

The Unspeakable Turk.

By GEORGE HORTON.

Just at sunset one day in the last week of March, 1857, a calque set sail from the harbor of Piræus, ostensibly laden with cognac for Cairo, but in reality carry a small revolving cannon and a large number of Greek rifles from Konia, Athens, and the other cities. The calque was not fighting for liberty and the Christian faith. There were several large barrels, conspicuously marked "Konika," in Greek characters on the deck and a number of boxes that bore the legend, "We have come from Konia, Athens, and the other cities." The calque was not fighting for liberty and the Christian faith. There were several large barrels, conspicuously marked "Konika," in Greek characters on the deck and a number of boxes that bore the legend, "We have come from Konia, Athens, and the other cities." The calque was not fighting for liberty and the Christian faith.

There were other things, too, in the calque's cargo, articles of a seemingly modern nature, such as hams, hard tack, flour, sausages, olives and beans. These were intended for the Cretan heroes, battling for their freedom and for their starving families. They had been declared contraband by the admirals of the great powers, and the whole cargo should have been seized by the British vessels prowling about the ancient island, was doomed to confiscation. The captain, a thick-set, square-shouldered Greek in greasy blue suit, long white shirt and felt hat, held the long tiller in his left hand and made the sign of the cross repeatedly with his right.

"St. Nicholas protect and help us!" a stiff breeze was blowing and the vessel leaped over, like a tall man shouldering his way through a storm. The three young men standing upon her deck maintained their equilibrium by shooting one leg out straight, as though it were the prop of a cabin built on the side of a hill, the other being shortened to half its length by bending at the hip and knee.

Two natty officers stepped to the prow of a Russian gunboat, that was white and trim as a bride, and fixed their glasses keenly on the calque.

"Curse you, gawled the captain, involuntarily opening his hand, the Greek sign of an imprecation.

"St. Nicholas strike you blind! Look all you will, and again I'll cheat you."

But the time had come to tack, and he shouted the order to the sailors. The convenient canvas was shifted, the helm was put over, and the white ships prowling about the narrow mouth of the harbor.

A great sail was thrown out on either side of the calque, like a pair of wings. The vessel turned its back to the south and swooped down the wind like a hawk. The three young men stood with their feet apart now, their legs of equal length.

A sudden lurch of the ship threw the American against the man at his side.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "or perhaps you do not speak English?"

"Oh, yes," replied the person addressed, "not perfectly, but sufficiently to make myself understood. Permit me to introduce myself."

Producing a large leather pocketbook, he extracted from it a business card. The card presented the bit of pasteboard was large, pink and well groomed. The American read:

Lieutenant Lindbohm.
Lieutenant Lindbohm read on the card which he received in return.
Mr. John Curtis.

"I am happy to meet you, Mr. Curtis," said the lieutenant, politely lifting his straw hat and then drawing it down over his ears with both hands. The hat was secured to the buttocks by means of a shoe string, and had a startling habit of leaping to the end of its tether every few moments.

"And I, too, lieutenant," replied Curtis, heartily, extending his hand.

"No, no, no," laughed the lieutenant.

"Oh, we're all onto the secret, or we wouldn't be here. And I'm mighty glad there's somebody going along who can speak English. I hope we'll be good friends, and I don't see why we shouldn't be, I'm sure. I'm just out of college—Harvard, you know—and the governor told me to take a trip around the world. He believes in a year of travel to kind of complete and round out a man's education."

"I find it an excellent idea," said the lieutenant, grabbing for his hat, that a sudden puff of wind had swept from his head.

"Isn't it? It's jolly. Well, I'm going to surprise the governor. I'm going to write a book—sort of prose. 'Childie Harold.' I wish I had the knack to do it in verse. I thought the Cretan business would make a great chapter, so I went straight to the president of the committee and told him I would write the struggle up from a Christian standpoint. Nice old fellow. Said he would do anything for an American, and put me onto this snip. I ought to find some good material down there. I'm glad the governor can't hear of this thing till I get ready to tell him."

"That is, the governor of New York?" asked the lieutenant.

"No, Ha, ha, ha! My governor—my old man—my father, you know."

"Ah, I beg pardon. You will see that I do not know the English so well."

"You have given me your confidence," he said. "I will give you mine, though there is not much to tell. I am a soldier by profession. I was down among the Boers when I heard of the trouble in Crete. I had hoped for war there. I was also at Maja hill, you see, and President Kruger knows me. But the English will not attack now, so I decided in a moment. I just

the calque was called, crunched among islands that seemed to float in a pool sea. Some of them were steep rocks, on which a single shepherd dwelt with his flocks. Often as they flitted through the shadow of a precipice that rose, high and stern as the walls of a medieval castle, which a few scattered pines were perilously scaling, a shaggy band would look down from the overhanging battlements and shout some salutation in Greek. At other times they skirted green valleys, guarded at the shore by a band of sentry cypress trees, tall and straight; through these tiny streams came leaping and laughing down to the sea. Arcadian villages, gleaming white in the sun, sat peacefully on distant cliffs, or straggled down through olive orchards to aards a bit of white beach; old monasteries dreamed in green and lonely nooks.

On a cloudy afternoon, when the wind was blowing fresh and fair, and the waves that ran behind shivered blackly ere they broke into foam, the captain set all sail and headed straight for the northern shore of Crete. The calque plunged like a child's rocking horse. The three passengers went down into the little cabin, that smelled of bilgewater and stale goat's cheese. A smoky lantern, hanging from a hook in the roof, cast a flickering light on the rickety ladder, the four plank walls and the eikons of Mary and Nicholas, that peered from round holes in the wall in safety. After scrambling for a ways blindly up the side of a hill, cut in tawdry squares of silver. There were two bunks and a table that, when not in use, drew up its one leg and fell back against the wall. Curtis and his two com-



panions rattled about in the narrow room like peas in a fool's gourd. Every few moments water splashed and spluttered on the deck and brine dripped down through the thin hatch. When Curtis heard the spray patter over the planks he thought of the rats that used to run over the garret door of a farmhouse where he sometimes slept when in America. The Swede produced one of those ineffable cigars that one buys in Italy by the meter, broke off a couple of inches and offered the stick to his companion. The American refused to begin with, but smothering burning goat's hair filled the cabin.

"Ah," sighed Lindbohm, "what a comfort is tobacco!"

Poor Michael collapsed in a spasm of seasickness.

Curtis, gnashing his teeth and declaring that he would not yield, scrambled up the ladder and butted the hatch cover with his head. The most inconspicuous ideas kept running through his brain, sick as he was. As he sprawled out upon the deck and the two trap doors fell behind him with a slam he thought of a jock-the-box that had been given him on his fourth Christmas. Curtis rose cautiously erect and threw himself at the nearest mast. It was not raining, but occasional faint electric flashes revealed a lurid world full of inky waves.

"There's no danger at all in this sort of thing," he muttered. "If these beggars understand their business."

After another twenty minutes a sailor brought a lantern from the cabin and hung it to a hook on the forward mast. For over an hour there had been no lightning and now a sudden flash hissed and died as though one had attempted to light a match in a gusty room. There was but a moment of light, but that was enough. There, a quarter of a mile distant, extended beckoning and invitingly toward the little vessel, were the arms of a narrow bay, and down the shore, perhaps a mile away, a gunboat stood stoically and stowly alone.

"To the left a stretch of coast, perhaps two miles in length, ended suddenly in a towering cliff. By turning they would have the wind square in the sails and would be making straight for the promontory. This expedient evidently occurred to the captain, who knew every inch of the Cretan coast as well as the deck of his own calque, for he instantly gave the necessary orders.

"It would never have done to put into the bay," observed Lindbohm, "they would have us like rats in a trap. That's one of the blooming squanders. They're looking for just such people as we are."

"They haven't seen us, glory to God!" cried Michael.

The three passengers had crowded about the captain, who stood at the tiller. The calque was now skipping from crest to crest like a flying fish.

"To St. Nicholas and the Virgin I give equal praise," devoutly responded the captain.

The words were hardly out of his mouth before the gunboat began to whip the sea with its searchlight. Up into the clouds went the spreading lash, as though spitefully wielded by a giant arm, and then, "whizz," it struck the waters where the calque had been five minutes before.

"Katarra!" cried the crew in chorus, rolling the "ra." Katarra meant "damn," which is exactly what it means.

"What orders is he giving?" asked Curtis.

"To put on all sail," replied Michael. "I hope he don't let us over."

Again the whip fell, again and yet again. At last it struck fast upon the little ship with blinding radiance. Curtis gave vent to a surprised "Ah!" as he had sometimes done in a theater, when the electricity had been unexpectedly turned on after twenty minutes of midnight murder or burglary on the stage. A sailor was lurching sprawling in the air, half way up the foremast, and the two others were pulling at a rope. The faces of the little group at the tiller looked ghastly in the unnatural light. The calque rose and fell with the long striding motion of a fleet horse running close to the ground, with regular intervals a discharge of fine spray swept lengthwise of the deck and stung the face like handfuls of rice, flung at a wedding.

The light was now a great triangle, lying on the sea, and the calque was firing toward the rear. The promontory seemed to slide rapidly toward them along one of its sides.

A gun boomed in the triangle's apex. Curtis and Michael ducked their heads and closed their eyes tight. The captain and crew again cried "Katarra!" in chorus and Lindbohm laughed.

"Blank," he said sardoniously; "that means 'lay to.'"

The promontory slid nearer. Another gun, this time with a sharp, coughing sound, followed by a crescendo-diminished scream, like the demonic wail of a winter wind, "The shell," explained the Swede. "That means business. If they're Russians, they can't hit us. If French, they probably won't in this sea. If English, they probably will. We must just take our chances. What does the captain say?"

"He's the point," translated Michael. "Once around that, they will never find us."

Curtis looked. The steep cliff photo-

graphed itself indelibly upon his mind. It towered high above their heads, rude, grim, and perpendicular, but at its base a spur of land sloped into the water, like the foot of a mighty leg. And as he looked, a crashing sound was heard, and the little vessel shivered and lurched, wounded to the death.

"English, by damn!" cried Lindbohm. "Can you swim?"

CHAPTER II.

"How shall I ever thank you for saving my life?"

"Very easily. If you know anything about this part of the island you can just lead us out of here. If we don't find something to eat today we shall be sorry we didn't drown. I'd rather drown than starve any time. It don't last so long, and isn't so painful."

The two speakers were Michael and the lieutenant. They were standing, together with the American, beside a fire of driftwood which the vestas in Curtis' metal matchbox had enabled them to light. A bit of sand, sheltered from the waves by a projecting rock, had made it easy for them to land. It is true that Michael's strength had soon given out, but his friends, both being powerful swimmers, had brought him to the shore in safety. After scrambling for a ways blindly up the side of a hill, cut in tawdry squares of silver. There were two bunks and a table that, when not in use, drew up its one leg and fell back against the wall. Curtis and his two com-



"WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS WITH US?" ASKED THE DEMARCH.

gallows frame planted in the sea. The torn canvas fluttered helplessly in the wind. The captain clung to the arm of another galley a few feet distant, and the third sailer was floating about over the submerged calque on the cabin roof. The gunboat shied out into deeper water and brought the filibusters in. Then the three comrades crouched behind a rock, while the Cyclopean eye of the monster that hurled deadly missiles than old Homer ever dreamed of searched hill and shore.

"They'll never try to catch us," said Lindbohm, as the gunboat sailed away. "They couldn't if they wanted to, and they've no particular business with us anyhow."

So they built a fire and kept themselves warm as much by the exercise of bringing and breaking up wood as by the flames themselves. When morning finally peeped at the pallid sea and kissed its face to ruddy life and laughter, the Cretan, the Swede and the American looked each other over and took an inventory of their condition. They were dry, but hungry. Curtis and Michael had lost their hats, and Michael had tied a handkerchief about his own head in peasant fashion, and had performed the same office for Curtis. Lindbohm's straw hat had not escaped from the tether, and he still wore it, glistening with salt and hanging down on one side like the wing of a wounded duck. His long coat had slunk until the tails parted in the middle of his back as though the space between them had been cut out with a triangular stamp. He alone of the three had removed his shoes after reaching the shore. Not being able to put them on again, he cut away the uppers and tied the remnant on with strings, which he passed through the holes slashed in the sides. A resourceful and courageous man was the lieutenant.

"Now we are ready," he said to Michael; "lead on to breakfast."

It was about 11 o'clock in the afternoon



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When they arrived at the foot of the tremendous rocky dam which they must scale to reach the village. The sun was shining against its face and the dozen or more rivulets that were racing and leaping downward glittered like molten platinum. The bed of the ravine not a truss was visible. Lindbohm made a trumpet of his hands and, looking upward, shouted lustily, drawing out the last syllable of the word as though it were a vocal flourish.

"Hillo! Hillo! Hillo!"

A girl came to the edge. She appeared to be standing on the top of a wall. She was floating in sunlight; she was glorified. Tall, straight, deep-homed, she wore a skirt of blue homespun and a short jacket of the same material, with sleeves that were white from the elbow down. Her hair, that was in reality a soft brown, seemed of gold; one massive strand fell over her bosom, quite to her knees. Her face was oval, the features as clearly cut as those of a goddess, with a certain warmth and softness about them that no sculptor ever attained to. Her large, brown eyes, wide apart, beneath a low, broad forehead, beamed with fearless innocence and wonder. On her left shoulder reposed a huge earthen water jug, two-handled, bulging near the top and dwindling at either end. Her right hand held this in place and her left rested on her hip.

"What is it, stranger?" she called down, in a winning voice.

"Spakklote," said Michael.

"What's spakklote?" asked Lindbohm.

"Greek for goodness!"

The Cretan shouted back a few words of explanation and the maiden disappeared. Ten minutes later the edge was lined with citizens of Ambellaki, tow-headed children, women and old men, some tall and some short, all in the same material, boys and maidens. All the males, of whatever age, wore high, yellow boots, voluminous blue trousers and soft lezzes that broke across the crown and fell backward, ending in a long, black tassel. The women and girls wore light-colored dresses, some of which were fastened with buttons. Several of these wore handkerchiefs tied to their heads.

"Here's the demarch," shouted a shrill chorus.

And Pappas Maleko," cried the rest, as though in response to a call.

A majestic old Cretan, with two silver-mounted pistols and a long pearl-handled knife in his belt, took his place in the middle of the line. He was soon joined by a priest in venerable robes and tall hat. Curtis imagined that he was the patriarch of some opera town had come out on the walls to hold parley with himself and his two friends. He wondered what character he was, but his foot hurt so that he was unable to make up his mind.

"What is your business with us?" asked the demarch, pompously, remembering that he was acting in official capacity in the presence of his entire constituency.

Michael explained at length. His story threw the listening Cretans into a state of great excitement. Several of them had heard of the business of the prophet, and now they were down from the edge of the natural battlement, descended by means of shrubbery and jutting stones, sprawling midair like huge spiders. On reaching the bottom they commenced an animated conversation with Michael, the object of which they thought must all go up as the youngsters had just come down, and that it was very easy if you had courage. In proof of which a boy of 15 sprawled awkwardly skyward again, looking every moment to lurch and shout "Embark!"

"I can do it," cried Michael, with pride. "All Cretans can climb, if some of them cannot swim. Can you follow me?"

"How do I know?" asked Lindbohm.

"If it is you, the hedgehog will burn through before I get there," replied Curtis.

"It is very dangerous," replied Michael.

"We must take our chances," asserted Lindbohm.

The descent was not so difficult as it appeared. Within twelve feet of the bottom they found themselves on the edge of a rock. Below them the stream gurgled enticingly between banks of snowy sand.

"And now?" asked Curtis.

"We must just jump and take our chances," replied Lindbohm, instinctively seizing the tails of his coat he held them out like wings and sprang into the air.

"Hurray!" he cried, looking up. "It's all right," and throwing himself flat on his stomach he sucked up long draughts of the cool, refreshing water. In a moment Michael and Curtis were lying beside him.

CHAPTER III.

Several pairs of strong hands pulled Curtis onto terra firma and he found himself in the public square of a picturesque little village. White, two-story houses surrounded an open space, in the midst of which stood an immense plane tree. Under this latter were four rickety tables and a dozen or so of chairs, for the accommodation of those who chose to enjoy the beauties of nature in the open air and partake of the mayor's coffee or mastice. The mayor, he it was which the town was large enough to support. The influence of the saloon in politics is felt even in the mountains of Crete.

Lindbohm and the priest rushed forward and assisted the American to one of the chairs. The mayor brought another and tenderly placed the lame foot upon it, shouting, meanwhile, a storm of voluble orders in a good-natured, blustering voice. Michael arrived and interpreted for which Curtis was thankful, as he did not understand the mayor's guttural, rapid Greek.

"He bids you welcome in the name of old Ambellaki! He has ordered you a glass of mastice. Ah! Here it comes now. You are to stay in the priest's house, who will say a prayer over your foot as soon as he gets you home."

The group was by this time surrounded by the entire population of the town, or as much of it as was not out in the vineyards, or on the hills with the sheep and the goats. Curtis rose on one leg.

"Hold!" cried the human stork," he exclaimed in English, because he did not know the Greek for "stork."

"What does he say?" asked the demarch.

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