



A B Y Z A N T I N E C H A R M

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By

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AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF THE GREEK REVOLUTION, 1821

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Sir JAMES BARRIE recently  
burnt his first novel. The world  
would be a much brighter place  
if everybody followed his ex-  
ample. \*\*\*

*Punch*

PART 1

Chapter 1

The Refugee

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On a beautiful morning in the month of April, in the year of our Lord 1822, the gutters of the narrow and dirty streets of the small town of Chios, on the eastern coast of the island of that name in the Mediterranean were dyed crimson with Christian blood, for, as their fellow Christians throughout all Greece, the Chians had risen and were fighting for independence against their Turkish oppressors. Unluckily, they were soon overpowered, some cruelly slaughtered, men, women, and children alike, others being carried off to the slave markets, but the greater number were slain, a Turkish war vessel, arriving off the town, helped to complete the final destruction. This was but one of many savage atrocities, which were occurring all over the country, causing a thrill of horror throughout the whole of Europe.

The day following the massacre and the destruction of the town, a Turkish soldier, servant of the Pasha of the district, was searching among the ruins, when he heard a low moaning coming from some bushes, he drew his sword, and going near the sound, saw partially hidden among some debris, a little child who was dreadfully frightened at his appearance. Looking imploringly at him, a little girl raised her hands and cried out "Oh, good Turk, good good Turk." The man had no heart to kill her, and sheathing his

sword, he caught her up in his arms, and carried her to his master's house. His wife, a servant of the Pasha, took pity on the little girl, gave her some food and put her to sleep. In spite of the fact that she was a Christian, the girl was allowed to remain in the house, where, though the Pasha saw her from time to time no notice was taken of her.

Not long afterwards, the "HOPE" an English vessel, owned and commanded by Captain Edye, came to the island with a cargo of grain for the Turks, consigned to this same Pasha. While payment was being made, the Captain who was sitting with the Pasha under some trees, saw a pretty little child playing in the garden. Noticing by her dress that she was not Turkish, he said to the Pasha, "Who is that child, and what is she doing here?" "Oh", said the Pasha, "she belongs to my servant, he found her among the ruins of the town." "But what is he going to do with her?" "Sell her for a slave, I suppose," replied the Pasha, or, when she grows up, put her to some other use perhaps. He will know what to do with her, no doubt," he added with a meaning smile.

The Captain at once decided to save her, if possible, from such a dreadful fate.

"Well" he said, turning to the Pasha, "will your servant sell her if so, I'll buy her,"

The servant was sent for, a bargain was soon struck, and thus, for a few piastres, amounting to about seven shillings in English money, the little girl became the property of the English Captain.

That morning Captain Edye took the girl on board, and sailed for Alexandria. During the voyage, he was much perplexed as to what to do with the child, so many questions, he thought, might be asked, and

enquires made as to where she came from, that he almost wished he had left her where she was, for although he had ~~been breaking~~ *Bontzen* no law, he had been trading with the Turks, who at that time, owing to the atrocities they had committed, were held in abhorance by all civilised nations. It was quite certain that he would be asked how he came by the child, he could hardly say he had bought her, as that would be worse still, he might be accused of being a slave dealer'.

The poor man hardly knew what to do. At first, he would try and get her to England and send her to his wife, who would surely be deeply touched by her sad story, but there were many reasons against that, as he had already a large family of his own, and his wife would hardly thank him for adding to his *he* responsibilities.

The little girl knew no language but Greek, and on account of the shock she had suffered, had entirely lost her memory and did not know what her name was, or who her parents were, and had no other clothes than those she wore, and as to her age, the Captain could only guess that she was about eight years old.

She was of a sweet and gentle nature, and took at once to her new friend. The good man, sailor as he was, made a great pet of her as did the rest of the crew, and she seemed quite happy in her new surroundings.

Some time before this, while in the distant East the Turkish tyranny was moving towards the destruction of their subject people,

the following conversation took place between Lord Derry and Mr Murray, the famous publisher in the comfortable private room of the latter's house in London. "Well my friend," said Mr Murray, "What is the verdict, what do the doctors say?"

" They tell me, "replied Lord Derry, sadly," that she must not pass another winter in England, I must take her south in search of the sun."

" That's ~~a~~ bad," said Murray, but of course it will have to be done, it would never do to run any risk, her ladyship's health must be the first consideration."

" Of course, and I must see about it at once."

" But what about yourself, and your literary work --- your edition of Aristophanes, for instance? You will have to give that up for the present, I am afraid. This will be a great shock to all your literary friends and acquaintances."

" It is a great disappointment to me I can assure you, my friend, but for my wife's sake I must sacrifice everything. I leave my half finished work in your hands, and you shall hear from me from time to time, I promise. "

Lady Derry's health was distressing her husband considerably. ~~Best~~ Besides possessing a most charming personality, she was a great help to him in his literary pursuits, she was a very accomplished woman, speaking several languages, and was a poetess in a mild way. She had also studied Latin and Greek and was able to help her husband in his translations in those languages. They had known each other for a number of years, but his frequent absence from England on various diplomatic missions had prevented, or rather delayed their marriage. He was devoted to her, so that it was with a very heavy heart he at once set about making arrangements to carry out the doctor's orders, and it was decided to go to the Mediterranean. This, however, was easier said than done, as there



THE TEMPLE





*Photo in 1821 - Before Mr. Iyer built his house and gardens by General Cosasco*



View from River	View of the River from the bank	Gate House	Palace	Entrance to Garden
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THE VILLA MIRAMAR



BALCONY IN REAR OF HOUSE

were no regular packets going there in those days, and the journey overland was out of the question, so the doctor said, so the only thing to be done was to charter some sailing ship which could accommodate Lord Derry and his wife and the small party who would accompany him. This after some trouble, was arranged, and the Schooner "HOPE" owned by Captain Edye was engaged.

In the month of August, 1820, the party sailed from the port of London.

The sea air, and the change, did wonders for Lady Derry, and after some months of pleasant cruising, calling at several ports on the coasts of Spain, and Portugal, and Gibraltar and several harbours in the western Mediterranean, they arrived at Malta in the spring of 1821.

The climate seemed to suit the invalid, so Lord Derry having found what he considered a suitable residence on the sea front decided not to proceed any further. The party landed, and with many regrets, said good-bye to Captain Edye, and his vessel, <sup>which</sup> after a short refit, left with a cargo for the Eastern ports of the Mediterranean.

Several weeks passed, and so much better was his wife's health that Lord Derry decided to abandon any idea of returning to England. He then acquired, on a long lease, a large piece of rocky land at the back of the house, and set himself to lay out a garden.

This he did, partly to give himself an occupation, but principally, to employ a number of labourers who were much in want of work. Soil had to be brought from all parts of the island, subtropical shrubs and plants of all descriptions were selected from the public gardens, and many others were imported from abroad. All the paths and terraces were so arranged, that any rain that should fall would run into several large reservoirs which had been excavated. The terraces had to be cut out of the solid rock, and retaining walls built, so as to prevent the soil being washed away by the heavy rainfall. Orange and lemon trees, vines and a great quantity of flowering shrubs were planted, as well as pine trees and evergreen oaks, so as to give as much shade as possible during the heat and glare of the summer months. Sheltering walls were raised as a partial protection from the high winds, and these, also, gave a grateful shade in the early part of the day and in the evening.

Flowers of all descriptions were carefully cultivated. **R**oses, carnations, lilies, and violets grew in great abundance, as well as the wonderful flowering cactii. Many bulbs were introduced from South Africa, such as freesias, ixias, tulips, and hyacinths. The result was that in a few years Lord Derry had formed one of the most beautiful <sup>gardens</sup> ~~villas~~ it is possible to imagine.

He spared no expense, and the once bare and rocky ground became a series of hanging gardens, sloping down from the top of the hill to the house.

So pleasantly did the time pass in making these lovely gardens that, though most distressing news came to Malta from time to time, Lord Derry hardly realised the terrible and ferocious oppression that was being practised by the Turks upon their unfortunate Christian subjects; but within a short time these atrocities were to be brought home to him in a most vivid and personal manner.

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The "Hope" arrived at Alexandria, and Captain Edye found there a cargo of grain waiting for him to take to Malta, but still the question as to what to do with his little Greek girl had not been solved.

Captain Edye finally decided that on arrival at Malta, he would take the child to Lord and Lady Derry, tell them the whole story, and beg them to help him out of his difficulty, as he knew them to be kind and charitable people, and he felt sure they would do something for the poor little orphan, for Lord Derry was very much in sympathy with the Greeks in their struggle for independence.

as were a large number of his countrymen. He was a Greek scholar, and had written a good deal on the subject, corresponding often with Lord Byron, who was then in Greece.

All this was well known to Captain Edye, so he felt some confidence that his appeal would not be in vain.

After a long and stormy voyage, the "Hope" reached Malta one lovely, bright, December morning, and the Captain lost no time in calling upon his friends with his little charge.

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Lord and Lady Derry were delighted to see their old Captain, and received him most warmly. As soon as Lord Derry caught sight of the little girl, who clung to the Captain's hand, he exclaimed: "Why, Captain, who on earth have you brought with you?"

The poor child who was half hidden behind <sup>the Captain,</sup> him, peeped out, and seeing Lady Derry, who was reclining in an armchair, ran up to her and buried her face in her lap.

"Good gracious! Captain Edye" exclaimed her ladyship. "Who is she, the poor little darling?"

"You must excuse her," said the Captain, "she is dreadfully shy, you are the first woman she has seen for many weeks."

Captain Edye then told his story, which explained everything.

"But you say that she remembers nothing that happened before that horrible massacre."

"No, my Lord, she remembers nothing, not even her name, or anything about her parents. I have called her simply 'little maid'."

"But of course she must have a name, we shall have to give her one," said Lord Derry, smiling. Then, as soon as the child had recovered a little from her shyness, he took her and very gently began to talk to her in her own language, in which he was fairly proficient.

She could remember nothing about her young life, but kept on pointing to Captain Edye and saying, in her own language, "Oh, good kind man, good kind man," and ran to clasp her hands round his knees. So, after a little ~~more~~ discussion, it was decided that she might remain with them for the present, and later they would see what could be done about her.

Captain Edye was very sorry to part with the little girl, but after warmly thanking his friends, he reluctantly went away. When he left, the poor child burst into tears. Lady Derry took her to her heart, and soothed her as only a woman can.

The next thing to do was to find a suitable name until some day she might remember her own.

After a good many suggestions, Lord Derry decided upon the



classical name of Helena, as being of Greek origin, and for surname he gave her the name of the place where she was found, and so

Helena Chios became a member of the family.

In due course, an Irish lady who had been governess to an English family in the island, was found and readily undertook to teach

Helena, and the girl soon proved a very apt pupil.

Her sweet disposition and sad story soon endeared her to her kind host and hostess, and all who came in contact with her. She was small, with very regular features, rather pale, with dark hair and large expressive eyes. As a rule she was bright and cheerful, but as she grew older there could be noticed sometimes a far off look in her eyes as if longing for something she missed, probably a feeling of loneliness because she wondered who she might be and who her parents were, but it was very rarely that this feeling came over her and it was only a passing cloud, her sweet and loveable nature rapidly asserting itself.

Lord Derry had erected at the top of the garden a small Greek temple in honour of Helena, he said, and there she used to pass a considerable<sup>e</sup> part of her time with her governess, reading, studying, and enjoying the lovely view of the harbour and surrounding country.

She almost lived in the gardens, and was never so happy as when accompanying her host while superintending the work that was in progress, or with Lady Derry in her wheel chair, directing the gardeners, for she was now able to move about.

Lord Derry, a great student and classical scholar, interested himself in Helena's education, for he found her very quick and intelligent. He also gathered round him the learned and scientific men there were in the island, some of whom took a great interest in the little orphan.

Helena was quite happy, but she had few playmates and this made her appear, perhaps a little older than she really was.

Among the family circle at the Villa, was a niece of Lady Derry, who had come out with them from England, Lily Darrell. For some reason or other she had never taken a fancy to Helena, but looked upon her rather as an interloper. As time went on, and Lily saw what a favourite the ~~the~~ child had become, she seemed to avoid, and even to snub her, this hurt Helena, as she saw no reason for it.

Lily was a good deal older than Helena and nothing the latter could do - and she tried her best - would break down this unfriendly feeling, which the elder girl would invariably show towards the younger.

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But Helena was of a bright and happy disposition, so in spite of this little trouble, many very pleasant and profitable years were passed. With the means at the disposal of her adopted parents, she became as accomplished as most girls of her age, speaking English fluently, though always with a slight accent which added to the charm of a very sweet voice, was quite fascinating.



TEMPLE STEPS