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# SIX MONTHS AMONG BRIGANDS

## III

### THE MOTHER AND HER BABY

BY ELLEN M. STONE

**D**AYS had deepened into weeks, and weeks into months, since the 4th of September, the day after our capture, when I had informed the brigands of the delicate condition in which my fellow-captive, Mrs. Tsilka, was found. When they first asked me my opinion as to the length of time which might elapse before the ransom could be paid, I told them that on account of Mrs. Tsilka it would be impossible that we could remain with them more than three months. They then thought that the term of our captivity would be far shorter than that, as they afterwards confessed to us, deceiving themselves with the idea that the money would be forthcoming immediately, within not more than twenty or thirty days.

During November, as negotiations were dragging their slow lengths along, and there seemed no prospect of our speedy release, although we were always hoping for it, Mrs. Tsilka began to be troubled because she could make no preparations for the little one whose coming was drawing near. I took it upon myself to inform the brigands of the state of things, and in very plain language told one of them of the exigencies of the situation. His face looked anxious, even troubled. I fancy it is not an easy thing for brigands to know where to turn to find materials for a baby's wardrobe. He looked so stern that my heart almost quailed, but the exigency was imperative. I told him we must have some kind of white woolen cloth—flannel if they could find it—and some thin white cotton cloth for the little dresses. He heaved a deep sigh, and finally said: "Well, make a list of the most indispensable things, and we will see what we can do about getting them."

They were moving frequently from one place to another at night, as they had done from the first. Once we found ourselves shut into some place partly underground, from the ceiling of which, between the slats, looked down at us a long, lean rat. At first he was at a distance, but as the brigands left us, after completing their task of arranging our couch of dried leaves and hay, the rat came cautiously nearer, until he looked down upon us from a

broad crevice just over our heads. An inch of candle, stuck upon a log, gave all the light which we had in the dingy place, but it lasted long enough for me to snatch up a stick, with which I was rejoiced to find that I could reach the ceiling. Thus armed, I lay down by Mrs. Tsilka's side. For a time I kept watch, occasionally striking the slats a blow from the stick to remind our visitor that we were awake and on guard. Mrs. Tsilka, with a woman's natural antipathy to rodents, was quite nervous, but finally sleep overcame even her fears. We saw no more of the rat, however.

Once in a great while we asked the guard who happened to be with us if it were not possible to find from somewhere water and conveniences to do a little indispensable washing. If they found it practicable, the water would be forthcoming some time during the day, together with some wooden trough or kettle in which we might wash out a few pieces. We had each but one towel. The number of our handkerchiefs was very limited. We had but one change of undergarments, our one pair of stockings pieced out by two pairs of men's black cotton socks, which the brigands had provided for us. It was not every day that we could have the luxury of washing even our faces, because of scarcity of water. We must have water to drink. We could more easily go with unwashed faces and hands. Hence it was not so strange that our one piece of toilet soap, provided by the brigands, lasted us fully three months.

At length there came a day when a bundle was given to us. No shopper at home more eagerly opens her packages after an expedition to the stores than we that package of cloth. There was the white woolen cloth and the thin white cotton cloth. The former was the coarsest I ever saw, and the latter was only the thin, cheap cheese-cloth which the brigands used for the cleaning of their guns. There were also spools of cotton for our sewing. Mrs. Tsilka was willing to make the best of what was brought to her, and merely remarking that that coarse flannel would grow softer with washing, she took the shears and speedily cut out several blankets, the little

pinning-blankets, and one tiny shirt. From the cheese-cloth she cut three little dresses, two little caps, and as many shirts, and a headkerchief both for herself and for me. Now our work was ready for us. With zest we seated ourselves close by the window, to take advantage of all the light there was. Oh the blessedness of work! The hours had seemed to us interminable before. After our morning devotions we had occupied ourselves in talking together, and sleeping to gain strength for a possible journey at night. Our meals were not varied enough in viands, nor sumptuous enough in the serving, to consume much time. Sometimes when one of the head men came in, and inquired how we were passing the time, we would say, "Oh, we're sitting and talking, and talking and sitting." But now all was changed. We were occupied quietly and happily. We could even lift cheerful faces when one of the brigands asked us what we were doing.

The hours and days sped away more swiftly; and all too soon we had finished binding the blankets with crossway bands of plain cotton cloth, and had made the little dresses and pinning-blankets. Still there was no word of release.

We had been transferred to a sheepfold on the hillside. Macedonia is a pastoral country. As the season advances the shepherds lead their flocks of sheep and goats from the plains to the more abundant verdure on surrounding hills, and later, as the herbage becomes scanty there, they ascend still higher upon the mountains. As the cold of winter approaches, these Wallachian shepherds retrace their steps, leaving many a sheepfold and shepherd's hut unoccupied upon the mountains and hillsides. It was in one of these sheepfolds that we now found ourselves. The brigands were all about us. One corner was reserved for us. From somewhere they had found straw, which they spread down upon the hard ground, and hung a screen of boughs and leaves before us. We could look freely into the open yard. The weather was now cold, and our fingers were often too chilled to allow us to work; but when the sun had warmed the air we opened the package which was becoming so precious to Mrs. Tsilka's heart, for it contained the humble wardrobe which we were preparing for her baby. At least we could see now, and we feather-stitched wherever we could find any excuse for feather-stitching, and hem-stitched wherever we could put in a tuck or hem. This was all the work we had, and we made the most of it. One of the coarse blankets even bears a row of embroidery done with simple white cotton thread, upon which

Mrs. Tsilka, in her passion for work, occupied several otherwise tedious hours. No young mother in happier surroundings takes more pride in the daintily lined and perfumed drawer in which she lays the beautiful wardrobe for her little child, than did this brave-hearted woman as she undid the square of coarse hempen cloth which contained her little one's outfit. Her loving fingers often folded and rearranged the little garments which, in our rude surroundings, actually seemed soft and dainty. We varied our work with investigations in the saddle bags, to see if haply there remained any apples or pears, with which the brigands occasionally supplied us. We were fortunate, indeed, to have so many of them, and some varieties were very nice.

When my companion was overborne, as she sometimes was, with her sorrowful memories and her longings for her dear ones, especially in anticipation of her coming trial, I more than suspected that the brigands sometimes got up some sort of a show of athletics or manœuvres or a game to divert her attention from herself, for they were greatly disconcerted when she was more than usually sad, and evidently distressed if she gave way to tears. Their superstitious fears were strong upon them, lest some harm should come to her or to her little child. To avert the threatened curse they took many precautions, which greatly alleviated our condition as captives.

The time had long since passed for the expected arrival of our tiny guest. Mrs. Tsilka sometimes impatiently longed for her little one, to break up the monotony of our lives, and furnish us occupation and amusement. I could not share with her this eagerness, from fear of the possible complications which might arise. How could we provide for the needs of a baby? How could we protect it from the cold on our travels during the wintry nights? Would the brigands have patience with the baby when it should cry? No, I could not agree with her, but hoped and prayed that the day might come for our release before its birth. I pleaded with the brigands to release Mrs. Tsilka, if it were possible for them to find some place to which to send her; if not to her home, or to some place where her mother might be with her, at least to some house in which she could have the ministries of women, and some of the comforts of a home. I announced to them my willingness to remain alone with them until I could be ransomed, if they would only have mercy on her; but they, as well as we, were nightly expecting word from their messenger concerning the

results of the negotiations for our ransom. So they procrastinated and procrastinated.

Meantime some change came over their plans, as we judged from their movements, though they vouchsafed no information. They compelled us to take long journeys night after night, and Mrs. Tsilka, as well as I, was ten hours in the saddle the night preceding her baby's birth. These nightly journeys occasioned her untold sufferings. On the last night, when the path became too steep to permit us to ride up, we were compelled to dismount and climb. A man on each side assisted each of us, and one behind Mrs. Tsilka tried to give her additional help. Overcome by her weakness and pain, she moaned out to them, "Leave me here to die. I cannot go any farther." Moved to pity by her extreme agony, the brigands encouraged her by saying, "Only a few steps more," and supported her far more tenderly than they had ever dreamed they could support a captive. The end of the ten hours' journey found us hidden in an isolated hut, almost entirely monopolized by two huge wine casks. Just under the one opposite the doorway, between it and the glowing open fire built upon the earth floor, were spread the straw and leaves for our bed. Upon this we sank down exhausted, and were soon in a deep sleep. It seemed to me not long after when I was roused by Mrs. Tsilka moving about, quite contrary to her usual custom after the fatigues of such a night's journey. She said that she was so restless and in so much pain that it was impossible to sleep. There was little sleep for either of us during that day. Perhaps one of the guards suspected what was about to happen, even before I did, for he came to me and talked very seriously about the desirability of our continuing the journey the next night, and hoped that Mrs. Tsilka would understand how extremely necessary it was that we should go on at least one night more. I told him that he knew perfectly well how willing Mrs. Tsilka had proved herself to do all that was possible. She had said to them most pathetically one day, "I shall go as far as I can, and when I cannot travel longer you must leave me, if you cannot stop." As the day wore away it became at last clear to Mrs. Tsilka that she could not go on that night, and about ten o'clock (Turkish), or four in the afternoon, I communicated this fact to the brigand. He looked serious in the extreme, and even concerned, I thought; but simply said, "If she cannot go, we must find some other way," and went away to confer with the members of the band, who were somewhere else.

Meanwhile we made what preparations were

possible to us. Only one guard, and he one of the youngest of the band, remained by the fire. He sat with his face between his hands, sobered by the momentousness of the hour, until I bade him go out and guard us from the outside.

A little before eight o'clock in the evening, in the light of the fire and a smoking kerosene lamp, a tiny maiden joined our band of captives. As I took her in my hands and looked into the wee face, a great wave of love filled my soul, and I said to the mother, "I congratulate you with all my heart. You have a 'blessed baby girl'!" She thanked me, while a sweet content filled her pallid features. In that chilly, draughty place, there was need of speed, lest our newly arrived guest should find this world too harsh in its reception to her. I passed her over to the old woman whom the brigands had found somewhere, and brought some distance to be with us during that hour of trial. With no bathing, without being rubbed even with vaseline, which had been procured for the emergency from one of the brigands who was provided with it to lubricate his weapons, our baby was wrapped in its blankets and laid by its mother's side to rest. Mrs. Tsilka, as a trained hospital nurse, had known just what to do, and had told me, her wholly inexperienced attendant, just what should be done at every point. She had said, "I am not afraid."

It was time to announce the advent to that brigand keeping guard outside the door. What a change had come over his face and manner as he reëntered the hut! The deep depression had given way to relief, if not positive joy. His movements were quick and alert. I said he might go and tell the rest of the band that all was well. He took a large gourd, went to the cask which was so nearly overhanging Mrs. Tsilka, and drew a generous portion of wine. Then he went out, still maintaining that strange brigand silence, to carry the glad tidings to his companions. He had taken the wine that they might drink to the health of the mother and her little daughter.

Quiet reigned in the hut. The baby voice whose lusty cry had proved that the little lungs were strong and well was hushed. The eyes which had opened so brightly and looked upon its strange surroundings in this world were closed, and our little one and her mother rested. The old woman, sitting by the fire, was a picturesque feature of the scene. About her head was wound a white kerchief, and her thin, delicate features were brought out in strong relief by the firelight. Her village costume suggested that she might belong to a family of wandering Wallachian shepherds;

but we never knew who she was, or where the brigands had found her. We had not asked for such assistance, nor supposed that they could or would provide it if we had asked for it. Although she knew only the superstitious customs which prevail among ignorant, isolated peoples, it was a comfort to have an older woman, a mother, with us. She wrapped the little form in its swaddling clothes, and attended to the necessary work which followed. She hung a kettle of water over the fire, into which we put barley to boil, to provide barley water for the mother. In anticipation of the event which had now taken place, we had been obliged to ask our captors to provide us some special articles of food, such as the mother would need for nourishment. They had looked awed and solemnized, realizing the gravity of the hour which threatened them, and had promised to do what they could. They made good their word, and had provided for us barley, prunes, sugar, and tea, and later found for us some potatoes, and more frequently than before a chicken, from which we could make broth.

When our barley water was ready so far as we could prepare it with no milk to add to it, we gave it to our invalid. The baby, too, soon let us know that she had come into the world hungry. What should we do? Her cries would not be stilled; so with the mother's consent we tied a bit of cotton into a thin cloth, and, dipping it into the barley water, put it into the tiny mouth. The baby took hold of it with the greatest eagerness, testifying to her appreciation of it by very audible smacking. From her first meal this was a characteristic of our little maiden, and many a laugh we had over baby's smack, which always gave notice of her satisfaction when being nursed, or when any one who might be holding her put a finger in her mouth to keep her quiet at any critical time. "Don't you know where baby got her smack?" said Mrs. Tsilka to me one day. "Don't you remember how audibly some of



MISS STONE AND MRS. TSILKA'S BABY

the men used to fall upon their food?" "Oh, yes," I answered her. "We used to say 'It sounds like pigs eating at their troughs.'" "That's how baby got her smack," said Mrs. Tsilka.

When their hunger was satisfied, and the mother and baby were composed to sleep, and two brigands had resumed their watch by the fire, and the old woman was nodding in her place before it, I laid myself down in a tiny space under the cask, for my place on the back side of the pallet of straw must now be given to baby. All was quiet. At some time during the night my eyes opened, to see that that brigand chief had taken up the baby, and sat holding it in his strong arms, his head nodding over it with uncontrollable weariness. The mother, too, had not failed to be aware of his action, and had watched him sitting there. As she saw with what tenderness he



STEPPERSON

Drawn by Claude Stepperson

IN A SHEEPFOLD

held that little form, her fears lest the brigands would be cruel to her baby began to be allayed, and her heart was comforted.

Sabbath morning dawned bright and beautiful. We begged the men to allow the door to stand open a little, that Mrs. Tsilka might look out and be cheered by a glimpse of the bright blue sky. She delighted to watch the contrast between the sere, brown leaves of the forest and the brilliant blue. When lost in sleep during the night she had dreamed that windows were open behind her. There were no windows in the hut, but the spaces between the thatched roof overhead and the stone wall upon which its supports rested, gave abundant opportunity for fresh air and mountain breezes to enter the apartment. How thankful she was for the fresh air, and for our comparative freedom from the guards. The day passed quietly and happily. No longer was time to hang heavily upon our hands. The monotony of our lives was broken up by the needs of the mother and her baby; indeed, the days were hardly long enough. We stewed some prunes and put a chicken to boil. The holy hours passed with a Sabbath quiet in our souls.

Toward evening a request was brought from the rest of the band that they might come to congratulate the mother, and see the baby. Mrs. Tsilka gave a happy consent to their request. We arrayed baby in her little best, which consisted only in putting about her, outside her swaddling clothes, the white crocheted woolen Afghan for which they had somewhere found us some yarn. After it was quite dark the men came filing in. They were in their full dress—their weapons all in place, their hands and faces remarkably clean. I held the baby in my arms. Each man passed straight by the fire, which burned brightly, and, standing by the mother, lying there in its light, proffered to her his congratulations. He then congratulated the old woman, sitting by the log which kept the sparks from lighting the straw pallet upon which Mrs. Tsilka lay. Then each congratulated me, and looked into the tiny face of the baby, murmuring some word of blessing, as is their custom. It was a scene worthy an artist's skill. During the day I had asked Mrs. Tsilka if she had a name for baby. "Oh, yes," she said, "I have decided upon that. She shall be called Elena. That is my mother's name and yours. She shall be named for you both, and in English I will call her Eleanor." Hence the men were introduced to baby Elenchie, for we must have her name in the diminutive form for so tiny a girl. They began to talk in a light, even merry, strain. The relief from the superstitious fears which

had so long oppressed them was very great. The care which they had taken of Mrs. Tsilka had not been in vain. "Now," they said, "we must provide an outfit for the baby." One must make her a pair of little moccasins; another a cloak, such as they wore; another, a brigand's suit; still another, a cap; one must compose a song in honor of the occasion; and still another must set it to music. Their talk had its desired effect, for the mother's fears took flight, and she lay and smiled, happy in the consciousness that something had awakened in the heart of even the hardest of our captors, and that her little one would be guarded safely by them. The brigand who was holding baby passed her back to me, and I gave her, rather half-heartedly, I confess, into the outstretched arms of Chaoosh. How afraid we had been of this terrible-looking, black-bearded brigand the first time he had been set as a guard over us. He might have been a Turkish deserter, for he wore their dark blue recorded uniform, and a fez surmounted his thick black hair. He it was who had more than once terrified us. One night, when we were descending a steep hill on foot, through a forest, but a little time before, when all were maintaining the strictest silence, he had suddenly and without orders discharged his musket. Every one sank, overcome with terror, into the shadow of the nearest tree, and waited to learn what would happen. Was it a sudden attack from some enemy? Soon the guard who had been assisting me in the descent said lightly, to allay our fears, "Oh, it's only our Chaoosh!" Other brigands appeared upon the scene, vociferating as vehemently as they dared, and expressing their disgust by spitting, as they said, "That Chaoosh! That Chaoosh!" Chaoosh had seen a strange man leading strange horses, and without consulting his comrades had fired. There were no bounds to their indignation, but time was too precious to be wasted even upon vituperations. The captives were mounted upon the horses, and the line moved on as rapidly as possible, to get out of that region of danger. Here must have been one of our marvelous deliverances, for no attack from any source followed that untimely announcement of our whereabouts.

At another time, when there had been an alarm about the hut in which we were confined, far up on a mountain side, other members of the guard had contented themselves with looking out of the foot-square window which gave light to our apartment; but when Chaoosh looked out, he pressed his gun upon the glass until it gave way, that he might look out more clearly. Faithful as a dog to any

trust which might be committed to him, he yet showed himself rash and without judgment, and many a time we feared what he might do to us. His were the hands which were now outstretched to take Baby Elenchie. Grasping her in them both, he seated himself at once before the fire, Turk fashion, and rocked her back and forth. Then he proceeded in his quick, imperative way, to give me a lecture on the proper care of a baby. Of course I had uncovered the little face to let them see her. "You must not do so," he said; "you will cause her death of cold. You must do so and so," emphasizing his remark by folding her blankets, as well as her Afghan, over her face. "You have not grown up with babies, as I have," he added, as he gave her back, with many another injunction as to the care which I must take of her.

Having wished the mother many happy years, and the baby a long life, they then took their departure and went back to their own quarters, wherever those may have been. Mrs. Tsilka and I sat long that evening talking over the marvelous goodness of God in softening the hearts of those cruel brigands to treat thus tenderly the little child born in captivity among them. The joy which filled the mother's heart aided in her recovery, and baby seemed from the first disposed to make the best of her surroundings. She was a hardy mountain maiden.

The next day the brigands said it was impossible to remain where we were; we must go on the next night. "Can Mrs. Tsilka ride her horse?" inquired the man then in charge. "Of course not," I answered him. He persisted that it was imperative for us to journey that night. "Then can you make a stretcher on which Mrs. Tsilka may be carried," I inquired, and indicated that our blanket might be attached to boughs, one on either end, and thus a stretcher be improvised. He looked thoughtful, and went away to consult with his companions. Later he returned, and said they had decided what to do. A stretcher was impracticable, because of the narrowness of the path in many places. They would make a box in which Mrs. Tsilka might sit. "But," I objected, "she cannot sit; she must recline." The serious look on his face showed that my point added to their difficulties, but I was inexorable. "You have cared so long for Mrs. Tsilka, and she and her little one are doing well. You do not wish her to be injured now," I continued. He yielded the point, and went out again to attend to preparations. Toward evening a box was brought into our hut, which was sadly suggestive in its shape. After dark there were

arrivals. The animals had been brought for the night's journey. We were in readiness, in accordance with the command of the brigands. The old woman had prepared the little one as warmly as possible for her exposure to the night winds and cold. I had taken the precaution to tie bits of sugar into a thin cloth, to provide against the crying of the baby from hunger.

Three of the brigands, from among the younger of them, lifted Mrs. Tsilka, lying on her straw pallet, and laid her in that box which had been prepared for her. All of us who stood around felt the tremendous responsibility which the men were taking in moving her that cold night. She looked up into the faces of the men as they laid her in the box, and said, "Now say 'The Lord forgive her!'" as is the custom in the East when one dead is laid in the casket. The men could not bear this. One burst out, "Don't say that," while the tears stood in his eyes; and he was a stern man, not used to the manifestations of any tender feeling. Meanwhile a conference went on at the door, outside and inside. We wondered what occasioned the delay. The baby would be getting hungry. The mother lay patiently waiting in her box, and still they talked and talked. By and by it appeared that none of the animals brought for the journey was strong enough to carry the heavy load of Mrs. Tsilka in her box strapped upon one side of the pack-saddle, with a correspondingly heavy load upon the other side. Then came a proposition that I should go with one of those horses, while Mrs. Tsilka and Baby Elenchi should remain behind. Dismayed at the bare suggestion that they should be left alone in their weakness and need to the tender mercies of those men, I answered determinedly, "I will not be separated from Mrs. Tsilka." They did not insist upon the demand, and after further consultation said we might remain there that night. It appeared that the brigands had decided that if they were too hard pressed by their pursuers, so that they could not move Mrs. Tsilka, they would disguise her as a village woman, with her baby, and fly with me to some more secure spot.

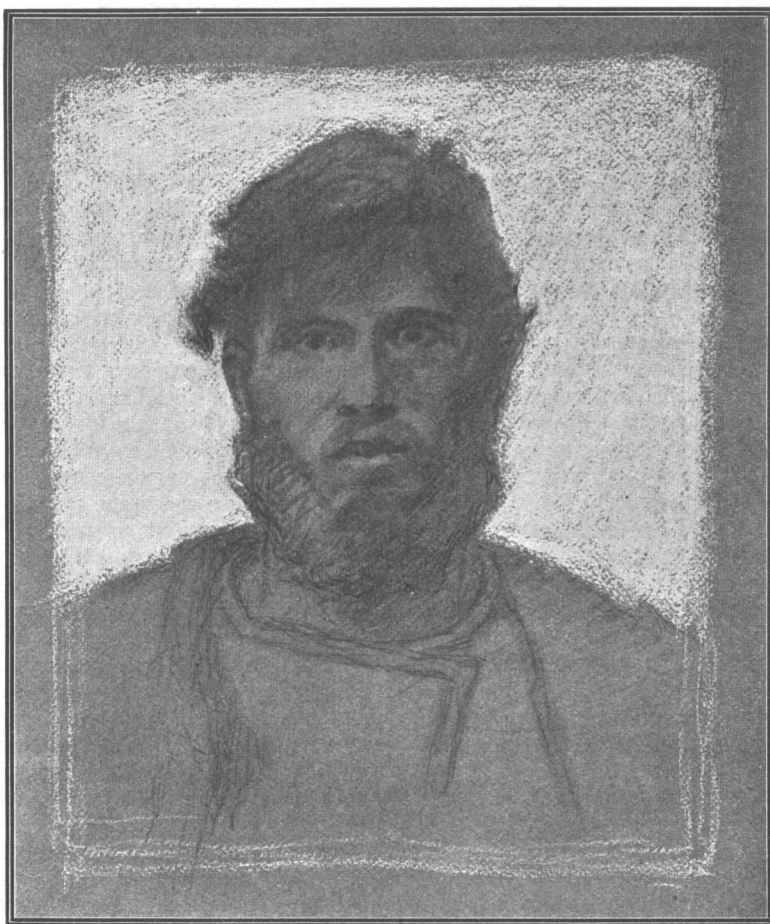
The next day passed swiftly in our varied duties for the comfort of the mother and child. Toward night that same leader, in a purposely offensive way, commanded me peremptorily to gather everything and be ready again for a journey. The youngest among the brigands, who was guarding me at that time, seemed to understand the harshness of the words, and unobtrusively, but sympathetically, helped to gather our belongings. There was real com-



fort to us both as we understood his mute helpfulness. Some of the men had been drinking too much of the wine from that great cask over Mrs. Tsilka. It is quite possible that whiskey also may have been brought to them from somewhere during the day, and this may have been the reason for the heartlessness of that man in charge. We always felt great solicitude when we saw them drinking, especially before we were to set out for a night's expedition, for though rarely positively drunk, some were only too manifestly affected by the liquor.

Again the baby was prepared for her journey, wrapped as warmly as our limited supply of clothing would allow. Mrs. Tsilka was dressed and once

more laid in her box. This time the animals provided were deemed strong enough for the start. Mrs. Tsilka was lifted carefully, and borne out of the hut, and after a good deal of delay was at last securely strapped to one side of a pack-saddle. Then everything available was loaded on to the other side. Cloaks were thrown over, and still the load was too light to balance. Then they tied on great logs of wood, until the load was evened. Now it was my turn to mount, and then the *sadilkah*, in which village women carry their little children, was tied around my neck and shoulders, and to me was committed the precious baby. As the line started off, the head man drew my horse to the first place, saying, "*Kismetchie nahpred*" (the luck-child ahead). The four hours which our guards had said would be the length of our travels that night were drawn out to more than double that number. None who participated in it can ever forget it. The poor animal which carried the double load required



Drawn by Corwin Knapp Linson

A BRIGAND

to be helped by details of the brigands, who put their strong shoulders under the box on the one side and under the motley collection of baggage on the other. They were all thoroughly tired out before they reached their journey's end. The road proved to be a terrible one; in many places such a steep and narrow path that the men must necessarily fall behind; in others, huge boulders blocked the way, and Mrs. Tsilka would be jarred by the grazing of the box along their sides, momentarily expecting the overturn of the saddle. Nor was it easier for me with the baby. It was hard enough for us to balance ourselves alone upon the saddle, but with baby monopolizing one arm, and leaving but one free with which to balance upon the saddle, the task became an extremely difficult one. Men were detailed to guard the baby and me upon each side, and one to try to support my back from behind, when the steep ascent would have thrown me backwards from the saddle. The guard leading

the horse would fall back in cautious tones, commanding "Have a care here," or "Guard well there," and his comrades tried faithfully to do his bidding. The tiny traveler slept during the first hours, but hunger awakened her, and she cried lustily. How thankful we were that in one section of the way, where absolute silence was commanded, no sound came from her! When she began to nestle about and give forth little sounds which preceded her crying, the cold perspiration burst forth all over me. Had we passed that region of danger? What would become of us if baby should cry? Her wail soon burst upon the air. It was no small task in the darkness to find amid its wrappings, partly sheltered under the brigand's cloak which covered me, the wee face and put the bits of sugar into the wailing mouth. However, she took it gladly, and, tiny as she was, smacked her satisfaction over it. By and by she slept again. But the relief from the sugar was only temporary in that keen night air, and her cries became more frequent. We were all well-nigh desperate, when a halt was ordered. Mrs. Tsilka's mother-heart could not endure to hear the wailing cry, and somehow she managed to strain herself out of the cords which bound her, into a sitting posture, and took her little one to her breast. The long night wore away, and after numberless stops and renewals of the journey, we finally came, toward morning, to the place where we were permitted to rest.

The apartment into which we were led was larger than the hut which we had left. Here, too, we had the comfort of a wood fire on the hearth. A lamp helped to relieve the blackness which always prevailed there, for the windows were boarded and nailed up, and day and night were alike to us. Here we had great reason for fear lest Mrs. Tsilka should be seriously ill, for the cold and jarring to which she was exposed in that untimely journey caused her great suffering for several days. The little one seemed to have taken no harm beyond a disordered stomach, which caused her mamma to decide unalterably that baby should be fed no more with sugar. She decided also that baby must take some castor oil, if the brigands could find any for her. Strange to say, a bottle of that medicine was forthcoming after a time, and the wee mite of humanity took her first and only dose of medicine in captivity; she took it like the heroine she is, and smacked over it, too, as if it were very satisfying. Among the new tasks which baby brought to us was the daily care of her napkins. The supply which the brigands had provided was very limited, and ne-

cessitated daily renewing. Of course they must be dried somewhere. They could not be put out of doors in the sunlight without danger of betraying the presence of the brigands at that point; they could not be dried by moonlight; they must be dried before the fire, and always in season for the gathering of everything into the saddle bags in case a night's journey should be ordered. It was an interesting sight, and an edifying one, to see one and another of the brigands, who happened to be on guard over us, sitting by the fire and assisting in the process of drying. Thus our days wore away in busy ministries to the mother and her little one. We were always waiting for news, and always hoping for some good word. We waited in vain until Sabbath morning, January 12th, when a great joy came to us. It was not the news for which we waited so anxiously; but a brigand had arrived during the night, who brought to us again a letter. With what joy we read those words which gave us, for the second time in more than four months, assurance that loving hearts remembered us, and were still working and praying for our release. That same night three of our captors left us to go to meet the committee which had been appointed by the American Embassy at Constantinople to negotiate for our ransom. He who had held baby during the first night of her life, and in whose care we had somehow come to feel ourselves to be, was now to leave us in the hands of those less well known to us, and of some of whom we were constantly afraid. There was no help for it, and we trusted God still to keep us safely in the hands of our new guardians.

The nights were now bitterly cold. High winds prevailed, and more than once we remonstrated for baby's sake, as well as for her mother's, when we were ordered to be ready to move. They never were deterred from carrying out their plans, however cold the night, however wildly the wind blew or the snow flew. They knew, as we could not, the dangers which threatened them inexorably, but they never took us into their confidence. In the falling snow we traveled with Elenchie, and when her cries became too insistent her mother's horse would be turned away from the wind that she might nurse her. One night we were stopped on a lonely hillside by a rough shed filled with straw. Into a hollow in the straw we were put. A lighted candle stuck upon a beam flickered in the wind, endangering the straw. It was so cold and draughty that the mother could not endure patiently the exposure of her precious child to such danger. She burst into

uncontrollable weeping. "My baby will die here, with no fire!" "How can I change her with no way to warm her tiny feet or her fresh napkins?" The guard soon learned of her distress, and set himself to see if he could find any better accommodations. Not long after he came back, manifestly relieved. "There is a place where you can have a fire. Come with me," he said.

It was evidently some shepherd's or herdsman's hut on the lonely hillside. There was just room within for our little party, though two guards felt obliged to cramp themselves up in one corner to keep watch over us, and for their own warmth. If one of them lay down the other must sit up. There was actually no other room, save for an earthen jug, which stood in the corner by Mrs. Tsilka's head. This was filled before light, to furnish our supply of water for the day. Not only were we strictly confined within the hut, and not even permitted to have the door opened a little way to admit light, but we were not allowed to have a fire all the day long. Here we had our only experience of being without food. There was barely enough for Mrs. Tsilka, and that of the poorest quality. All the day I tasted nothing, but at nightfall a kettle containing a hot stew, none too palatable, was brought to the guards, and they shared it with us. At another hut where we halted some days later a brigand had noticed that there was a calf among the animals, and ordered that it should be tied up during the day. At nightfall its mother was milked, but she proved intractable, and in an unhappy moment kicked over the vessel containing the milk.

Mrs. Tsilka was very ingenious in devising ways to secure a bath for her baby whenever our place of confinement was not too draughty and cold to allow it. When she asked for some warm water and something which might answer as a tub for the little one, the men could be depended upon to comply with her wishes if it were possible. At the same time we found opportunity to attend to baby's laundry work, and freshen some articles from our own scanty wardrobe. We were thus furnished, also, with bathing facilities for ourselves, which we did not hesitate to improve. Sometimes, however, the brigands seemed to be either in a position

too exposed to permit a frequent sending for water, or at too great a remove from the stream which supplied it, to allow us to have what we wished.

The weeks of our captivity wore on, dangers threatened us daily and nightly, not only from without, but from within. Many and many a time we were commanded to hush even our own voices lest some strange person who had appeared near the brigands' hiding-place should hear us, and betray them and us. Even baby was not allowed to cry at some such times. From within, we suffered from the intolerable smoke of the fire in some of the huts to which we were taken night after night, which caused general discomfort not only to us grown people, but to baby, effectually preventing her from sleeping. In sheer desperation we were sometimes obliged to wrap the little one as warmly as possible, and take her out into the night air, that her little nerves, as well as ours, might be quieted. But occasionally she wailed, and was restless during the entire night.

Dangers of other sorts also menaced us. Once we were suddenly aroused from slumber by a great commotion. The man who had been on guard outside in the dark came in to be the inside guard for the next hour. He should have removed the cartridge from his musket at the door, but somehow failed to do so, and while handling his gun, sitting before the blazing fire, he somehow exploded it, and the bullet went crashing through a board over our heads. Instantly everybody was awake. What was it? Mrs. Tsilka was roused from deep sleep, under the impression that the Turkish troops, whom we supposed were always pursuing the brigands, had found them out and were making their attack. Of course the man confessed his careless oversight.

In these glimpses of the way in which those tender baby fingers played upon the heart-strings of the men who held her, as well as her mother and friend, in captivity, during the more than seven weeks in which she lived among them, we plainly saw God's merciful plan for the alleviation of our otherwise well-nigh insupportable bondage, and we thanked Him that "E'en in the darkest spot of earth, some love is found."

[This paper of Miss Stone's will be followed in the August number by Mrs. Tsilka's own account of the baby. Miss Stone's narrative will be resumed and concluded in September.]





ELLENCHA TSILKA

*From a photograph taken when she was about three months old*