointly with the Venetians, though in no harmony with them.

Before the siege of Candia, the monasteries had, collectively, the substantial income of £110,000.

They numbered not fewer than seventy or seventy-five establishments and six nunneries, sheltering about eighteen hundred 'religious' of both sexes. It is difficult to apportion to Venetian and Turk their exact responsibility for the later impoverishment of the monasteries. I have already mentioned the compact made between the Turkish general at Candia and the Greek priest who pressed for a renewal of their old hierarchy. Further, by one of the articles of treaty at the surrender of Canea, the present capital, to Turkey, it was agreed that 'the monasteries and churches of the priests, monks, brothers, and ordained monks (Hieromonachoi), Greeks as well as Latins, both in the town and the country, shall be left untouched, and the people living in them shall have free possession of their property; likewise shall the bishops of both rites, Greek and Latin, be left free, and in the enjoyment of their revenues.' The Venetians thought in time to supersede the Greek monasteries with monasteries of their own branch of the faith. Hence the Latin foundations, which have now all disappeared from Crete, were already numerous enough to be noticed in the treaty.

But facts are more eloquent than treaties. It is difficult to say how much of the ruin which has come upon these establishments is due to the subtle

scheming of the Venetians, how much to the rapacity of individual Pashas administering the Vilayet of Crete, and how much to the unworldly devotion which has made the Cretan monks identify themselves with their lay brethren whenever these have elected to take up arms against their rulers. During the last century the superiors of the monasteries, where they had the power, mortgaged their lands to the hilt, that they might help the insurgents. The Turks, with a natural sense of reprisal, have in many cases destroyed these buildings from the face of the earth, and appropriated the lands for secular purposes. And other establishments are but gradually releasing themselves from the heavy pecuniary burdens with which they had voluntarily chosen to saddle themselves.

In 1577, according to Foscarini, the Venetian publicist, the Monastery of Angdrathos had an income of ,£925 ; that of Gorgolaynis, £3,728 ; of Odigitria, £697 ; and of Areti, £930. The same monasteries have now incomes, respectively, of £295, £60, £188, and £270, which have to support twenty-two, two, nine, and two individuals, the meagre survivors of their old populous establishments. The Monastery of Areti, with its two monks and £270 of income, may be regarded as

the wealthiest of the monasteries in one sense: nowhere else is there so large a sum as £135 to the share of one monk. The average is from £20 to £30. But the reduced establishments of Jerusalem and Per&mpela, with five monks and two, respectively, have to do the best they can on the magnificent revenue of £50 to the one, and £17 to the other. In all, there are now forty-two monasteries and nunneries (three of the latter, with a population of seventeen nuns), possessing a joint revenue of £12,300, and giving sustenance to about three hundred and seventy individuals. Added to these are six decayed foundations, dependent on the institutions of Mount Sinai, Patmos, and Mount Athos, supporting in all only eight individuals.

To be sure, under careful husbandry, all the Cretan monasteries might do well, so few are the needs of their inmates, and so genial is the Cretan soil and sun; and it is a fact that in times of peace they are progressively prosperous. But at any time the cry of 'War f between the laymen of their faith and the Moslem soldiers who hold the island in nominal subjection, may throw them back. The Cretan clergy, from the Metropolitan to the humblest 'caloyer,'[#] are hotly patriotic. Rather

* —literally, a good old man. He is often merely a needy man, who consigns himself to the monastery as an Eng-

than remain neutral in an insurrection which has all their sympathies, they would save the Turks the trouble of laying waste their conventual lands, and fly to the hills, gun in hand, for a little exercise in musketry. Hence it is that one finds so many white ruins standing gaunt about the island of Crete. Shot and shell have played havoc among the seventy-five establishments of yore, and, as I have already said, many an acre of consecrated land is harvested yearly by men who have no title-deeds to justify their action.

The administration of the Cretan monasteries differs according to the number of monks in the establishment. The most populous monastery, that of Preveli, with an income of £2,230, has twenty-nine residents ; others, again, have as few as three, two, or one. After the war of 1866, the affairs of the majority of the monasteries were vested in the hands of local law authorities, who administered under the control of the bishop of the diocese ;

lishman would enter a workhouse. He is infirm and lonely : for the sake of the comfort of an assured living at no cost, he leaves his house, gets admission into the establishment, and there ends his days peacefully. He works for the monastery when he feels disposed to do a little work, attends the hurch services, suns himself on the warm stones of the courtyard, lets his beard grow untrimmed, and vows never to marry. But there are few ' caloyers' in Crete now.

while the Synod of Constantinople acted as final referee and adviser. The affairs of the establishments were then in such a disordered and encumbered state that the htity insisted on some such disinterested supervision of them. Not every monastery, however, submitted readily to this interference, as it was esteemed. Here and there was one peculiarly weighted with debt ; and it seemed expedient, both to the superior and the creditors of such a monastery, to keep off investigation and scrutiny of the books as long as possible. But, in time, authority took them also in hand, and thus, as has been said, wherever prosperity is possible, the monasteries have again become prosperous.

Of the internal life of those starved establishments now represented by forlorn individuals, or two or three monks only, little can be said. These monks receive an allowance from the administrative body ; they work the conventual lands, attend their church services, look after the few scholars who may be entrusted to them for education, seldom go five miles from the monastery walls, hold little converse with anyone except the stray descendants of the * caloyers' who were formerly attached to the monastery, and may be numbered amongst the most innocent and simple-minded of men.

But where there are more than six members

they resolve themselves into a sort of religious republic for the management of their secular affairs. They elect from their own brethren a superior, or Hegiimenos, for a term of years (generally four), and also two councillors. These three presiding officers keep a record of the monastery annals and accounts, and at the end of the term resign their books to three successors, who, having scrutinized them and satisfied themselves that all has gone well of late, accept the responsibility in their turn. The Hegiimenos, therefore, though he may seem to have a longer beard than the rest of the brethren, or a more imposing deportment, has no solid superiority over them.

The monks of the monastery of the Agia Triadha came in to us one by one, looking as elated as boys at a fair. They were tall, well-made men, with taper beards of black and brown, and so suggestive of the Holy Apostles that at first I found myself treating them with a confusing degree of respect. But they had little of the self-assertion which ought to go with the apostolic character ; for, having bowed ceremoniously with one hand upon the heart, they blushed like children as they took place on the divan in file with us. Happily, however, we soon got to the right level

of intimacy. My landlord, who had kissed the fingers of the Hegiimenos when this reverend father joined us, plied them with answers to the myriads of questions they propounded to him about me ; and I joined in the talk with a lone monosyllable now and then, which always excited the admiration of those of the monks who heard it, and set them babbling in return. The tumult of tongues drew into the room certain other brethren, who did not know of our arrival. The same formal greeting had to be gone through with each of them, and they, too, had to be enlightened like their comrades.

The porter in blue, who, I judge, was a monk in embryo, soon brought in tobacco, Turkish Delight, and raki. He was so flustered that he bounced the things upon the table with a ruinous clatter. Raki was upset upon the Turkish Delight, and some water was spilt. As a punishment, half a dozen of the good monks set to and gave him a shrewish rating all in one breath, and with a laughable similarity of tones and gestures. It was not at all amusing to the poor probationer, however. He withdrew for a cloth, with tears in his eyes, and tins reappearance brought more [4] words ' upon him.

You would have been richly entertained, I

think, to see us drinking each other's 'healths' in the raki when this scene was changed. It became quite embarrassing. I did not know with whom I had omitted to clink glasses, and it was evidently a sore matter with those who were overlooked. If they had not been big men, mated to the Church, I should have said that some of them seemed disposed to sulk a little. It is certain that these small slips and troubles are very serious slights and wrongs in a monastic community, unless the members are under the most rigid of rules. I drank twice to a genial little fellow with very black finger-nails, and he was transported with delight. He told me he was the papds Constantinos, and tugged at his long beard to inform me of his sacred calling.

[4] Ego iereiis ! Do you know what that means *V* he asked.

'Yes', said I ; and I would have gone on to say something more, but came to a stop.

Then the papas Constantinos got up and went along the line of his fellow-monks, pointing at each of them with an interrogative 'Iereus *V* which I acknowledged with nods. He came at length to me, and with a boisterous 'Not iereus ! laughed himself into his seat in a state of high excitement.

My landlord then informed the brethren that I could repeat the numerals in Greek up to a hundred. I believe a number of them gave him the retort discourteous without loss of a moment —' Impossible f Others, among them the papas Constantinos, considerately took my side in the matter of my attainments. But, in the end, there was so much scepticism, and such an amount of conflict on the subject between the different brethren, that my supporters compelled me to count up to thirty or forty *vivd voce.* Two or three gay old gentlemen, dressed like brigands, looked into the room while this was going on. And when the task was over, monks and laymen applauded loud and long. It was a very triumphant minute of my life, believe me.

The exhibition of so much learning reminded one of the monks that there was a French Grammar in the cupboard at one end of the room. The book was forthcoming from under a litter of knives and forks and spoons ; but not one of the men could make out a word of it, except the Greek textual accompaniment. This time, however, I was not to be the victim. The probationer, who was presumably fresher at his books than his seniors, was haled into the room, accused before the company of his erudition, made to blush furiously from

natural bashfulness, and from a proper sense of shame at daring to be better than those who were born long before him, and then ordered to recite something from a page opened at haphazard. The poor boy went through the Present Indicative Active of the verb *i* to love *;* and, though my sympathy with him in his evident distress was very keen, I would not have missed the scene for something. When he ended it, I gave him a clap of praise. The others kept a dead silence ; and finally the boy was hurriedly told to take himself away, Grammar and all, and see about the dinner.

As we were now sufficiently rested after our hot walk, the Hegiinienos invited me into the church. We went into it arm-in-arm, followed by a dozen of the monks, who straightway uncovered the pictures, opened the triptychs, and blew the dust off the brazen and gilded lamps that hung within their reach. It is a poor little dingy place, but to these untravelled men who had been reared in the odour of its sanctity, and who looked forward to dying within audience of its tuneless bells, it was an edifice of surpassing majesty, and they stood aside in knots to mark how I bore the sight *of* its splendours. The spectacle culminated at the iconostasis, the carving and pictorial designs of

which showed some of each primary colour, though staring vermilion, green, and gold predominated. It was a most discomforting thing to look at ; and when one of the men passed through it to show me the Holy Table ( ), I was amazed at the sight of so much dirt and meretriciousness.

The church of the Agia Triadha, like most Greek churches, is garnished with the symbolical dome. This dome is a type of heaven, and to make this more plain, a representation of Christ is sometimes mosaicized into the ceiling (the monastery church in the Pass of Daphne, near Athens, is a good illustration of this). The dome is supported by four columns, or the angles of the walls stand for the columns, which in their turu symbolize the four Evangelists, who enunciate the good tidings which are to lift men from earth to heaven. From the earliest times the Greek architects have shown forth this allegory. The old cathedral of Athens, a squab chocolate-coloured building, small indeed by the side of the elaborate ochre church which is now the Metropolitan Church of Athens, is one of the most consistent extant examples of this habit.

The faces of two large paintings of Christ and the Virgin on the iconostasis here were formed of solid plates of chased silver let into the wood. I showed some interest in these strange works of

art; but the papds Constantinos, intent on doing his best for the stranger, put forth his mirky hand and removed the faces, that I might examine the bullion more at leisure. The faceless figures at once became so grotesque that I turned away. The chief advantage of this branch of iconology seems to be the ease with which the nobler parts of the saints of the Greek Church may be converted into current coin, and change their complexions according to the fancy or degree of opulence of their guardians or devotees.

As for the other pictures of the Agia Triadha, they would surely turn the stomach of the most unambitious of our provincial school of art masters. Of course, one knows that the Greek hierarchy are so slavishly bound to their traditions that they would esteem it sacrilegious to paint the Holy Family, the Apostles, and the chief saints upon ordinary models. 'What!' a Greek priest would say; 'would you have the Panagia' (the All-Holy; *i.e.*, the Virgin) 'to show a face like a common woman? Oh, shocking!' And, in argument, he would refuse to let his mind consider the notion that the prototype of the representations of the Virgin in the churches of his faith was probably a very common woman, not at all like the Virgin in fact, and very badly copied on wood into the bargain.

When, therefore, a church is in need of some more paintings, it sends for an artist, who either brings his copy with him, and slavishly adheres to it, or else, if a man of originality, goes to work with the help of the catalogue of facial and other characteristics of the Apostles postulated in the Council of Nice, or elsewhere, by the Fathers of the Church in solemn conclave.

' Non est imaginum structura pictorum inventio, sed Ecclesise Catholicse probata legislatio et traditio. Nam quod vetustate excellit venerandum est, ut inquit divus Basilius.'

For example :

' Petrus equidem non crassa corporis statura fuit, sed mediocri, et quae aliquanto esset erectior, facie subpallida et alba admodum. Capilli et capitis barbae crispi et densi, sed non admodum prominentes fuere. Oculi quasi sanguine respersi et nigri ; supercilia sublata. Nasus autem longior ille quidem, non tamen in acumen desinens, sed pressus imusque majus.'

Hence in all the Greek churches St. Peter is depicted as a man not very fat, but of a fair stature, with plenty of hair on his head, black eyes *lnore or less bloodshot, arched eyebrows, and rather a long nose, which, instead of ending in a decided point, curves thickly downwards in a

manner not very prepossessing. And as of St. Peter, so of St. John, St. Paul, St. James the Less ('a young man, with a small beard'), and the others.

There was a picture here of the vicissitudes of Jonah the prophet, which was as funny an exhibition of incongruity as one might see. In one of its final scenes Master Jonah and two others are seen squatting in a small ship, the hold of which they fill to the last inch with their legs; their heads tower to the top of the mast. In this posture they are being abominably tossed by an angry sea, while they gaze vacantly at the horrible sea monster which glowers at them in such close proximity to the vessel that the next wave will assuredly bring them into collision.

There was also a pictorial biography of St. John the Baptist, which occasioned a slight dispute between two of the monks.

'The Holy John, Evangelist f said one of them, approaching me, to act as cicerone.

'Evangelist! No! remarked my friend the papas Constantinos, mildly, as a superior might correct another who was wanting in the gifts with which Heaven had endowed him. '*

'No! exclaimed the other, with the air of a combatant ready to accept a challenge.

'No, indeed! How should it be? It is the Holy Baptist. You see the water!

'But the water is just what shows it is the Holy Evangelist! He was a fisherman. Where there are fish there must be water, you will not deny that? Besides, there are the fishes f

'Bah!' retorted the papas Constantinos. 'They are fish, of course; but they are river-fish. See the end; that will make it clear to you',

And pointing to the concluding vignette of the series, the papds Constantinos scored a victory, for there was seen John the Baptist without a doubt, being bereft of his head, and torrents of red blood streaming down his mutilated body on to the ground.

After the devil, which, with his presumptive dwelling-place, is certainly the favourite subject of illustration in a Greek church, nothing is so much liked as an elaborate sanguinary martyrdom, or series of half-martyrdoms culminating in the death of the saint, and his or her subsequent resurrection by bursting unexpectedly from the tomb, the heavy white stones of which are boldly broken asunder. But it is hard to say how these pictures really impress the good ecclesiastics who see so much of them. They seem to believe thoroughly in the veracity of their portraiture, and will indicate

with triumph the representation of the holy dead after death, being weighed one by one in a butcher's balance, ere they ascend to heaven in Indian file ; and, on the other hand, the bad people, half bronzed already, as they stand, shivering with fear, on the outer extremity of the lurid jaws of a terrific dragon, by whose flaming throat they are to find their way into the warm recesses of the hell which awaits them. They seem to have no doubt that their future will be exactly what the pictures represent it. And yet, as they pass from painting to painting, laughing and chatting, and joking about the subjects, there is something about their conduct that forcibly reminds one of a pack of mere children turning over the pages of their picture-books.

When we had seen all the treasures of the church, I murmured the word ' Cimiterio !' I had been told that the cemetery of the Agia Triadha was worth seeing ; though I have since wondered why it has the reputation.

The papas Constantinos led me there as sole guide. We passed under the cloisters and out into a modest little enclosed courtyard, where the joinings of the paving-stones were very clearly marked. In one corner stood a bier, a mattock, a lantern woven round with cobwebs, and a coil of

rope. Tall grasses grew from between the stones. This was the cemetery !

Here the good monks are brought when they are dead. One or other of the stones is lifted, and in the cavity underneath the body is let down, uncoffined, to stay there for a few months in company with a shovelful of lime. When the months have expired, the stone is again displaced, and what remains of the papds Elias, Joannis, or Georgios, still cloaked in the black robe which kept his living blood warm within him, is flung without remorse into the charnel-pit which forms the north end of the little mortuary-chapel of the monastery.

The papds Constantinos took me into this chapel —a close, ill-smelling place, with but scant adornment of any kind. Nailed against the wall was a box with a grilled front to it, through the bars of which the yellow teeth of somebody's fleshless cranium shone at us. Hard by, a screen of wood, some six feet high, partitioned the room ; and the Latin inscription of 'Earth thou art: to earth thou shalt return', borne by this screen, suggested what was behind. 'Bones f said the papas Constantinos, opening the door, and disclosing a tolerably spacious and, I imagine, deep recess, where heads and legs and arms and backbones lay intermingled with fragments of clothes and buttons and

bits of linen. A ray of dusty light shone upon this unedifying medley of deceased monks from a slight window overhead, and altogether it did not seem a spectacle one would care to recur to when the owls of night were hooting beyond the walls, and a pale moon hung over the monastery buildings.

The pap&s Constantinos was very indifferent at first; but he betrayed a little emotion later on, when he had rummaged for a while among the bones, and brought forth a fine broad-browed head which he seemed to recognise. As a rule, however, a monk is a person who has raised himself far too high above ordinary mortals to be capable of commonplace human sentiment. And in this instance the papds, who had seemed to contemplate the skull of his friend as if he were saddened by sweet memories which could never more take substantial shape, suddenly pitched the thing among its fellows with a dry chuckle of a very indefinable kind. It was with him as with you and me, I suppose—'Dum vivimus, vivamus!'

Dinner was now ready for my landlord and me. We made the meal at a tiny table set in one corner of the refectory, which was also the reception-room of the monastery. The monks, meanwhile, sat round about us, talking glibly, and cordially

acknowledging the toasts we seemed called upon to render them. They gave us of their best wines—a flask of red and a flask of white—and were very inquisitive about my verdict on these liquors, which I had no difficulty in praising.

My landlord was a good Churchman. The monks did not, therefore, offer him anything very solid to eat. He seemed to get on very well, however, with a plateful of snails in large spotted shells, and a dish of cabbage boiled in olive oil. I tried the snails, and found them sufficiently tasty, but very tough. The monks and Greek laity must have strong stomachs, I think.

As for me, I was treated royally. It seems that the most serious episode in their conversation with my landlord, when we had first arrived, was a heated argument between him and them as to what I would best like to eat. He urged his experience of my palate, gained at much cost; they argued on general grounds and preferences, It eventuated in a number of luxuries : eggs boiled and fried, a rice-pudding, some fish, a bowl of pellucid honey from their own bees, milk, wine, and bread. The good fellows had taken such pains to satisfy European needs, that they could well be forgiven the hot interest they showed while we were eating our dinner.

Behind us, quivering with nervousness, waited the probationer in blue, with his French Grammar tight between a finger and thumb of his right hand, where the other monks could not well see it. From time to time, he whispered some awkward French to me, and said ' Oui, monsieur' in a doleful undertone. He was much disturbed once during the meal. Several of the monks, a little derisively, I fancy, posed him with a question he was to translate into French and put to me. The boy did it after a fashion :

' Have you a mother, monsieur ?' he asked.

I was obliged to tell them all that I could not remember my mother, but that I had never felt the want of her. Their commiseration, when they understood the first part of my sentence, was unanimous and immense. They sighed long-drawn *i* Ahs f like so many warm-hearted old ladies; though it is probable enough that they had been reft from their own mothers at an early age, and had never since felt the need of feminine attentions.

After dinner, my landlord and I and two small scholars of the monastery school set out for an excursion through the Akrotiri Mountains to a renowned cave and chapel in combination, called the Grotto of Katholiko. We climbed the sides of the hills through a thick undergrowth of prickly

shrubs, scented herbs, roses, stumpy caroub-trees, and wild olives, until we had all the Akrotiri plateau below us. It was the most perfect of days: a clear golden light coloured the country, and touched the unclouded snow-peaks which rose majestic from the mainland end of the peninsula. The sea was blue and sparkling, and the western mountains a quiet purple. My landlord was in very gay spirits, and when the lads began to chirp snatches of Cretan songs, he joined in if the chorus or refrain was at all suitable for his voice.

Our path led us into a steep ravine of the mountains, hot and soundless, save for the echo of the singing of my guides. But suddenly the boys stopped, and began leaping aside from the track. Then my landlord also held his tongue, and I saw that he looked, with a dark expression on his face, towards the boys, who had come to a standstill in a corner of the gorge, where there was a straight side of red cliff.

On the surface of the rock eight rude crosses † † †. had been scratched with knives or † † † swords. My landlord and the boys told * * the tale passionately, in broken words, and with lusty gestures. Here a body of Moslem soldiers had come upon eight Cretan Christian men, during

the last insurrection. They had them cooped up as securely as if they were in the prison-house of Canea, And here the Turks cut their throats, and left them dead one upon another. Like enough, some of the Moslems lay dead with the Christians; but my landlord made small account of them. The boys soon found relief for their feelings in hunting a spotted snake through the brushwood ; but my landlord plodded on for a while with lowered head and an occasional murmurous growl : the memory of the slaughter rankled long within him.

From the gorge we ascended to a spacious hollow in the mountains, with a southern outlook towards the snow-peaks of the Madara Vouna, Here, in ineffable solitude, stood the white monastery of the Agios Joannis, walled enclosure protecting the patch of barley, a fig-tree or two, and the few other fruit trees, now in bloom, which were the entire agricultural wealth of the monastery. The Agios Joannis is one of the small conventual establishments which drag on a rather purposeless life, under the control of authority. It seems to serve but one secular end ; it is the emporium of the candles which at long intervals are used for the survey and consecration of the different mountain caves between it and the sea.

A loosely-dressed large-bodied monk let us into the courtyard, which was a thick brake of orange and lemon trees, monster geraniums of different colours grown to wood, and other flowers. A fountain of delicious water was set in the midst of the shrubs. The air was almost too sweet with the various blossoms. Looking about me at the cool cloisters, the upper stories of the deserted building, the quaint old porch of the monastery church looming through the greenery of the orange-trees, and the unclouded blue sky which canopied the little quadrangle, methought it were an ideal place to bask in for a while, far, far away from all civilized intrusion.

. Only two monks live in the monastery of the Agios Joannis ; and I was glad to see that the other monk was thin and spruce, and generally in fair contrast with his burly companion. We took coffee in their parlour, a small apartment with the naked earth for flooring, and for furniture, a hard divan covered with a blue and white cotton quilt, a looking-glass much out of order, an earthenware pitcher, and a comb. From this one might judge that the monks were not full livers, or over-heedful of tiheir toilet.

The boys were given the pitcher, to use at the fountain for the quenching of their thirst. 'My

landlord and I took coffee; brewed by the one monk and served by the other.

While we were thus resting, in strode a fine cock, with comb erect, and crowed with pleasure at the sight of so much life. The big monk looked down at the bird with an affectionate softness suffusing his large features. He even spilt some of the grounds of the coffee for the proud creature to dabble in. And the cock looked up at its owner and crowed, and scraped up the parlour floor and shook its comb, like a thing that knew its lot had fallen in smooth places, and that it need never apprehend being seized by its pinions, and having its gallant head chopped off. Shortly afterwards, however, the meek face of a hen appeared in the doorway. The monk did not see her, and so she tripped quietly in, and amused herself under his stout legs, out of sight of him and the cock, who had found pastime with some crumbs dropped by the boys. But, with the unwisdom of her sex, the hen was not content to stay in easy obscurity, and so the monk caught a glimpse of her. He rose abruptly, swung his great arms, and hissed her out of the room; sitting down again with much colour in his face, and a bashful apology for the scandal. *

[i] What is it all about *V* I asked of my landlord.

* It is feminine/ he replied, with a look of concern.

Twice the silly hen essayed to share the enjoyments of her spouse, the cock; and each time the monk drove her out with cries. But at the third invasion, the priest could brook her obstinacy no longer. Meditating for *one* moment, he poised his red hands, and pounced upon the hen, and, notwithstanding her screams and struggles, he seized her by the neck, and carried her off into an adjoining room, the door of which he locked, bringing the key away with him. And how, think you, did the cock bear these indignities offered to the hen ? He watched the different expulsions with a bright eye of impartiality. He crowed when the papds took his lady by the neck ; and when the priest returned, out of breath from anxiety and his exertions, this pampered male bird set himself between his reverence's legs, and made the welkin ring with his congratulations. From this little story of the cock and hen of the monastery of the Agios Joannis, you may perceive the horrible demoralization wrought by a life of seclusion and favouritism upon a creature of such innate chivalry as a common cock. It was said of Mount Athos **that** the flea was the only living being allowed to introduce **its female into their** monasteries, arid that

many an old man who had never knowingly seen a living woman, and had spent a long lifetime on that holy promontory, would blush furiously at the sight of milk or an *egg.* Even Mount Athos is a little more lax or enlightened in these days, I believe; but some of the Cretan monasteries affect a rather amusing amount of scrupulousness in the matter of sex.

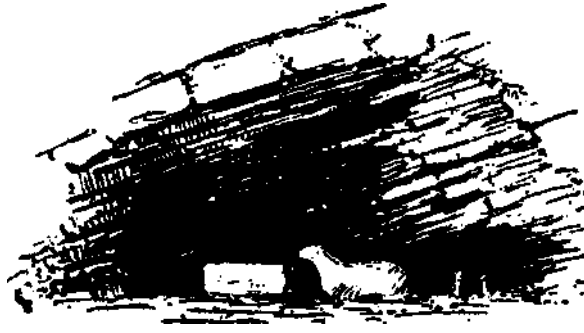
We made a wild descent from this monastery, well supplied with candles which had been blessed by the monks, until we stood at the head of a deep mountain hollow, the lips of which, if I may say so, ran seawards, where the rocks fell precipitously into the ^Egean. From the top we could see marks of building half-way down ; and these we reached by an artificial staircase of some seven score steps cut in the red rock. On one side the steps fell perpendicularly into the gully, so that we had to be careful with our feet. They ended at the base of a wall of the cliff, and carved in the cliff was the church, with a triangular porch rather nicely cut.

I am sorry I can tell you little about this ancient place. In old times it was a famous shrine, and a body of monks lived in the buildings hard by —now unroofed, with big trees growing in* the courtyard. Now it is dismantled and forsaken. Once or twice in the year **a priest comes with his**

mattress, his loaf, and some olives, and lodges in a rock-hole adjoining the chapel, that he may do honour to the saint to whom the work is dedicated. The church and his apartment are both clotted with green mould and the refuse of sheep, so that the poor priest must have but a sorry and rheumatic time of it. So it is, however.

The grotto is altogether a more pretentious attraction. Having crossed themselves, and lit the candles before a faded picture of the Panagfa in the chapel, my guides led the way into this hole. It must be enough if I say that we got as far into it as we could without danger, clambering over enormous wet stones, from chamber to chamber, hung with brown and white stalactites, some of which had united with the level and grown to columns half as big round as a man ; that the heat at length became so insufferable that by the dancing light of our tapers we seemed each of us to be beaded with a number of sparkling diamonds which rolled hurriedly from our faces to the ground; and that we were as ready to leave the cave as we had been eager to enter it. The disused parts of our first set of candles were immediately afterwards stuck into a tall candlestick of wood, and placed that they might burn themselves out before the poor iconostasis of the church.

We explored two or three other caverns on our way home, leaving the candle in each case ; for to each cavern a tiny cell was attached, wherein a monk does penance now and then. One of these holes, called the Cave of the Bear, is remarkable. It has a high pitch, and in the large entrance chamber is a cistern of sweet icy water, which is kept constantly supplied by the tricklings from the roof into the head of a huge isolated rock shaped



very like a bear, which rock discharges its surplus through the snout. There is a deep well in the same cave, nourished from the same source. In the event of a new insurrection, the Cretan Christians would send their wives and children to places such as this Cave of the Bear, where they would be in fair security, and put to no inconvenience from a want of water. Only a Cretan knows how right dear to a country its caverns may become.

The good monks of the Agia Triadha were droning away at their 'Kyrie Eleisons' in the dim end of their church when we got back to the monastery. They paused for a moment to shake hands with my landlord, who was to walk home to his wife at Khalepa, leaving me to take care of myself. I sat and listened drowsily to their sing-song service until it was all over. I do not think the brain of the average Greek priest would weigh much : there is so little in their life to develop anything approaching intellectuality. You know, too, that sermons are not heard in Greek churches, since it has been laid down by the hierarchy (very much to their satisfaction, I imagine) that Holy Writ is its own commentary, and that no man needs further human exposition of it.

After service we went in a body to visit a sick papds in his apartment over the cloisters. He was not very sick, however, for he did the honours of his room with pleasant assiduity. He produced a bottle of rum, and we chatted and smiled, and looked at his treasures until it was dark, and the probationer in blue was bidden to fetch the lamp. This invalid father had a couple of guns crossed over his bedhead, in token of his pacific vocation. His walls were covered with photographs (all gentlemen); he handed me some enormous oranges

to admire, and when I was about to break the peel of one, he quickly relieved me of all of them, and showed me his books instead. His library consisted of five volumes, all concerned with the ritual of the Greek Church. I do not know what the poor fellow suffered from. Perhaps it was his stomach, for he planted both his hands there when he had manfully tossed off his glass of neat rum.

The stars were bright over our heads when we left the sick man and crossed the quadrangle to the supper-room. It was a calm, soft night, and the odour of the orange-blossom hung heavy outside and inside the monastery*

This time it was the Hegiimenos and I who were to eat together, while the others sat round and talked. But very soon the wine was served indiscriminately. Papas after papas approached our table at the invitation of the superior, and ate a snail or a bit of lettuce and drank a glass of wine, with a genial word and look of goodfellowship. As for the superior, he was a capital fellow ; but when he took to clapping me rather constantly and hard on the shoulder, and making innumerable jokes, which were three parts lost on me, I knew that he had drunk a little too muck I did my very best at the language, now that I

was unaided, and we made the wooden rafters resound with our laughing.

When at length supper was done with, we fell back upon the divans, all very comfortable in body. But to add yet further to our ease, the monks brought in a number of chairs and disposed these by the wall, so that each papds could lounge on the divan, and at the same time rest his feet on a chair. In this attitude we saw the evening out.

Of the night that followed, I do not care to say much. The probationer led me into a long room provided with eight beds, and with a blue and gold illumination of the Virgin over the threshold, and then, with a gentle 'Bon soir, monsieur/ he left me.

I examined all the beds, but, alas ! there was nothing to choose between them. I wonder how many people had slept in them before it came to my turn. It were more futile still to wonder how many fleas found lodgment in them, severally and collectively.

It was a feverish night, and between the attacks I got up again and again to drink at the pitcher my kind probationer had put ready for me. The room had six or seven windows, and by the moonlight I could see the country and the White Mountains (silvered entrancingly) whenever I

chose to look out of the windows. But the fleas were that night more to me than many moons.

Early in the morning, however, I got up, determined to shake the dust of the Agia Triadha from my feet without delay. And having washed in a primitive way (the probationer poured water over me from a vessel like a coffee-pot), and eaten a romantic but rather unsatisfying breakfast of coffee and Turkish Delight, I shook every papiis by the hand, and returned to my house at Khalepa.

I may add that the income of the monastery of the Agia Triadha is about £715, with which it may easily support its one-and-twenty monks.

LETTER IX.

Baths and Shops of Canea—The Sepia—The Octopus—Consular Troubles—Trade of Crete—Music and Antiquities—Pictures in the Greek Church of Canea,

A LAZY day 1 It has been really hot. My thermometer, set in a window looking south, touched 109 degrees in the sun before noon. The mountains spotless, except where black points of rock have cropped through the snow !

Count Manzoni and I walked into the town. The narrow streets were full of flies, and the so-called butter and mizethra, as well as the fleshless joints of the thin lambs that hang dead in the meat-market, were clotted with flies. The Canea butchers have learnt a little English through their intercourse with our British commissariat. They point to any and every bit of lean meat in their stalls and cry ' Buy beeff leering, and fencing the air with their long knives. They have brown bare legs, blotched in an unsightly manner, and are, on the whole, a disagreeable body of men.

On our way we met several of the officials of the different consular houses. Count Manzoni is acting as honorary correspondent for the Roman *Tribuna,* and I have not yet quite lost the fame that accrued to me as a Gladstonian diplomatist; we were, therefore, hailed in the usual cordial way, and besought for the latest European intelligence. Manzoni had heard of the coming of six Greek torpedo-boats, made in Germany ; and I was able to tell of a missing English sailor, who had landed at Suda and gone no one knows whither. Thus we managed to buttress our reputation.

We looked into a common Turkish bath establishment in a dirty alley of the town. A single swing-door was the only division between the bath-room and the street. But, indeed,* it needed some such direct process of ventilation. The smell was suffocatingly foul, and the air a thick grey, through which we could distinguish a good-sized square room, with recesses opening towards a common centre, and a number of swarthy forms, nude and half-nude, lying about—some puffing tobacco. A rectangular pile of towels that had been used stood close to us, reeking with nauseous vapour. It looked like an altar smoking with its sacrifice. We did not bathe as we intended.

From **the** bath-house to a fez-shop. The **Cretan**

Turks are noted for their fezes ; and a fez-shop in Canea is one of the cleanest and most orderly of places. The proprietors had plenty of work on their hands. Several thousand Turkish soldiers had been landed from the Bosphorus, or were going thither, and there was a demand for head-gear. I paid a medjidie (three shillings and fourpence) for a first-quality Cretan fez. Count Manzoni, who lives in his fez, has already worn one out. It is a becoming sort of thing to certain heads, and transforms a man into a Turk with curious completeness. I chanced to call at the Consulate in the town wearing my fez, and was received with the greatest indignity by the kavass of the Consulate, who is an old servant in the British Foreign employ, and apt to rule his conduct by his own instincts. I was for going into the office, and waiting until the Consul or the Vice-Consul came in ; but the kavass pitted his muscles against me. ' Consul no here ; you no here. You go now.' Nor would he let me sit on the steps outside the office door. No tramp could have been more ruthlessly hustled out of a respectable quarter of London by a haughty policeman **than** was **I** out of the precincts of the Consulate. The kavass is a broad, brawny fellow, with two pistols in his waistband, so I should have had no chance against him if I **had** resisted.

A great supply of cuttle-fish in the market to-day ! The Maltese fishermen had made a haul, and their boats were being emptied when I was by. The sepia, or cuttle-fish (it is a bastard kind of cuttle-fish, I believe), is much eaten here. I do not like it. My landlady lately served me one about a foot long, stewed in the bad butter of Canea, But, even apart from its demerits, the great staring eyes of the fish when it comes to table are enough to frighten a timid wife. One begins to eat it by removing the large white concave bone, shaped like a spoon bait, which seems to give the animal the degree of rigidity it has. The bone comes out like a rabbit from its skin, and the flaccid fish thenceforward loses all dignity, and collapses into a thing of pure horror. This bone or shell is the only graceful part about it. As for the nature of the fish, it is leathery leathery ; and the dye of its body mingling with the bad butter of Canea do not make a palatable condiment.

But if the sepia is bad to eat, the octopus is worse. I cannot get my landlady to understand that I abhor seeing in its raw state this or that fish or half-plucked fowl, which is destined to provide a dinner for me. She thinks it a dut$ I ought not to shirk, I suppose ; and, indeed, it is proof of her honest heart. The other day, for example, she

appeared before me with a loathsome, cold, dead, slimy object dangling from her fingers, and looking in itself like a cluster of repugnant vipers tied round the middle ; this was an octopus, which the boy Georgio had bought for my dinner. After that, I had to face the undertaking with what fortitude I could muster. The octopus, as you well know, has eight legs, feelers, or what you like to call them ; and, as a matter of fact, that is all he has in the way of corporation : for his body is but the place of meeting of his various limbs. He came to me cooked like the sepia. I tried a limb, and it gave me a shock to find that the limb proper slipped out of a thick skin like a thing with not a little life still inherent in it. The octopus was dead enough really, however. Its flesh is a smooth, whity-brown material, closer than any lobster's. I tried to eat a morsel of it, but it had all the elasticity, toughness, and capacity of resistance of a piece of indiarubber, with no flavour that I could discover as a set-off; so that I very soon sent away my octopus with seven of his legs untouched by the knife. Even the boy Georgio made a wry face at this fish. ' Octopus oish kalo !' (Octopus no good), said he.

At Smyrna or thereabouts it seems that bathers are threatened with capture by a large octopus

that has the air of lying in wait for them. One is prone to conjecture what the animal would do with a man if he got him. But think of the octopus of which Pennant talks, with arms nine fathoms long and a nucleus two fathoms broad !

The favourite fish here is a local kind of sea-urchin, I fancy. It is spherical, as large as a child's fist, and its shell is set closely with very formidable prickles. They break the sea-urchin open, and expose his scarlet inside in the half of the shell that retains him. I have met the dragoman of the Austrian Consulate going home with a basketful of these dainties ; but have not yet made trial of them myself. Why should one be constantly martyrizing one's self by such doubtful experiments ?

From the fish-market to the Palace to call upon the Governor's secretary, who very civilly put his work aside to give me cigarettes and coffee. He was constantly being interrupted by this or that petitioner, now a Turk, now a black-coated -Greek, and now a country Cretan brown as the writing-table, who has come from twenty miles away with an itching grievance to declare. I was amused by the energy of two of these native Cretans : splendid fellows, strong of limb, and with lustrous skin. They pleaded for about a quarter of an

hour, with much impressive gesturing, and clear resonant voices. When they had gone, Mr, Kopassis explained what they were after. A certain church in the neighbourhood had fallen out of repair, so that it had come to be disused. ' Of what use is the building now *V* argued the men. ' We wish to build a house, and a good wall, and here is the material ready to our hand without hiring asses to carry one stone at a time from the quarries by the aloes ; and so we ask your permission.' It seemed a cool proceeding, but the secretary very properly deferred granting their request before inquiry.

There has lately been a disturbance in official circles here. The secretary of our Consulate, a clever Cretan who has been educated through his own exertions at a German University, and has appeared in print as a philologist, met one of the Pasha's secretaries, and gave him but three fingers of his hand to shake. The Pasha's secretary was enraged at the insult, and the two secretaries soon fell into a wordy war of a very uncompromising kind. Our secretary is by way of being a Sphakian through his ancestry, which is equivalent to raying a Cretan patriot of the best type ; and the Pasha's secretary is also a Greek, though more diffident in the declaration of his politics, seeing that

he depends for his bread and butter upon the Turkish Government.

[1] You are a Turk, not a Greek!' exclaimed our secretary, when the quarrel had gone far; and the two men separated in extreme dudgeon.

The matter has finally been accommodated, after a visit by the Pasha to the British Consul in his house at Khalepa. With thirty ships of the nations in Suda Bay, and daily expectation of news of war between Greece and Turkey, the two officials do not seem to have well chosen their time for a petty disagreement which might have eventuated badly; and it is hard on our excellent Consul, besides.

I have been studying the trade and other reports of the island. It is exceedingly unaccountable why the Grand Vizier will not do something for the harbours of Crete, unless on the supposition that Crete is soon to go out of the hands of the Moslems. At Retimo, for example, the third port of the island, ships have to be warned off sometimes, because the water in the port is too shallow, or because there is no room for another hull. And at Canea and Candia vessels drawing more than ten feet find themselves in jeopardy. In the consular reports of 1882 and 1883, the needs of the harbours and roads are the chief

topics ; and in 1884 the matter is re-opened with the observation that plans for improvements to be effected at a cost of £100,000 were laid before the Porte in 1883, and that nothing more has been heard of the plans.

* Public works in Crete are carried on at a halting pace, though the means at the disposal of the Government are constantly on the increase.'

A local law makes it imperative on all the male inhabitants between the ages of eighteen and sixty to give four or six days' labour annually, or a money equivalent, towards keeping the roads in order. This law may be a mere survival of the intolerable corvee system of the Venetians in Crete ; but it has certainly fallen into desuetude. The four miles of road between Canea and Suda, and the two between Canea and Khalepa, represent the entire carriage-way of this large island. It would be too much if the Admirals and Beys who interchange calls between the Fleet and the Palace had to betake themselves to horseback after a good dinner, and so this Suda road is carefully looked after.

The Cretan harbours being so bad, no wonder English shippers pay so few visits here. In 1882 not a single British barque came to Crete for trading purposes. In 1884 two British sailing-

vessels and six steamers appeared at Canea, out of a total of 586 sailing-vessels and 246 steamers from other European ports (Turkish, Greek, Austrian, and Italian). But, as a rule, we send two or three ships every year, with cargoes of Manchester goods, minerals, etc.

In the trade returns of Crete, the olive shows as by far the most important of the island products. In 1883 the crop of olives was the heaviest known there this century, and 19,500 tons of olive-oil were exported, valued at £567,000. In 1884 the figures were 5,765 tons, worth £188,300. The other exports for 1884 were as follows :

Soap, 3,141 tons - - -	jrth .£68,374
Locust-beans, 4,300 tons	15,175
Wine, 950,000 gallons -	31,660
Raisins, 40,000 cwt. - -	13,700
Valonea nuts -	11,000
Oranges and lemons -	6,150
Sundries	40,000

making a total value of £374,359, against, for 1883, £803,840, which includes the unprecedented harvest of olives.

Consul Sandwith's remarks about the **vine**-growth in Crete, and the cost of the Cretan wines collected on the island, ought to appeal to English-

men, who in Ben Jonson's time thought highly indeed of the 'rich Candian wine/ which has been identified with the Malmsey of old, and which was so valuable an import into England in the sixteenth century that a British consul was necessary at Candia, to act as * Master-Governor and Protector of all and singular the merchants and others his lieges [Henry VIIL's lieges] and subjects within the port, island, and country. , . .'—*Rymer.*

[6] It is a matter of doubt,' says Mr. Sandwith, in 1883, * whether the great extension of vine-culture in Crete, stimulated by the spread of the phylloxera in France, is likely to prove so remunerative to the growers as was supposed. . . . It is said that the increased cost of labour in February and March, when the vineyards need tilling, swallows the profits. . • .'

And in 1884 : ' The price of wine, f.o.b., which in 1883 was 8d. per gallon, fell this year to 7½d., but rose to 82/3d. The former price is scarcely remunerative. The greater part of the wine, especially the inferior qualities, is sent to Egypt and Barbary; while the rest is bought for the French and Hamburg markets, where it is manipulated and sold under other names. The Cretan wines, being very alcoholic, are found useful for fortifying the weaker qualities of France and Ger-

many. The peasantry have at length ceased to add vineyard to vineyard, and quotations were so low that they talked of rooting up the existing vines . . . so that a limit to viniculture seems to have been reached/

A bottle of excellent unadulterated wine, so strong that I cannot drink more than three or four glasses of it at a time, costs about 3½d. It seems a pity that our wine-merchants will not compete with the traders of France and Germany, and thereby benefit us as well as the Cretans.

The imports of Crete for the three years 1882-84 were worth £500,490, £523,150, and £484,900 respectively. Cotton goods here hold the chief place, with an average value of £164,000. Then comes flour, £44,000; leather, £41,000; timber, £29,000; hardware, £21,000; sugar, £25,500; iron, £11,000, etc., etc. Not a little rice, coffee, rum, and salt-fish are also consumed. An old traveller in Crete tells how he went to a country hovel to ask for some water. The water was forthcoming, but the Cretan tried to bargain for some rum in exchange for it, and showed surprise on learning that rum was not as plentiful in England as water in Crete. *

The recent report from Crete (1886), in answer to the questions of our Royal Commissioners on the

Depression of Trade and Industry, is a cheering one:

'The condition of trade and industry generally, and of British trade in particular, here, is far from being depressed as compared with the last twenty years/

It may be asked, Of what importance is it that a small, insulated country like Crete is doing well, while a large island like Great Britain is doing badly? In its full extent the question is one for political economists to answer. But it is worth remark that Crete is a land very inadequately peopled. In old times its population has been estimated variously from a million to a million and a half. At present it has barely three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants; and their prosperity (in spite of past hardships) is such that the legal rate of interest in the island is only nine per cent., compared with the twelve per cent, elsewhere in the Sultan's dominions. There is plenty of capital, but no spirit of enterprise.

But though our trade with Crete holds its own, and more, at present, there is a serious menace from more than one- quarter; and here also Crete is ah example of one small market among many markets in which our commercial influence is similarly opposed.

i Within the last five years a rough cotton cloth from America, called "cabot" here, has been introduced, to the detriment of British grey goods. Cabots being of a superior quality, and of a comparatively lower price, it is to be apprehended that their use will gradually become so general as to greatly endanger the future prospects of British grey goods in this market. The value of imports of the former to the latter is already as one to five/

Again: 'Some years since, Salonica and Vienna sent here cheap white yarn under British trademarks. The fraud having been detected by consumers, importations were suspended for a time. But the Vienna quality having improved, and its price being lower than that of Manchester cotton twist, the Austrian article, which is now introduced without disguise, threatens to gain ground.

i In cotton and woollen fabrics generally, we have to fear German and Austrian competition. The manufacturers of these and other articles, by sending samples, and fixing the price at which they can deliver them in Crete, offer to merchants here a facility they do not find in British markets/ *

And, lastly, 'conditions of credit for articles of importation are, for wholesale, from one to two

months' term ; for retail, weekly instalments of 10 per cent. ; but in both cases the full sum is never paid within the respective terms, which, in fact, extend to three and four months. Usually, British merchants or manufacturers grant no credit. Austrians and Germans, on the other hand, allow three to six months, and facilities of exceeding these terms against payment of interest at 6 per cent. A similar adoption by British traders would be good.'

I believe I may safely say that there is no British merchant resident in Crete. From time to time the island is visited by an English gentleman settled in Athens; and during certain harvest seasons the Smyrna merchants send representatives here ; and that is the extent of the direct trade which English-speaking traders have with this island, so rich in native resources.

On our way home, Manzoni and I looked in at the Bey's garden—a pretty enclosed plot of ground full of blossoming shrubs, rose-bushes, and flowers. In summer it must be an Elysian place, as vines are trained overhead from tree to tree and arbour to arbour, and these are prolific in grapes. We foifnd the military band practising in the middle of the garden. Most of the performers sat on their haunches in concentric circles, blowing away at

their cornets or trumpets, or banging the drums, in a singularly asinine manner. The music was Oriental, and made Manzoni fidget. He beat time now and then for his satisfaction, or rather dissatisfaction, and this greatly amused the Turks, spectators and instrumentalists alike. What a droll notion in a man to take so much trouble without any apparent reason ! This is how they seemed to regard it. But the conductor of the band put a hasty stop to the enjoyment of certain of the bandsmen by stepping up to them slyly, and kicking them, or boxing their ears soundly. The men flinched at the first cuff, which was unexpected, but took the rest of their very summary punishment with much stolidity. Some of the musicians were skilful enough to continue telling their beads, or rather fumbling with them, while they blew their trumpets or beat their drums. On the whole, the music was not a little stirring when the noise was at its height, but it was very barbaric.

In this garden are three or four remains of Greek antiquity, or of the time when

*. . mater cultrix Cybele, Corybantiaque aera,'

were in fashion. There is an inscription also, not undecipherable. A tombstone of an archaic kind

denotes the sex of the person it commemorates in a manner quite unmistakable. But it is a pity these relics are not put under cover. All Canea crowds the garden on certain Sundays, when high-class musical festivals are offered to the public, and the ancient marbles are lounged against, sat upon, kicked, scraped, and ridiculed, so that in time their excrescences will surely all vanish.

There is no shop in Canea devoted to the sale of antiquities exclusively. A sort of Greek haberdasher is the only trader who takes thought of such concerns. He has a table set out with broken amphorae and jars, bottles of old Phoenician glass faintly iridescent, bits of twisted iron, brass gods and goddesses for the pocket, and a silver coin or two. Even these few treasures are not always to be seen, I imagine ; they are collected and offered for the seduction of those officers of the Allied Fleet who may think they have archaeological tastes. The prices are reasonable enough. But our Consul, who is a renowned antiquary, and has published a valuable record of the memorials of Rhodes, where he held office before coming to Crete, has some very attractive old treasures. He has not been here many months yet, but he will no doubt do what he can for the exploitation of the archaeology of this large island in course of time.

The labyrinth of Gortyna,* near the south coast, and supposed to be the prison-house of Theseus in the days of King Minos, is one of the tasks of exploration he means to take upon himself; and it will be through no lethargy on his part if they do not make some discovery. Silver Cnossian coins seem to be the commonest of Cretan numismatic finds, after the Byzantine sequins, which are very plentiful. I often meet a black-coated Greek with one of these coins of Cnossus hanging from his watch-chain. They are differently designed ; some show a rude involution of lines on the one side, to represent the labyrinth, and on the other a Greek head, finely graved ; others show the Bull. There are extant, besides, a good many coins of the individual mints of various of the hundred cities. Some of these could hardly be matched in Europe for antiquity, and their designs, though simple, are, to the best of my judgment, in very good taste.

In the way of modern curios, Canea does a large business in Cretan knives. These are sold to strangers, in silver sheaths chased in alto-relievo, for five or six napoleons each. It is said that the Russian naval officers by the lavishness of their

* See *Athenoeum* of February 12, 1887, for some interesting particulars of recent antiquarian research at Oortyna.

purchases here have much raised the price of these fancy knives, among other things. But they are pretty toys, with their ivory handles, each with a red, green, or watery jewel set in the middle of the haft; and it is amusing to see how artfully a Cretan will stow his knife in his girdle in such a manner that the jewel may gleam towards a beholder. These jewels are made of very fine glass, I think.

But the word 'glass' reminds me that we inspected the cathedral church of Canea to-day. It is a modern building, containing many bad paintings, and a good deal of coloured glass in the shape of chandeliers, etc. St. Sophia is seen in the process of her martyrdom : and one discovers here, and in other of the pictures, that the Greek artists have made the most of their national hatred for the Turk by representing the persecutors of the different martyred saints in the guise of Moslem soldiers, and the pseudo-judges of the martyrs as Agas, Beys, and Pashas. There is a depiction of the ravage of a band of fanatic Mohammedans, which, it is to be hoped, the artist has not drawn from memory. The Turks are shown tearing the Christian dead from their graves, and stabbing them through their shrouds, with very malignant expressions. A Christian is seen hanging from the

upper window of his house : doubtless the Turks have suspended him; but the artist's imbecility makes his head touch the roof of his two-storied house, while his feet all but rest on the ground beneath him* Again, a Christian is whipped and beheaded before the Pasha, who, in a later series, is seen to be gasping with alarm at the sight of his dead victim, risen from the tomb, with a serene look on his face, and a palm-leaf in his hand. For the comfort of the congregation, there is also the usual representation of heaven and hell. A holy man is being weighed in the balance of purgatory. He has nothing on except a loin-cloth, but there is a halo about his head which marks him as a just man whose deeds will procure him admittance into the heaven which blooms to the right of him. Not for him is the fiery mouth of the great snake of hell on the other side, where countless imps are seen jibing hideously at the good man, their red eyes and red-tipped tails designed to signify the extreme of ghastly adornment. But there is no bounds to the foolish imagination of these Athenian or Constantinopolitan artists.

Outside the church an uncomely bevy of the sick and lame squat upon the warm stones, and hold animated conversation with each other all

through the day. They sit in the midst of a thick litter of torn playing-cards. I do not know if the cards are of their own using—everyone plays cards in Crete. But they are a glib and comfortable group of beggars, in spite of their bleared eyes and withered limbs, and they are not so prone to curse every sane man or woman who overlooks them, as are the pestiferous eyesores of happy Italy.

LETTER X.

My Cretan Dog — Dinner-table Talk — The Sphakiots — The Kavasses—The Cretan Women : Mohammedan and Christian —Conflict of Religious Faiths.

NOT long ago I chanced to say that I should like a Cretan dog to keep me company in my house, and to bark at night if thieves came through my door. Well, Georgio has got me a native puppy from one of the numerous families which haunt the Khalepa highway, and little Crete, as I have christened him, is tied to my parlour staircase, where he howls amazingly.

A student of natural history will of course be anxious to know the points of a Cretan dog. But alas! Crete is debased by a long, long line of unchivalrous and hard-used ancestry, so that he has no option but to look like the pitiful, fearful little composite of savage qualities that he is. He is about fifteen inches long, rough of coat, mouse-coloured, with very large splay feet, inquisitive brown baby eyes, and an immense idea of the

dreadfulness of a full-grown European. With my landlady, or the boys Georgio, Michaelis, and Demetri, he will gambol delightfully, and utter the quaintest of little barks of happiness; but with me—oh no! Only when I leave the house, and set Crete at liberty to roam through its chambers while I am away—only then will he behave, like the child he is. Torn slippers, worried towels, scattered papers, and many a foot-mark against the cupboard wherein my food is stored—all show how the little brute has enjoyed my absence. But the moment of my reappearance, having barked in a business-like manner until quite assured that it is his incomprehensible master who has returned, he sticks his tail between his hairy legs, and backs urgently against the wall, with plaintive appeal in his big brown eyes. Even the food I give him he paws and sniffs at, and turns over and over before venturing to eat, with a sly peep of suspicion into my face; whereas what his native Cretans throw to him, he gobbles up in the twinkling of an eye, with eloquent wagging of his fat short tail, and most affectionate fawning of thanks as a 'Grace after meat.' My landlady and her boys kick him without mercy, and pull him here and there by a thin string tied tight round his neck. I, on the other hand, am kindness itself to the dog. Yet,

by his conduct, it would really seem that he understands and appreciates their want of amiability, and takes it as his due ; whereas my civilities he can make nothing of, and so determines always to reject. A most incongruous little beast, therefore, is my little Crete. And, to crown all, he bays in the night within five yards of my bed-head, and in the same room; thereby, of course, awaking me in the uncanniest hours, and attuning me for the gloomiest and most unwelcome of thoughts and memories ; so that I am afraid Crete and I must soon sever our acquaintance, and that my study of a Cretan mongrel will be imperfect.

Yesterday I dined with our kind Consul, and supped with the Baroness. The Consul was disturbed three times at dinner by messages from the Fleet, which necessitated immediate replies. He told me that the French Consul, who had taken such a strong Philhellenic part in the distractions between Greece and Turkey, and whose sympathies, personal and political, are here with the Cretans, has received his recall. It is certainly dangerous for a man in the position of a consul in such a country as Crete, to act as political correspondent for a paper like *Le Temps,* and to bis letters his recall is attributed. This gentleman started the suspicions about me, and, as I said,

passed on his suspicions to his paper and M. Gravy's Foreign Minister. Perhaps he got a rebuff for his pains on this point also. The subject will supply Count Manzoni with interesting matter for his next letter to the *Tribuna.*

There was an English gentleman at dinner with us, who has been seven years in Crete as superintendent of the local telegraph of the Eastern Company. He has had enough of the island, which is not to be wondered at. But he knows the Cretans very well by this time, of course, and is not so thoroughly condemnatory of them as are most Europeans who know a little about them. It is the Greek Cretans—those Cretans who go for their education to Athens and return with their heads full of notions—that he thinks worst of. The hill-men have the usual virtues of open-air people. They are brave and warm-hearted, but uncertain and reckless. To this day the Sphakiots are peremptory about the chastity of their women : they would not hesitate to cut the throat of a wife or sister who had committed herself. As for the morality of the Cretan Turks, men and women alike, it would have to be a very loose code indeed that should hold them blameless.

By-the-bye, this is what Buondelmonti says of the Sphakiots a long time ago : 'Because of the

aridity of their mountains they do not cultivate the ground, but live by the sale of cypress timber, and on the milk of their herds of goats. They are of great stature, incredibly active in their mountains, and bold in war. They attain the age of a hundred without any infirmities ; instead of wine they drink almost always milk/ And in one of the Venetian reports of 1586, I find the same insistence upon the valour of these men of the White Mountains : 'What gives the Sphakiots their superiority in courage is (in combination with their temperament, and the nature of their country) the conviction that they are descended from the Romans/

Through all the Cretan revolts, it is to these Sphakiots that the rest of the islanders have looked for the signal when to begin and when to desist. Their country has served them for a fortress from time out of mind. The White Mountains fall towards the sea on the southern coast by a number of stupendous dark ravines, with here and there tiny levels at different elevations above the sea, and guarded by the wildest conceivable of approaches. In these ravines and plateaux the Sphakiots have been born and bred. And round about them the wars between Moslems and Christians have always been the most bitter and bloody in the whole island.

The Venetians were never able to oppress the Sphakiots as they oppressed the other Cretans. Consequently the spirits of these highlanders were uncurbed when the Turks took over the island. And so unresting was their energy in opposition to all attempts of the Moslems to gain their mountain stronghold, and so matchless was their pluck, that until the last insurrection, in 1866, no armed Turk had ever penetrated to the heart of their abode. The Sphakiots lived as freely as men can live, when the Cretans elsewhere suffered from extortion, violation, and every other form of tyranny that enters the imagination of a Moslem. But they were not sluggards who cared for their own security only. They knew, moreover, that they were what they were thanks to their rocks and to their own right hands, and that loss of vigilance meant taxation and loss of liberty. Hence they were always ready to come to the help of their weary fellow-countrymen.

This actual independence came to an end after the insurrection of 1866, when the Sultan caused block-houses to be built among the mountains. From my bedroom window I see a square dark heap on the lower hills of the Madara Vouna. It is about 2,500 feet above the sea-level, and is one of these block-houses, which are now supposed to

terrorize the land into quietude ; it accommodates some two hundred soldiers. But, after all, it does not matter much to Sphakia that its name is gone for impregnability. It has yielded when Crete has got a National Assembly of its own, elected by universal suffrage, and when it rests with this National Assembly to elect its committee for the taxing of the country solely in the interest of the country. The Sphakiots were never freer than now, in spite of the block-houses which from eerie heights cast a shadow upon their deepset little villages, in spite of the Moslem red-coats who shiver and drill on their mountain-tops all through the year.

It speaks well for the credit of these mountaineers that Venetians and Turks alike (though in nominal possession of the whole of Crete) were prone to offer money to them whenever war difficulties seemed to be looming : it also betrays that weakness of theirs which was always ready to divide the Sphakiots into as many parties, with individual leaders, as there were villages contributory of fighting men.

I am sorry I shall not be able to see these Sphakiots at home. They say the mountains are yet impassable, and that the snow will not be sufficiently melted until May. But I often meet

the fine fellows with their two or three mules laden with a hard indigestible sort of cheese, which is almost the only salable product of their glorious but bleak and inhospitable country. They have their emissaries in Canea, I am told, waiting and watching for the course of events. Twenty years of peace have left them as ready as ever to take up their long guns, and hasten into the few valleys which are beyond the ken of the detestable block-houses.

In my peregrinations the other day, I found myself near a large square white house with high walls, and a tangle of fig, orange, and almond trees growing over the walls, which were fringed at the base by clumps of enormous prickly-pear. The house had been a consular residence, but it was now empty. It might have stood a siege. Indeed, there were several heavy cannon-balls lying in the grass and on the flags of the deserted court-yard. I could only guess to which insurrection they belonged. Well, I was wandering through this place when I heard a note of a song, which was followed by a full orchestra of male throats; and I very soon came upon a score of fine Cretans, some with guns and all with knives, sitting together in a basement-room. They were silent in a second, and looked inquisitive. It was clear

they would rather not have been discovered in their place of meeting, and discovered by the Englishman, too 1 However, I said a civil ' Good-day ' to them, and turned away. But I had hardly got on to a wall in order to jump down into a barley-field thick with poppies, when one of the men had run after me—a brown Hercules of a fellow, smiling like a girl—and offered me a red rose, with the most gracious of salutes. They were soon all singing away again with not a touch of 1 istraint in their voices.

Madame de S. says she would not for anything have a Cretan resident in her house. She speaks from a twenty years' experience of Crete. Her kavass is an Arnaut who does nothing he does not choose to do, excusing himself with a polite ' I don't do that P and who is both immodest and shrewd in his peculations ! One can only surmise how bad a Cretan may be, therefore.

These kavasses here are an amusing body of men. Nothing can be more martial to the eye than Madame de S.'s Houssein or our Consul's Solyman, as their names are. They are tall, strongly made, with piercing eyes, long moustaches, hooked noses, and two or three pistols in thEIr waistbands, as well as knives. They walk with a swagger, moreover, which is as telling as any part

of them. Yet their work is to a very large extent purely domestic. Fancy such a man, armed to the nose, carrying a basket of dirty linen to the washerwoman ; and doing it too with head erect, as if he were transporting a fine trophy of his own prowess ! And I daily meet the Consul's kavass sitting in a heap on a small ass, coming from town with his master's marketings: cabbages, bread, fish, mutton-chops, etc. I suppose they have some very valorous qualities under their superb exterior, but I confess I should like to see them put to the proof. Houssein, when he pays me a visit with a note, or one or other of the edible trifles which Madame de S. so kindly sends me now and then, smiles in a somewhat compassionate way at my humble *menage*, and well he may; but he keeps away from my small dog. And the other day he was much interested in my revolver, until I remarked that it was loaded, when he put it down at once, and removed himself three good yards out of the line of its muzzle. What he finds more in keeping with his natural tastes is a common little Cretan lyre, or 'bulgarie,' as Georgio calls it, which I hang from a nail on my wall. This instrument he is fond of seizing while I am replying to his messages, and twanging in a wild but familiar way as if he meant to break the strings; and when he

opens his very wide mouth, and chants a mournful ditty to an accompaniment vastly more mournful and disturbing, he is a very pretty and incongruous figure. But I assure you he is not a man to be laughed at. For he marched off in sulky dudgeon when I could not control my feelings the first time of hearing him sing in my house; and that same evening, having led me home as usual with a large lantern, he went off without saying 'Good-night' in his accustomed way. I wonder what in the world he would do if I were to pull his nose ! He is such a queer medley of the sublime and the ridiculous, that I may perhaps be forgiven the hazard of such a very ridiculous surmise.

One more word about this Houssein. I have mentioned the pretty young woman of whom the Governor of Crete is somewhat enamoured. Well, she is Madame de S.'s personal domestic, and therefore Houssein sees a good deal of her. The consequence is that he, too, like the Pasha, admires her exceedingly. The pity of it is that he cannot speak French or German, which are her native tongues; and she, of course, knows nothing of Greek or Turkish. But Houssein is not a man to be baffled by his tongue. He has conveyed *hh* sentiments of affection by look and gesture, and, to the girl's amusement, has constituted himself

her very devoted protector. A fine scene occurred a little while ago, when some one had the presumption to offer Houssein a flower to give to the pretty girl. He trod it under foot, and went straightway into an unbecoming passion. And he will not, if he can help it, let the girl so much as go to the door to open it for visitors, lest she should endanger his chances of matrimony with her by captivating a man more eligible than himself. The worst of it is that the child would as soon think of mating a gorilla as a barbarian with pistols and exposed legs like Houssein. But Houssein is up to the neck in sweet illusion, and no one is likely to help him out of it at present.

You wish to know something about the Turkish ladies, you say. It is very provoking, but I am not on talking terms with any of the Moslems* wives. Understand, this is only because we have no common medium of speech. Up here in Khalepa, the ladies do not confine themselves to the house when their lords are away in Canea. Indeed, they go about with uncovered faces, and use their eyes to the very best of their ability. From the window of my parlour, which looks up ihe lane into the public place of Khalepa, I see at this moment a statuesque young woman of eighteen or nineteen, posing at the garden-gate of her father's

villa. She has been deeply interested in my house ever since I took it, and we have clashed looks fifty times. To her credit or discredit (as you will), I am always forced to be the first to look somewhere else ; her effrontery, indeed, has often astonished me, and I have wondered, in her excuse, whether or not she suffers from some affection of the eyes. She is statuesque, as I have said, with a round head, a fine bust, and melancholy brown eyes. How can I tell the colour of her eyes from my window ? you ask. Well, I cannot; but I have left the house, and walked past her into the town, and, so far from withdrawing when she saw me coming, she has fingered her hair, straightened her dress, put colour into her cheeks, etc., etc., with the unaffected composure of a city coquette. Nevertheless, she cannot be more than nineteen, and she knows nothing about objective life, as one might say.

Other Turkish ladies I see at other times: hanging carpets or washed linen from the sills of their windows, or with their eyes to the wooden lattice of the harem. As often as not they are more than merry : their laughter is tempestuous, and they will point the finger at one, and find fresh amusement in their very impudence. But they are not very lovely, apart from their eyes, which I

fancy owe something of their apparent size and lustre to unnatural causes.

It is the maturer matrons who veil their charms most strictly, and turn modest when a strange man approaches them. And yet, I suspect, they also have their moments of levity. The other day, I came upon four of them with not an inch of their flesh uncovered, save their hands, which they had linked together. They were all short and plump, and for long manoeuvred about a large puddle which the rains had formed in the uneven roadway. First one of them advanced and tried the depth of the water with her small foot, receding with a cry when her instep went under water. Then another tried her foot; and so on. They did not know what to do, and stood face to face (their countenances hidden behind thin veils of flowered gauze) like four mummies. But with an odd unanimous sort of giggle they once more made common cause against the puddle, this time arm-in-arm, and amid shrieks of fun and despair they finally waded to their ankles through the water, and waddled off, like men running in a sack-race, towards a tall house hard by, the close-barred \findows of which no doubt marked their prison and the palace of their lord.

I am told that by some means or other even the

Turkish ladies are tasting a little of the sweets of education and enlightenment nowadays ; and that, as a result, the Turkish men are not so extravagant in the number of their spouses. This is, of course, quite as it is bound to be. And doubtless the day will come when even a Moslem will find himself looking upon the other sex with a vast deal more respect than affection. In this way the Paradise of the Mohammedan will lose its chief glamour, and with the hopes the religion of the Moslems will fade gradually out of their minds, and they may be fitted for the material prosperity that seems to them to accompany the irreligion of the Western nations. Who knows ? The Eastern Question may settle itself after all in the most convenient and conservative of ways. Let but our turbulent lady advocates of their sex's rights for awhile set aside the unimportant question of Parliamentary suffrage, and flit in a body to the East, there to concentrate all their strength and genius for the emancipation of their less happy, because more ignorant, and much more married sisters. The wings of the great army of their sex would not then be so excessively deflected from the centre, and a common standard of progress having b^pn attained definitively, an advance along the whole line might be feasible, such as, for aught we know,

would succeed in bearing down the more stereotyped resistance of the long-established superiority of the male sex. If we could but hand the Ottoman Empire, with its extensive range of warm latitudes, to the control of our ladies, what a terrible vengeance would fall upon the round heads of the phlegmatic Moslems !

Of the Cretan Christian women, I must say that they seem in strong contrast to their Turkish sisters. This is, of course, due to the license that the Moslem men take upon themselves whenever occasion offers. The girls and young women are often very beautiful. Deep-coloured violet eyes, with warm complexions, and faces of a soft oval shape, are not uncommon ; and the unmarried of them are strangely retiring and modest, The married women, on the other hand, seem to me to acquire a strength of will and determination that is no less remarkable. The young maiden, ignorant of life and its perils, blossoms sharply into a full-blown woman, who understands in that moment the dangers to which her person and the fellow-Christians of her own sex may at any time be exposed in such a country as Crete. My landlady is a brilliant illustration of this type of the Cretan woman. She must have been a pretty girl ; but she is now a superb woman, with imperial carriage

and build, and a temper behind the smile in her dark blue eyes that I for one would rather fly before than face. Her daughter, alas! is not beautiful. She is short and fat, and looks best when thumping the clothes in the stone washing-sarcophagus under the eaves of my house. She will thrash the unfortunate linen for half an hour if need be, with the untiringness and method of a machine.

I am the more vexed at not being able to get into the hill districts of Sphakia, as the most lovely of the Cretan maidens are to be found there, blooming in cold shadow. The presence of so much beauty in those unapproachable recesses is, of course, easily explained. When the Moslems were let loose over the plain-country to work their wicked will upon the Christian inhabitants, all who could fled to the mountains, and the prettier of the girls were sure to be taken great care of by the younger as well as the more veteran campaigners. Once in the mountains, these fair faces have been induced to stay there, amid the security of the black precipices, snow peaks, and tumbling torrents, and their children have inherited their unsoiled beauty.

But Christian and Moslem have not always lived and married apart in Crete. In the plains there are many families who would be puzzled

whether to rank themselves under the Crescent or the Cross, if they were to do this according to the tradition of their ancestry. When the Turks obtained the island, many of the old stock apostatized: the brutality of the Venetians had so debased them that they were willing to change Christ for Mahomet, if by so doing they might better their material prospects. But, later, some of these apostates and their descendants regretted this step; and were only deterred from returning to their old faith by the knowledge that they would thereby sentence themselves to death at the hands of the Moslem authorities. They did what they could, however, to satisfy their consciences and save soul and body at the same time. They professed Mohammedanism as before, but in secret they were Christians. Their children were first baptized and christened with a Greek name, and afterwards circumcised and endowed with the Turkish prefix, of Ibrahim, Houssein, etc. In this way they were for some time content to trim between the two creeds. But after a while certain of these Cretans felt scruples about their conduct. One of them was sent across the water to Palestine to lay a supposititious case before the Bishop of Jerusalem: 'Can a man who professes Islamism and is yet a true believer at heart, look for salva-

tion after death *V* The Bishop, without hesitation, said (No', When this was told to the others, a number of them resolved to go at once and confess their crime to the Governor at Candia. And, fully prepared to die, they were thus on their way when they chanced to call at the house of the Metropolitan of Crete before proceeding to the palace. But the Archbishop soon put a stop to their plans. He not only assured them that in his opinion they were quite sure of a seat in fieaven in spite of their duplicity, but he told them that a general massacre of Christians would in all probability follow their confession to the Pasha. And so their scruples were temporarily put to flight.

It has been roughly computed that at the beginning of this century about half the population were Moslems ; whereas now, out of the 350,000 inhabitants, barely 50,000 are Moslems or Jews. And with this loss of influence on the part of those who do not profess Christianity, has grown the arrogance (for it really amounts to that) of the Christians towards the Mohammedans in the country districts. He were a courageous Turk, indeed, who dared to bid for the hand of a hill-maiden nowadays. But in all times the Sphaki^ts have been especially strict in the protection of their women from such contamination.

LETTER XI.

Cretan Ballads: Tragic and Amorous—Popular Beliefs and Phrases—The Dervishes—A Cretan Turk as Merchant—A Funeral—Lost in the Cemetery—Evening in my House—The Terrors of Science.

I HAVE found in Elpis Melena's collection of Cretan ballads, legends, proverbs,* etc., a piece of verse bearing upon what I said in my last letter about the relationship between the sexes of the different faiths here, and the following is a bald version of it. The scene is laid in the last century :

THE SONG OF SUSANNA.

Susanna, whom they call 'the beauty of Candia,' is hotly inflamed with love for iSary Mpachryn *[i.e.,* the handsome Mpachryn —a Turk].

On Friday she rises betimes from her bed, and dries the tears which stream from her eyes.

Her father notices her, and her mother anxiously asks : * What ails my little Susanna, that thus she sobs and moans *V*

' 0 mother, I have been dreaming, and dreamed such a terrible dream* Methought I saw my brother coming, with a naked sword in nis hand; and when he was near, I saw that his clothes were soaked with blood.[1]

* 'Kreta Biene/ Munich, 1874.

[1] Thy dream is from God, child; so be of good cheer. It is the Lord's will, which is thy shield and protection, my child, that thy brother tarries so long from us in foreign parts. Keep up thy spirits, child; the river-flood has not drowned him.*

On Thursday the beautiful Susanna admitted the Turk to her room: the handsome Turk, Mpachryn: he came to her in the night.

After many a sweet caress they fall asleep.

The little Susanna suddenly awakes: she hears a strange knocking at her chamber-door. Straightway she softly rouses her lover, and softly whispers: ' Flee away! Sary Mpachryn, 0 flee, ere it be dawn I flee far, else shall I die an early death of pain.*

* Sleep on, my little Susanna, sleep; put out thy lamp: they aro not knocking here—it is at some neighbour's house.'

Again the strange knock is heard outside: the hand which beats the door comes with death and blood within it.

'Go, little Susan—go, open it. I will hide me by the bed. The love, the strong love 1 have for thee will not let me leave thee I'

* Welcome, my brother! thou comest far from a foreign land. But why—why, my brother, that sharp sword in thine hand)'

He enters her room, and forthwith sits down on the couch. ' Go, little Susanna, bring me some water, some fresh and sparkling water. The journey has tired me, and I am burnt by the sun.'

She takes from the wall the bowl with the silvered chain, and goes to fetch the water. But before she returned, her brother heard a light noise under the bed : he gently lifts the counterpane, and sees the stranger.

Susanna brings the water, but her brother does not touch it. Sorrowfully he gazes at her; then fiercely speaks: [c] Audacious girl I tell me, who is here under the bed ? I never thought that thou wouldst thus forget all modesty and shame !'

[1] You did but fancy that you heard a sound, my brother. There is no one there.'

'Thinkest thou that, like thee, I have forgotten all modesty and honour? I have seen with my own eyes a sight that wounds me grievously.'

From his breast he draws his dagger out of its silvered sheath, and plunges it deep into the breast of the luckless maid. The bed heaved and shook as she sank down upon it.

Sary Mpachryn hoars the noise, and sickens of grief. With his own handkerchief he staunches the blood that streams from her. He brings precious musk and famous simples, and breathes upon the herbs, to stay the ebbing life. 'Come, darling, to the doctor, come! he shall heal thee; I will give him good silver, and sequins of gold.'

'Open the door; open, 0 mother! thy son returns from afar.'

She lifts the latch, and beholds the woe that has come upon her.

* My little Susanna, 0 my Susanna, who has done this to thee *V*

[Thy son, he who has returned to his home, he has pierced my bosom. 0 mother, my mother, thou didst not know of it *V*

* My curse be on and with him ever!'

Next came Susanna's father. He saw the blood-soaked girl. He touches her in terror; he cries out in bitter sorrow: 'May the trees round about be uprooted!'

Then takes he the pale maiden in his arms, and hurries to the doctor. '0 doctor dear, help my poor, poor child! and if money cannot save her, take my life for hers.'

'No light wound this, in which my aid may serve. There is no help on earth for this: it is so deep and red. No herb that grows can conquer death; here a doctor's powers are vain; and no saint can do aught to save her.'

'Thou art dying, my child! tell me what I can do for thee as a last token of my love.

[I am dying. 0 father! let my curse be with him, and then go dig me a grave in the quiet cloister-woods!'

This is tragic, and, as it may have saddened you, I will follow it with a lighter ballad, translated from

Perrot's collection, and giving a shadowy idea of the Oriental chivalry that exists between the sexes. I strongly suspect, however, that there is more of chivalrous courtesy in the songs of the country than in actual intercourse between man and maid.

THE RETUKN OF THE LOVER.

'Open, gate of the fair one, of the fair one with the dark eyes!'

' Who art thou ? How art thou called ? What is the name they give thee *V*

i I am he who used to bring thee apples in his handkerchief—apples and peaches, and sweet grapes. I am he who used to kiss thy scarlet lips.'

' To assure myself that thou art he thou assumest to be, give me some sign : tell me something about my courtyard.'

'There is an apple-tree by thy gate, and within thy courtyard is a vine. This vine yields a white grape; the grape makes a Muscat wine; and this wine is such, that whoever drinks of it is refreshed, and asks for more.'

* Thou art deceiving me, 0 thou rogue ! Some one in the neighbourhood has told thee this. To assure myself that thou art really he whom thou pretendest to be, tell me somethiug about my house.'

' In the middle of thine own room there hangs a golden lamp, and this lamp shines upon thee when thou art disrobing thyself, when thou art unbuttoning the buttons of thy gown.'

'Thou art deceiving me, 0 thou rogue ! A neighbour has told thee that. To assure myself that thou art he whom thou assumest to be, give me some intelligence about myself.' *M*

' **Thou hast a** spot upon thy cheek, another upon thy shoulder, **and** in thy bosom thou **hast** the beauty of the moon **and the stars.'**

'Run, my maids, run, ami open all the doors; and thou, **ray nurse, make** everything ready for my bridal/

'0 Christ, keep the morning bird from singing, and the dawn from dawning, now that I have my white dove in mine arms/

You must know that in Crete vampires and spiritual apparitions are articles of very common faith. Charms are sold by wise women who, from their looks and reputation, might be of the same brood as the Witch of Endor; but even these charms are not all-powerful. It may be imagined what a lively force such belief might have between a lover and his lady ; witness the following :

'Leave me not when I come to die,
But, at the last, close thou mine eye;
In death, my darling, still be kind :
Over my heart my dead hands bind :
Forsake me not!
Yet, shouldst thou perchance forsake me,
In the grave I will not stay:
From the cold sod I'll betake me
To thee till the dawn of day.'

Again : ' May he lose his beloved !' is a popular local imprecation, which might well be substituted for some of our own less pleasing forms of malediction.

My Venetian friend here told me lately of a divorce on curious grounds, which, nevertheless,

were held sufficiently valid. The husband found that his wife's breath was too strong for him ; and on this plea the authorities annulled the marriage. In equity, I suppose the judges would be obliged to suffer the test undergone by the husband ; but that would be very hard and gross on the poor woman, and, perhaps, not quite conclusive.

I should like to be able to give you an account of the Dervishes here, but I will spare you for a very good reason. They spin every Friday afternoon for an hour or two. By mistake I got into the Arab quarter of the town, where the red-tiled houses are built upon the sand on a level with the sea, which breaks over them when the wind is high. A flag was fluttering from the sacred house, and a knot of ugly Orientals were gathered round its portal. The walls outside were painted with Arabic texts, and some rude pictorial designs which I could not understand. I had got as far as the first window of the house unopposed, though the looks of the bystanders were not friendly. Then I stopped and looked through the glass into the long room which was given up to the whirling Dervishes. A dozen or fifteen Arab ecclesiastics in green, blue, crimson, white, and yellow cotton robes were squatted by the walls, on cushions or not, singing dismally. The dancers were just

about to begin. And at this conjuncture, alas! I had to retreat. The gayest of the gentlemen within the house had risen from his cushion, and was making angry signals to me to take my face from the window; and the soldiers and lay Arabs outside had closed round me with discordant cries and addresses, of which I could quite guess the meaning. By their eyes and the movements of their arms, I perceived that I was in extreme disfavour with them. For a second or two I tried to parley in order to gain admission; but the men inside were shaking their loose scarlet and white turbans in the passion of their disapproval, and the others even offered to lay hands on me in a very summary manner. The milder of them pointed emphatically to the road by which I had approached them. And so I went away, unsatisfied. I have since learnt that these Arabs are very fanatical, and that it is perilous for a European to go among them unaccompanied.

As for the ordinary dancing Dervishes, they are a common sight. A portly Turkish grain-merchant whom I met somewhere, and who was as civil as he could be by mere signs, offers to be cicerone; but he is unnecessary. I see this good Turk whenever I walk the Marina in Canea. His store looks on to the road. He sits in an armchair at the entrance,

with his feet on a woollen pad, and the stem of his chibouk in his mouth. When a customer addresses him, he wrinkles his forehead, and points at the samples of wheat, barley, oats, etc., in tubs by his side. The visitor may do his business without reference to him, surely ! he seems to say. If the customer studies the samples and goes away unsatisfied, my merchant takes not one whiff the fewer at his pipe, nor does he alter the due succession of his whiffs. If the customer wants to trade, the merchant lets him say so, and tell him everything else he has a mind to, but he smokes on and on; and it is only when the perverse intruder drives him to bay, as it were, that he finally tumbles from his chair to his desk, and, with inflated cheeks, and many a sigh, puts pen and paper to work. This same enterprising gentleman was present when my Venetian friend and I were talking about the likelihood of war, and happened to mention the word 'London' two or three times. 'Who is this London that you are talking of?' he asked my friend; and he held up his fat hands in astonishment when he heard that it was a city, not a man, and that it had four or five millions of people in it.

I was rambling about the ravines and slopes in the neighbourhood of Khalepa a little while ago,

when I came upon a man seated upon a notch of an old olive-tree, with a curious-looking object upon his knee. It was a shallow case like a big bonbon-box, covered outside with silver-paper which had stars cut in it, and filled up with a coarse kind of gold-leaf The man was resting, and he seemed somewhat sad, I thought. But it never occurred to me that the thing in his hands was a coffin. It was, however, and he was taking it home to put his little child in it.

I met the funeral procession afterwards, going through the crowded streets of Canea towards the cemetery. It was a very simple affair. The father himself held the coffin on his head, supporting it with his hands at either side; and therein, as he climbed the unlevel streets through the swarm of people of different colours, shouting and chaffering, one could see the baby, like a thing of wax, open to the air. Two or three friends followed the man, and thus they traversed the blacksmiths' quarter of the city to the cemetery. Through the dark gloss of the cypresses here, the snow of the mountains seemed to flash upon the dense vegetation of the level ground.

Yet the ground was not so very level after all. For the Turks had been buried in it one .upon the other until the heaps rose high. And on this

rich rank soil, bushes of roses, of scarlet and pink geraniums, and thick masses of yellow and pink and purple flowers, grew all together, so tall and so dense that they hid the turbaned stones which marked the graves of respectable Turks, and were much over my head. It was like a piece of beautiful primeval land. The perfume was at first too strong, however, and the birds made a loud chattering in the trees overarching us. In this jungle I quite lost my way, missed the funeral procession, and for a long time stumbled about in mortal dread of inhaling a typhus ; for the Turks bury so shallow that in places one may see the bones above the soil, and the ground was moist from rains, and exuded foul vapours which not even the smell of the roses could over-master. Here and there I came upon a new grave, with two or three fattened dogs sleeping calmly on it, and the marks of their hungry feet in the sides of the grave. So that on the whole I was very pleased when at length I managed to steer safely out of the place. It is very extensive, and my work in cutting through the dewy grasses and flowers had drenched me as completely, I think, as if I had dipped in the sea, clothes and all. [1]

Well, it is time to end this packet. The sun Has gone behind the western mountains with its

customary glow, as if a prodigious furnace fire had been prepared for its reception. I have had to light my very unsteady candles, and put-to the shutters which look upon the roadway, lest the Turkish maiden outside should chance to see too much of me. Georgio and his brothers have been playing cards and wrangling on the stone terrace round the well, as long as the redness in the sky has let them distinguish King from Knave; but now they are all indoors, and I should judge that one of them is being whipped by his mother. The mountains are in thick gloom, for there is no moon now, and the stars are not bright enough to touch the snow. Save for the sharp wails of Michaelis or Demetri, there is a penetrating stillness out of doors. I could fancy I hear the dew falling on the barley under my bedroom window, or on the olives in the ravine below the barley.

And now, if you please, imagine all this dim and solemn quietude suddenly broken into by a gigantic beam of blinding light which shoots from the north, and, remaining concentrated for a single moment, afterwards scours the mountain-sides in great steps of a mile at a move. The darkness flies before this awful phantom, which is enough to startle a man used to the pranks of civilization, and, at the first time of seeing, fairly

to bend the superstitious Cretans upon their knees.

For half an hour this vagrant manifestation continues, then it is all dark again ; dogs howl, sheep bleat, and two or three odd-voiced birds croak out single notes; one surmises that they have been held in a leash of terror, and do but now dare to utter a sound.

The Fleet in Suda Bay are occasionally wont to amuse themselves in this high-handed way. I suppose we shall soon have permanent electric light on the Pyramids of Cheops. After that, it will be very simple to superannuate the stars. But really it is difficult to decide which is likely to prove the worse : the past tyranny of theology, or the new tyranny of science.

LETTER XII.

A Journey West—A Bad Pony and a Good Mule—My Moslem Guide—A Cretan Wayside Inn—The City of Platanias—A Ride against the Wind—The Beautiful Village of Spiglia—On the Mountains and in the Valleys—Kissamos Kastelli.

I WRITE to you from the town of Kissainos in the province of Kissamos, the most western of the districts of Crete, and nearly thirty miles from my little house in Khalepa.

The weather seemed settled; and you may imagine the nature of fine weather in Crete, when I tell you that the old Cretans called their day by the name of God Himself: 'Cretenses vocant' (Macrobius). The wind has been north-westerly for several days—an excellent bjyicing point down here. Morning after morning the mountains have shone speckless of cloud, and the sea has been blue and tranquil; and every day at noon it has been so hot that no one except the lizards and locusts have cared to be then much out of doors, a&d away from the shade of the olive-

trees. Indeed, it had got so warm that, before I left, my house had begotten a number of unpleasant insects. Bugs of a large kind dropped regularly from my ceiling on to my bedcover during the night, and the first thing I had to do on waking was to collect them while still in their hibernal coma, and throw them out to the poultry. And my larder was so beset with ants, that a cupboard-delivery had to be instituted every twenty-four hours.

All things and portents seemed to say that the time had come for an excursion.

But, in the first place, the difficulty of procuring a good dragoman with capable animals presented itself. The Fleet has ridden the Canea mules and horses into a shocking condition; it was clear cruelty to propose to any of these poor brutes a journey of some thirty miles in a day. And so for awhile we searched here and there for a steed that had had a quiet life of recuperation during the last few weeks. But alas! only a single animal was in the market. It was a little black pony with prominent bones, a long funereal tail, and a discouraging habit of looking round the corners of his very bloodshot eyes. The man wko offered the pony, and himself as guide and inseparable companion of the pony, was hardly more pre-

possessing than the animal. Everything connected with the pony was 'bono f and he himself was ready to get on his ass, and begin the journey without loss of five minutes. But the instant the pony was loosed from the wall to which he was tethered, he rolled on his back, tossing his heels in the air; and when some one afterwards turned him over on to his feet, and mounted him, he reared and rubbed his rider against the wall, and started, tail foremost, to wards nasty breakneck steeps, showing so much vice in his face, and general inefficiency in his movements, that I gave him an absolute farewell without regret and without temporizing. My friends approved my determination as they had before approved of the horse; and so I remained in very acute doubt as to whether I should be able to leave my house after all. It was rather disheartening.

In this dilemma, I went to see Mr. Kopassis, who at once, in the kindest manner, offered to make all arrangements. And, thanks to him and the good Baroness, I left Khalepa two days ago on a princely mule, with gay trappings, in the care of a mounted gendarme, and with seven letters of introduction in my pocket, over and above a firman from his Excellency the Pasha. My guide was a Turk, lean, muscular, and agile. I

could do little with him in the way of conversation beyond asking him where we were, how he was, and what he thought of the weather; but, in spite of these limitations, I soon found him to be an amiable, if hot-tempered, fellow, who was determined to take great care of me. As a rule he rode *en vidette* some fifty paces ahead, but whenever a troop of stalwart Cretans, with devil-may-care expressions, chanced to be coming in the opposite way (though maybe with merely a cargo of cheese on their mules), he stood at attention, with his hand on his carbine, until the travellers had passed. And at each village or place of interest, he halted, and gave it its name with dry military precision and twinkling eyes.

We started at nine o'clock in the morning, and with little intermission kept on our saddles until an hour after sunset, when we rode with somewhat laggard pomp into the courtyard of the castle at Kissamos, where I was so happy as to be the guest of the Governor.

For two or three miles we followed a high-road, from which we looked over the dark-green plain of growing barley and olive-woods, set here and there with white farms or villages, towards the lower slopes of the Madara Vouna, with the snow giants above them, We passed through some deep red

cuttings of soft rock, by a bare little rounded glen, hid from the interior by a gentle hillock that seemed to have been smoothed by human agency, and then, after winding cautiously amid a mass of pointed crags which ran seawards, we found ourselves on the sand of the shore, and at the end of the thoroughfare. For the next three or four miles, we sped with the frothing waves breaking twice every minute over the legs of our beasts. There was a breeze on shore, and the ride was deliciously invigorating. The Cape of Spada stood eight or ten miles into the sea before us, with its mountains rising to a crest about 2,500 feet high. Near its junction with the mainland a single white building with a dome was ever in our eyes. This was the Monastery of Gonia, which claims to date from the time of Christ, on a Pagan foundation, I suppose.

Our first halt was at a small wayside wine-shop, with a stable attached. The long bamboo stalks which thatched the little tavern protruded in front and formed a tolerably cool veranda, where we drank coffee and ate some crusts of bread. But the dark shop itself was much the cooler place. Here, in suggestive gloom were several Cretan gentlemen, sipping raki and talking in stridulous tones.; the Word 'polemos' sounded often; and

the men were evidently disappointed when they learned from my guide that I was unable to communicate freely with them about the latest doings in Athens and Macedonia. A Cretan inn of this stamp is a very simple concern. The one large room, in deep shadow, was floored with adhesive soil, which many feet had trod into a fair state of compactness. A rude counter was set across the room, with some flagons of red and white wine upon it. A bucket of water with a scoop in it flanked the wine. Ten or twelve large flat cakes of barley-bread rose, in a pile from the floor by the counter. Seated at their ease on rush-bottomed chairs, the guests of the house occupied the middle of the room; the smiling landlord stood among his loaves and bottles ; while the farther dark end of the chamber was given up to a row of burly barrels with mysterious marks upon them. 'Boston Rum' was inscribed upon one of these barrels. I do not know what this rum may be in the ladder of fame, but a certain Cretan with a large red nose looked longingly at the barrel whenever his speaking was done.

Close to this wine-shop was the city of Platanias, on the top of a rock which falls precipitously *i,o* the north. Of course the city is an ancient one : its site is too commanding to have been overlooked

by the city-builders of pre-Homeric times, and there can be little doubt that it sent representatives in the eighty ships which were Crete's contingent in the grand Hellenic force of Troy. It may be the old Phsestus, by which 'silver Jardan' runs: for the Jardanos is identified with the Platanos, a river with a broad shallow bed, lapsing into the sea a little to the west of Platanias; but, Phæstus or not, it is a striking coterie of white and whity-brown houses. Landwards, especially, the view from it is one to remember. The level ground between it and the sea was covered with leafing vines and barley, the divisions between the fields being marked by great hedges of cactus. But elsewhere it was as if a mountain had been dropped from the clouds, and, having broken into multitudinous shapes, had got all its fragments covered with greenery of one kind or another, so that the very rifts and abysses between the rocks were cheated of their horror. In the few miles of country that intervene between Platanias and the White Mountains are aiguilles, truncated cones,** pyramids, and many fantastic peaks that seem suddenly to have been stopped in the development of yet more romantic eccentricities; and, cumbering each other like frightened sheep, these verdant rocks are an impressive foreground to the snow-peaks which shine down upon them.

It is through this litter of mountain-tops that the river Platanos runs down to the sea, with the drainage of many a sombre gorge, and the melted snow of some of the highest summits of the Madara Vouna. We crossed it by a crazy wooden bridge; but, except in one place, where the muddy current was deep and rapid, we might have ridden our animals over its wide reaches of dry shingle, standing pools, and pale mud. Near the coast, one sees but few of the platanes, which grow along the banks of this river to a huge size, and which, of course, give it its name.

The Platanos, however, was but one of ten or twelve rivers, or river-beds, which we had to traverse during the day, though it was the only one which offered us the use of a bridge. Some of these streams ran in rocky ravines, the descent to which was rather ticklish; but, of course, I soon found that I could trust my mule in all cases where a human nerve might be apt to tremble. With my Turk it was different. He and his horse were perpetually quarrelling: the poor brute did not like being spurred in the ribs whenever he was doing his best to surmount a difficulty; and no sooner did he begin to prance and whip his master with his long tail, than the man smacked him about the head with his open palm, much as an

impetuous schoolmaster in old days might maltreat a very stupid or restive scholar. After one of these battles in the middle of a river-bed, where our animals stood to their knee-caps in turbid snow-water, the Turk was kind enough to offer me his horse : by gesticulation, expression, and accent he tried to make me understand that he did not like to see me riding so humble a creature as a mule ; but I contrasted the calmness and strength of the mule with the abused nervous energy of the horse as it moved, quivering from head to foot, with its ears back, ready to go on its hind-legs again at the least touch of spur, and I bade the Turk proceed as before. I have since wondered about the thickness of my mule's hide : in Cretan fashion, my stirrups were armed with star-shaped spurs of a large kind, which for several hours I jogged into the animal's sides quite unconsciously ; but of this barbarous treatment he took no notice. Indeed, he took but little notice of me from first to last, acting like a reasonable being who had got a commission to perform and was bent upon performing it, happen what might.

After a long jaunt by the seashore, and between low hedges not unlike our home hedges, with the exception of the vines which bowered them, we began to leave the coast. We rode through some

rich purple lands that give name to a palatable vintage of Crete, past groups of wild pear-trees covered with blossom, fields of grain reddened with poppies, and straggling olive-woods, until an enchanting valley appeared before us. A river had to be crossed, with thick foliage on both banks, and then we ascended by the roughest of tracks through a forest of fruit-trees—pear, fig, almond, orange, lemon, olive, etc.—over which the lighter leafing of some great platanes and the dark points of cypresses rose against the blue, cloudless sky. In the heart of this greenery, houses showed their white sides here and there; and as we passed these, with every care for our heads against the overarching boughs, the dusky faces of pretty Cretan girls peeped with inquiry from their square portals. Down in the valley we could see the blue-cottoned legs of the men of Spiglia (as this delightful village is called), where they were working at their vines; but from an occasional house the tortuous chant of male voices told us that not everyone was at work in the fields.

Spiglia is a great place for nightingales, whose love of natural beauty is well known; and we heard them singing here at full noontide. Wh$t with their melodies, the glorious day, the changeful tints of tree after tree, the mosaic of golden light

that fell though the interstices of the thick leafage above us, the glint of the river below, seen now and again as a still silver pool embosomed in verdure, and the purple outlines of the hills over the opposite bank of the valley, this village is far and away the loveliest nook of earth I have ever seen. Conceive what it must be at night-time, under a dark dome of stars, with the curve of a moon enlarging behind the hills, a full choir of nightingales in the trees, the water below just shining through the middle gloom, and the moist air charged with the perfume of orange-blossom !

I had a letter to the Demarch of Spiglia, which letter was to procure us a dinner. The Turk was for making our entrance into the narrow streets a sort of pageant ; but I let him spur on as he pleased : if he liked to break his horse's knees on the rocks of the path, it should be his affair. From my mule, I looked into the upper stories of the houses on both sides until we came to the wine-shop where we were to dismount. Here, in front of the door, was a paddock some six yards square, with the stumps of two or three almond-trees sticking from the ground. A table was set between these stumps, and at the table six or seven Cretans in red and white turbans, with knives in their girth-bands, and their brown, hairy bodies

exposed at the breast, were playing a busy game at cards. Their horses or mules were hitched to the stumps, and so near that they could look over the shoulders of their respective masters, and nudge them in their play. But the advent of a Christian stranger and a Moslem soldier soon made the men throw down their cards.

Spiglia is a Christian village; that is to say, a Mohammedan would nowadays lead a sorry life in it. But my soldier was a genial fellow, and with me on his hands as a curious subject for discussion, he was soon on a fair footing of smiles with every-one we met. These are a sample of the questions which were commonly put to him by those Cretans among whom we came to a halt; and I think he was a man with a ready flow of fancy, who would find no difficulty in satisfying his questioners: [1] You say he is an Englishman; are you quite sure he is not his Excellency the Duke Edinburgh *V* 'Then at least he belongs to the ships *V* 'No doubt he is concerned with this cursed treaty which gives us up to England'. 'How old do you think he is? 'Has he a wife and some children in the place he comes from? 'He asks for meat in Lent—then he is neither a Christian nor a Moslem J What can he be *V* [4] He has such a long nose that there can be no doubt he is up to some mischief;

tell us what you think it is' 'Who on earth made his boots for him *V* etc., etc. Such were some of the problems with which my guide was posed. And truly, to a man apt to judge his fellow-men by their appearance, there is something very disengaging about the manner of these country Cretans, at the beginning of an acquaintanceship. They are tall brawny fellows, with an aggressive look in their eyes, and they stand every inch of their height. But the history of their country is fair warrant for their attitude of general distrust towards those they do not understand, and of course they have their good -qualities as well as their bad.

The Demarch of Spiglia received me and the letter at the same time. He was a young man of about twenty-five, dressed in European clothes, carrying his arm in a sling, and with much determination in his face. We followed him through the crowd of curious natives, and into the upper room of his official house. From the look of it, this was the court-chamber of his district. Proclamations in Greek, with the Turkish seal affixed, were pinned against its walls, and legal papers lay about the table, tied and docketed. And here, in the midst of his technical litter, the hospitable young Demarch served to us the best dinner his village could provide at short notice.

But long before the hard-boiled eggs and bread and wine which made out our meal were brought up to us, I began to regret with an acute degree of self-blame that I had not improved my Greek ere setting out for parts of the island where no other language is of any use. It was the most embarrassing situation conceivable (so I thought) to sit with a country gentleman and the friends who joined him one by one, for the sake of the entertainment, and to be able to do nothing but sit thus in expectation of victuals. I was very rash in airing my few monosyllables and commonplaces at first. They were all received with a distinguished welcome that would have enchanted me if I could have backed them up with a degree of fluency; but when it came to ordinary give-and-take conversation, alas! how low I sank in my own esteem and in the esteem of the muscular friends of the Demarch, who were for squeezing to the verge of endurance this chance wanderer from civilization, with, it was to be presumed, such veracious information about courts and kings as circulates nowhere except in civilized cities!

Under these circumstances, my Turk naturally took a good deal upon himself, and quite usurped the attention of the people of Spiglia; or would have done so if the young Demarch had not now

and again referred to the letter I had brought him. Since he could not entertain me in the usual way, this gentleman determined to try another tack. He invited me on to the roof of his house, and there we sat and looked through the tops of the trees at his gracious surroundings, and he recorded on his fingers the number of houses in Spiglia, the number of people, and the number of Christians. Industry of any special kind, Spiglia, like Crete, as a whole, could boast of none. The people trusted wholly to the soil for food and clothing. There was a fine orange-tree touching our terrace with its boughs, and when I did but look at it, the Demarch called straightway to some one below to bring oranges at once. We then returned to the court-room to eat the fruit.

Wine arrived as a genial medium of social intercourse. It was juice of their own pressing, and the good fellows were exceedingly anxious to know if I thought it praiseworthy. And indeed it seemed to me so excellent, that I made no stint of approving nods and smiles and superlatives of praise. There was a hot argument between themselves as to the comparative merits of the white wine and the red; but that I declined to take part in. Eggs followed the wine; the Demarch and his friends unshelled them as fast as they

could, and laid them before me, apologizing for their fewness (there were at least a score) ; and, to further the meal, one black-browed Hercules, who would make his fortune among the artists as blood-thirstiness personified, pulled his dagger out of its sheath, and gave it me with a courtesy.

But I am really insufferably prolix in these details. And so I will say a curt good-bye to Spiglia, assuring you that though I could not reply to the questions they put to me about the likelihood of war otherwise than by a hesitant or a bland 'Yes' or ' No', an ambiguous ' Perhaps', or a diplomatic silence, conjoined with a lifting of the eyebrows and a slow shake of the head ; and though I could not have been anything except a nuisance to the good Demarch, I was sorry to leave them when it came to the gripping of hands. I can still see the gentle eyes and arched brows of the many village maidens who peered out at us from the low upper windows of their fathers' houses, as my Turk and I clattered merrily over the stones on our way to the mountains. By this time it was three o'clock/ We had ten or twelve miles of vexatious work before us ; so that it was very dubious if we could get to Kissamos by daylight.

From Spiglia we ascended over a ridge of red-dish crags by a terribly bad track. It was as

much as I could, do to stimulate my panting mule from rock to rock. In one place an earthquake had left its mark, very patently. The crest of a hill had been shaken asunder, and of the part that remained on its old foundation two or three tall spires of rock and soil stood up, bent this way and that, as if they then were in the very act of toppling over. We were soon out of the line of vegetation. Dusky herbs matted the hillsides; here and there was a stray fig-tree or olive, blown out of all reasonable shape by the mountain gales ; but there was nothing else; and for awhile my Turk and I plodded along the summits of the crags, as clear against the sky-line as the snow mountains themselves. These latter, however, were now gradually lost to us. We were riding into the heart of a chaotic mingling of mountains and ravines, and one by one the white-capped giants slipped out of sight behind the nearer masses. From our vantage-ground we could see to the very base of the mountains of Enneakhoria, which go east to south-west from the Madara Vouna, have peaks four and five thousand feet high, and send many distinct spurs to the north, one going as far as the headland of Grabusa, and another ending in Cape Spada. Of course there are as many river-beds as gulleys between these mountain-ridges;

and looking west to Kissamos, which we could see as a white cluster on a blue bay of sea, we also saw that our route was to consist of a series of desperately steep ups and downs, each ridge above the water-level being about a thousand feet in elevation.

But I know not how to tell you of the joy and exhilaration of this part of our travel, as we scrambled along in full sunlight, with such various landscapes all around us. The mountains beyond to the south were of amazing outlines, and where their precipitous sides fell between the declining sun and the pent valleys or depressions at their feet, these were in the blackest of shadow. On the other hand, the fertile glades right and left of our own ridge glowed with the intense freshness of the spring green of its foliage, its barley-fields and vineyards ; and the soberer olive-woods were hardly less cheerful to the eye. We were breaking step by step into land where each mountain was of old a city and a citadel, and where there was as sharp division between the Cretans of the different mountain-tops as between the sublime crags themselves. One of these ancient sites, for example, was particularly engrossing—that of Rhokka. It stood on the brow of a towering quadrangular rock that seemed from a distance quite unscalable. Its sides dropped sheer to the level; and yet, facing it close

on one side, with lines as hard as its own, is another perpendicular mass ; so that between the two there is a stupendous cleft, which looks as if it had been cut by the chisel of a Titan. If it be true that suffering and hardship are the most educative forces in human character, it is no less true that for these chasms, which impress one more than any other features of natural scenery, we have to thank those pitiless subterranean powers which from time to time rend and split up the surface of our poor old earth. Even my Turk was content to waste a minute in contemplating Rhokka before we started our serpentine course down to the river which washed the flank of our mountain.

< Rhokka—old place f said he ; but he soon turned to execrate the rocks and crumbling shale of our declivity, and vigorously boxed his horse's ears by way of preparing it for its new trials. Our course was so steep and devious that at times my guide's head and the muzzle of his carbine were on a level with my mule's feet.

As a whole, this day's experience of Crete stays in my memory like one of Turner's fantastic landscapes in the National Gallery ; and, indeed, the pictures give the tone of Cretan scenery with wonderful exactness.

I must mention another little episode of our

jaunt, which was picturesque if trivial. We were just entering a very extensive olive-wood of gnarled and hoary trees when we came upon a small village, and a wine-shop on the skirts of the village. Twenty or thirty Cretan men in their national dress were gathered under the trees by the inn : some drinking raki, some playing cards at little tables, and a few younger ones wrestling and racing with each other. Considering that hardly one foreigner in two or three years thinks it worth while to travel into this part of the island, you may suppose these villagers were interested in our small procession through their midst. But we did not stop, and left them standing looking after us, and loudly conjecturing what it meant.

Shortly after leaving them, my mule put its foot into a hole and threw me over its head. Then, speedily recovering its own footing, the sturdy animal thought well to indulge in a long gallop between the trunks of the trees, deaf to the bad language which the Turk shouted after it as he put his horse in pursuit. But the regulation river at the bottom of the valley brought us all into society again, and we were none the worse for the escapade.

Well, we were still two or three tough miles from Kissamos when the sun went down. Conse-

quently, our final climbs were made in the dusk. We passed a miserable village on the crest of a ridge, where the dogs barked at us in a furious passion, and where some ragged men and women stared at us from dens like enlarged pigsties. But having left this place behind, we could see the capital of the district, with a flat acreage of grain-fields and vineyards between it and us. And in due time we walked through the street of the town, to the turreted and battlemented castle itself. We were expected here; but the sensation of a traveller's presence was still very great. My Turk was for seizing the chance of a little creditable fame : he digged his spurs deep into the steaming sides of his poor horse, compelled him to prance and caper, and finally galloped under the archway and to the steps of the Governor's residence with no regard for the safety of anyone. As for me and my mule, we were equally fagged, and I cared nothing about display : we therefore walked past this grinning Turk soldier and that, at the very laziest of paces, and dismounted fully two minutes after my guide was standing at attention in a crowd of men, military and lay, ready to help me to the ground.

LETTER XIII.

The Situation of Kissamos Kastelli—New Hardships of Ignorance—Daily Eoutine and Visitors—Treasures of the City—A Review of Troops—Remains of Antiquity—A Bevy of Young Patriots—Night and Morning.

UNDER a sky less blue, this city of Kissamos would be one of the most bleak and chilling places on the earth. It stands as a bald excrescence on a treeless space of level ground ; yet not altogether ' treeless', for a single palm lifts its dark tuft over the white and dingy habitations of the town, and gives severer emphasis to the surrounding nakedness. South, east, and west, rocky hills do their best to enclose the city as a little territory apart; but they are not *near* enough to fence oft' the winds from those quarter^. As for the north wind, that comes swooping across the water straight at the castle, where it finds many a nook between the displaced stones and rickety window-frames to sigh and wail in. This wind is concentrated from the sea by the two bold prongs of Spada and Grabusa, each with

their mountain-ranges rising to 2,500 feet in height, and six to eight miles into the sea. If the north wind could be kept for ever chained by King ^Eolus, then the Bay of Kissamos would come forward as a roadstead of some value; for its dimensions far exceed the dimensions of Suda. But nowadays it is not a haven for mariners ; and the small mole, of big stones and rocks piled one upon another, which the Cretans of two or three thousand years ago made for the security of their men-of-war, would no longer shelter a London smack.

Since, however, Kissamos is fortunate enough to be under a Cretan sky, all its defects are charmed away ; and from the faint olive colour of the neighbouring hillsides to the purple of the Grabiisa and Spada mountains ; from the glowing white of the castle where it has been newly washed, to the long waves of the wide bay, heaving themselves green and unbroken upon the reddish sand ; from the blue heavens to the blue distant sea, there is that gracious glamour of an Eastern sun which trahs-figures everything, and makes a filthy and diseased beggar under its influence a better picture for the eye than the Lord Mayor in his robes in London.

[1] Et que dites-vous, monsieur, touchant la guerre *V*

[1]Y a-t-il raison dans le—la rumeur que la France et l'Angleterre ont Fintention a, annexer la Crdte, pour la partager entre eux-memes ?'

No sooner was I seated on the divan by the side of the Governor of Kissamos than an interpreter was sent for, that the local authorities might get some information first-hand, and the old questions were asked in very nervous and uncertain French. The Governor, who, no doubt, had long lost faith in the official communications that might come to him with the weekly post on such subjects, was deeply interested in my opinions. His fort is a feeble piece of masonry ; his bay offers a good field for the deploy of torpedo-boats, and other such vile inventions ; and his personal well-being was bound up with the Turkish Government. You should have seen him brighten and dismiss his harassed looks, therefore, when I said all the rumours were lies, and that however much they might talk of war between this Power and that, peace was a much sounder probability. On the other hand, a British gunboat had passed the mouth of the bay only that morning ; it had been followed by a Turkish gunboat; and the two were then supposed to be cruising on the west of the island. The noise of firing had reached Kissamos from the sea. It might have been mere practising, to be sure ; but——

So you may suppose that certain of the more curious of the local notables were in a state of perplexing excitement, which I was glad to try and allay.

To both the Governor and myself it was a terrible discovery to find that we had no language in common. As long as I stay with him, he will, as a matter of etiquette, I am told, keep me company without intermission. It will be awful; and so I must strain at the Greek to the point of brain inflammation. In his looks and manners he is a very hospitable and distinguished gentleman; but that makes me all the more vexed 'that I cannot talk freely with him. His wife, who in all goodness seems his counterpart, came to us as an intermediary on trial ; but her husband laughed her out of the room when she found by experiment that she had forgotten all her French except ' Comment allez-vous, monsieur *V* Since then this kind lady has exercised her memory for our common behoof. She now remembers the phrase, ' Ce n'est pas bon *V* and she uses it interrogatively when we sit at table, so that I have to say, ' Oui, madame, e'est excel lent,' twice a minute during a meal.

•Do but think, however, of the hours of pain **and** anxiety which the Governor and I pass together in the large room which serves for reception-room and

council-chamber. The divan is broad and against the wall. We sit at ease upon it, and institute embryo conversations by the dozen. They all die very young, however, amid smiles, and laughter, and shrugging of shoulders, and stoical uplifting of hands.

Now and again, some one from the city can spare half an hour as interpreter; and then we work him hard, until he finds it imperative to take his leave, after promising that he will return as soon as possible.

All manner of visitors drop in during our sessions of state. The schoolmaster, who knows no French, is particularly anxious for self-improvement on many subjects; but he goes away no wiser than at first, I fear. A fat, merry little Turk, the Governor's secretary, comes and salaams in a very becoming way, and looks as if he would like to say many things; but he, too, lifts his eyebrows and departs, after a rapid interchange of words with his superior. Shopkeepers and others from the town stamp over the cobbles in the antechamber (a rectangular space paved with rough stones, and open to the air in the daytime), with different treasures for sale to the stranger. They have coins of the very earliest issues—flakes of dull gold so thin that they will take but one impression,

which has almost split the coins ; and plenty of sequins and demi-sequins of the Byzantine and Venetian times. It seems that the country round has been very populous at different eras. Tombs are plentiful ; and the Cretans have now no scruple about bursting these tombs, and disposing of the bullion treasure which they often find in the early Hellenic sepulchres. Gold ornaments of one kind or another were also brought to my notice. A massive little gold eagle was particularly pleasing, and indicated Roman visitation by some considerable deputy of Metellus Creticus, I suppose. But the trifles that their possessors conveyed into our ' reception-chamber' were as nothing to those that were thrust upon us when we went out of doors to view the larger antiquities of the place. Now and again the nurse would also appear, as a diversion, with one of the Governor's children ; and we find it an incident of high enlivenment when the child in arms holds to my finger like a limpet, or the little boy comes, pouting prettily, and consents to sit on my knee. From a window by the divan, we look down at the bakehouse of the castle. The Turkish bakers are hard to please, I have discovered. As subordinate after subordinate brought them their trays full of brown splashes of dough ready to be warmed into bread, the critical superior

bored half of them with a poker, and having tried in vain to detach many more of the lumps, banged his fist into those that resisted him, and, with ugly pantomime of derision, dismissed the under-strappers with their spoiled burdens. The machicolated walls of the castle rise above the bakery ; and, beyond, we can see the blue Ægean and the mountainous headlands which confine the bay. Coffee and cigarettes in brisk succession help us through the ennui of these fearful sittings. I would give much to be able to assure my kind host that I shall not feel insulted if he leaves me to myself a little while; but the interpreters would be sure to digest the wish into a command that would seem both uncivil and impolitic; and so it must be endured.

My bodyguard, the Turk, presented himself in the castle when we were at breakfast the morning after my arrival. He wanted his orders for the day. But there was nothing for him to do ; and, having stood talking for a few minutes, now and then eating a piece of fish or biscuit from our table, tendered him by the Governor with his own hands, he disappeared. He is certainly a fine fellow, with a very creditable amount of dash and daring in *his* looks and deportment.

After breakfast, we made the tour of the castle

and the town. The castle is Venetian, of course, and it must have been fairly useful in the earlier centuries. Now, however, it is crumbling to pieces, and its cannon point nowhere in particular. For our pleasure, a review of the three or four hundred soldiers who are garrisoned here was held in the castle courtyard. It was odd to see how recklessly the men were set in companies: a broad giant of over six feet would be touching arms with a couple of men fully a foot lower than himself. The officers were dressed resplendently, and walked to and fro with a courtly air of weariness : they were, however, anything but 'smart'. The movements were gone through with precision, but I fancy each man had one eye on his neighbour, that he might be sure of his cue. Directly we showed signs of abandoning inspection, there was a palpable relaxation all down the line. Several of the privates wore boots that had no laces in them, and their bare feet showed at the instep.

The castle is not without its antiquities.^ In one corner was a little railed enclosure, within which some flowers and creepers grew in a tangle; and here, leaning against the wall, was a life-size Inarble figure of a Roman official, much injured indeed, but with a certain grace and beauty, though of the florid order of statuary. There were also a

number of. bits of moulding not unlike some of the detail of the Athenian Erectheum. These few treasures do not represent the discoveries of the district: they are put here in company because they were found in the immediate vicinity.

But when we left the castle and entered the bazaar of the city, antiquities came upon us at every step. We were besieged by a mob of chattering and excited citizens and others, with the finds from their respective gardens, foundations, or what not. Coins in gold, silver, and bronze, with a range of three thousand years in date; portable gods of gross design in brass and marble; amphorae of different material and adornment ; cameo rings; marble tablets and tomb-heads, showing inscriptions still decipherable, were pressed upon me from all sides.

I was quite beset with these treasures, all of which were unquestionably what they purported to be. One man had a little bag of gold and silver coins and fragments: he was constantly finding something fresh to add to his store ; he had kept his accumulations in hopes that an opportunity like the present would be afforded him before he came to die. For years, it seems, no EuropeaiF with a fancy for curios had paid the province a visit. Hence the supply was very great. The

last visitor was a botanist, who cared for nothing that no longer had the spirit of life within it.

You must not suppose, however, that I relieved these west-Cretans of their antiquities as fast as they offered them. By no means. I asked about the price of a pretty, plain silver finger-ring, with an oval intaglio of carnelian set in it. * Six napoleons !' replied the villager, without flinching. It was the same with the other treasures. No doubt, as practical men, they would rather abase their ideals than go profitless; but I did not think it worth while to run the course of the endless chaffering and expostulations by way of which alone a bargain is to be effectuated in Crete. Twenty and fifty years ago, Spratt and Pashley were able to carry away from Crete entire sarcophagi of Greek sculpture, in superb condition, at a cost that was relatively very trifling; but even then the more portable treasures were rated high; and it is the same now. Much of the legitimate commerce of Crete is transacted with Smyrna; it needs a Smyrniot to overreach a Cretan, perhaps ; which is the same as cutting diamond with diamond.

We went to the shop of **a certain clever doctor** ^**in** Kissamos, who has an extensive **collection of** amphorae, lacrymatories, and other ancient **pottery. From his shop** he **took us to** his **country-house,**

which, with genuine antiquarian shrewdness, he has built on the site of an old temple. Under the soil of his garden in front of the house are two rows of columns, he assured us, each column as wide as his shoulders; and, in partial confirmation of this, he showed us two sections of pillars and a monster capital of the Corinthian order, in very good preservation. From a closet in his house, this gentleman brought forth from a wrack of dust and cobwebs a pretty marble Cupid about two feet long, and half a score of legs and arms and heads. He hoped some day to find time to burrow for the bodies of these respective limbs, and in the end be able to patch up a complete life-size divinity from his domestic spoils.

We also explored some of the tombs which were then being investigated. They were broken open in a barbarous manner, with rude blows of the pickaxe. From their appearance it seemed that the unburned bodies were enclosed in an earthenware case of some kind. But bones, amphorae, and outer covering all lay smashed up together by the upcompromising shocks of the delver. Kissamos is a city of divers strata. Deep down are the graves of prehistoric Cretans. Over them the remains of Romans are found, side by side, with the regularity of a modern cemetery. Then come the

Byzantines, and the gold coins of the later Emperors of the East. The Venetians follow the Byzantines. And now, in the miserable little enclosures which stand for the burying-grounds of the Greek and Turkish members of the community respectively, the nineteenth-century residents of Kissamos find a shallow resting-place on the top of their long lines of ancestry. While the Governor and I made our survey of the neighbourhood, etc., several Cretans appeared with their implements, and began to dig into these graves with much impetuosity. But I remarked that they were always rather jealous when I climbed down into the holes to do a little independent exploring : they credit Europeans with an instinctive and quite peculiar gift of divination, which, very naturally, they think may be used in their spoliation.

From the tombs we passed to a group of unpretentious houses, and the floor of one of these hovels was found to be a Roman mosaic, complex in design, and brilliant in colour and condition. It seemed to warm the poor little room like a Turkey carpet. Elsewhere, by tall tufts of grass or barley, fragments of marble, for the most part deep-embedded, glistened in the sunlight.

This was all very interesting and agreeable to me, and vastly better than sitting cheek by jowl

with cruel difficulty on the Governor's divan ; but I fear the Governor himself felt this perambulation in the guise of cicerone as a little tedious. Of course he did not make this apparent, but I judge him by my own instincts. I on my part longed to be able to get at my diary to make a few notes in solitude, opportunity for which seemed wholly denied me. And so on our way back to the castle, when one of our staff of interpreters, a capable young law student lately from Athens, accosted us and said he should like me to drink a glass of something with him, both the Governor and I acquiesced with, I feel sure, a common sense of relief.

The Europeanized young Cretan soon drew me into a knot of his friends, who could speak French well or badly, and, talking very loud, they walked me up and down the principal street, while they discussed what they were pleased to call ' the political situation/ I had got so desperately tired of converting into comprehensible speech what little political intelligence I brought with me from Canea that I fear I answered these heated patriots rather at random. Whatever I said, however, it was much to their liking. And when we sat down outside the most considerable coffee-house of Kissamos, and the waiter had been summoned, they were in such a state of excited **jubilation, that**

the crowd of natives who massed about us looked as if they also would like to be made merry in the same way. Three times we had to toss off our glasses of raki to the well-being of Crete. Sundry asides and whispers made it apparent that they had ideas of their own about what concerned this well-being and its accomplishment; and they even went so far as to talk lightly of the Governor and the Moslem forces in the island. At first they were very prejudiced against me, they acknowledged: the conduct of England had made the name of Englishmen remarkably ill-sounding, they thought.

'Why is it, sir', asked their spokesman, *that you are always the friend of Turkey, who is, as all the world allows, of no further use to the map of Europe? She is weak and uncivilized, and yet England prefers her to the Hellenes f

'If that is so/ I replied, 'I can only account for it by diplomatic motives/ I tried to say something about the antagonism between political expediency and personal sympathies, but they had not the patience to hear about such sickening and degrading platitudes.

[1] It is shameful !' said they.

''May I be allowed to ask how the Cretans estimate the Turks, how many Turks you reckon as an equivalent for a single Cretan man *V* said I.

[1] Eight/ replied the young law student, without hesitation.

[1] But in that case what can be easier than another successful rising, one more insurrection to crown all *V*

[1] True/ was the reply, 'we are ready. They have their arms in the mountains all prepared. We wait but the word. And yet it were no use. For there are the Great Powers—thirty-three ships of war in Suda ; and at a gunshot, no doubt, the English will land and take part with the Turks.'

I explained that I could only speak as an impartial spectator of such a contingency ; but that I thought they were in a situation which was much to their advantage. I ventured to hope that they would not be too precipitate ; that they would at any rate wait until they had collected plenty of money among themselves, so that if need be they might act independently of the Hellenes of the mainland, and thus be under no obligation to shackle their land with a ready-made national debt, an incompetent house of representatives, and a tardy system of internal development, all of which seemed to be the more conspicuous features of Greek monarchical rule. I reminded them that they were very well off compared with the hard-pressed populations of the great European States,

and suggested that they should very quietly make the best of their circumstances until an irresistible combination of Powers pushed Turkey completely out of Europe. And so forth. My advice was good if not very original, no doubt, and I hope they will take it. At any rate, these young patriots were patient in letting me air my notions, and we parted good friends. Nevertheless, I dare say they will attribute my verbosity to the raki.

While I am here, I sleep in the drawing-room (if I may so call it) of the castle. There is no luxury at Kissamos. The entire suite of rooms allotted to the Governor numbers only four, excluding a kitchen. The room in which we linger through many of the hours is square, very lofty, and large, and yet it has absolutely no furniture, except the long divan by the wall, and a little table for official work. The drawing-room, on the contrary, contains a great many things : boxes, tables, pictures, and elaborate trifles, all of which are dusty in the extreme. I sleep on a sofa against the wall, and during the dark hours receive much attention from the small inhabitants of the room. Moreover, just outside the wall is a piquet of soldiers on guard at night. They sing, and tell tales, and laugh, and quarrel, with so little regard for the inmates of the castle that I am exceedingly puzzled

to know how to sleep. But sleep I do, notwithstanding ; and to such good purpose, that when I turn out in the morning I find the whole household agog in expectation of my appearance for breakfast. The good Governor is just outside, and we begin the day by going forthwith to the divan and taking a cup of coffee and a cigarette. The Governor's lady soon calls us to breakfast. We find the little boy, napkined and glistening, sitting in a high chair, with a large spoon in his hand, as impatient to begin as any of our home youngsters ; and we all set to with a cordial appetite upon the rice-soup, pillau, lamb-steaks, honey, oranges, and wine, which are to fortify us until the evening. A fat, dark, Greek maid-servant stands with clasped hands to see us eat. She beams with contentment when she has to carry away a well-cleared plate, but sighs profoundly, and casts limpid looks of reproach at her amiable mistress when anything considerable is left on the plate. 'Ce n'est pas bon *V* hereupon says the Governor's lady, sorrowfully ; and I have to assure her with the phrase that now slips to my tongue by its own accord : 'Oui, madame ; c'est tres bon.'

LETTER XIV.

A City of very Ancient History—A Rude Track to it—Other Prehistoric Cities conjecturable—Monuments of the Past—A Lovely Maid—The Day ends with the Dictionary.

AT ten o'clock in the morning of a day that would have graced our midsummer, we set forth from the Kastello on a short tour of exploration. There were five of us in the cavalcade: two riflemen in the van; then the Governor on a spirited black genet with a long, sweeping tail; myself on my mule; and, lastly, my Turk, spruce and elated. I assure you Kissamos was delighted with the excitement preceding our start; and we made our way over the fearful cobbles of the streets between a double rank of admiring faces.

We were bound for a place called Paleokastron, several miles inland, among the mountains, and which, though itself a village of antiquity, is the modern survival of the old Cretan city of Polyrrhenia. For particulars of Polyrrhenia, pray search Polybius, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and others;

they may give you a line or two about it, and of that line two or three words may be accepted as true.

Spratt claims the honour of discovering Polyrrhenia about a score of years ago. A plethora of old coins and such trifles in the hands of the Cretans of the neighbourhood put him on the scent. He had his suspicions before; but when he had satisfactorily assured himself that an important subsidence of the island on its western shores has occurred since the time of the earlier geographers, and that therefore it was impossible exactly to identify the different ports which gave sea outlet to the warriors and traders of the interior cities, he determined to trust to personal visitation of suspected sites rather than to the tape-measure. And in the case of Polyrrhenia this clever and resolute sailor was uncommonly successful; for, having substantiated his conjectures about the site, he found that the coast-line also came to his assistance, and confirmed him in his good fortune.

Putting Spratt aside, the following is the only information about Paleokastron that my island library tenders. Says Valiero in his 'Cretan War' of the seventeenth century: 'There is a citadel in the country called Paleocastro, which is raised on an eminence.'

An eminence indeed it is! A mountain springs boldly from a riverside until it is eight or nine hundred feet high: its summit is level, with perhaps an acre of soil and rocky lumps upon it; and on all its other sides this mountain is at least as abrupt as the side the foot of which is washed by the river just mentioned. Its actual summit is guarded by sturdy precipices, difficult to scale even now, and impossible of old in the teeth of an opposing force on the top. And hereupon, skirting the perpendicular rocks, are the ruins of a number of centuries: from the acropolis of the prehistoric city, with its huge untrimmed blocks of squared stone, still standing, to the superincumbent workmanship of Venetian masons, who have used the Hellenic walls as an overground foundation, and have thus helped to perpetuate their own work, and preserve that of their predecessors at the same time.

It is a place to inspire an elegy. The downfall is so unequivocal, and yet the marks of past power are so strongly set. Year by year, the stones of the Venetians are falling away. In some places all the superstructure is gone, and the Hellenic masses stand as they stood before the Italians built over them. One is attacked .by the old wonder—how could such blocks have been brought to such a place and so cunningly allied and cemented? We

clambered up them for awhile till we were at the top: for they are not confined to the summit, but rise in protection of it from a good way down; and here and there a false step from one stone to another would have plunged us two hundred feet at a drop. We were caught by brambles, diverted by the tortuous boughs of fig-trees and scrub, stung by the nettles which grow high between the stones and in the chambers partitioned by these rude walls, and cawed at by distressful rooks that fluttered from pinnacle to pinnacle in fear lest we should come upon their callow children. And on the top, for a time I lay prone upon one of these old walls, and looked at the brake of vegetation about the stones, at the horizon of rough dark mountain-peaks one upon another—south, east, and west, and thought that not Baalbec itself could be more impressively eloquent of the romantic dead past which has nothing—absolutely nothing—in common with a century of jerry-built houses, steam, electricity and dynamite. While I was idling in this way, a great eagle soared lazily by, and passed from crag to crag, seeming just to graze them in his quiet flight; and when the eagle was gone, I saw nothing but still mountains and still blue heavens. »

There is much Roman work here, as well as Hellenic and Venetian. The familiar thin red

bricks hold well together; but are not to be compared with the handiwork of the first comers. And among the stones, where many an arch cavity tempts one to break one's neck by treading into it, are two enormous cisterns, bulging inside in an elephantine manner, and each holding to this day several thousand gallons of clear water.

We plodded and stumbled from ruin to ruin until a patch of barley appeared where the mountain smoothed a little before dropping abruptly. Yellow peas' blossom and a bright blue flower grew thick among the grain. And the grain itself was nurtured by a soil that seemed made of bits of pottery, bits of snowy-white marble, and Venetian stone, rather than the native mould it would have liked.

When Spratt was at Polyrrhenia, Greek inscriptions were to be seen on the fragments. But not the most vivid imagination of my guides nor all our research could discover anything better than a marble tablet with a weak 'theta' on it all alone. The guides from the village of Paleokastron below averred that stones with such marks were to be seen; but they differed about their localities, and *jfoe* result was nil. Limekilns bad been *in* operation, and of course the marble slabs, wherever they could be found, would be wanted for the kilns.

The different Venuses of Medici, Aphrodite, Milo, etc., would assuredly have been burned into lime if they had been so unfortunate as to be discovered in lands of the Sultan.

But I must say a few words about our ride to this old place, which was very interesting in itself. The path was worse than the worst my Turk and I had trodden between Canea and KissamoS. Ere we had been afoot half an hour, our lives were meanly imperilled. We had come to a steep glen, with wild olives on the rising ground on one side, and a watercourse purling thirty or forty feet below on the other hand. And here, where the track on the edge of the precipice just allowed the passage of one creature at a time, was a very obstinate donkey, unattended by man, woman, or child. This ass offered us its broadside, and would not budge one way or another. But there was so much wrath at our being thus stopped that the leaders, by a smart movement, pressed by the ass, and the Governor also manoeuvred his horse successfully. Then it came to my turn. The mule was indisposed to try strategy. What he could do he would do, by a fair pitting of weight against weight; and so he bent down his head and bumped the ass in the ribs in a way that would have stirred the ire of even a meeker animal than an ass.

After the shock we were doing our best to step along the few inches of clear roadway from which we had pushed the ass by brute force, and it was then that we all but came to complete disaster. For, shooting its long ears back viciously, and ramming its head against the rocky bank as though to get the better purchase for its attack, the ass lifted both its hind-legs in the air, and flung them hard at the chest of my mule. The mule winced, but did not cry out; and having got fairly over the difficulty, what should he take it into his head to do but try and turn round, with his great teeth unbared, to have a biting match with his abominable little enemy! But I managed to prevent this tournament, though in his gyrations the mule had his feet on the edge of our path more than once.

In our course, we had to pass over two high ridges, from which small circular peaks rose on one side of us. A very casual inspection of one of these peaks showed that, in earlier days, it had been the site of what one may call a small^eity. Squared stories were there in more or less disorder. In the rocks rude chambers had been excavated; and, within a few hundred yards of the deserted summit, we came upon empty rectangular cuts in the hard matrix, measuring some six feet, by three

or four deep, and two wide, which were of course the chill narrow graves of these ancient Cretans, In its mountainous parts, this island must for ages have had an undisputed lease of intestine warfare ; and one can imagine the petty brawls and tourneys between the warriors of the pocket cities on the same ridge of rock, equally with the greater fights between the men of one mountain and the men of another. The citizens of Polyrrhenia would be privileged to look down from their impregnable acropolis upon the puny struggles of many a less community ; and from their potency they would doubtless be in the position of arbiters over a large expanse of country.

We could conjecture about the site of other nameless cities, quite at our pleasure, as we rode roughly along these heights. In some instances the old circumvallations are turned into terraces of vineyards, and where the vines make lesser circles within the outer ones, until they can go round no longer, one may assume that the inner citadel once had its formidable station. But there is no end to the visions and fancies begotten of high spirits while quaffing this clear fresh mountain air.

It was when we had descended **carefully from** the mountain into the river-bed **which, as I have said, bounds** the **hill** of Paleokastron **on** one side,

and had begun to make the toilsome climb towards the knot of white houses half-way up the declivity, which houses stand for the village of Paleokastron, on the outskirts of the old city of Polyrrhenia, and under its frowning acropolis—it was then that we fairly had a surfeit of unarranged and unticketed antiquities.

First, we came to the graves of the ancients, dug here and there in the hard rock, now rifled and empty.

Next, a chiselled rectangular monument stood by a turn of the track. It was probably a votive stone of some kind: the front of it proved to be scarred and defaced.

Then, as we got among the houses, set sideways to the mountain-slope, pillars and mouldings lay higgledy-piggledy between the hovels of these modern Cretans, with maiden-hair ferns growing thick in the clefts underneath them, wild vines draping them, and fig-trees shooting from between their marble masses.

Finally, we alighted by the roof of a house, *Vith the bare rocks impending over us, and gave our animals a drink of water from a trough which was a marble sarcophagus with fair-outlined figures cut on the panelled sides in vigorous alto-rejievo. We could see that the very houses round about were a

patchwork of marble and rock and Roman bricks and native mud.

The villagers who were not at work in their vineyards in the valleys soon left their houses and crowded round us. The Governor, being a Cretan and a Christian, was welcomed, with respectful cordiality. Chairs were brought forth from the nearest house, and we were invited to walk on to the roof, where we sat for a few minutes, right and left of the smoking chimney-pot, looking out at the wild and almost fearsome assemblage of rugged mountains towering high, close in front of us. The bases of these mountains are mostly cultivated, and therefore clad in a bright barley-green ; but, above, they broke craggy and grey, with sheer walls of rock to the hot purple of the sky-line. High up in the side of a giant heap that faced us was a black gash, so symmetrical that man must have had something to do with it. Probably it was a grotto dedicated to a heathen divinity ; but all I could learn by way of elucidation was that it was a cave. It looked like a door into the heart of the mountain.

While we were resting, I was lucky enough to see one of those lovely Cretan maids who are fit to live in the memory as an imperishable dream of beauty. She came up behind a stalwart old man

with white moustaches, and peeped at us over his shoulder. My Turk was the first to discern her. He turned sharp to the left with such a peculiar glare in his eyes that I looked where he looked, and for the moment saw no more than he saw—a smooth, peach-coloured cheek. But when her shelter suddenly deserted her, and she stood exposed, with her lips parted, the most winsome of expressions in her large grey eyes, her cheeks delicately tinted, and her hands, one in the other, hanging loose in front of her, the girl was at once, irresistibly, the cynosure of us all — Governor, soldiery, and the stranger. She turned away then, however, and went behind the angle of a neighbouring house; and I could see her now and again peeping from the house when she thought she was unnoticed, with her long brown hair acting as a sort of screen for her face. I would rather have missed Paleokastron than this pretty maid. Such a revelation is an immediate key (or one is prone to think so) to the art-element in the souls of the old Greeks, . But the features of this girl had a soft regularity that would have baffled even the Periclean group of sculptors.

Well, the Governor was soon engaged in some official talk with the grey-beards of the village, when these had assuaged their curiosity about me,

and the reason of our visit. And as I was bent **upon** getting to the acropolis, three good-looking young Cretans, with particoloured handkerchiefs round their foreheads, and one with a gun on his shoulder, were nominated as guides. Neither the Governor nor my Turk wanted to do any personal climbing, and so one of the riflemen was apportioned to me as further body-guard. It was a tiresome scramble, and one that made us sweat profusely long before we reached the first of the Cyclopic masses.

I have already said something about the ruins of this city of Polyrrhenia, on the top. The guides told me they were constantly finding things among the stones—coins, jars, etc. But they did not often pay the place a visit, and never without their guns, because they loved popping at the rooks, partridges, and hares at least as much as poking about the old walls. They were a merry trio of boys, not indisposed to play me some practical jokes. 'Here! here! they would cry; and when I joined them they would stare and point out—nothing, with a roar of laughter. But they were also very Gothic in their conduct. They **broke off** great chunks of the Roman masonry, **andi toppled** them over the mountain-side, **and united their** strength to move a **single cube of the**

Venetian work. As for the Hellenic walls, these would defy a score of the Cretan youth, working with all their might. The water in the cisterns, they assured me, was good, cold, and abundant! And one of them got the bottom half of an old beer-bottle (how on earth it came to be here I cannot determine), and with a rope of brushwood-twigs lowered it into the recess, that we might taste the liquor. Finally, they took to firing at the rooks that skimmed about the tallest parts of the walls.

Before departing from Paleokastron, one of the villagers brought us each a cup of wine. With the wine came also a handful of bits of pottery and bronze coinage. The sight of these relics reminded others who were present that they also had something to show and sell to the stranger, if he would offer a good price. They brought many coins, Byzantine for the most part; though one or two were of the earliest minting, and marked with an eagle on a plain ground. The prettiest thing of all, however, was a small blue-enamelled amphora, with side handles, and the figure of a woman moulded on one side. I am sorry I did not take ;more pains to secure this ; but I consoled myself with the conviction that it would certainly get smashed in the jolting to be borne before I got back to Khalepa.

We returned by the same route, and the green of the crest of old Polyrrhenia darkened as we receded from it: its stones were lost to sight; and soon it was nothing to the eye except a hill of jagged outline, with a thicket of scrub on its forehead, and broad glades of bare rock falling to the level. But I shall not soon forget it; and long may it remain as untroubled and unsought as it now is.

The pace which the bad ways compelled us to keep was so desperately galling to the high spirits of the Governor's thoroughbred that the animal began to play pranks in awkward places. There was nothing for it but to give it a little 'abandon' at the first opportunity. And so when we came to a patch of barley growing thin and unkindly in an exposed elevation, the Governor galloped to and fro amid the barley-stalks for a few minutes. The Turk must needs follow the Governor's example; so that by the time they had taken somewhat of the superfluous energy from their animals, hardly half the stalks of barley in the patch stood fairly on their legs. It was a most arbitrary proceeding, and decidedly hard upon the poor agriculturist who had determined to smooth this stony acre or two, fertilize its aridity, and then try to cherish enough grain to keep him in bread for a few

months. But the Governor was too proud of his horse to care much for this trivial wreck of hopes. It was certainly a beautiful little creature, with remarkable nervousness of movement. Its master was no less proud of having bought it for the small sum of thirty napoleons.

Nearing Kissamos, we diverged a little, so that after a time we stood under one of those block-houses which are the latest evidences of its power that the Turkish Government has displayed in Crete. The ugly building was perched on a crag that might have been a miniature of Polyrrhenia. Prometheus could not have been laid open to the approaches of his eagle on a more nakedly exposed pinnacle of rock. Bugles sounded as we approached. Red-coats were seen moving here and there. And soon a sub-officer with a troop of men came tripping down to salute the Governor, and exchange a few words with him.

We got to the castle in time for a hearty dinner. If I could do little else, I was glad to please my very excellent entertainers by showing them how I could appreciate what they put before me.

The succeeding hours were spent on the divan. We smoked and talked alphabetically, with one finger in the dictionary. The Governor toyed with

a rosary of large brown beads. Visitors and interpreters came one after the other; and the children found much to amuse them in my dress, habits, and trinkets. In fact, when the day was over, and I withdrew to my drawing-room, with, for a night-light, a morsel of cork with a wick in it, floating in a tumbler of olive oil, I congratulated myself on my improved skill in conversation under sore difficulties.

LETTER *XV.*

The Ancient Coast City of Phalasarna—A Gusty Kide to it—The Throne, the Empty Houses, and the Ruined Temples—Lunch by a Spring—A British Gunboat—The Village of Mesoghia—Cards, Coffee, and Hard-Boiled Eggs.

IN my last letter I described the appearance of the obsolete city of Polyrrhenia, situated on a mountain several miles inland. I am afraid you must tolerate a second letter about ancient Cretan cities : though the city of Phalasarna, which is the one I have just visited, and which gives board and lodging to not one soul in this present age, differs much from the lofty Polyrrhenia, and notably in being a coast town, and, as has been conjectured, in serving Polyrrhenia as the Piraeus serves Athens. I take it, however, that Phalasarna was considerably the more important of the two places, both from the actual extent of its abandoned buildings, and the larger area it offered for habitation. Moreover, I traced out the site of two heathen temples, which, though not spacious enough to accommodate many worshippers after the manner of those who attend

Christian churches in the north, were yet imposing in their frontage, and indicative of plenty of devotees in Phalasarna at one time or another. For exact information about the particular god or goddess which this city favoured, you must again refer to the old writers ; pit them one against the other if they differ mortally in their statements, and then fix upon this or that assertion which has most impudence, and therefore most force in engaging human notice and sympathy.

But, in all seriousness, Phalasarna is a place that strikes one with a deadly chill. A practical statesman from our Warwickshire metropolis would not be able to endure five minutes of the humiliation that would certainly come upon him among its prodigious walls, split and twisted this way and that by earthquakes, with the quiet green and blue waves laving its ruined stones, and the fearful stillness that broods over it, the shelving strand of the bay on which it is situated, and the amphitheatrical mountains which gird and hide it from the rest of the world with the solicitude of an undertaker concealing his dead client. One has to toil arduously to the summit of a high ridge; and then Phalasarna comes in sight. It lies all along by the water, and a number of low pointed rocks that jut into the water; there is much edging of

pink and white sand; the whole extent of the bay of land made by the hills is some four or five square miles; there is no fresh water in sight; trees there are none either; but the rough boulders and shingle which bestrew the plain are decked with mint and thyme, scrub-caroub and olive, and many a perfumed flower which we in England caress through a summer with difficulty, but which here blooms as fast as its strength will let it, winter and summer alike. A mountain some three thousand feet high looks down at Phalasarna from the south. It has a white spot on its crest. That is the monastery of the Agios Elias. And there is no other visible sign of life all around this dead city. The west winds blow over its riven houses, subverted temples, and tenantless graves; and the voice of the wind is the only voice that speaks in Phalasarna.

To strike further awe into the soul of our practical statesman whose ambition would fain put a wreath of bay round his brows, a pebble's-throw away from the nearest of the city walls, a great empty stone throne stands apart from everything else on a rugged carpet of wiry herbs and fragments of rock. A real throne, too, or Pashley's learned references to the great Phalasarna, who once sat supreme in it, are so much dust *on* his pages. Pashley saw and speculated upon it more than **half**

a century ago. I dare say six or eight people have stood and gazed at it since then. And so my turn came; and without doubt it will excite marvel and guesses and blunders for a century or two longer. But of all things, in such a site, a throne! I would not for all the world carp at Pashley's assumption that it is a throne. If only I could truthfully add that in front of the base of the throne there was digged in the rock a pit six feet by two by three, what a rare and perfect commentary would the throne and the grave be upon the city, and the city upon the throne and the grave! You must not scoff and say, 'All fancy: merely a hollowed rock, or something of the kind !' For I assure you that it is exactly the shape of a comfortable chair on a large scale (it is about eight feet high at the back); that it is cut out of a single lump of stone, and that the seat is very roomy, and so amazingly concave, that one is compelled to assume that the kings and queens (if the Salic law was not in force among the early Cretans) of Phalasarna who sat upon the throne were of good hard flesh and bone, and that the royal lineage ran smoothly for a long succession of centuries. Therefore, we will by no means deprive this dismally beautiful place of desolation, *a land wherein no man dwelleth'm *of* its gaunt and empty throne.

It was a little difficult to get at Phalasarna from Kissamos. When I murmured my plea into the Governor's ear, he shrugged his shoulders, smiled plaintively, and pointed to our dictionary. Could I not find the word in the book, and then he would understand its meaning, perhaps? My tongue by itself was an enduring snare for him. It was the same with those of the castle officials whom the Governor consulted. Phalasarna was not so much as a name to them, although its ruins graced the seashore not ten miles to the west of them. It seems that the district within which the stones stand is called Kutri; and it was only when I had contrived to talk of 'speethea petra' (stone houses), and had attached to my houses the intensest superlative of the simple adjective 'old'—it was only then that I pricked the comprehension of one or other of my auditors.

[1] Oh, malista f—there were houses at Kutri, but they were empty houses. I could not get so much as a glass of wine or a cup of sheep's milk in the place. **

I protested that wine or sheep's milk were nothing to me under the circumstances; that, in fact, it was the stones, and the stones only, that I felt an interest in.

[i] Well, well!' And so it was settled that a

cortege should set out on the morrow, under the guidance of a commissioned officer of the Sultan's army. The Governor, alas! had a pressure of business, and he was sorry that he could not renew the pleasure of Polyrrhenia. It was all settled by the antiquarian doctor, who sat between us for half an hour, interpreting the Governor's proposals into very halting French, and mutilating my own suggestions with a sublime want of tact and indifference to the wrongs he thereby wrought upon both of us.

Do you remember that excellent counsel of old Walker the original in his advice to travellers, and how often we have made it a pleasant pretext for cramming our pockets with good things before setting out for a mountain climb?

'In whatever way you travel, I particularly recommend you to guard against the cravings of hunger, both for your health's sake, and in order the better to preserve placidity of temper, which, with every precaution, is exposed to frequent disturbance. When your mind is ruffled, you can neither see with pleasure nor profit, and the natives are pretty sure to revenge themselves for your ill-humour by imposing upon you!'

Was ever so hideous a picture of the iniquity of human nature drawn with such a cold methodical

hand ? Conceive the unhappy state of a famished tourist, trying to solace his soul with fair landscapes, colossal pillars set on end by the mighty dead, or the mere babbling of a summer's sea upon the sand and shingle, and surrounded all the time by a demoniacal throng of things in human shape, taunting, reviling, and pressing 'bargains' upon him, and dogging his weary footsteps as he meanders from sight to sight, until the time comes at length when his empty stomach will hold out no longer, and, with a hollow groan, he falls into their hands as a yielding victim ! Is it not terrible ? And one can only hope that Walker did not write from a sad personal experience ; that he penned these words sitting in his armchair, after a self-inflicted fast of five, six, or seven hours, in a heat of petulance, which was as much self-begotten as his fancy picture ! However, to guard against hunger, our officer slung a green bag of bread round his body; and then we set our faces due west, my Turk and a single rifleman accompanying us as body-guard.

We skirted the margin of the Bay of Kissamos for awhile, with the mountains of Grabusa and Spada, of amethystine beauty, to the north of the city. I inspected the old harbour of Kissamos, which is exactly after the model of the tiny ports of Munychia and Zea hard by Piraeus and Athens,

But the mole is a stout achievement, and will probably last for another two or three thousand years —unless in our thirst for islands we do really lay hands on Crete, and later improvements in steam communication make these glorious bays of the ^Egean as favoured of the people as are Margate and Hastings and Brighton nowadays. Two or three lumbering fisher's boats lay moored by the mole. One bore the gracious name of 'The Truth.' What would St. Paul, Epimenides, and Polybius say to such testimony as this, I wonder? But, really, I believe that liars are no more in the majority here than anywhere else.

After leaving the castle, with its machicolated towers and walls, and its gaps in the masonry where this stone or that had got dislodged and had never been replaced, we trod quietly through a bright patch of meadow-land, agreeably green to an English eye. The meadow was sectioned here and there by ditches, in which the water glistened and reflected with a bland impartiality the blue sky, me and my mule, and this or that Turkish woman with a dark pitcher on her head. In the grass of the meadow, tall pink flowers and white waxen lilies grew iii thick clusters. It was a very pretty little piece of ground, though I dare say the fiend Malaria broods about it after sundown.

We had two ridges to surmount this day, as on our way to Polyrrhenia, and the state of the rocks was as bad as could be. My mule showed a very natural objection to the efforts he was called upon to make. I got off him once, thinking to ease him; but I was soon on him again, when I found that he considered himself quite freed from the obligation of proceeding further when once he was freed from me. I would rather ride him than lug him, I thought. It was harder to-day, moreover, because there was a stiff wind blowing, and right against us. When first we showed our heads on the summit, I really feared that we should all be blown pell-mell back again; and our animals trembled like leaves as they set their chests to the blast.

The valley that intervenes between our Kissamos ridge and the ridge that runs immediately into the promontory of Grabusa, and commands Phalasarna on the east, is not so pretty as the other Cretan valleys I have seen. It is wide and stony, and about half cultivated ; it has its olive orchards and vineyards, and barley-fields, and flowering pear-trees and knotted fig-trees, and small villages stud it north and south, until the sea ends it at one extremity, and the higher mountains drop their flanks across it at the other extremity ; but, on the whole, it is rather bald.

We stopped for five minutes in the middle of the valley, to get a drink of water. The riflemen fetched from one of the houses a jar two feet high, and held it to our lips one after the other. He said something about it being medicinal; there is a river in one of the provinces with a name that means, literally, 'good for the stone:' probably this also had some renal qualities, for it was not very nice.

While we were giving our beasts a drink, I strolled away into the precincts of one of the small monasteries which are to be found everywhere in Crete. It was about as big as an English summer-house, with the ordinary whitewashed dome swelling up in its midst: and round about it square slabs of stone, level with the ground, or a few inches above it, marked its thinly populated cemetery. But the monastery was deserted, again like so many other Cretan monasteries, and the windows of the small holy building were tightly boarded up. Perhaps the superior of this trivial foundation was one of those who had squandered the monastery endowment, or injudiciously gone to the money-lenders in the time of the last war: so that when afterwards the authorities asked for a reckoning, and got it, they found that the establishment was mortgaged to the top of the dome, and

that there was nothing for it but to abandon the building and estate to the creditors.

But if the wind was strong on the first of our ridges, it was genuinely tempestuous when we had panted to the top of the second ridge, and had the sea before us, and the plain of Kutri with Phalasarna on the coast steeply below us. We struggled down the side of our mountain, perforce holding our breath now and then; and I had occasional qualms of terror-sickness, and regret that I had not jumped from the mule's back the moment we saw the water in front. As for dismounting during the descent, it was out of the question: I have half a mind to say that stopping was an impossibility.

In our hurried stumble to the level, we passed a few neatly-cut tombs in the rockside—the common witness of an ancient city. As the whole of this basin of territory is so mercilessly exposed to the sun, one could forgive the mountain sheep for making themselves quite at home in these cool nests, which no doubt they periodically turned into a nursery. There was also a black gap in the rock, with a romantic portal, which I should have liked to explore. The Turk had some tale to tell about this hole: I wish to heaven I could have understood, his mouthings and writhings in the

impossible effort to make me know what he knew ! But a less imaginative man than Mr. Rider Haggard might do something with such a cave in such a situation.

I was very glad when we set foot on the plain. So was my impetuous Turk, who began straightway to tease his horse and make him start off in a furious gallop which was nearly the death of him ; for the animal caught its hoof in some of the wiry herbs of the place and stopped short, with the inevitable result. Happily, the rider pitched on a gorse-bush, which did not break his skull.

By this time we were in the midst of the outlying stones of Phalasarna, with the huge grey walls close by, clumped with bushes, sparkling with brisk little green lizards, and leaning this way and that. The rest of the exploration had to be done without the aid of my mule.

I got away from my friends after several futile attempts. There was no help for it, if I was to enjoy these ruins in the way most congenial to my soul. But at the outset they would not be given the slip. Though the point of masonry on to which I chose to clamber were ever so precarious and difficult of access, officer and rifleman walked after me, balancing themselves with difficulty, and looking a little askant at the dark gulfs which yawned on

either hand, ready to receive them at the first false step. The rifleman in particular—a sturdy fellow, with as much impudence as blood in his veins—meant to keep an eye on me, with a view to getting a share in any treasure that I might have come in search of. I said 'Monos!' interrogatively and authoritatively, in a tone of entreaty and matter-of-fact request, gently and loud as the very wind itself; but they persisted in following me. And so at length I jumped from a wall into a gloomy recess of small shrubs and matted herbs, and wormed my way through the ruins out of sight and sound of them. Ten feet was a drop they had no mind to attempt.

How I wish I could reproduce on paper the impression made upon me by this place! I dare say you are content that I cannot, and so there is an end of the aspiration as far as you are concerned. But it is I that am not content.

Again, I should like to know which made the first movement in contempt of the other—the^ity or the population. Did the inhabitants desert Phalasarna while yet it was an assemblage of well-roofed habitations, with every reasonable convenience for the conduct of public worship and commerce; or did the earthquake, which has without doubt thus thrown one stone upon another,

ruin the city and overwhelm the citizens, thereby frightening from its boundaries those of them who escaped destruction? Neither Strabo nor Diodorus Siculus will tell you anything on this point, I fear. They may record the name of the high-priest of the Temple of Apollo or Artemis in the year 2957 B.C., and give you the number of stadia between Phalasarna and the purple rock of Mylse, which looks at it from the sea; but, otherwise, these geographers are as fond of embalming a body and neglecting the soul of the body as the average historians of their age and our age.

I measured some of the walls: they were ten and twelve feet thick. In parts they had split in twain, and fallen at an acute angle to each other. From their points of juncture, thick bushes of caroub now grow high, and I startled a partridge with her family from the midst of one of these clefts.

The houses extend along the seashore, and into the sea itself for several hundred yards. To the north the city is terminated by a red and grey rock three to four hundred feet high, falling precipitously into the sea. And adjoining this rock, which is a ready-made acropolis, is another cliff about the same height, and no less steep. From the plain I could see the heaps of stone debris on

both these ugly heights, and I could hear the surge of the sea against their hard solid bases.

They are the plainest conceivable of houses. I am not at all sure that they have not one and all been cut, where they stand, out of the rocks, which here and there, along the shore of the bay, continue into the sea. And yet the regularity of their square ground-plans, side by side, militates against the fancy. But whatever they were, there they stand, open to the sun, with the very road that ran by them still faintly marked. And where the early Cretans trod between their walls, I found smooth carpeting of turf, with odorous green lilies and blue crocuses growing above the grass; and in every chink or hole which the winds and storms have bored in the walls there is a tapestry of dwarf holly or herbal tufts, round about which the bees buzzed in the sunlight, sucking their sweets. Gorse also was flowering here in abundance, and myriads of the pale pink stock which we rear at home in garden-plots.

When at length I rejoined the others, who in the meantime had fraternized with three or four wild-looking shepherds attracted by the unusual signs of life at Kutri, the officer contrived to inform me that he longed to be my guide to the acropolis of the ruined city. He pointed to the

summit of the precipitous rocks, made as if he were enclosing many yards of space between his two arms, and with determination and emphasis ejaculated : 'Ecclesia ! kastello ! macro—micro—speethea petra : tutti kalo f It did not need his hideous comminglement Italian and Cretan Greek words to make me understand him and give him a hearty *Malista' of agreement. The 'Charisto' (thanks) which I added to the [i]Malista' made the men laugh.

I cannot think why my politeness in this trivial matter always does bring a smile upon the faces of those who hear it. At the monastery of the Agia Triadha, for instance, when I very naturally thanked them for their civilities in due course, the fathers echoed my words at each other, looking the while as merry as children at a first pantomime. 'Ti einai *V* (what is it ?) asked those of them who did not catch the joke ; and when they were told that the stranger had said 'Charisto,' or 'Ef charisto' (literally ' Eu charisto '—' I thank you ;' but the *u* is generally an *f* in modern pronunciation), they too put their hands to their mouths, and sniggered like the rest. However, I mean to persist in the practice, if only for the spiritual discipline of the thing.

I discovered that the officer, separated from the

others, was a very agreeable fellow. He was as courteous in trying to hand me from rock to rock in our rude climb as if I were the pretty sister of a bosom friend ; and when, after a tough wrestle with the wind, which blew a downright hurricane two or three hundred feet above the sea-level, we stood upon the ruins of the old 'kastello,' as he called it, he was studious in endeavouring to trace out the lines of the divers buildings, whose uprooted stones lay in such dire confusion here, there, and everywhere.

What a scene it was !

I think I may say, without laying myself open to technical error, that when the city of Phalasarna was in its birth, and in the zenith of its prosperity, the two great precipitous rocks, which now frown dreadfully at each other across the terrible cleft which separates them, were but one rock ; and that the earthquake which shattered the city in the plain, split this huge particoloured mass in twain, and rent the temples and towers from their foundations, in some instances not even stopping there, but spewing the very foundation-stones out of the solid rock.

Hence the temple on the one rock, with six or seven tiers of the stone steps which conducted to its propylaea still distinguishable amid the other litter

thrown obliquely over them, was within a very few paces of the temple on the other rock, also with the smoothed stones of the base of its portico discernible.

Nowadays, a descent and a climb of a kind that would shock a head not very weak separates the two buildings. Cowering to the wind, and bawling to the officer my intention of attempting this Alpine climb, I struggled towards the edge of the rock we were on. But my trusty friend gripped my shoulder with a firm hand of responsibility, and screaming *Kakos* topos ! (a bad, bad place !) did not scruple to set his legs well on the ground, and pull against me.

The ruins on this acropolis of Phalasarna are not, I think, of so old a date as those in the plain : these latter are certainly as much Cyclopic or Hellenic as anything at Polyrrhenia. The temple stones are smaller, better chiselled; and I even thought I could make out fragments of upright shafts which would indicate merely mediaeval handiwork. Like enough, however, the Venetians had a watch-tower here, raised amid the other wreck which they would not think of disturbing. For this place is a fine landmark, and looks north along the rock-bound coast of the Grabusa cape to the island fortress of Grabusa at its extremity, a citadel

that ought to be as impregnable as Gibraltar. It also surveys the sea far beyond the high heap of the little island of Mylae or Pontiko, a few miles from the shore, measuring about a mile by half a mile, and rising more than seven hundred feet above the water. In a southerly direction, it looks across the bay, with its spurs of black rock, coves of white sand, and pools of grass-green water, at two or three dark capes of the western coast. Unquestionably, the position is a commanding one.

From this elevation one also has the working of the particular earthquake or convulsion which overwhelmed the buildings well suggested. We could see that the city below was all atilt towards the sea. And in the sea we could mark other heaps of masonry, which had everything in common with those still high and dry. A subsidence of twenty or thirty feet on the western side of the island would of course markedly change its coast-line ; and hence the difficulty of reconciling the ancient and modern shore topography of Crete.

While I was writing on this acropolis, with my back bent to the wind, my guide had loosed his green flannel bag of victuals. The gusts had made us both ravenous ; and so we ate a few dry crescents of bread with great relish. It was evident that the Kissamos baker is a good Mohammedan. I

wonder no enterprising British tradesman has tried how his customers would like their loaves sent out in the shape of a cross, and delivered in a cart blazoned with the lion and the unicorn on one side, and the Union Jack on the other. When we were in the plain, we ate more bread . I sat in the throne of Phalasarna this time, and got a royal relish with the food. But, alike on the rock and in the throne, I think the Turk's courtesy gave sweeter flavour to the flour. I remembered a similar experience in the American States where, being hungry and in company with a man well stocked with food, I was brutally invited to 'have a chunk * by having the chunk almost pitched at my head : my Turk, on the other hand, conjured his heart to aid him in the act of offering me such miserable fare as dry bread ; he bowed and lifted his eyebrows, and looked as happy as if I had done him a favour when I gladly accepted one of his cakes.

Here again, as at Polyrrhenia, I found two or three big stones with letters just visible upon them. But the letters were disjoined and the stones were in a medley ; and so to the average tourist such marks signify nothing at all in this late age. There was something else which I thought much more* expressive—a prodigious quantity of pieces of

coarse brown pots and pitchers. It was just as if a couple of hundred demented housewives had fallen-to upon their domestic crockery, and, having smashed every article of it, had flung the fragments down the temple stairs.

We soon descended this hill of the acropolis of Phalasarna. The wind assisted us with so much goodwill that I could hardly keep my balance in getting from block to block. And then, having viewed the empty throne, which stands, as I have said, quite by itself, and with its back to the south-west, we rejoined the others of our party, and the eccentric Cretan shepherds. I never before saw such comical guys as these pastoral gentlemen. One was an aged man, in a dirty white woollen shroud from his neck to his toes; and he stood with a large crook in his hand, and, with trembling head and bleared eyes, examined me as if I were a curiosity just dropped from the stars. He had with him a youth who wore nothing at all on his brown body from the waist upwards, and whose legs were slipped into the usual blue bag perforated with a brace of holes. The lad stood to windward, and the gale, which had got down to the level by now, filled his thin breeches behind, and held them stretched at such a tension that he staggered under the strain, and **I thought every**

moment to see him torn away, and carried out over the stones like a balloon. But he stuck bravely to his crook, and was saved on this occasion; though, if I could have done so with ease, I would certainly have warned him of the perils which confronted him if the wind gained in force.

In our return to Kissamos, we intended, by a circuitous route, to pay a visit to the valley which produces the very best wine in western Crete, if not the best in the island : the valley and village of Mesoghia.

But it was imperative to find water for our animals and water for ourselves (since there was nothing better to be had) before recommencing our travels. The shepherds were consulted. Oh yes ! there was a spring of the clearest water on the hillside. Did we see a spot of green high up ? Well, that was the fountain, and the green represented the cool sheltering shrubs which were fostered by the water. Thither, accordingly, we climbed with a will. And a most welcome little oasis in the arid slope it proved to be, from which we could look down meditatively upon the dwindled stones of Phalasarna and out at the sea. Our dinner was duly produced, and here, while our beasts drank and drank till they were palpably distended, and then munched the pollard willows that grew

over the water, we feasted on dry bread and olives, with a zest that would have made even poorer fare more than palatable. I ate olives from the handkerchief of the Turk my guide, and olives from the handkerchief of the rifleman. Perhaps, elsewhere, one would have been a little capricious about the handkerchiefs; but I aver that the olives were excellent, and that the green almonds, which my unscrupulous Turk had purloined from the trees of the different villages we had passed on our way to the coast, were hardly less delicious than the olives.

We were calmly enjoying our cigarettes, stretched at full length in the sun, when what should come steaming by in the sea before us but a British gunboat! She was hardly a mile from the shore, in spite of the wind upon the land; and was a stirring spectacle. The others looked upon me with added respect when I confirmed their supposition that it was a ship of my country; and I preened my feathers, and decked myself with vain airs all the* time they watched its passage across our bay, silently, as if the majesty of the thing had a subduing effect upon them. But, finally, the gunboat vanished round a southerly headland. 'It's gone!' said the rifleman, in a brisk tone of relief. I abandoned my mantle of conceit, and

nodded assent, when a movement was made towards the animals. From the hillside I had my last view of Phalasarna—a grey, rock-bound plain, with its ruins now being lashed by the white surf of the sea; and then we scrambled along for Mesoghia, by stony lanes, dug in the hard uplands by the autumn storms.

Mesoghia is almost as beautiful a village as Spiglia. Its white houses are set among olive-woods and almond-trees : some high on the mountain-side, and some lower in the glad valley, which runs narrowly between two slopes. It is remarkably well furnished with good water. In the bed of the valley, a brook that soon swells into a river sparkles over the stones. Higher up, with great plane-trees overshadowing it, is a second stream, as it were cut in the flank of the hill; and higher still, within easy reach of the horses and men of the more elevated houses, is a third aqueduct, of such good workmanship that I set it down to the Venetians without scruple. And here, near the last of these waterways, we stopped at a wine-shop, situated amid a heap of purple boulders, and alighted for yet more refreshment, and to present the seventh of my letters.

The scene within the tavern was a pretty one. The house was new : the clean state of the long

bamboos and rushes of its ceiling showed this. Water-skins hung from the ceiling, and a mandoline or two, which their owners would begin to twang when the stars were out. And these same proprietors, with a dozen or more of other villagers and soldiery, were seated about the room at little tables, playing cards in a very spirited manner, with their legs as far away from them as possible, and a fine rakish air over them all. It needed as much assurance in a stranger to disturb these splendid fellows at their game as to pay his first visit to his first club-house. Hovering round their more dissipated elders were several cherubic little boys in blue cotton smocks, who were early being initiated into the charms of fast life.

When I say that this scene was a pretty one, you must understand that its prettiness was due to the rich sunlight upon the vivid colours of the dress of these country Cretans, quite as much as to the dramatic grouping of the people. In rude category, I might enumerate the details in this fashion:yellow bamboo stalks; black goatskins hanging therefrom ; whitewashed walls; earth floor; tables set irregularly in the ground ; counter with flasks of red and white wine thereupon; Cretans in grey silk vests, short much-be-buttoned jackets, scarlet and white sashes, blue breeches of the bag type, and long yellow

leather jackboots, with very low heels—all having white-handled knives in their waistbands, and jewels, green, blue, or ruby red, in the hafts of their knives; soldiers in scarlet, with the arrow-head embroidered on their sleeves ; boys in blue ; two or three grey-beards smoking chibouks, and talking with a good deal of gesture ; a dog, yellow and mangy, stretched by one of the tables, now and again lifting his nose to smell a Queen of Diamonds or a King of Spades just torn asunder and pitched among the thick heap of other cards similarly destroyed. To give a little rough variety to the picture, you must rip open the vest and white-frilled shirt of one or two of the younger men, and expose their strong chests, matted with black hair; and you may let one of them thrust his hands into the poll of his head when the cards are peculiarly unkind, and say something so very unparliamentary that all the others for one moment look up from their own play and laugh a deep free laugh, and even the cherubic boys who have watched hitherto in silence, smile or maybe blush a little in a cherubic fashion, as they look slyly at each other, and immediately look somewhere else when they find that the impulse has been one common to them all. In a polite way, I believe we were much cursed when we appeared, as a quite irresistible distraction to

this hot gambling. And it was with no very winning expression that galant after galant pitched down his cards, tilted round his chair, and, sinking fully into it, with his legs straight in front of him, and his arms folded across his swart breast, demanded to know who we were and what we wanted in Mesoghia. However, when the questioning had subsided, the men returned to their cards.

The gentleman to whom I had a letter here did not proffer much in the way of civilities. How indeed could he, poor man, when he was apprised by my guides that I was on hardly better terms of communicability with my neighbours than if I had come from another planet? He shrugged his shoulders, and spread out his palms, when he thought I was not looking; but the instant I moved an eyelash he was blandly impassive, like one bred at a court. I ordered coffee, as the first beverage that met my eye; and of course, having ordered it, I tendered money in payment for it. The landlord took the coin sheepishly, and no one was at first the wiser. But when the end came and it was discovered that I had paid for the stuff, what an outcry of disgust there uprose from six or seven throats!

[1] Bah f said my officer, fervently.

' Bah I* bah ! bah ! echoed the others; and they

looked as if they had suffered the extreme of indignity.

The landlord was then subjected to such an upbraiding at the hands of the friend to whom I had been introduced, and at the hands of my guides, one after the other, that I feel sure he will be very chary about bringing his village into discredit in the future by accepting a single 'para' for the meat and drink of a stranger, be he distinguished or not. They banged the tables with their fists, and shouted and played with the handles of their knives, until the landlord had blushed so red with shame that he began to turn an ashen-white by way of revulsion. And all the while the cherubic boys gazed from one to another of us, unconsciously learning the alphabet of real life. Under persuasion, the landlord had to offer me a drachma for re-acceptance. But I declined the coin, and, to escape the annoying hubbub, left the inn, and climbed to a low rock just outside, looking up the valley.

By the way, I may mention that I paid for the coffee in silver, whereas copper of the nominal equivalent was offered me in return. Between the two currencies, there is at present an agio of about ten per cent. One is prone to give a little respects to the bold highwayman who stalks in the daylight,

and, with his loud voice, Alsatian manner, large pistols, and curved knife, brings his victim well on his knees; but such petty larceny as this of the Cretan innkeeper gives satisfaction to no one.

I was thus resting apart in the open air, with the gurgling of water below, and the shouting of the players coming noisily from the inn, when one of these young gamblers stepped towards me, with a defiant look on his face. He was followed rather timidly by two of the little boys. The man had a very unpleasant appearance ; he was flushed, and his vest was pulled aside, and his black hair was dishevelled. But a better-proportioned specimen of a strong man was never seen, I should suppose.

' Good-day, my friend', said I; but a compression of the eyebrows was the only answer he vouchsafed me ; so I concluded my poor accent was again at fault. He and his satellites stepped to my boots, and then paused. I really expected to be assaulted at any moment, so evil was the glare in the fellow's eyes; and I thought his very iguscles seemed to twitch with eagerness to begin upon me. His lips sneered abominably, too. And this began to tell on my own innate amiability.

For two or three minutes, this rogue stood over me, viewing me closely ; and the little boys watched him, and relied upon him for their cue of conduct.

I plied him with remarks, which all fell flat. They made the boys smile, that was all.

But lo! in the nick of time, when I might reasonably have expected to be wrestling with the man for my life, he plumped down on the grass at the foot of my rock, and all the vice went out of his dissipated countenance.

'What next *V* thought I.

Why, this. He took some eggs from his pocket, cracked them on the rock, picked all the shell from them, and offered them to me one by one with a sweet smile. Then, when I had accepted them (it really seemed the right thing), he sent one of the boys for some salt, and, lolling at full length, he rested one side of his fine head in the palm of one hand, and contemplated me in a state of ecstatic calmness and contentment. I confess I smelt the eggs before tasting them ; but I did it warily for fear of touching a wrong chord in the donor's constitution. They were quite good, however, and of course hard-boiled. And so we chummed amicably, on the tacit understanding that I satisfied my stomach while he satisfied his curiosity. He and the boys thoroughly enjoyed themselves, I believe ; and we parted with an interchange of two or three grandiose bows, and all manner of dumb good wishes.

Phalasarna and Mesoghia together made a long day's pleasuring; and I was glad to get into the castle precincts of Kissamos early in the evening. The Governor led me straight to the divan, with all his old reckless hospitality, and put upon me the excruciating agony of telling him as best I could about all we had seen and heard.

LETTER XVI.

Crete a Deserter—Farewell to Kissamos—The Monastery of Gonia—The Ardent * Grammatikos '—Ollendorff and the Monks—The Monks and the Quinine—An Evensong in the Church—A Protracted 'Good-Night'—Petrified Men—An Horatian Breakfast.

I AM back in my house at Khalepa by this ; with a corner full of sweet memories in my brain. My lessees were very glad to welcome me ; I had outstayed my reckoning, and they had begun to be fearful, and daily communicated with the Consul, or Madame de S., endeavouring to learn if news of an outrage upon the English traveller in the west of the island had yet been received. Georgio glistened at the sight of me, and was for changing some more of my French gold into Turkish coin there and then. In fact, as you may know, for a man whose ideal of human nature is not extravagantly high, there is something very cheering in the return home after a jaunt in rude parts of a country.

However, I am not without a sort of grief to

adulterate my contentment. It seems that my dog Crete, about whom I had great hopes at first, has fled no one knows whither during my absence. He was allowed to roam where he pleased through my apartments, to sleep on my bed, read my books, and enjoy the mountain view from my south window; with no heavier responsibility than that of eating his meals with regularity and playing with the children when it was required of him ; and yet the ungrateful little rogue has vanished. It is the old story, of course : the chains may have been of silk, and positive hardships made impossible; but liberty and a robust call upon all the faculties in canine nature, with short commons at mealtime, are preferred to the softest servitude. I would fain attribute Crete's departure to his inconsolable sorrow at the loss of me, and I question myself about the looks of the stray dogs I can remember meeting between Canea and Kissamos ; but I fear I may be deceived, nevertheless, and that never so arch a tone of greeting would be able to conjure the glee~ ful Crete again to my feet, where cringing always came to him with the facility of a second nature. The dog has gone back to his dark burrow in the Khalepa lanes, and the next time I go that way, 4io doubt he will growl low at my footsteps, as if he had never so much as licked my hand.

' Gratitude—sweetest of virtues,
And of nuisances the greatest,' etc.

But I am haunted by one regret about this little dog. He has gone off with his string collar tight round his growing neck. If only he has the sense to ask a friend to gnaw it in twain for him, all will be well. On the other hand, I fear that, like the young lions who escaped into their native forest from the menagerie of the African hunter, with massive iron rings round their throats, Crete may have doomed himself to an end by slow and terrible suffocation. My latter days in the island will be a little embittered by the thought of such a fate for the poor dog.

But to return to Kissamos for a moment. I hardly know whether I was more pleased than grieved to leave the castle. It was a load from my shoulders to realize that I should no longer be under the need of prattling impossibly for hours of the day at a time. But I had got to have an affection for my host, and (I may say it in all propriety) for his pretty and obliging wife also, and for the youngsters, who had surmounted their first awe in the presence of a big-booted and bearded foreigner, and, as often as not, screamed to the strapping military kavass who dandled them about the bare rooms, to set them down where their.

[1] baba′ and the stranger-man were sitting and smoking in formal seriousness. And the very Greek maid, dark-eyed and podgy, who cooked our dinners for us, had crept a little way into my heart. I could almost swear she shed a tear when I slipt aside on the morning of our departure, and pressed a medjidie into her yielding hand. But if so, it may have been because her expectations were disappointed, alas !

There was a large gathering of the military and others to see us off. My Turk had made himself generally agreeable. And so from the top of the staircase of the castle residence, and from the quadrangle below, there was a common waving of handkerchiefs, and wishes for a safe journey, quick return, and so forth. We rode forth in strong freshness, and on through the slipshod streets, regardless of those of the townspeople who were for stopping us to try and use their last opportunity of bargaining an antique coin or pot for a little current money. The day was perfect, like every day for the previous fortnight; and whether we were scaling the mountain-sides, splashing through the clear waters of the streams in our way, or going slow in the cool green shade of a wide olive-wood, our travel was alike invigorating.

We had but one very bad bit of road this day. It was where from the top of a mountain we had to descend abruptly by natural steps of bare red rock. Here, however, it was very bad indeed, and I expected accidents every minute. My mule floundered freely, and from anxiety or the toil worked himself into a profuse sweat. As for my Turk and his charger, the contests between them (in the worst of places, and a mere six or seven feet from the nose of my mule) were so numerous that the interest of seeing the horse on his hind-legs almost plump back upon me, and the Turk belabouring it with no particular choice of parts, began quite to pall upon me. My Turk got several falls, I am glad to say ; but he always fell with the bridle in one hand, and was up and on again in a twinkling.

Towards one o'clock we sighted the sea in the Bay of Canea, and then bent our steps by woods and vineyards and waterways to the white building of the monastery of Gonia, which stands in the south-west corner of the bay, set against the eastern side of the craggy cape of Spada. I did not think of staying here longer than was needful for the ordering and enjoying the dinner the good monks were bidden by the Governor of Kissamos to provide for us; but the charms of the place, the

eccentric society, and the cordial and repeated invitation of the ecclesiastics, made me determine to devote a day and a night to Gonia, that I might give you another account of Cretan monastery life, if it seemed to afford an interesting diversity of characteristics. I was much amused at the monastery of the Agia Triadha; but, on the whole, that of Gonia is the shell of better comedy, I think. At the Agia Triadha there was a faint, very faint, air of suspicion over the monks that they were not like other people, and that their peculiarities might possibly provoke mirth in the heart of a stranger. There was a slight tincture of constraint now and then in their behaviour among themselves in my presence, and they tried to fit themselves to what they conceived to be the habits of Western life. Not so at Gonia.

i You here this night: you see us for a day. It will be good for the signor to know what the monasteries of Crete are like/

So said one of the brethren, with aningenuous look of simple entreaty on his bearded face. And from that time forward, I vow it seemed to me that I was a mere spectator of a very entertaining series of 'tableaux vivants,' through which the untarnished innocence of a number of monks and particoloured laymen glowed as of supreme interest.

When my Turk showed his teeth and plaited his brows, with an insinuating 'Malista' to my vague question as to whether I should do well to risk my skin in the monastery, I decided; and then the father of the church who had been most pressing took our animals by the nose, and led them past the white marble fountains which beautify the entrance of the building, and into the well-filled stables. A look on his face seemed to say, 'I'll take good care to cut off your retreat, you odd-looking signor; and I wager we will get some fun out of you before this Chiriachee (Sunday, for such it was) comes to an end/

The monastery of Gonia boards and lodges seventeen monks, and has a revenue of some £468. Its site is well chosen by the anchorite who in the first century of Christianity was concerned with its foundation. The walls of it rise sheer from the rocks which skirt the coast, so that a stone drops a hundred feet from the admirable little terrace which adjoins the guest-rooms of the monastery, before it touches ground. The great Bay of Canea with the farther mountainous cape of Akrotiri are before it. The town of Canea, though eight or nine miles away, is distinctly Been across the blue water, as a gracefiil agglomerate of snowy houses—which, of course, it is not in reality. Between Canea and

Gonia, landwards, a bright edging of sand by the shore, and the dark masses of olive-woods, spotted with small villages and isolated white houses which border the sand and continue to the base of the broken hills, form a very engaging foreground to the always impressive Madara Vouna. From Gonia, these mountains are unfolded like a huge white wing, and the sight of them fairly transports one into dreamland. As for the back of the monastery, that is steep rock, vermilion where it is naked, but otherwise thickly clothed with perfumed blossoms and many an aromatic herb that an untravelled herbalist might sigh for. So steep is it, indeed, that very little of it is seen from the building, and the two or three houses that are erected between it and the monastery seem to have their foothold hewn out of the matrix. A few hundred yards to the north, a precipitous bluff falls into the sea, and shuts off the view in that direction,

I was allowed to make this mental sketch of my surroundings when a bevy of the monks ha(^ escorted us into the new wing of the monastery, and out on to the terrace, with intent to charm me into a short stay with them. What a sublime honeymoon might be enjoyed here, methought!

But the good-natured fellows gave me little time for solitary reflection. They were too delighted to

have the chance of entertaining a stranger out of their common funds. The guest-room rose by a doorless staircase from the refectory and common apartment for the ordinary and penniless stamp of applicants for a night's lodging. It had a table covered with a piece of printed cotton that hailed from Manchester, and set my teeth on edge when I touched it, and hard chairs were disposed about the room. But when my Turk and I were brought upstairs, we were soon the centre of such an animated throng of ecclesiastical fathers and respectable country gentlemen who were spending the Sunday at the monastery (they would pay nothing for their dinner, by-the-bye), that there was hardly moving-space in the room. A kindly papds of plebeian look and build took a close seat by me on the little divan, and stroked my hand now and then while listening to the infamous lies about me that the conceited Turk once more found himself in a position to fabricate with safety, for the edification of the multitude. The superior of the monastery was a kindly man, with a certain amount of cultured mirth in his eyes ; but I would have liked to know wherein lay the joke several times when all the room was laughing except myself. However, I hold that man a public benefactor who provides honest amusement for others,

whether willingly or not; and so I consoled myself with the idea of my benefactions.

But in the heat of the fun, Heaven sent me an ally. It seems that when my Turk and I were on the road, a lynx-eyed child had espied us from a distant village, and had straightway run to the Grammatikos of the village, and given him the news. I gather that this Grammatikos was constantly on the look-out for foreigners, even as the maidens in the old folk-tales are for ever sighing after handsome young princes. And so it happened that as soon as he heard about us the young Grammatikos, with a soul throbbing for some legitimate self-improvement, saddled his ass, and made tracks across the sand for the monastery. Thus, in the nick of time, when I was getting very restless about my inability to accuse the Turk of his gross mendaciousness, the Grammatikos showed his spectacled head by the banisters, and came forward like one about to greet a beloved relation. He could speak something of French and something of Italian: accomplishments that he claimed exclusive possession of for a radius of I forget how many miles; and, in the ardour of his natural if impolitic desire to make an exhibition of his learning, he thrust his greetings and interjections and ill-built ideas into my face before ever he had done

shaking my hand, or had thought of appropriating the seat on the other side of me. Then, for a spell, there was perfect silence among the twenty or thirty other occupants of the room, as they watched the lips of the Grammatikos (who trembled with a sense of high responsibility, and all but touched my nose with his own, the better to make sure of the force of his accent), and listened to our remarkable interchange of observations.

I Of what land are you a countryman, monsieur *V*

I I am an Englishman'.

[1] Ah, the fine nation! It is, without doubt, one of the powerful nations of the continent of Europe. Do they not call her the mistress of the sea, monsieur *V*

'Yes, I believe so. We have plenty of ships, you know.[5]

' So I have heard, monsieur. Never have I been in your famous country—island, that is to say; for you are an island, is it not so? On the south the Manche or the English Channel, on the east the Channel of Bristol; no, no—the west, that is; the North Sea on the east, and the Atlantic on the west. Ah, it is wonderful! And the capital is London, with "des millions" of inhabitants *V*

[1] It is quite true, monsieur/ said I.

' And you are rich and powerful, monsieur/ con-

tinued the poor, thin, pale-faced and spectacled Grammatikos, speaking with a ludicrous degree of enthusiasm, twitching his fingers, and fidgeting so as to bump a good deal of dust out of the sofa. * You have a beautiful Queen to reign over you ; and she is good as well as beautiful, is it not so *V*

' She is even more good than she is beautiful,' said I.

' Assuredly, monsieur, assuredly. And now, monsieur, I have come from my little village on my ass to see you, for it is a pleasure, monsieur, that I could not deny myself. This is monasterio, you understand, where one eats and sleeps, and all for nothing. They give you of the best, and you go your way, after one day, two days, or four,'as you will. Tell me, monsieur, will there be war ? Our cause is just, but I fear, I fear. My heart, it bleeds for the suffering poor; and my little ones, they would be deprived of their schooling. Ah ! but I hope monsieur has words of peace on his tongue——'

It would have been rude if I had told him that he had so many words of one kind or another on his own long tongue that it was of small consequence what kind were my own words ; but I really felt inclined to be uncivil towards the Grammatikos. He babbled and babbled and babbled; and very

much more because he was in the presence of the Demarch of the district and other notables, with whom such manifest proof of his erudition would be worth ten distinguished testimonials, than because he wished to be of use to me. At least, so I premised ; I hope not uncharitably.

'1 have not an idea to offer you on the subject of politics/ was my reply to his query about the war. 'And if I had, any one of your own ideas would be as valuable as it.'

'But, monsieur is modest——'

*Not at all, monsieur, I assure you. But, if I may trouble monsieur, will he be so good as to convey in his very best vernacular the stranger's thanks to the reverend brethren of this monastery for the hospitality they have so kindly afforded him?'

'Mais, monsieur, it is "monasterio ;" and by the rules of the monastery you eat, sleep, enjoy yourself here one, two, or four days, and all for nothing, you understand—for nothing, not one sou, monsieur f

Then I confess I shrugged my shoulders, folded my arms, and fell back upon the divan in a state of resignation. The attention of the others had by this become a little strained, and they began to talk; and certain of them with uncurbed dispositions manifestly began to suspect the poor

Grammatikos of being something of a mountebank in his accomplishments. One pap&s nodded towards another, and whispered in his ear; and then they both looked cynical, and pursed their lips, and smiled. And the kindly priest on the other side of me, whom I called Father Jack (he was the pap^s Joannis, speaking with reverence), stretched across, and said something very sharp to the schoolmaster, which made the young man blush and retort no less sharply; Father Jack replied, and the Grammatikos rejoined with growing acerbity ; and even I could perceive that there was storm in the air. But, happily, the superior now intervened with a beaming face, and stopped the breach.

It then occurred to me that the schoolmaster would be interested in my Geldart's modern Greek Grammar, which I had in my pocket. I offered it to him. Oh yes, he was charmed ; the Greek was excellent Greek, he said. But he was not allowed to have the exclusive perusal of it for long. Father Jack took it out of his hand with scant courtesy, and then collected four or five congenial reverend spirits about him for the enjoyment of its profound Ollendorffian wisdom.

With sparkling eyes, Father Jack would slowly spell out one sentence. For a moment he and his friends would look at each other in a puzzled manner,

until the meaning of the phrase flashed to their torpid intelligences ; and then, agape with joy, they all waited for the elucidation of the next line. No young lady of the epoch of Clarissa ever, I should suppose, panted with more eagerness for the catastrophe between Lovelace and the beauty than these mature men showed over such words as the following :

'1 see a dog.

* Is it a white dog ?

' No ; it is a black.

'And has the daughter of the old man three children ?

'Yes ; one of which is Peter, another James, and the third Irene.

* How are you to-day ?

'I am not so well as yesterday I was/ etc., etc.

They rushed upon the lines like boys upon a blackberry-bush, and spent minutes in hot argument over the meaning of such words as '1 have a pen ; but my little sister has the paper.'

Of course, at such a time as this the Grammatikos might have had his revenge. I could see the deep-engrained scorn in his sallow face, but he forbore to exult over their ignorance ; and very soon we fell into renewed talk of a various kind. He

asked about the price of my clothes, if my wife liked me to be separated so far from her, and other odd questions; and so I think I helped the poor fellow to keep up appearances very creditably. But his accent was really detestable, as may be imagined from the fact that his acquirements were bookish only, and that all his exercise in conversational French was obtained from sparse travellers like myself, whom he did his best to intercept on their travels.

After a time, it was proposed that I should see the neighbourhood. The Grammatikos could not stay at the monastery for long, and he good-naturedly suggested that I might make use of him while he was with us.

Of the church I will say little. In its general plan and decorations, it is like that of the Agia Triadha. Its pictures, however, are older, and have travelled to the Continent now and then to get security from the Moslems up in arms. One picture is a very vivid representation of a hell, though I have no doubt the artist was helped a little by Dante. There is a smoking river, in which men and women are stuck like plums; and the agonies that accompany their frying are indicated by the appealing gestures of their hands, and the looks on their faces. Other works of art portray the

history of St. John at Patmos, in the midst of an earthquake ; and, with much coarse grotesqueness, the Virgin and Child with so-called rivers of life flowing from them. Father Jack and another well-meaning papas armed me through the church as if I were an aged or infirm person.

We then left the monastery precincts, and fought with the scrub and flowers, which make a dense undergrowth upon the rocks. The monks led the way, with remarkable agility and robustness of movement. Their brown satin pantaloons were always ahead of me, and they had no mercy on the Grammatikos, who from time to time made a halt and placed his hand on his heart.

' I am weak, monsieur,' said the poor fellow ; but he would none the less, therefore, abandon the enterprise. ' It is necessary for a Cretan to do what he can : the day may come when every man will be again required to take up his gun' he added.

This was said at the top of a cliff some hundreds of feet above the large kitchen-chimney, which is the highest point of the monastery. The monks asked for a rendering in Greek of the words of the Grammatikos. They had scented the word ' war.' And when they learnt the drift of our talk, they, volubly, and with much pantomime, showed what they would do if the Turks again visited Gonia as

they did in 1866. I had already seen the two large cannon-balls in the monastery, which were shot there by a Moslem gunboat a quarter of a mile from shore. The one shot is embedded in the white walls of the terrace ; and the other had sped through the windows of the refectory, and stuck in the opposite wall of that room ; so that both these mementos are ever in the eyes of the brethren.

'If they come/ said the monks, jerking their skirts aside, or stringing them out of the way like Blue-coat boys, * we will——'

And then they lifted fragments of the rock lying here and there, and raised them above their heads, as if to hurl them down the steep.

' Oh yes f observed the Grammatikos ; ' though they are consecrated, they hate the Turk, and will not hesitate at doing a little slaughter when it is necessary. In the last war they all ran away from the holy building, and hid themselves in the caves, which are here very numerous, and there was not one of them that received any hurt.'

I asked if we might make our way towards one of these valued places of refuge.

' Yes,' said the Grammatikos ; ' but the path is difficult, and there are many fleas in the holes, because, you understand, the sheep go there for the night. But, after all, a flea is only a flea'.

Accordingly, the monks again led the way. It was so precipitous a descent as to be dangerous; but I could not draw back when I saw how dexterously the brethren used hand and foot: they seemed to swing from herb to herb, and trod lightly as sheep. Yet, at the least slip on my part, they were ready to shower ill words upon the hapless one of themselves who chanced to be nearest to me, and who ought to have been concerning himself with my safety.

As the Grammatikos said, the cave was full of fleas. Father Jack, who went into it experimentally, hopped out very soon, and began to search his nether hose; and his discoveries abated my eagerness to see the place. But it was, of course, quite disused now as a human habitation. From its mouth, we looked down at the sea, and away at the White Mountains, then just veiling themselves with wisps of transparent cloud. And here, when, with much deliberation, he had made me notice his village in the landscape, and the whereabouts of his own house in the village, the young Grammatikos bid me farewell. He pressed me to go to him on the morrow and see his simple dwelling, as he called it; and I much regret I did not pay him a visit. The monks plainly exulted when he left us, and clambered down by a short way. He had

become too much of a 'personage' for the contentment of their reverend stomachs.

Later in the evening, I sat with Father Jack and the superior on my terrace, watching the mist cover up the mountains. We struggled into conversation now and again; but it was very hard work. I was glad, therefore, when one of the boys (a son of the Metropolitan of Crete, serving his novitiate at Gonia) called us to supper. Experience had taught me that, in Crete, wine lubricates the tongue amazingly.

The monks had done their best for the stranger within their gates. The superior and Father Jack and one layman were my companions at table; and while for their joint use there was nothing but a plate of snails, with some vegetable snippings, for me they had provided rice soup, hard-boiled eggs, mizethra, and an entire boiled fowl of a very large size.

'Eat f said the superior, putting his fingers to his mouth.

A curly-headed young monk, with a trick of blushing, took the fowl in his hands, and broke it asunder, laying a leg and a wing before me, and the sparkling wine was poured out by the son of the Metropolitan. But suddenly an outcry of **joy** came from the young monk. He had **got into** the

recesses of the fowl, and there discovered a tissue of fine eggs in various stages of immaturity. 'What a discovery !' exclaimed the others. Half a dozen of these embryo chanticleers were forthwith dropped upon my plate, and when I made signs of disapproval, were as briskly removed, and eaten whole from the point of a skewer, for my encouragement.

i G-ood f observed the monk who had thus made an example of himself; and he stroked his paunch.

But what kind fellows they were, to be sure ! Their every action was a genial invitation to the stranger either to drink with them, or to continue fortifying himself with their monastic viands.

Once only did I perceive a little petulance in the manner of Father Jack. It was when an ill-clad pilgrim of a man with deferential demeanour put his head into the room and gave us greeting. The superior blessed him in the customary way, and a seat was offered him at table. He took it without hesitation, and the curly-haired papds tendered him a plate with five snails in their shells thereupon. Now Father Jack had been very voluble heretofore, and had wasted in speech the time he ought to have devoted to his supper. He had missed his share in the snails therefore, and now, with the shadow of a frown between his eyebrows, he counted with his

forefinger the remaining number in the dish, and then frowned afresh. But it was all over in a moment, and> as if resolved to mortify himself anew for his spasm of selfishness, he offered the pilgrim a glass of wine and the 'Egeia F of salutation. Five snails and a glass of wine would not be much of a meal with us ; but it sufficed with the pilgrim.

To show you what a family of innocents these good monks are, I must tell you the following. I had felt a little out of sorts during the day, and wished to take some quinine with my wine, under permission from my hosts. Of course they made no difficulty. But their curiosity was acute when they saw me measure the dose of white powder into the wine-glass, and drink it off. 'What was it *V* they asked in a breath ; and the superior was no wiser than his brethren. I tried to explain ; but no : I could not succeed to their satisfaction. And as monk after monk approached the box, and, licking the tip of his finger, poked this into the powder for gustatory purposes, I thought it well to resign the stuff to them absolutely. They diet not much like the quinine taken by itself; but as soon as they understood that it was theirs to do what they pleased with, it was equitably divided among those present (including the laymen), and the very large portion that fell to each individual was there

and then drunk off precipitately, with much uncertain smacking of lips. I do not suppose it hurt them; but it was certainly a considerable dose.

Again, I chanced to look at my watch, to see how near we were to bedtime. Father Jack saw the watch, and uttered a cry. There was nothing for it but to surrender watch and chain for public examination. Was it real gold? they asked. Several of them had never seen a gold watch before. The superior confessed to having a silver one, and the boy was sent to fetch it. When it arrived, it proved to be a very commonplace work of art, inscribed with a record of its treasures that did not seem truthful.

'What cost *V* said the superior, pointing to my watch.

I told him; and he and the other monks looked dumfoundered. He had given but twenty-five drachma for his silver watch, although it was marked to contain no fewer than twenty-two rubies.

In the midst of our conviviality, however, the bell of the church began to toll. It was for the last office of the day. The monks rose heavily from their chairs, or from the common beds which stood by the walls of the room. Would I come?

signalled the superior, and as it seemed to me that I was as ready and fit for a church ceremony as they themselves, I at once acquiesced. We went from the supper-room, arm-in-arm, swaying and jesting to the very door of the church, which was illumined at the farther end only by the dim light of a number of candles, which with their candlesticks were some six or seven feet high.

The service that followed was simple, but eccentric. Twelve or thirteen monks were present in the dark stalls north and south of the space under the dome. Before them were tall stands holding their big books of ritual, and at each side of the church stood a couple of the monastery boys, in their dark-blue blouses, and bare-legged from the knee downwards. The monks chanted nasally, and the boys joined them in a whining soprano, now and then moving from their places into the middle of the church before the iconostasis, and carrying a candle to help them in the utterance of a succession of Kyrie Eleisons prostrate upon the cold flags. One of the boys, with a tender girlish face, came in for a public rebuke from the superior. Like the other lads, he was far more interested in the stranger than in the ritual, and he chanced to forget when it was his turn to go to the front. It was a very sharp bit of scolding, and the boy

went crimson, and muttered his Kyries as if he were about to break into tears in the midst of them. But this did not hinder his companion—a bright little fellow with a monstrous nose and great splay feet—from continuing to scream in my direction whenever he was called upon to sing.

I said 'Good-night' to the monks as soon as we left the church. If they were in a humour for more wine, I was not; but I will do them the justice to say that the wine-flasks were removed when we returned to the refectory. But, though I went at once to my room, I was not to be left in peace. The young son of the Metropolitan followed me there, and began to chatter. He got hold of my diary, and scribbled and caricatured in it, prattling the while in a gentle way. He told me that he was *anagnoutes,* or reader, in the monastery, which is, I suppose, the phase of novitiate in the Greek monastic hierarchy. He asked me to write my name on a piece of paper, that he might have some remembrance of me. And, having again and again turned down the frowsy counterpane of my bed to show me what a comfortable night was in prospect for me, and tilted the little jug to make sure that I had enough water for my ablutions, at last he understood my intimations that I had had enough of him for the

present, in spite of his winning ways and affectionate demeanour. I asked him to call me early ; and, in truth, he did so, for at four o'clock the next morning, when I had hardly wrested an hour's sleep from the Gonia fleas, the door opened without formality, and the boy seated himself on my bedside and smiled upon me with a soft ' Tessara ora, signor f I bid him come again at seven, and he went away, though with reluctance. But, however homely this lack of constraint in monastery life may seem to be, it is sometimes rather insufferable. For example, when a great ragged man, whom I had never seen before, strode into my room after the anagnostes, and, with a matter-of-fact greeting, sat down on the first thing he saw, I would have liked to empty the jug of water upon him ; but there was too little of the fluid. By other means, however, I got rid of him quite effectually, and I do not think he will much esteem my memory.

It was a still and sunny morning when I walked out on to my terrace after dressing. The sea below was calm, and the White Mountains had long ago thrown off their thin night-gear : they shone resplendent over the lower hills and olive-woods which yet lay in soft shadow. On the horizon line of the ^Egean, I could see the funnel of the weekly

Lloyd's steamer, bringing the mails from Greece to Canea. Two or three men were scrambling along the rocks under the monastery, with rods and nets in their hands; and they scrupled not to disturb the fish with stanzas of song with many a wry melody, which sounded strange on my terrace. The sun was bright in the heavens across the Bay of Canea, and caught the monastery windows and the red rocks on the hills behind the monastery. In short, there was so much beauty round about, that I wished I might stay at Gonia a week.

Father Jack and the superior, however, soon found me in my retreat. It had been one of their washing-days, and they came towards me, twisting their wet pigtails into coils with a comical dexterity.

The previous evening, over our wine, it was agreed that I should go with the superior to a certain rock north of Gonia, reputed to show by unmistakable signs the havoc of a cataclysm in prehistoric times. They had now come to take me there.

It was an expedition as charming as it was perilous. We had to clamber through the perfumed herbage of the cliffs in places two or three hundred feet above the sea, where a single false step would have risked a life. At one time we had a bare wall of vermilion rock on the left hand,

looking as if it had been quarried, and a perfect precipice seawards on the right. Our footway consisted of the thick vegetation that had got root at the base of the wall of rock, and I assure you we trod daintily. At another time, we fought with a swarm of bees clustered over the yellow honey-bloom, which here grows more than half a yard high. And, all the while, the monks laughed and chattered, and kept their eyes open for this edible herb and that, which they gathered, and stuffed into their pockets.

Finally, we stopped by a cave, with steep portals of red and purple rock at the entrance. Proceeding in, with lighted candles, we came to a cleft, and here, holding the taper against the wall, the superior stood and said :

'Anthropoi!'

On examination, the rock proved to be really compounded of a vast gathering of bones, all crushed and petrified into a substance as hard to the touch as granite itself. They lay in confused strata, bones of men and other animals, mixed with the original matrix of the rock ; and Father Jack and the superior went to and fro with their tapers, identifying this bone and that by touching the corresponding bone in their own muscular and animated bodies. We tried with hammer and

chisel to detach parts of this uncommon vein of stone ; but, as I have said, its hardness was prodigious, and we could do nothing with it. I wish I could tell you something credible about this fearful landslip ; but there is nothing to tell The monks say, ' Ages ago! ages ago f and that is all their tradition affirms about the matter. Probably, at one time, there was a village on the higher level of this Spada peninsula; and this village was suddenly overwhelmed by the crashing down of a mountain-top from the chain which prolongs itself like a backbone to the very tip of the cape. The Cretan rocks are not old in the geologic notation of time ; so I am afraid these embedded fragments cannot claim to be parts of pre-Adamic men.

Our early ramble over the cliffs had given all three of us a vigorous appetite. The monks vouched for their hunger by patting their stomachs; and they pointed to the sheaves of herbs and roots they had picked from the rocks, so that at first I imagined we were to stay our cravings with these alone. We did not return to the monastery, but made our way to a little cottage, bowered in high shrubs, standing on a sheltered plateau above the Gonia chimneys. And here, in a tiny garden filled with blossoming orange and lemon trees, mammoth pink geraniums, tall stocks, and scarlet verbenas,

we found a table prepared for us, upon which the sunlight gleamed prisrnatically through the brake of leafage and flowers.

Adjoining the house was a strongly-barricaded building, like a stable, with cobwebbed windows looking into the garden. We deposited our botanical collection, and approached this building, the superior with a large key in his hand, and Father Jack with a wine-glass. It was the Gonia buttery that we were about to attack—nothing less. And the next minute we were in the dim dusty room, with its rows of portly barrels, and an atmosphere that made me shiver, tasting the cool pure wines of the last year's vintage, and making our choice for the breakfast that was to follow. The superior confessed that they prided themselves upon their wine: there was a mere handful of gypsum in all their hogsheads put together.

By-the-bye, the following is the benedictory prayer which the Abbots of the Cretan monasteries say over their wine when the vintage is safely * stored in the casks :

'O Lord God! Who lovest mankind, turn Thine eyes upon this wine, and on those who may drink of it; bless our casks as Thou didst in old times bless Jacob's Well, the Pool of Siloam, and the

wine drunk by the Holy Apostles. O Lord I Who wast present at the feast of Cana, and by the changing of water into wine manifested Thy glory to the young married couple, send now Thy Holy Spirit upon this wine, and bless it in Thy name. Amen/

Without being superstitious, one may conceive that the wine would taste none the worse for this solemn sanctification.

Well, when we had selected our liquor, we returned to the table, and the superior clapped his hands. A sound was heard overhead, and soon afterwards a burly Turkish woman appeared, and gave the fathers a very unceremonious greeting. Then a child began to cry, and the woman, who was no doubt its mother, periodically left the preparation of our greens to upbraid the youngster from the foot of the stairs. I would not slander the good monks by imputation or assertion ; but it seemed odd that this lone woman (a Turk, moreover) should have upon her the keeping of the monastic buttery, and the superintendence of such mild Horatian repasts as ours in the midst of romantic perfumes and flowers. However, there she was; and when she had dressed the herbs and squeezed lemon-juice upon them and the roots, she stood with her fists in her sides and watched us at

our meal. I drank her health, moreover ; and it was significant that the superior cordially seconded me : Father Jack being less eager. We ate barley-bread, beans soaked in cold water, olives, and the mountain herbs; all which, combined with the wine, glass after glass, made a most healthful and pleasant meal, totally free from dyspeptic responsibilities. The kindly fellows beamed with a goodwill that I should have supposed to have been universal in its extent, but for one little circumstance. The woman left the room for a moment, and when she returned, a hungry-looking dog, with a scared expression, came in at her heels. But at sight of the poor animal, Father Jack became demoniacal : he rose abruptly and shouted, and eventually kicked the dog through the doorway.

The superior, in acknowledgment of my look of surprise, just moved his shoulders, and said smilingly:

' It is a woman-dog P

I was glad to see a calm smile of strength steal over the lips of the Turkish lady when she heard these words. It is, after all, possible that she may have some claim upon the papds ; and, through her superior knowledge of human nature, be able and willing to avenge the man's wanton insult to her sex. This little scene reminded me of the monk

and the hen at the Akrotiri monastery of the Agios Joannis.

Shortly afterwards, we bade the monks of Gonia farewell ; and early in the afternoon I was at home again, with the skin scorched from my face.

LETTER XVII.

Candia, the Old Capital of Crete—Retimo and the Coast—Characters on Board—The Walls of Candia—The Governor—The Labyrinth of Dsedalus in its Modern Aspect—Independence and Superstition of the Hill Cretans.

You have had letters enough from Canea, the Turkish capital of Crete ; and now, as a penultimate, I must send you one from Candia, the old metropolis. It is a city of aliases, having borne the names of Heracleon and Megalo Kastron before its more popular name of Candia. Nowadays, however, it goes by whichever name of the three comes first to the tongue : so that a stranger might fancy Crete had three cities where she has but one.

I expected much from Candia. In Canea and the west of the island generally it was mentioned with a sort of envious admiration. Canea was acknowledged to be a dirty place, over-crowded, and unhealthy—but Candia! In Canea, bread, wine, oranges, tobacco, etc., might be, as they were

(thanks to the Fleet), phenomenally dear ; but in Candia, far otherwise! Did I remark upon the magnitude of the walls which gird the present capital, I was met with a stout 'Bah!' of contempt—what are the walls of Canea by the side of those of Candia? There was a like depreciation of the houses of Canea, compared with those of Candia. It was the same from an antiquarian point of view. Canea has a certain amount of creditable Venetian work in its streets ; but I was given to understand that Candia was a city of Venetian palaces ; and more than this—it could show to the stranger an assuming cathedral, the foundation-stone of which was laid by no less a person than St. Titus, the fellow-worker with St, Paul Again, though it might be that Canea in its first days sent men to Troy to prove their valour, what was this in comparison with the early records of Heracleon and its vicinity? They were Cretan mariners from the neighbourhood of Heracleon whom the God Apollo chose on the highways of the sea, and, acting the dolphin, led into the Gulf of Corinth and ensnared from their wives and children to do service to his godship. I do not know the date of this deed of Apollo's; but it was a long time ago. And, last of all, one ought to remember that Mount Ida looks upon Candia, that Mount Juktas stands

between it and the south, and that the brook Tethrys flows south to north but a few miles from the city gates. If Jove's birth, the most significant of his many matrimonial alliances, and his burial—with which Ida, Tethrys, and Juktas are respectively associated, cannot hallow the town so as to make it a very loadstone of veneration, I wonder what can. Moreover, if in these latter centuries of Western history Canea has seen much blood shed, and some stirring scenes of warfare, what is that by the side of the 'Great Siege', which held the interest of Europe for a score of years, and accounted for tens of thousands of deaths by sword, famine, and pestilence, *on* both sides of the walls of Candia? In short, Candia was the superlative of Canea's every positive boast.

And, under such circumstances, of course, Candia proves to be a disappointment. Nevertheless, it is not despicable. I find it a circular area of flat-roofed houses, baked to a depressing yellow-brown colour: the houses pent in from the rest of Crete by Titanic walls, yellow-brown also; with streets that it is a pain to cross, so irregular in their alternation are the cobbles which are presumed to pave them, and the gaps filled with a dingy ochre fluid which is the local quality of mud; with immediate surroundings that are positively ugly,

saving the sea, which washes it on the north ; for the country near it is level and nude, and as a refined suburb it offers to the eye a wilderness of graves, the green mounds and white headstones of which come up to the very walls of the city. I find the Cathedral of St. Titus being metamorphosed into a mosque ; and the castle and fortifications, which still keep Candia a spectacle to charm the eyes of students of half-moons, bastions, counterscarps, etc., yawning wide and visibly crumbling to eternal ruin.

Candia is about sixty miles east of Canea by the coast. We left the capital at midnight in the Lloyd's steamship *Galatea,* which was acting as temporary substitute for the *Tibisco,* upon which she could not fail to be an improvement. At six o'clock, I turned out of my berth to find we were at anchor off Retimo, the third city of Crete. Of course, the harbour will not admit a boat of some 1,500 tons, and so we lay off about half a mile, rolling at discretion, for two hours. Retimo was pretty enough in the morning light, and at a distance. It is a blue-faced little city, and its white and azure houses have red roofs, over which here and there the plume of a faded green palm appears. Its two or three white-domed mosques have their slender minarets blue-capped, and the

crescents gilded. The Fort of Retimo is trivial, and its black-muzzled guns seemed hardly bigger than the small brass cannon that the *Galatea* kept for ornament on the upper deck.

But Retimo has a situation to be proud of It lies between Ida and the White Mountains, and the snow on both sides sparkled against the sky. Behind the town the ground rises bleakly, with an occasional hollow where a monastery stands sheltered in a wood of olives, until its hills reach the sky-line, and then they seem to join the stupendous white peaks on the west to Ida's long spotless slope on the east. Hence, too, one sees Juktas, where Jove's bones lie. This singular mountain rises three thousand feet from the plain south of Candia, is quite isolated from the other mountain chains, and has two peaks nearly equal in height, which can only be distinguished individually when viewed from the east and west. From Retimo they are seen to perfection. The sands along the coast here are so extensive that they might bathe all London's millions simultaneously.

Our boat had a heavy load of passengers going from Canea to Candia. I was the only European, For the most part, the passengers slept on deck, rolled together in a wondrous medley of heads **and** legs ; and it was amusing to watch the different

ceremonies by which they prepared themselves for the vicissitudes of the new day which broke upon them at Retimo. One ancient Turkish dame was especially engrossing. She was travelling alone, poor lady ; so of course her beauty-days were over. I saw her first as a prostrate bundle, from which one of her arms protruded like a tentacle, and pressed half over the lid of a big box painted in blue and vermilion lines. The box held her goods and chattels, and in this strained posture of security she had slumbered through the night. A strange heaving of her shape betokened her awakening while we stood rolling uneasily off Retimo. Then the hand left the box, and, fumbling about, at length tore off a thick unsavoury piece of stuff, with which the old lady had covered her face. She wiped her countenance with this face-cloth, which she then folded up with care. Next, she uncovered her head itself, and with the finger-nails of both hands scratched her matted crown for several minutes—deliberately, too, as if it were routine work. When she had satisfied herself in this respect, she assumed a pair of large iron spectacles, that made her look like an unpleasant and ill-plumaged owl of a prodigious size, and, opening her box, she rummaged for a while, until she found a package and some articles of clothing. The

package consisted of some hard bits of bread, and the clothing of a faded turban and a number of rags, which she put upon her head one after the other, finally binding them securely and precisely with a piece of string. A comely Greek market-man happening to pass her on his way from his boat alongside to the steward of the *Galatea,* the old dame hailed him and chaffered for a lettuce, of which he had a store to dispose of. Then she ate her breakfast complacently, scrutinizing the lettuce-leaves through her spectacles, and supporting her jaws on this or that side when the bread proved to be a trial to her teeth. Finally, this old lady collects the crumbs of her meal from the deck, eats them, takes off her spectacles, draws the face-cloth over her face as if she were again going to sleep, and, having locked up her extraneous trifles in the blue and vermilion box, goes on her knees, turns to a certain quarter of the compass, and says her prayers until she gradually subsides in a state of agreeable coma, from which she does not re-awaken until one of the officers of the ship kicks her into animation, and demands the medjidie due for her passage. I am inclined to think the astute old creature was feigning this time to be a mere piece of somebody's luggage, so she might escape paying her fare. For she gave the man some trouble ; and

certain other passengers had had no scruples about coming on board with not a para in their pockets. The officers kicked and cuffed and swore at these immoral rogues—Cretan Moslems and Christians alike ; but that was the sum of their punishment, and, having taken it as their due, they soon relapsed into quiet conversation with their friends.

There was another passenger whom I thought a rather interesting incongruity. This was a young Cretan in clothes that could not but have been his best, and with a swaggering grandiose manner that was not at all becoming. He wore a vest and bag-trousers of lavender broadcloth, new and glossy ; a long silver chain went to and fro across his chest until it reached a fine embroidered pocket which held his watch ; in his crimson waistband was a knife in a scabbard, covered with uncommonly good metal-work; his shins were cased in white cotton stockings, and his feet in elastic-supported boots, with amber-coloured uppers; and his fine calico shirt showed a ridge of careful ruffles in front such as our forefathers would have appreciated. So much for the exterior of the man ! His luggage was as odd as himself. It consisted of two spacious bird-cages ; **a** model of a boat, sumptuously fitted, about two feet long ; and a doll-house with a frontage of some eighteen inches, studded with white **and**

yellow nails, painted of many colours, and with tufts of scarlet, green, and blue artificial flowers at the two upper corners of the house. He propped these goods of his against the cabin entrance, and paced the deck with one anxious eye upon them, and one on the scenery, which was evidently new to him. I was at first curious about the contents of the doll-house ; but very soon he approached it, opened a door, and introduced to the daylight its sole occupant—a glass flask of cheap Marseilles brandy ! From Retimo to Candia he was constantly at his brandy-bottle, or explaining to casual acquaintances the wonders that travelled with him.

I asked the second officer of the ship about this young man, but he could tell me nothing. The officers had no good opinion of the Cretans, and held as little intercourse with the native passengers as possible. By-the-bye, the *Galatea's* previous trip had been to Jaffa, and eight passengers out of a cargo of two or three hundred had died on the way. It was a pilgrim freight ; starvation and mental excitement together as often as not decimate the passengers on these occasions. ' In two days we have tumbled as many as twenty of them into the sea f remarked the ship's officer ; and he added that the vessel had always to undergo a very

rigorous cleansing when it had discharged its burthen of religious enthusiasts. 'They drink all the water they can on board, but they make no other use of it !'

From Retimo to Candia, we crept along by the coast. The day was calm and clear, and the cliff scenery memorable. For the greater part of the thirty miles the rocks, tinted crimson, olive, and grey, fall steeply into the sea from a height of two to three thousand feet, with water several fathoms deep close alongside. But here and there we passed tiny green slopes, with pinnacles and spurs surrounding them amphitheatrically landwards, and a small gathering of houses and a white church in the midst. Such recesses as these would have their normal population greatly increased in times of civil war. The mountain approaches to the village would be strictly guarded: the sea approach is under their eyes ; and, at a signal, men, women, and children would scamper up the hillsides and on to the greater mountains which find their apex here in vast-rooted Ida. Of course, however, flight would be thus adopted only if little could be gained by fierce opposition. As for Psiloriti, or Mount Ida herself, she was constantly gleaming down at our little boat from this or that parting in the mountains, a magnificent spotless

pinnacle of snow : and in the waveless reaches of the *JEgem* near the shore we could see her white reflection trembling in the blue.

But soon after rounding the sharp Cape Dhia, with the island of Standia a few miles east, we turned south-east, and saw the enormous walls of Candia, and the bold crest of Juktas beyond. The scores of Cretans on board welcomed the sight as elatedly as if the voyage had been one of weeks instead of a few hours. 'Heracleon f 'Megalo Kastron !' 'Candia !' they exclaimed, according to their fancy, pointing, and taking each other joyously by the arm or shoulder.

Exactly twelve hours after leaving Canea, we hove-to outside the harbour, with a strong swell breaking against the stout base of the castle at the end of the walls before us ; and I went on shore at once in the boat sent for me by my host while I stay here, Mr. Almond, the Cretan superintendent of the Eastern Telegraph Company's cables. There is no other Englishman resident in Candia, out of the twelve or thirteen thousand Turks, Cretan Christians, and Jews which make up the population ; and, with the exception of the telegraphic staff, and a Smyrna merchant with his wife, no other English-speaking person.

The Customs examination here was stricter than

at Canea, although we had been brought only from one Turkish port in a principality to another in the same principality. They are in great anxiety lest packets of dynamite should come into the island, and especially into the chief towns. If this stuff can operate so strongly upon buildings in the very prime of their vigour, what may it not do in the Venetian cities of Crete, where but a little leverage seems wanting to bring down walls and palaces in a general ruin! This seems to be the view they take, and perhaps it is for this reason that the authorities are building here an enormous range of substantial barracks to take the place of the old erections on and about the walls. These new quarters are expected to find lodging for some five thousand privates under their bright red roofs.

But even as it is, half the population of Candia appears to be military. Ragged red-coats, carbines in hand, lounge about all the principal streets, or, if they can find a clean corner, squat on their hams, and, with cigarettes in their mouths, talk to each other by the hour, undisturbed by the multitudinous traffic alongside of them. And drill of a mild kind is always going on in the hummocky square (set about with irregular houses, where it is not bounded by the battlements of the city), which goes by the name of the Exercising-ground. Just now, how-

ever, the military are as much excited as the ordinary populace by the arrival of a couple of new Krupp guns, which are to make them impregnable. They have dragged these guns to the northern ramparts, where they point over a sward of yellow and purple flowers towards the sea in the direction of the island of Standia. I should like to see the artillerymen work them, however. At present, I believe, they look upon them with too much of a mysterious reverence to venture to take the bungs out of their mouths ; and probably they will await an insurrection before beginning to practise.

I began my experience of Candia by making the tour of the walls—a walk of about a couple of miles. Without question the vast range of cemetery-ground south and east is the most curious feature of the place ; not excepting Mount Juktas, which looks very lofty in its grand rise from the level. I have been studying a seventeenth-century chart of the city, showing its fortifications and gates when the Turks encamped against it, and these acres of graveyard are the very site whereon the Moslems, under their successive leaders, made their wonderfully patient tarrying until Fate worked with them. We strolled about from point to point until sunset-time, looking at the purple gloss over this great cemetery ; the flat housetops of the city

below us, with the heads of two or three palm and plane trees by the fountains ; the dulling water out towards Standia, whose hills appeared much higher than they are ; and at the singularly bleak country beyond the cemeteries, from which every trace of tree seemed to be shorn away. But when the sun went off to the west, the mountains of the Ida range compelled us to notice them. The nearest of these is a conical hill nearly three thousand feet high, called Stromboli, and some eight miles from Candia. On the top of it, as the sunset glow intensified, we could readily distinguish its tiny white monastery, as this and the whole upper cone of the mountain were put into vivid relief by the golden light behind. Ida, too, was seen, though its long line of snow was soon lost to the light, and darkened to the colour of a mere grey cloud. But for fifteen or twenty minutes Stromboli and its more distant peers were a sublime spectacle. And when the sun had quite disappeared, its traces lingered in the puffs of fire-coloured clouds which seemed to rise from the upland gorges and float about by the mountain-tops until their beauty vanished from them.

Of course, I am not rash enough to think you will obtain any idea of this exquisite panorama of colour from the mere reading of such a description

as mine. Indeed, I suppose all rhapsodies about the beauty of nature are humiliating, and therefore a mistake. But I assure you that for a few minutes I held Candia and its surroundings to be the most glorious country conceivable. Mr. Almond, however, was of a different opinion. He had seen the same sight day after day for year after year, and talked of Candia as a wretched place for an Englishman to be banished to. And this must be true, although exile may be much mitigated by cable conversation day by day with acquaintances in London, Alexandria, and elsewhere.

A few hours after my arrival, we visited the Governor of Candia. He is by no means a potentate, like Savas Pasha of Canea. In the days of the Venetians, Candia was considered rich and strong enough to bear the burden of supporting nine hundred gentlemen of Venice out of its confiscated and other funds, whereas Canea was made responsible for only three hundred. Under Moslem rule, however, the Governor of Candia receives little more than £300 a year, which is hardly a tithe of the Governor-General's income.

We first met the Governor of Candia in an unofficial character. Some one threw a potsherd at Mr. Almond while we were passing a ridge of the

battlements, in our circuit of the city walls. A second potsherd followed the first. We looked up for the delinquent, and there stood a squarely stout man of an olive complexion, in a full laugh of enjoyment* This was his Excellency, indulging his humour for little tricks of fun ; and, after a formal greeting, an hour was fixed for our reception at the Palace.

The Governor of Candia is a man with a history, like many other of the proconsular notables in the Sultan's employ. He was at one time a Khurdistan Prince ; but his principality was annexed, and his estates absorbed. Now, however, he receives an allowance from the Sultan's exchequer on account of his lost lands, which doubles his official salary.

He proved to be a merry gentleman, of a kind that Dame Fortune would find it hard to vex. The twist in politics was little to him. He did not even care to discuss the matter. With the most courteous and yet emphatic of shoulder-movements, he made it apparent that in his esteem the settlement of such difficulties might safely be left to the Higher Powers. It was much more to the point that I should enlighten him about myself, my age, family, occupation, and judgment upon Crete.

When he learnt that some sort of a book might be the outcome of my visit to Crete, ' Then be sure to

put in it', said he, 'that you saw the Governor of Candia throwing stones on the wall/ I told his Excellency that I would not fail to do so, and he was amused exceedingly. To give me yet more material, he went away to fetch a curiosity that had come into his possession. It was a hideous little green god of bronze, about nine inches long, and reputed to have been found on Mount Ida. But I am afraid to describe it minutely, though its uncommon rudeness made us laugh.

His Excellency then taunted my companion with being a married man, and congratulated me because I am single. I asked why he thought so ill of matrimony.

'Oh! such troubles happen/ said he, fidgeting himself upon the divan.

Though a man of fifty or more, he talked with the air of a very young adult, seriously considering whether the advantages of marriage could possibly outweigh its trials. But he soon joked himself anew into a comfortable degree of levity, and would not descend to advise me on the subject further than by saying :

* One is best single—one is best single.'

And so we smoked and drank our coffee, until it was time to depart.

The Palace here, as at Canea, is a great barn of

a building, agreeable for nothing except its airiness. Just when we were leaving, the premonitory signs of a sirocco came over the land, and manifested themselves through the Palace by an eerie swaying and clattering of open windows. We watched the effects of the wind as it worked its way over the city towards the sea. It dyed the water a dull lead-colour in a very short time, with here and there a beady tuft of dirty white where it blew strongest. But ere we had got down the staircase, its force had grown so that there was a pervading sound of the banging of doors and windows, of breaking glass and flapping curtains. And we walked into the streets to breathe an air that was almost sickening in its heat.

Candia may not really be a better place of residence than Canea, but it has one object of interest that the capital has not—a museum of local treasure-trove. This museum contains a surprising amount of wealth in coins, gold and silver, metal-worker's art of a quite antediluvian kind, and pottery more or less old. There are many equipments of bronze armour, found in digging about Mount Ida; but, unfortunately, they are in a sad state of mutilation, and have exacted all the curator's skill to put them into a merely conjectural state of relationship. These casques and breastplates are chased minutely with archaic figures of fighting-

men, sacrificial and other processions. There are also some gigantic sepulchral urns, not inelegantly adorned. Of the gold and silver work, one beautiful little gold figure of a deity, hardly more than an inch in length, is especially good. Then there are numerous inscriptions of one kind or another that would help to piece out the early history of this part of the island, if they were carefully cleaned and arranged ; stones from Cnossus and Ida, and (best source of all) Heracleon herself. It is to be hoped that any archaeological discoveries made in the labyrinth, stone-quarry, or what you will, of Gortyna, will be transported to this valuable little collection. They arc just now investigating this cave of Gortyna, which is with much plausibility identified with the old maze of Daedalus that was for long supposed to be in the immediate neighbourhood of Cnossus, the metropolis of Jove and royal residence of King Minos. Gortyna is more than a score of miles from Cnossus ;• but the decorations of the portal to its rock-hole seem to mark it as something more than a mere natural cave. And the interminable and confusing involution of its windings may well enough give it a character like that which perforce kept King Minors victims miserably imprisoned for life, unless a benevolent Ariadne came to their assistance.

But the walls of Candia impress me most. Even in their state of neglect and comparative ruin, they are a rare illustration of the past art of urban defence by bricks and mortar. The gates of the city are at the outer extremity of tunnels driven through the solid mass of the battlements. They still bear the proud inscriptions of the Venetians on their pediments. The names Cornaro, Morosini, and others, are preserved in big capitals about the city ; and for this one is grateful to the Turk, though it be sheer laziness that may have kept them undestroyed. And, outside, in the middle of one great curve of cracking wall, seventy or eighty feet from the cultivated garden, which was of old the moat, there still glowers at every passer-by a gigantic lion of St. Mark, embossed upon the stone.

I spent a morning wandering at will about the mysterious outer lines of fortification. They are of such immensity that houses are dug in them. I groped into one of these artificial holes, but it was only one of many, and I did not trace it to its ending. In places, I came upon little enclosed areas of ground, the yellowish earth of which rose and fell with earthy wavelets. The tips of self-embedded stones protruded from the soil, and the stones bore such marks of rude chisel-work that I

was tempted to explore them more closely. But I soon understood what they represented. These were the graveyards of the dead during the 'Great Siege/ who died within the walls, and were thus buried, probably under truce, perhaps under cover of night, or by daylight, with stealth. Now, however, the decay of the superinclining walls has half buried the graveyards also ; and tall purple and yellow flowers grow thick on the ruins everywhere.

The lepers of Candia keep close to the outer gates of the city. There is a fountain by the entrance, where the Cretans water their mules and horses, and the pause gives time for a strong appeal to their ready sympathies. But I was more shocked by the deformities here than at Canea. A poor woman held a stump of an arm almost in my face ; her fingers had dropped away from her limb one by one. Yet, apart from their bodily affliction, they have much to amuse and engage them in the constant passage of picturesque personalities in and out of the city. On the battlements high in front of them they may see troops of red-coats sitting about or bugling, washing, or eating their dinner ; and in the evening, when the air is cooling, the Turkish ladies pass by on the edge of the walls, parasols in hands, with quaint gait that may serve

the lepers with many a mocking quip and allusion. Hence, too, they might see some of their poorer sisters climbing the lower walls with a remarkable gift of equilibrium. The walls are perpendicular, and yet I watched woman after woman, each with a jar upon her head, ascend by footholes cut in the bulwarks until she came to the level, when a confederate relieved her of the jar, and allowed her to descend in the same chilling and unmaidenly manner.

I passed on by tottering heaps of masonry, with crests that seemed larger than their sapped bases, until at length I had left the fortifications of Candia behind me. A slope of bright red rock burnished by the sun stood in front. Though it was noon, and sweltering hot, I made for this slope, to surmount it, and get at the eastern country beyond. The Lasethe Mountains (Crete's eastern range, with peaks reaching 7,000 feet) showed their whitened humps in the distance ; but there is as distinct a gap between Lasethe and Juktas on the one hand, as between Juktas and Ida on the other : as if the hills were in confederation to leave royal Jove's tomb in sacred isolation. But I was astonished to find the rock a burrow of human beings, with circular holes cut in the surface as a vent for their smoke. In the dark, a man or

woman of ordinary bodily proportions might easily slip by way of the chimney into the presence of these survivors of the old race of dwellers in caves.

While I was conjecturing about the social rank of the people of this suburb, a fine Cretan came to the door of his hole with a bedcover in his hands, to be aired. He was a soldierly man in sleek raiment, and with fierce moustaches, but he had to bow himself double to get back into his den. Such an apparition was as unexpected as a Venus from the sea-spume, for the troglodyte was not much in harmony with his mean habitation.

A broken tower stands up conspicuously on the naked rocky ground *on* this eastern side of Candia. Thither I walked. The shot-holes are still in its sides, and with a little exertion I dare say the very cannon-balls which perforated it more than two centuries ago might be found under the ddbris which lies deep within the tower. From it one looks down across some miserable patches of barley into a great gulley of earth with peninsulas of rock running into the ravine, and near at hand the shallow bed of a stream trending towards the coast. I suppose an earthquake is responsible for this split of country. But the river, such as it is, gets its interest from fabulous history ; for it is the Tethrys, and the bare purple and brown plateau

which rises between some long low hills that seem no less bare, south of the tower, is the site of **old** Cnossus, some five or six miles from the gates of Candia. I hope to give you a sketch of Cnossus by-and-by. It lies on the way to Arkanais and Juktas.

Look at Candia from what point one may, one is unconquerably forced to wonder at the might of the Venetians who made it what it is. I believe there is no European city with walls that are so ponderous. But this massiveness culminates in the old castle, fort, mole, or whatever it may be called, which abuts from the mainland upon the sea, built upon a base of enormous artificial strength. Nowadays it is capped by a lighthouse that for whitewash and smartness of gear would compare with ours of the Needles or the South Stack. The situation of this house is singular. It stands high on the masonry roofing of the empty, moulded chambers and vaults of the deserted castle. Grass and flowers grow where they list about this forlorn elevated terrace, which yawns in places so that one may look down a hundred feet to the sea-level within the walls. We had permission to explore the basement-rooms of the building, which is kept religiously barred, as if it held all manner of ghastly secrets behind its great door. And here, again, we saw fresh evidence

of the extraordinary listlessness of the generations of Moslems who have lived in Candia since 1667. In recesses of the masonry we found piles of fodder decayed and decaying to dust, which were asserted to have lain there for scores of years : in other words, ever since the castle fell into the Sultan's possession. We also came across a multitude of stone cannon-shot that were unmistakably relics of the Venetians, and heaps of rusted iron balls, chain-shot and others, hardly less old than the stones. And by the unbarred semicircular windows, deep-sunk in the walls, the spray of the waves, breaking on the prodigious pedestal of the castle, rained in upon the cannon-balls, the old straw and hay, and much other litter and rubbish of an indescribable kind going far back into history, and bred a slimy green mould over everything. I was glad to leave this damp abode of desolation. It is an apt symbol of the gentlemanly Jesuits who were the authors of it, and who were so devilishly cruel in the exercise of the strength they held veiled under a gracious exterior.

And how do we pass the time when it is not daylight, and when, therefore, no one who does not desire a broken neck or leg thinks of stumbling about the dark streets of Candia ? Indeed, *it* might have been a weary business, were I not with a man who can play cribbage and has gained a

thorough knowledge of the Cretans, and is willing to say what he thinks about them. Speaking for himself, Mr. Almond likes the hill-Cretans well enough; but he is inclined to say that this is because they like him, and treat him more hospitably than they would treat a prince, if any such cared to invade their lairs. At times he has to go into very wild and sequestered parts of the country to make an inspection of the cables under his control ; but when the word is passed that he is coming (and the signal goes as it was wont to go thousands of years ago—by tongues and quick legs), the clansmen choose out a fat lamb from their flocks, kill, skewer, and roast it, so that he may eat crisp chops a few minutes after he sets foot in their midst. They give him their best house, wine, etc., and will take no money; and they do it all with gay cordiality.

But, on the other hand, they have still a measure of lawlessness in their blood ; and therefore they are superstitious, as well as hot-tempered and revengeful. They adore the old hag of their community, who has got a sound reputation as a seer, wise woman, healer, etc. She it is that they fly to when any actual ills assail them. The priest is very well as a mere ritual-monger ; otherwise he has to find his level among them as best he may,

on the strength of his particular endowments as a layman. And, to complete the circuit of ancient error which has these people in its thrall, the very priest himself has as much regard for the wise woman of the village as any other of the villagers have. I was even told of a worthy ecclesiastic who hastened miles across the mountains to procure a charm from one of these old and ugly dames, that he might hang it round the neck of his daughter, who was sick. A muscular Cretan, who would not delay to tackle three or four Turks if it were required of him, would be ready to die of dread of a vampire if he saw an inexplicable shadow in the night, and would be for digging up this or that corpse in the neighbouring churchyard, to see if the flush of blood in its normally pale face indicated it as his unholy assailant in the quiet hours. Death-feuds, moreover, are perhaps as common in Crete as in Corsica; though, as the more quarrelsome parts of the island are not within easy ken of the officials who register births and deaths, and far from the editorial office of the one little newspaper which Canea issues for the pastime of its contributors, such tragedies do not come, duly recorded, before the public. They go from tongue to tongue, however, and a European who visits the hills, has their goodwill, and is able to talk with them in their own

language, is soon informed by these stout-hearted rogues of the various little events of the kind which give a zest to high life far from civilized influences*

This very week a body of the Mount Ida men set law and liberty at defiance in a very remarkable way. The election of members for the Cretan National Assembly is at hand, and even here the course of politics does not run smoothly. It seems that a certain measure was in project by certain candidates for election, which measure was not in accord with the wishes of the gentlemen of the hills. These hillmen said as much when they paid their visits to Candia, previous to the appointment of the day of election. They may have threatened also—but that would probably be put down to a spirit of mere bombast, of which their haughty carriage is generally very suggestive. At any rate, no regard was paid to their protests, menaces, or adjurations. The day of nomination arrived. Then, to the astonishment of Candia, Governor-General, officers of the five or six thousand Moslem soldiers who occupy the town, and all save a few of the citizens, it transpired that these obnoxious aspirants for Parliamentary honours had been seized and carried off to the mountains, where they were likely to be held until the election was ended. Straightway soldiers were ordered to this ravine

and that, to yonder village in a romantic hollow near a mountain-top, and to this suspected valley where it was known that some of these unscrupulous politicians had their dwelling. But in vain. All that can be gathered is this—that the candidates will be kept imprisoned in the uplands until the National Assembly has got its complement of members. And as the election takes place to-morrow, the rascals will be sure to have it all their own way. I have no doubt the Governor shrugs his shoulders and smiles.

But, besides a cribbage-board (made to order in the workshop of the telegraphic depot), I am delighted to find here in Candia a good supply of magazines and literature of a fitly tenuous kind. The Smyrna merchant (who by the way is one of the famous family of the Whittalls, mentioned by Eastern travellers many a year ago for their princely wealth, good qualities, and rapid multiplication) is away in Smyrna at present, but his business is in the hands of two young cousins, who are acting as deputies. From them I have borrowed 'King Solomon's Mines,' which it may interest Mr. Haggard to know has been much enjoyed in Smyrna, and is now likely to be no less enjoyed in Crete. And so the few last days of my trip will pass pleasantly enough.

LETTER XVIII.

The Metropolis of Jove and Minos—The Great Labyrinth—Cnossus, its Barley-Field and its Empty Graves—Arkanais—The Mayor of the Village—Embarrassment—Up the Mountain and into the Tomb of Jove—Back to Candia.

I THINK my excursion to Cnossus and Juktas has been the happiest of the several happy journeys of discovery which Crete has afforded me. Not that it has eventuated in anything important archaeologically. I am a little ashamed to confess that I should be much encumbered with the finest of life-size statues, or a sepulchre of chiselled marble fit to put in the same room as the Elgin collection. This more serious and useful kind of exploration I leave to more capable men, such as Mr. Biliotti, our Consul. And much I hope that he will soon fulfil a promise he has already given to the notables of Candia—to visit the place and district with stern *ex officio* and antiquarian designs. Under his guidance, Gortyna may yet show indisputable evidence that its labyrinth was

in old days a fell prison-house, and perhaps the subterranean connection between it and the ruins of Cnossus (which ardent students and specialists have dreamed of) may then be found to be a veritable fact of the most interesting and horrifying kind, Conceive a passage under the plains and mountains, covering a distance of twenty miles as the crow flies overground, but doubling upon itself in such a way that its actual length may be nearer thirty than twenty miles ; and conceive the miserable lot of those hapless men and women (whether blue-blooded Athenians or Cretan born) who may have lingered out their days to the end in such a hell, under the decrees of the just King Minos! Yet this is the picture offered to the imagination as a matter of history (more or less fabulous) by this or that scholar who would rather have Minos a despot of the most insufferable stamp than believe that he and his labyrinth are equally mythical! They do not, therefore, dispense with Daedalus, however. This clever architect, landscape-gardener, or puzzle-monger, is brought forward as the discoverer of the earth-hole, or as the man who put locks on its fatal gates, or made side issues for the victims to wander into despairingly, in quest of the only goal they were likely to find—Death the deliverer.

So much for the great labyrinth.

I have referred to the 'ruins of Cnossus', and the phrase will probably make you expectant. But, indeed, one flatters Cnossus by talking of it as anything more than a name to conjure with. I did not look for Doric temples, like the Theseion or the Parthenon, or very captivating remains of anything in particular. But it is hard to assure one's self that a city whose beautiful coins are the commonest of Cretan treasures, and whose fame in Crete is as that of Athens in Greece, has vanished completely. Green barley, gemmed with thousands of great red poppies, covers the spacious basin of ground that claims to be the site of the city. It is a noble situation for a settlement. The hills rise all around it, yet not so high but that the winds may freshen the valley without blowing upon it rudely. To the north, beyond its boundary, the land dips gently to the sea. And scarlet-flanked Juktas looks over the hither rocks on the south-west. In times past there was doubtless more timber on the slopes than now : for the Turks have always waged war against the olive in their mad irresponsible sallies upon the native Cretans ; but even now in the distance one sees dark groups and lines, which are the surviving trees of the ancient woods. And in the nineteenth century anno Domini, as in the nth

century before Christ, the silvery Tethrys gurgles through the land, in a bed below the common level of the country, so that the leafy platanes which grow here and there by its side do but show their thick green heads to the casual wayfarer.

And yet one feels that the city has not really lost its right of existence. It is not easy to determine how it has got overwhelmed with an upper crust of earth, unless by the agency of a very malignant earthquake ; but one is forced upon the presumption. The barley was a splendid crop, the richest I have seen in Crete ; and the stalks tickled our mules' noses as we spurred them about the plain. The fertilization must either proceed from the old walls and stones of the city, or there must be a very deep accretion of soil over the ruins of Cnossus. And after a time we were able to try the reasonableness of these alternate assumptions. We came to a pit in the plain, partly excavated, showing walls and chambers several feet below the level from which the surrounding barley took its spring. The soil thrown out of the pit was impregnated with marble fragments ; and there was everything to show that walls and debris continued north, south, east, and west, under the barley. Here, therefore, is another laudable piece of task-work for whichever civilized

Power of Europe first comes into possession of Crete—the city of Cnossus must be made accessible to the eyes of men instead of moles, and it must be coaxed into yielding other produce than barley-bread. But, locally, there can not be much doubt that a full crop of barley is preferred to an annoying disturbance of the ground which may result in an exposure of the skeleton of a section of a town, and, consequently, an absolute diminution of the cereal productiveness of the area.

My guide was very ignorant about Cnossus, naturally enough. It was to him a mere field of barley, with something queer underneath. I tried him with similar unsuccess on the subject of Jove and Juno, and their matrimonial alliance by the brook alongside the barley. He had never heard of such a marriage. What a place to choose ! quoth he. What priest married them ? Where did they live ? etc. Nor did he at all encourage me in my credulity when I told him that the interest of the entire district settled upon the same deity whose marriage consecrated the Tethrys. Assuredly he had heard that Psiloriti (Ida) was concerned with somebody ; but the personality of that ' somebody' was very vague to him, and he was glum with a sense of the absurdity of our expedition when I further added that we were

bound to Juktas mainly because this same divine gentleman had therein his sublime sepulchre.

From Cnossus to Arkanais, a very extensive village on the eastern slope of Juktas, we had a rough ride. The country is broken to such an extent that hardly ten yards of our route was on the same plane. At one time a great staircase of rock stood before us to be ascended. It was the track of a river which to-day luckily left a good margin of dry stone by the side of its clear but chalky-looking waters. Then we came to a long aqueduct built by the Venetians, and bearing a Latin inscription commemorating the public munificence of the High Commissioner by whose orders it was raised. This had to be crossed. Green glades slanted off to the left occasionally, with bunches of tall pink asphodels standing alongside the poppies, which bloomed profusely wherever a hundred heads of grain offered them a little society. We skirted the grain by vile tracks full of holes, and in a short time began a wild clamber to the top of a high red hill, from which we viewed Juktas close at hand, with a mere span's-breadth of pale green ground intervening. Juktas stood tremendous in the foreground ; but the white crests of the Ida group, ten or fifteen miles away, seemed to spring from it like distant wings, right and left.

A cheerful breeze put fresh life in us on these hot uplands.

We **had** left the barley-field of Cnossus behind us about a mile, when we came to **a** number of elaborate vaults in the rock, which were soon identified as the graves of an old necropolis. They were close to the water, where it fell from step to step into a valley. The chiselling was careful even at the portal of each hole ; but by creeping inside one could see that the inner niches were still more daintily sculptured. The average superficies of these ransacked tombs was about six feet square. I dare say some of Minos's subjects and contemporaries marked this rock, with the water tumbling past the mouths of the graves, as a pleasant and select place of burial ; and it is a hundred pities that they have not been allowed tranquilly to sleep themselves into dust. But an ordinary Cretan would pry into the very marrow of his mother's bones if he suspected that her dead body contained a little gold or silver.

Arkanais would be a nondescript village if it had not decreed that its Moslems and Christians should live apart. As it is, however, Kato Arkanais, a degraded group of hovels, is given up to the Moslems, and Apano Arkanais, with its hundreds of square grey and white roofs, is wholly

Christian. Three or four thousand human beings live in the two Arkanais, under the lee of Juktas's great red side, and with rich olive-groves, vine-yards, fig-trees, and pear and almond trees growing luxuriantly round about the houses. It is a heavenly spot ; but the extreme filthiness of the daily habits of the Christians of Arkanais much adulterates the pleasure one would otherwise feel in entering their village. The place is malarious, with all its beauty ; but the wonder is that Typhus also has not set up his throne in the midst of its impurities.

Of course our arrival made a stir in the streets. The routine of Arkanais life admitted one outsider every week—the bearer of the Imperial post. It was soon evident that we were not the post, and before we had got off[1] our animals to give them a feed preparatory to their climb up Juktas itself, we were questioned from doorways, and by fine smiling men with tawny moustaches, coming from their vineyards with shining adzes on their shoulders, all curious about our visit, and who followed us to the khan of the place that they might the better hear and discuss what we had to tell. I should think there were thirty of these gentry in scarlet and white and blue, with axes and pistols and knives, who tried to crowd into the room when we

had taken our seats, and who kept up such a Babel of excited chatter that my guide could hardly proclaim our need of candles, and a guide or two familiar with the mountain that looked over the houses of the village. As usual, there were card-players in the khan room, but the cards were abandoned for a time, without demur from any of the players. It seemed more entertaining to watch the stranger break his fast on the eggs and bread and wine which was the entire stock of varieties in the house.

Then came the mayor of the village, an officious and nervous old gentleman in motley attire, with a long white beard like a patriarch. His fellow-men had summoned him in hot haste, and he showed in a full panoply of responsibility, courteous and willing to do all he could for the stranger, but not the less disinclined to have his suspicions. The customary questions were asked, which my guide answered readily, attracting for the nonce the 'eager gaze of the two or three score eyes around us, which soon, however, reverted to me as the greater novelty of the two. But when it came to a declaration of our object in wishing to exert ourselves by such an unaccountable feat as the ascent of a mountain on a day that was not a saint's day (when perchance there might have been a service- in the

little church which caps Juktas, as well as many other of the Cretan mountains), *then* my guide stammered, looked foolish, puckered his brows, and fell silent. It was all very well to talk in private about visiting the grave of the late King of Heaven ; but a confession of such a kind in public was likely to be attended by mirthful consequences whicli my guide would not enjoy. And so he merely quoted the European, and spread out his leathery palms, with a lifting of the eyebrows, as if exonerating himself from an active share in such exceeding nonsense.

The bystanders stared, the mayor stroked his beard and looked grave, and the innkeeper stopped shelling eggs for me. Some of the younger men smiled, and very soon the smiling was contagious, so that I waited to see the whole room explode in one loud laugh of derision.

But the mayor began to speak, and there was new attention. He had never heard of Jove ; neither his birth in the Psiloriti province, nor his marriage with the lady Juno between Arkanais and Heracleon, nor his death and burial in Mount Juktas. It seemed improbable altogether. If I had other designs on the mountain, it were best to say what they were : concealment might be awkward, even illegal. It was in his power to

order us both back to Heracleon by the way we had come* Why should he not do it? He kept the registers of the births and deaths in the district. No one named Jove appeared in his books! And why should he choose to be interred on a mountain-top? And what right had I to go looking for his bones, even if it were true that his body lay there? It was a mysterious business. The mayor shook his head, and looked much puzzled, as if he were between two dilemmas, each equally troublesome.

Then my guide, having vaguely consulted with me, giving me the heads of the mayor's objections, returned to the attack fortified with authority.

* It is all to be found in books/ said he, but by no means with the confidence that comes from conviction, or is inherent in the heaven-born advocate. ' It happened a long while ago—so he says.'

There was so much general doubt in the air that I now began to despair of getting up Juktas after all. My guide, however, continuing to talk, began to boast about my importance: I was a signor who had been staying at Canea, who had never been opposed in any of his purposes, and who had come with a firman from his Excellency the Governor-General (though, unfortunately, he had not got the document with him at the moment), for

no other object except to climb Mount Juktas and see Jove. Surely the stranger may be trusted to know what he is doing, for he has come a thousand miles to do it! Of course it would not be right to say that the mayor of a village is in the wrong, but it may not be a very gross insult to suggest that his honour has not got a very extensive library of his own, and is likely, therefore, to be less at home with book-lore than some others—this signor, for example.

I did what I could to second my man with a peremptory monosyllable now and then, which may not have been very intelligible, but which, as a mere sound, seemed not ineffective.

Moreover, certain of the boys now entered into controversy about the matter. They differed a great deal, and got excited over their differences ; and perhaps it was rather in dispraise of each other than in agreement with me that at length three or four of them broke upon the Demarch with forcible arguments in support of my excursion. My guide joined in afresh; there was a general hubbub; some one claimed acquaintance with the cave, by token of going there with a foreign botanist years ago ; in short, the Demarch bowed his head, and signified his consent. No further preparation was needed, except a responsible guide and some

candles. Three guides volunteered in a breath, the candles were soon brought, and so we set off for the mountain, with our spirits agreeably heated by the strife of hope and fear within us, and our final victory.

At the outset we had to traverse the gardens of the village, with sprouting vines at our feet. The valley was flooded with a warm yellow light, which seemed an ideal atmosphere for the dark cypresses aspiring from the midst of the low white houses, for the greenery of the trees and fields, and the olive and vermilion colouring of the mountain before us. Our guides went on their way, carolling and chattering, and seemingly as happy as the country around them. Thus we began the ascent, by a slope so steep that we could see but little of the way above us ; and in about half an hour we had plodded our way through the network of wiry herbs and the sharp shingle, to the watershed of Juktas. Miles of olive-green land lay below us on the other side of the mountain, and Ida, with all her company of peaks, rose face to face with us.

But we had not come for a mere view, else we should at once have been abundantly satisfied. The cave had to be found. And after a little pointing and tentative movement about the ridge, one of the boys gave a scream, and we joined him at the red

mouth of a horizontal split in the herby slope. The cave was not large, even at its entrance ; the footway was more than moist; and but a few yards from the mouth it narrowed so considerably that a human being would have no chance with it unless he went on hands and knees, not to say hands and toes.

We sat on the sun-warmed rocks by the cave, and for a while surveyed in alternation the den that was to be investigated, and the lovely reach of mountain and valley below and before us. Between Juktas and Ida the irregular but fertile valley is watered by two good-sized rivers. The district goes by the name of Melavese, and Pashley has it that this is the source of the ancient Malmsey, that 'rich Candian wine' which has begot so much mirth and jollity in days past. Certainly, the wine is very tasty and strong ; but the dispute about the locality of the Malmsey is hardly less bitter than that about many another famous old classical subject. Colonel Leake, for instafice, derives the name from Monemvasia, a district on the east coast of the Greek Peloponnesus ; and certain islets and spots of maritime territory here and there in the Levant also claim to give their vintage the name of Malmsey. But as this Melavese vale is bounded on the one side by Jove's

birthplace, and on the other by his nuptial rivulet and place of sepulchre, it is surely reasonable to believe that nectar fit for the chief of the gods was not wanting to complete the honour of these few square miles of country. And so one may easily call the wine of Melavese Malmsey, or any other name, to mark its superlative goodness.

My guide took an immediate dislike to the cave. He said bluntly that he would not go in. To be sure, he was a little stouter at the girth than seemed suitable for the very limited space of the cave's passage ; but I think it was rather that he felt convinced the entire expedition was a blatant piece of folly. He squatted and watched us preparing for the grimy recesses of the hole, with more grim stolidity than encouragement on his ancient face. A fourth guide, who had joined us on the way up, was rejected from the trip on the plea of a stiff joint, which he would find it awkward to get round the close corners. There were, therefore, four of us, and we went into the red mud in a humour that was unaccountably, even sacrilegiously, merry.

But our trials soon began. Not even the lively hopes which stimulated us could make us very comfortable when we had to grope along at full length, holding our candles with difficulty, and

seeing nothing but the illuminated red slime on the rock, which pressed us as tightly as if we were in an artificial tube. And while we grovelled along in this humiliating way, and in an atmosphere like that of a bakehouse, we were in momentary expectation of an abrupt stoppage by the leader of the file, and an announcement that not even the thinnest of us could go farther with impunity. However, we gasped and sweated along, and I admired the pluck and good-nature of these sturdy Cretans, who had consented to inconvenience themselves so greatly for the behoof of a stranger. They shouted to each other now and then, and bellowed a laugh, with a curt allusion to Jove, and his bad taste in choosing such a hole for a tomb. But, generally, none of us had much breath to sacrifice in levity.

We went on in this serpentine fashion for several minutes. Then, when we really seemed in danger of being jammed tight in the fearful place, the two first of the party began a roar of song, and a rift of fuller light, with the sharp drawing up of the heels of the man in front of me, proclaimed that we had reached more airy and roomy quarters. In due time, we all four wormed ourselves into a sitting posture, and just filled the space of the little chamber which came at the end of the tunnel.

We sat close together, indeed almost nose to nose, holding our candles with a keen sense of the peril to which we were thereby subjecting each other.

But what figures of fun we appeared, to be sure, when settled sufficiently at our ease to take a disinterested view of each other! I never saw such a trio of scarecrows as my three friends had become. The red ooze from the rocks had dyed them zebra-fashion. The dangers and exertions of the burrow had also marked their faces in a way that by the flickering yellow light of our dips, thrown back by our red surroundings, made them irresistibly comical: they looked for all the world like anxious villains in a melodrama. I suppose it was the same with me, for the rogues roared when they looked at me, and roared the more when they glanced from me at each other. For a minute or two, I lost sight of the aim of this most torrid and dirty bit of exploration.

Yet when we had calmed somewhat, and, with a view to business, I referred once more to Jove, the first cause of our trouble, viewing the chamber to see if it offered anything at all suggestive to the fancy, then the incongruity of the association came home to me. Unless metamorphosed for sepulchral purposes into a snake, no ordinary man could be buried here without preliminary dismemberment

that might well be shocking to those who attended the funeral. And as for Jove! With the **big,** hearty shape one is prone to bestow on him in imagination, it were nothing less than a miracle that could get him stowed here, dead or alive. I feared that we were sorrily misled or baffled, and managed to say something to that effect.

My words did not dishearten the men, however. Shuffling their knees and feet on to the very smallest possible area of space, they drew their sharp knives from their girdles, and began to turn up the soil in our midst. It was not that they hoped to disinter Jove or anyone else. Golden goblets and breastplates were much more to their taste; and what wealth of this kind the cave afforded they now determined to find while their pallid light lasted. I leaned back against the hard wet wall of the cave, and watched them digging. I dared not hope they would discover anything, and yet they worked with such a fury and force that I thought of the reaction, and wondered how they would bear the disappointment when their strength was spent.

But, in spite of appearances, methought that Jove might have been buried here, after all—if he lay anywhere among earthly clods. One can constantly recur to the earthquakes of Crete, and say

to them, * It is your fault that what was once probable as the succession of day and night, now seems so grossly improbable.' By the subsidence of the rocks, what was formerly a majestic natural vestibule and corridor to this cave may have, become the cramped warren of a place fit only for a hermitage of rabbits that now it is.

In the meantime, the men had worked themselves into a sAveat again. They unearthed bones and smooth pebbles under the angular chips of red rock, and a multitude of morsels of pottery as red as the walls of our nest. There were fragments of handles, and the bases of pots—all clear evidences that the place has had to do with living men. Specimens of this rubbish, with a bone or two which proved to be bovine (sacrificial remains, of course), were all the plunder and testimony which Jove's cave yielded us.

Needless to say, the Cretans did not admire these curios. They sheathed their knives, and looked inclined to clamour for redress. But before putting up their weapons, they began a warm argument amongst themselves, of which it was clear that I was the subject. The word 'medjidie' rang out through the tangle of their talk again and again. They held their candles towards me, and, looked me up and down, one after the other, very

much as a practised appraiser might regard a cabinet of china he had been called upon to value. Did they think to keep me at ransom in this mephitic hole? or to rob me of my few valuables, cut my throat, and swear to my guide at the mouth of the cave that I had tumbled into a cavernous pit so profound that it was not the least use his trying to do anything further for me? But, to my satisfaction, they made no movement towards sacrificing me on the putative grave of the great father of the Pagans; and shortly afterwards we went anew on our stomachs, and crawled silently back to daylight.

That worthy man, my guide, received the intelligence that we were not much the better for the trip with a dry chuckle of pleasure; and he heightened his contentment by comparing his clean blue garments and face with our red selves. However, the sun soon caked the wet mud upon us, so that we could pick and scrape it away with tolerable ease. And then we proceeded on foot to one of the twin peaks of the mountain, by a stupendous natural staircase of sharp blocks of stone, with sly crevices of infinite depth, which the flowers and herbs concealed, but did not securely bridge.

Here we made acquaintance with the dilapidated church of Juktas, of which the stout walls of its old

conventual precincts are still standing. What a spot to inhabit from the beginning of the year to its end! The walls of the church rise sheer from a dizzy precipice; and, looking from a little window through which the western sun shone upon a few mouldy trifles of church furniture, one saw Ida's white peak, as it were an incomparable vignette. Of the wonderful colouring of earth, mountain, sea, sky, and vegetation, I will not attempt to say anything.

We rode back to Candia by another way, skirting the base of Juktas for two or three miles, and then by green downs and shady olive-woods, populous with sheep, joining the high-road, which here, as at Canea, claims to be fairly sound for no more than an hour's walk from the city-walls.

LETTER XIX.

Athens—Break-up of a Home and 'Good-bye'—Again on the *Tibisco*—Wooing and Necromancing—The Archbishop and the Rose—Farewell to Canea and Crete—In the Saronic Gulf.

As you see, I have said good-bye to Crete. Even the civilized bustle of the capital of Greece, with the Parthenon pillars a quarter of an hour's walk from the hotel, seem paltry in comparison with the island of Jove. The distance between Canea and the Piraeus is less than two hundred miles over blue water; but it is as if an ocean divided them.

It was cruel work stripping my sunny little home at Khalepa of its scanty but familiar gear. Master Georgio ruthlessly made a heap of the more portable goods, huddled them up in the mattress and counterpane, tied the heap on an ass, and trotted it to town, where he sold it in public market. I left the ants in possession of the cupboard, in a lively state of perturbation at the

removal of what they had come to look upon as theirs by right of custom. And so one evening, when it was already dusk, the whole household of my landlord the mason mustered by the gate leading from the well into the high-lane, and gave me a hearty if rather plaintive adieu. I told them I should return some day; but they were too wise to make much of words spoken at random, under stress of grief. Then, in charge of the valorous Houssein, whom Madame do S., kind to the last, had lent me as temporary bodyguard, we strode over the rocky ground and down to the road skirting the sea, on the way to the city-gates. The stars were out, and it was very calm, and we seemed to move without noise, and with no sound about or above us except the gentle hoot of an owl that kept up with us till we reached the blacksmiths' avenue of Canea. Though comparatively early, the city-gates were shut and guarded. Without Houssein I should have been nonplussed and lost my passage ; but an authoritative word from the Arnaut made the red-coats open the wicket and let us pass under the tunnel of the battlements, and, for the last time, flounder over the greasy cobbles of the deserted thoroughfares. Houssein's martial salute, when he had seen me comfortably settled in a boat and pushing through

the still water of the harbour towards the abominable *Tibisco,* was the final severance of my connection with IPialepa ; and I watched his petticoats out of sight regretfully.

We had good company on board. The British Consul from Syta was there, with his wife and family, and a pretty young lady who made no scruple about smoking a cigarette with us when dinner was done with. This girl was passionately wooed by the second officer of the ship, both at dinner and afterwards. She did not exactly treat him with disdain, but she puffed her smoke in his face now and then when he was very much in earnest. It seemed to me that she was one of those contrary children of Nature who are easier won by indifference than by stormy sentiment or deeds of devotion. On the upper deck, amidships, a party of Greek gipsies had been allowed to rig up an encampment. They lay under their own canvas quite promiscuously—a heap of brown legs and heads, bright clothing, bracelets, earrings, and silver chains. These same travellers later on were for earning a little money by fortune-telling. A dried flower was their oracle. You enclose this in your naked palm for a few minutes. If when you reopen the hand the flower happens to have unfurled its petals, good luck impends ; otherwise,

look for the worst. From their interpretation, I reckon a man could have no more substantial blessing than a hectic fever. A less arbitrary way of ensnaring fortune is by keeping the flower for a couple of days, and then throwing it into the sea : a piece of good luck will then ensue. This is much more satisfactory as a speculation.

It was nearly bedtime when I saw the last of Canea. We were pacing the deck and smoking, with the faint lights of the city encircling the harbour, and quivering in its waters. Some British and German tars had got leave from Suda to have an evening's roystering in the cafds ; and 'God Save the Queen' mixed with the 'Watch on the Rhine,' to the soft tinkle of mandolines from the resorts of the more musical Cretans. For the melody of their efforts, the Germans were a long way ahead of the British ; but I think eventually our Jack-tars out-voiced the Teutons. At any rate, they shouted as if they were at home ; and their roaring must have reached the ears of the Governor-General in his palace hard by. A sirocco came on to blow from the mountains, which towered over the city quite distinctly. It rufHed the oily waters of the little harbour, blew out the loose sails of some of the fishing-boats, and sent a squadron of light puffy clouds flitting from the

hills seawards. And thus, in reasonable hopes of a quick passage, we went to bed, and awoke in the ^Egean, with Cape Malea looming to the west.

Of our return steam from Candia to Canea, I have little to say. We had a crowd of passengers, and among them his Holiness the Archbishop of Crete, a mild, apostolic-looking man with a long auburn beard. I was first apprised of the rank of this ecclesiastic by seeing Cretan after Cretan enter the smoking-room in which he and I were seated, and go reverentially on his knees to kiss the prelate's extremity. The Archbishop was gentleness and humility itself during and after these salutations of respect. He held a small bunch of roses fixedly in his left hand the while, and looked very like a picture in a Greek church, so rigid and benevolent of gaze was he. But when there seemed an end to these prostrations, his Holiness began to consult with *one* of his inferior clergy, furtively glancing at me, as if I were the subject of their talk. The other priest pursed his lips, ran his fingers through his beard, and, having gravely considered the matter, whispered an audible 'Malista f and nodded his head. Thereupon the Archbishop rose, came towards me unsteadily (we rolled a trifle at that moment), and, with a delicate bloom on his hearty cheeks, offered me the fairest

of his roses. I would have smiled if I dared at the happy air which his simple reverence assumed when he sat down again. But I did better, I think, in smelling the rose repeatedly, until I found no savour left in it, and then putting it ostentatiously in my button-hole, with a smile and a bow to the Archbishop, which the Archbishop and his subordinate returned, with not a little nervous exultation in their faces. Subsequently, we tried a little conversation ; but we stuck very fast when I had managed to answer his enquiry if I were a Christian. The Archbishop was bound for Canea only, and I was amused to see how the orthodox boatmen of the capital strove for his reverence's brown satin legs when it was a question of going ashore. Between them, they all but jerked him into the water.

We steamed up the Saronic Gulf in a sea so quiet that even the *Tibisco* found it difficult not to go steadily. Grey rocks and islets rose on both sides of us, so that we seemed to be moving along a highway, the course of which was graciously marked by Dame Nature. At one time we studied Melos ; an hour or two later, Hydra came under view. Then Poros and the sharp peak of Ægina stood out against the somewhat gloomy mountains of Argos and the mainland in general. It was an

uncertain day overhead, and thick clouds were settled upon Hymettus and Parnes, over distant Athens. Cape Colonna looked very fine; but we could not see its temple. And so in due time we passed the northern end of Ægina, where it tapers to a flattish, long-drawn promontory, and had Salamis before us in its place—an olive-coloured group of hills indistinguishable from the land of Attica which it presses so closely. By this time, of course, we were within hail of Athens herself. The fringe of light sand ahead of us, with snowy houses on the beach, was Phalerum, where the citizens bathe in summer, and where Demosthenes of old walked with the pebbles in his mouth, pleading against the waves of the sea. A light-house on a rocky heap by Phalerum indicated the head of the harbour of Piraeus, and, briskly turning the cape, we stood towards our anchorage. There was a stir in the harbour this day: British gun-boats had arrived in the morning, for unexplained reasons; French gunboats were already present, their masts festooned with linen from the wash; and, amid the two or three Greek ships of war which had been temporarily transferred thither from the arsenal of Salamis over the way, several ugly torpedo-boats slunk to and fro, eloquent of dire potentiality.

But I must stop here, for I am on very familiar ground. Over the houses, and between the vista of the factory chimneys of the Piraeus, the Acropolis of Athens, with the sunlight on its Parthenon pillars, is commanding—though five miles of olive-woods and marsh-land separate it from the sea. But there is something in Athens that from a distance is always more conspicuous than its Acropolis. This is the quadrangular white marble palace of the King of the Hellenes, which seems as if it would fain arrogate to itself some of the notice that the Acropolis exacts. It is a little provoking to strangers, who are not apt to think with excessive veneration of a modern sovereign over Greece ; but in the esteem of the majority of the Greeks themselves, this pretension would no doubt be held both just and desirable.

APPENDIX TO LETTER VI.

FROM a manuscript report by Dr. Zaphirides of Candia, on the prevalence and characteristics of leprosy in Crete, with which I have been favoured while passing the last sheets of these 'Letters* through the press, I find I must modify the charge of inhumanity with regard to the lepers, which I have brought against the Sultan's representatives in the island.

'The public treasury', says Dr. Zaphirides, 'allows to each of the indigent lepers one loaf of bread every day, but nothing else. The question of erecting a lepers' house in one of the outlying small islands has lately been discussed in the General Assembly of the representatives of the people, but, under our present circumstances, and because of the cost of the undertaking, I fear that it will long remain only a "pium desiderium."'

The number of lepers in Crete is so large—being about 1,000, as compared with the 150 or so in the whole of Greece—that the following other particulars about them from Dr. Zaphirides's authoritative report may be interesting as well as valuable :

In Crete leprosy seems to be slightly on the increase. This is attributable to the insurrections

which so frequently disturb the island, and interfere with those sanitary regulations, neglect of which predisposes to most bodily evils, including leprosy. The increase is also due to the marriage of lepers, among their own community, and with wives and husbands hitherto untainted. In the former case, families of four and five children, all probably doomed to become lepers, are common. In the latter case, as may be supposed, the leprosy has declared itself after marriage ; though it is not rare for a rich leper to obtain a healthy wife by virtue of his riches. The disease manifests itself most frequently between the ages of ten and twenty. From twenty to thirty and from thirty to forty come next, in their respective order. After fifty it is of rare occurrence. The child of parents of whom the mother is a leper is more likely to become a leper than the child of parents whereof the father only is leprous : this in the proportion of 6 to 5. Men, however, are far more subject to the scourge than women. For 100 women lepers, there will be from 150 to 175 leprous men, The cause of this excess among the men is not yet quite satisfactorily explained ; though their harder outdoor work and more marked tendency for alcoholic liquors may have something to do with it. But in fact this majority is even greater than it appears statistically ; for many leper men expatriate themselves, and live out their days as wanderers over the earth.

According to Dr. Zaphirides, few of the Cretan lepers are really indigent ; but they suffer in being obliged to lease their estates to others, or to cultivate them through their relations. Hence it is

that, by permission of the officer in command of the leper village, they are glad to beg at the gates of the city.

Dr. Zaphirides attributes to bad diet, immorality, and unclean habits, only a secondary influence in the generation of the disease. He also questions the judgment of those specialists who have classified leprosy; as a parasitical disease: ' I much fear,' he says, 'that the result has been taken for the cause; in other words, I fear that the microbe which has been found in lepers is a microbe simply finding in them a convenient place for development, and not a specific microbe generating the disease' He admits that the problem would be solved if a human being were successfully inoculated with leprosy ; but as such an experiment is never likely to be made, and inoculation of animals would have no result, the matter will remain in dispute.

Dr. Zaphirides classifies the leprosy of Crete (which is the real leprosy, or elephantiasis of the ancients) under three forms : tuberculous, anaesthetic, and mixed. The first two are the commoner forms, the tuberculous being much more common in men than women, while the anaesthetic is about equally common in both sexes. The doctor specifies atrophy of the thenar and hypothenar as one of the earliest and most convincing symptoms of the anaesthetic form of leprosy. 'This atrophy is considered by our peasants, who are most skilled in making the diagnosis of the setting-in of leprosy, as the unfailing sign of the invasion of the disease.' Among the chief indications of the tuberculous form, Dr. Zaphirides mentions the falling off of the

eyebrows and eyelashes, distension and shining of the skin of the forehead, a redness of the face, enlargement in the region of the eyebrows, and a swelling of the pituital nasal membrane, which operates in giving the voice a nasal sound. After these primary signs comes the numbness in the legs and forearms. The spots and tubercles, which are unaccompanied by pain, follow the numbness ; but in many cases these final symptoms are rather the first to appear.

In conclusion, says Dr. Zaphirides, ' I know of no instance of a leper having been cured ; and the only means which appear to have checked for a time the progress of the disease or somewhat temporarily ameliorated the condition of the lepers are the preparations with arsenic, and the Greek baths at Ypate (in the province of Phthiotis) ;' in every case the cure being assisted by a rigorous application of the rules of health.

THK END.

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