

## 330 THE ISLES AND SHRINES OF GREECE

ment. From experience I know that to join a cavalry charge is one of the most dramatic and exciting things in the world, and therefore requires but a small amount of courage; but to be suspended for four minutes in mid-air in a net affords unusual opportunity for reflection. A consciousness of your utter helplessness and the ridiculousness of your position alternates with speculations on the strength of the rope and the perfection of the windlass. I found, however, my courage slowly rising with the net. An advantage of ascending by net instead of by ladder is that the beautiful scenery opens gradually before you as you rise. A critical time is when you reach the top and hang poised for a few seconds opposite the door of the monastery. Two monks put out their hands at each side, and shouting *Ἔτοιμα* to those at the windlass, pull you in and land you in a heap on the floor.

The Monastery of Saint Barlaam takes its name either from the saint of the fourteenth century or some hermit named after him. We had but time for a rapid view of the church. Tozer speaks enthusiastically of the Byzantine frescos and of the artistic grouping of one of the representations of the Virgin. Think of the sanctity of a monastery which no woman has ever entered! I can imagine what an exorcism, not of evil spirits, but of evil matter — the dirt of centuries — a few women from Broek might effect with their mops and brooms. We found but six monks and ten servants. All supplies had to be drawn up by the rope, for which there is a separate hoistway. The monastery bell was cracked. Considering the position of the church, one could not