

## Chapter Ten: On Board the Galley

Rosamund was led from the Hall of Steeple across the meadow down to the quay at Steeple Creek, where a great boat waited--that of which the brethren had found the impress in the mud. In this the band embarked, placing their dead and wounded, with one or two to tend them, in the fishing skiff that had belonged to her father. This skiff having been made fast to the stern of the boat, they pushed off, and in utter silence rowed down the creek till they reached the tidal stream of the Blackwater, where they turned their bow seawards. Through the thick night and the falling snow slowly they felt their way along, sometimes rowing, sometimes drifting, while the false palmer Nicholas steered them. The journey proved dangerous, for they could scarcely see the shore, although they kept as close to it as they dared.

The end of it was that they grounded on a mud bank, and, do what they would, could not thrust themselves free. Now hope rose in the heart of Rosamund, who sat still as a statue in the middle of the boat, the prince Hassan at her side and the armed men--twenty or thirty of them--all about her. Perhaps, she thought, they would remain fast there till daybreak, and be seen and rescued when the brethren woke from their drugged sleep. But Hassan read her mind, and said to her gently enough:

"Be not deceived, lady, for I must tell you that if the worst

comes to the worst, we shall place you in the little skiff and go on, leaving the rest to take their chance."

As it happened, at the full tide they floated off the bank and drifted with the ebb down towards the sea. At the first break of dawn she looked up, and there, looming large in the mist, lay a galley, anchored in the mouth of the river. Giving thanks to Allah for their safe arrival, the band brought her aboard and led her towards the cabin. On the poop stood a tall man, who was commanding the sailors that they should get up the anchor. As she came he advanced to her, bowing and saying:

"Lady Rosamund, thus you find me once more, who doubtless you never thought to see again."

She looked at him in the faint light and her blood went cold. It was the knight Lozelle.

"You here, Sir Hugh?" she gasped.

"Where you are, there I am," he answered, with a sneer upon his coarse, handsome face. "Did I not swear that it should be so, beauteous Rosamund, after your saintly cousin worsted me in the fray?"

"You here?" she repeated, "you, a Christian knight, and in the

pay of Saladin!"

"In the pay of anyone who leads me to you, Rosamund." Then, seeing the emir Hassan approach, he turned to give some orders to the sailors, and she passed on to the cabin and in her agony fell upon her knees.

When Rosamund rose from them she felt that the ship was moving, and, desiring to look her last on Essex land, went out again upon the poop, where Hassan and Sir Hugh placed themselves, one upon either side of her. Then it was that she saw the tower of St. Peter's-on-the-Wall and her cousins seated on horseback in front of it, the light of the risen sun shining upon their mail. Also she saw Wulf spur his horse into the sea, and faintly heard his great cry of "Fear not! We follow, we follow!"

A thought came to her, and she sprang towards the bulwark; but they were watching and held her, so that all that she could do was to throw up her arms in token.

Now the wind caught the sail and the ship went forward swiftly, so that soon she lost sight of them. Then in her grief and rage Rosamund turned upon Sir Hugh Lozelle and beat him with bitter words till he shrank before her.

"Coward and traitor!" she said. "So it was you who planned this,

knowing every secret of our home, where often you were a guest! You who for Paynim gold have murdered my father, not daring to show your face before his sword, but hanging like a thief upon the coast, ready to receive what braver men had stolen. Oh! may God avenge his blood and me on you, false knight--false to Him and me and faith and honour--as avenge He will! Heard you not what my kinsman called to me? 'We follow. We follow!' Yes, they follow, and their swords--those swords you feared to look on--shall yet pierce your heart and give up your soul to your master Satan," and she paused, trembling with her righteous wrath, while Hassan stared at her and muttered:

"By Allah, a princess indeed! So have I seen Salah-ed-din look in his rage. Yes, and she has his very eyes."

But Sir Hugh answered in a thick voice.

"Let them follow--one or both. I fear them not and out there my foot will not slip in the snow."

"Then I say that it shall slip in the sand or on a rock," she answered, and turning, fled to the cabin and cast herself down and wept till she thought that her heart would break.

Well might Rosamund weep whose beloved sire was slain, who was torn from her home to find herself in the power of a man she

hated. Yet there was hope for her. Hassan, Eastern trickster as he might be, was her friend; and her uncle, Saladin, at least, would never wish that she should be shamed. Most like he knew nothing of this man Lozelle, except as one of those Christian traitors who were ever ready to betray the Cross for gold. But Saladin was far away and her home lay behind her, and her cousins and lovers were eating out their hearts upon that fading shore. And she--one woman alone--was on this ship with the evil man Lozelle, who thus had kept his promise, and there were none save Easterns to protect her, none save them--and God, Who had permitted that such things should be.

The ship swayed, she grew sick and faint. Hassan brought her food with his own hands, but she loathed it who only desired to die. The day turned to night, the night turned to day again, and always Hassan brought her food and strove to comfort her, till at length she remembered no more.

Then came a long, long sleep, and in the sleep dreams of her father standing with his face to the foe and sweeping them down with his long sword as a sickle sweeps corn--of her father felled by the pilgrim knave, dying upon the floor of his own house, and saying "God will guard you. His will be done." Dreams of Godwin and Wulf also fighting to save her, plighting their troths and swearing their oaths, and between the dreams blackness.

Rosamund awoke to feel the sun streaming warmly through the shutter of her cabin, and to see a woman who held a cup in her hand, watching her--a stout woman of middle age with a not unkindly face. She looked about her and remembered all. So she was still in the ship.

"Whence come you?" she asked the woman.

"From France, lady. This ship put in at Marseilles, and there I was hired to nurse one who lay sick, which suited me very well, as I wished to go to Jerusalem to seek my husband, and good money was offered me. Still, had I known that they were all Saracens on this ship, I am not sure that I should have come--that is, except the captain, Sir Hugh, and the palmer Nicholas; though what they, or you either, are doing in such company I cannot guess."

"What is your name?" asked Rosamund idly.

"Marie--Marie Bouchet. My husband is a fishmonger, or was, until one of those crusading priests got hold of him and took him off to kill Paynims and save his soul, much against my will. Well, I promised him that if he did not return in five years I would come to look for him. So here I am, but where he may be is another matter."

"It is brave of you to go," said Rosamund, then added by an

afterthought, "How long is it since we left Marseilles?"

Marie counted on her fat fingers, and answered:

"Five--nearly six weeks. You have been wandering in your mind all that time, talking of many strange things, and we have called at three ports. I forget their names, but the last one was an island with a beautiful harbour. Now, in about twenty days, if all goes well, we should reach another island called Cyprus. But you must not talk so much, you must sleep. The Saracen called Hassan, who is a clever doctor, told me so."

So Rosamund slept, and from that time forward, floating on the calm Mediterranean sea, her strength began to come back again rapidly, who was young and strong in body and constitution. Three days later she was helped to the deck, where the first man she saw was Hassan, who came forward to greet her with many Eastern salutations and joy written on his dark, wrinkled face.

"I give thanks to Allah for your sake and my own," he said. "For yours that you still live whom I thought would die, and for myself that had you died your life would have been required at my hands by Salah-ed-din, my master."

"If so, he should have blamed Azrael, not you," answered Rosamund, smiling; then suddenly turned cold, for before her was

Sir Hugh Lozelle, who also thanked Heaven that she had recovered. She listened to him coldly, and presently he went away, but soon was at her side again. Indeed, she could never be free of him, for whenever she appeared on deck he was there, nor could he be repelled, since neither silence nor rebuff would stir him. Always he sat near, talking in his false, hateful voice, and devouring her with the greedy eyes which she could feel fixed upon her face. With him often was his jackal, the false palmer Nicholas, who crawled about her like a snake and strove to flatter her, but to this man she would never speak a word.

At last she could bear it no longer, and when her health had returned to her, summoned Hassan to her cabin.

"Tell me, prince," she said, "who rules upon this vessel?"

"Three people," he answered, bowing. "The knight, Sir Hugh Lozelle, who, as a skilled navigator, is the captain and rules the sailors; I, who rule the fighting men; and you, Princess, who rule us all."

"Then I command that the rogue named Nicholas shall not be allowed to approach me. Is it to be borne that I must associate with my father's murderer?"

"I fear that in that business we all had a hand, nevertheless



your order shall be obeyed. To tell you the truth, lady, I hate the fellow, who is but a common spy."

"I desire also," went on Rosamund, "to speak no more with Sir Hugh Lozelle."

"That is more difficult," said Hassan, "since he is the captain whom my master ordered me to obey in all things that have to do with the ship."

"I have nothing to do with the ship," answered Rosamund; "and surely the princess of Baalbec, if so I am, may choose her own companions. I wish to see more of you and less of Sir Hugh Lozelle."

"I am honoured," replied Hassan, "and will do my best."

For some days after this, although he was always watching her, Lozelle approached Rosamund but seldom, and whenever he did so he found Hassan at her side, or rather standing behind her like a guard.

At length, as it chanced, the prince was taken with a sickness from drinking bad water which held him to his bed for some days, and then Lozelle found his opportunity. Rosamund strove to keep her cabin to avoid him, but the heat of the summer sun in the

Mediterranean drove her out of it to a place beneath an awning on the poop, where she sat with the woman Marie. Here Lozelle approached her, pretending to bring her food or to inquire after her comfort, but she would answer him nothing. At length, since Marie could understand what he said in French, he addressed her in Arabic, which he spoke well, but she feigned not to understand him. Then he used the English tongue as it was talked among the common people in Essex, and said:

"Lady, how sorely you misjudge me. What is my crime against you? I am an Essex man of good lineage, who met you in Essex and learnt to love you there. Is that a crime, in one who is not poor, who, moreover, was knighted for his deeds by no mean hand? Your father said me nay, and you said me nay, and, stung by my disappointment and his words--for he called me sea-thief and raked up old tales that are not true against me--I talked as I should not have done, swearing that I would wed you yet in spite of all. For this I was called to account with justice, and your cousin, the young knight Godwin, who was then a squire, struck me in the face. Well, he worsted and wounded me, fortune favouring him, and I departed with my vessel to the East, for that is my business, to trade between Syria and England.

"Now, as it chanced, there being peace at the time between the Sultan and the Christians, I visited Damascus to buy merchandise. Whilst I was there Saladin sent for me and asked if it were true

that I belonged to a part of England called Essex. When I answered yes, he asked if I knew Sir Andrew D'Arcy and his daughter. Again I said yes, whereon he told me that strange tale of your kinship to him, of which I had heard already; also a still stranger tale of some dream that he had dreamed concerning you, which made it necessary that you should be brought to his court, where he was minded to raise you to great honour. In the end, he offered to hire my finest ship for a large sum, if I would sail it to England to fetch you; but he did not tell me that any force was to be used, and I, on my part, said that I would lift no hand against you or your father, nor indeed have I done so."

"Who remembered the swords of Godwin and Wulf," broke in Rosamund scornfully, "and preferred that braver men should face them."

"Lady," answered Lozelle, colouring, "hitherto none have accused me of a lack of courage. Of your courtesy, listen, I pray you. I did wrong to enter on this business; but lady, it was love for you that drove me to it, for the thought of this long voyage in your company was a bait I could not withstand."

"Paynim gold was the bait you could not withstand--that is what you mean. Be brief, I pray you. I weary."

"Lady, you are harsh and misjudge me, as I will show," and he

looked about him cautiously. "Within a week from now, if all goes well, we cast anchor at Limazol in Cyprus, to take in food and water before we run to a secret port near Antioch, whence you are to be taken overland to Damascus, avoiding all cities of the Franks. Now, the Emperor Isaac of Cyprus is my friend, and over him Saladin has no power. Once in his court, you would be safe until such time as you found opportunity to return to England. This, then, is my plan--that you should escape from the ship at night as I can arrange."

"And what is your payment," she asked, "who are a merchant knight?"

"My payment, lady, is--yourself. In Cyprus we will be wed--oh! think before you answer. At Damascus many dangers await you; with me you will find safety and a Christian husband who loves you well--so well that for your sake he is willing to lose his ship and, what is more, to break faith with Saladin, whose arm is long."

"Have done," she said coldly. "Sooner will I trust myself to an honest Saracen than to you, Sir Hugh, whose spurs, if you met your desert, should be hacked from your heels by scullions. Yes, sooner would I take death for my lord than you, who for your own base ends devised the plot that brought my father to his murder and me to slavery. Have done, I say, and never dare again to

speak of love to me," and rising, she walked past him to her cabin.

But Lozelle looking after her muttered to himself, "Nay, fair lady, I have but begun; nor will I forget your bitter words, for which you shall pay the merchant knight in kisses."

From her cabin Rosamund sent a message to Hassan, saying that she would speak with him.

He came, still pale with illness, and asked her will, whereon she told him what had passed between Lozelle and herself, demanding his protection against this man.

Hassan's eyes flashed.

"Yonder he stands," he said, "alone. Will you come with me and speak to him?"

She bowed her head, and giving her his hand, he led her to the poop.

"Sir captain," he began, addressing Lozelle, "the Princess here tells me a strange story--that you have dared to offer your love to her, by Allah! to her, a niece of Salah-ed-din."

"What of it, Sir Saracen?" answered Lozelle, insolently. "Is not a Christian knight fit mate for the blood of an Eastern chief? Had I offered her less than marriage, you might have spoken."

"You!" answered Hassan, with rage in his low voice, "you, huckstering thief and renegade, who swear by Mahomet in Damascus and by your prophet Jesus in England--ay, deny it not, I have heard you, as I have heard that rogue, Nicholas, your servant. You, her fit mate? Why, were it not that you must guide this ship, and that my master bade me not to quarrel with you till your task was done, I would behead you now and cut from your throat the tongue that dared to speak such words," and as he spoke he gripped the handle of his scimitar.

Lozelle quailed before his fierce eyes, for well he knew Hassan, and knew also that if it came to fighting his sailors were no match for the emir and his picked Saracens.

"When our duty is done you shall answer for those words," he said, trying to look brave.

"By Allah! I hold you to the promise," replied Hassan. "Before Salah-ed-din I will answer for them when and where you will, as you shall answer to him for your treachery."

"Of what, then, am I accused?" asked Lozelle. "Of loving the lady

Rosamund, as do all men--perhaps yourself, old and withered as you are, among them?"

"Ay, and for that crime I will repay you, old and withered as I am, Sir Renegade. But with Salah-ed-din you have another score to settle--that by promising her escape you tried to seduce her from this ship, where you were sworn to guard her, saying that you would find her refuge among the Greeks of Cyprus."

"Were this true," replied Lozelle, "the Sultan might have cause of complaint against me. But it is not true. Hearken, since speak I must. The lady Rosamund prayed me to do this deed, and I told her that for my honour's sake it is not possible, although it was true that I loved her now as always, and would dare much for her. Then she said that if I did but save her from you Saracens, I should not go without my reward, since she would wed me. Again, although it cost me sore, I answered that it might not be, but when once I had brought my ship to land, I was her true knight, and being freed of my oath, would do my best to save her."

"Princess, you hear," said Hassan, turning to Rosamund. "What say you?"

"I say," she answered coldly, "that this man lies to save himself. I say, moreover, that I answered to him, that sooner would I die than that he should lay a finger on me."

"I hold also that he lies," said Hassan. "Nay; unclasp that dagger if you would live to see another sun. Here, I will not fight with you, but Salah-ed-din shall learn all this case when we reach his court, and judge between the word of the princess of Baalbec and of his hired servant, the false Frank and pirate, Sir Hugh Lozelle."

"Let him learn it--when we reach his court," answered Lozelle, with meaning; then added, "Have you aught else to say to me, prince Hassan? Because if not, I must be attending to the business of my ship, which you suppose that I was about to abandon to win a lady's smile."

"Only this, that the ship is the Sultan's and not yours, for he bought it from you, and that henceforth this lady will be guarded day and night, and doubly guarded when we come to the shores of Cyprus, where it seems that you have friends. Understand and remember."

"I understand, and certainly I will remember," replied Lozelle, and so they parted.

"I think," said Rosamund, when he had gone, "that we shall be fortunate if we land safe in Syria."



"That was in my mind, also, lady. I think, too, that I have forgot my wisdom, but my heart rose against this man, and being still weak from sickness, I lost my judgment and spoke what was in my heart, who would have done better to wait. Now, perhaps, it will be best to kill him, if it were not that he alone has the skill to navigate the ship, which is a trade that he has followed from his youth. Nay, let it go as Allah wills. He is just, and will bring the matter to judgment in due time."

"Yes, but to what judgment?" asked Rosamund.

"I hope to that of the sword," answered Hassan, as he bowed and left her.

From that time forward armed men watched all the night through before Rosamund's cabin, and when she walked the deck armed men walked after her. Nor was she troubled by Lozelle, who sought to speak with her no more, or to Hassan either. Only with the man Nicholas he spoke much.

At length upon one golden evening--for Lozelle was a skilful pilot, one of the best, indeed, who sailed those seas--they came to the shores of Cyprus, and cast anchor. Before them, stretched along the beach, lay the white town of Limazol, with palm trees standing up amidst its gardens, while beyond the fertile plain rose the mighty mountain range of Trooidos. Sick and weary of the

endless ocean, Rosamund gazed with rapture at this green and beautiful shore, the home of so much history, and sighed to think that on it she might set no foot. Lozelle saw her look and heard her sigh, and as he climbed into the boat which had come out to row him into the harbour, mocked her, saying:

"Will you not change your mind, lady, and come with me to visit my friend, the Emperor Isaac? I swear that his court is gay, not packed full of sour Saracens or pilgrims thinking of their souls. In Cyprus they only make pilgrimages to Paphos yonder, where Venus was born from out the foam, and has reigned since the beginning of the world--ay, and will reign until its end."

Rosamund made no answer, and Lozelle, descending into the boat, was rowed shorewards through the breakers by the dark-skinned, Cyprian oarsmen, who wore flowers in their hair and sang as they laboured at the oars.

For ten whole days they rolled off Limazol, although the weather was fair and the wind blew straight for Syria. When Rosamund asked why they bided there so long, Hassan stamped his foot and said it was because the Emperor refused to supply them with more food or water than was sufficient for their daily need, unless he, Hassan, would land and travel to an inland town called Nicosia, where his court lay, and there do homage to him. This, scenting a trap, he feared to do, nor could they put out to sea

without provisions.

"Cannot Sir Hugh Lozelle see to it?" asked Rosamund.

"Doubtless, if he will," answered Hassan, grinding his teeth;

"but he swears that he is powerless."

So there they bode day after day, baked by the sweltering summer sun and rocked to and fro on the long ocean rollers till their hearts grew sick within them, and their bodies also, for some of them were seized with a fever common to the shores of Cyprus, of which two died. Now and again some officer would come off from the shore with Lozelle and a little food and water, and bargain with them, saying that before their wants were supplied the prince Hassan must visit the Emperor and bring with him the fair lady who was his passenger, whom he desired to see.

Hassan would answer no, and double the guard about Rosamund, for at nights boats appeared that cruised round them. In the daytime also bands of men, fantastically dressed in silks, and with them women, could be seen riding to and fro upon the shore and staring at them, as though they were striving to make up their minds to attack the ship.

Then Hassan armed his grim Saracens and bade them stand in line upon the bulwarks, drawn scimitar in hand, a sight that seemed to

frighten the Cypriotes--at least they always rode away towards the great square tower of Colossi.

At length Hassan would bear it no more. One morning Lozelle came off from Limazol, where he slept at night, bringing with him three Cyprian lords, who visited the ship--not to bargain as they pretended, but to obtain sight of the beautiful princess Rosamund. Thereon the common talk began of homage that must be paid before food was granted, failing which the Emperor would bid his seamen capture the ship. Hassan listened a while, then suddenly issued an order that the lords should be seized.

"Now," he said to Lozelle, "bid your sailors haul up the anchor, and let us begone for Syria."

"But," answered the knight, "we have neither food nor water for more than one day."

"I care not," answered Hassan, "as well die of thirst and starvation on the sea as rot here with fever. What we can bear these Cyprian gallants can bear also. Bid the sailors lift the anchor and hoist the sail, or I loose my scimitars among them."

Now Lozelle stamped and foamed, but without avail, so he turned to the three lords, who were pale with fear, and said:

"Which will you do: find food and water for this ship, or put to sea without them, which is but to die?"

They answered that they would go ashore and supply all that was needful.

"Nay," said Hassan, "you bide here until it comes."

In the end, then, this happened, for one of the lords chanced to be a nephew of the Emperor, who, when he learned that he was captive, sent supplies in plenty. Thus it came about that the Cyprian lords having been sent back with the last empty boat, within two days they were at sea again.

Now Rosamund missed the hated face of the spy, Nicholas, and told Hassan, who made inquiry, to find--or so said Lozelle--that he went ashore and vanished there on the first day of their landing in Cyprus, though whether he had been killed in some brawl, or fallen sick, or hidden himself away, he did not know. Hassan shrugged his shoulders, and Rosamund was glad enough to be rid of him, but in her heart she wondered for what evil purpose Nicholas had left the ship.

When the galley was one day out from Cyprus steering for the coast of Syria, they fell into a calm such as is common in those seas in summer. This calm lasted eight whole days, during which

they made but little progress. At length, when all were weary of staring at the oil-like sea, a wind sprang up that grew gradually to a gale blowing towards Syria, and before it they fled along swiftly. Worse and stronger grew that gale, till on the evening of the second day, when they seemed in no little danger of being pooped, they saw a great mountain far away, at the sight of which Lozelle thanked God aloud.

"Are those the mountains near Antioch?" asked Hassan.

"Nay," he answered, "they are more than fifty miles south of them, between Ladikiya and Jebela. There, by the mercy of Heaven, is a good haven, for I have visited it, where we can lie till this storm is past."

"But we are steering for Darbesak, not for a haven near Jebela, which is a Frankish port," answered Hassan, angrily.

"Then put the ship about and steer there yourself," said Lozelle, "and I promise you this, that within two hours every one of you will be dead at the bottom of the sea."

Hassan considered. It was true, for then the waves would strike them broadside on, and they must fill and sink.

"On your head be it," he answered shortly.

The dark fell, and by the light of the great lantern at their prow they saw the white seas hiss past as they drove shorewards beneath bare masts. For they dared hoist no sail.

All that night they pitched and rolled, till the stoutest of them fell sick, praying God and Allah that they might have light by which to enter the harbour. At length they saw the top of the loftiest mountain grow luminous with the coming dawn, although the land itself was still lost in shadow, and saw also that it seemed to be towering almost over them.

"Take courage," cried Lozelle, "I think that we are saved," and he hoisted a second lantern at his masthead--why, they did not know.

After this the sea began to fall, only to grow rough again for a while as they crossed some bar, to find themselves in calm water, and on either side of them what appeared in the dim, uncertain light to be the bush-clad banks of a river. For a while they ran on, till Lozelle called in a loud voice to the sailors to let the anchor go, and sent a messenger to say that all might rest now, as they were safe. So they laid them down and tried to sleep.

But Rosamund could not sleep. Presently she rose, and throwing on her cloak went to the door of the cabin and looked at the beauty

of the mountains, rosy with the new-born light, and at the misty surface of the harbour. It was a lonely place--at least, she could see no town or house, although they were lying not fifty yards from the tree-hidden shore. As she stood thus, she heard the sound of boats being rowed through the mist, and perceived three or four of these approaching the ship in silence, perceived also that Lozelle, who stood alone upon the deck, was watching their approach. Now the first boat made fast and a man in the prow rose up and began to speak to Lozelle in a low voice. As he did so the hood fell back from his head, and Rosamund saw the face. It was that of the spy Nicholas! For a moment she stood amazed, for they had left this man in Cyprus; then understanding came to her and she cried aloud:

"Treachery! Prince Hassan, there is treachery."

As the words left her lips fierce, wild-looking men began to scramble aboard at the low waist of the galley, to which boat after boat made fast. The Saracens also tumbled from the benches where they slept and ran aft to the deck where Rosamund was, all except one of them who was cut off in the prow of the ship. Prince Hassan appeared, too, scimitar in hand, clad in his jewelled turban and coat of mail, but without his cloak, shouting orders as he came, while the hired crew of the ship flung themselves upon their knees and begged for mercy. To him Rosamund cried out that they were betrayed and by Nicholas, whom she had



seen. Then a great man, wearing a white burnous and holding a naked sword in his hand, stepped forward and said in Arabic:

"Yield you now, for you are outnumbered and your captain is captured," and he pointed to Lozelle, who was being held by two men while his arms were bound behind him.

"In whose name do you bid me yield?" asked the prince, glaring about him like a lion in a trap.

"In the dread name of Sinan, in the name of the lord Al-je-bal, O servant of Salah-ed-din."

At these words a groan of fear went up even from the brave Saracens, for now they learned that they had to do with the terrible chief of the Assassins.

"Is there then war between the Sultan and Sinan?" asked Hassan.

"Ay, there is always war. Moreover, you have one with you," and he pointed to Rosamund, "who is dear to Salah-ed-din, whom, therefore, my master desires as a hostage."

"How knew you that?" said Hassan, to gain time while his men formed up.

"How does the lord Sinan know all things?" was the answer; "Come, yield, and perhaps he will show you mercy."

"Through spies," hissed Hassan, "such spies as Nicholas, who has come from Cyprus before us, and that Frankish dog who is called a knight," and he pointed to Lozelle. "Nay, we yield not, and here, Assassins, you have to do not with poisons and the knife, but with bare swords and brave men. Ay, and I warn you--and your lord--that Salah-ed-din will take vengeance for this deed."

"Let him try it if he wishes to die, who hitherto has been spared," answered the tall man quietly. Then he said to his followers, "Cut them down, all save the women"--for the Frenchwoman, Marie, was now clinging to the arm of Rosamund--"and emir Hassan, whom I am commanded to bring living to Masyaf."

"Back to your cabin, lady," said Hassan, "and remember that whate'er befalls, we have done our best to save you. Ay, and tell it to my lord, that my honour may be clean in his eyes. Now, soldiers of Salah-ed-din, fight and die as he has taught you how. The gates of Paradise stand open, and no coward will enter there."

They answered with a fierce, guttural cry. Then, as Rosamund fled to the cabin, the fray began, a hideous fray. On came the Assassins with sword and dagger, striving to storm the deck.

Again and again they were beaten back, till the waist seemed full of their corpses, as man by man they fell beneath the curved scimitars, and again and again they charged these men who, when their master ordered, knew neither fear nor pity. But more boatloads came from the shore, and the Saracens were but few, worn also with storm and sickness, so at last Rosamund, peeping beneath her hand, saw that the poop was gained.

Here and there a man fought on until he fell beneath the cruel knives in the midst of the circle of the dead, among them the warrior-prince Hassan. Watching him with fascinated eyes as he strove alone against a host, Rosamund was put in mind of another scene, when her father, also alone, had striven thus against that emir and his soldiers, and even then she bethought her of the justice of God.

See! his foot slipped on the blood-stained deck. He was down, and ere he could rise again they had thrown cloaks over him, these fierce, silent men, who even with their lives at stake, remembered the command of their captain, to take him living. So living they took him, with not a wound upon his skin, who when he struck them down, had never struck back at him lest the command of Sinan should be broken.

Rosamund noted it, and remembering that his command was also that she should be brought to him unharmed, knew that she had no

violence to fear at the hands of these cruel murderers. From this thought, and because Hassan still lived, she took such comfort as she might.

"It is finished," said the tall man, in his cold voice. "Cast these dogs into the sea who have dared to disobey the command of Al-je-bal."

So they took them up, dead and living together, and threw them into the water, where they sank, nor did one of the wounded Saracens pray them for mercy. Then they served their own dead likewise, but those that were only wounded they took ashore. This done, the tall man advanced to the cabin and said:

"Lady, come, we are ready to start upon our journey."

Having no choice, Rosamund obeyed him, remembering as she went how from a scene of battle and bloodshed she had been brought aboard that ship to be carried she knew not whither, which now she left in a scene of battle and bloodshed to be carried she knew not whither.

"Oh!" she cried aloud, pointing to the corpses they hurled into the deep, "ill has it gone with these who stole me, and ill may it go with you also, servant of Al-je-bal."

But the tall man answered nothing, as followed by the weeping Marie and the prince Hassan, he led her to the boat.

Soon they reached the shore, and here they tore Marie from her, nor did Rosamund ever learn what became of her, or whether or no this poor woman found her husband whom she had dared so much to seek.