Rambles and Studies in Greece



by J. P. Mahaffy

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EBOOK RAMBLES AND STUDIES IN GREECE

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RAMBLES IN GREECE



The Acropolis, Athens

RAMBLES AND STUDIES

IN

GREECE

BY

J. P. MAHAFFY

KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF THE SAVIOUR;
AUTHOR OF “SOCIAL LIFE IN GREECE;” “A
HISTORY OF GREEK LITERATURE;”

“GREEK LIFE AND THOUGHT FROM THE DEATH
OF ALEXANDER;”
“THE GREEK WORLD UNDER ROMAN SWAY,”
ETC.

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[pg vii]

PREFACE.

Few men there are who having once visited Greece do not contrive to visit it again. And yet when the returned traveller meets the ordinary friend who asks him where he has been, the next remark is generally, “Dear me! have you not been there before? How is it you are so fond of going to Greece?” There are even people who imagine a trip to America far more interesting, and who at all events look upon a trip to Spain as the same kind of thing—southern climate, bad food, dirty inns, and general discomfort, odious to bear, though pleasant to describe afterward in a comfortable English home.

This is a very ignorant way of looking at the matter, for excepting Southern Italy, there is no country which can compare with Greece in beauty and interest to the intelligent traveller. It is not a land for creature comforts, though the climate is splendid, and though the hotels in Athens are as good as those in most European towns. It is not a land for society, though the society at Athens is excellent, and far easier of access than that of most European capitals. But if a man is fond of the large [pg viii]effects of natural scenery, he will find in the Southern Alps and fiords of

Greece a variety and a richness of color which no other part of Europe affords. If he is fond of the details of natural scenery, flowers, shrubs, and trees, he will find the wild-flowers and flowering-trees of Greece more varied than anything he has yet seen. If he desires to study national character, and peculiar manners and customs, he will find in the hardy mountaineers of Greece one of the most unreformed societies, hardly yet affected by the great tide of sameness which is invading all Europe in dress, fabrics, and usages. And yet, in spite of the folly still talked in England about brigands, he will find that without troops, or police, or patrols, or any of those melancholy safeguards which are now so obtrusive in England and Ireland, life and property are as secure as they ever were in our most civilized homes. Let him not know a word of history, or of art, and he will yet be rewarded by all this natural enjoyment; perhaps also, if he be a politician, he may study the unsatisfactory results of a constitution made to order, and of a system of free education planted in a nation of no political training, but of high intelligence.

Need I add that as to Cicero the whole land was one vast shrine of hallowed memories—*quocunque incedis, historia est*—so to the man of culture this splendor of associations has only increased with the lapse of time and the greater appreciation of human [pg ix]perfection. Even were such a land dead to all further change, and a mere record in its ruins of the past, I know not that any man of

reflection could satisfy himself with contemplating it. Were he to revisit the Parthenon, as it stands, every year of his life, it would always be fresh, it would always be astonishing. But Greece is a growing country, both in its youth and in its age. The rapid development of the nation is altering the face of the country, establishing new roads and better communications, improving knowledge among the people, and making many places accessible which were before beyond the reach of brief holiday visits. The insecurity which haunted the Turkish frontier has been pushed back to the north; new Alps and new monasteries are brought within the range of Greece. And this is nothing to what has been done in recovering the past. Every year there are new excavations made, new treasures found, new problems in archæology raised, old ones solved; and so at every visit there is a whole mass of new matter for the student who feels he had not yet grasped what was already there.

The traveller who revisits the country now after a lapse of four or five years will find at Athens the Schliemann museum set up and in order, where the unmatched treasures of Mycenæ are now displayed before his astonished eyes. He will find an Egyptian museum of extraordinary merit—the gift of a patriotic merchant of Alexandria—in which there [pg x]are two figures—that of a queen, in bronze and silver, and that of a slave kneading bread, in wood—which alone would make the reputation of any collection

throughout Europe. In the Parthenon museum he will find the famous statuette, copied from Phidias's Athene, and the recent wonder, archaic statues on which the brightness of the colors is not more astonishing than the moulding of the figures.

And these are only the most salient novelties. It is indeed plain that were not the new city covering the site of the old, discoveries at Athens might be made perhaps every year, which would reform and enlarge our knowledge of Greek life and history.

But Athens is rapidly becoming a great and rich city. It already numbers 110,000, without counting the Peiræus; accordingly, except in digging foundations for new houses, it is not possible to find room for any serious excavations. House rent is enormously high, and building is so urgent that the ordinary mason receives eight to ten francs per day. This rapid increase ought to be followed by an equal increase in the wealth of the surrounding country, where all the little proprietors ought to turn their land into market-gardens. I found that either they could not, or (as I was told) they would not, keep pace with the increased wants of the city. They are content with a little, and allow the city to be supplied—badly and at great cost—from Salonica, [pg xi]Syra, Constantinople, and the islands, while meat comes in tons from America. How different is the country round Paris and London!

But this is a digression into vulgar matters,

when I had merely intended to inform the reader what intellectual novelties he would find in revisiting Athens. For nothing is more slavish in modern travel than the inability the student feels, for want of time in long journeys, or want of control over his conveyance, to stop and examine something which strikes him beside his path. And that is the main reason why Oriental—and as yet Greek—travelling is the best and most instructive of all.

You can stop your pony or mule, you can turn aside from the track which is called your road, you are not compelled to catch a train or a steamer at a fixed moment. When roads and rails have been brought into Greece, hundreds of people will go to see its beauty and its monuments, and will congratulate themselves that the country is at last accessible. But the real charm will be gone. There will be no more riding at dawn through orchards of oranges and lemons, with the rich fruit lying on the ground, and the nightingales, that will not end their exuberant melody, still outsinging from the deep-green gloom the sounds of opening day. There will be no more watching the glowing east cross the silver-gray glitter of dewy meadows; no more wandering along grassy slopes, where the scarlet anemones, all [pg xii]drenched with the dews of night, are striving to raise their drooping heads and open their splendid eyes to meet the rising sun. There will be no more watching the serpent and the tortoise, the eagle and the vulture, and all the living

things whose ways and habits animate the sunny solitudes of the south. The Greek people now talk of going to Europe, and coming from Europe, justly too, for Greece is still, as it always was, part of the East. But the day is coming when enlightened politicians, like Mr. Tricoupi, will insist on introducing through all the remotest glens the civilization of Europe, with all its benefits forsooth, but with all its shocking ugliness, its stupid hurry, and its slavish uniformity.

I will conclude with a warning to the archæologist, and one which applies to all amateurs who go to visit excavations, and cannot see what has been reported by the actual excavators. As no one is able to see what the evidences of digging are, except the trained man, who knows not only archæology, but architecture, and who has studied the accumulation of soil in various places and forms, so the observer who comes to the spot after some years, and expects to find all the evidences unchanged, commits a blunder of the gravest kind. As Dr. Dörpfeld, now one of the highest living authorities on such matters, observed to me, if you went to Hissarlik expecting to find there clearly marked the various strata of successive occupations, you would show that you were [pg xiii]ignorant of the first elements of practical knowledge. For in any climate, but especially in these southern lands, Nature covers up promptly what has been exposed by man; all sorts of plants spring up along and across the lines which in the cutting when freshly made were

clear and precise. In a few years the whole place turns back again into a brake, or a grassy slope, and the report of the actual diggers remains the only evidence till the soil is cut open again in the same way. I saw myself, at Olympia, important lines disappearing in this way. Dr. Purgold showed me where the line marking the embankment of the stadium—it was never surrounded with any stone seats—was rapidly becoming effaced, and where the plan of the foundations was being covered with shrubs and grass. The day for visiting and verifying the Trojan excavations is almost gone by. That of all the excavations will pass away, if they are not carefully kept clear by some permanent superintendence; and to expect this of the Greek nation, who know they have endless more treasures to find in new places, is more than could reasonably be expected. The proper safeguard is to do what Dr. Schliemann does, to have with him not only the Greek ephoros or superintendent—generally a very competent scholar, and sometimes not a very friendly witness of foreign triumphs—but also a first-rate architect, whose joint observation will correct any hastiness or misprision, [pg xiv]and so in the mouth of two or more witnesses every word will be confirmed.

In passing on I cannot but remark how strange it is that among the many rich men in the world who profess an interest in archæology, not one can be found to take up the work as Dr. Schliemann did, to enrich

science with splendid fields of new evidence, and illustrate art, not only with the naïve efforts of its infancy, but with forgotten models of perfect and peerless form.

This New Edition is framed with a view of still satisfying the demand for the book as a traveller's handbook, somewhat less didactic than the official guide-books, somewhat also, I hope, more picturesque. For that purpose I have added a new chapter on mediæval Greece, as well as many paragraphs with new information, especially the ride over Mount Erymanthus, pp. 343, *sqq.* I have corrected many statements which are now antiquated by recent discoveries, and I have obliterated the traces of controversy borne by the Second Edition. For the criticisms on the book are dead, while the book survives. To me it is very pleasant to know that many visitors to Greece have found it an agreeable companion.

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN,
February, 1892.

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[pg 1]

GREECE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE COAST.

A voyage to Greece does not at first sight seem a great undertaking. We all go to and fro to Italy as we used to go to France. A trip to Rome, or even to Naples, is now an Easter holiday affair. And is not Greece very close to Italy on the map? What signifies the narrow sea that divides them? This is what a man might say who only considered geography, and did not regard the teaching of history. For the student of history cannot look upon these two peninsulas without being struck with the fact that they are, historically speaking,

turned back to back; that while the face of Italy is turned westward, and looks towards France and Spain, and across to us, the face of Greece looks eastward, towards Asia Minor and towards Egypt. Every great city in Italy, except Venice, approaches or borders the Western Sea—Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Rome, Naples. All the older history of Rome, its [pg 2]development, its glories, lie on the west of the Apennines. When you cross them you come to what is called the back of Italy; and you feel that in that flat country, and that straight coast-line, you are separated from its true beauty and charm.[1] Contrariwise, in Greece, the whole weight and dignity of its history gravitate towards the eastern coast. All its great cities—Athens, Thebes, Corinth, Argos, Sparta—are on that side. Their nearest neighbors were the coast cities of Asia Minor and of the Cyclades, but the western coasts were to them harborless and strange. If you pass Cape Malea, they said, then forget your home.

So it happens that the coasts of Italy and Greece, which look so near, are outlying and out-of-the way parts of the countries to which they belong; and if you want to go straight from real Italy to real Greece, the longest way is that from Brindisi to Corfu, for you must still journey across Italy to Brindisi, and from Corfu to Athens. The shortest way is to take ship at Naples, and to be carried round Italy and round Greece, from the centres of culture on the west of Italy to the centres of culture (such as they are) on the east of Greece. But

this [pg 3]is no trifling passage. When the ship has left the coasts of Calabria, and steers into the open sea, you feel that you have at last left the west of Europe, and are setting sail for the Eastern Seas. You are, moreover, in an open sea—the furious Adriatic—in which I have seen storms which would be creditable to the Atlantic Ocean, and which at times forbid even steam navigation.

I may anticipate for a moment here, and say that even now the face of Athens is turned, as of old, to the East. Her trade and her communications are through the Levant. Her chief intercourse is with Constantinople, and Smyrna, and Syra, and Alexandria.

This curious parallel between ancient and modern geographical attitudes in Greece is, no doubt, greatly due to the now bygone Turkish rule. In addition to other contrasts, Mohammedan rule and Eastern jealousy—long unknown in Western Europe—first jarred upon the traveller when he touched the coasts of Greece; and this dependency was once really part of a great Asiatic Empire, where all the interests and communications gravitated eastward, and away from the Christian and better civilized West. The revolution which expelled the Turks was unable to root out the ideas which their subjects had learned; and so, in spite of Greek hatred of the Turk, his influence still lives through Greece in a thousand ways.

[pg 4]
For many hours after the coasts of Calabria

had faded into the night, and even after the snowy dome of Etna was lost to view, our ship steamed through the open sea, with no land in sight; but we were told that early in the morning, at the very break of dawn, the coasts of Greece would be visible. So, while others slept, I started up at half-past three, eager to get the earliest possible sight of the land which still occupies so large a place in our thoughts. It was a soft gray morning; the sky was covered with light, broken clouds; the deck was wet with a passing shower, of which the last drops were still flying in the air; and before us, some ten miles away, the coasts and promontories of the Peloponnesus were reaching southward into the quiet sea. These long serrated ridges did not look lofty, in spite of their snow-clad peaks, nor did they look inhospitable, in spite of their rough outline, but were all toned in harmonious color—a deep purple blue, with here and there, on the far Arcadian peaks, and on the ridge of Mount Taygetus, patches of pure snow. In contrast to the large sweeps of the Italian coast, its open seas, its long waves of mountain, all was here broken, and rugged, and varied. The sea was studded with rocky islands, and the land indented with deep, narrow bays. I can never forget the strong and peculiar impression of that first sight of Greece; nor can I cease to wonder at the strange likeness which rose in my mind, and which [pg 5]made me think of the bays and rocky coasts of the west and south-west of Ireland. There was the same cloudy, showery sky, which is so common there; there was the same serrated outline of

hills, the same richness in promontories, and rocky islands, and land-locked bays. Nowhere have I seen a light purple color, except in the wilds of Kerry and Connemara; and though the general height of the Greek mountains, as the snow in May testified, was far greater than that of the Irish hills, yet on that morning, and in that light, they looked low and homely, not displaying their grandeur, or commanding awe and wonder, but rather attracting the sight by their wonderful grace, and by their variety and richness of outline and color.

I stood there, I know not how long—without guide or map—telling myself the name of each mountain and promontory, and so filling out the idle names and outlines of many books with the fresh reality itself. There was the west coast of Elis, as far north as the eye could reach—the least interesting part of the view, as it was of the history, of Greece; then the richer and more varied outline of Messene, with its bay, thrice famous at great intervals, and yet for long ages feeding idly on that fame; Pylos, Sphacteria, Navarino—each a foremost name in Hellenic history. Above the bay could be seen those rich slopes which the Spartans coveted of [pg 6]old, and which, as I saw them, were covered with golden corn. The three headlands which give to the Peloponnesus “its plane-leaf form,”[2] were as yet lying parallel before us, and their outline confused; but the great crowd of heights and intersecting chains, which told at once the Alpine character of the peninsula,

called to mind the other remark of the geographer, in which he calls it the Acropolis of Greece. The words of old Herodotus, too, rise in the mind with new reality, when he talks of the poor and stony soil of the country as a “rugged nurse of liberty.”

For the nearer the ship approaches, the more this feature comes out; increased, no doubt, greatly in later days by depopulation and general decay, when many arable tracts have lain desolate, but still at all times necessary, when a large proportion of the country consists of rocky peaks and precipices, where a goat may graze, but where the eagle builds secure from the hand of man. The coast, once teeming with traffic, is now lonely and deserted. A single sail in the large gulf of Koron, and a few miserable huts, discernible with a telescope, only added to the feeling of solitude. It was, indeed, “Greece, but living Greece no more.” Even the pirates, who sheltered in these creeks and moun[pg 7]tains, have abandoned this region, in which there is nothing now to plunder.[3]

But as we crossed the mouth of the gulf, the eye fastened with delight on distant white houses along the high ground of the eastern side—in other words, along the mountain slopes which run out into the promontory of Tainaron; and a telescope soon brought them into distinctness, and gave us the first opportunity of discussing modern Greek life. We stood off the coast of Maina—the home of those Mainotes whom Byron has made so famous as pirates, as heroes, as lovers, as

murderers; and even now, when the stirring days of war and of piracy have passed away, the whole district retains the aspect of a country in a state of siege or of perpetual danger. Instead of villages surrounded by peaceful homesteads, each Mainote house, though standing alone, was walled in, and in the centre was a high square tower, in which, according to trustworthy travellers, the Mainote men used to spend their day watching their enemies, while only the women and children ventured out to till the fields. For these fierce mountaineers were not only perpetually defying the [pg 8]Turkish power, which was never able to subdue them thoroughly, but they were all engaged at home with internecine feuds, of which the origin was often forgotten, but of which the consequences remained in the form of vengeance due for the life of a kinsman. When this was exacted on one side, the obligation changed to the other; and so for generation after generation they spent their lives in either seeking or avoiding vengeance. This more than Corsican *vendetta*[4] was, by a sort of mediæval chivalry, prohibited to the women and children, who were thus in perfect safety, while their husbands and fathers were in daily and deadly danger.

They are considered the purest in blood of all the Greeks, though it does not appear that their dialect approaches old Greek nearer than those of their neighbors; but for beauty of person, and independence of spirit, they rank first among the inhabitants of the

Peloponnesus, and most certainly they must have among them a good deal of the old Messenian blood. Most of the country is barren, but there are orange woods, which yield the most delicious fruit—a fruit so large and rich that it makes all other oranges appear small and tasteless. The country is now perfectly safe for visitors, and the people extremely hospitable, though the diet is not very palatable to the northern traveller.

[pg 9]
So with talk and anecdote about the Mainotes—for every one was now upon deck and sight-seeing—we neared the classic headland of Tainaron, almost the southern point of Europe, once the site of a great temple of Poseidon—not preserved to us, like its sister monument on Sunium—and once, too, the entry to the regions of the dead. And, as if to remind us of its most beautiful legend, the dolphins, which had befriended Arion of old, and carried him here to land, rose in the calm summer sea, and came playing round the ship, showing their quaint forms above the water, and keeping with our course, as it were an escort into the homely seas and islands of truer Greece. Strangely enough, in many other journeys through Greek waters, once again only did we see these dolphins; and here as elsewhere, the old legend, I suppose, based itself upon the fact that this, of all their wide domain, was the favorite resort of these creatures, with which the poets of old felt so strong a sympathy.

But, while the dolphins have been occupying

our attention, we have cleared Cape Matapan, and the deep Gulf of Asine and Gythium—in fact, the Gulf of Sparta is open to our view. We strained our eyes to discover the features of “hollow Lacedæmon,” and to take in all the outline of this famous bay, through which so many Spartans had held their course in the days of their greatness. The site of Sparta is far from the sea, probably twelve or fifteen [pg 10]miles; but the place is marked for every spectator, throughout all the Peloponnesus and its coasts, by the jagged top of Mount Taygetus, even in June covered with snow. Through the forests upon its slopes the young Spartans would hunt all day with their famous Laconian hounds, and after a rude supper beguile the evening with stories of their dangers and their success. But, as might be expected, of the five villages which made up the famous city, few vestiges remain. The old port of Gythium is still a port; but here, too, the “wet ways,” and that sea once covered with boats, which a Greek comic poet has called the “ants of the sea,” have been deserted.

We were a motley company on board—Russians, Greeks, Turks, French, English; and it was not hard to find pleasant companions and diverting conversation among them all. I turned to a Turkish gentleman, who spoke French indifferently. “Is it not,” said I, “a great pity to see this fair coast so desolate?” “A great pity, indeed,” said he; “but what can you expect from these Greeks? They are all pirates and robbers; they are all liars and

knaves. Had the Turks been allowed to hold possession of the country they would have improved it and developed its resources; but since the Greeks became independent everything has gone to ruin. Roads are broken up, communications abandoned; [pg 11]the people emigrate and disappear—in fact, nothing prospers."

Presently, I got beside a Greek gentleman, from whom I was anxiously picking up the first necessary phrases and politenesses of modern Greek, and, by way of amusement, put to him the same question. I got the answer I expected. "Ah!" said he, "the Turks, the Turks! When I think how these miscreants have ruined our beautiful country! How could a land thrive or prosper under such odious tyranny?" I ventured to suggest that the Turks were now gone five and forty years, and that it was high time to see the fruits of recovered liberty in the Greeks. No, it was still too soon. The Turks had cut down all the woods, and so ruined the climate; they had destroyed the cities, broken up the roads, encouraged the bandits—in fact, they had left the country in such a state that centuries would not cure it.

The verdict of Europe is in favor of the Greek gentleman; but it might have been suggested, had we been so disposed, that the greatest and the most hopeless of all these sorrows—the utter depopulation of the country—is not due to either modern Greeks or Turks, nor even to the Slav hordes of the Middle Ages. It was a calamity which came upon Greece almost suddenly, immediately after the loss of

her independence, and which historians and phys[pg 12]iologists have as yet been only partially able to explain.[5]

Of this very coast upon which we were then gazing, the geographer Strabo, about the time of Christ, says, “that of old, Lacedæmon had numbered one hundred cities; in his day there were but ten remaining.” So, then, the sum of the crimes of both Greeks and Turks may be diminished by one. But I, perceiving that each of them would have been extremely indignant at this historical palliation of the other’s guilt, “kept silence, even from good words.”

These dialogues beguiled us till we found ourselves, almost suddenly, facing the promontory of Malea, with the island of Cythera (Cerigo) on our right. The island is little celebrated in history. The Phœnicians seem, in very old times, to have had a settlement there for the working of their purple shell-fishery, for which the coasts of Laconia were celebrated; and they doubtless founded there the worship of the Sidonian goddess, who was transformed by the Greeks into Aphrodite (Venus). During the Peloponnesian War we hear of the Athenians using it as a station for their fleet, when they were ravaging the adjacent coasts. It was, in fact, used by their naval power as the same sort of [pg 13]blister (ἐπιτείχισις) on Sparta that Dekelea was when occupied by the Spartans in Attica.

Cape Malea is more famous. It was in olden days the limit of the homely Greek waters, the

bar to all fair weather and regular winds—a place of storms and wrecks, and the portal to an inhospitable open sea; and we can well imagine the delight of the adventurous trader who had dared to cross the Western Seas, to gather silver and lead in the mines of Spain, when he rounded the dreaded Cape, homeward bound in his heavy-laden ship, and looked back from the quiet Ægean. The barren and rocky Cape has its new feature now. On the very extremity there is a little platform, at some elevation over the water, and only accessible with great difficulty from the land by a steep goat-path. Here a hermit built himself a tiny hut, cultivated his little plot of corn, and lived out in the lone seas, with no society but stray passing ships.[6] When Greece was thickly peopled he might well have been compelled to seek loneliness here; but now, when in almost any mountain chain he could find solitude and desolation enough, it seems as if that poetic instinct which so often guides the ignorant and unconscious anchorite had sent him to this spot, which combines, in a strange way, solitude and publicity, and which ex[pg 14]cites the curiosity, but forbids the intrusion, of every careless passenger to the East.

So we passed into the Ægean, the real thoroughfare of the Greeks, the mainstay of their communication—a sea, and yet not a sea, but the frame of countless headlands and islands, which are ever in view to give confidence to the sailor in the smallest boat. The most striking feature in our view was the

serrated outline of the mountains of Crete, far away to the S. E. Though the day was gray and cloudy, the atmosphere was perfectly clear, and allowed us to see these very distant Alps, on which the snow still lay in great fields. The chain of Ida brought back to us the old legends of Minos and his island kingdom, nor could any safer seat of empire be imagined for a power coming from the south than this great long bar of mountains, to which half the islands of the Ægean could pass a fire signal in times of war or piracy.[7] The legends preserved to us of Minos—the human sacrifices to the Minotaur—the hostility to Theseus—the identification of Ariadne with the legends of Bacchus, so eastern and orgiastic in character—make us feel, with a sort of instinctive certainty, that the power of Minos was [pg 15]no Hellenic empire, but one of Phœnicians, from which, as afterwards from Carthage, they commanded distant coasts and islands, for the purposes of trade. They settled, as we know, at Corinth, at Thebes, and probably at Athens, in the days of their greatness, but they seem always to have been strangers and sojourners there, while in Crete they kept the stronghold of their power. Thucydides thinks that Minos's main object was to put down piracy, and protect commerce; and this is probably the case, though we are without evidence on the point. The historian evidently regards this old Cretan empire as the older model of the Athenian, but settled in a far more advantageous place, and not liable to the dangers which proved the ruin of Athens.

The nearer islands were small, and of no reputation, but each like a mountain top reaching out of a submerged valley, stony and bare. Melos was farther off, but quite distinct —the old scene of Athenian violence and cruelty, to Thucydides so impressive, that he dramatizes the incidents, and passes from cold narrative and set oration to a dialogue between the oppressors and the oppressed. Melian starvation was long proverbial among the Greeks, and there the fashionable and aristocratic Alcibiades applied the arguments and carried out the very policy which the tanner Cleon could not propose without being pilloried by the great histo[pg 16]rian whom he made his foe. This and other islands, which were always looked upon by the mainland Greeks with some contempt, have of late days received special attention from archæologists. It is said that the present remains of the old Greek type are now to be found among the islanders—an observation which I found fully justified by a short sojourn at Ægina, where the very types of the Parthenon frieze can be found among the inhabitants, if the traveller will look for them diligently. The noblest and most perfect type of Greek beauty has, indeed, come to us from Melos, but not in real life. It is the celebrated Venus of Melos—the most pure and perfect image we know of that goddess, and one which puts to shame the lower ideals so much admired in the museums of Italy.[8]

Another remark should be made in justice to the islands, that the groups of Therasia and

Santorin, which lie round the crater of a great active volcano, have supplied us not only with the oldest forms of the Greek alphabet in their inscriptions, but with far the oldest vestiges of inhabitants in any part of Greece. In these, beneath the lava slopes formed by a great eruption—an eruption earlier than any history, except, perhaps, Egyptian—have been found the dwellings, the implements, and the bones of men who cannot have lived there much later than 2000 [pg 17]B. C. The arts, as well as the implements, of these old dwellers in their Stone Age, have shown us how very ancient Greek forms, and even Greek decorations, are in the world's history: and we may yet from them and from further researches, such as Schliemann's, be able to reconstruct the state of things in Greece before the Greeks came from their Eastern homes. The special reason why these inquiries seem to me likely to lead to good result is this, that what is called neo-barbarism is less likely to mislead us here than elsewhere. Neo-barbarism means the occurrence in later times of the manners and customs which generally mark very old and primitive times. Some few things of this kind survive everywhere; thus, in the Irish Island of Arran, a group of famous *savants* mistook a stone donkey-shed of two years' standing for the building of an extinct race in gray antiquity: as a matter of fact, the construction had not changed from the oldest type. But the spread of culture, and the fulness of population in the good days of Greece, make it certain that every spot about the thoroughfares was improved and civilized;

and so, as I have said, there is less chance here than anywhere of our being deceived into mistaking rudeness for oldness, and raising a modern savage to the dignity of a primæval man.

But we must not allow speculations to spoil our observations, nor waste the precious moments given [pg 18]us to take in once for all the general outline of the Greek coasts. While the long string of islands, from Melos up to the point of Attica, framed in our view to the right, to the left the great bay of Argolis opened far into the land, making a sort of vista into the Peloponnesus, so that the mountains of Arcadia could be seen far to the west standing out against the setting sun; for the day was now clearer—the clouds began to break, and let us feel touches of the sun's heat towards evening. As we passed Hydra, the night began to close about us, and we were obliged to make out the rest of our geography with the aid of a rich full moon.

But these Attic waters, if I may so call them, will be mentioned again and again in the course of our voyage, and need not now be described in detail. The reader will, I think, get the clearest notion of the size of Greece by reflecting upon the time required to sail round the Peloponnesus in a good steamer. The ship in which we made the journey—the *Donnai*, of the French Messagerie Company,—made about eight miles an hour. Coming within close range of the coast of Messene, about five o'clock in the morning, we rounded all the headlands, and arrived at the Peiræus

about eleven o'clock the same night. So, then, the Peloponnesus is a small peninsula, but even to an outside view "very large for its size;" for the actual climbing up and down of constant mountains, in any land [pg 19]journey from place to place, makes the distance in miles very much greater than the line as the crow flies. If I said that every ordinary distance, as measured on the map, is doubled in the journey, I believe I should be under the mark.

It may be well to add a word here upon the other route into Greece, that by Brindisi and the Ionian Islands. It is fully as picturesque, in some respects more so, for there is no more beautiful bay than the long fiord leading up to Corinth, which passes Patras, Vostitza, and Itea, the port of Delphi. The Akrokeraunian mountains, which are the first point of the Albanian coast seen by the traveller, are also very striking, and no one can forget the charms and beauties of Corfu. I think a market-day in Corfu, with those royal-looking peasant lads, who come clothed in sheepskins from the coast, and spend their day handling knives and revolvers with peculiar interest at the stalls, is among the most picturesque sights to be seen in Europe. The lofty mountains of Ithaca and its greater sister, and then the rich belt of verdure along the east side of Zante—all these features make this journey one of surpassing beauty and interest. Yet notwithstanding all these advantages, there is not the same excitement in first approaching semi-Greek or outlying Greek

settlements, and only gradually arriving at the real centres of historic interest. Such at least was the feeling (shared by other observers) which I had in approach[pg 20]ing Greece by this more varied route. No traveller, however, is likely to miss either, as it is obviously best to enter by one route and depart by the other, in a voyage not intended to reach beyond Greece. But from what I have said, it may be seen that I prefer to enter by the direct route from Naples, and to leave by the Gulf of Corinth and the Ionian Islands. I trust that ere long arrangements may be made for permitting travellers who cross the isthmus to make an excursion to the Akrokorinthus—the great citadel of Corinth—which they are now compelled to hurry past, in order to catch the boat for Athens.

The modern Patras, still a thriving port, is now the main point of contact between Greece and the rest of Europe. For, as a railway has now been opened from Patras to Athens, all the steamers from Brindisi, Venice, and Trieste put in there, and from thence the stream of travellers proceeds by the new line to the capital. The old plan of steaming up the long fiord to Corinth is abandoned; still more the once popular route round the Morea, which, if somewhat slower, at least saved the unshipping at Lechæum, the drive in omnibuses across the isthmus, and reshipment at Cenchreæ—all done with much confusion, and with loss and damage to luggage and temper. Not that there is no longer confusion. The railway station at Patras, and that at

Athens, are the most curious bear-gardens in which business ever was [pg 21]done. The traveller (I speak of the year of our Lord 1889) is informed that unless he is there an hour before the time he will not get his luggage weighed and despatched. And when he comes down from his comfortable hotel to find out what it all means, he meets the whole population of the town in possession of the station. Everybody who has nothing to do gets in the way of those who have; everything is full of noise and confusion.

At last the train steams out of the station, and takes its deliberate way along the coast, through woods of fir trees, bushes of arbutus and mastic, and the many flowers which stud the earth. And here already the traveller, looking out of the window, can form an idea of the delights of real Greek travel, by which he must understand mounting a mule or pony, and making his way along woody paths, or beside the quiet sea, or up the steep side of a rocky defile. Every half-hour the train crosses torrents coming from the mountains, which in flood times color the sea for some distance with the brilliant brick-red of the clay they carry with them from their banks. The peacock blue of the open sea bounds this red water with a definite line, and the contrast in the bright sun is something very startling. Shallow banks of sand also reflect their pale yellow in many places, so that the brilliancy of this gulf exceeds anything I had ever seen in sea or lake. We pass the sites of Ægion, now Vostitza, [pg 22]once famous as the

capital or centre (politically) of the Achæan League. We pass Sicyon, the home of Aratus, the great regenerator, the mean destroyer of that League, as you can still read in Plutarch's fascinating life of the man. But these places, like so many others in Greece, once famous, have now no trace of their greatness left above ground. The day may, however, still come when another Schliemann will unearth the records and fragments of a civilization distinguished even in Greece for refinement. Sicyon was a famous school of art. Painting and sculpture flourished there, and there was a special school of Sicyon, whose features we can still recognize in extant copies of the famous statues they produced. There is a statue known as the Canon Statue, a model of human proportions, which was the work of the famous Polycleitus of Sicyon, and which we know from various imitations preserved at Rome and elsewhere. But we shall return in due time to Greek sculpture as a whole, and shall not interrupt our journey at this moment.

All that we have passed through hitherto may be classed under the title of "first impressions." The wild northern coast shows us but one inlet, of the Gulf of Salona, with a little port of Itea at its mouth. This was the old highway to ascend to the oracle of Delphi on the snowy Parnassus, which we shall approach better from the Bœotian side. But now we strain our eyes to behold the great rock of [pg 23]Corinth, and to invade this, the first great centre of Greek life, which closes

the long bay at its westernmost end.

I will add a word upon the form and scope of the following work. My aim is to bring the living features of Greece home to the student, by connecting them, as far as possible, with the facts of older history, which are so familiar to most of us. I shall also have a good deal to say about the modern politics of Greece, and the character of the modern population. A long and careful survey of the extant literature of ancient Greece has convinced me that the pictures usually drawn of the old Greeks are idealized, and that the real people were of a very different—if you please, of a much lower—type. I may mention, as a very remarkable confirmation of my judgment, that intelligent people at Athens, who had read my opinions elsewhere set forth upon the subject,[9] were so much struck with the close resemblance of my pictures of the old Greeks to the present inhabitants, that they concluded that I must have visited the country before writing these opinions, and that I was, in fact, drawing my classical people from the life of the moderns. If this is not a proof of the justice of these views, it at least strongly suggests that they may be true, and is a powerful support in arguing the matter on the perfectly independent ground of the inferences from old literature. After [pg 24]all, national characteristics are very permanent, and very hard to shake off, and it would seem strange, indeed, if both these and the Greek language should have remained almost intact, and yet

the race have either changed, or been saturated with foreign blood. Foreign invasions and foreign conquests of Greece were common enough; but here, as elsewhere, the climate and circumstances which have formed a race seem to conspire to preserve it, and to absorb foreign types and features, rather than to permit the extinction or total change of the older race.

I feel much fortified in my judgment of Greek character by finding that a very smart, though too sarcastic, observer, M. E. About, in his well-known *Grèce contemporaine*, estimates the people very nearly as I am disposed to estimate the common people of ancient Greece. He notices, in the second and succeeding chapters of his book, a series of features which make this nationality a very distinct one in Europe. Starting from the question of national beauty, and holding rightly that the beauty of the men is greater than that of the women, he touches on a point which told very deeply upon all the history of Greek art. At the present day, the Greek men are much more particular about their appearance, and more vain of it, than the women. The most striking beauty among them is that of young men; and as to the care of figure, as About well observes, in Greece it is the men who pinch [pg 25]their waists—a fashion unknown among Greek women. Along with this handsome appearance, the people are, without doubt, a very temperate people; although they make a great deal of strong wine, they seldom drink much, and are far

more critical about good water than wine. Indeed, in so warm a climate, wine is disagreeable even to the northern traveller; and, as Herodotus remarked long ago, very likely to produce insanity, the rarest form of disease among the Greeks. In fact, they are not a passionate race—having at all ages been gifted with a very bright intellect, and a great reasonableness; they have an intellectual insight into things, which is inconsistent with the storms of wilder passion.

They are, probably, as clever a people as can be found in the world, and fit for any mental work whatever. This they have proved, not only by getting into their hands all the trade of the Eastern Mediterranean, but by holding their own perfectly among English merchants in England. As yet they have not found any encouragement in other directions; but there can be no doubt that, if settled among a great people, and weaned from the follies and jealousies of Greek politics, they would (like the Jews) outrun many of us, both in politics and in science. However that may be—and perhaps such a development requires moral qualities in which they seem deficient—it is certain that their work[pg 26]men learn trades with extraordinary quickness; while their young commercial or professional men acquire languages, and the amount of knowledge necessary for making money, with the most singular aptness. But as yet they are stimulated chiefly by the love of gain.

Besides this, they have great national pride, and, as M. About remarks, we need never

despair of a people who are at the same time intelligent and proud. They are very fond of displaying their knowledge on all points—I noted especially their pride in exhibiting their acquaintance with old Greek history and legend. When I asked them whether they believed the old mythical stories which they repeated, they seemed afraid of being thought simple if they confessed that they did, and of injuring the reputation of their ancestors if they declared they did not. So they used to preserve a discreet neutrality.

The instinct of liberty appears to me as strong in the nation now as it ever was. In fact, the people have never been really enslaved. The eternal refuge for liberty afforded by the sea and the mountains has saved them from this fate; and, even beneath the heavy yoke of the Turks, a large part of the nation was not subdued, but, in the guise of bandits and pirates, enjoyed the great privilege for which their ancestors had contended so earnestly. The Mainotes, for example, of whom I have just [pg 27]spoken as occupying the coast of Messene, never tolerated any resident Turkish magistrate among them, but "handed to a trembling tax-collector a little purse of gold pieces, hung on the end of a naked sword."[10] Now, the whole nation is more intensely and thoroughly democratic than any other in Europe. They acknowledge no nobility save that of descent from the chiefs who fought in the war of liberation; they will allow no distinction of classes; every common mule-boy is a gentleman (κύριος), and fully your

equal. He sits in the room at meals, and joins in the conversation at dinner. They only tolerate a king because they cannot endure one of themselves as their superior. This jealousy is, unfortunately, a mainspring of Greek politics, and when combined with a dislike of agriculture, as a stupid and unintellectual occupation, fills all the country with politicians, merchants, and journalists. Moreover, they want the spirit of subordination of their great ancestors, and are often accused of lack of honesty—a very grave feature, and the greatest obstacle to progress in all ages. It is better, however, to let points of character come out gradually in the course of our studies than to bring them together into an official portrait. It is impossible to wander through the country without seeing and understanding the inhabitants; for the traveller is [pg 28]in constant contact with them, and they have no scruple in displaying all their character.

M. About has earned the profound hatred and contempt of the nation by his picture, and I do not wonder at it, seeing that the tone in which he writes is flippant and ill-natured, and seems to betoken certain private animosities, of which the Greeks tell numerous anecdotes.

I have no such excuse for being severe or ill-natured, as I found nothing but kindness and hospitality everywhere, and sincerely hope that my free judgments may not hurt any sensitive Greek who may chance to see them. Even the great Finlay—one of their best

friends—is constantly censured by them for his writings about Modern Greece.

But, surely, any real lover of Greece must feel that plain speaking about the faults of the nation is much wanted. The worship lavished upon them by Byron and his school has done its good, and can now only do harm. On the other hand, I must confess that a longer and more intimate intercourse with the Greeks of the interior and of the mountains leads a fair observer to change his earlier estimate, and think more highly of the nation than at first acquaintance. Unfortunately, the Greeks known to most of us are sailors—mongrel villains from the ports of the Levant, having very little in common with the bold, honest, independent peasant who lives under his vine and his fig-tree in the valleys of Arcadia [pg 29]or of Phocis. It was, no doubt, an intimate knowledge of the sound core of the nation which inspired Byron with that enthusiasm which many now think extravagant and misplaced. But here, as elsewhere, the folly of a great genius has more truth in it than the wisdom of his feebler critics.

[pg 30]

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF ATHENS AND ATTICA.

There is probably no more exciting voyage, to any educated man, than the approach to Athens from the sea. Every promontory, every island, every bay, has its history. If he knows the map of Greece, he needs no guide-book or guide to distract him; if he does not, he needs little Greek to ask of any one near him the name of this or that object; and the mere names are sufficient to stir up all his classical recollections. But he must make up his mind not to be shocked at *Ægina* or *Phalerum*, and even to be told that he is utterly wrong in his way of pronouncing them.

It was our fortune to come into Greece by night, with a splendid moon shining upon the summer sea. The varied outlines of Sunium on the one side, and Ægina on the other, were very clear, but in the deep shadows there was mystery enough to feed the burning impatience to see it all in the light of common day; and though we had passed Ægina, and had come over against the rocky Salamis, as yet there was no sign of Peiræus. Then came the light on Psyttalea, and they told us that the harbor was right [pg 31]opposite. Yet we came nearer and nearer, and no harbor could

be seen. The barren rocks of the coast seemed to form one unbroken line, and nowhere was there a sign of indentation or of break in the land. But, suddenly, as we turned from gazing on Psyttalea, where the flower of the Persian nobles had once stood in despair, looking upon their fate gathering about them, the vessel had turned eastward, and discovered to us the crowded lights and thronging ships of the famous harbor. Small it looked, very small, but evidently deep to the water's edge, for great ships seemed touching the shore; and so narrow is the mouth that we almost wondered how they had made their entrance in safety. But we saw it some weeks later, with nine men-of-war towering above all its merchant shipping and its steamers, and among them crowds of ferry-boats skimming about in the breeze with their wing-like sails. Then we found out that, like the rest of Greece, the Peiræus was far larger than it looked.



Along the Coast from the Throne of Xerxes

It differed little, alas! from more vulgar harbors in the noise and confusion of disembarking; in the delays of its custom house; in the extortion and insolence of its boatmen. It is still, as in Plato's day, "the haunt of sailors, where good manners are unknown." But when we had escaped the turmoil, and were seated silently on the way to Athens, almost along the very road of classical days, all our [pg 32]classical notions, which had been scared away by vulgar bargaining and protesting, regained their sway. We had sailed in through the narrow passage where almost every great Greek that ever lived had sometime passed; now we went along the line, hardly less certain, which had seen all these great ones going to and fro between the city and the port. The present road is shaded with great silver poplars and plane trees, and the moon had set, so that our approach to Athens was even more mysterious than our approach to the Peiræus. We were, moreover, perplexed at our carriage stopping under some large plane trees, though we had driven but two miles, and the night was far spent. Our coachman would listen to no advice or persuasion. We learned afterwards that every carriage going to and from the Peiræus stops at this half-way house, that the horses may drink, and the coachman take "Turkish delight" and water. There is no exception made to this custom, and the traveller is bound to submit. At last we entered the unpretending ill-built streets at

the west of Athens.

The stillness of the night is a phenomenon hardly known in that city. No sooner have men and horses gone to rest than all the dogs and cats of the town come out to bark and yell about the thoroughfares. Athens, like all parts of modern Greece, abounds in dogs. You cannot pass a sailing boat in the Levant without seeing a dog looking angrily [pg 33]over the taffrail, and barking at you as you pass. Every ship in the Peiræus has at least one, often a great many, on board. I suppose every house in Athens is provided with one. These creatures seem to make it their business to prevent silence and rest all the night long. They were ably seconded by cats and crowing cocks, as well as by an occasional wakeful donkey; and both cats and donkeys seemed to have voices of almost tropical violence.

So the night wore away under rapidly growing adverse impressions. How is a man to admire art and revere antiquity if he is robbed of his repose? The Greeks sleep so much in the day that they seem indifferent about nightly disturbances; and, perhaps, after many years' habit, even Athenian caterwauling may fail to rouse the sleeper. But what chance has the passing traveller? Even the strongest ejaculations are but a narrow outlet for his feelings.

In this state of mind, then, I rose at the break of dawn to see whether the window would afford any prospect to serve as a requital for angry sleeplessness. And there, right opposite,

stood the rock which of all rocks in the world's history has done most for literature and art—the rock which poets, and orators, and architects, and historians have ever glorified, and cannot stay their praise—which is ever new and ever old, ever fresh in its decay, ever [pg 34]perfect in its ruin, ever living in its death—the Acropolis of Athens.

When I saw my dream and longing of many years fulfilled, the first rays of the rising sun had just touched the heights, while the town below was still hid in gloom. Rock, and rampart, and ruined fanes—all were colored in uniform tints; the lights were of a deep rich orange, and the shadows of dark crimson, with the deeper lines of purple. There was no variety in color between what nature and what man had set there. No whiteness shone from the marble, no smoothness showed upon the hewn and polished blocks; but the whole mass of orange and crimson stood out together into the pale, pure Attic air. There it stood, surrounded by lanes and hovels, still perpetuating the great old contrast in Greek history, of magnificence and meanness—of loftiness and lowness—as well in outer life as in inward motive. And, as it were in illustration of that art of which it was the most perfect bloom, and which lasted in perfection but a day of history, I saw it again and again, in sunlight and in shade, in daylight and at night, but never again in this perfect and singular beauty.

If we except the Acropolis, there are only two striking buildings of classical antiquity within

the modern town of Athens—the Temple of Theseus and the few standing columns of Hadrian's great temple to Zeus. The latter is, indeed, very remarkable. [pg 35]The pillars stand on a vacant platform, once the site of the gigantic temple; the Acropolis forms a noble background; away towards Phalerum stretch undulating hills which hide the sea; to the left (if we look from the town), Mount Hymettus raises its barren slopes; and in the valley, immediately below the pillars, flows the famous little Ilisus,[11] glorified for ever by the poetry of Plato, and in its summer-dry bed the fountain Callirrhoe, from which the Athenian maidens still draw water as of old—water the purest and best in the city. It wells out from under a great limestone rock, all plumed with the rich *Capillus Veneris*, which seems to find out and frame with its delicate green every natural spring in Greece.

But the pillars of the Temple of Zeus, though very stately and massive, and with their summits bridged together by huge blocks of architrave, are still not Athenian, not Attic, not (if I may say so) genuine Greek work; for the Corinthian capitals, which are here seen perhaps in their greatest perfection, cannot be called pure Greek taste. As is well known, they were hardly ever used, and never used prominently, till the Græco-Roman stage of [pg 36]art. The older Greeks seem to have had a fixed objection to intricate ornamentation in their larger temples. All the greater temples of Greece and Greek Italy are of the Doric Order, with its perfectly plain

capital. Groups of figures were admitted upon the pediments and metopes, because these groups formed clear and massive designs visible from a distance. But such intricacies as those of the Corinthian capital were not approved, except in small monuments, which were merely intended for close inspection, and where delicate ornament gave grace to a building which could not lay claim to grandeur. Such is clearly the case with the only purely Greek (as opposed to Græco-Roman) monument of the Corinthian Order, which is still standing—the Choragic monument of Lysicrates at Athens.[12] It was also the case with that beautiful little temple, or group of temples, known as the Erechtheum, which, standing beside the great massive Parthenon on the Acropolis of Athens, presents [pg 37]the very contrasts upon which I am insisting. It is small and essentially graceful, being built in the Ionic style, with rich ornamentation; while the Parthenon is massive, and, in spite of much ornamentation, very severe in its plainer Doric style.



The Erechtheum from the West, Athens

But to return to the pillars of Hadrian's Temple. They are about fifty-five feet high, by six and a half feet in diameter, and no Corinthian pillar of this colossal size would ever have been set up by the Greeks in their better days. So, then, in spite of the grandeur of these isolated remains—a grandeur not destroyed, perhaps even not diminished, by coffee tables, and inquiring waiters, and military bands, and a vulgar crowd about their base—to the student of really Greek art they are not of the highest interest; nay, they even suggest to him what the Periclean Greeks would have done had they, with such resources, completed the great temple due to the munificence of the Roman Emperor.

Let us turn, in preference, to the Temple of Theseus, at the opposite extremity of the town, it too standing upon a clear platform, and striking the traveller with its symmetry and its completeness, as he approaches from

the Peiræus. It is in every way a contrast to the temple of which we have just spoken. It is very small—in fact so small in comparison with the Parthenon, or the great temple at Pæstum, that we are disappointed with it; and yet it is built, not in the richly-decorated Ionic style of [pg 38]the Erechtheum, but in severe Doric; and though small and plain, it is very perfect—as perfect as any such relic that we have. It is many centuries older than Hadrian's great temple. It could have been destroyed with one-tenth of the trouble, and yet it still stands almost in its perfection. The reason is simply this. Few of the great classical temples suffered much from wanton destruction till the Middle Ages. Now, in the Middle Ages this temple, as well as the Parthenon, was usurped by the Greek Church, and turned into a place of Christian worship. So, then, the little Temple of Theseus has escaped the ravages which the last few centuries—worse than all that went before—have made in the remains of a noble antiquity. To those who desire to study the effect of the Doric Order this temple appears to me an admirable specimen. From its small size and clear position, all its points are very easily taken in. "Such," says Bishop Wordsworth, "is the integrity of its structure, and the distinctness of its details, that it requires no description beyond that which a few glances might supply. Its beauty defies all: its solid yet graceful form is, indeed, admirable; and the loveliness of its coloring is such that, from the rich mellow hue which the marble has now assumed, it looks as if it

had been quarried, not from the bed of a rocky mountain, but from the golden light of an Athenian sunset." And in like terms many others have spoken.

[pg 39]
I have only one reservation to make. The Doric Order being essentially massive, it seems to me that this beautiful temple lacks one essential feature of that order, and therefore, after the first survey, after a single walk about it, it loses to the traveller who has seen Pæstum, and who presently cannot fail to see the Parthenon, that peculiar effect of massiveness—of almost Egyptian solidity—which is ever present, and ever imposing, in these huger Doric temples. It seems as if the Athenians themselves felt this—that the plain simplicity of its style was not effective without size—and accordingly decorated this structure with colors more richly than their other temples. All the reliefs and raised ornaments seem to have been painted; other decorations were added in color on the flat surfaces, so that the whole temple must have been a mass of rich variegated hues, of which blue, green, and red are still distinguishable—or were in Stuart's time—and in which bronze and gilding certainly played an important part.

We are thus brought naturally face to face with one of the peculiarities of old Greek art most difficult to realize, and still more to appreciate.[13] We can recognize in Egyptian and in Assyrian art the [pg 40]richness and appropriateness of much coloring. Modern

painters are becoming so alive to this, that among the most striking pictures in our Royal Academy in London have been seen, for some years back, scenes from old Egyptian and Assyrian life, in which the rich coloring of the architecture has been quite a prominent feature.

But in Greek art—in the perfect symmetry of the Greek temple, in the perfect grace of the Greek statue—we come to think form of such paramount importance, that we look on the beautiful Parian and Pentelic marbles as specially suited for the expression of form apart from color. There is even something in unity of tone that delights the modern eye. Thus, though we feel that the old Greek temples have lost all their original brightness, yet, as I have myself said, and as I have quoted from Bishop Wordsworth, the rich mellow hue which tones all these ruins has to us its peculiar charm. The same rich yellow brown, almost the color of the Roman travertine, is one of the most striking features in the splendid remains which have made Pæstum unique in all Italy. This color contrasts beautifully with the blue sky of southern Europe; it lights up with extraordinary richness in the rising or setting sun. We can easily conceive that were it proposed to restore the Attic temples to their pristine whiteness, we should feel a severe shock, and beg to have these venerable buildings left in the soberness of their [pg 41]acquired color. Still more does it shock us to be told that great sculptors, with Parian

marble at hand, preferred to set up images of the gods in gold and ivory, or, still worse, with parts of gold and ivory; and that they thought it right to fill out the eyes with precious stones, and set gilded wreaths upon colored hair.

When we first come to realize these things, we are likely to exclaim against such a jumble, as we should call it, of painting and architecture—still worse, of painting and sculpture. Nor is it possible or reasonable that we should at once submit to such a revolution in our artistic ideas, and bow without criticism to these shocking features in Greek art. But if blind obedience to these our great masters in the laws of beauty is not to be commended, neither is an absolute resistance to all argument on the question to be respected; nor do I acknowledge the good sense or the good taste of that critic who insists that nothing can possibly equal the color and texture of white marble, and that all coloring of such a substance is the mere remains of barbarism. For, say what we will, the Greeks were certainly, as a nation, the best judges of beauty the world has yet seen. And this is not all. The beauty of which they were evidently the most fond was beauty of form—harmony of proportions, symmetry of design. They always hated the tawdry and the extravagant. As to their literature, there is no poetry, no oratory, no [pg 42]history, which is less decorated with the flowers of rhetoric: it is all pure in design, chaste in detail. So with their dress; so with their dwellings. We

cannot but feel that, had the effect of painted temples and statues been tawdry, there is no people on earth who would have felt it so keenly, and disliked it so much. There must, then, have been strong reasons why this bright coloring did not strike their eye as it would the eye of sober moderns.

To any one who has seen the country, and thought about the question there, many such reasons present themselves. In the first place, all through southern Europe, and more especially in Greece, there is an amount of bright color in nature, which prevents almost any artificial coloring from producing a startling effect. Where all the landscape, the sea, and the air are exceedingly bright, we find the inhabitants increasing the brightness of their dress and houses, as it were to correspond with nature. Thus, in Italy, they paint their houses green, and pink, and yellow, and so give to their towns and villas that rich and warm effect which we miss so keenly among the gray and sooty streets of northern Europe. So also in their dress, these people wear scarlet, and white, and rich blue, not so much in patterns as in large patches, and a festival in Sicily or Greece fills the streets with intense color. We know that the coloring of the old Greek dress was quite of the same character as that of the modern, [pg 43]though in design it has completely changed. We must, therefore, imagine the old Greek crowd before their temples, or in their market-places, a very white crowd, with patches of scarlet and various blue; perhaps

altogether white in processions, if we except scarlet shoe-straps and other such slight relief. One cannot but feel that a richly colored temple—that pillars of blue and red—that friezes of gilding, and other ornament, upon a white marble ground, and in white marble framing, must have been a splendid and appropriate background, a genial feature, in such a sky and with such costume. We must get accustomed to such combinations—we must dwell upon them in imagination, or ask our good painters to restore them for us, and let us look upon them constantly and calmly.

But I will not seek to persuade; let us merely state the case fairly, and put the reader in a position to judge for himself. So much for the painted architecture. I will but add, the most remarkable specimen of a richly painted front to which we can now appeal is also really one of the most beautiful in Europe—the front of S. Mark's at Venice. The rich frescoes and profuse gilding on this splendid front, of which photographs give a very false idea, should be studied by all who desire to judge fairly of this side of Greek taste.

But I must say a word, before passing on, concerning the statues. No doubt, the painting of [pg 44]statues, and the use of gold and ivory upon them, were derived from a rude age, when no images existed but rude wooden work—at first a mere block, then roughly altered and reduced to shape, probably requiring some coloring to produce any effect whatever. To a public accustomed from childhood to such painted, and often richly

dressed images, a pure white marble statue must appear utterly cold and lifeless. So it does to us, when we have become accustomed to the mellow tints of old and even weather-stained Greek statues; and it should be here noticed that this mellow skin-surface on antique statues is not the mere result of age, but of an artificial process, whereby they burnt into the surface a composition of wax and oil, which gave a yellowish tone to the marble, as well as also that peculiar surface which so accurately represents the texture of the human skin. But if we imagine all the marble surfaces and reliefs in the temple colored for architectural richness' sake, we can feel even more strongly how cold and out-of-place would be a perfectly colorless statue in the centre of all this pattern.

I will go further, and say we can point out cases where coloring greatly heightens the effect and beauty of sculpture. The first is from the bronzes found at Herculaneum, now in the museum at Naples. Though they are not marble, they are suitable for our purpose, being naturally of a single [pg 45]dark brown hue, which is indeed even more unfavorable (we should think) for such treatment. In some of the finest of these bronzes—especially in the two young men starting for a race—the eyeballs are inserted in white, with iris and pupil colored. Nothing can be conceived more striking and lifelike than the effect produced. There is in the Varvakion at Athens a marble mask, found in the Temple of Æsculapius under the south side of the Acropolis,

probably an *ex voto* offered for a recovery from some disease of the eyes. This marble face also has its eyes colored in the most striking and lifelike way, and is one of the most curious objects found in the late excavations.

I will add one remarkable modern example—the monument at Florence to a young Indian prince, who visited England and this country some years ago, and died of fever during his homeward voyage. They have set up to him a richly colored and gilded baldachin, in the open air, and in a quiet, wooded park. Under this covering is a life-sized bust of the prince, in his richest state dress. The whole bust—the turban, the face, the drapery—all is colored to the life, and the dress, of course, of the most gorgeous variety. The turban is chiefly white, striped with gold, in strong contrast to the mahogany complexion and raven hair of the actual head; the robe is gold and green, and covered with ornament. The general effect is, from the very first [pg 46]moment, striking and beautiful. The longer it is studied, the better it appears; and there is hardly a reasonable spectator who will not confess that, were we to replace the present bust with a copy of it in white marble, the beauty and harmony of the monument would be utterly marred. To those who have the opportunity of visiting Greece or Italy, I strongly commend these specimens of colored buildings and sculpture. When they have seen them, they will hesitate to condemn what we still hear called the curiously bad taste of the old

Greeks in their use of color in the plastic arts.

But these archæological discussions are truly ἐκβολαὶ λόγου, digressions—in themselves necessary, yet only tolerable if they are not too long. I revert to the general state of the antiquities at Athens, always reserving the Acropolis for a special chapter. As I said, the isolated pillars of Hadrian's Temple of Zeus, and the so-called Temple of Theseus, are the only very striking objects.[14] There are, of [pg 47]course, many other buildings, or remains of buildings. There is the monument of Lysicrates—a small and very graceful round chamber, adorned with Corinthian engaged pillars, and with friezes of the school of Scopas, and intended to carry on its summit the tripod Lysicrates had gained in a musical and dramatic contest (334 B. C.) at Athens. There is the later Temple of the Winds, as it is called—a sort of public clock, with sundials and fine reliefs of the Wind-gods on its outward surfaces, and arrangements for a water-clock within. There are two portals, or gateways—one leading into the old agora, or market-place, the other leading from old Athens into the Athens of Hadrian.

But all these buildings are either miserably defaced, or of such late date and decayed taste as to make them unworthy specimens of pure Greek art. A single century ago there was much to be seen and admired which has since disappeared; and even to-day the majority of the population are careless as to the treatment of ancient monuments, and sometimes even mischievous in wantonly

defacing them. Thus, I saw the marble tombs of Ottfried Müller and Charles Lenormant—tombs which, though modern, were yet erected at the cost of the nation to men who were eminent lovers and students of Greek art—I saw these tombs used as common targets by [pg 48]the neighborhood, and all peppered with marks of shot and of bullets. I saw them, too, all but blown up by workmen blasting for building-stones close beside them.[15] I saw, also, from the Acropolis, a young gentleman practising with a pistol at a piece of old carved marble work in the Theatre of Dionysus. His object seemed to be to chip off a piece from the edge at every shot. Happily, on this occasion, our vantage ground enabled us to take the law into our own hands; and after in vain appealing to a custodian to interfere, we adopted the tactics of Apollo at Delphi, and by detaching stones from the top of our precipice, we put to flight the wretched barbarian who had come to ravage the treasures of that most sacred place.

These unhappy examples of the defacing of architectural monuments,[16] which can hardly be removed, naturally suggest to the traveller in Greece the kindred question how all the smaller and movable antiquities that are found should be distributed so as best to promote the love and knowledge of art.

On this point it seems to me that we have gone to one extreme, and the Greeks to the other, and [pg 49]that neither of us have done our best to make known what we acknowledge ought to be known as widely as

possible. The tendency in England, at least of later years, has been to swallow up all lesser and all private collections in the great national Museum in London, which has accordingly become so enormous and so bewildering that no one can profit by it except the trained specialist, who goes in with his eyes shut, and will not open them till he has arrived at the special class of objects he intends to examine. But to the ordinary public, and even the generally enlightened public (if such an expression be not a contradiction in terms), there is nothing so utterly bewildering, and therefore so unprofitable, as a visit to the myriad treasures of that great world of curiosities.

In the last century many private persons—many noblemen of wealth and culture—possessed remarkable collections of antiquities. These have mostly been swallowed up by what is called “the nation,” and new private collections are very rare indeed.

In Greece the very opposite course is being now pursued. By a special law it is forbidden to sell out of the country, or even to remove from a district, any antiquities whatever; and in consequence little museums have been established in every village in Greece—nay, sometimes even in places where there is no village, in order that every district may pos[pg 50]sess its own riches, and become worth a visit from the traveller and the antiquary. I have seen such museums at Eleusis, some fifteen miles from Athens, at

Thebes, now an unimportant town, at Livadia, at Chæronea, at Argos, at Olympia, and even in the wild plains of Orchomenus, in a little chapel, with no town within miles.[17] If I add to this that most of these museums were mere dark outhouses, only lighted through the door, the reader will have some notion what a task it would be to visit and criticise, with any attempt at completeness, the ever-increasing remnants of classical Greece.

The traveller is at first disposed to complain that even the portable antiquities found in various parts of Greece are not brought to Athens, and gathered into one vast national museum. Further reflection shows such a proceeding to be not only impossible, but highly inexpedient. I will not speak of the great waste of objects of interest when they are brought together in such vast masses that the visitor is rather oppressed than enlightened. Any one who has gone to the British Museum will know what I mean. Nor will I give the smallest weight to the selfish local argument, that compelling visitors to [pg 51]wander from place to place brings traffic and money into the country. Until proper roads and clean inns are established, such an argument is both unfair and unlikely to produce results worth considering. But fortunately most of the famous things in Greece are sites, ruined buildings, forts which cannot be removed from their place, if at all, without destruction, and of which the very details cannot be understood without seeing the place for which they were intended. Even

the Parthenon sculptures in London would have lost most of their interest, if the building itself at Athens did not show us their application, and glorify them with its splendor. He who sees the gold of Mycenæ at Athens, knows little of its meaning, if he has not visited the giant forts where its owners once dwelt and exercised their sway; and if, as has been done at Olympia, some patriotic Greek had built a safe museum at Mycenæ to contain them, they would be more deeply interesting and instructive than they now are.

In such a town as Athens, on the contrary, it seems to me that the true solution of the problem has been attained, though it will probably be shortly abandoned for a central museum. There are (or were) at Athens at least six separate museums of antiquities—one at the University, one called the Varvakion, one in the Theseum, one, or rather two, on the Acropolis, one in the Ministry of Public Instruction, and lastly, the new National Museum, [pg 52]as it is called, in Patissia Street—devoted to its special treasures. If these several storehouses were thoroughly kept,—if the objects were carefully numbered and catalogued,—I can conceive no better arrangement for studying separately and in detail the various monuments, which must always bewilder and fatigue when crowded together in one vast exhibition. If the British Museum were in this way severed into many branches, and the different classes of objects it contains were placed in separate buildings, and in different

parts of London, I believe most of us would acquire a far greater knowledge of what it contains, and hence it would attain a greater usefulness in educating the nation. To visit any one of the Athenian museums is a comparatively short and easy task, where a man can see the end of his labor before him, and hence will not hesitate to delay long over such things as are worth a careful study.

It may be said that all this digression about the mere placing of monuments is delaying the reader too long from what he desires to know—something about the monuments themselves. But this little book, to copy an expression of Herodotus, particularly affects digressions. I desire to wander through the subject exactly in the way which naturally suggests itself to me. After all, the reflections on a journey ought to be more valuable than its mere description.

[pg 53]
Before passing into Attica and leaving Athens, something more must, of course, be said of the museums, then of the newer diggings, and especially of the splendid tombs found in the Kerameikus. We will then mount the Acropolis, and wander leisurely about its marvellous ruins. From it we can look out upon the general shape and disposition of Attica, and plan our shorter excursions.

As some of the suggestions in my first edition have found favor at Athens, I venture to point out here the great benefit which the Greek archæologists would confer on all Europe if

they would publish an official guide to Athens, with some moderately complete account of the immense riches of its museums. Such a book, which might appear under the sanction of M. Rousopoulos, or Professor Koumanoudis, might be promoted either by the Greek Parliament or the University of Athens. Were it even published in modern Greek, its sale must be large and certain; and, by appendices, or new editions, it could be kept up to the level of the new discoveries. The catalogues of Kekulé and of Heydemann are already wholly inadequate, and unless one has the privilege of knowing personally one of the gentlemen above named, it is very difficult indeed to obtain any proper notion of the history, or of the original sites, of the various objects which excite curiosity or admiration at every step. Such a book as I suggest would be hailed by every Hellenist in [pg 54]Europe as an inestimable boon. But in a land where the able men are perpetually engaged in making or observing new discoveries, they will naturally despise the task of cataloguing what they know. Hence, I suggest that some promising young scholar might undertake the book, and have his work revised by his masters in the sober and practical school of Athens.[18]

[pg 55]

CHAPTER III.

ATHENS—THE MUSEUMS—THE TOMBS.

Nothing is more melancholy and more disappointing than the first view of the Athenian museums. Almost every traveller sees them after passing through Italy, where everything—indeed far too much—has been done to make the relics of antiquity perfect and complete. Missing noses, and arms, and feet have been restored; probable or possible names have been assigned to every statue; they are set up, generally, in handsome galleries, with suitable decoration; the visitor is provided with full descriptive catalogues. Nothing of all this is found in Greece. The fragments are merely sorted: many of the mutilated statues are lying prostrate, and, of course, in no way restored. Everything is, however, in process of being arranged. But there is room to apprehend that in fifty years things will still be found changing their places, and still in process of being arranged. It is not fair to complain of these things in a nation which is fully occupied with its political and commercial development, and where new classical remains are constantly added to the museums. Every nerve is being strained by the Greeks to obtain [pg 56]their

proper rights in the possible break-up of the Ottoman Empire. Great efforts are, besides, being made to develop not only the ports, but the manufactures of the country. The building of new roads is more vital to the nation than the saving and ordering of artistic remains. Thus we must trust to private enterprise and generosity to settle these things; and these have hitherto not been wanting among the Greeks. But their resources are small, and they require help both in money and in sympathy. So, then, unless foreign influences be continuously brought to bear,—all the foreign schools act unselfishly at their own expense,—I fear that all of us who visit Athens will be doomed to that first feeling of disappointment.

But I am bound to add that every patient observer who sets to work in spite of his disappointment, and examines with honest care these “disjecta membra” of Attic art—any one who will replace in imagination the tips of noses—any one who will stoop over lying statues, and guess at the context of broken limbs—such an observer will find his vexation gradually changing into wonder, and will at last come to see that all the smoothly-restored Greek work in Italian museums is not worth a tithe of the shattered fragments in the real home and citadel of pure art. This is especially true of the museum on the Acropolis. It is, however, also true of the other museums, and more obviously true of the reliefs [pg 57]upon the tombs. The assistance of an experienced Athenian

antiquary is also required, who knows his way among the fragments, and who can tell the history of the discovery, and the theories of the purport of each. There are a good many men of ability and learning connected with the University of Athens, who describe each object in the antiquarian papers as it is discovered. But when I asked whether I could buy or subscribe to any recognized organ for such information, I was told (as I might have expected) that no single paper or periodical was so recognized. Clashing interests and personal friendships determine *where* each discovery is to be announced; so that often the professedly archæological journals contain no mention of such things, while the common daily papers secure the information.

Here, again, we feel the want of some stronger government—some despotic assertion of a law of gravitation to a common centre—to counteract the strong centrifugal forces acting all through Greek society. The old *autonomy* of the Greeks—that old assertion of local independence which was at once their greatness and their ruin—this strong instinct has lasted undiminished to the present day. They seem even now to hate pulling together, as we say. They seem always ready to assert their individual rights and claims against those of the community or the public. The old Greeks had as a safeguard [pg 58]their divisions into little cities and territories; so that their passion for autonomy was expended on their city interests, in which the individual could forget himself. But as the

old Greeks were often too selfish for this, and asserted their personal autonomy against their own city, so the modern Greek, who has not this safety-valve, finds it difficult to rise to the height of acting in the interests of the nation at large; and though he converses much and brilliantly about Hellenic unity, he generally allows smaller interests to outweigh this splendid general conception. I will here add a most annoying example of this particularist feeling, which obtrudes itself upon every visitor to Athens. The most trying thing in the streets is the want of shade, and the consequent glare of the houses and roadway. Yet along every street there are planted pepper-trees of graceful growth and of delicious scent. But why are they all so wretchedly small and bare? Because each inhabitant chooses to hack away the growing branches in front of his own door. The Prime Minister, who deplored this curious Vandalism, said he was powerless to check it. Until, however, the Athenians learn to control themselves, and let their trees grow, Athens will be an ugly and disagreeable city.

So, then, the Greeks will not even agree to tell us where we may find a complete list of newly-discovered antiquities. Nor, indeed, does the Athenian [pg 59]public care very much, beyond a certain vague pride, for such things, if we except one peculiar kind, which has taken among them somewhat the place of old china among us. There have been found in many Greek cemeteries—in Megara, in Cyrene, and of late in great abundance and

excellence at Tanagra, in Bœotia—little figures of terra cotta, often delicately modelled and richly colored both in dress and limbs. These figures are ordinarily from eight to twelve inches high, and represent ladies both sitting and standing in graceful attitudes, young men in pastoral life, and other such subjects. I was informed that some had been found in various places through Greece, but the main source of them—and a very rich source—is the Necropolis at Tanagra. There are several collections of these figures on cupboards and in cabinets in private houses at Athens, all remarkable for the marvellous modernness of their appearance. The graceful drapery of the ladies especially is very like modern dress, and many have on their heads flat round hats, quite similar in design to the gipsy hats much worn among ladies of late years. But above all, the hair was drawn back from the forehead, not at all in what is considered Greek style, but rather *à l' Eugénie*, as we used to say when we were young. Many hold in their hands large fans, like those which we make of peacocks' feathers. No conclusive theory has yet been started, so far as I know, concerning the [pg 60]object or intention of these figures. So many of them are female figures, that it seems unlikely they were portraits of the deceased; and the frequent occurrence of two figures together, especially one woman being carried by another, seems almost to dissuade us from such a theory. They seem to be the figures called Κόραι by many old Greeks, which were used as toys by children, and, perhaps, as

ornaments. The large class of tradesmen who made them were called Κορόπλαθοι, and were held in contempt by real sculptors. Most of them are, indeed, badly modelled, and evidently the work of ignorant tradesmen. If it could be shown that they were only found in the graves of children, it would be a touching sign of that world-wide feeling among the human race, to bury with the dead friend whatever he loved and enjoyed in his life on earth, that he might not feel lonely in his cold and gloomy grave.[19] But it seems unlikely that this limitation can ever be proved.

There is an equal difficulty as to their age. The [pg 61]Greeks say that the tombs in which they are found are not later than the second century B. C., and it is, indeed, hard to conceive at what later period there was enough wealth and art to produce such often elegant, and often costly, results. Tanagra and Thespiæ were, indeed, in Strabo's day (lib. ix. 2) the only remaining cities of Bœotia; the rest, he says, were but ruins and names. But we may be certain that in that time of universal decay the remaining towns must have been as poor and insignificant as they now are. Thus, we seem thrown back into classical or Alexandrian days for the origin of these figures, which in their bright coloring—pink and blue dresses, often gilded fringes, the hair always fair, so far as I could find—are, indeed, like what we know of old Greek statuary, but in other respects surprisingly modern.[20] If their antiquity can be strictly demonstrated, it will but show another case of

the versatility of the Greeks in all things relating to art: how, with the simplest material, and at a long distance from the great art centres, they produced a type of exceeding grace and refinement totally foreign to their great old models, varying in dress, attitude—in every point of style—from ordinary Greek sculpture, and anticipating much of the modern ideals of beauty and elegance.

[pg 62]
But it is necessary to suspend our judgment, and wait for further and closer investigation. The workmen at Tanagra are now forbidden to sell these objects to private fanciers; and in consequence, their price has risen so enormously, that those in the market, if of real elegance and artistic merit, cannot be obtained for less than from £40 to £60. As much as 2000 francs has been paid for one, when they were less common. From this price downward they can still be bought in Athens, the rude and badly finished specimens being cheap enough. The only other method of procuring them, or of procuring them more cheaply, is to make diligent inquiries when travelling in the interior, where they may often be bought from poor people, either at Megara, Tanagra, or elsewhere, who have chanced to find them, and are willing enough to part with them after a certain amount of bargaining.

It is convenient to dispose of this peculiar and distinct kind of Greek antiquities, because they seem foreign to the rest, and cannot be

brought under any other head. These figurines have now found their way into most European museums.[21]

I pass to the public collections at Athens, in which we find few of these figures, and which [pg 63]rather contain the usual products of Greek plastic art—statues, reliefs, as well as pottery, and inscriptions. As I have said, the statues are in the most lamentable condition, shattered into fragments, without any attempt at restoring even such losses as can be supplied with certainty. What mischief might be done by such wholesale restoration as was practised in Italy some fifty years ago, it is hard to say. But perhaps the reaction against that error has driven us to an opposite extreme.

There is, indeed, one—a naked athlete, with his cloak hanging over the left shoulder, and coiled round the left forearm—which seems almost as good as any strong male figure which we now possess. While it has almost exactly the same treatment of the cloak on the left arm which we see in the celebrated Hermes of the Vatican,[22] the proportions of the figure are nearer the celebrated *Discobolus* (numbered 126, Braccio Nuovo). There are two other copies at Florence, and one at Naples. These repetitions point to some very celebrated original, which the critics consider to be of the older school of Polycletus, and even imagine may possibly be a copy of his *Doryphorus*, which was called the *Canon* statue, or model of the perfect manly form. The Hermes has too strong a likeness to

Lysippus's *Apoxyomenos* not to be recognized as of the newer school. What [pg 64]we have, then, in this Attic statue seems an intermediate type between the earlier and stronger school of Polycletus and the more elegant and newer school of Lysippus in Alexander's day.

There can, however, be no doubt that it does not date from the older and severer age of sculpture, of which Phidias and Polycletus were the highest representatives. Any one who studies Greek art perceives how remarkably not only the style of dress and ornament, but even the proportions of the figure change, as we come down from generation to generation in the long line of Greek sculptors. The friezes of Selinus (now at Palermo), and those of Ægina (now in Munich), which are among our earliest classical specimens, are remarkable for short, thick-set forms. The men are men five feet seven, or, at most, eight inches high, and their figures are squat even for that height. In the specimens we have of the days of Phidias and Polycletus these proportions are altered. The head of the *Doryphorus*, if we can depend upon our supposed copies, is still heavy, and the figure bulky, though taller in proportion. He looks a man of five feet ten inches at least. The statue we are just considering is even taller, and is like the copies we have of Lysippus's work, the figure apparently of a man of six feet high; but his head is not so small, nor is he so slender and light as this type is usually found.

[pg 65]
It is not very easy to give a full account of this change. There is, of course, one general reason well known—the art of the Greeks, like almost all such developments, went through stiffness and clumsiness into dignity and strength, to which it presently added that grace which raises strength into majesty. But in time the seeking after grace becomes too prominent, and so strength, and with it, of course, the majesty which requires strength as well as grace, is gradually lost. Thus we arrive at a period when the forms are merely elegant or voluptuous, without any assertion of power. I will speak of a similar development among female figures in connection with another subject which will naturally suggest it.

This can only be made plain by a series of illustrations. Of course, the difficulty of obtaining really archaic statues was very great.[23] They were mostly sacred images of the gods, esteemed venerable and interesting by the Greeks, but seldom copied. Happily, the Romans, when they set themselves to admire and procure Greek statues, had fits of what we now call pre-Raphaelitism—fits of admiration for the archaic and devout, even if ungraceful, in preference to the more perfect forms of later art. Hence, we find in Italy a number of [pg 66]statues which, if not really archaic, are at least *archaistic*, as the critics call it—imitations or copies of archaic statues. With these we need now no longer be content. And we may pause a moment on the

question of archaic Greek art, because, apart from the imitations of the time of Augustus and Hadrian, we had already some really genuine fragments in the little museum in the Acropolis—fragments saved, not from the present Parthenon, but rather from about the ruins of the older Parthenon. This temple was destroyed by the Persians, and the materials were built into the surrounding wall of the Acropolis by the Athenians, when they began to strengthen and beautify it at the opening of their career of dominion and wealth. The stains of fire are said to be still visible on these drums of pillars now built into the fortification, and there can be no doubt of their belonging to the old temple, as it is well attested.[24] But I do not agree with the statement that these older materials were so used in order to nurse a perpetual hatred against the Persians in the minds of the people, who saw daily before them the evidence of the ancient wrong done to their temples.[25] I believe this sentimental twaddle to be [pg 67]quite foreign to all Greek feeling. The materials were used in the wall because they were unsuitable for the newer temples, and because they must otherwise be greatly in the way on the limited surface of the Acropolis.

A fair specimen of the old sculptures first found is a very stiff, and, to us, comical figure, which has lost its legs, but is otherwise fairly preserved, and which depicts a male figure with curious conventional hair, and still more conventional beard, holding by its

four legs a bull or calf, which he is carrying on his shoulders. The eyes are now hollow, and were evidently once filled with something different from the marble of which the statue is made. The whole pose and style of the work is stiff and expressionless, and it is one of the most characteristic remains of the older Attic art still in existence.

Happily there is little doubt what the statue means. It is the votive offering of the Marathonians, which Pausanias saw in the Acropolis, and which commemorated the legend of Theseus having driven the wild [pg 68]bull, sent against them by Minos, from Marathon to the Acropolis, where he sacrificed it. Pausanias does not say how Theseus was represented with the bull; but it certainly was not a group—such a thing is clearly beyond the narrow and timid conceptions of the artists of that day. It being difficult to represent this hero and bull together except by representing the man carrying the bull, the artist has made the animal full grown in type, but as small as a calf, and has, of course, not attempted any expression of hostility between the two. The peaceful look, which merely arises from the inability of the artist to render expression, has led many good art critics to call it not a Theseus but a Hermes. Such being the obscure history of the statue, it is not difficult to note its characteristics. We see the conventional treatment of the hair, the curious transparent garments lying close to the skin, and the very heavy muscular forms of the arms and body.

The whole figure is stiff and expressionless, and strictly in what is called the hieratic or old religious style, as opposed to an ideal or artistic conception.

There are two full-length reliefs—one which I first saw in a little church near Orchomenus, and a couple more at Athens in the Theseon—which are plainly of the same epoch and style of art. The most complete Athenian one is ascribed as the stele of Aristion, and as the work of Aristocles,[26] [pg 69]doubtless an artist known as contemporary with those who fought at the battle of Marathon. Thus we obtain a very good clue to the date at which this art flourished. There is also the head of a similar figure, with the hair long and fastened in a knot behind, and with a discus raised above the shoulder, so as to look like a nimbus round the head, which is one of the most interesting objects in the Varvakion. But of the rest the pedestal only is preserved. Any impartial observer will see in these figures strong traces of the influence of Asiatic style. This influence seems about as certain, and almost as much disputed, as the Egyptian influences on the Doric style of architecture. To an unbiassed observer these influences speak so plainly, that, in the absence of strict demonstration to the contrary, one feels bound to admit them—the more so, as we know that the Greeks, like all other people of genius, were ever ready and anxious to borrow from others. It should be often repeated, because it is usually ignored, that it is a most original gift to know how to borrow;

and that those only who feel wanting in originality are anxious to assert it. Thus the Romans, who borrowed without assimilating, are always asserting their originality; the Greeks, who borrowed more and better, because they made what they borrowed their own, never care to do so. The hackneyed parallel of Shakespeare will occur to all.

Unfortunately, the museums of Athens show us [pg 70]but few examples of the transition state of art between this and the perfect work of Phidias's school. The Æginetan marbles are less developed than Phidias's work; but from the relief of Aristion, and the Theseus of the Acropolis, to these, is a wide gulf in artistic feeling. The former is the work of children shackled by their material, still more by conventional rules; the latter the work of men. There is also the well-known Apollo of Thera; a similar Apollo found at Athens, with very conventional curls, and now in the National Museum; and two or three small sitting statues of Athene which, though very archaic, begin to approach the grace of artistic sculpture. But Italy is sufficiently rich in imitations of this very period. There are four very remarkable statues in a small room of the Villa Albani, near Rome, which are not photographed, because the public would, doubtless, think them bad art, but which, could I procure copies and reproduce them, would illustrate clearly what I desire. We have also among the bronzes found at Pompeii statues precisely of this style, evidently copies from old Greek originals, and

made to satisfy the pre-Raphaelitism (as I have already called it) of Italian amateurs. I select a bronze Artemis as an interesting example of this antiquarian taste in a later age. The statuette maintains in the face the very features which we think so comical when looking at the relief of Aristion, or the women [pg 71]of the Acropolis. They are, no doubt, softened and less exaggerated, but still they are there. The so-called Greek profile is not yet attained. The general features of the old Greek face in monuments were a retreating forehead, a peaked nose, slightly turned up at the end, the mouth drawn in, and the corners turned up, flat elongated eyes (especially full in the profiles of reliefs), a prominent angular chin, lank cheeks, and high ears. These lovely features can be found on hundreds of vases, because, vase-making being rather a trade than an art, men kept close to the old models long after great sculptors and painters had, like Polygnotus, begun to depart from the antique stiffness of the countenance.[27] The Artemis in question has, however, these very features, which are very clear when we can see her in profile. But the head-dress and draping are elaborate, and though formal and somewhat rigid, not wanting in grace. The pose of the arms is stiff, and the attitude that of a woman stepping forward, which is very usual in archaic figures—I suppose because it enlarged the base of the statue, and made it stand more firmly in its place. The absence of any girdle or delaying fold in the garments is one of the most marked contrasts with the later draping of such figures.

But now at last we can show the reader how far the antiquarians of later days were able to imitate [pg 72]archaic sculpture. Another characteristic archaic statue was one of the seventeen found in 1885–86 on the Acropolis,[28] where they had been piled together with portions of pillars and other stones to extend the platform for new buildings. The style and the mutilation of all these statues, which, from their uniform type, are more probably votive offerings than sacred images, point to their being the actual statues which the Persians overthrew when ravaging the Acropolis (480 B. C.). They were so broken and spoiled that the Athenians, when restoring and rebuilding their temples, determined to use them for rubbish. Thus we have now a perfectly authentic group of works showing us the art of the older Athens before the Persian Wars. They are each made of several pieces of marble, apparently Parian, dowelled together like wooden work, and the figure here reproduced has a bronze pin protruding from the head, apparently to hold a nimbus or covering of metal. They were all richly colored, as many traces upon them still show.[29]

[pg 73]
Let us now leave this archaic art and go to the street of tombs, where we can find such specimens as the world can hardly equal, and in such condition [pg 74]as to be easily intelligible. A good many of these tombs, and some of them very fine, have lately been removed to the National Museum, where they

are no doubt safer, and more easily studied and compared, though there is something lost in not having them upon their original site, with some at least of their original surroundings. What I have said of the museums is, even so, disappointing, as indeed it should be, if the feelings of the visitor are to be faithfully reproduced. But I must not fail to add, before turning to other places, that in inscriptions these museums are very rich, as well as also in Attic vases, and lamps, and other articles of great importance in our estimate of old Greek life. The professors of the University have been particularly diligent in deciphering and explaining the inscriptions, and with the aid of the Germans, who have collected, and are still collecting, these scattered documents in a complete publication, we are daily having new light thrown upon Greek history. Thus Kohler has been able from the recovered Attic tribute-lists to construct a map of the Athenian maritime empire with its dependencies, which tells the student more in five minutes than hours of laborious reading. The study of vases and lamps is beyond my present scope; and the former so wide and complicated a subject, that it cannot be mastered without long study and trouble.[30]

[pg 75]
I pass, therefore, from the museums to the street of tombs, which Thucydides tells us to find in the fairest suburb of the city, as we go out westward towards the groves of Academe, and before we turn slightly to the south on

our way to the Peiræus. Thucydides has described with some care the funeral ceremonies held in this famous place, and has composed for us a very noble funeral oration, which he has put in the mouth of Pericles.[31] It is with this oration, probably the finest passage in Thucydides's great history, in our minds, that we approach the avenue where the Athenians laid their dead. We have to pass through the poorest portion of modern Athens, through wretched *bazaars* and dirty markets, which abut upon the main street. Amid all this squalor and poverty, all this complete denial of art and leisure, there are [pg 76]still features which faintly echo old Greek life. There is the bright color of the dresses—the predominance of white, and red, and blue, of which the old Athenians were so fond; and there is among the lowest classes a great deal of that striking beauty which recalls to us the old statues. More especially in the form of the head, and in the expression, of the children, we see types not to be found elsewhere in Europe, and which, if not derived from classical Greece, are at all events very beautiful.

We then come on to the railway station, which is, indeed, in this place, as elsewhere, very offensive. With its grimy smoke, its shrill sounds, and all its other hard unloveliness, it is not a meet neighbor for the tombs of the old Greeks, which are close to it on all sides.

They lie—as almost all old ruins do—far below the present level of the ground, and have, therefore, to be exhumed by careful

digging. When this has been done they are covered with a rude door, to protect their sculptured face; and when I first saw them were standing about, without any order or regularity, close to the spots where they had been found.

A proper estimate of these tombs cannot be attained without appreciating the feelings with which the survivors set them up. And we must consider not only the general attitude of Greek literature on the all-important question of the state of man after death, but also the thousands of inscriptions upon [pg 77]tombs, both with and without sculptured reliefs, if we will form a sure opinion about the feelings of the bereaved in these bygone days.

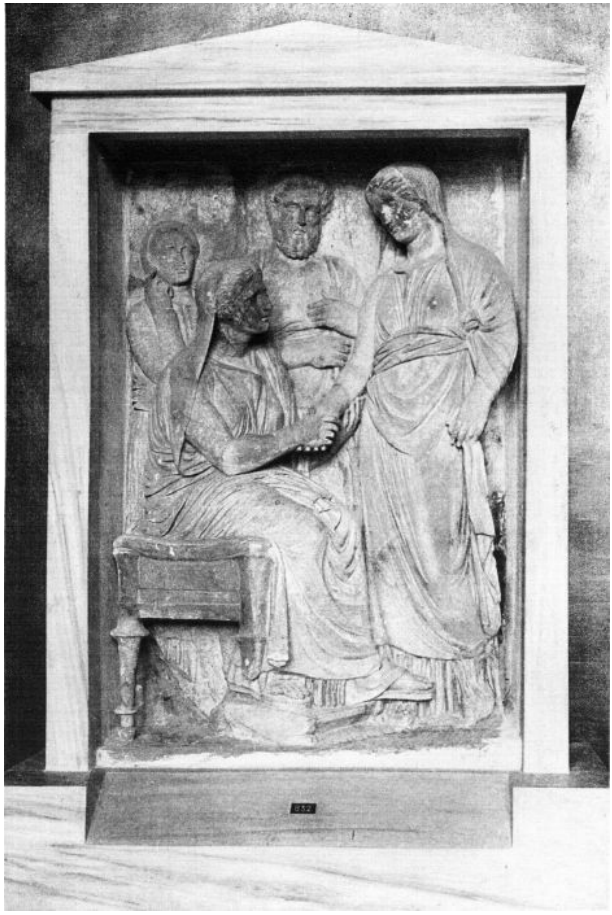
We know from Homer and from Mimnermus that in the earlier periods, though the Greeks were unable to shake off a belief in life after death, they could not conceive that state as anything but a shadowy and wretched echo of the real life upon earth. It was a gloomy existence, burdened with the memory of lost happiness and the longing for lost enjoyment. To the Homeric Greeks death was a dark unavoidable fate, without hope and without reward. It is, indeed, true that we find in Pindar thoughts and aspirations of a very different kind. We have in the fragments of his poetry more than one passage asserting the rewards of the just, and the splendors of a future life far happier than that which we now enjoy. But, notwithstanding these noble visions, such high expectation laid no hold upon the imagination of the Greek world. The

poems of Pindar, we are told, soon ceased to be popular, and his visions are but a streak of light amid general gloom. The kingdom of the dead in Æschylus is evidently, as in Homer, but a weary echo of this life, where honor can only be attained by the pious service of loving kinsfolk, whose duty paid to the dead affects him in his gloomier state, and raises him in the esteem of his less-remembered fellows. Sophocles says nothing to clear away the night; nay [pg 78]rather his deepest and maturest contemplation regards death as the worst of ills to the happy man—a sorry refuge to the miserable. Euripides longs that there may be no future state; and Plato only secures the immortality of the soul by severing it from the person—the man, and all his interests.

It is plain, from this evidence, that the Greeks must have looked upon the death of those they loved with unmixed sorrow. It was the final parting, when all the good and pleasant things are remembered; when men seek, as it were, to increase the pang, by clothing the dead in all his sweetest and dearest presence. But this was not done by pompous inscriptions, or by a vain enumeration of all the deceased had performed—inscriptions which, among us, tell more of the vanity than of the grief of the survivors. The commonest epitaph was a simple χαῖρε, or farewell; and it is this single word, so full and deep in its meaning to those who love, which is pictured in the tomb reliefs. They are simple parting scenes, expressing the grief of the survivors, and the great sadness of the sufferer, who is

going to his long home.

Nevertheless, what strikes us forcibly in these remarkable monuments is the chastened modest expression of sorrow which they display. There is no violence, no despair, no extravagance—all is simple and noble; thus combining purity of art with a far deeper pathos—a far nobler grief—than that of the [pg 79]exaggerated paintings and sculptures which seek to express mourning in later and less cultivated ages.[32] We may defy any art to produce truer or more poignant pictures of real sorrow—a sorrow, as I have explained, far deeper and more hopeless than any Christian sorrow; and yet there is no wringing of hands, no swooning, no defacing with sackcloth and ashes.[33] Sometimes, indeed, as in the celebrated tomb of Dexileos, a mere portrait of the dead in active life was put upon his tomb, and private grief would not assert itself in presence of the record of his public services.



A Tomb from the Via Sacra, Athens

I know not that any other remnants of Greek art bring home to us more plainly one of its eternal and divine features—or shall I rather say, one of its eternal and human features?—the greatest, if not the main feature, which has made it the ever new and ever lasting lawgiver to men in their efforts to represent

the ideal.

If I am to permit myself any digression whatever, we cannot do better than conclude this chapter with some reflections on this subject, and we may there[pg 80]fore turn, by suggestion of the Athenian tombs, to a few general remarks on the *reserve* of Greek art—I mean the reserve in the displaying emotion, in the portraying of the fierce outbursts of joy or grief; and again, more generally, the reserve in the exhibiting of peculiar or personal features, passing interests, or momentary emotions.

In a philosophy now rather forgotten than extinct, and which once commanded no small attention, Adam Smith was led to analyze the indirect effects of *sympathy*, from which, as a single principle, he desired to deduce all the rules of ethics. While straining many points unduly, he must be confessed to have explained with great justice the origin of good taste or tact in ordinary life, which he saw to be the careful watching of the interest of others in our own affairs, and the feeling that we must not force upon them what concerns ourselves, except we are sure to carry with us their active sympathy. Good breeding, he says, consists in a delicate perception how far this will go, and in suppressing those of our feelings which, though they affect *us* strongly, cannot be expected to affect in like manner our neighbor, whose sympathy should be the measure and limit of our outspokenness. There can be no doubt that whatever other elements come in, this analysis is true, so far

as it goes, and recommends itself at once to the convictions of any educated man. The very same principle applies still more [pg 81]strongly and universally in art. As tragedy is bound to treat ideal griefs and joys of so large and broad a kind that every spectator may merge in them his petty troubles, so ideal sculpture and painting are only ideal so far as they represent those large and eternal features in human nature which must always command the sympathy of every pure human heart.

Let us dispose at once of an apparent exception—the mediæval pictures of the Passion of Christ, and the sorrows of the Virgin Mary. Here the artist allowed himself the most extreme treatment, because the objects were necessarily the centre of the very highest sympathy. No expression of the grief of Christ could be thought exaggerated in the Middle Ages, because in this very exaggeration lay the centre point of men's religion. But when no such object of universal and all-absorbing sympathy can be found (and there was none such in pagan life), then the Greek artist must attain by his treatment of the object what the Christian artist obtained by the object itself. Assuming, then, a mastery over his material, and sufficient power of execution, the next feature to be looked for in Greek art, and especially in Greek sculpture, is a certain modesty and reserve in expression, which will not portray slight defects in picturing a man, but represent that eternal or ideal character in

him which remains in our memory when he is gone. Such, for example, is the famous portrait-statue of Sophocles.

[pg 82]
Such are also all that great series of ideal figures which meet us in the galleries of ancient art. They seldom show us any violent emotion; they are seldom even in so special an attitude that critics cannot interpret it in several different ways, or as suitable to several myths. It is not passing states of feeling, but the eternal and ideal beauty of human nature, which Greek sculpture seeks to represent; and for this reason it has held its sway through all the centuries which have since gone by. This was the calm art of Phidias, and Polycletus, and Polygnotus, in sentiment not differing from the rigid awkwardness of their predecessors, but in mastery of proportions and of difficulties attaining the grace in which the others had failed. To this general law there are, no doubt, exceptions, and perhaps very brilliant ones; yet they are exceptions, and even in them, if we consider them attentively, we can see the universal features and the points of sympathy for all mankind. But if the appeal for sympathy is indeed overstrained, then, however successful in its own society and its own social atmosphere, the work of art loses power when offered to another generation. Thus Euripides, though justly considered in his own society the most tragic of poets, has for this very reason ceased to appeal to us as Æschylus still appeals. For Æschylus kept

within the proper bounds dictated by the reserve of art; Euripides often did [pg 83]not, and his work, though great and full of genius, suffered accordingly.

It seems to me that the tombs before us are remarkable as exemplifying, with the tact of genius, this true and perfect reserve. They are simple pictures of the grief of parting—of the recollection of pleasant days of love and friendship—of the gloom of the unknown future. But there is no exaggeration, nor speciality—no individuality, I had almost said—in the picture. I feel no curiosity to inquire who these people are—what were their names—even what was the relationship of the deceased.[34] For I am perfectly satisfied with an ideal portrait of the grief of parting—a grief that comes to us all, and lays bitter hold of us at some season of life; and it is this universal sorrow—this great common flaw in our lives—which the Greek artist has brought before us, and which calls forth our deepest sympathy. There will be future occasion to come back upon this all-important feature in connection with the *action* in Greek sculpture, and even with the draping of their statues—in all of which the calm and chaste reserve of the better Greek art contrasts strangely with the Michael Angelos, and Berninis, [pg 84]and Canovas, of other days; nay, even with the Greek sculpture of a no less brilliant but less refined age.

But, in concluding this digression, I will call attention to a modern parallel in the portraiture of grief, and of grief at final

parting. This parallel is not a piece of sculpture, but a poem, perhaps the most remarkable poem of our generation—the *In Memoriam* of Lord Tennyson. Though written from personal feeling, and to commemorate a special person—Arthur Hallam—whom some of us even knew, has this poem laid hold of the imagination of men strongly and lastingly owing to the poet's special loss? Certainly not. I do not even think that this great dirge—this magnificent funeral poem—has excited in most of us any strong interest in Arthur Hallam. In fact, any other friend of the poet's would have suited the general reader equally well as the exciting cause of a poem, which we delight in because it puts into great words the ever-recurring and permanent features in such grief—those dark longings about the future; those suggestions of despair, of discontent with the providence of the world, of wild speculation about its laws; those struggles to reconcile our own loss, and that of the human race, with some larger law of wisdom and of benevolence. To the poet, of course, his own particular friend was the great centre point of the whole. But to us, in reading it, there is a wide [pg 85]distinction between the personal passages—I mean those which give family details, and special circumstances in Hallam's life, or his intimacy with the poet—and the purely poetical or artistic passages, which soar away into a region far above all special detail, and sing of the great gloom which hangs over the future, and of the vehement beating of the human soul against the bars of its prison house, when

one is taken, and another left, not merely at apparent random, but with apparent injustice and damage to mankind. Hence, every man in grief for a lost friend will read the poem to his great comfort, and will then only see clearly what it means; and he will find it speak to him specially and particularly, not in its personal passages, but in its general features; in its hard metaphysics; in its mystical theology; in its angry and uncertain ethics. For even the commonest mind is forced by grief out of its commonness, and attacks the world-problems, which at other times it has no power or taste to approach.

By this illustration, then, the distinction between the universal and the personal features of grief can be clearly seen; and the reader will admit that, though it would be most unreasonable to dictate to the poet, or to imagine that he should have omitted the stanzas which refer specially to his friend, and which were to him of vital importance, yet to us it is no loss to forget that name and those circum[pg 86]stances, and hold fast to the really eternal (and because eternal, really artistic) features, in that very noble symphony —shall I say of half-resolved discords, or of suspended harmonies, which faith may reconcile, but which reason can hardly analyze or understand?[35]

Within a few minutes' walk of these splendid records of the dead, the traveller who returns to the town across the Observatory Hill will find a very different cemetery. For here he suddenly comes up to a long cleft in the rock,

running parallel with the road below, and therefore quite invisible from it. The rising ground towards the city hides it equally from the Acropolis, and accordingly from all Athens. This gorge, some two hundred yards long, sixty wide, and over thirty feet deep, is the notorious *Barathrum*, the place of execution in old days; the place where criminals were cast out, and where the public executioner resided. It has been falsely inferred by the old scholiasts that the Athenians cast men alive into the pit. It is not nearly deep enough now to cause death in this way, and there seems no reason why its original depth should have been diminished by any accumulation of rubbish, such as is common on inhabited sites. “Casting [pg 87]into the Barathrum” referred rather to the refusing the rights of burial to executed criminals—an additional disgrace, and to the Greeks a grave additional penalty. Honor among the dead was held to follow in exact proportion to the continued honors paid by surviving friends.

Here, then, out of view of all the temples and hallowed sites of the city, dwelt the public slave, with his instruments of death, perhaps in a cave or grotto, still to be seen in the higher wall of the gorge, and situated close to the point where an old path leads over the hill towards the city. Plato speaks of young men turning aside, as they came from Peiræus, to see the dead lying in charge of this official; and there must have been times in the older history of Athens when this cleft

in the rock was a place of carnage and of horror. The gentler law of later days seems to have felt this outrage on human feeling, and instead of casting the dead into the Barathrum, it was merely added to the sentence that the body should not be buried within the boundaries of Attica. Yet, though the *Barathrum* may have been no longer used, the accursed gate (ἱερὰ πύλη) still led to it from the city, and the old associations clung about its gloomy seclusion. Even in the last century, the Turks, whether acting from instinct, or led by old tradition, still used it as a place of execution.

In the present day, all traces of this hideous his[pg 88]tory have long passed away, and I found a little field of corn waving upon the level ground beneath, which had once been the *Aceldama* of Athens. But even now there seemed a certain loneliness and weirdness about the place—silent and deserted in the midst of thoroughfares, hidden from the haunts of men, and hiding them from view by its massive walls. Nay, as if to bring back the dark memories of the past, great scarlet poppies stained the ground in patches as it were with slaughter, and hawks and ravens were still circling about overhead, as their ancestors did in the days of blood; attached, I suppose, by hereditary instinct to this fatal place, “for where the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.”

[pg 89]

CHAPTER IV.

THE ACROPOLIS OF ATHENS.

I suppose there can be no doubt whatever that the ruins on the Acropolis of Athens are the most remarkable in the world. There are ruins far larger, such as the pyramids, and the remains of Karnak. There are ruins far more perfectly preserved, such as the great Temple at Pæstum. There are ruins more picturesque, such as the ivy-clad walls of mediæval abbeys beside the rivers in the rich valleys of England. But there is no ruin, all the world over, which combines so much striking beauty, so distinct a type, so vast a volume of history, so great a pageant of immortal memories. There is, in fact, no building on earth which can sustain the burden of such greatness, and so the first visit to the Acropolis is and must be disappointing. When the traveller reflects how all the Old World's culture culminated in Greece—all Greece in Athens—all Athens in its Acropolis—all the

Acropolis in the Parthenon—so much crowds upon the mind confusedly that we look for some enduring monument whereupon we can fasten our thoughts, and from which we can pass as from a visible starting-point [pg 90]into all this history and all this greatness. And at first we look in vain. The shattered pillars and the torn pediments will not bear so great a strain: and the traveller feels forced to admit a sense of disappointment, sore against his will. He has come a long journey into the remoter parts of Europe; he has reached at last what his soul had longed for many years in vain: and as is wont to be the case with all great human longings, the truth does not fulfil his desire. The pang of disappointment is all the greater when he sees that the tooth of time and the shock of earthquake have done but little harm. It is the hand of man—of reckless foe and ruthless lover—which has robbed him of his hope. This is the feeling, I am sure, of more than have confessed it, when they first wound their way through the fields of great blue aloes, and passed up through the Propylæa into the presence of the Parthenon. But to those who have not given way to these feelings—who have gone again and again and sat upon the rock, and watched the ruins at every hour of the day, and in the brightness of a moonlight night—to those who have dwelt among them, and meditated upon them with love and awe—there first come back the remembered glories of Athens's greatness, when Olympian Pericles stood upon this rock with careworn Phidias, and reckless Alcibiades with Pious Nicias and

fervent Demosthenes with caustic Phocion—when such men peopled the temples [pg 91]in their worship, and all the fluted pillars and sculptured friezes were bright with scarlet, and blue, and gold. And then the glory of remembered history casts its hue over the war-stained remnants. Every touch of human hand, every fluting, and drop, and triglyph, and cornice recalls the master minds which produced this splendor; and so at last we tear ourselves from it as from a thing of beauty, which even now we can never know, and love, and meditate upon to our hearts' content.

Nothing is more vexatious than the reflection, how lately these splendid remains have been reduced to their present state. The Parthenon, being used as a Greek church, remained untouched and perfect all through the Middle Ages. Then it became a mosque, and the Erechtheum a seraglio, and in this way survived with little damage till 1687, when, in the bombardment by the Venetians under Morosini, a shell dropped into the Parthenon, where the Turks had their powder stored, and blew out the whole centre of the building. Eight or nine pillars at each side have been thrown down, and have left a large gap, which so severs the front and rear of the temple, that from the city below they look like the remains of two different buildings. The great drums of these pillars are yet lying there, in their order, just as they fell, and some money and care might set them all up again in their places; yet there is not in

Greece the patriotism or even the common [pg 92]sense to enrich the country by this restoration, matchless in its certainty as well as in its splendor.

But the Venetians were not content with their exploit. They were, about this time, when they held possession of most of Greece, emulating the Pisan taste for Greek sculptures; and the four fine lions standing at the gate of the arsenal at Venice still testify to their zeal in carrying home Greek trophies to adorn their capital. Morosini wished to take down the sculptures of Phidias from the eastern pediment, but his workmen attempted it so clumsily that the figures fell from their place, and were dashed to pieces on the ground. The Italians also left their lasting mark on the place by building a high square tower of wretched patched masonry at the right side of the entrance gate, which had of late years become such an eyesore to the better educated public, that when I was first at Athens there was a subscription on foot to have it taken down—not only in order to remove an obtrusive reminiscence of the invaders, but in the hope of bringing to light some pillars of the Propylæa built into it, as well as many inscribed stones, broken off and carried away from their places as building material. This expectation has not been verified by the results. The tower was taken down by the liberality of M. Schliemann, and there were hardly any inscriptions or sculptures discovered.

A writer in the *Saturday Review* (No. 1134)

[pg 93]attacks this removal of the Venetian tower, and my approval of it, as a piece of ignorant and barbarous pedantry, which from love of the old Greek work, and its sanctity, desires to destroy the later history of the place, and efface the monuments of its fortunes in after ages.[36] This writer, whose personality is unmistakable, thinks that even the Turkish additions to the Parthenon should have been left untouched, so that the student of to-day could meditate upon all these incongruities, and draw from them historical lessons. And, assuredly, of all lessons conveyed, that of a victory over the Turks would be to this writer the most important and the most delightful.

If this great man will not silence us with his authority, but let us argue with him, we might suggest that there are, no doubt, cases where the interests of art and of history are conflicting, and where a restoration of pristine beauty must take away from the evidences of later history. The real question is then, whether the gain in art is greater than the loss in history. In the case of the Parthenon I think it is, now especially, when records and drawings of the inferior additions can be secured. [pg 94]It may be historically important to note the special work and character of every generation of men; but surely for the education of the human race in the laws of beauty, and in general culture, some ages are worth nothing, and others worth everything; and I will not admit that this sort of education is one whit less

important than education in the facts of history.

Of course, artistic restorations are often carried too far; a certain age may be arbitrarily assumed as the canon of perfection, and everything else destroyed to make way for it. There are few ages which can lay claim to such pre-eminence as the age of Pericles; yet even in this case, were the mediæval additions really beautiful, we should, of course, hesitate to disturb them. But the Venetian tower, though a picturesque addition to the rock when seen from a distance, so much so, that I felt its loss when I saw the Acropolis again, had no claim to architectural beauty; it was set up in a place sacred to greater associations, and besides there was every reasonable prospect that its removal would subserve historical ends of far more importance than the Venetian occupation of the Acropolis. A few inscriptions of the date of Pericles, containing treaties or other such public matter, would, in my opinion, have perfectly justified its removal, even though it did signify a victory of Christians over Turks.

[pg 95]
In any case, it seems to me unfair that if every generation is to express its knowledge by material results, we should not be permitted to record our conviction that old Greek art or old Greek history is far greater and nobler than either Turkish or Venetian history, and to testify this opinion by making their monuments give way to it. This is the mark of

our generation on the earth. Thus the eighteenth century was, no doubt, a most important time in the history even of art, but where noble thirteenth century churches have been dressed up and loaded with eighteenth century additions, I cannot think the historical value of these additions, as evidence of the taste or the history of their age, counterbalances their artistic mischievousness, and I sympathize with the nations who take them away. Of course, this principle may be overdriven, and has been often abused. Against such abuses the remarks of the great critic to whom I refer are a very salutary protest. But that any barbarous or unsightly deforming of great artistic monuments is to be protected on historical grounds—this is a principle of which neither his genius nor his sneers will convince me. As for the charge of pedantry, no charge is more easily made, but no charge is more easily retorted.

Strangely enough, his theory of the absolute sanctity of old brick and mortar nearly agrees in results with the absolute carelessness about such [pg 96]things, which is the peculiarity of his special enemies, the Turks. The Turks, according to Dodwell, who is a most trustworthy witness, never destroyed the old buildings unless they wanted them for masonry. He tells us not to believe that the figures of the remaining pediment were used as targets by the Turkish soldiers—a statement often made in his day. However that may be, I have little doubt, from what I

saw myself, that Greek soldiers in the present day might so use them. But the Turks did take down some pillars of the Propylæa while Dodwell was there, for building purposes, an occurrence which gave that excellent observer the opportunity of noting the old Greek way of fitting the drums of the pillars together. He even got into his possession one of the pieces of cypress wood used as plugs between the stone masses, and has given a drawing of it, and explained the method of its use, in his admirable book.[37]

But the same traveller was also present when a far more determined and systematic attack was made upon the remaining ruins of the Parthenon. While he was travelling in the interior, Lord Elgin had obtained his famous firman from the Sultan to take down and remove any antiquities or sculptured stones he might require, and the infuriated Dodwell [pg 97]saw a set of ignorant workmen, under equally ignorant overseers, let loose upon the splendid ruins of the age of Pericles. He speaks with much good sense and feeling of this proceeding. He is fully aware that the world would derive inestimable benefit from the transplanting of these splendid fragments to a more accessible place, but he cannot find language strong enough to express his disgust at the way in which the thing was done. Incredible as it may appear, Lord Elgin himself seems not to have superintended the work, but to have left it to paid contractors, who undertook the job for a fixed sum. Little as either Turks or Greeks cared for the ruins,

Dodwell says that a pang of grief was felt through all Athens at the desecration, and that the contractors were obliged to bribe workmen with additional wages to undertake the ungrateful task. He will not even mention Lord Elgin by name, but speaks of him with disgust as "the person" who defaced the Parthenon. He believes that had this person been at Athens himself, his underlings could hardly have behaved in the reckless way they did, pulling down more than they wanted, and taking no care to prop up and save the work from which they had taken the supports.

He especially notices their scandalous proceeding upon taking up one of the great white marble blocks which form the floor or stylobate of the temple. They wanted to see what was underneath, and Dod[pg 98]well, who was there, saw the foundation—a substructure of Peiræic sandstone. But when they had finished their inspection they actually left the block they had removed, without putting it back into its place. So this beautiful pavement, made merely of closely-fitting blocks, without any artificial or foreign joinings, was ripped up, and the work of its destruction begun. I am happy to add that, though a considerable rent was then made, most of it is still intact, and the traveller of to-day may still walk on the very stones which bore the tread of every great Athenian.

The question has often been discussed, whether Lord Elgin was justified in carrying off this pediment, the metopes, and the friezes, from their place; and the Greeks of to-

day hope confidently that the day will come when England will restore these treasures to their place. This is, of course, absurd, and it may fairly be argued that people who would bombard their antiquities in a revolution are not fit custodians of them in the intervals of domestic quiet. This was my reply to an old Greek gentleman who assailed the memory of Lord Elgin with reproaches. I told him that I was credibly informed the Greeks had themselves bombarded the Turks in the Acropolis during the war of liberation, as several great pieces knocked out and starred on the western front testify. He confessed, to my amusement, that he had himself been one of the [pg 99]assailants, and excused the act by the necessities of war. I replied that, as the country seemed then (1875) on the verge of a revolution, the sculptures might at least remain in the British Museum until a secure government was established. And this is the general verdict of learned men on the matter. They are agreed that it was on the whole a gain to science to remove the figures, but all stigmatize as barbarous and shameful the reckless way in which the work was carried out.

I confess I approved of this removal until I came home from Greece, and went again to see the spoil in its place in our great Museum. Though there treated with every care—though shown to the best advantage, and explained by excellent models of the whole building, and clear descriptions of their place on it—notwithstanding all this, the loss that

these wonderful fragments had sustained by being separated from their place was so terribly manifest—they looked so unmeaning in an English room, away from their temple, their country, and their lovely atmosphere,—that one earnestly wished they had never been taken from their place, even at the risk of being made a target by the Greeks or the Turks. I am convinced, too, that the few who would have seen them, as intelligent travellers, on their famous rock, would have gained in quality the advantage now diffused among many, but weakened and almost destroyed by the wrench in associations, when the [pg 100]ornament is severed from its surface, and the decoration of a temple exhibited apart from the temple itself. We may admit, then, that it had been better if Lord Elgin had never taken away these marbles. Nevertheless, it would be absurd to send them back, as has recently been advocated (in 1890) by some ignorant English sentimentalists. But I do think that the museum on the Acropolis should be provided with a better set of casts of the figures than those which are now to be seen there. They look very wretched, and carelessly prepared.

There are, indeed, preserved in the little museum on the Acropolis the broken remains of the figures of the eastern pediment, which Morosini and his Venetians endeavored to take down, as I have already told. They are little more than pieces of drapery, of some use in reconstructing the composition, but of none in judging the effect of that famous group.

But we must not yet enter into this little museum, which is most properly put out of sight, at the lowest or east corner of the rock, and which we do not reach till we have passed through all the ruins. As the traveller stands at the inner gate of the Propylæa, he notices at once all the perfect features of the buildings. Over his head are the enormous architrave-stones of the Propylæa—blocks of white marble over twenty-two feet long, which span the gateway from pillar to pillar. Opposite, above him [pg 101]and a little to the right, is the mighty Parthenon, not identical in orientation, as the architects have observed, with the gateway, but varying from it slightly, so that sun and shade would play upon it at moments differing from the rest, and thus produce a perpetual variety of lights. This principle is observed in the setting of the Erechtheum also. To the left, and directly over the town, stands that beautifully decorated little Ionic temple, or combination of temples, with the stately Caryatids looking inwards and towards the Parthenon. These two buildings are the most perfect examples we have of their respective styles. We see at first sight the object of the artists who built them. The one is the embodiment of majesty, the other of grace. The very ornaments of the Parthenon are large and massive; those of the Erechtheum for the most part intricate and delicate. Accordingly, the Parthenon is in the Doric style, or rather in the Doric style so refined and adorned as to be properly called the Attic style.

For the more we study old Athenian art—nay, even old Athenian character generally—the more are we convinced that its greatness consists in the combination of Doric sternness and Ionic grace. It is hardly a mediation between them; it is the adoption of the finer elements of both, and the union of them into a higher harmony. The most obvious illustration of this is the drama, where the [pg 102]Ionic element of recitation and the Doric choral hymn were combined—and let me observe that the Ionic element was more modified than the Doric. In the same way Attic architecture used the strength and majesty of the older style which we see at Corinth and Pæstum; but relieved it, partly by lighter proportions, partly by rich decorations, which gave the nearer observer an additional and different delight, while from afar the large features were of the old Doric majesty. Even in the separate decorations, such as the metopes and friezes, the graceful women and the long-flowing draperies of the Ionic school were combined with the muscular nakedness of the Doric athlete, as represented by Doric masters. Individual Attic masters worked out these contrasted types completely, as we may see by the *Discobolus* of Myron, a contemporary of Phidias, and the *Apollo Musagetes* of Scopas, who lived somewhat later.[38]

In fact, all Athenian character, in its best days, combined the versatility, and luxury, and fondness of pleasure, which marked the Ionian, with the energy, the public spirit, and

the simplicity which was said to mark the better Doric states. The Parthenon and Erechtheum express all this in visible clearness. The Athenians felt that the Ionic elegance and luxury of style was best suited to a small [pg 103]building; and so they lavished ornament and color upon this beautiful little house, but made the Doric temple the main object of all the sacred height.

It is worth while to consult the professional architects, like Revett,[39] who have examined these buildings with a critical eye. Not only were the old Athenian architects perfect masters of their materials, of accurate measurement, of precise correspondence, of all calculations as to strain and pressure—they even for artistic, as well as for practical purposes, deviated systematically from accuracy, in order that the harmony of the building might profit by this imperceptible discord. They gave and took, like a tuner tempering the chords of a musical instrument. The stylobate is not exactly level, but curved so as to rise four inches in the centre; the pillars, which themselves swell slightly in the middle, are not set perpendicularly, but with a slight incline inwards: and this effect is given in the Caryatids by making them rest their weight on [pg 104]the outer foot at each corner, as Viollet-le-duc has admirably explained. Again, the separation of the pillars is less at the corners, and gradually increases as you approach the centre of the building. The base of the pediment is not a right line,

but is curved downward. It is not my province to go into minute details on such points, which can only be adequately discussed by architects. What I have here to note is, that the old Greek builders had gone beyond mere mathematical accuracy and regularity. They knew a higher law than the slavish repetition of accurate distances or intervals; they had learned to calculate effects, to allow for optical illusions; they knew how to sacrifice real for ideal symmetry.

The sculptures of the Parthenon have given rise to a very considerable literature—so considerable that the books and treatises upon them now amount to a respectable library. The example was set by the architect of the building itself, Ictinus, who wrote a special treatise on his masterpiece. As is well known, it was sketched in chalk by the French painter, Jacques Carrey, a few years before the explosion of 1687; and though he had but very imperfect notions of Greek art, and introduced a good deal of seventeenth century style into the chaste designs of Phidias, still these drawings, of which there are copies in the British Museum, are of great [pg 105]value in helping us to put together the broken and imperfect fragments which remain.[40]

The sculptured decorations of the building are of three kinds, or applied in three distinct places. In the first place, the two triangular *pediments* over the east and west front were each filled with a group of statues more than life-size—the one representing the birth of

Athene, and the other her contest with Poseidon for the patronage of Athens. Some of the figures from one of these are the great draped headless women in the centre of the Parthenon room of the British Museum: other fragments of those broken by the Venetians are preserved at Athens. There are, secondly, the *metopes*, or plaques of stone inserted into the frieze between the triglyphs, and carved in relief with a single small group on each. The height of these surfaces does not exceed four feet. There was, thirdly, a band of reliefs running all around the external wall at the top of the cella, inside the surrounding pillars, and opposite to them, and this is known as the *frieze of the cella*. It consists of a great Panathenaic procession, starting from the western front, and proceeding in two divisions along the parallel north and south walls, till they meet on the eastern front, which was the proper front of the temple. Among the Elgin marbles there are a good many of the metopes, and also of [pg 106]the pieces of the cella frieze preserved. Several other pieces of the frieze are preserved at Athens, and altogether we can reconstruct fully three-fourths of this magnificent composition.

There seems to me the greatest possible difference in merit between the metopes and the other two parts of the ornament. The majority of the metopes which I have seen represent either a Greek and an Amazon or a Centaur and Lapith, in violent conflict. It appeared plainly to me that the main object

of these contorted groups was to break in upon the squareness and straightness of all the other members of the Doric frieze and architrave. This is admirably done, as there is no conceivable design which more completely breaks the stiff rectangles of the entablature than the various and violent curves of wrestling figures. But, otherwise, these groups do not appear to me very interesting, except so far as everything in such a place, and the work of such hands, must be interesting.

It is very different with the others. Of these the pediment sculptures—which were, of course, the most important, and which were probably the finest groups ever designed—are so much destroyed or mutilated that the effect of the composition is entirely lost, and we can only admire the matchless power and grace of the torsos which remain. The grouping of the figures was limited, and indicated by the triangular shape of the surface to be deco[pg 107]rated—standing figures occupying the centre, while recumbent or stooping figures occupied the ends. But, as in poetry, where the shackles of rhyme and metre, which encumber the thoughts of ordinary writers, are the very source which produces in the true poet the highest and most precious beauties of expression; so in sculpture and painting, fixed conditions seem not to injure, but to enhance and perfect, the beauty and symmetry attainable in the highest art. We have apparently in the famous Niobe group, preserved in Florence, the elements of a similar composition, perhaps intended to fill

the triangular tympanum of a temple; and even in these weak Roman copies of a Greek masterpiece we can see how beautifully the limited space given to the sculpture determined the beauty and variety of the figures, and their attitudes. It was in this genius of grouping that I fancy Phidias chiefly excelled all his contemporaries: single statues of Polycletus are said to have been preferred in competitions. To us the art of the *Discobolus* of Myron seems fully as great as that of any of the figures of the Parthenon; but no other artist seems to have possessed the same architectonic power of adapting large subjects and processions of figures to their places as Phidias.[41] How far he was helped or [pg 108]advised by Ictinus, or even by Pericles, it is not easy to say. But I do not fancy that Greek statesmen in those days studied everything else in the world besides statecraft, and were known as antiquaries, and linguists, and *connoisseurs* of china and paintings, and theologians, and novelists—in fact, everything under the sun. This many-sidedness, as they now call it, which the Greeks called πολυπραγμοσύνη and thought to be meddlesomeness, was not likely to infect Pericles. He was very intimate with Phidias, and is said to have constantly watched his work—hardly, I fancy, as an adviser, but rather as an humble and enthusiastic admirer of an art which did realize its ideal, while he himself was striving in vain with rebel forces to attain his object in politics.

The extraordinary power of grouping in the

designs of Phidias is, however, very completely shown us in the better preserved band of the cella frieze, along which the splendid Panathenaic procession winds its triumphal way. Over the eastern doorway were twelve noble sitting figures on either side of the officiating priest, presenting the state robe, or *peplos*, for the vestment of Athene. These figures are explained as gods by the critics; but they do not in either beauty or dignity, excel those [pg 109]of many of the Athenians forming the procession. A very fine slab, containing three of these figures, is now to be seen in the little museum in the Acropolis. This group over the main entrance is the end and summary of all the procession, and corresponds with the yearly ceremony in this way, that, as the state entrance, or Propylæa, led into the Acropolis at the west end, or rear of the Parthenon, the procession in all probability separated into two, which went along both sides of the colonnade, and met again at the eastern door. Accordingly, over the western end, or rear, the first preparations of the procession are being made, which then starts along the north and south walls; the southern being chiefly occupied with the cavalcade of the Athenian knights, the northern with the carrying of sacred vessels and leading of victims for the sacrifice. The frieze over the western door is still in its place; but, having lost its bright coloring, and being in any case at a great height, and only visible from close underneath, on account of the pillars and architrave in front, it produces no effect, and

is hardly discernible. Indeed it evidently was never more than an architectural ornament, in spite of all its artistic beauty.

The greater number of the pieces carried away by Lord Elgin seem taken from the equestrian portion, in which groups of cantering and curveting horses, and men in the act of mounting, and striving to curb restive steeds, are brought together with extra[pg 110]ordinary effect. We can see plainly how important a part of Athenian splendor depended upon their knights, and how true are the hints of Aristophanes about their social standing and aristocratic tone. The reins and armor, or at least portions of it, were laid on in metal, and have accordingly been long since plundered; nor has any obvious trace remained of the rich colors with which the whole was painted. There appears no systematic uniform, some of the riders being dressed in helmets and cuirasses, some in felt wide-awakes, and short flying cloaks. It must remain uncertain whether the artist did not seek to obtain variety by this deviation from a fixed dress. There can be no doubt that Greek art was very bold and free in such matters. On the other hand, the type of the faces does not exhibit much variety. At the elevation above the spectator which this frieze occupied, individual expression would have been thrown away on figures of three feet in height: the general dress, and the attitudes, may have been, when colored, easily discernible.

But I confess that this equestrian procession

does not appear to me so beautiful as the rows of figures on foot (carrying pitchers and other implements, leading victims, and playing pipes), which seem to come from the north wall, and of which the most beautiful slabs are preserved at Athens. Here we can see best of all that peculiar stamp which shows the age of Phidias to have been the most perfect in the whole [pg 111]of Greek sculpture. This statement will not be accepted readily by the general public. The Apollo Belvedere, the Capitoline Venus, the Dying Gladiator—these are what we have been usually taught to regard as the greatest wonders of Greek plastic art; and those who have accustomed themselves to this realistic and sensuous beauty will not easily see the greatness and the perfection of the solemn and chaste art of Phidias.



Part of the West Frieze of the Parthenon, Athens

Nevertheless, it will always be held by men who have thought long enough on the subject, that the epoch when Myron and Phidias, Polycletus and Polygnotus, broke loose from archaic stiffness into flowing grace was, indeed, the climax of the arts. There seems a sort of natural law—of slow and painful origin—of growing development—of sudden bloom into perfection—of luxury and effeminacy—of gradual debasement and decay—which affects almost all the arts as well as most of the growths of nature. In Greek art particularly this phenomenon perpetually reappears. There can be little doubt that the Iliad of Homer was the first and earliest long creation in poetry, the first attempt, possibly with the aid of writing, to rise from short disconnected lays to the greatness of a formal epic. And despite all its defects of plan, its want of firm consistency, and its obvious incongruities, this greatest of all poems has held its place against the more finished and interesting Odyssey, the more elaborated [pg 112]Cyclic poems, the more learned Alexandrian epics—in fact, the first full bloom of the art was by far the most perfect. It is the same thing with Greek tragedy. No sooner had the art escaped from the rude wagon, or stage, or whatever it was, of Thespis, than we find Æschylus, with imperfect appliances, with want of experience, with many crudenesses and defects, a tragic poet never equalled again in Greek history. Of course the modern critics of his own country preferred, first Sophocles, and then Euripides—great poets, as Praxiteles

and Lysippus were great sculptors, and like them, perhaps, greater masters of human passion and of soul-stirring pathos. But for all that, Æschylus is *the* tragic poet of the Greeks —the poet who has reached beyond his age and nation, and fascinated the greatest men even of our century, who seek not to turn back upon his great but not equal rivals. Shelley and Mr. Swinburne have both made Æschylus their master, and to his inspiration owe the most splendid of their works.

I will not prosecute these considerations further, though there may be other examples in the history of art. But I will say this much concerning the psychological reasons of so strange a phenomenon. It may, of course, be assumed that the man who breaks through the old, stiff conventional style which has bound his predecessors with its shackles is necessarily a man of strong and original genius. Thus, when we are distinctly told of Polygnotus that [pg 113]he first began to vary the features of the human face from their archaic stiffness, we have before us a man of bold originality, who quarrelled with the tradition of centuries, and probably set against him all the prejudices and the consciences of the graver public. But to us, far different features seem prominent. For in spite of all his boldness, when we compare him with his forerunners, we are struck with his modesty and devoutness, as compared with his successors. There is in him, first, a devoutness toward his work, an old-fashioned piety, which they had not; and as art in this

shape is almost always a handmaid of religion, this devoutness is a prominent feature. Next, there is a certain reticence and modesty in such a man, which arises partly from the former feeling, but still more from a conservative fear of violent change, and a healthy desire to make his work not merely a contrast to, but a development of, the older traditions. Then the old draped goddess of religious days, such as the *Venus Genitrix* in Florence, made way for the splendid but yet more human handling which we may see in the Venus of Melos, now in the Louvre. This half-draped but yet thoroughly new and chaste conception leads naturally to the type said to have been first dared by Praxiteles, who did not disguise the use of very unworthy human models to produce his famous, or perhaps infamous ideal, which is best known in the *Venus de Medici*, but perhaps more perfectly repre[pg 114]sented in the Venus of the Capitol. There is, too, in the earlier artist that limited mastery over materials, which, like the laws of the poet's language, only condenses and intensifies the beauty of his work.

Such reserve, as compared with the later phases of the art, is nowhere so strongly shown as in the matter of *expression*. This is, indeed, the rock on which most arts have ultimately made shipwreck. When the power over materials and effects becomes complete, so that the artist can as it were perform feats of conquest; when at the same time the feeling has died out that he is treading upon

holy ground, we have splendid achievements in the way of intense expression, whether physical or mental, of force, of momentary action, of grief or joy, which are good and great, but which lead imitators into a false track, and so ruin the art which they were thought to perfect. Thus over-reaching itself, art becomes an anxious striving after display, and, like an affected and meretricious woman, repels the sounder natures which had else been attracted by her beauty. In Greek art especially, as I have already noticed in discussing the Attic tomb reliefs, this excess of expression was long and well avoided, and there is no stronger and more marked feature in its good epochs than the reserve of which I have spoken. It is the chief quality which makes the school of Phidias matchless. There is in it beauty of form, there is a good deal of action, there is in the frieze [pg 115]an almost endless variety; but withal there is the strictest symmetry, the closest adherence to fixed types, the absence of all attempt at expressing passing emotion. There is still the flavor of the old stiff simplicity about the faces, about the folds of the robes, about the type of the horses; but the feeling of the artist shines through the archaic simplicity with much clearer light than it does in the more ambitious attempts of the later school. The greatest works of Phidias—his statue of Zeus at Elis, and his Athene in the Parthenon—are lost to us; but the ancients are unanimous that for simple and sustained majesty no succeeding sculptor, however brilliant, had approached his ideal.[42]

We may say almost the same of the great temple which he adorned with his genius. It is just that perfection of the Doric temple which has escaped from the somewhat ponderous massiveness and simplicity of the older architecture, while it sacrificed no element of majesty to that grace and delicacy which marks, later and more developed Greek architecture. On this Acropolis the Athenians determined to show what architecture could reach in majesty and what in delicacy. So they set up the [pg 116]Parthenon in that absolute perfection where strength and solidity come out enhanced, but in no way overlaid, with ornament. They also built the Erechtheum, where they adopted the Ionic Order, and covered their entablature with bands of small and delicate tracing, which, with its gilding and coloring, was a thing to be studied minutely and from the nearest distance. Though the inner columns of the Propylæa were Ionic (and they were very large), it appears that large temples in that Order were not known in Attica. But for small and graceful buildings it was commonly used, and of these the Erechtheum was the most perfect.

In its great days, and even as Pausanias saw it, the Acropolis was covered with statues, as well as with shrines. It was not merely an Holy of Holies in religion; it was also a palace and museum of art. At every step and turn the traveller met new objects of interest. There were archaic specimens, chiefly interesting to the antiquarian and the devotee; there were

the great masterpieces which were the joint admiration of the artist and the vulgar. Even all the sides and slopes of the great rock were honeycombed into sacred grottos, with their altars and their gods, or studded with votive monuments. All these lesser things are fallen away and gone; the sacred caves are filled with rubbish and desecrated with worse than neglect. The grotto of Pan and Apollo is difficult of access, and was, when I first [pg 117]saw it, an object of disgust rather than of interest. There are left but the remnants of the surrounding wall, and the ruins of the three principal buildings, which were the envy and wonder of all the civilized world.

The walls are particularly well worth studying, as there are to be found in them specimens of all kinds of building, beginning from prehistoric times. There is even plain evidence that the builders of the age of Pericles were not by any means the best wall builders; for the masonry of the wall called the Wall of Themistocles, which is well preserved in the lowest part of the course along the north slope, is by far the most beautifully finished work of the kind which can anywhere be seen: and it seems to correspond accurately to the lower strata of the foundations on which the Parthenon was built. The builders of Pericles's time added a couple of layers of stone to raise the site of the temple, and their work contrasts curiously in its roughness with the older platform. Any one who will note the evident admiration of Thucydides for the walls built round the

Peiræus by the men of an earlier generation will see good reason for this feeling when they examine these details.

The beautiful little temple of Athena Nike, though outside the Propylæa—thrust out as it were on a sort of great bastion high on the right as you enter—must still be called a part, and a very striking [pg 118]part, of the Acropolis. It is only of late years that the site has been cleared of rubbish and modern stonework, and the temple rebuilt from the original materials, thus destroying, no doubt, some precious traces of Turkish occupation which the fastidious historian may regret, but realizing to us a beautiful Greek temple of the Ionic Order in some completeness. The peculiarity of this building, which is perched upon a platform of stone and commands a splendid prospect, is, that its tiny peribolus, or sacred enclosure, was surrounded by a parapet of stone slabs covered with exquisite reliefs of winged Victories, in various attitudes. Some of these slabs are now in the Museum of the Acropolis, and are of great interest—apparently less severe than the school of Phidias, and therefore later in date, but still of the best epoch and of marvellous grace. The position of this temple also is not parallel with the Propylæa, but turned slightly outward, so that the light strikes it at moments when the other building is not illuminated. At the opposite side is a very well preserved chamber, and a fine colonnade at right angles with the gate, which looks like a guard-room. This is the chamber commonly

called the Pinacotheca, where Pausanias saw pictures of frescoes by Polygnotus.

Of the two museums on the Acropolis, the principal one requires little comment and is very easily seen and appreciated. In an ante-room are the [pg 119]archaic figures of which I have already spoken, with the remains taken from about the Parthenon, together with casts of the Elgin marbles, and many small and beautiful reliefs, apparently belonging to votive monuments. There are also two figures of young men, with the heads and feet lost, which are of peculiarly beautiful Parian marble, and of very fine workmanship. But the visitor is very likely to pass by the little Turkish house, which is well worth a visit, for here are the cypress plugs from the pillars of the Parthenon or Propylæa; here are also splendid specimens of archaic vases, such as are very hard indeed to find in any other collection. The large jars from Melos which are here to be seen have the most striking resemblance in their decoration to the fragment of a similar vessel, with a row of armed figures round it, which was found at Mycenæ, and is now in the Ministry of Public Instruction. Lastly, there stands in the window a very delicately worked little Satyr, as the pointed ears and tail show, but of voluptuous form—rather of the hermaphrodite type: there is hardly a better preserved statuette than this anywhere at Athens. It seemed a pity that such a gem should be hidden away in so obscure a place; and I hope that by this time it has been brought into the larger and official

museum.

I will venture to conclude this chapter with a curious comparison. It was my good fortune, a few [pg 120]months after I had seen the Acropolis, to visit a rock in Ireland, which, to my great surprise, bore many curious analogies to it—I mean the rock of Cashel. Both were strongholds of religion—honored and hallowed above all other places in their respective countries—both were covered with buildings of various dates, each representing peculiar ages and styles in art. And as the Greeks, I suppose for effect's sake, have varied the posture of their temples, so that the sun illumines them at different moments, the old Irish have varied the orientation of their churches that the sun might rise directly over against the east window on the anniversary of the patron saint. There is at Cashel the great Cathedral—in loftiness and grandeur the Parthenon of the place; there is the smaller and more beautiful Cormac's Chapel, the holiest of all, like the Erechtheum at Athens. Again, the great sanctuary upon the Rock of Cashel was surrounded by a cluster of abbeys about its base, which were founded there by pious men on account of the greatness and holiness of the archiepiscopal seat. Of these, one remains, like the Theseum at Athens, eclipsed by the splendor of the Acropolis.

The prospect from the Irish sanctuary has, indeed, endless contrasts to that from the pagan stronghold, but they are suggestive contrasts, and such as are not without a certain harmony. The plains around both are

framed by mountains, of which the Irish [pg 121]are probably the more picturesque; and if the light upon the Greek hills is the fairest, the native color of the Irish is infinitely more rich. So, again, the soil of Attica is light and dusty, whereas the Golden Vale of Tipperary is among the richest and greenest in the world. Still, both places were the noblest homes, each in their own country, of religions which civilized, humanized, and exalted the human race; and if the Irish Acropolis is left in dim obscurity by the historical splendor of the Parthenon, on the other hand, the gods of the Athenian stronghold have faded out before the moral greatness of the faith preached from the Rock of Cashel.

[pg 122]

CHAPTER V.

ATHENS—THE THEATRE OF DIONYSUS—THE AREOPAGUS.

There are few recent excavations about Athens which have been so productive as those along the south slope of the Acropolis. In the conflicts and the wear of ages a vast quantity of earth, and walls, and fragments of buildings has either been cast, or has rolled, down this steep descent, so that it was with a certainty of good results that the Archæological Society of Athens undertook to clear this side of the rock of all the accumulated rubbish. Several precious inscriptions were found, which had been thrown down from the rock; and in April, 1884, the whole plan of the temple of Æsculapius had been uncovered, and another step attained in fixing the much disputed topography of this part of Athens.

And yet we can hardly call this a beginning. Some twenty-five years ago, a very extensive and splendidly successful excavation was made on an adjoining site, when a party of German archæologists laid bare the Theatre of Dionysus—the great theatre in which Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides brought [pg 123]out their immortal plays before an immortal audience. There is nothing more delightful than to descend from the Acropolis, and rest awhile in the comfortable marble arm-chairs with which the front row of the circuit is occupied. They are of the pattern usual with the sitting portrait statues of the Greeks—very deep, and with a curved back, which exceeds both in comfort and in grace any chairs designed by modern workmen.[43] Each chair has the name of a priest inscribed on it, showing how the theatre among the Greeks corresponded to our cathedral, and this front row to the stalls of canons and prebendaries.



Theatre of Dionysus, Athens

But unfortunately all this sacerdotal prominence is probably the work of the later restorers of the theatre. For after having been first beautified and adorned with statues by Lycurgus (in Demosthenes's time), it was again restored and embellished by Herodes Atticus, or about his time, so that the theatre, as we now have it, can only be called the building of the second or third century after Christ. The front wall of the stage, which is raised some feet above the level of the empty pit, is adorned with a row of very elegant sculptures, amongst which one—a shaggy old man, in a stooping posture, [pg 124]represented as coming out from within, and holding up the stone above him—is particularly striking. Some Greek is said to have knocked off, by way of amusement, the heads of most of these figures since they were discovered, but this I do not know upon any better authority than ordinary report. The pit or centre of the theatre is empty, and was never in Greek days occupied by seats, but a wooden structure was set up in advance of the stage, and on this the chorus performed their dances and sang their odes. But now there is a circuit of upright slabs of stone close to the front seats, which can hardly have been an arrangement of the old Greek theatre. They are generally supposed to have been added when the building came to be used for contests of gladiators, which Dion Chrysostom tells us were imported from Corinth in his day.

All these later additions and details are, I fear, calculated to detract from the reader's interest in this theatre, which I should indeed regret—for nothing can be more certain than that this is the veritable stone theatre which was built when the wooden one broke down, at the great competition of Æschylus and Pratinas; and though front seats may have been added, and slight modifications introduced, the general structure can never have required alteration. The main body of the curved rows of seats have no backs, but are so deep as to leave plenty of room for the feet of the people next above; and I [pg 125]fancy that in the old times the προεδρία or right of sitting in the front rows was not given to priests, but to foreign embassies, along with the chief magistrates of Athens. The cost of admission was two obols to all the seats of the house not specially reserved, and such reservation was only for persons of official rank, and by no means for richer people, or for a higher entrance money—a thing which would not have been tolerated, I believe, for an instant by the Athenian democracy.[44] When the state treasury grew full with the tribute of the subject cities, the citizens had this sum, and at times even more, distributed to them in order that no one might be excluded from the annual feast, and so the whole free population of Athens came together without expense to worship the gods by enjoying themselves in this great theatre.

It is indeed very large, though exaggerated statements have been made about its size. It is

generally stated that the enormous number of thirty thousand people could fit into it—a statement I think incredible;[45] and it is not nearly as large as other [pg 126]theatres I have seen, at Syracuse, at Megalopolis, or even at Argos. This also is certain, that any one speaking on the stage, as it now is, can be easily and distinctly heard by people sitting on the highest row of seats now visible, which cannot, I fancy, have been far from the original top of the house. Such a thing were impossible where thirty thousand people, or a crowd approaching that number, were seated. We hear, however, that the old actors had recourse to various artificial means of increasing the range of their voices, which shows that in some theatres the difficulty was felt; and in the extant plays, *asides* are so rare[46] that it must have been difficult to give them with effect.

In one respect, however, the voice must have been more easily heard through the old house than it now is through the ruins. The back of the stage was built up with a high wooden structure to represent fixed scenes, and even a sort of upper story on which gods and flying figures sometimes appeared—an arrangement which of course threw the voice forward into the theatre. There used to be an old idea, not perhaps yet extinct, that the Greek audiences had the lovely natural scenery of their country for their stage decoration, and that they embraced in one view the characters on the stage, and the coasts [pg 127]and islands for miles behind them. Nothing can be more

absurd, or more opposed to Greek feeling on such matters. In the first place, as is well known, a feeling for the beauty of landscape as such was almost foreign to the Greeks, who never speak of the picturesque in their literature without special relation to the sounds of nature, or to the intelligences which were believed to pervade and animate it: a fine view as such had little attraction for them. In the second place, they came to the theatre to enjoy poetry, and the poetry of character, of passion, of the relation of man and his destiny to the course of Divine Providence and Divine justice—in short, to assume a frame of mind perfectly inconsistent with the distractions of landscape. For that purpose they had their stage, as we now know, filled in at the back with high painted scenes, which in earlier days were made of light woodwork and canvas, to bear easy removal, or change, but which in most Græco-Roman theatres, like the very perfect one at Aspendus, or indeed that of Herodes Atticus close by at Athens, were a solid structure of at least two stories high, which absolutely excluded all prospect.

But even had the Athenians not been protected by this arrangement from outer disturbance, I found by personal investigation that there was no view for them to enjoy! Except from the highest tiers, and therefore from the worst places, the sea and islands [pg 128]are not visible, and the only view to be obtained, supposing that houses did not obstruct it, would have been the dull,

somewhat bleak, undulating hills which stretch between the theatre and Phalerum.

The back scenes of the Greek theatres were painted as ours are, and at first, I suppose, very rudely indeed, for we hear particularly of a certain Agatharchus, who developed the art of scene-painting by adopting perspective.[47] The other appurtenances of the Greek theatre were equally rude, or perhaps I should say equally stiff and conventional, and removed from any attempt to reproduce ordinary life—at least this was the case with their tragedy, their satyric dramas, and their older comedy, which dealt in masks, in fixed stage dresses, in tragic padding, and stuffing-out to an unnatural size, in comic distortions and indecent emblems—in all manner of conventional ugliness, we should say, handed down from the first religious origin of these performances, and maintained with that strict conservatism which marks the course of all great Greek art. The stage was long and narrow, the means of changing scenes cumbrous and not frequently employed; the number of the actors in tragedy strictly limited—four is an unusual number, exceptionally employed in the second *Œdipus* of Sophocles. In fact, we cannot [pg 129]say that the Greek drama ever became externally like ours till the comedies of Menander and his school. These poets, living in an age when serious interests had decayed, when tragedy had ceased to be religious, and comedy political, when neither was looked upon any longer as a great public engine of instruction

or of censure, turned to pictures of social life, not unlike our genteel comedy; and in this species of drama we may assert that the Greeks, except perhaps for masks, imitated the course of ordinary life.

It is indeed said of Euripides, the real father of this new comedy, that he brought down the tragic stage from ideal heroism to the passions and meannesses of ordinary men; and Sophocles, his rival, the supposed perfection of an Attic tragedian, is reputed to have observed that he himself had represented men as they ought to be, Euripides as they were. But any honest reader of Euripides will see at once how far he too is removed from the ordinary realisms of life. He saw, indeed, that human passion is the subject, of all others, which will permanently interest human thought; he felt that the insoluble problems of Free Will and Fate, of the mercy and the cruelty of Providence, were too abstract on the one hand, and too specially Greek on the other; that, after all, human nature as such is the great universal field on which any age can reach the sympathy and the interest of its remotest successors. [pg 130]But the passions painted by Euripides were no ordinary passions—they were great and unnatural crimes, forced upon suffering mortals by the action of hostile deities; the virtues of Euripides were no ordinary virtues—they were great heroic self-sacrifices, and showed the Divine element in our nature, which no tyranny of circumstances can efface. His Phædra and

Medea on the one hand, his Alcestis and Iphigenia on the other, were strictly characters as they ought to be in tragedy, and not as they commonly are in life; and in outward performance Euripides did not depart from the conventional stiffness, from the regular development, from the somewhat pompous and artificial dress in which tragedy had been handed down to him by his masters.

They, too, had not despised human nature—how could they? Both Æschylus and Sophocles were great painters of human character, as well in its passions as in its reasonings. But the former had made it accessory, so to speak, to the great religious lessons which he taught; the latter had at least affected to do so, or imagined that he did, while really the labyrinths of human character had enticed and held him in their endless maze. Thus, all through Greek tragedy there was on the one hand a strong element of conventional stiffness, of adherence to fixed subjects, and scenes, and masks, and dresses —of adherence to fixed metres, and regular dialogues, where question and answer were balanced line for line, and the [pg 131]cast of characters was as uniform as it is in the ordinary Italian operas of our own day. But on the other hand, these tragic poets were great masters of expression, profound students not only of the great world problems, but of the problems of human nature, exquisite masters too of their language, not only in its dramatic force, but in its lyric sweetness; they summed up in their day all

that was great and beautiful in Greek poetry, and became the fullest and ripest fruit of that wonderful tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which even now makes those that taste it to be as gods.

Such, then, were the general features of the tragedy which the Athenian public, and the married women, including many strangers, assembled to witness in broad daylight under the Attic sky. They were not sparing of their time. They ate a good breakfast before they came. They ate sweetmeats in the theatre when the acting was bad. Each play was short, and there was doubtless an interval of rest. But it is certain that each poet contended as a rule with four plays against his competitors; and as there were certainly three of them, there must have been twelve plays acted; this seems to exceed the endurance of any public, even allowing two days for the performance. We are not fully informed on these points. We do not even know how Sophocles, who contended with single plays, managed to compete against Euripides, who con[pg 132]tended with sets of four. But we know that the judges were chosen by lot, and we strongly suspect, from the records of their decisions, that they often decided wrongly. We also know that the poets sought to please the audience by political and patriotic allusions, and to convey their dislike of opposed cities or parties by drawing their representatives in odious colors on the stage. Thus Euripides is never tired of traducing the Spartans in the character of Menelaus.

Æschylus fights the battle of the Areopagus in his *Eumenides*.

But besides all this, it seems that tragic poets were regarded as the proper teachers of morality, and that the stage among the Greeks occupied somewhat the place of the modern pulpit. This is the very attitude which Racine assumes in the Preface to his *Phèdre*. He suggests that it ought to be considered the best of his plays, because there is none in which he has so strictly rewarded virtue and punished vice.[48] He [pg 133]alters, in his *Iphigénie*, the Greek argument from which he copied, because as he tells us (again in the Preface) it would never do to have so virtuous a person as Iphigenia sacrificed. This, however, would not have been a stumbling-block to the Greek poet, whose capricious and spiteful gods, or whose deep conviction of the stain of an ancestral curse, would justify catastrophies which the Christian poet, with his trust in a benevolent Providence, could not admit. But, indeed, in most other points the so-called imitations of the Greek drama by Racine and his school are anything but imitations. The main characters and the general outline of the plot are no doubt borrowed. The elegance and power of the dialogue are more or less successfully copied. But the natural and familiar scenes, which would have been shocking to the court of Louis XIV.—"ces scenes entremêlées de bas comique, et ces fréquents exemples de mauvais ton et d'une [pg 134]familiarité choquante," as Barthélémy says—such

characters as the guard in the *Antigone*, the nurse in the *Choephorœ*, the Phrygian in the *Orestes*, were carefully expunged. Moreover, love affairs and court intrigues were everywhere introduced, and the language was never allowed to descend from its pomp and grandeur. Most of the French dramatists were indeed bad Greek scholars,[49] and knew the plays from which they copied either through very poor translations, or through the rhetorical travesties surviving under the name of Seneca, which were long thought fully equal to the great and simple originals.

So the French of the seventeenth century, starting from these half-understood models, and applying rigidly the laws of tragedy which they had deduced, with questionable logic, from that very untrustworthy guide, our text of the *Poetics* of Aristotle, created a drama which became so unlike what it professed to imitate, that most good modern French critics have occupied themselves with showing the contrasts of old Greek tragedy to that of the modern stage. They are always praising the *naiveté*, the familiarity, the irregularity of the old dramatists; they are always noting touches of common life and of ordinary motive quite foreign to the dignity of Racine, and Voltaire, and Alfieri.[50] They think that the real [pg 135]parallel is to be found not among them, but in Shakespeare. Thus their education makes them emphasize the very qualities which we admit, but should not cite, as the peculiarities of Greek tragedy. *We* are rather struck with its conventionalities,

with its strict adherence to fixed form, with its somewhat stilted diction, and we wonder how it came to be so great and natural within these trammels.

Happily the tendency in our own day to reproduce antiquity faithfully, and not in modern recasting, has led to the translating, and even to the representing, of Greek tragedies in their purity, and it does not require a knowledge of Greek to obtain some real acquaintance with these great masterpieces. Mr. and Mrs. Browning, Dean Milman, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Whitelaw, and many others, have placed faithful and elegant versions within our reach. But since I have cautioned the reader not versed in Greek against adopting Racine's or Alfieri's plays as adequate substitutes, I venture to give the same advice concerning the more Greek and antique plays of Mr. Swinburne, which, in spite of their splendor, are still not really Greek plays, but modern plays based on Greek models. The relief produced by ordinary [pg 136]talk from ordinary characters, which has been already noticed, is greatly wanting in his very lofty, and perhaps even strained, dialogue. Nor are his choruses the voice of the vulgar public, combining high sentiments with practical meanness, but elaborate and very difficult speculations, which comment metaphysically on the general problems of the play. There is nothing better worth reading than the *Atalanta in Calydon*. The Greek scholar sees everywhere how thoroughly imbued the author is with Greek models. But

it will not give to the mere English reader any accurate idea of a real Greek tragedy. He must go to *Balaustion's Adventure*, or *Aristophanes's Apology*, or some other professed translation, and follow it line for line, adding some such general reviews as the *Etudes* of M. Patin.

As for revivals of Greek plays, it seems to me not likely that they will ever succeed. The French imitations of Racine laid hold of the public because they were not imitations. And as for us nowadays, who are more familiar with the originals, a faithless reproduction would shock us, while a literal one would weary us. This at least is the effect which the *Antigone* produces, even with the modern choruses of Mendelssohn to relieve the slowness of the action. But, of course, a reproduction of the old chorus would be simply impossible. The whole pit in the theatre of Dionysus seems to have been left empty. A part somewhat larger than our orchestra [pg 137]was covered with a raised platform, though still lower than the stage.[51] Upon this the chorus danced and sang and looked on at the actors, as in the play within the play in *Hamlet*. Above all, they constantly prayed to their gods, and this religious side of the performance has of course no effect upon us.[52]

As to old Attic comedy, it would be even more impossible to recover it for a modern public. Its local and political allusions, its broad and coarse humor, its fantastic dresses, were features which made it not merely

ancient and Greek, but Athenian, and Athenian of a certain epoch. Without the Alexandrian scholiasts, who came in time to recover and note down most of the allusions, these comedies would be to the Greek scholar of to-day hardly intelligible. The new Attic comedy, of which Terence is a copy, is indeed on a modern basis, and may be faithfully reproduced, if not admired, in our day. But here, alas! the great originals of Menander, Philemon, and Diphilus are lost to us, and we must be content with the Latin accommodations.

But I have delayed too long over these Greek [pg 138]plays, and must apologize for leading away the reader from the actual theatre in which he is sitting. Yet there is hardly a place in Athens which calls back the mind so strongly to the old days, when all the crowd came jostling in, and settled down in their seats, to hear the great novelties of the year from Sophocles or Euripides. No doubt there were cliques and cabals and claqueurs, noisy admirers and cold critics, the supporters of the old, and the lovers of the new, devotees and skeptics, wondering foreigners and self-complacent citizens. They little thought how we should come, not only to sit in the seats they occupied, but to reverse the judgments which they pronounced, and correct with sober temper the errors of prejudice, of passion, and of pride.

Plato makes Socrates say, in his *Apologia* (*pro vita sua*), that a copy of Anaxagoras could be bought on the orchestra, when very dear, for

a drachme, that is to say for about 9d. of our money, which may then have represented our half-crown or three shillings in value.[53] The commentators have made desperate attempts to explain this. Some say the orchestra was used as a book-stall when plays were not going on—an assumption justified by no [pg 139]other hint in Greek literature. Others have far more absurdly imagined that Plato really meant you could pay a drachme for the best seat in the theatre, and read the writings of Anaxagoras in a fashionable play of Euripides, who was his friend and follower. Verily a wonderful interpretation!

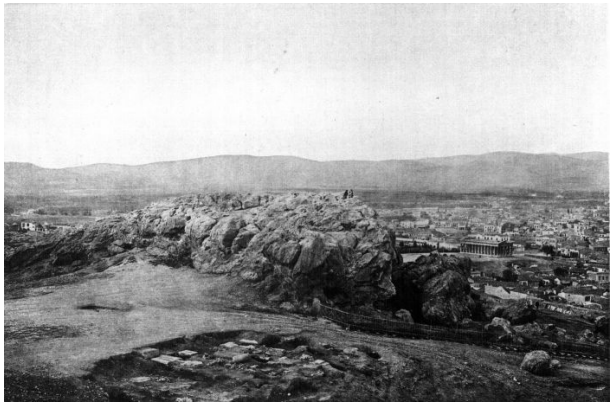
If the reader will walk with me from the theatre of Dionysus past the newly excavated site of the temple of Æsculapius, and past the Roman-Greek theatre which was erected by Hadrian or Herodes Atticus, I will show him what Plato meant. Of course, this later theatre, with its solid Roman back scenes of masonry, is equally interesting with the Theatre of Dionysus to the advocates of the unity of history! But to us who are content to study Greek Athens, it need not afford any irrelevant delays. Passing round the approach to the Acropolis, we come on to a lesser hill, separated from it by a very short saddle, so that it looks like a sort of outpost or spur sent out from the rock of the Acropolis. This is the Areopagus—Mars' Hill—which we can ascend in a few minutes. There are marks of old staircases cut in the rock. There are underneath, on our left and right, as we go up, deep black caverns, once the home of the

Eumenides. On the flat top there are still some signs of a rude smoothing of the stone for seats. Under us, to the north-west, is the site of the old *agora*, once surrounded with colonnades, the crowded market-place of all those [pg 140]who bought and sold and talked. But on the descent from the Areopagus, and, now at least, not much higher than the level of the market-place beneath, there is a small semicircular platform, backed by the rising rock. This, or some platform close to it, which may now be hidden by accumulated soil, was the old *orchestra*, possibly the site of the oldest theatre, but in historical times a sort of reserved platform, where the Athenians, who had their town bristling with statues, allowed no monument to be erected save the figures of Harmodius and Aristogiton, which were carried into Persia, replaced by others, afterwards recovered, and of which we may have a copy in the two fighting figures, of archaic character, now in the Museum of Naples. It was doubtless on this orchestra, just above the bustle and thoroughfare of the *agora*, that booksellers kept their stalls, and here it was that the book of Anaxagoras could be bought for a drachme.

Here then was the place where that physical philosophy was disseminated which first gained a few advanced thinkers; then, through Euripides, leavened the drama, once the exponent of ancient piety; then, through the stage, the Athenian public, till we arrive at those Stoics and Epicureans who came to

teach philosophy and religion not as a faith, but as a system, and to spend their time with the rest of the public in seeking out novelties of creed and of opinion as mere fashions with which people choose [pg 141]to dress their minds. And it was on this very Areopagus, where we are now standing, that these philosophers of fashion came into contact with the thorough earnestness, the profound convictions, the red-hot zeal of the Apostle Paul. The memory of that great scene still lingers about the place, and every guide will show you the exact place where the Apostle stood, and in what direction he addressed his audience. There are, I believe, even some respectable commentators, who transfer their own estimate of S. Paul's importance to the Athenian public, and hold that it was before the *court* of the Areopagus that he was asked to expound his views.[54] This is [pg 142]more than doubtful. The *blases* philosophers, who probably yawned over their own lectures, hearing of a new lay preacher, eager to teach and apparently convinced of the truth of what he said, thought the novelty too delicious to be neglected, and brought him forthwith out of the chatter and bustle of the crowd, probably past the very orchestra where Anaxagoras's books had been proselytizing before him, and where the stiff old heroes of Athenian history stood, a monument of the escape from political slavery. It is even possible that the curious knot of idlers did not bring him higher than this platform, which might well be called part of Mars' Hill. But if they choose to bring him to the top, there was

no hindrance, for the venerable court held its sittings in the open air, on stone seats; and when not thus occupied the top of the rock may well have been a convenient place of retirement for people who did not want to be disturbed by new acquaintances and the constant eddies of new gossip in the market-place.



Mars' Hill, Athens

It is, however, of far less import to know on what spot of the Areopagus Paul stood, than to understand clearly what he said, and how he sought to conciliate as well as to refute the philosophers who, no doubt, looked down upon him as an intellectual [pg 143]inferior. He starts naturally enough from the extraordinary crowd of votive statues and offerings, for which Athens was remarkable above all other cities of Greece. He says, with a touch of irony, that he finds them very

religious indeed,[55] so religious that he even found an altar to a God professedly *unknown*, or perhaps unknowable.[56] Probably S. Paul meant to pass from the latter sense of the word ἄγνωστος, which was, I fancy, what the inscription meant, to the former, which gave him an excellent introduction to his argument. Even the use of the singular may have been an intentional variation from the strict text, for Pausanias twice over speaks of altars to the gods who are called the ἄγνωστοι (or mysterious), but I cannot find any citation of the inscription in the singular form. However that may be, our version does not preserve the neatness of S. Paul's point: "I find an altar," he says, "to an unknown God. Whom then ye unknowingly worship, [pg 144]Him I announce to you." But then he develops a conception of the great One God, not at all from the special Jewish, but from the Stoic point of view. He was preaching to Epicureans and to Stoics—to the advocates of prudence as the means, and pleasure as the end, of a happy life, on the one hand; on the other, to the advocates of duty, and of life in harmony with the Providence which governs the world for good. There could be no doubt to which side the man of Tarsus must incline. Though the Stoics of the market-place of Athens might be mere dilettanti, mere talkers about the ἀγαθόν and the great soul of the world, we know that this system of philosophy produced at Tarsus as well as at Rome the most splendid constancy, the most heroic endurance—I had almost said the most Christian benevolence. It was this stern and

earnest theory which attracted all serious minds in the decay of heathenism.

Accordingly, S. Paul makes no secret of his sympathy with its nobler features. He describes the God whom he preaches as the benevolent Author of the beauty and fruitfulness of Nature, the great Benefactor of mankind by His providence, and not without constant and obtrusive witnesses of His greatness and His goodness. But he goes much further, and treads close upon the Stoic pantheism when he not only asserts, in the words of Aratus, that we are His offspring, but that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being."

[pg 145]
His first conclusion, that the Godhead should not be worshipped or even imaged in stone or in bronze, was no doubt quite in accordance with more enlightened Athenian philosophy. But it was when he proceeded to preach the Resurrection of the Dead, that even those who were attracted by him, and sympathized with him, turned away in contempt. The Epicureans thought death the end of all things. The Stoics thought that the human soul, the offspring—nay, rather an offshoot—of the Divine world-soul, would be absorbed into its parent essence. Neither could believe the assertion of S. Paul. When they first heard him talk of *Jesus* and *Anastasis* they thought them some new pair of Oriental deities. But when they learned that Jesus was a man ordained by God to judge the world, and that Anastasis was merely the Anastasis of the

dead, they were greatly disappointed; so some mocked, and some excused themselves from further listening.

Thus ended, to all appearance ignominiously, the first heralding of the faith which was to supplant all the temples and altars and statues with which Athens had earned its renown as a beautiful city, which was to overthrow the schools of the sneering philosophers, and even to remodel all the society and the policy of the world. And yet, in spite of this great and decisive triumph of Christianity there was something curiously prophetic in the contemptuous rejection of its apostle at Athens. Was it not the [pg 146]first expression of the feeling which still possesses the visitor who wanders through its ruins, and which still dominates the educated world?—the feeling that while other cities owe to the triumph of Christianity all their beauty and their interest, Athens has to this day resisted this influence; and that while the Christian monuments of Athens would elsewhere excite no small attention, here they are passed by as of no import compared with its heathen splendor.[57] [pg 147]There are very old and very beautiful little churches in Athens, “ces délicieuses petites églises byzantines,” [pg 148]as M. Renan calls them. They are very peculiar, and unlike what one generally sees in Europe. [pg 149]They strike the observer with their quaintness and smallness, and he fancies he here sees the tiny model [pg 150]of that unique and splendid building, the cathedral of S. Mark at Venice. But yet it is

surprising how little we notice them at Athens. I was even told—I sincerely hope it was false—that public opinion at Athens was gravitating toward the total removal of one, and that the most perfect, of these churches, which stands in the middle of a main street, and so breaks the regularity of the modern boulevard! Let us hope that the man who lashes himself into rage at the destruction of the Venetian tower may set his face in time against this real piece of barbarism, if indeed it ever ventures to assert itself in act.[58]

I have now concluded a review of the most important old Greek buildings to be seen about Athens. To treat them exhaustively would require a far longer discussion, or special knowledge which I do not possess; and there are, moreover, smaller buildings, like the so-called Lantern of Demosthenes, which is really the Choragic monument of Lysicrates, and the Temple of the Winds, which are well worth [pg 151]a visit, but which the traveller can find without a guide, and study without difficulty. But incompleteness must be an unavoidable defect in describing any city in which new discoveries are being made, I may say, monthly, and when the museums and excavations of to-day may be any day completely eclipsed by materials now unknown, or scattered through the country. Thus, on my second visit to Athens, I found in the National Bank the wonderful treasures exhumed by Dr. Schliemann at Mycenæ, which are in themselves enough to induce any student of Greek antiquity to revisit the town,

however well he may have examined it in former years. On my third visit, they were arranged and catalogued, but we have not yet attained to any certainty about the race that left them there, and how remote the antiquity of the tombs. These considerations tend not only to vindicate the inadequateness of this review, but perhaps even to justify it in the eyes of the exacting reader, who may have expected a more thorough survey.

[pg 152]

CHAPTER VI.

EXCURSIONS IN ATTICA—COLONUS—THE HARBORS—LAURIUM—SUNIUM.

There are two modern towns which, in natural features, resemble Athens. The irregular ridge of greater Acropolis and lesser

Areopagus remind one of the castle and the Mönchsberg of Salzburg, one of the few towns in Europe more beautifully situated than Athens. The relation of the Acropolis to the more lofty Lycabettus suggests the castle of Edinburgh and Arthur's Seat. But here the advantage is greatly on the side of Athens.

When you stand on the Acropolis and look round upon Attica, a great part of its history becomes immediately unravelled and clear. You see at once that you are placed in the principal plain of the country, surrounded with chains of mountains in such a way that it is easy to understand the old stories of wars with Eleusis, or with Marathon, or with any of the outlying valleys. Looking inland on the north side, as you stand beside the Erechtheum, you see straight before you, at a distance of some ten miles, Mount Pentelicus, from which all the splendid marble was once carried to the rock [pg 153]around you. This Pentelicus is a sort of intermediate cross-chain between two main lines which diverge from either side of it, and gradually widen so as to form the plain of Athens. The left or north-western chain is Mount Parnes; the right or eastern is Mount Hymettus. This latter, however, is only the inner margin of a large mountainous tract which spreads all over the rest of South Attica down to the Cape of Sunium. There are, of course, little valleys, and two or three villages, one of them the old deme Brauron, which they now pronounce Vravron. There is the town of Thorikos, near the mines of Laurium; there are two modern

villages called Marcopoulos; but on the whole, both in ancient and modern times, this south-eastern part of Attica, south of Hymettus, was, with the exception of Laurium, of little moment. There is a gap between Pentelicus and Hymettus, nearly due north, through which the way leads out to Marathon; and you can see the spot where the bandits surprised in 1870 the unfortunate gentlemen who fell victims to the vacillation and incompetence of people in power at that time.

On the left side of Pentelicus you see the chain of Parnes, which almost closes with it at a far distance, and which stretches down all the north-west side of Attica till it runs into the sea as Mount Corydallus, opposite to the island of Salamis. In this long chain of Parnes (which can only be [pg 154]avoided by going up to the northern coast at Oropus, and passing into Bœotia close by the sea) there are three passes or lower points, one far to the north—that by Dekelea, where the present king has his country palace, but where of old Alcibiades planted the Spartan garrison which tormented and ruined the farmers of Attica. This pass leads you out to Tanagra in Bœotia. Next to the south, some miles nearer, is the even more famous pass of Phyle, from which Thrasybulus and his brave fellows recovered Athens and its liberty. This pass, when you reach its summit, looks into the northern point of the Thriasian plain, and also into the wilder regions of Cithæron, which border Bœotia. The third pass, and the lowest—but a

few miles beyond the groves of Academe—is the pass of Daphne, which was the high road to Eleusis, along which the sacred processions passed in the times of the Mysteries; and in this pass you still see the numerous niches in which native tablets had been set by the worshippers at a famous temple of Aphrodite.

On this side of Attica also, with the exception of the Thriasian plain and of Eleusis, there extends outside Mount Parnes a wild mountainous district, quite alpine in character, which severs Attica from Bœotia, not by a single row of mountains, or by a single pass, but by a succession of glens and defiles which at once explain to the classical student, when he sees them, how necessary and fundamental were [pg 155]the divisions of Greece into its separate districts, and how completely different in character the inhabitants of each were sure to be. The way from Attica into Bœotia was no ordinary high road, nor even a pass over one mountain, but through a series of glens and valleys and defiles, at any of which a hostile army could be stopped, and each of which severed the country on either side by a difficult obstacle. This truly alpine nature of Greece is only felt when we see it, and yet must ever be kept before the mind in estimating the character and energy of the race. But let us return to our view from the Acropolis.

If we turn and look southward, we see a broken country, with several low hills between us and the sea—hills tolerably well cultivated, and when I saw them in May all

colored with golden stubbles, for the corn had just been reaped. But all the plain in every direction seems dry and dusty; arid, too, and not rich alluvial soil, like the plains of Bœotia. Then Thucydides's words come back to us, when he says Attica was "undisturbed on account of the lightness of its soil" (ἀστασίαστος οὖσα διὰ τὸ λεπτόγεων), as early invaders rather looked out for richer pastures. This reflection, too, of Thucydides applies equally to the mountains of Attica round Athens, which are not covered with rich grass and dense shrubs, like Helicon, like Parnassus, like the glades of Arcadia, but seem so bare that we wonder where the bees of [pg 156]Hymettus can find food for their famous honey. It is only when the traveller ascends the rocky slopes of the mountain that he finds its rugged surface carpeted with quantities of little wild flowers, too insignificant to give the slightest color to the mountain, but sufficient for the bees, which are still making their honey as of old. This honey of Hymettus, which was our daily food at Athens, is now not very remarkable either for color or flavor. It is very dark, and not by any means so good as the honey produced in other parts of Greece—not to say on the heather hills of Scotland and Ireland. I tasted honey at Thebes and at Corinth which was much better, especially that of Corinth made in the hills toward Cleonæ, where the whole country is scented with thyme, and where thousands of bees are buzzing eagerly through the summer air. But when the old Athenians are found talking so much about honey, we

must not forget that sugar was unknown to them, and that all their sweetmeats depended upon honey exclusively. Hence the culture and use of it assumed an importance not easily understood among moderns, who are in possession of the sugar-cane.

But amid all the dusty and bare features of the view, the eye fastens with delight on one great broad band of dark green, which, starting from the west side of Pentelicus, close to Mount Parnes in the north, sweeps straight down the valley, passing about [pg 157]two miles to the west of Athens, and reaching to the Peiræus. This is the plain of the Kephissus, and these are the famous olive woods which contain with them the deme Colonus, so celebrated by Sophocles, and the groves of Academe, at their nearest point to the city. The dust of Athens, and the bareness of the plain, make all walks about the town disagreeable, save either the ascent of Lycabettus, or a ramble into these olive woods. The River Kephissus, which waters them, is a respectable, though narrow river, even in summer often discharging a good deal of water, but much divided into trenches and arms, which are very convenient for irrigation.[59] So there is a strip of country, fully ten miles long, and perhaps two wide on the average, which affords delicious shade and greenness and the song of birds, instead of hot sunlight and dust and the shrill clamor of the tettix without.

I have wandered many hours in these delightful woods listening to the nightingales,

which sing all day in the deep shade and solitude, as it were in a prolonged twilight, and hearing the plane-tree whispering to the elm,[60] as Aristophanes has it, and [pg 158]seeing the white poplar show its silvery leaves in the breeze, and wondering whether the huge old olive stems, so like the old pollarded stumps in Windsor Forest, could be the actual sacred trees, the μορίαι, under which the youth of Athens ran their races. The banks of the Kephissus, too, are lined with great reeds, and sedgy marsh plants, which stoop over into its sandy shallows and wave idly in the current of its stream. The ouzel and the kingfisher start from under one's feet, and bright fish move out lazily from their sunny bay into the deeper pool. Now and then through a vista the Acropolis shows itself in a framework of green foliage, nor do I know any more enchanting view of that great ruin.

All the ground under the dense olive-trees was covered with standing corn, for here, as in Southern Italy, the shade of trees seems no hindrance to the ripening of the ear. But there was here thicker wood than in Italian corn-fields; on the other hand, there was not that rich festooning of vines which spread from tree to tree, and which give a Neapolitan summer landscape so peculiar a charm. A few homesteads there were along the roads, and even at one of the bridges a children's school, full of those beautiful fair children whose heads remind one so strongly of the old Greek statues. But all the houses were walled in, and

many of them seemed solitary and deserted. The memories of rapine and violence were still there. I was told, indeed, that [pg 159]no country in Europe was so secure, and I confess I found it so myself in my wanderings; but when we see how every disturbance or war on the frontier revives again the rumor of brigandage, I could not help feeling that the desert state of the land, and the general sense of insecurity, however irrational in the intervals of peace, was not surprising.

There is no other excursion in the immediate vicinity of Athens of any like beauty or interest. The older buildings in the Peiræus are completely gone. No trace of the docks or the *deigma* remains; and the splendid walls, built as Thucydides tells us with cut stone, without mortar or mud, and fastened with clamps of iron fixed with lead—this splendid structure has been almost completely destroyed. We can find, indeed, elsewhere in Attica—at Phyle—still better at Eleutheræ—specimens of this sort of building, but at the Peiræus there are only foundations remaining. Yet it is not really true that the great wall surrounding the Peiræus has totally disappeared. Even at the mouth of the harbor single stones may be seen lying along the rocky edge of the water, of which the size and the square cutting prove the use for which they were originally intended. But if the visitor to the Peiræus will take the trouble to cross the hill, and walk round the harbor of Munychia, he will find on the eastern point of the headland a neat little café, with com[pg

160]fortable seats, and with a beautiful view. The sea coast all round this headland shows the bed of the surrounding sea wall, hewn in the live rock. The actual structure is preserved in patches on the western point of this harbor, where the coast is very steep; but in the place to which I refer, we can trace the whole course of the wall a few feet above the water, cut out in the solid rock. I know no scanty specimen of Athenian work which gives a greater idea of the enormous wealth and energy of the city. The port of Munychia had its own theatre and temples, and it was here that Pausanias saw the altar to *the gods called the unknown*. The traces of the sea wall cease as soon as it reaches the actual narrow mouth of the little harbor. I do not know how far toward Phalerum it can be traced, but when visiting the harbor called Zea[61] on another occasion, I did not observe it. The reader will find in any ancient atlas, or in any history of Greece, a map of the harbors of Athens, so that I think it unnecessary to append one here.

The striking feature in the present Peiræus, which from the entrance of the harbor is very picturesque, is undoubtedly the rapid growth and extension of [pg 161]factories, with English machinery and overseers. When last there I found fourteen of these establishments, and their chimneys were becoming quite a normal feature in Greek landscape. Those which I visited were working up the cotton and the wool of the country into calico and other stuffs, which are unfortunately coming

into fashion among the lower classes, and ousting the old costume. I was informed that boys were actually forbidden to attend school in Greek dress, a regulation which astonishes any one who knows the beauty and dignity of the national costume.



The Peiraeus

A drive to the open roadstead of Phalerum is more repaying. Here it is interesting to observe how the Athenians passed by the nearest sea, and even an open and clear roadstead, in order to join their city to the better harbor and more defensible headland of Peiræus. Phalĕrum, as they now call it, though they spell it with an η, is the favorite bathing-place of modern Athens, with an open-air theatre, and is about a mile and a half nearer the city than Peiræus. The water is shallow, and the beach is of fine sand, so that for ancient ships, which I suppose drew little

water, it was a convenient landing-place, especially for the disembarking of troops, who could choose their place anywhere around a large crescent, and actually land fighting, if necessary. But the walls of Athens, the long walls to Peiræus, and its lofty fortifications, made this roadstead of no use to the [pg 162]enemy so long as Athens held the command of the sea, and could send out ships from the secure little harbors of Zea and Munychia, which are on the east side and in the centre of the headland of Peiræus. There was originally a third wall, too, to the east side of the Phaleric bay, but this seems to have been early abandoned when the second long wall, or middle wall, as it was originally called, was completed.

At the opening of the Peloponnesian war it appears that the Athenians defended against the Lacedæmonians, not the two long walls which ran close together and parallel to Peiræus, but the northern of these, and the far distant Phaleric wall. It cannot but strike any observer as extraordinary how the Athenians should undertake such an enormous task. Had the enemy attacked anywhere suddenly and with vigor, it seems hard to understand how they could have kept him out. According to Thucydides's accurate detail,[62] the wall to Phalerum was nearly four miles, that to Peiræus four and a half. There were in addition five miles of city wall, and nearly three of Peiræus wall. That is to say, there were about seventeen miles of wall to be pro[pg 163]tected. This is not all. The circuit

was not closed, but separated by about a mile of beach between Peiræus and Phalerum, so that the defenders of the two extremities could in no way promptly assist each other. Thucydides tells us that a garrison of 16,000 inferior soldiers, old men, boys, and *metics*, sufficed to do this work. We are forced to conclude that not only were the means of attacking walls curiously incomplete, but even the dash and enterprise of modern warfare cannot have been understood by the Greeks. For we never hear of even a bold attempt on this absurdly straggling fortification, far less of any successful attempt to force it.

But it is time that we should leave the environs of Athens,[63] and wander out beyond the borders of the Athenian plain into the wilder outlying parts of the land. Attica is, after all, a large country, if one does not apply railway measures to it. We think thirty miles by rail very little, but thirty miles by road is a long distance, and implies land enough to support a large population and to maintain many flourishing towns. We can wander thirty miles from Athens through Attica in several directions—to Eleutheræ, on the western Bœotian frontier; to Oropus, on the north; and Sunium, on [pg 164]the south. Thus it is only when one endeavors to know Attica minutely that one finds how much there is to be seen, and how long a time is required to see it. And fortunately enough there is an expedition, and that not the least important, where we can avoid the rough

paths and rougher saddles of the country, and coast in a steamer along a district at all times obscure in history, and seldom known for anything except for being the road to Sunium. Strabo gives a list of the demes along this seaboard,[64] and seems only able to write one fact about them—a line from an old oracle in the days of the Persian war, which prophesied that "the women of Colias will roast their corn with oars,"[65] alluding to the wrecks driven on shore here by the northwest wind from Salamis. Even the numerous little islands along this coast were in his day, as they now are, perfectly barren. Yet with all its desolation it is exceedingly picturesque and varied in outline.

We took ship in the little steamer[66] belonging to the Sunium Mining Company, who have built a village called Ergasteria, between Thorikos and the promontory, and who were obliging enough to allow us to sail in the boat intended for their private traffic. We left the Peiræus on one of those peculiarly Greek mornings, with a blue sky and very [pg 165]bright sun, but with an east wind so strong and clear, so λαμπρός, as the old Greeks would say, that the sea was driven into long white crests, and the fishing-boats were lying over under their sails. These fresh and strong winds, which are constantly blowing in Greece, save the people very much from the bad effects of a very hot southern climate. Even when the temperature is high the weather is seldom sultry; and upon the sea, which intrudes everywhere, one can

always find a cool and refreshing atmosphere. The Greeks seem not the least to fear these high winds, which are generally steady and seldom turn to squalls. The smallest boats are to be seen scudding along on great journeys from one island to another—often with a single occupant, who sits holding the helm with one hand, and the stern sheet with the other. All the ferry-boats in the Peiræus are managed in this way, and you may see their great sails, like sea-gulls' wings, leaning over in the gale, and the spray dashing from the vessel's prow. We met a few larger vessels coming up from Syra, but on the whole the sea was well-nigh as desert as the coast; so much so, that the faithful dog, which was on board each of those boats, thought it his serious duty to stand up on the taffrail and bark at us as a strange and doubtful company.

So, after passing many natural harbors and spacious bays, many rocky headlands and bluff islands—but all desert and abandoned by track of man, we [pg 166]approached the famous cape, from which the white pillars of the lofty old temple gleamed brilliantly in the sun. They were the first and only white marble pillars which I saw in Greece. Elsewhere, dust and age, if not the hand of man, have colored that splendid material with a dull golden hue; but here the sea breeze, while eating away much of the surface, has not soiled them with its fresh brine, and so they still remain of the color which they had when they were set up. We should fain conjecture that here, at all events, the Greeks

had not applied the usual blue and red to decorate this marvellous temple; that—for the delight and benefit of the sailors, who hailed it from afar, as the first sign of Attica—its brilliant white color was left to it, to render it a brighter beacon and a clearer object in twilight and in mist. I will not yet describe it, for we paid it a special visit, and must speak of it in greater detail; but even now, when we coasted round the headland, and looked up to its shining pillars standing far aloft into the sky, it struck us with the most intense interest. It was easy, indeed, to see how Byron's poetic mind was here inspired with some of his noblest lines.

When we turned from it seaward, we saw stretched out in *échelon* that chain of Cyclades, which are but a prolongation of the headland—Keos, Kyphnos, Seriphos, Siphnos, and in the far distance, Melos—Melos, the scene of Athens's violence and [pg 167]cruelty, when she filled up, in the mind of the old historian, the full measure of her iniquity. And as we turned northward, the long island, or islet, of Helena, which stretches along the point, like Hydra off that of Argolis, could not hide from us the mountain ranges of Eubœa, still touched here and there with snow. A short run against the wind brought us to the port of Ergasteria, marked very strangely in the landscape by the smoke of its chimneys—the port where the present produce of the mines of Laurium is prepared and shipped for Scotland.

Here, at last, we found ourselves again among

men; three thousand operatives, many of them with families, make quite a busy town of Ergasteria. And I could not but contrast their bold and independent looks, rough and savage as they seemed, with what must have been the appearance of the droves of slaves who worked the mines in old days. We were rowed ashore from our steamer by two men called Aristides and Epaminondas, but I cannot say that their looks betokened either the justice of the one or the culture of the other.

We found ourselves when we landed in an awkward predicament. The last English engineer remaining in the Mining Company, at whose invitation we had ventured into this wild district, had suddenly left, that morning, for Athens. His house was shut up, and we were left friendless and alone, among [pg 168]three thousand of these Aristideses and Epaminondases, whose appearance was, as I have said, anything but reassuring. We did what was best to meet the difficulty, and what was not only the best thing to do, but the only thing, and it turned out very well indeed. We went to the temporary director of the mines, a very polished gentleman, with a charming wife, both of whom spoke French excellently. We stated our case, and requested hospitality for the night. Nothing could be more friendly than our reception. This benevolent man and his wife took us into their own house, prepared rooms for us, and promised to let us see all the curiosities of the country. Thus our misfortune became, in fact,

a very good fortune. The night, however, it must be confessed, was spent in a very unequal conflict with mosquitoes—an inconvenience which our good hostess in vain endeavored to obviate by giving us a strong-smelling powder to burn in our room, and shutting all the windows. But had the remedy been even successful, it is very doubtful whether it was not worse than the disease.

We started in the morning by a special train—for the company have a private line from the coast up to the mines—to ascend the wooded and hilly country into the region so celebrated of old as one of the main sources of Athenian wealth. As the train wound its way round the somewhat steep ascent, our prospect over the sea and its islands [pg 169]became larger and more varied. The wild rocks and forests of southern Eubœa—one of the few districts in Greece which seem to have been as savage and deserted in old days as they are now—detached themselves from the intervening island of Helena. We were told that wild boars were still to be found in Eubœa. In the hills about Laurium, hares, which Xenophon so loved to hunt in his Elean retreat, and turtle doves, seemed the only game attainable. All the hills were covered with stunted underwood.



Laurium

The mines of Laurium appear very suddenly in Attic history, but from that time onward are a prominent part of the wealth of the Athenians. We know that in Solon's day there was great scarcity of money, and that he was obliged to depreciate the value of the coinage —a very violent and unprecedented measure, never repeated; for, all through later history, Attic silver was so good that it circulated at a premium in foreign parts just as English money does now. Accordingly, in Solon's time we hear no mention of this great and almost inexhaustible source of national wealth. All through the reign of the Peisistratids there is a like silence. Suddenly, after the liberation of Athens, we hear of Themistocles persuading the people to apply the very large revenue from these mines to the building of a fleet for the purpose of the war with Ægina.[67] [pg 170]The so-called Xenophon *On the Attic Revenues*—a tract which is almost altogether

about these mines—asserts indeed that they had been worked from remote antiquity; and there can be little doubt that here, as elsewhere in Greece, the Phœnicians had been the forerunners of the natives in the art of mining. Here, as in Thasos, I believe the Phœnicians had their settlements; and possibly a closer survey of the great underground passages, which are still there, may give us some proof by inscriptions or otherwise.

But what happened after the Semitic traders had been expelled from Greek waters?—for expelled they were, though, perhaps, far later from some remote and unexplored points than we usually imagine. I suppose that when this took place Athens was by no means in a condition to think about prosecuting trade at Sunium. Salamis, which was far closer and a more obvious possession, was only conquered in Solon's day, after a long and [pg 171]tedious struggle; and I am perfectly certain that the Athenians could have had no power to hold an outlying dependency, separated by thirty miles of the roughest mountain country, when they had not subdued an island scarcely a mile from the Thriasian plain and not ten miles from Athens. I take it, then, that the so-called συνοικισμός, or unifying of Athens, in prehistoric times, by Theseus, or whoever did it, was not a cementing of all Attica, including these remote corners, but only of the settlements about the plains of Attica, Marathon, and Eleusis; and that the southern

end of the peninsula was not included in the Athens of early days. It was, in fact, only accessible by a carefully constructed artificial road, such as we hear of afterward, or by sea. The Athenians had not either of these means of access at so early a period. And it is not a little remarkable that the first mention of their ownership of the silver mines is associated with the building of a fleet to contend with Ægina. I have no doubt that Themistocles's advice has been preserved without his reasons for it. He persuaded the Athenians to surrender their surplus revenue from Laurium, to build ships against the Æginetans, simply because they found that without ships the Æginetans would be practically sole possessors of the mines. They were far closer to Laurium by sea than Athens was by land—closer, indeed, in every way—and I am led to suspect that, in the days before Solon, the [pg 172]mines may have been secretly worked by Ægina, and not by Athens. I cannot here enter into my full reasons, but I fancy that Peisistratus and his sons—not by conquest, but by some agreement—got practical possession of the mines, and were, perhaps, the first to make all Attica really subject to the power of Athens.[68] But no sooner are they expelled than the Æginetans renew their attacks or claims on Laurium; and it is only the Athenian fleet which secures to Athens its possession. We hear of proceedings of Hippias about coinage,[69] which are adduced by Aristotle as specimens of injustice, or sharp practice, and which may have something to do with the

acquisition of the silver mines by his dynasty. But I must cut short this serious dissertation.

Our special train brought us up slowly round wooded heights, and through rich green brakes, into a lonely country, from which glimpses of the sea could, however, still be seen, and glimpses of blue islands, between the hills. And so we came to the settlements of the modern miners. The great Company, whose guests we were, had been started some [pg 173]years ago, by French and Italian speculators, and Professor Anstead had been there as geologist for some years. But the jealousy of the Greeks, when they found out that profit was rewarding foreign enterprise, caused legislation against the Company; various complications followed, so that at last they gladly sold their interest to a native Company. In 1887 this Company was still thriving; and I saw in the harbor a large vessel from Glasgow, which had come to carry the lead to Scotland, when prepared in blocks—all the produce being still bought by a single English firm.

When the Greeks discuss these negotiations about the mines they put quite a different color on the affair. They say that the French and Italians desired to evade fair payment for the ground-rent of the mines, trusting to the strength of their respective governments, and the weakness of Greece. The Company's policy is described in Greece as an over-reaching, unscrupulous attempt to make great profits by sharp bargains with the natives, who did not know the value of their property.

A great number of obscure details are adduced in favor of their arguments, and it seemed to me that the Greeks were really convinced of their truth. In such a matter it would be unfair to decide without stating both sides; and I am quite prepared to change my present conviction that the Greeks were most to blame, if proper reasons can be assigned. But the legis[pg 174]lative Acts passed in their Parliament look very ugly indeed at first sight.

The principal Laurium Company[70] never enter the mines at all, but gather the great mass of scoriæ, which the old Athenians threw out after smelting with more imperfect furnaces and less heat than ours. These scoriæ, which look like stone cinders, have been so long there that some vegetation has at last grown over them, and the traveller does not suspect that all the soil around was raised and altered by the hand of man. Owing to the power of steam, and their railway, the present miners carry down the scoriæ on trucks to the sea-coast, to Ergasteria, and there smelt them. The old Athenians had their furnaces in the middle of the mountains, where many of them are still to be seen. They sought chiefly for silver, whereas the modern Company are chiefly in pursuit of lead, and obtain but little silver from the scoriæ.

In many places you come upon the openings of the old pits, which went far into the bowels of the mountains, through miles of underground galleries and passages. Our engine-driver—an intelligent Frenchman—

stopped the train to show us one of these entrances, which went down almost straight, with good steps still remaining, into the earth. He assured us that the other extremity which was known, [pg 175]all the passage being open, was some two or three miles distant, at a spot which he showed us from a hill. Hearing that inscriptions were found in these pits, and especially that the name of Nicias had been discovered there, we were very anxious to descend and inspect them. This was promised to us, for the actual pits were in the hands of another Greek Company, who were searching for new veins of silver. But when we arrived at the spot the officers of the Company were unwilling to let us into the pits. The proper overseer was away—intentionally, of course. There were no proper candles; there were no means of obtaining admission: so we were balked in our inquiry. But we went far enough into the mouth of one of them to see that these pits were on a colossal scale, well arched up; and, I suppose, had we gone far enough, we should have found the old supports, of which the Athenian law was so careful.

The quantity of scoriæ thrown out, which seems now perfectly inexhaustible, is in itself sufficient evidence of the enormous scale on which the old mining was carried on. Thus, we do not in the least wonder at hearing that Nicias had one thousand slaves working in the mines, and that the profits accruing to the State from the fines and head-rents of the mines were very large—on a moderate

estimate, £8000 a year of our money, which meant in those days a great deal more.

[pg 176]
The author of the tract on “Athenian Revenue” says that the riches of the mines were absolutely unbounded; that only a small part of the silver district had been worked out, though the digging had gone on from time immemorial; and that after innumerable laborers had been employed the mines always appeared equally rich, so that no limit need be put on the employment of capital. Still he speaks of opening a new shaft as a most risky speculation. His general estimate appears, however, somewhat exaggerated. The writer confesses that the number of laborers was in his day diminishing, and the majority of the proprietors were then beginners; so that there must have been great interruption of work during the Peloponnesian War. In the age of Philip there were loud complaints that the speculations in mining were unsuccessful; and for obtaining silver, at all events, no reasonable prospect seems to have been left. In the first century of our era, Strabo (ix. i. 23) says that these once celebrated mines were exhausted,[71] that new mining did not pay, and thus people were smelting the poorer ore, and the scoriæ from which the ancients had imperfectly separated the metal. He adds that the main product of the mining district was in his day honey, which was especially known as smokeless (ἀκάπνιστον), on ac[pg 177]count of its good preparation. This in itself shows that the mining had

decayed, for now all the flowers in the neighborhood of the smelting are killed by the black fumes.

Our last mention of the place in olden times is that of Pausanias (at the end of the second century A. D.), who speaks of Laurium, with the addition that it had once been the seat of the Athenian silver mines!

There is but one more point suggested by these mines, which it is not well to pass over when we are considering the working of them in ancient times. Nothing is more poisonous than the smoke from lead-mines; and for this reason the people at Ergasteria have built a chimney more than a mile long to the top of a neighboring hill, where the smoke escapes. Even so, when the wind blows back the smoke, all the vegetation about the village is at once blighted, and there is no greater difficulty than to keep a garden within two or three miles of this chimney. As the Athenians did not take such precautions, we are not surprised to hear from them frequent notices of the unhealthiness of the district, for when there were many furnaces, and the smoke was not drawn away by high chimneys, we can hardly conceive life to have been tolerable. What then must have been the condition of the gangs of slaves which Nicias and other respectable and pious Athenians kept in these mines? Two or three allusions give us a hideous [pg 178]insight into this great social sore, which has not been laid bare, because the wild district of Laurium, and the deep mines under its surface, have concealed the

facts from the ordinary observer. Nicias, we are told, let out one thousand slaves to Sosias the Thracian, at an obolus a day each—the lessee being bound to restore them to him the same *in number*.

The meaning of this frightful contract is only too plain. The yearly rent paid for each slave was about half the full price paid for him in the market. It follows that, if the slave lived for three years, Nicias made a profit of 50 per cent. on his outlay. No doubt, some part of this extraordinary bargain must be explained by the great profits which an experienced miner could make—a fact supported by the tract on the Revenues, which cannot date more than a generation later than the bargain of Nicias. The lessee, too, was under the additional risk of the slaves escaping in time of war, when a hostile army might make a special invasion into the mountain district for the purpose of inflicting a blow on this important part of Athenian revenue. In such cases, it may be presumed that desperate attempts were made by the slaves to escape, for although the Athenian slaves generally were the best treated in Greece, and had many holidays, it was very different with the gangs employed by the Thracian taskmaster. We are told that they had [pg 179]three hundred and sixty working days in the year. This, together with the poison of the atmosphere, tells its tale plainly enough.

And yet Nicias, the capitalist who worked this hideous trade, was the most pious and God-fearing man at Athens. So high was his

reputation for integrity and religion, that the people insisted on appointing him again and again to commands for which he was wholly unfit; and when at last he ruined the great Athenian army before Syracuse, and lost his own life, by his extreme devoutness and his faith in the threats and warnings of the gods —even then the great sceptical historian, who cared for none of these things, condones all his blunders for the sake of his piety and his respectability.

Of course, however, an excursion to Laurium, interesting as it might be, were absurd without visiting the far more famous Sunium, —the promontory which had already struck us so much on our sea voyage round the point,—the temple which Byron has again hallowed with his immortal verse, and Turner with his hardly less immortal pencil. So we hired horses on our return from the mines, and set out on a very fine afternoon to ride down some seven or eight miles from Ergasteria to the famous promontory. Our route led over rolling hills, covered with arbutus and stunted firs; along valleys choked with deep, matted grass; by the [pg 180]side of the sea, upon the narrow ledge of broken rocks. Nowhere was there a road, or a vestige of human habitation, save where the telegraph wire dipped into the sea, pointing the way to the distant Syra. It was late in the day, and the sun was getting low, so we urged our horses to a canter wherever the ground would permit it. But neither the heat nor the pace could conquer the indefatigable esquire

who attended us on foot to show us the way, and hold the horses when we stopped. His speed and endurance made me think of Phidippides and his run to Sparta; nor, indeed, do any of the feats recorded of the old Greeks, either in swimming or running, appear incredible when we witness the feats that are being performed almost every day by modern muscle and endurance. At last, after a delightful two hours' roaming through the homely solitude, we found ourselves at the foot of the last hill, and over us the shining pillars of the ruined temple stood out against the sky.

There can be no doubt that the temple of Neptune on Mount Tænarum must have been quite as fine as to position, but the earthquakes of Laconia have made havoc of its treasures, while at Sunium, though some of the drums in the shafts of the pillars have been actually displaced several inches from their fellows above and below, so that the perfect fitting of the old Athenians has come to look like the tottering work of a giant child with marble [pg 181]bricks,—in spite of this, thirteen pillars remain,[72] a piece of architrave, and a huge platform of solid blocks; above all, a site not desecrated by modern habitations, where we can sit and think of the great old days, and of the men who set up this noble monument at the remotest corner of their land. The Greeks told us that this temple, that at Ægina, and the Parthenon, are placed exactly at the angles of a great equilateral triangle, with each side about twenty-five or

thirty miles long. Our maps do not verify this belief. The distance from Athens to Sunium appears much longer than either of the other lines, nor do we find in antiquity any hint that such a principle was attended to, or that any peculiar virtue was attached to it.

We found the platform nearly complete, built with great square blocks of poros-stone, and in some places very high, though in others scarcely raised at all, according to the requirements of the ground. Over it the temple was built, not with the huge blocks which we see at Corinth and in the Parthenon, but still of perfectly white marble, and with that beautifully close fitting, without mortar, rubble, or cement, which characterizes the best and most perfect epoch of Greek architecture.[73] The stone, too, is the finest [pg 182]white marble, and, being exposed to no dust on its lofty site, has alone of all temples kept its original color—if, indeed, it was originally white, and not enriched with divers colors. The earthquake, which has displaced the stones in the middle of the pillars, has tumbled over many large pieces, which can be seen from above scattered all down the slope where they have rolled. But enough still remains for us to see the plan, and imagine the effect of the whole structure. It is in the usual simple, grand, Doric style, but lighter in proportions than the older Attic temples; and, being meant for distant effect, was probably not much decorated. Its very site gives it all the ornament any building could possibly require.

It was our good fortune to see it in a splendid sunset, with the sea a sheet of molten gold, and all the headlands and islands colored with hazy purple. The mountains of Eubœa, with their promontory of Geræstus, closed the view upon the north-east; but far down into the Ægean reached island after island, as it were striving to prolong a highway to the holy Delos. The ancient Andros, Tenos, Myconos were there, but the eye sought in vain for the home of Apollo's shrine—the smallest and yet the greatest of the group. The parallel chain, reaching down from Sunium itself, was confused into one mass, but ex[pg 183]posed to view the distant Melos. Then came a short space of open sea, due south, which alone prevented us from imagining ourselves on some fair and quiet inland lake; and beyond to the south-west we saw the point of Hydra, the only spot in all Hellas whose recent fame exceeds the report of ancient days. The mountains of Argolis lay behind Ægina, and formed with their Arcadian neighbors a solid background, till the eye wandered round to the Acropolis of Corinth, hardly visible in the burning brightness of the sun's decline. And all this splendid expanse of sea and mountain, and bay and cliff, seemed as utterly deserted as the wildest western coast of Scotland or Ireland. One or two little white sails, speeding in his boat some lonely fisherman, made the solitude, if possible, more speaking and more intense. There are finer views, more extensive, and perhaps even more varied, but none more exquisitely interesting and more

melancholy to the student of Ancient Greece.

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CHAPTER VII.

EXCURSIONS IN ATTICA—PENTELICUS—MARATHON—DAPHNE—ELEUSIS.

This great loneliness is a feature that strikes the traveller almost everywhere through the country. Many centuries of insecurity, and indeed of violence, have made country life almost impossible; and now that better times have come, the love and knowledge of it are gone. The city Athenian no longer grumbles, as he did in Aristophanes's day, that an invasion has driven him in from the rude plenty and simple luxuries of his farming life, where with his figs and his olives, his raisins and his heady wine, he made holiday before

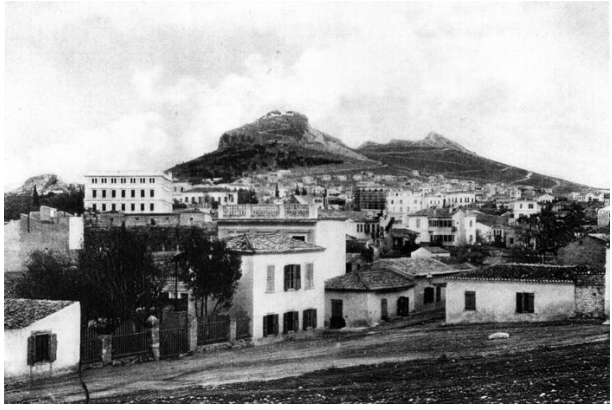
his gods, and roasted his thrush and his chestnuts with his neighbor over the fire. All this is gone. There remains, indeed, the old political lounger, the loafer of the market-place, ever seeking to obtain some shabby maintenance by sycophancy or by bullying. This type is not hard to find in modern Athens, but the old sturdy Acharnian, as well as the rich horse-breeding Alcmæonid, are things of the past. Even the large profits to be made by market-gardening will not tempt them to adopt this industry, and the great city of Athens is [pg 185]one of the worst supplied and dearest of capitals, most of its daily requirements in vegetables, fowls, eggs, etc., coming in by steamers from islands on the coast of Thessaly. No part of the country of Attica can be considered even moderately cultivated, except the Thriasian plain, and the valley of Kephissus, reaching from near Dekelea to the sea. This latter plain, with its fine olive-woods reaching down across Academus to the region of the old long walls, is fairly covered with corn and grazing cattle, with plane trees and poplars. But even here many of the homesteads are deserted; and the country seats of the Athenians were often left empty for years, whenever a band of brigands appeared in the neighboring mountains, and threatened the outlying houses with blackmail, if not with bloodier violence. Of late there is a steady improvement.

Nothing can be truer than the admirable description of Northern Attica given in M. Perrot's book on the Attic orators. He is

describing Rhamnus, the home of Antiphon, but his picture is of broader application.[74]

[pg 186]
All these remarks are even more strongly exemplified by the beautiful country which lies between [pg 187]Pentelicus and Hymettus, and which is now covered with forest and brushwood. We passed through this [pg 188]vale one sunny morning on our way to visit Marathon. There is, indeed, a road for some miles—the road to the quarries of Pentelicus—but a very different one from what the Athenians must have had. It is now a mere broad track, cut by wheels and [pg 189]hoofs in the sward; and wherever the ruts become too deep the driver turns aside, and makes a parallel track for his own convenience. In summer days, the dust produced by this sort of road is something beyond description; and the soil being very red earth, we have an atmosphere which accounts to some extent for the remarkable color of the old buildings of Athens. The way, after turning round the steep Lycabettus, which, like Arthur's Seat at Edinburgh, commands the town close by, passes up the right side of the undulating plain of Attica, with the stony but variegated slopes of Hymettus upon the right, and Pentelicus almost straight ahead. As soon as the suburbs are passed we meet but one or two country seats, surrounded with dark cypress and pepper trees; but outside the sombre green is a tall, dazzling, white wall, which gives a peculiarly Oriental character to the landscape.

There is cultivation visible when you look to the westward, where the village of Kephissia lies, among the groves which accompany the Kephissus on its course; but up toward Pentelicus, along the track which must once have been crowded with carts, and heavy teams, and shouting drivers, when all the blocks of the Parthenon were being hurried from their quarry to adorn the Acropolis—along this famous track there is hardly a sign of culture. Occasionally, a rough stubble field showed that a little corn had been cut—an occasional station, with a couple of soldiers, [pg 190]shows why more had not been sown. The fear of brigands had paralyzed industry, and even driven out the scanty rural population.



Mount Lycabettus, Athens

It strikes me, when speaking of this road, that the Greek roads cannot have been at all so

well constructed as the Roman, many of which are still to be seen in England. Though I went upon the track of many of them, I but once noticed the vestige of an old Greek road. There are here and there wretched remains of Turkish roads—rough angular stones laid down across the hills, in a close irregular pavement; but of the great builders of the Parthenon and of Phyle, of Eleutheræ and of Eleusis, hardly a patch of road-work has, so far as I know, remained.

There is, indeed, one exception in this very neighborhood, to which we may now naturally turn. The traveller who has wondered at the huge blocks of the Propylæa and the Parthenon, and who has noticed the exquisite quality of the stone, and the perfect smoothness which it has preserved to the present day, will naturally desire to visit the quarry on Pentelicus from which it was brought. The marble of Paros is probably the only stone found superior to it for the purposes of sculpture. It is, however, harder and of larger grain, so that it must have been more difficult to work. Experts can tell the difference between the two marbles, but I confess that, though M. Rousopoulos endeavored to teach [pg 191]it to me from specimens in the Acropolis Museum, I was unable to attain a clear knowledge of the distinction. The large blocks of Pentelican marble, however beautiful and fine in grain, seem not unfrequently to have contained flaws, and possibly the ascertaining of this defect may of old have been one of the most

difficult duties of the architect. It is supposed to have been done by sounding the block with a hammer, a process which the Greeks would call κωδωνίζειν. There are at present, close to the east front of the Parthenon, several of these rejected blocks, and the lapse of ages has brought out the flaw visibly, because damp has had time to penetrate the stone, and stain its pure whiteness with a dark seam. But when it came fresh from its native bed, and was all pure white, I presume the difficulty must have been considerable. Possibly these blocks on the Parthenon were injured in their transit, and left the quarries in sound condition. For in going up the steep road to these quarries, in more than one place a similar great block will be found tumbled aside, and left lying at the very spot where we may suppose some accident to have happened to crack it. This road, which in its highest parts has never been altered, is a steep descent, rudely paved with transverse courses of stone, like steps in pattern, and may have had wooden slides laid over it, to bring down the product of the quarries to the valley. It is well worth while going up for a night to the fine monas[pg 192]tery not far off, where there is ample shade of waving trees and plenty of falling water, in the midst of steep slopes wooded with the fir—a cool and quiet retreat in the fierce heat of summer.[75] From this place to the quarries is less than an hour's walk. The moderns still draw stone from them, but far below the spots chosen by the ancients; and, of course, the remains of the old industry are on an infinitely grander scale.

It is a laborious climb, up a road covered with small fragments of stone. But at last, beneath a great face of marble all chipped with the work of ancient hands, there is a large cool cavern, with water dripping from the roof into ice-cold pools below, and besides it a quaint grotto chapel, with its light still burning, and stone seats around, where the traveller may rest. This place seems to have been the main source of the old Athenian buildings. The high face of the rock above it is chipped, as I have said, with small and delicate cutting, and hangs over, as if they had removed it beneath, in order to bring down the higher pieces more easily. Of course, they could not, and probably if they could, would not, have blasted the stone; and, so far as I know, we are not informed by what process they [pg 193]managed to loosen and bring down the great blocks from their sites. The surface of the rock testifies to the use of some small and delicate chisel. But whatever the process, they must have had machinery of which we have lost all record, for no amount of manual work could possibly have accomplished what they did in a few years, and accomplished it with a delicacy which shows complete control of their materials. The beautifully fitted walls of the chamber inside the left wing of the Propylæa preserve an interesting piece of detail on the face of each square block, which is perfectly fitted to its fellows; there still remains a rough knob jutting out from the centre, evidently the handle used for lifting the stone, and usually removed when all the building was

completely finished. The expenses of war and the dolors of a long siege caused the Propylæa to remain unfinished, and so this piece of construction has survived.

The view from the top of Pentelicus is, of course, very striking, and those who have no time or inclination to spend a day at Marathon itself are usually content with a very fine view of the bay and the opposite mountains of Eubœa, which can thence be had. But it is indeed a pity, now that the country is generally quite safe, that after so long a journey as that from England to Athens, people should turn back without completing the additional fifteen miles [pg 194]which brings them to the site of the great battle itself.

As we leave the track which leads up to the monastery above mentioned, the country becomes gradually covered with shrubs, and then with stunted trees—generally old fir-trees, all hacked and carved and wounded for the sake of their resin, which is so painfully obtrusive in Greek wine. But in one place there is, by way of change, a picturesque bridge over a rapid rocky-bedded river, which is completely hidden with rich flowering oleanders, and in which we found sundry Attic women, of the poorer class, washing their clothes. The woods in this place were wonderfully rich and scented, and the sound of the turtle doves was heard in the land. Presently we came upon the thickly wooded corner, which was pointed out to us as the spot where our unfortunate countrymen were

captured in 1870, and carried up the slopes of Pentelicus, to be sacrificed to the blundering of the English Minister or the Greek Ministry, —I could not decide which,—and more certainly to their own chivalry; for while all the captured Greeks escaped during the pursuit, our English gentlemen would not break their parole. These men are now held by the better Greeks to be martyrs for the good of Greece; for this outrage first forced the Government to take really vigorous measures for the safety of the country. The whole band were gradually captured and executed, till at [pg 195]last Takos, their chief, was caught in Peloponnesus, three or four years ago, and hanged at Athens. So it came that I found the country (on all my visits, ’75, ’77, ’84, ’89) apparently as safe as Ireland is to a traveller, and we required neither escort, nor arms, nor any precautions whatever.

We had, indeed, a missive from the Greek Prime Minister, which we presented to the Chief Police Officer of each town—a gentleman in the usual scarlet cap and white petticoats, but carrying a great dog-whip as the sign of his office. This custom, strange to say, dates from the days of Aristophanes. But the Prime Minister warned us that, though things were now safe, there was no permanent security. Any revolution in the neighborhood (such, for example, as that in Herzegovina, which at that time had not yet broken out) might, he said, send over the Turkish frontier a number of outlaws or other

fugitives, who would support themselves by levying blackmail on the peasantry, and then on travellers. We were assured that the Morea, which does not afford an easy escape into Turkey, has been for years perfectly secure, and I found it so in several subsequent journeys. So, then, any traveller desirous of seeing the Peloponnesus—Sparta, Olympia, Mantinea, Argos, or even Central Greece—may count on doing so with safety. Not so the visitor to Tempe and Mount Pindus.[76] The Professors of the University [pg 196]with whom I talked were, indeed, of a more sanguine opinion. They did not anticipate any recurrence of the danger: they considered Greece one of the safest and quietest of countries. Moreover, in one point they all seemed agreed. It was perfectly certain that the presence of bandits would be at once known at Athens. Why this was so, I was not informed, nor whether travellers would be at once informed also. In any case, either M. Trikoupi or the British Minister can be perfectly relied upon for advice in this matter.

So much for the safety of travelling in Greece, which is suggested by the melancholy fate of Mr. Vyner and his friends, though that event is now so long past. But one point more. It is both idle and foolish to imagine that revolvers and daggers are the best protection against Greek bandits, should they reappear. They never attack where they are visible. The first notice given to the traveller is the sight of twenty or thirty muzzles pointed at him from the covert, with a summons to surrender.

Except, therefore, the party be too numerous to be so surrounded and *visé*, so that some could fight, even were others shot—except in such a case, arms are only an addi[pg 197]tional prize, and a tempting one, for the clephts. It is, indeed, very seldom that the carrying of arms is to be recommended to any traveller in any land.

As we ascended the long saddle of country which lies between Pentelicus and Hymettus, we came upon a fine olive-wood, with the same enormous stems which had already excited our wonder in the groves of Academe. Indeed, some of the stems in this wood were the largest we had seen, and made us think that they may have been there since the days when the olive oil of Attica was one of its most famous products, and its export was even forbidden. Even then there were ancient stumps—μορίαι, as they were called—which were sacred, and which no man who rented or bought the land might remove; a restriction which seems hard to us, but was not so in Greece, where corn grows freely in the shade of trees, and is even habitually planted in orchards. But at all events, these old, gnarled, hollowed stumps, with their tufts of branches starting from the pollarded trunk, are a really classical feature in the country, and deserve, therefore, a passing notice.

When we had got well between the mountains a new scene unfolded itself. We began to see the famous old Euripus, with the mountains of Eubœa over against us; and down to the south, behind Hymettus, till we reach the

extremity of Sunium, stretched a long tract of mountainous and barren country which never played a prominent part in [pg 198]history, but where a conical hill was pointed out to us as the site of the old deme Brauron. It is, indeed, surprising how little of Attica was ever celebrated. Close by the most famous city of the world are reaches of country which are as obscure to us as the wilds of Arcadia; and we may suspect that the shepherds who inhabited the φελλέα, or rocky pastures in the Attic hills, were not much superior to those whom we now meet herding their goats in the same region.

The plain of Marathon, as everybody knows, is a long crescent-shaped strip of land by the shore, surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills, which may be crossed conveniently in three places, but most easily toward the south-west, along the road which we travelled, and which leads directly to Athens. When the Athenians marched through this broad and easy passage they found that the Persians had landed at the northern extremity of the plain—I suppose, because the water was there sufficiently deep to let them land conveniently. Most of the shore, as you proceed southward, is lined on the seaboard by swamps. The Greek army must have marched northward along the spurs of Pentelicus, and taken up their position near the north of the plain. There was evidently much danger that the Persians would force a passage through the village of Marathon, farther toward the north-west. Had they done this, they might have rounded

Pentelicus, and descended [pg 199]the main plain of Attica, from the valley below Dekelea. Perhaps, however, this pass was then guarded by an outlying fort, or by some defences at Marathon itself. The site of the battle is absolutely fixed by the great mound, upon which was placed a lion, which has been carried off, no one knows when or whither. The mound is exactly an English mile from the steep slope of one of the hills, and about half a mile from the sea at present; nor was there, when I saw it, any difficulty in walking right to the shore, though a river flows out there, which shows, by its sedgy banks and lofty reeds, a tendency to create a marshy tract in rainy weather. But the mound is so placed that, if it marks the centre of the battle, the Athenians must have faced nearly north; and if they faced the sea eastward, as is commonly stated, this mound must mark the scene of the conflict on their left wing. The mound is very large—I suppose thirty feet high—altogether of earth, so far as we could see, and bears traces of having been frequently ransacked in search of antiquities. Dr. Schliemann, its latest investigator, could find nothing there but prehistoric flint weapons.



Looking Toward the Sea from the Soros, Marathon

Like almost every view in Greece, the prospect from this mound is full of beauty and variety—everywhere broken outlines, everywhere patches of blue sea, everywhere silence and solitude. Byron is so much out of fashion now, and so much more talked about than read—though even that notice of [pg 200]him is fast disappearing—that I will venture to remind the reader of the splendid things he has said of Greece, and especially of this very plain of Marathon. He was carried away by his enthusiasm to fancy a great future possible for the country, and to believe that its desolation and the low condition of the inhabitants were simply the result of Turkish tyranny, and not of many natural causes conspiring for twenty centuries. He paints the Greek brigand or pirate as many others have painted the “noble savage,” with the omission of all his meaner vices. But in spite of all these faults, who is there who has

felt as he the affecting aspects of this beautiful land—the tomb of ancient glory—the home of ancient wisdom—the mother of science, of art, of philosophy, of politics—the champion of liberty—the envy of the Persian and the Roman—the teacher, even still, of modern Europe? It is surely a great loss to our generation, and a bad sign of its culture, that the love of more modern poets has weaned them from the study of one not less great in most respects, but far greater in one at least—in that burning enthusiasm for a national cause, in that red-hot passion for liberty which, even when misapplied, or wasted upon unworthy objects, is ever one of the noblest and most stirring instincts of higher man.

But Byron may well be excused his raving about the liberty of the Greeks, for truly their old conflict at Marathon, where a few thousand ill-disciplined men [pg 201]repulsed a larger number of still worse disciplined Orientals, without any recondite tactics—perhaps even without any very extraordinary heroism—how is it that this conflict has maintained a celebrity which has not been equalled by any of the great battles of the world from that day down to our own? The courage of the Greeks, as I have elsewhere shown,[77] was not of the first order. Herodotus praises the Athenians in this very battle for being the first Greeks that dared to look the Persians in the face. Their generals all through history seem never to feel sure of victory, and always endeavor to harangue their soldiers into a fury. Instead of advising

coolness, they especially incite to rage—ὀργῇ προσμίξωμεν, says one of them in Thucydides—as if any man not in this state would be sure to estimate the danger fully, and run away. It is, indeed, true that the ancient battles were hand to hand, and therefore parallel to our charges of bayonets, which are said to be very seldom carried out by two opposing lines, as one of them almost always gives way before the actual collision takes place. This must often have occurred in Greek battles, for in one fought at Amphipolis Brasidas lost seven men; at a battle at Corinth, mentioned by Xenophon—an important battle, too—the slain amounted to eight;[78] [pg 202]and these battles were fought before the days when whole armies were composed of mercenaries, who spared one another, as Ordericus Vitalis says, "for the love of God, and out of good feeling for the fraternity of arms." So, then, the loss of 192 Athenians, including some distinguished men, was rather a severe one. As to the loss of the Persians, I so totally disbelieve the Greek accounts of such things that it is better to pass it by in silence.

Perhaps most readers will be astonished to hear of the Athenian army as undisciplined, and of the science of war as undeveloped, in those times. Yet I firmly believe this was so. The accounts of battles by almost all the historians are so utterly vague, and so childishly conventional, that it is evident that these gentlemen were not only quite ignorant of the science of war, but could not easily find

any one to explain it to them. We know that the Spartans—the most admired of all Greek warriors—were chiefly so admired because they devised the system of subordinating officers to one another within the same detachment, like our gradation from colonel to corporal. Orders were passed down from officer to officer, instead of being bawled out by a herald to a whole army. But this superiority of the Spartans, who were really disciplined, and went into battle [pg 203]coolly, like brave men, certainly did not extend to strategy, but was merely a question of better drill. As soon as any real strategist met them they were helpless. Thus Iphicrates, when he devised Wellington's plan of meeting their attacking column in line, and using missiles, succeeded against them, even without firearms: thus Epaminondas, when he devised Napoleon's plan of massing troops on a single point, while keeping his enemy's line occupied, defeated them without any considerable struggle. As for that general's great battle of Mantinea, the ancient Rossbach, which seems really to have been introduced by some complicated strategical movements, we owe our partial knowledge to the grudging aid of the soldier Xenophon. But both generals were in the distant future when the battle of Marathon was being fought.

Yet what signifies all this criticism? In spite of all skepticism, in spite of all contempt, the battle of Marathon, whether badly or well fought, and the troops at Marathon, whether well or ill trained, will ever be more famous

than any other battle or army, however important or gigantic its dimensions. Even in this very war, the battles of Salamis and Platæa were vastly more important and more hotly contested. The losses were greater, the results were more enduring, yet thousands have heard of Marathon to whom the other names are unknown. So much for literary ability—so much for the power of talk[pg 204]ing well about one's deeds. Marathon was fought by Athenians; the Athenians eclipsed the other Greeks as far as the other Greeks eclipsed the rest of the world, in literary power. This battle became the literary property of the city, hymned by poet, cited by orator, told by aged nurse, lisped by stammering infant; and so it has taken its position, above all criticism, as one of the great decisive battles which assured the liberty of the West against Oriental despotism.

The plain in the present day is quite bare of trees, and, as Colonel Leake observed, appears to have been so at the time of the battle, from the vague account of its evolutions. There was a little corn and a few other crops about the great tumulus; and along the seashore, whither we went to bathe, there was a large herd of cows and oxen—a sight not very usual in Greece. When we rushed into the shallow blue water, striving to reach swimming depth, we could not but think of the scene when Kynægirus and his companions rushed in armed to stop the embarkation of the Persians. On the shore, then teeming with ships of war, with transports, with fighting

and flying men, there was now no sign of life, but ourselves in the water, and the lazy cattle and their silent herdsmen looking upon us in wonder; for, though very hot, it was only May, and the modern Greek never thinks it safe to bathe till at least the end of June—in this like his Italian [pg 205]neighbor. There was not a single ship or boat in the straits; there was no sign of life or of population on the coast of Eubœa. There was everywhere that solitude which so much struck Byron, as it strikes every traveller in Modern Greece. There was not even the child or beggar, with coins and pieces of pottery, who is so troublesome about Italian ruins, and who has even lately appeared at the Parthenon, the theatre at Argos, and a few other places in Greece. We asked the herdsman for remnants of arms or pieces of money: he had seen such things picked up, but knew nothing of their value. Lord Byron tells us he was offered the purchase of the whole plain (six miles by two) for about £900. It would have been a fine speculation for an antiquarian: but I am surprised, as he was, rather at the greatness than at the smallness of the price. The Greek Government might very well, even now, grant the fee-simple to any one who would pay the ordinary taxes on property, which are not, I was told, very heavy. But still the jealousy of the nation would not tolerate a foreign speculator.

I have already spoken (p. 154) of the position of the pass of Daphne, and how it leads the traveller over the ridge which separates the

plain of the Kephissus from the Thriasian plain. I have also spoken at length of the country about the Kephissus, with its olive woods and its nightingales. When we [pg 206]go through the pass of Daphne—of its monastery I shall speak in another chapter—a perfectly new view opens before us. We see under us the Thriasian plain, well covered with ripening corn and other crops; we see at the far side of the crescent-shaped bay the remains of Eleusis. Behind it, and all round to the right up to where we stand, is an amphitheatre of hills—the spurs of Mount Parnes, which from Phyle reach due south down to where we stand, and due west to the inland of the Thriasian plain, till they meet and are confounded with the slopes of Cithæron, which extend for miles away behind Eleusis. On the sea-side, to our left, lies the island of Salamis, so near the coast that the sea seems a calm inland lake, lying tortuously between the hills.

Many points of Greek history become plain to us by this view. We see how true was the epithet “rocky Salamis,” for the island, though it looks very insignificant on our maps, contains lofty mountains, with very bare and rocky sides. The student of Greek geography in maps should note this feature. Thus, Ithaca on the map does not suggest the real Ithaca, which from most points looks like a high and steep mountain standing out of the sea. We begin also to see how Salamis was equally *convenient* (as the Irish say) to both Megara and Attica, if we consider that Eleusis was

strictly a part of Attica. The harbor of the Peiræus, for example, would be [pg 207]quite useless if an enemy were watching it from Salamis. But we also come to see the sense of the old legend, that Eleusis had originally a separate king or government from that of Athens, and that the two cities once carried on war against each other. The towns are but a few miles apart; but their respective plains are so distinctly and completely separated by the pass of Daphne, that not one acre of the territory of Eleusis can be seen from Athens, nor of Athens from Eleusis. So also, lastly, we come to feel how natural is the remark of Thucydides, that the population of Athens, when the Lacedæmonians invaded Attica, and came no farther than the Thriasian plain, did not feel the terrors of a hostile invasion, as the enemy was not in sight; but when he crossed the pass, and began to ravage Acharnæ and the vale of Kephissus, then indeed, though Eleusis was just as near, and just as much their own, they felt the reality of the invasion, and were for the first time deeply dejected. This is a good example of that combined farness and nearness which is so characteristic about most neighboring cities in Greece.



Salamis from Across the Bay

The wretched modern village of Eleusis is picturesquely situated near the sea, on the old site, and there are still to be seen the ruins, not only of the famous temple of Demeter, but also of the Propylæa, built apparently in imitation of that of Mnesicles on the Acropolis at Athens, though the site of both [pg 208]temple and Propylæa are at Eleusis low, and in no way striking.

These celebrated ruins are wretchedly defaced. Not a column or a wall is now standing, and we can see nothing but vast fragments of pillars and capitals, and a great pavement, all of white marble, along which the ancient wheel-tracks are distinctly visible. There are also underground vaults of small dimensions, which, the people tell you, were intended for the Mysteries. We that knew what vast crowds attended there would not give credence to this ignorant guess; and

indeed we knew from distinct evidence that the great ceremony took place in a large building specially constructed for the purpose. The necessary darkness was obtained by performing the more solemn rites at night; not by going down beneath the surface of the earth.

The Greek *savants* have at last laid open, and explained, the whole plan of the temple, which was built by Ictinus, in Pericles's time, but apparently restored after a destructive fire by Roman architects copying faithfully the ancient style. The excavators have shown that the shrine had strange peculiarities. And this is exactly what we should expect. For although no people adhered more closely to traditional forms in their architecture, no people were more ready to modify these forms with a view to practical requirements. Thus, as a rule, the cella, or inner chamber of the temple, only con[pg 209]tained the statue of the god, and was consequently small and narrow. In the temple at Eleusis has been found a great inner chamber about 59 yards by 54, hewn out of the rock in the rear of the edifice, and capable of accommodating a large assembly.[79] Here then it seems the initiated—probably those of the higher degree, *epoptæ* as they were called—witnessed those services "which brought them peace in this world, and a blessed hope for the world to come."

The way into the temple was adorned with two Propylæa—one of the classical period, and by Philo (311 B. C.), another set up by a

Roman, App. Claudius Pulcher, in 48 B. C., after you had passed through the former. The great temple, raised upon a natural platform, looks out toward Salamis, and the narrow line of azure which separates it from the land. Turning to the left as you stand at the temple front, the eye wanders over the rich plain of Eleusis, now dotted over with villages, and colored (in April) with the rich brown of ploughing and the splendid green of sprouting wheat. This plain had multiplied its wealth manifold since I first saw it, and led us to hope that the peasants were waking up to the great market which is near them at Athens. The track of the old sacred way along the Thriasian plain is often visible, for much of the sea-coast is [pg 210]marshy, so the road was cut out in many places along the spurs of the rocky hill of Daphne. The present road goes between the curious salt-lakes (Rheitoi) and the shore—salt-lakes full of sea-fish, and evidently fed by great natural springs, for there is a perpetual strong outflow to the tideless sea. I know not whether this natural curiosity has been explained by the learned.

It is, of course, the celebrated Mysteries—the *Greater Eleusinia*, as they were called—which give to the now wretched village of Eleusis, with its hopeless ruins, so deep an interest. This wonderful feast, handed down from the remotest antiquity, maintained its august splendor all through the greater ages of Greek history, down to the times of decay and trifling—when everything else in the country had become mean and contemptible. Even

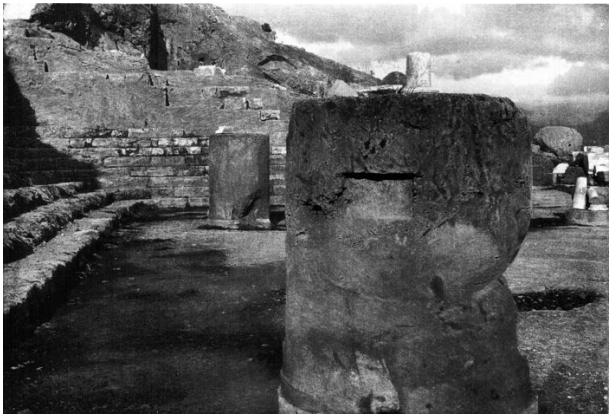
Cicero, who was of the initiated himself, a man of wide culture and of a skeptical turn of mind—even Cicero speaks of it as *the* great product of the culture of Athens. “Much that is excellent and divine,” says he,[80] “does Athens seem to me to have produced and added to our life, but nothing better than those Mysteries, by which we are formed and moulded from a rude and savage life to humanity; and indeed in the Mysteries we perceive the real principles of life, and learn not only to live happily, but to die with a fairer hope.” These are the words [pg 211]of a man writing, as I have said; in the days of the ruin and prostration of Greece. Can we then wonder at the enthusiastic language of the Homeric Hymn,[81] of Pindar,[82] of Sophocles,[83] of Aristophanes,[84] of Plato,[85] of Isocrates,[86] of Chrysippus[87]? Every manner of writer—religious poet, worldly poet, skeptical philosopher, orator—all are of one mind about this, far the greatest of all the religious festivals of Greece.

To what did it owe this transcendent character? It was not because men here worshipped exceptional gods, for the worship of Demeter and Cora was an old and widely diffused cult all over Greece: and there were other Eleusinia in various places. It was not because the ceremony consisted of mysteries, of hidden acts and words, which it was impious to reveal, and which the initiated alone might know. For the habit of secret worship was practised in every state, where special clans were charged with the care of

special secret services, which no man else might know. Nay, even within the ordinary homes of the Greeks there were these Mysteries. Neither was it because of the splendor of the temple and its appointments, which never equalled the Panathenæa at the Parthenon, or the riches of Delphi, or Olympia. There is only one reasonable [pg 212]cause, and it is that upon which all our serious authorities agree. The doctrine taught in the Mysteries was a faith which revealed hopeful things about the world to come; and which—not so much as a condition, but as a consequence, of this clearer light, this higher faith—made them better citizens and better men. This faith was taught them in the Mysteries through symbols,[88] through prayer and fasting, through wild rejoicings; but, as Aristotle expressly tells us, it was reached not by intellectual persuasion, but by a change into a new moral state—in fact, by being spiritually revived.

Here, then, we have the strangest and most striking analogy to our religion in the Greek mythology; for here we have a higher faith publicly taught,—any man might present himself to be initiated,—and taught, not in opposition to the popular creed, but merely by deepening it, and showing to the ordinary worldling its spiritual power. The belief in the Goddess Demeter and her daughter, the queen of the nether world, was, as I have said, common all over Greece; but even as nowadays we are told that there may be two kinds of belief of the same truths—one of the

head and another of the heart—just [pg 213]as the most excellent man of the world, who believes all the creeds of the Church, is called an unbeliever, in the higher sense, by our Evangelical Christians; so the ordinary Greek, though he prayed and offered at the Temple of Demeter, was held by the initiated at the Mysteries to be wallowing in the mire of ignorance, and stumbling in the night of gloom—he was held to live without real light, and to die without hope, in wretched despair.[89]



Temple of Mysteries, Eleusis

The very fact that it was not lawful to divulge the Mystery has prevented the many writers who knew it from giving us any description by which we might gain a clear idea of this wonderful rite. We have hints of various sacred vessels, of various priests known by special technical names; of dramatic

representations of the rape of Cora, and of the grief of her mother; of her complaints before Zeus, and the final reconciliation. We hear of scenes of [pg 214]darkness and fear, in which the hopeless state of the unbelievers was portrayed; of light and glory, to which the convert attained, when at last his eyes were opened to the knowledge of good and evil.

But all these things are fragmentary glimpses, as are also the doctrines hinted of the Unity of God, and of atonement by sacrifice. There remains nothing clear and certain, but the unanimous verdict as to the greatness, the majesty, and the awe of the services, and as to the great spiritual knowledge and comfort which they conveyed. The consciousness of guilt was not, indeed, first taught by them, but was felt generally, and felt very keenly by the Greek mind. These Mysteries were its Gospel of reconciliation with the offended gods.

[pg 215]

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM ATHENS TO THEBES—THE PASSES OF PARNES AND OF CITHÆRON, ELEUTHERÆ, PLATÆA.

No ordinary student, looking at the map of Attica and Bœotia, can realize the profound and complete separation between these two countries. Except at the very northern extremity, where the fortified town of Oropus guarded an easy boundary, all the frontier consists not merely of steep mountains, but of parallel and intersecting ridges and gorges, which contain indeed a few alpine valleys, such as that of Œnoe, but which are, as a rule, wild and barren, easily defensible by a few against many, and totally unfit for the site of any considerable town, or any advanced culture. As I before stated, the traveller can pass through by Dekelea, or he can pass most directly by Phyle, the fort which Thrasybulus seized when he desired to reconquer Athens with his democratic exiles. The historians usually tell us "that he seized *and fortified* Phyle"; a statement which the present aspect of it seems to render very doubtful indeed. It is quite impossible that the great hill-fort of the very finest Attic building, which is still remaining and admired by all, could have been [pg 216]"knocked up" by Thrasybulus and his exiles. The careful construction and the enormous extent of the building compel us to suppose it the work of a

rich state, and of a deliberate plan of fortification. It seems very unlikely, for these reasons, that it was built after the days of Thrasybulus, or that so important a point of attack should have been left unguarded in the greater days of Athens. I am therefore convinced that the fort, being built long before, and being, in fact, one of the well-known fortified demes through Attica, had been to some extent dismantled, or allowed to fall into decay, at the end of the Peloponnesian War, but that its solid structure made it a matter of very little labor for the exiles to render it strong and easily defensible.

This is one of the numerous instances in which a single glance at the locality sets right an historical statement that has eluded suspicion for ages. The fort of Phyle, like that of Eleutheræ, of which I shall speak, and like those of Messene and of Orchomenus, is built of square blocks of stone, carefully cut, and laid together without a particle of rubble or cement, but so well fitted as to be able to resist the wear of ages better than almost any other building. I was informed by M. Émile Burnouf, that in the case of a fort at Megara, which I did not see, there are even polygonal blocks, of which the irregular and varying angles are fitted with such precision that it is difficult, as in the case of the Parthenon, to detect [pg 217]the joinings of the stones. The blocks are by no means so colossal in these buildings as in the great ruins about Mycenæ; but the fitting is closer, and the sites on which

we find them very lofty, and with precipitous ascents. This style of building is specially mentioned by Thucydides (I. 93) as being employed in the building of the walls of the Peiræus in the days of Themistocles, apparently in contrast to the rude and hurried construction of the city walls. But he speaks of the great stones being not only cut square, but fastened with clamps of iron soldered with lead. I am not aware that any traces of this are found in the remaining hill-forts. The walls of the Peiræus have, unfortunately, long since almost totally disappeared.

The way from Athens to Phyle leads north-west through the rich fields of the old deme of Acharnæ; and we wonder at first why they should be so noted as charcoal-burners. But as we approach Mount Parnes, we find that the valley is bounded by tracts of hillside fit for nothing but pine forest. A vast deal of wooding still remains; it is clear that these forests were the largest and most convenient to supply Athens with firewood or charcoal. As usual, there are many glens and river-courses through the rugged country through which we ascend—here and there a village, in one secluded nook a little monastery, hidden from the world, if not from its cares. There is the usual Greek vege[pg 218]tation beside the path; not perhaps luxuriant to our Northern eyes, but full of colors of its own—the glowing anemone, the blood-red poppy, the delicate cistus on a rocky surface, with foliage rather gray and silvery than green. The pine-trees sound, as the breeze sweeps up the

valleys, and lavish their vigorous fragrance through the air.

There is something inexpressibly bracing in this solitude, if solitude it can be called, where the forest speaks to the eye and ear, and fills the imagination with the mystery of its myriad forms. Now and then too the peculiar cadence of those bells which hardly varies throughout all the lands of the south, tells you that a flock of goats, or goat-like sheep, is near, attended by solemn, silent children, whose eyes seem to have no expression beyond that of vague wonder in their gaze. These are the flocks of some village below, not those of the nomad Vlachs, who bring with them their tents and dogs, and make gipsy encampments in the unoccupied country.

At last we see high over us the giant fort of Phyle—set upon a natural precipice, which defends it amply for half its circuit. The point of occupation was well chosen, for while within sight of Athens, and near enough to afford a sure refuge to those who could escape by night and fly to the mountain, its distance (some 15 miles) and the steep and rugged ascent, made it impossible for weak and aged people to crowd into it and mar the efficiency of its garrison. [pg 219]With the increase of his force Thrasybulus began successful raids into the plain, then a rapid movement to Peiræus; ultimately, as may be read in all histories, he accomplished the liberation of his native city.

We did not pass into Bœotia by the way of Phyle, preferring to take the longer route through Eleusis. But no sooner had we left Eleusis than we began to ascend into the rough country, which is the preface to the wild mountain passes of Cithæron. It is, indeed, very difficult to find where one range of mountains begins and another ends, anywhere throughout Greece. There is generally one high peak, which marks a whole chain or system of mountains, and after which the system is called; but all closer specification seems lost, on account of the immense number of ridges and points which crowd upon the view in all directions. Thus the chain of Parnes, after throwing out a spur toward the south, which divides the Athenian and the Thriasian plains, sweeps round the latter in a sort of amphitheatre, and joins the system of Cithæron (Kitheron), which extends almost parallel with Parnes. A simple look at a good map explains these things by supplementing mere description. The only thing which must be specially enforced is, that all the region where a plain is not expressly named is made up of broken mountain ridges and rocky defiles, so that it may fairly be called an [pg 220]alpine country. A fellow-traveller, who had just been in Norway, was perpetually struck with its resemblance to the Norwegian highlands.

I will only mention one other fact which illustrates the consequent isolation. We have a river Kephissus in the plain of Athens. As soon as we cross the pass of Daphne we have

another Kephissus in the Thriasian plain. Within a day's journey, or nearly so, we have another Kephissus, losing itself in the lake Copais, not far from Orchomenus. This repetition of the same name shows how little intercourse people have in the country, how little they travel, and how there is no danger of confusing these identical names. Such a fact, trifling as it is, illustrates very powerfully the isolation which the Greek mountains produce.

There is a good road from Athens to Thebes, —a very unusual thing in Greece,—and we were able to drive with four horses, after a fashion which would have seemed very splendid in old days. But, strange to say, the old Greek fashion of driving four horses abreast, two being yoked to the pole, and two outriggers, or παράσειροι, as they were called, has disappeared from Greece, whereas it still survives in Southern Italy. On the other hand the Greeks are more daring drivers than the Italians, being indeed braver in all respects, and, when a road is to be had, a very fast pace is generally kept up.

As usual, the country was covered with brush[pg 221]wood, and with numbers of old gnarled fir-trees, which bore everywhere upon their stems the great wounds of the hatchet, made to extract the resin for the flavoring of wine. Rare flocks of goats, with their peculiar, dull, tinkling bells—bells which have the same make and tone all through Calabria, through Sicily, and through Greece—were the only sign of human occupation or of

population. But when you look for houses, there is nothing in the shape of wall or roof, save an occasional station, where, but a few years since, soldiers were living, to keep the road safe from bandits. At last we came upon the camp of some Vlach shepherds—a thing reminding one far more of a gipsy camp than anything else—a few dark-brown skins falling over two upright poles, so as to form a roof-shaped tent, of which the entrance looked so absolutely black as to form quite a patch in the landscape. There is mere room for lying in these tents by night; and, I suppose, in the summer weather most of these wild shepherds will not condescend even to this shelter.[90]

After some hours' drive we reached a grassy dell, shaded by large plane-trees, where a lonely little public-house—if I may so call it—of this construc[pg 222]tion invited us to stop for watering the horses, and inspecting more closely the owner. There was the usual supply of such places—red and white wine in small casks, excellent fresh water, and *lucumia*, or Turkish delight. Not only had the owner his belt full of knives and pistols, but there was hanging up in a sort of rack a most picturesque collection of swords and guns—all made in Turkish fashion, with ornamented handles and stocks, and looking as if they might be more dangerous to the sportsman than to his game. While we were being served by this wild-looking man, in this suspicious place—in fact, it looked like the daily resort of bandits—his wife, a comely young woman, dressed in the usual dull blue, red, and white,

disappeared through the back way, and hid herself among the trees. This fear of being seen by strangers—no doubt caused by jealousy among men, and, possibly, by an Oriental tone in the country—is a striking feature through most parts of Greece. It is said to be a remnant of the Turkish influence, but seems to me to lie deeper, and to be even an echo of the old Greek days. The same feeling is prevalent in most parts of Sicily. In the towns there you seldom see ladies in the streets; and in the evenings, except when the play-going public is returning from the theatre, there are only men visible.

After leaving this resting-place, about eleven in the morning, we did not meet a village, or even a [pg 223]single house till we had crossed Cithæron, after six in the evening, and descried the modern hamlet of Platæa on the slopes to our left. But once or twice through the day a string of four or five mules, with bright, richly striped rugs over their wooden saddles, and men dressed still more brightly sitting lady-fashion on them, were threading their way along the winding road. The tinkling of the mules' bells and the wild Turkish chants of the men were a welcome break in the uniform stillness of the journey. The way becomes gradually wilder and steeper, though often descending to cross a shady valley, which opens to the right and left, in a long, narrow vista, and shows blue far-off hills of other mountain chains. One of these valleys was pointed out to us as Œnoe, an outlying deme of Attica, fortified in

Periclean days, and which the Peloponnesian army attacked, as Thucydides tells us, and failed to take, on their invasion of Attica at the opening of the war. There are two or three strong square towers in this valley, close to the road, but not the least like any old Greek fort, and quite incapable of holding any garrison. The site is utterly unsuitable, and there seemed no remains of any walled town.

These facts led me to reflect upon the narrative of Thucydides, who evidently speaks of Œnoe as the border fort of Attica, and yet says not a word about Eleutheræ, which is really the border, the great fort, and the key to the passes of Cithæron. [pg 224]The first solution which suggests itself is, that the modern Greeks have given the wrong names to these places, and that by Œnoe Thucydides really means the place now known as Eleutheræ.[91] Most decidedly, if the fort which is now there existed at the opening of the Peloponnesian War, he cannot possibly have overlooked it in his military history of the campaign. And yet it seems certain that we must place the building of this fort at the epoch of Athens's greatness, when Attic influence was paramount in Bœotia, and when the Athenians could, at their leisure, and without hindrance, construct this fort, which commands the passes into Attica, before they diverge into various valleys, about the region of the so-called Œnoe.

For, starting from Thebes, the slope of Cithæron is a single unbroken ascent up to the ridge, through which, nearly over the village

of Platæa, there is a cut that naturally indicates the pass. But when the traveller has ascended from Thebes to this point he finds a steep descent into a mountainous and broken region, where he must presently choose between a gorge to the right or to the left, and must wander about zigzag among mountains, so as to find his way [pg 225]toward Athens. And although I did not examine all the passes accurately, it was perfectly obvious that, as soon as the first defile was left behind, an invader could find various ways of eluding the defenders of Attica, and penetrating into the Thriasian plain, or, by Phyle, into that of Athens. Accordingly, the Athenians choose a position of remarkable strength, just inside the last crowning ascent, where all the ways converge to pass the crest of the mountain into Platæa. Here a huge rock, interposing between the mountains on each side, strives, as it were, to bar the path, which accordingly divides like a torrent bed, and passes on either side, close under the walls of the fort which occupies the top of the rock. From this point the summit of the pass is about two or three miles distant, and easily visible, so that an outpost there, commanding a view of the whole Theban plain, could signal any approach to the fort with ample notice.

The position of the fort at Phyle, above described, is very similar. It lies within a mile of the top of the pass, on the Attic side, within sight of Athens, and yet near enough to receive the scouts from the top, and resist all

sudden attack. No force could invade Attica without leaving a large force to besiege it.

Looking backward into Attica, the whole mountainous tract of Œnoe is visible; and, though we cannot now tell the points actually selected, there [pg 226]is no difficulty in finding several which could easily pass the signal from Eleutheræ to Daphne, and thence to Athens. We know that fire signals were commonly used among the Greeks, and we can here see an instance where news could be telegraphed some thirty miles over a very difficult country in a few moments. Meanwhile, as succors might be some time in arriving, the fort was of such size and strength as to hold a large garrison, and stop any army which could not afford to mask it, by leaving there a considerable force.[92]

The site was, of course, an old one, and the name Eleutheræ, if correctly applied to this fort, points to a time when some mountain tribe maintained its independence here against the governments on either side in the plain, whence the place was called the "*Free*" place, or *Liberties* (as we have the term in Dublin). There is further evidence of this in a small irregular fort which was erected almost in the centre of the larger and later enclosure. This older fort is of polygonal masonry, very inferior to the other, and has fallen into ruins, while the later walls and towers are in many places perfect. The outer wall follows the nature of the position, the principle being to find everywhere an abrupt descent from the fortification, so that an assault must be very

difficult. On the north side, where the rock is pre[pg 227]cipitous, the wall runs along in a right line; whereas on the south side, over the modern road, it dips down the hill, and makes a semicircular sweep, so as to crown the steepest part of a gentler ascent. Thus the whole enclosure is of a half-moon shape. But while the straight wall is almost intact, the curved side has in many places fallen to pieces. The building is the most perfect I have ever seen of the kind, made of square hewn stones, evidently quarried on the rock itself. The preserved wall is about 200 yards long, six and a half feet wide, and apparently not more than ten or twelve feet high; but, at intervals of twenty-five or thirty yards, there are seven towers twice as deep as the wall, while the path along the battlement goes right through them. Each tower has a doorway on the outside of it, and close beside this there is also a doorway in the wall, somewhat larger. These doorways, made by a huge lintel, about seven and a half feet long, laid over an aperture in the building, with its edges very smoothly and carefully cut, are for the most part absolutely perfect. As I could see no sign of doorposts or bolts—a feature still noticeable in all temple gates—it is evident that wooden doors and door-posts were fitted into these doorways—a dangerous form of defence, were not the entrances strongly protected by the towers close beside them and over them. There were staircases, leading from the top of the wall outward, beside some of the [pg 228]towers. The whole fort is of such a size as to hold not merely a garrison,

but also the flocks and herds of the neighboring shepherds, in case of a sudden and dangerous invasion; and this, no doubt, was the primary intention of all the older forts in Greece and elsewhere.[93]

The day was, as usual, very hot and fine, and the hills were of that beautiful purple blue which Sir F. Leighton so well reproduces in the backgrounds of his Greek pictures; but a soft breeze brought occasional clouds across the sun, and varied the landscape with deeper hues. Above us on each side were the noble crags of Cithæron, with their gray rocks and their gnarled fir-trees. Far below, a bright mountain stream was rushing beside the pass into Attica; around us were the great walls of the old Greeks, laid together with that symmetry, that beauty, and that strength which marks all their work. The massive towers are now defending a barren rock; the enclosure which had seen so many days of war and rapine was lying open and deserted; the whole population was gone long centuries ago. There is still *liberty* there, and there is peace—but the liberty and the peace of solitude.

[pg 229]
A short drive from Eleutheræ brought us to the top of the pass,[94] and we suddenly came upon one of those views in Greece which, when we think of them, leave us in doubt whether the instruction they give us, or the delight, is the greater. The whole plain of Thebes, and, beyond the intervening ridge, the plain of Orchomenus, with its shining

lake, were spread out before us. The sites of all the famous towns were easily recognizable. Platæa only was straight beneath us, on the slopes of the mountain, and as yet hidden by them. The plan of all Bœotia unfolded itself with great distinctness —two considerable plains, separated by a low ridge, and surrounded on all sides by chains of mountains. On the north there are the rocky hills which hem in Lake Copais from the Eubœan strait, and which nature had pierced before the days of history, aided by Minyan engineers, whose καταβόθρα, as they were called, were tunnelled drains, which drew water from thousands of acres of the richest land. On the east, where we stood, was the gloomy Cithæron—the home of awful mythical crimes, and of wild Bac[pg 230]chanalian orgies, the theme of many a splendid poem and many a striking tragedy. To the south lay the pointed peaks of Helicon —a mountain (or mountain chain) full of sweetness and light, with many silver streams coursing down its sides to water the Bœotian plains, and with its dells, the home of the Muses ever since they inspired the bard of Ascra—the home, too, of Eros, who long after the reality of the faith had decayed, was honored in Thespiæ by the crowds of visitors who went up to see the famous statue of the god by Praxiteles. This Helicon separates Bœotia from the southern sea, but does not close up completely with Cithæron, leaving way for an army coming from the isthmus, where Leuctra stood to guard the entrance. Over against us, on the west, lay, piled

against one another, the dark wild mountains of Phocis, with the giant Parnassus raising its snow-clad shoulders above the rest. But, in the far distance, the snowy Corax of Ætolia stood out in rivalry, and showed us that Parnassus is but the advanced guard of the wild alpine country, which even in Greece proved too rugged a nurse for culture.

We made our descent at full gallop down the windings of the road—a most risky drive; but the coachman was daring and impatient, and we felt, in spite of the danger, that peculiar delight which accompanies the excitement of going at headlong pace. We had previously an even more perilous [pg 231]experience in coming down the steep and tortuous descent from the Laurium mines to Ergasteria in the train, where the sharp turns were apparently full of serious risk. Above our heads were wheeling great vultures—huge birds, almost black, with lean, featherless heads—which added to the wildness of the scene. After this rapid journey we came upon the site of Platæa, marked by a modern village of the name, on our left, and below us we saw the winding Asopus, and the great scene of one of the most famous of all Greek battles—the battle of Platæa. This little town is situated much higher up the mountain than I had thought, and a glance showed us its invaluable position as an outpost of Athenian power toward Bœotia. With the top of the pass within an hour's walk, the Platæans could, from their streets, see every movement over the Theban plain: they could see an

invasion from the south coming up by Leuctra; they could see troops marching northward toward Tanagra and Œnophyta. They could even see into the Theban Cadmea, which lay far below them, and then telegraph from the top of the pass to Eleutheræ, and from thence to Athens. We can, therefore, understand at once Platæa's importance to Athens, and why the Athenians built a strong fortified post on their very frontier, within easy reach of it.

All the site of the great battle is well marked and well known—the fountain Gargaphia, the so-called [pg 232]island, and the Asopus, flowing lazily in a deep-cut sedgy channel, in most places far too deep to ford. Over our heads were still circling the great black vultures; but, as we neared the plain, we flashed a large black-and-white eagle, which we had not seen in Attica. There is some cultivation between Platæa and Thebes, but strangely alternating with wilderness. We were told that the people have plenty of spare land, and, not caring to labor for its artificial improvement, till a piece of ground once, and then let it lie fallow for a season or two. The natural richness of the Bœotian soil thus supplies them with ample crops. But we wondered to think how impossible it seems even in these rich and favored plains to induce a fuller population.

The question of the depopulation of Greece is no new one—it is not due to the Slav inroads —it is not due to Turkish misrule. As soon as the political liberties of Greece vanished, so

that the national talent found no scope in local government—as soon as the riches of Asia were opened to Greek enterprise—the population diminished with wonderful rapidity. All the later Greek historians and travellers are agreed about the fact.[95] "The whole of Greece could not put in the field," says one, "as many soldiers as came of old from a single city." "Of all the famous cities of Bœotia," says another, [pg 233]"but two—Thespiæ and Tanagra—now remain." The rest are mostly described as ruins (ἐρείπια). No doubt, every young enterprising fellow went off to Asia as a soldier or a merchant; and this taste for emigrating has remained strong in the race till the present day, when most of the business of Constantinople, of Smyrna, and of Alexandria is in the hands of Greeks. But, in addition to this, the race itself seems at a certain period to have become less prolific; and this, too, is a remarkable feature lasting to our own time. In the several hospitable houses in which I was entertained through the country I sought in vain for children. The young married ladies had their mothers to keep them company, and this was a common habit; the daughter does not willingly separate from her mother. But, whether by curious coincidence or not, the absence of children in these seven or eight houses was very remarkable. I have been since assured that this was an accident, and that large families are very common in Greece. The statistics show a considerable increase of population of late years.[96]

The evening saw us entering into Thebes—the town which, beyond all others, retains the smallest vestiges of antiquity. Even the site of the Cadmea is not easily distinguishable. Two or three hillocks in and about the town are all equally insignificant, [pg 234]and all equally suitable, one should think, for a fortress. The discovery of the old foundations of the walls has, however, determined the matter, and settled the site to be that of the highest part of the present town. Its strength, which was celebrated, must have been due nearly altogether to artificial fortification, for though the old city was in a deeper valley to the north-west, yet from the other side there can never have been any ascent steep enough to be a natural rampart. The old city was, no doubt, always more renowned for eating and drinking than for art or architecture,[97] and its momentary supremacy under Epaminondas was too busy and too short a season to be employed in such pursuits. But, besides all this, and besides all the ruin of Alexander's fury, the place has been visited several times with the most destructive earthquakes, from the last of which (in 1852) it had not recovered when I first saw it. There were still through the streets houses torn open, and walls shaken down; there were gaps made by ruins, and half-restored shops.

The antiquities of Thebes consist of a few inscribed slabs and fragments which are (as usual) collected in a dark outhouse, where it is not easy to make them out. I was not at the trouble of reading [pg 235]these inscriptions,

for in this department the antiquarians of the University of Athens are really very zealous and competent, and I doubt whether any inscription now discovered fails to come into the Greek papers within a few months. From these they of course pass into the *Corpus Inscriptionum Græcarum*, a collection daily increasing, and periodically reedited. I may observe that, not only for manners and customs, but even for history, these undeniable and seldom suspicious sources are rapidly becoming our surest and even fullest authority.

In the opinion of the inhabitants, by far the most important thing about the town is the tomb of their Evangelist S. Luke, which is situated in a chapel close by. The stone is polished and worn with the feet and lips of pilgrims, and all such homes of long devotion are in themselves interesting; but the visitor may well wonder that the Evangelist should have his tomb established in a place so absolutely decayed and depopulated as was the region of Thebes, even in his day. The tombs of the early preachers and missionaries are more likely to be in the thickest of thoroughfares, amid the noise and strife of men. The Evangelist was confused with a later local saint of the same name.[98]

Thebes is remarkable for its excellent supply of water. Apart from the fountain Dirke,[99] several [pg 236]other great springs rise in the higher ground close to it, and are led by old Greek conduits of marble to the town. One of these springs was large enough to allow us to

bathe—a most refreshing change after the long and hot carriage drive, especially in the ice-cold water, as it came from its deep hiding-place. We returned at eight in the evening to dine with our excellent host—a host provided for us by telegraph from Athens—where we had ample opportunity of noticing some of the peculiarities of modern Greek life.

The general elections were at the moment pending. M. Boulgaris had just *échoue*, as the French say; and the King, after a crisis in which a rupture of the Constitution had been expected, decided to try a constitutional experiment, and called to office M. Trikoupi, an advanced Radical in those days, and strongly opposed to the Government. But M. Trikoupi was a highly educated and reasonable man, well acquainted with England and English politics, and apparently anxious to govern by strictly constitutional means. He has since proved himself, by his able and vigorous administration, one of the most remarkable statesmen in Europe, and the main cause of the progress of his country. His recent defeat (1890) is therefore to be regarded as a national misfortune. Our new friend at Thebes was then the [pg 237]Radical candidate, and was at the very time of our arrival canvassing his constituency. Every idle fellow in the town seemed to think it his duty to come up into his drawing-room, in which we were resting, and sit down to encourage him and advise him. No hint that he was engaged in

entertaining strangers had the smallest effect: noisy politics was inflicted upon us till the welcome announcement of dinner, to which, for a wonder, his constituents did not follow him. He told me that though all the country was strongly in favor of M. Trikoupi, yet he could hardly count upon a majority with certainty, for he had determined to let the elections follow their own course, and not control them with soldiers. In this most constitutional country, with its freedom, as usual, closely imitated from England, soldiers stood, at least up to the summer of 1875, round the booths, and hustled out any one who did not come to vote for the Ministerial candidate. M. Trikoupi refused to take this traditional precaution, and, as the result showed, lost his sure majority.

But when I was there, and before the actual elections had taken place, the Radical party were very confident. They were not only to come in triumphant, but their first act was to be the prosecution of the late Prime Minister, M. Boulgaris, for violating the Constitution, and his condemnation to hard labor, with confiscation of his property. I used to plead the poor man's case earnestly with these hot-headed [pg 238]politicians, by way of amusement, and was highly edified by their arguments. The ladies, as usual, were by far the fiercest, and were ready, like their goddess of old, to eat the raw flesh of their enemies. I used to ask them whether it would not be quite out of taste if Mr. Disraeli, then in power, were to prosecute Mr. Gladstone for

violating the Constitution in his Irish Church Act, and have him condemned to hard labor. The cases, they replied, were quite different. No Englishman could ever attain, or even understand, the rascality of the late Greek Minister. Feeling that there might be some force in this argument, I changed ground, and asked them were they not afraid that if he were persecuted in so violent a way he might, instead of occupying the Opposition benches, betake himself to occupy the mountain passes, and, by robbing a few English travellers, so discredit the new Government as to be worse and more dangerous in opposition than in power. No, they said, he will not do that; he is *too rich*. But, said I, if you confiscate his property, he will be poor. True, they replied; but still he will not be able to do it: he is *too old*. It seemed as if the idea that he might be too respectable never crossed their minds.[100] What was my surprise to [pg 239]hear within six months that this dreadful culprit had come into power again at the head of a considerable majority!

We were afterward informed by a sarcastic observer that many of the Greek politicians are paupers, “who will not dig, and to beg they are ashamed;” and so they sit about the *cafés* of Athens on the look-out for one of the 10,000 places which have been devised for the patronage of the Ministry. But, as there are some 30,000 expectants, it follows that the 20,000 disappointed are always at work seeking to turn out the 10,000. Hence a crisis every three months; hence a Greek

ambassador could hardly reach his destination before he was recalled; hence, too, the exodus of all thrifty and hard-working men to Smyrna, to Alexandria, or to Manchester, where their energies were not wasted in perpetual political squabbling. The greatest misconduct with which a man in office could be charged was the holding of it for any length of time; the whole public then join against him, and cry out that it is high time for him, after so long an innings, to make way for some one else. It was not till M. Trikoupi established his ascendency that this ridiculous condition of things ceased. Whether in office or in opposition, he has a policy, and retains the confidence of foreign powers. I had added, in the first edition of this book, some [pg 240]further observations on the apparent absurdity of introducing the British Constitution, or some parody of it, into every new state which is rescued from barbarism or from despotism. I am not the least disposed to retract what I then said generally, but it is common justice to the Greeks to say that later events are showing them to be among the few nations where such an experiment may succeed. When the dangerous crisis of the Turco-Russian war supervened, instead of rushing to arms, as they were advised by some fanatical English politicians, they set about to reform their Ministry; and, feeling the danger of perpetually changing the men at the helm, they insisted on the heads of the four principal parties forming a coalition, under the nominal leadership of M. Canaris.[101] This

great political move, one of the most remarkable of our day, was attempted, as far as I can make out, owing to the deliberate pressure of the country, and from a solid interest in its welfare. Even though temporary in the present case, it was an earnest that the Greeks are learning national politics, and that a liberal constitution is not wasted upon them. There are many far more developed and important nations in Europe which [pg 241]would not be capable of such a sacrifice of party interests and party ambition.

We left Thebes, very glad that we had seen it, but not very curious to see it again. Its site makes it obviously the natural capital of the rich plain around it; and we can also see at once how the larger and richer plain of Orchomenus is separated from it by a distinct saddle of rising ground, and was naturally, in old times, the seat of a separate power. But the separation between the two districts, which is not even so steep or well marked as the easy pass of Daphne between Athens and Eleusis, makes it also clear that the owners of either plain would certainly cast the eye of desire upon the possessions of their neighbors, and so at an early epoch Orchomenus was subdued. For many reasons this may have been a disaster to Greece. The Minyæ of Orchomenus, as people called the old nobles who settled there in prehistoric days, were a great and rich society, building forts and treasure-houses, and celebrated, even in Homer's day, for wealth and splendor.

But, perhaps owing to this very luxury, they

were subdued by the inartistic, vulgar Thebans, who, during centuries of power and importance, never rose to greatness save through the transcendent genius of Pindar and of Epaminondas. No real greatness ever attached to their town. When people came from a distance to see art in Bœotia, they came to [pg 242]little Thespiæ, in the southern hills, where the Eros of Praxiteles was the pride of the citizens. Tanagra, too, in the terra cottas of which I have spoken (above, p. 59), shows taste and refinement; and we still look with sympathy upon the strangely modern fashions of these graceful and elegant figures. At Thebes, so far as I know, no trace of fine arts has yet been discovered. The great substructure of the Cadmea, the solid marble water-pipes of their conduits, a few inscriptions—that is all. It corroborates what we find in the middle and new comedy of the Greeks, that Thebes was a place for eating and drinking, a place for other coarse material comforts—but no place for real culture or for art. Even their great poet, Pindar, a poet in whom most critics find all the highest qualities of genius—loftiness, daring, originality—even this great man—no doubt from the accidents of his age—worked by the job, and bargained for the payment of his noblest odes.

Thus, even in Pindar, there is something to remind us of his Theban vulgarity; and it is, therefore, all the more wonderful, and all the more freely to be confessed, that in Epaminondas we find not a single flaw or

failing, and that he stands out as far the noblest of all the great men whom Greece ever produced. It were possible to maintain that he was also the greatest, but this is a matter of opinion and of argument. Certain it is that his influence made Thebes, for the moment, not only the leader in Greek [pg 243]politics, but the leader in Greek society. Those of his friends whom we know seem not only patriots, but gentlemen—they cultivated with him music and eloquence, nor did they despise philosophy. So true is it, that in this wonderful peninsula genius seemed possible everywhere, and that from the least cultivated and most vulgar town might arise a man to make all the world about him admire and tremble.

I will make but one more remark about this plain of Bœotia. There is no part of Greece so sadly famed for all the battles with which its soil was stained. The ancients called it Mars's *Orchestra*, or exercising ground; and even now, when all the old life is gone, and when not a hovel remains to mark the site of once well-built towns, we may indeed ask, why were these towns celebrated? Simply because in old Greek history their names served to specify a scene of slaughter, where a campaign, or it may be an empire, was lost or won, Platæa, Leuctra, Haliartus, Coronea, Chæronea, Delium, Œnophyta, Tanagra—these are in history the landmarks of battles, and, with one exception, landmarks of nothing more. Thebes is mainly the nurse of the warriors who fought in these battles, and

but little else. So, then, we cannot compare Bœotia to the rich plains of Lombardy—they, too, in their clay, ay, and in our own day, Mars's Orchestra—for here literature and art have given fame to cities, while the battles [pg 244]fought around their walls have been forgotten by the world.

I confess we saw nothing of the foggy atmosphere so often brought up against the climate of Bœotia. And yet it was then, of course, more foggy than it had been of old, for then the lake Copais was drained, whereas in 1875 the old tunnels, cut, or rather enlarged, by the Minyæ, were choked, and thousands of acres of the richest land covered with marsh and lake. It was M. Trikoupi who promoted the plan of a French Company to drain the lake more completely than even the old *Catabothra* had done, and, at the cost of less than one million sterling, to bring into permanent cultivation some thousands of acres—in fact, the largest and richest plain in all Greece. I asked him where he meant to find a population to till it, seeing that the present land was about ten times more than sufficient for the inhabitants. He told me that some Greek colonists, who had settled in the north, under the Turks or Servians (I forget which), were desirous of returning to enjoy the sweets of Hellenic liberty. It was proposed to give them the reclaimed tract. If these good people will reason from analogy, they will be slow to trust their fortunes to their old fellow-countrymen. So long as they are indigent they will be unmolested—*cantabit vacuus coram*

latrone viator—but as soon as they prosper, or are supposed to prosper, we might have the affair of Laurium repeated. [pg 245]The natives might be up in arms against the strangers who had come to plunder the land of the wealth intended by nature for others. The Greek Parliament might be persuaded to make retrospective laws and restrictions, and probably all the more active and impatient spirits would leave a country where prosperity implied persecution, and where people only awake to the value of their possessions after they have sold them to others.

What is now happening illustrates the views which I long since proposed. When the drainage works, completed in 1887, had uncovered rich tracts, the Government laid claim to every acre of it, and endeavored to fence off the old riparian proprietors. They on their side disputed the new boundaries, and claimed what the Government professed to have uncovered. Hence no sale to new owners is as yet possible. The dispute is still (1891) unsettled.

I think jealousy no accidental feature, but one specially engrained in the texture of Greek nature from the earliest times. Nothing can be a more striking or cogent proof of this than the way in which Herodotus sets down jealousy as one of the attributes of the Deity. For the Deities of all nations being conceptions formed after the analogy of human nature around them, there can be no doubt that the honest historian put it down as

a necessary factor in the course and constitution of [pg 246]nature. We can only understand Greek history by keeping these things perpetually in mind, and even now it explains the apparent anomaly, how a nation so essentially democratic—who recognize no nobility and no distinctions of rank—can be satisfied with a king of foreign race. They told me themselves, over and over again, that the simple reason was this: no Greek could tolerate another set over him, so that even such an office as President of a Greek Republic would be intolerable, if held by one of themselves. And this same feeling in old times is the real reason of the deadly hate manifested against the most moderate and humane despots. However able, however kindly, however great such a despot might be; however the state might prosper under him, one thing in him was intolerable—he had no natural right to be superior to his fellows, and yet he was superior. I will not deny the existence of political enthusiasm, and of real patriotism among Greek tyrannicides, but I am quite sure that the universal sympathy of the nation with them was partly based upon this deep-seated feeling.

It is said that, in another curious respect, the old and modern Greeks are very similar—I mean the form which bribery takes in their political struggles. It has been already observed and discussed by Mr. Freeman, how, among the old Greeks, it was the politician who was bribed, and not the constituents; whereas among us in England the leading

politicians [pg 247]are above suspicion, while the constituents are often corruptible enough. Our Theban friend told me that in modern Greece the ancient form of bribery was still in fashion; and that, except in Hydra and one other place—probably, if I remember rightly, Athens—the bribing of constituents was unknown; while the taking of bribes by Ministers was alleged not to be very uncommon. A few years ago, men of sufficient importance to be Cabinet Ministers were openly brought into court, and indicted for the sale of three archbishoprics, those of Patras and Corinth among the number. There is no doubt that this public charge points to a sort of bribery likely to take place in any real democracy, when the men at the head of affairs are not men of great wealth and noble birth, but often ordinary, or even needy persons, selected by ballot, or popular vote, to fill for a very short time a very influential office.

[pg 248]

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLAIN OF ORCHOMENUS, LIVÁDIA, CHÆRONEA.

The road from Thebes to Lebadea (Livádia) leads along the foot of Helicon all the way—Helicon, which, like all celebrated Greek mountains, is not a summit, but a system of summits, or even a chain. Looking in the morning from the plain, the contrast of the dark Cithæron and the gentle sunny Helicon strikes the traveller again and again. After the ridge, or saddle, is passed which separates the plain of Thebes from that of Orchomenus, the richness of the soil increases, but the land becomes very swampy and low, for at every half-mile comes a clear silver river, tumbling from the slopes of Helicon on our left, crossing the road, and flowing to swell the waters of Lake Copais—a vast sheet with undefined edges, half-marsh, half-lake—

which for centuries had no outlet to the sea, and which was only kept from covering all the plain by evaporation in the heats of summer. Great fields of sedge and rushes, giant reeds, and marsh plants unknown in colder countries, mark each river course as it nears the lake; and, as might be expected in this lonely fen country, all manner of insect life and all manner of [pg 249]amphibia haunt the sites of ancient culture. Innumerable dragon-flies, of the most brilliant colors, were flitting about the reeds, and lighting on the rich blades of grass which lay on the water's surface; and now and then a daring frog would charge boldly at so great a prize, but retire again in fear when the fierce insect dashed against him in its impetuous start. Large land tortoises, with their high-arched shells, yellow and brown, and patterned like the section of a great honeycomb, went lazily along the moist banks, and close by the water, which they could not bear to touch. Their aquatic cousins, on the other hand, were not solitary in habit, but lay in lines along the sun-baked mud, and at the first approach of danger dropped into the water one after the other with successive flops, looking for all the world a long row of smooth black pebbles which had suddenly come to life, like old Deucalion's clods, that they might people this solitude. The sleepy and unmeaning faces of these tortoises were a great contrast to those of the water-snakes, which were very like them in form, but wonderfully keen and lively in expression. They, too, would glide into the

water when so strange a thing as man came near, but would presently raise their heads above the surface, and eye with wonder and suspicion, and in perfect stillness, the approach of their natural enemy. The Copaic eels, so celebrated in the Attic comedy as the greatest of all [pg 250]dainties, are also still to be caught; but the bright sun and cloudless sky made vain all my attempts to lure this famous darling of Greek epicures. We noticed that while the shrill cicada, which frequents dry places, was not common here, great emerald-green grasshoppers were flying about spasmodically, with a sound and weight like that of a small bird.

As we passed along, we were shown the sites of Haliartus and Coronea—Haliartus, where the cruel Lysander met his death in a skirmish, and so gave a place in history to an obscure village—Coronea, where the Spartans first learned to taste the temper of the Theban infantry, and where King Agesilaus well-nigh preceded his great rival to the funeral pyre. As I said before, all these towns are only known by battles. Thespiæ has an independent interest, and so has Ascra. The latter was the residence of the earliest known Greek poet of whose personality we can be sure; Thespiæ, with its highly aristocratic society, which would not let a shopkeeper walk their place of assembly for ten years after he had retired from business, was the site of fair temples and statues, and held its place and fame long after all the rest of the surrounding cities had sunk into decay. There

are indistinct remains of surrounding walls about both Haliartus and Coronea, but surely nothing that would repay the labor of excavations. All these Bœotian towns were, of course, fortified, and all of them lay close to the [pg 251]hills; for the swampy plain was unhealthy, and in older days the rising lake was said to have swallowed up towns which had been built close upon its margin. But the supremacy of Orchomenus in older, and Thebes in later days, never allowed these subject towns to attain any importance or any political significance.

After some hours' riding, we suddenly came upon a deep vista in the mountains on our left —such another vista as there is behind Coronea, but narrower, and inclosed on both sides with great and steep mountains. And here we found the cause of the cultivation of the upper plain—here was the town of Lebadea (Livádia), famed of old for the august oracle of Trophonius—in later days the Turkish capital of the province surrounding. To this the roads of all the neighborhood converge, and from this a small force can easily command the deep gorges and high mountain passes which lead through Delphi to the port of Kirrha. Even now there is more life in Livádia than in most Greek towns. All the wool of the country is brought in and sold there, and, with the aid of their great water power, they have a considerable factory, where the wool is spun and woven into stuff. A large and beautifully clear river comes down the gorge above the town—or rather

the gorge in which the town lies—and tumbles in great falls between the streets and under the houses, which have wooden [pg 252]balconies, like Swiss châlets, built over the stream. The whole aspect of the town was not unlike a Swiss town; indeed, all the features of the upland country are ever reminding the traveller of his Swiss experience.

But the people are widely different. It was a great saint's day, and all the streets were crowded with people from many miles round. As we noted in all Greek towns, except Arachova, the women were not to be seen in any numbers. They do not walk about the streets except for some special ceremony or amusement. But no women's costume is required to lend brightness to the coloring of the scene; for here every man had his *fustanella* or kilt of dazzling white, his gray or puce embroidered waistcoat, his great white sleeves, and his scarlet skull-cap, with its blue tassel. Nothing can be imagined brighter than a dense crowd in this dress. They were all much excited at the arrival of strangers, and crowded around us without the least idea or care about being thought obtrusive. The simple Greek peasant thinks it his right to make aloud what observations he chooses upon any stranger, and has not the smallest idea of the politeness of reticence on such occasions.

We were received most hospitably by the medical officer of the district, who had an amiable young wife, speaking Greek only, and

a lively old mother-in-law, living, as usual, permanently in the house, [pg 253]to prevent the young lady from being lonely. Like all the richer Greeks in country parts, they ate nothing till twelve, when they had a sort of early dinner called breakfast, and then dined again at half-past eight in the evening. This arrangement gave us more than enough time to look about the town when our day's ride was over; so we went, first of all, to see the site of Trophonius's oracle.

As the gorge becomes narrower, there is, on the right side, a small cave, from which a sacred stream flows to join the larger river. Here numerous square panels cut into the rock to hold votive tablets, now gone, indicate a sacred place, to which pilgrims came to offer prayers for aid, and thanksgiving for success. The actual seat of the oracle is not certain, and is supposed to be some cave or aperture now covered by the Turkish fort on the rock immediately above; but the whole glen, with its beetling sides, its rushing river, and its cavernous vaulting, seems the very home and preserve of superstition. We followed the windings of the defile, jumping from rock to rock up the river bed, and were soon able to bathe beyond the observation of all the crowding boys, who, like the boys of any other town, could not satisfy their curiosity at strangeness of face and costume. As we went on for some miles, the country began to open, and to show us a bleak and solitary mountain region, where the chains of Helicon and Parnassus join, and shut

out the sea of [pg 254]Corinth from Bœotia by a great bar some thirty miles wide. Not a sound could be heard in this wild loneliness, save the metallic pipe of a water ouzel by the river, and the scream of hawks about their nests, far up on the face of the cliffs.

As the evening was closing in we began to retrace our steps, when we saw in two or three places scarlet caps over the rocks, and swarthy faces peering down upon us with signs and shouts. Though nothing could have been more suspicious in such a country, I cannot say that we felt the least uneasiness, and we continued our way without regarding them. They kept watching us from the heights, and when at last we descended nearer to the town, they came and made signs, and spoke very new Greek, to the effect that they had been out scouring the country for us, and that they had been very uneasy about our safety. This was indeed the case; our excellent Greek companion, who felt responsible to the Greek Government for our safety, and who had stayed behind in Livádia to make arrangements, had become so uneasy that he had sent out the police to scour the country. So we were brought in with triumph by a large escort of idlers and officials, and presently sat down to dinner at the fashionable hour, though in anything but fashionable dress. The entertainment would have been as excellent as even the intentions of our host, had not our attention been foolishly distracted by bugs walking up the table-cloth. It is, [pg 255]indeed, but a small

and ignoble insect, yet it produces a wonderful effect upon the mind; for it inspires the most ordinary man with the gift of prophecy: it carries him away even from the pleasures of a fair repast into the hours of night and mystery, when all his wisdom and all his might will not save him from the persistent skirmishing of his irreconcilable foe.

It may be here worth giving a word of encouragement to the sensitive student whom these hints are apt to deter from venturing into the wilds of Greece. In spite of frequent starvation, both for want of food and for want of eatable food; in spite of frequent sleeplessness and even severe exercise at night, owing to the excess of insect population;[102] such is the lightness and clearness of the air, such the exhilarating effect of great natural beauty, and of solitary wandering, free and unshackled, across the wild tracts of valley, wood, and mountain, that fatigue is an almost impossible feeling. Eight or ten hours' riding every day, which in other country and other air would have been almost unendurable, was here but the natural exercise which any ordinary man may conveniently take. It cannot be denied that the dis[pg 256]comforts of Greek travelling are very great, but with good temper and patience they can all be borne; and when they are over they form a pleasant feature in the recollections of a glorious time. Besides, these discomforts are only the really classical mode of travelling. Dionysus, in Aristophanes's

Frogs, asks, especially about the inns, the very questions which we often put to our guide; and if his slave carried for him not only ordinary baggage, but also his bed and bedding, so nowadays there are many khans (inns) where the traveller cannot lie down—I was going to say to rest—except on his own rugs.

The next day was occupied in a tour across the plain to Orchomenus, then to Chæronea, and back to Livádia in the evening, so as to start from thence for the passes to Delphi. Our ride was, as it were, round an isosceles triangle, beginning with the right base angle, going to Orchomenus north-east as the vertex, then to Chæronea at the left base angle, and home again over the high spurs of mountain which protrude into the plain between the two base angles of our triangle. For about a mile, as we rode out of Livádia, a wretched road of little rough paving-stones tormented us—the remains of Turkish engineering, when Livádia was their capital. Patches of this work are still to be found in curious isolation over the mountains, to the great distress of both mules and riders; for the stones are very small and [pg 257]pointed, or, where they have been worn smooth, exceedingly slippery. But we soon got away into deep rich meadows upon the low level of the country adjoining the lake, where we found again the same infinitely various insect life which I have already described. A bright merry Greek boy, in full dress (for it was again a holiday), followed in attendance on each mule or pony,

and nothing could be more picturesque than the cavalcade, going in Indian file through the long grass, among the gay wild flowers, especially when some creek or rivulet made our course to wind about, and so brought the long line of figures into more varied grouping. As for the weather, it was so uniformly splendid that we almost forgot to notice it. Indeed, strangers justly remark what large conversation it affords us in Ireland, for there it is a matter of constant uncertainty, and requires forethought and conjecture. During my first journey in Greece, in the months of April, May, and June, there was nothing to be said, except that we saw one heavy shower at Athens, and two hours' rain in Arcadia, and that the temperature was not excessively hot. I have had similar experiences in March and April during three other sojourns in the country.

In two or three hours we arrived at the site of old Orchomenus, of late called Scripou, but now reverting, like all Greek towns, to its original name. There is a mere hamlet, some dozen houses, at the [pg 258]place, which is close to the stone bridge built over the Kephissus—the Bœotian Kephissus—at this place. This river appears to be the main feeder of the Copaic lake, coming down, as we saw it, muddy and cold with snow-water from the heights of Parnassus. It runs very rapidly, like the Iser at Munich, and is at Orchomenus about double the size of that river. Of the so-called treasure-house of the Minyæ, nothing remains but the stone

doorposts and the huge block lying across them; and even these are almost imbedded in earth. It was the most disappointing ruin I had seen in Greece, for it is always quoted with the treasure-house of Atreus at Mycenæ as one of the great specimens of prehistoric building. It is not so interesting in any sense as the corresponding raths in Ireland. Indeed, but for Pausanias's description, it would, I think, have excited but little attention.

The subsequent excavation of it by Dr. Schliemann yielded but poor results. The building had fallen in but a few years ago. A handsome ceiling pattern, to which a curious parallel was afterward found at Tiryns, and some pottery, was all that rewarded the explorer.

On the hill above are the well-preserved remains of the small Acropolis, of which the stones are so carefully cut that it looks at first sight modern, then too good for modern work, but in no case polygonal, as are the walls of the hill city which it protected. [pg 259]There is a remarkable tower built on the highest point of the hill, with a very perfect staircase up to it. The whole of the work is very like the work of Eleutheræ, and seems to be of the best period of Greek wall-building. Nothing surprises the traveller in Greece more than the number of these splendid hill-forts, or town-fortresses, which are never noticed by the historians as anything remarkable—in fact, the art and the habit of fortifying must have been so universal that it excited no comment. This strikes us all the more when so

reticent a writer as Thucydides, who seldom gives us anything but war or politics, goes out of his way to describe the wall-building of the Peiræus. He evidently contrasts it with the hurried and irregular construction of the city walls, into which even tombstones were built; but if we did not study the remains still common in Greece, we might imagine that the use of square hewn stones, the absence of mortar and rubble, and the clamping with lead and iron were exceptional, whereas that sort of building is the most usual sort in Greece. The walls of the Peiræus cannot even have been the earliest specimen, for the great portal at Mycenæ, though somewhat rougher and more huge in execution, is on the same principle. The only peculiarity of these walls may have been their height and width, and upon that point it is not easy to get any monumental evidence now. The walls of the Peiræus have disap[pg 260]peared completely, though the foundations are still traceable; others have stood, but perhaps on account of their lesser height.

In a large and hospitable monastery we found the well which Pausanias describes as close beside the shrine of the Graces, and here we partook of breakfast, attended by our muleteers, who always accompany their employer into the reception-room of his host, and look on at meat, ready to attend, and always joining if possible in the conversation at table. Some excellent specimens of old Greek pottery were shown us in the monastery, apparently, though not ostensibly,

for sale, there being a law prohibiting the sale of antiquities to foreigners, or for exportation. In their chapel the monks pointed out to us some fragments of marble pillars, and one or two inscriptions—in which I was since informed that I might have found a real live digamma, if I had carefully examined them. The digamma is now common enough at Olympia and elsewhere. I saw it best, along with the *koph*, which is, I suppose, much rarer, in the splendid bronze plates containing Locrian inscriptions, which are in the possession of Mr. Taylor's heirs at Corfu. These plates have been ably commented on, with facsimile drawings of the inscriptions, by a Greek writer, G. N. Ecnomides (Corfu, 1850, and Athens, 1869).

It was on our way up the valley to Chæronea, along the rapid stream of the Kephissus, that we [pg 261]came, in a little deserted church, upon one of the most remarkable extant specimens of a peculiar epoch in Greek art. As usual, it was set up in the dark, and we were repeatedly obliged to entreat the natives to clear the door, through which alone we could obtain any light to see the work. It is a funeral *stele*, not unlike the celebrated *stele* and its relief at Athens, which is inscribed as the *stele* of Aristion, and dates from the time of the Persian wars. The work before us was inscribed as the work of Anxenor the Naxian —an artist otherwise unknown to us; but the style and finish are very remarkable, and more perfect than the *stele* of Aristion. It is a relief carved on an upright slab of gray

Bœotian marble—I should say about four feet in height—and representing a bearded man wrapped in a cloak, resting on a long stick propped under his arm,[103] with his legs awkwardly crossed, and offering a large grasshopper to a dog sitting before him. The hair and beard are conventionally curled, the whole effect being very like an Assyrian relief; but this is the case with all the older Greek sculpture, which may have started in Ionia by an impulse from the far east. The occurrence of the dog, a feature which strikes us frequently in the later Attic tombs, supports what I had long since inferred from stray hints in Greek literature, that dogs among the old Greeks, [pg 262]as well as the modern, were held in the highest esteem as the friends and companions of man. This curious monument of early Greek art was lying hidden in an obscure and out-of-the-way corner of Greece; isolated, too, and with little of antiquarian interest in its immediate neighborhood.[104] On my second visit (1884), I found a cast of it in the Ministry of Public Instruction at Athens. On my third I found the original removed to a prominent place in the National Museum at Athens, where the traveller may now study it at his ease.

The great value of these reliefs consists (apart from their artistic value) in their undoubted genuineness. For we know that in later days, both in Greece and Italy, a sort of pre-Raphaelite taste sprang up among amateurs, who admired and preferred the stiff awkward groping after nature to the symmetry and

grace of perfect art. Pausanias, for example, speaks with enthusiasm of these antique statues and carvings, and generally mentions them first, as of most importance. Thus, after describing various archaic works on the Acropolis of Athens, he adds, “But whoever places works made with artistic skill before those which come under the designation of archaic, may, if he likes, admire the [pg 263]following.”[105] As a natural result, a fashion came in of imitating them, and we have, especially in Italy, many statues in this style which seem certainly to be modern imitations, and not even Greek copies of old Greek originals. But these imitations are so well done, and so equalized by lapse of centuries with the real antiques, that though there are scholars who profess to distinguish infallibly the *archaistic*, as they call it, from the archaic, it is sometimes a very difficult task, and about many of them there is doubt and debate.

But here at Orchomenus—a country which was so decayed as to lose almost all its population two centuries before Christ, where no amateurs of art would stay, and where Plutarch was, as it were, the last remains in his town of literature and respectability—here there is no danger whatever of finding this spurious work; and thus here, as indeed all through Greece, archaic work is thoroughly trustworthy. But the unfortunate law of the land not often violated, as in this case—which insists upon all these relics, however isolated, being kept in their place of finding—is the

mightiest obstacle to the study of this interesting phase of culture, and we must await the completion of the Hellenic Society's gallery of photographs, from which we can make reliable observations. The Greeks will tell you that the pres[pg 264]ervation of antiquities in their original place, first of all, gives the inhabitants an interest in them, which might be true but that there are very often no inhabitants: and next, that it encourages travelling in the country. This also is true; but surely the making of decent roads, and the establishing of decent inns, and easy communications, would do infinitely more, and are indeed necessary, before the second stimulus can have its effect.

Not far from this little church and its famous relief, we came in sight of the Acropolis (called Petrachus) of Chæronea, and soon arrived at the town, so celebrated through all antiquity, in spite of its moderate size. The fort on the rock is, indeed, very large—perhaps the largest we saw in Greece, with the exception of that at Corinth; and, as usual in these buildings, follows the steepest escarpments, raising the natural precipice by a coping of beautifully hewn and fitted square stones. The artificial wall is now not more than four or five feet high; but even so, there are only two or three places where it is at all easy to enter the inclosure, which is fully a mile of straggling outline on the rock. The view from this fort is very interesting. Commanding all the plain of the lake Copais, it also gives a view of the sides of Parnassus,

and of the passes into Phocis, which cannot be seen till the traveller reaches this point. Above all, it looks out upon the gap of Elatea, about ten miles north-west, through which [pg 265]the eye catches glimpses of secluded valleys in northern Phocis.

This gap is, indeed, the true key of this side of Bœotia, and is no mere mountain pass, but a narrow plain, perhaps a mile wide, which must have afforded an easy transit for an army. But the mountains on both sides are tolerably steep, and so it was necessary to have a fortified town, as Elatea was, to keep the command of the place. As we gazed through the narrow plain, the famous passage of Demosthenes came home to us, which begins: “It was evening, and the news came in that Philip had seized, and was fortifying Elatea.” The nearest point of observation or of control was the rock of Chæronea, and we may say with certainty that it was from here the first breathless messenger set out with the terrible news for Thebes and Athens. This, too, was evidently the pass through which Agesilaus came on his return from Asia, and on his way to Coronea, where his great battle was fought, close by the older trophy of the Theban victory over Tolmides.[106]

Having surveyed the view, and fatigued ourselves greatly by our climb in the summer heat, we descended to the old theatre, cut into the rock where it ascends from the village—the smallest and steepest Greek theatre I had ever seen. Open-air buildings always look small for their size, but most of

those erected by the Greeks and Romans were so [pg 266]large that nothing could dwarf them. Even the theatre of such a town as Taormina in Sicily—which can never have been populous—is, in addition to its enchanting site, a very majestic structure; I will not speak of the immense theatres of Megalopolis and of Syracuse. But this little place at Chæronea, so steep that the spectators sat immediately over one another, looked almost amusing when cut in the solid rock, after the manner of its enormous brethren. The guide-book says it is one of the most ancient theatres in Greece—why, I know not. It seems to me rather to have been made when the population was diminishing; and any rudeness which it shows arises more from economy, than want of experience.

But, small as it is, there are few more interesting places than the only spot in Chæronea where we can say with certainty that here Plutarch sat—a man who, living in an age of decadence, and in a country village of no importance, has, nevertheless, as much as any of his countrymen, made his genius felt over all the world. Apart from the great stores of history brought together in his *Lives*, which, indeed, are frequently our only source for the inner life and spirit of the greatest Greeks of the greatest epochs—the moral effect of these splendid biographies, both on poets and politicians through Europe, can hardly be overrated. From Shakespeare and Alfieri to the wild savages of the French Revolution, [pg 267]all kinds of patriots and

eager spirits have been fascinated and excited by these wonderful portraits. Alfieri even speaks of them as the great discovery of his life, which he read with tears and with rage. There is no writer of the Silver Age who gives us anything like so much valuable information about early authors, and their general character. More especially the inner history of Athens in her best days, the personal features of Pericles, Cimon, Alcibiades, Nicias, as well as of Themistocles and of Aristides, would be completely, or almost completely, lost, if this often despised but invaluable man had not written for our learning. And he is still more essentially a good man—a man better and purer than most Greeks—another Herodotus in fairness and in honesty. A poor man reputed by his neighbors "a terrible historian," remarked to a friend of mine, who used to lend him Scott's novels, "that Scott was a great historian," and being asked his reason, replied, "He makes you to love your kind." There is a deep significance in this vague utterance, in which it may be eminently applied to Plutarch. "Here in Chæronea," says Pausanias, "they prepare unguents from the flowers of the lily and the rose, the narcissus and the iris. These are balm for the pains of men. Nay, that which is made of roses, if old wooden images are anointed with it, saves them, too, from decay." He little knew how eternally true his words would be, for [pg 268]though the rose and the iris grow wild and neglected and yield not now their perfume to soothe the ills of men, yet from Chæronea comes the eternal

balm of Plutarch's wisdom, to sustain the oppressed, to strengthen the patriot, to purify with nobler pity and terror the dross of human meanness. Nay, even the crumbling images of his gods arrest their decay by the spirit of his morals, and revive their beauty in the sweetness of his simple faith.

There is a rich supply of water, bursting from a beautiful old Greek fountain, near the theatre—indeed, the water supply all over this country is excellent. There is also an old marble throne in the church, about which they have many legends, but no history. The costume of the girls, whom we saw working in small irrigated plots near the houses, was beautiful beyond that in other Greek towns. They wore splendid necklaces of gold and silver coins, which lay like corselets of chain mail on the neck and breast; and the dull but rich embroidery of wool on their aprons and bodices was quite beyond what we could describe, but not beyond our highest appreciation.

As the day was waning, we were obliged to leave this most interesting place, and set off again on our ride home to Lebadea. We had not gone a mile from the town when we came upon the most pathetic and striking of all the remains in that country—the famous lion of Chæronea, which the Thebans set up [pg 269]to their countrymen who had fallen in the great battle against Philip of Macedon, in the year 338 B. C. We had been looking out for this monument, and on our way to Chæronea, seeing a lofty mound in the plain, rode up to

it eagerly, hoping to find the lion. But we were disappointed, and were told that the history of this larger mound was completely unknown. It evidently commemorates some battle, and is a mound over the dead, but whether those slain by Sylla, or those with Tolmides, or those of some far older conflict, no man can say. It seems, however, perfectly undisturbed, and grown about with deep weeds and brushwood, so that a hardy excavator might find it worth opening, and, perhaps, coins might tell us of its age.

The mound where we found the lion was much humbler and smaller; in fact, hardly a mound at all, but a rising knoll, with its centre hollowed out, and in the hollow the broken pieces of the famous lion. It had sunk, we are told, into its mound of earth, originally intended to raise it above the road beside, and lay there in perfect safety till the present century, when four English travellers claim to have discovered it (June 3, 1818). They tried to get it removed, and, failing in their efforts, covered up the pieces carefully.[107] Since that time they seem to have [pg 270]lain undisturbed, and are still in such a state that a few days' labor, and a few pounds of expense, would restore the work. It is of bluish-gray stone—they call it Bœotian marble or limestone—and is a work of the highest and purest merit. The lion is of that Asiatic type which has little or no mane, and seemed to us couchant or sitting in attitude, with the head not lowered to the forepaws, but thrown up.[108] The expression of the face is

ideally perfect—rage, grief, and shame are expressed in it, together with that [pg 271]noble calmness and moderation which characterize all good Greek art. The object of the monument is quite plain, without reading the affecting, though simple, notice of Pausanias: "On the approach to the city," says he, "is the tomb of the Bœotians who fell in the battle with Philip. It has no inscription; but the image of a lion is placed upon it as an emblem of the spirit of these men. The inscription has been omitted—I suppose, because the gods had willed that their fortune should not be equal to their valor." So, then, we have here, in what may fairly be called a *dated* record, one of the finest specimens of the sepulchral monuments of the best age of Greece. It is very much to be regretted that this splendid figure is not put together and photographed. Nothing would be more instructive than a comparison with the finest of modern monuments—Thorwaldsen's Lion at Lucerne—the work, too, of the only modern sculptor who can for one moment be ranked beside the ancient Greeks. But the lion of Chæronea now owes its existence to the accident that no neighboring peasant has in old times lacked stones for a wall, or for a ditch; and when Greece awoke to a sense of the preciousness of these things, it might have been gone, or dashed into useless fragments.

As we saw it, on a splendid afternoon in June, it lay in perfect repose and oblivion, the fragments large enough to tell the contour and the style; in [pg 272]the mouth of the

upturned head wild bees were busy at their work, and the honeycomb was there between its teeth. The Hebrew story came fresh upon us, and we longed for the strength which tore the lion of old, to gather the limbs and heal the rents of his marble fellow. The lion of Samson was a riddle to the Philistines which they could not solve; and so I suppose this lion of Chæronea was a riddle, too—a deeper riddle to better men—why the patriot should fall before the despot, and the culture of Greece before the Cæsarism of Macedonia. Even within Greece there is no want of remarkable parallels. This, the last effulgence of the setting sun of Greek liberty, was commemorated by a lion and a mound, as the opening struggle at Marathon was also marked by a lion and a mound. At Marathon the mound is there and the lion gone—at Chæronea, the lion is there and the mound gone.[109] But doubtless the earlier lion was far inferior in expression and in beauty, and was a small object on so large a tomb. Later men made the sepulchre itself of less importance, and the poetic element more prominent; and perhaps this very fact tells the secret of their [pg 273]failure, and why the refined sculptor of the lion was no equal in politics and war to the rude carver of the relief of the Marathonian warrior.

These and such like thoughts throng the mind of him who sits beside the solitary tomb; and it may be said in favor of its remoteness and difficulty of access, that in solitude there is at least peace and leisure, and the scattered

objects of interest are scanned with affection and with care.

[pg 274]

CHAPTER X.

ARACHOVA—DELPHI—THE BAY OF KIRRHA.

The pilgrim who went of old from Athens to the shrine of Delphi, to consult the august oracle on some great difficulty in his own life, or some great danger to his country, saw before him the giant Parnassus as his goal, as soon as he reached the passes of Cithæron. For two or three days he went across Bœotia with this great landmark before him, but it was not till he reached Lebadea that he found himself leaving level roads, and entering defiles, where great cliffs and narrow glens gave to his mind a tone of superstition and of

awe which ever dwelt around that wild and dangerous country. Starting from Lebadea, or, by another road, from Chæronea, he must go about half-way round Parnassus, from its east to its south-west aspect; and this can only be done by threading his way along torrents and precipices, mounting steep ascents, and descending into wild glens. This journey among the Alps of Phocis is perhaps the most beautiful in all Greece—certainly, with the exception of the journey from Olympia over Mount Erymanthus, [pg 275]the most beautiful of all the routes known to me through the highlands.



A Greek Shepherd, Olympia

The old priests of Delphi, who were the first systematic road-builders among the Greeks, had made a careful way from Thebes into Phocis, for the use of the pilgrims thronging to their shrine. It appears that, by way of

saving the expense of paving it all, they laid down or macadamized in some way a double wheel-track or fixed track, upon which chariots could run with safety; but we hear from the oldest times of the unpleasantness of two vehicles meeting on this road, and of the disputes that took place as to which of them should turn aside into the deep mud.[110] We may infer from this that the lot of pedestrians cannot have been very pleasant. Now, all these difficulties have vanished with the road itself. There are nothing but faintly-marked bridle-paths, often indicated only by the solitary telegraph wires, which reach over the mountains, apparently for no purpose whatever; and all travellers must ride or walk in single file, if they will not force their way through covert and forest.

These wild mountains do not strike the mind with the painful feeling of desolation which is produced by the abandoned plains. At no time can they have supported a large population, and we may suppose [pg 276]that they never contained more than scattered hamlets of shepherds, living, as they now do, in deep brown hairy tents of hides at night, and wandering along the glens by day, in charge of great herds of quaint-looking goats with long beards and spiral horns. The dull tinkling of their bells, and the eagle's yelp, are the only sounds which give variety to the rushing of the wind through the dark pines, and the falling of the torrent from the rocks. It is a country in which the consciousness grows not of solitude, but of smallness—a land of huge

form and feature, meet dwelling for mysterious god and gloomy giant, but far too huge for mortal man.

Our way lay, not directly for Delphi, but for the curious town of Arachova, which is perched on the summit of precipices some 4000 feet or more above the level of the sea. We rode from eight in the morning till the evening twilight to reach this place, and all the day through scenes which gave us each moment some new delight and some new astonishment, but which could only be described by a painter, not by any pages of writing, however poetical or picturesque. It is the misfortune of such descriptions on paper, that the writer alone has the remembered image clear before him; no reader can grasp the detail and frame for himself a faithful picture.

We felt that we were approaching Arachova when we saw the steep slopes above and below our path planted with vineyards, and here and there [pg 277]a woman in her gay dress working on the steep incline, where a stumble would have sent her rolling many hundreds of feet into some torrent bed. At one particular spot, where the way turned round a projecting shoulder, we were struck by seeing at the same time, to the north, the blue sea under Eubœa, and, at the south, the Gulf of Corinth where it nears Delphi—both mere patches among the mountains, like the little tarns among the Irish moors, but both great historic waters—old high roads of commerce and of culture. From any of the summits such

a view from sea to sea would not be the least remarkable; but it was interesting and unusual to see it from a mule's back on one of the high roads of the country. A moment later, the houses of Arachova itself attracted all our attention, lying as they did over against us, and quite near, but with a great gulf between us and them, which we were fortunately able to ride round. The town has a curious, scattered appearance, with interrupted streets and uncertain plan, owing not only to the extraordinary nature of the site, but to the fact that huge boulders, I might say rocks, have been shaken loose by earthquakes from above, and have come tumbling into the middle of the town. They crush a house or two, and stand there in the street. Presently some one comes and builds a house up against the side of this rock; others venture in their turn, and so the town recovers itself, till another earth[pg 278]quake makes another rent. Since 1870 these earthquakes have been very frequent. At first they were very severe, and ruined almost all the town; but now they are very slight, and so frequent that we were assured that they happened at some hour *every day*. I believe this is practically true, though we, who arrived in the evening and left early next day, were not so fortunate as to feel the shock ourselves. But the whole region of Parnassus shows great scars and wounds from this awful natural scourge.

Arachova is remarkable as being one of the very few towns of Greece of any note which is

not built upon a celebrated site. Everywhere the modern Greek town is a mere survival of the old. I remember but three exceptions—Arachova, Hydra, and Tripolitza,[111] and of these the latter two arose from special and known circumstances. The prosperity of Arachova is not so easily explicable. In spite of its wonderful and curious site, the trade of the place is, for a Greek town, very considerable. The wines which they make are of the highest repute, though to us the free use of resin makes them all equally worthless. Besides, they work beautifully patterned rugs of divers-colored wool—rugs which are sold at high prices all over the Greek waters. They are used in boats, on saddles, on beds—in fact for every possible rough use. The patterns are stitched on [pg 279]with wool, and the widths sewn together in the same way, with effective rudeness.

We had an excellent opportunity of seeing all this sort of work, as we found the town in some excitement at an approaching marriage; and we went to see the bride, whom we found in a spacious room, with low wooden rafters, in the company of a large party of her companions, and surrounded on all sides by her dowry, which consisted, in eastern fashion, almost altogether of “changes of raiment.” All round the room these rich woollen rugs lay in perfect piles, and from the low ceiling hung in great numbers her future husband’s white petticoats; for in that country, as everywhere in Greece, the men wear the petticoats. The company were all

dressed in full costume—white sleeves, embroidered woollen aprons, gold and silver coins about the neck, and a bright red loose belt worn low round the figure. To complete the picture, each girl had in her left hand a distaff, swathed about with rich, soft, white wool, from which her right hand and spindle were deftly spinning thread, as she walked about the room admiring the *trousseau*, and joking with us and with her companions. The beauty of the Arachovite women is as remarkable as the strength and longevity of the men, nor do I know any mountaineers equal to them, except those of some of the valleys in the Tyrol. But there, as is well known, beauty is chiefly confined to the men; at Arachova it seemed [pg 280]fairly distributed. We did not see any one girl of singular beauty. The average was remarkably high; and, as might be expected, they were not only very fair, but of that peculiarly clear complexion, and vigorous frame, which seem almost always to be found when a good climate and clear air are combined with a very high level above the sea.

We saw, moreover, what they called a Pyrrhic dance, which consisted of a string of people, hand-in-hand, standing in the form of a spiral, and moving rhythmically, while the outside member of the train performed curious and violent gymnastics. The music consisted in the squealing of a horrible clarionette, accompanied by the beating of a large drum. The clarionette-player had a leathern bandage about his mouth, like that which we see in the

ancient reliefs and pictures of double-flute-players. According as each principal dancer was fatigued, he passed off from the end of the spiral line, and stuck a silver coin between the cap and forehead of the player. The whole motion was extremely slow throughout the party—the centre of the coil, which is often occupied by little children, hardly moving at all, and paying little attention to the dance.

In general, the Greek music which I heard—dance music, and occasional shepherds' songs—was nothing but a wild and monotonous chant, with two or three shakes and ornaments on a high note, running down to a long drone note at the end. They repeat these [pg 281]phrases, which are not more than three bars long, over and over again, with some slight variations of *appoggiatura*. I was told by competent people at Athens, that all this was not properly Greek, but Turkish, and that the long slavery of the Greeks had completely destroyed the traditions of their ancient music. Though this seemed certainly true of the music which I heard, I very much doubt that any ancient feature so general can have completely disappeared. When there are national songs of a distinctly Greek character transmitted all through the Slavish and Turkish periods, it seems odd that they should be sung altogether to foreign music. Without more careful investigation I should be slow to decide upon such a question. Unfortunately, our specimens of old Greek music are very few, and probably very insignificant, all the extant works on music by the ancients being

devoted to theoretical questions, which are very difficult and not very profitable. To this subject I have devoted a special discussion in my *Social Life in Greece*, with what illustration it is now possible to obtain.

The inhabitants wished us to stay with them some days, which would have given us an opportunity of witnessing the wedding ceremony, and also of making excursions to the snowy tops of Mount Parnassus. But we had had enough of that sort of amusement in a climb up Mount Ætna, a short time before, and the five hours' toiling on the snow in a thick fog was [pg 282]too fresh in our memory. Beside, we were bound to catch the weekly steamer at Itea, as the port of Delphi is now called; and eight additional days, or rather nights, in this country might have been too much for the wildest enthusiast. For the wooden houses of Arachova are beyond all other structures infested with life, and not even the balconies in the frosty night air were safe from insect invasions.

We therefore started early in the morning, and kept along the sides of precipices on our way to the oracle of Delphi. It is not wonderful that the Arachovites should be famous for superstitions and legends, and that the inquirers into the remnants of old Greek beliefs in the present day have found their richest harvest in this mountain fastness, where there seems no reason why any belief should ever die out. More especially the faith in the terrible god of the dead, Charos, who represents not only the old Charon, but Pluto

also, is here very deep-seated, and many Arachovite songs and ballads speak of his awful and relentless visits. Longevity is so usual, and old age is so hale and green in these Alps, that the death of the young comes home with far greater force and pathos here than in unhealthy or immoral societies, and thus the inroads of Charos are not borne in sullen silence, but lamented with impatient complaints.

At eleven o'clock we came, in the fierce summer sun, to the ascent into the "rocky Pytho," where [pg 283]the terraced city of old had once harbored pilgrims from every corner of the civilized world. The ordinary histories which we read give us but little idea of the mighty influence of this place in the age of its faith. We hear of its being consulted by Crœsus, or by the Romans, and we appreciate its renown for sanctity; but until of very late years there was small account taken of its political and commercial importance. The date of its first rise is hidden in remote antiquity. As the story goes, a shepherd, who fed his flocks here, observed the goats, when they approached the vaporous cavern, springing about madly, as if under some strange influence. He came up to see the place himself, and was immediately seized with the prophetic frenzy. So the reputation of the place spread, first around the neighboring pastoral tribes, and then to a wider sphere.

This very possible origin, however, does not distinctly assert what may certainly be inferred—I mean the existence of some older

and ruder worship, before the worship of Apollo was here established. Two arguments make this clear. In the first place, old legends consistently speak of the arrival of Apollo here; of his conflict with the powers of earth, under the form of the dragon Python; of his having undergone purification for its murder, and having been formally ceded possession by its older owners. This distinct allusion [pg 284]to a previous cult, and one even hostile to Apollo, but ultimately reconciled with him, is sustained by the fact that Pausanias describes in the Temple of Apollo itself two old stones—one apparently an aërolith—which were treated with great respect, anointed daily with oil, and adorned with garlands of flowers. One of these was to the Greeks the centre of the earth (ὀμφαλός), and beside it were two eagles in gold, to remind one of the legend that Zeus had started two eagles from the ends of the earth, and that they met at this exact spot midway. These old and shapeless stories, which occur elsewhere in Greek temples, point to the older stage of fetish worship, before the Greeks had risen to the art of carving a statue, or of worshipping the unseen deity without a gross material symbol.

The researches of M. A. Lebègue, at Delos, have given us another instance. He found that the old shrine of Apollo has been made in imitation of a cave, and that in the recess of the shrine, made with large slabs of stone forming a gable over a natural fissure in the rock, there was an ancient, rude, sacred stone,

on which were remaining the feet of the statue, which had afterward been added to give dignity to the improved worship. M. Lebègue's work at Delos has been completed and superseded by M. Homolle.

Homer speaks in the Iliad of the great wealth of the Pythian shrine; and the Hymn to the Pythian [pg 285]Apollo implies that its early transformations were completed. But seeing that the god Apollo, though originally an Ionian god, as at Delos, was here worshipped distinctively by the Dorians, we shall not err if we consider the rise of the oracle to greatness coincident with the rise and spreading of the Dorians over Greece—an event to which we can assign no date, but which, in legend, comes next after the Trojan War, and seems near the threshold of real history. The absolute submission of the Spartans, when they rose to power, confirmed the authority of the shrine, and so it gradually came to be the Metropolitan See, so to speak, in the Greek religious world. It seems that the influence of this oracle was, in old days, always used in the direction of good morals and of enlightenment. When neighboring states were likely to quarrel, the oracle was often a peacemaker, and even acted as arbitrator—a course usual in earlier Greek history, and in which they anticipated the best results of our nineteenth-century culture. So again, when excessive population demanded an outlet, the oracle was consulted as to the proper place, and the proper leader to be selected; and all the splendid

commercial development of the sixth century B. C., though not produced, was at least sanctioned and promoted, by the Delphic Oracle. Again, in determining the worship of other gods and the founding of new services to great public benefactors, the oracle [pg 286]seems to have been the acknowledged authority—thus taking the place of the Vatican in Catholic Europe, as the source and origin of new dogmas, and of new worships and formularies.



The Temple of Apollo, Delphi

At the same time the treasure-house of the shrine was the largest and safest of banks, where both individuals and states might deposit treasure—nay, even the states seem to have had separate chambers—and from which they could also borrow money, at fair interest, in times of war and public distress. The rock of Delphi was held to be the navel or centre of

the earth's surface, and certainly in a social and religious sense this was the case for all the Greek world. Thus the priests were informed, by perpetual visitors from all sides, of all the last news—of the general aspect of politics—of the new developments of trade—of the latest discoveries in outlying and barbarous lands—and were accordingly able, without any genius or supernatural inspiration, to form their judgments upon wider experience and better knowledge than anybody else could command. This advice, which was really sound and well-considered, was given to people who took it to be divine, and acted upon it with implicit faith and zeal. Of course, the result was in general satisfactory; and so even individuals made use of it as a sort of high confessional, to which they came as pilgrims at some important crisis of their life; and finding by the response that the god seemed to [pg 287]know all about the affairs of every city, went away fully satisfied with the divine authority of the oracle.

This great and deserved general reputation was not affected by occasional rumors of bribed responses or of dishonest priestesses. Such things must happen everywhere; but, as Lord Bacon long ago observed, human nature is more affected by affirmatives than negatives—that is to say, a few cases of brilliantly accurate prophecy will outweigh a great number of cases of doubtful advices or even of acknowledged corruption. So the power of the Popes has lasted in some

respects undiminished to the present day, and they are still regarded by many as infallible, even though historians have published many dreadful lives of some of them, and branded them as men of worse than average morals.

The greatness and the national importance of the Delphic Oracle lasted from the invasion of the Dorians down to the Persian War, certainly more than three centuries; when the part which it took in the latter struggle gave it a blow from which it seems never to have recovered. When the invasion of Xerxes was approaching, the Delphic priests informed accurately of the immense power of the Persians, made up their minds that all resistance was useless, and counselled absolute submission or flight. According to all human probabilities they were right, for nothing but a series of blunders could pos[pg 288]sibly have checked the Persians. But surely the god ought to have inspired them to utter patriotic responses, and thus to save themselves in case of such a miracle as actually happened. I cannot but suspect that they hoped to gain the favor of Xerxes, and remain under him what they had hitherto been, a wealthy and protected corporation.[112] Perhaps they even saw too far, and perceived that the success of the Greeks would bring the Ionic states into prominence; but we must not credit them with too much. The result, however, told greatly against them. The Greeks won, and the Athenians got the lead, —the Athenians, who very soon developed a secular and worldly spirit, and who were by

no means awed by responses which had threatened them and weakened their hands, when their own courage and skill had brought them deliverance. And we can imagine even Themistocles, not to speak of Pericles and Antiphon, looking upon the oracles as little more than a convenient way of persuading the mob to follow a policy which it was not able to understand. The miraculous defeat of the Persians by the god, who repeated his wonders when the Gauls attacked his shrine, should be read in Herodotus and in Pausanias.

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It is with some sadness that we turn from the splendid past of Delphi to its miserable present. The sacred cleft in the earth, from which rose the cold vapor that intoxicated the priestess, is blocked up and lost. As it lay within the shrine of the temple, it may have been filled by the falling ruins, or still more completely destroyed by an earthquake. But, apart from these natural possibilities, we are told that the Christians, after the oracle was closed by Theodosius, filled up and effaced the traces of what they thought a special entrance to hell, where communications had been held with the Evil One.

The three great fountains or springs of the town are still in existence. The first and most striking of these bursts out from between the Phædriades—two shining peaks, which stand up one thousand feet over Delphi, and so close together as to leave only a dark and mysterious gorge or fissure, not twenty feet wide, intervening. The aspect of these twin

peaks, so celebrated by the Greek poets, with their splendid stream, the Castalian fount, bursting from between them, is indeed grand and startling. A great square bath is cut in the rock, just at the mouth of the gorge; but the earthquake of 1870, which made such havoc of Arachova, has been busy here also, and has tumbled a huge block into this bath, thus covering the old work, as well as several votive niches cut into the rocky wall. This was the [pg 290]place where arriving pilgrims purified themselves with hallowed water.

In the great old days the oracle gave responses on the seventh of each month, and even then only when the sacrifices were favorable. If the victims were not perfectly without blemish, they could not be offered; if they did not tremble all over when brought to the altar, the day was thought unpropitious. The inquirers entered the great temple in festal dress, with olive garlands and *stemmata*, or fillets of wool, led by the ὅσιοι, or sacred guardians of the temple, who were five of the noblest citizens of Delphi. The priestesses, on the contrary—there were three at the same time, who officiated in turn—though Delphians also, were not frequently of noble family. When the priestess was placed on the sacred tripod by the chief interpreter, or προφήτης, over the exhalations, she was seized with frenzy—often so violent that the ὅσιοι were known to have fled in terror, and she herself to have become insensible, and to have died. Her ravings in this state were carefully noted down, and then reduced to

sense, and of old always to verses, by the attendant priests, who of course interpreted disconnected words with a special reference to the politics or other circumstances of the inquirers.

This was done in early days with perfect good faith. During the decline of religion there were of course many cases of corruption and of partiality, [pg 291]and, indeed, the whole style and dignity of the oracle gradually decayed with the decay of Greece itself. Presently, when crowds came, and states were extremely jealous of the right of precedence in inquiring of the god, it was found expedient to give responses every day, and this was done to private individuals, and even for trivial reasons. So also the priests no longer took the trouble to shape the responses into verse; and when the Phocians in the sacred war (355–46 B. C.) seized the treasures, and applied to military purposes some ten thousand talents, the shrine suffered a blow from which it never recovered. Still, the quantity of splendid votive offerings which were not convertible into ready money made it the most interesting place in Greece, next to Athens and Olympia, for lovers of the arts: and the statues, tripods, and other curiosities described there by Pausanias, give a wonderful picture of the mighty oracle even in its decay.[113] The greatest sculptors, painters, and architects had lavished their labor upon the buildings. Though Nero had carried off five hundred bronze statues, the traveller estimated the remaining works of art

at three thousand, and yet these seem to have been almost all statues, and not to have included tripods, pictures, and other gifts. The Emperor Constantine brought away (330 A. D.) a great number to adorn [pg 292]his capital—more especially the bronze tripod, formed of three intertwined serpents, with their heads supporting a golden vessel, which Pausanias, the Spartan King, had dedicated as the leader of Greece to commemorate the great victory over Xerxes. This tripod (which was found standing in its place at Constantinople by our soldiers in 1852) contains the list of states according to the account of Herodotus, who describes its dedication, and who saw it at Delphi.

When the Emperor Julian, the last great champion of paganism, desired to consult the oracle on his way to Persia, in 362 A. D., it replied: "Tell the king the fair-wrought dwelling has sunk into the dust: Phœbus has no longer a shelter or a prophetic laurel, neither has he a speaking fountain; the fair water is dried up." Thus did the shrine confess, even to the ardent and hopeful Julian, that its power had passed away, and, as it were by a supreme effort, declared to him the great truth which he refused to see—that paganism was gone for ever, and a new faith had arisen for the nations of the Roman Empire.

About the year 390, Theodosius took the god at his word, and closed the oracle finally. The temple—with its cella of 100 feet—with its Doric and Ionic pillars—with its splendid

sculptures upon the pediments—sank into decay and ruin. The walls and porticos tumbled down the precipitous cliffs; the [pg 293]prophetic chasm was filled up by the Christians with fear and horror; and, as if to foil any attempt to recover from ruins the site and plan, the modern Greeks built their miserable hamlet of Castri upon the spot; so that it is only among the walls and foundations laid bare by earthquakes that we can now seek for marble capitals and votive inscriptions.

One or two features are still unchanged. The three fine springs, to which Delphi doubtless owed its first selection for human habitation, are still there—Castalia, of which we have spoken; Cassotis, which was led artificially into the very shrine of the god; and Delphussa, which was, I suppose, the water used for secular purposes by the inhabitants. The stadium, too, a tiny racecourse high above the town, in the only place where they could find a level 150 yards, is still visible; and we see at once what the importance of games must have been at a sacred Greek town, when such a thing as a stadium should be attempted here.[114] The earliest competitions had been in music—that is, in playing the lyre, in recitation, and probably in the composition of original poems; but presently the physical contests of Olympia began to outdo the splendor of Delphi. Moreover, the Spartans would not compete in minstrelsy, which they liked and criticised, but left to professional artists. Accordingly,

the priests of [pg 294]Delphi were too practical a corporation not to widen the programme of their games, and Pindar has celebrated the Pythian victors as hardly second to those at the grand festival of Elis.

There is yet one more element in the varied greatness of Delphi. It was here that the religious federation of Greece—the Amphictyony of which we hear so often—held its meetings alternately with the meetings at the springs of Thermopylæ. When I stood high up on the stadium at Delphi, the great scene described by the orator Æschines came fresh upon me, when he looked upon the sacred plain of Krissa, and called all the worshippers of the god to clear it of the sacrilegious Amphissians, who had covered it with cattle and growing crops. The plain, he says, is easily surveyed from the place of meeting—a statement which shows that the latter cannot have been in the town of Delphi: for a great shoulder of the mountain effectually hides the whole plain from every part of the town.

The Pylæa, or place of assembly, was, however, outside, and precisely at the other side of this huge shoulder, so that what Æschines says is true; but it is not true, as any ordinary student imagines, that he was standing in Delphi itself. He was, in fact, completely out of sight of the town, though not a mile from it. There is no more common error than this among our mere book scholars —and I daresay there are not many who realize the existence of this [pg 295]suburban

Pylæa, and its situation close to, but invisible from, Delphi. It certainly never came home to me till I began to look for the spot from which Æschines might have delivered his famous extempore address.

When we rode round to the real place we found his words amply verified. Far below us stretched the plain from Amphissa to Kirrha, at right angles with the gorge above which Delphi is situated. The river-courses of the Delphic springs form, in fact, a regular zigzag. When they tumble from their great elevation on the rocks into the valley, they join the Pleistus, running at right angles toward the west; when this torrent has reached the plain, it turns again due south, and flows into the sea at the Gulf of Kirrha. Thus, looking from Pylæa, you see the upper part of the plain, and the gorge to the north-west of it, where Amphissa occupies its place in a position similar to the mouth of the gorge of Delphi. The southern rocks of the gorge over against Delphi shut out the sea and the actual bay; but a large rich tract, covered with olive-woods, and medlars, and oleanders, stretches out beneath the eye—verily a plain worth fighting for, and a possession still more precious, when it commanded the approach of pilgrims from the sea; for the harbor duties and tolls of Kirrha were once a large revenue, and their loss threatened the oracle with poverty. This levying of tolls on the pilgrims to Delphi be[pg 296]came quite a national question in the days of Solon; it resulted in a great war, led by the Amphictyonic Council.

Kirrha was ruined, and its land dedicated to the god, in order to protect the approach from future difficulties. So this great tract was, I suppose, devoted to pasture, and the priests probably levied a rent from the people who choose to graze their cattle on the sacred plain. The Amphissians, who lived, not at the seaside, but at the mountain side of the plain, were never accused of robbing or taxing the pilgrims; but having acquired for many generations the right of pasture, they advanced to the idea of tilling their pastures, and were undisturbed in this privilege till the mischievous orator, Æschines, for his own purposes, fired the Delphians with rage, kindled a war, and so brought Philip into Greece. These are the historical circumstances which should be called to mind by the traveller, who rides down the steep descent from Delphi to the plain, and then turns through the olive-woods to the high road to Itea, as the port of Delphi is now called.

A few hours brought us to the neighborhood of the sea. The most curious feature of this valley, as we saw it, was a long string of camels tied together, and led by a small and shabby donkey. Our mules and horses turned with astonishment to examine these animals, which have survived here only, though introduced by the Turks into many parts of Greece.

[pg 297]
The port of Itea is one of the stations at which the Greek coasting steamers now call, and, accordingly, the place is growing in

importance. If a day's delay were allowed, to let tourists ride up to the old seat of the oracle, and if the service were better regulated so as to compete in convenience with the train journey from Patras to Athens, I suppose no traveller going to Greece would choose any other route. For he would see all the beautiful coasts of Acarnania and Ætolia on the one side, and of Achaia on the other; he could then take Delphi on his way, and would land again at Corinth. Here again, a day, or part of a day, should be allowed to see the splendid Acro-Corinthus, of which more in another chapter. The traveller might thus reach Athens with an important part of Greece already visited, and have more leisure to turn his attention to the monuments and curiosities of that city and of Attica. It is worth while to suggest these things, because most men who go to Greece find, as I did, that, with some better previous information, they could have economized both time and money. I can also advise that the coasting steamer should be abandoned at Itea, from which the traveller can easily get horses to Delphi and Arachova, and from thence to Chæronea, Lebadea, and through Thebes to Athens. So he would arrive there by a land tour, which would make him acquainted with all Bœotia. He might next go by train from Athens to Corinth [pg 298](stopping on the way at Megara), and then into the Peloponnese; going first to Mycenæ and Argos, and then taking another steamer round to Sparta, and riding up through Laconia, Arcadia, and Elis, so as to come out at Patras,

or by boat to Zante, where the steamer homeward would pick him up. Of course, special excursions through Attica, and to the islands, are not included in this sketch, as they can easily be made from Athens.

But surely, no voyage in Greece can be called complete which does not include a visit to the famous shrine of Delphi, where the wildness and ruggedness of nature naturally suggest the powers of earth and air, that sway our lives unseen—where the quaking soil and the rent rocks speak a strength above the strength of mortal man—and where a great faith, based upon his deepest hopes and fears, gained a moral empire over all the nation, and exercised it for centuries, to the purifying and the ennobling of the Hellenic race. The oracle is long silent, the priestess forgotten, the temple not only ruined, but destroyed; and yet the grand responses of that noble shrine are not forgotten, nor are they dead. For they have contributed their part and added their element to the general advancement of the world, and to the emancipation of man from immorality and superstition into the true liberty of a good and enlightened conscience.

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CHAPTER XI.

ELIS—OLYMPIA AND ITS GAMES—THE VALLEY OF THE ALPHEUS—MOUNT ERYMANTHUS—PATRAS.

The thousands of visitors, whose ships thronged the bay of Katakolo every four years in the great old times, cannot have been fairly impressed with the beauty of the country at first sight. Most other approaches to the coast of Greece are far more striking. For although, on a clear day, the mountains of Arcadia are plainly visible, and form a fine background to the view, from the great bar of Erymanthus on the north, round to the top of Lykæon far south-west, the foreground has not, and never had, either the historic interest or the beauty of the many bays and harbors in other parts of Greece. Yet I am far from asserting that it is actually wanting even in this respect. As we saw the bay in a quiet summer sunset, with placid water reflecting a sleeping cloud and a few idle sails in its amber glow, with a wide circle of low hills and tufted shore bathed in a golden haze, which spread its curtain of light

athwart all the distance, so that the great snowy comb of Erymanthus alone seemed suspended by some mystery in the higher blue —the view was [pg 300]not indeed very Greek, but still it was beautiful, and no unsuitable dress wherein the land might clothe itself to welcome the traveller, and foretell him its sunny silence and its golden mystery.

The carriage-way along the coast passes by sand-hills, and sandy fields of vines, which were being tilled when we saw them by kindly but squalid peasants, some of whom lived in wretched huts of skins, enclosed with a rough fence. But these were probably only temporary dwellings, for the thrift and diligence of the southern Greek seems hardly compatible with real penury. Mendicancy, except in the case of little children who do it for the nonce, seems unknown in the Morea.

A dusty ride of two hours, relieved now and then for a moment by the intense perfume from the orange blossoms of gardens fenced with mighty aloes, brought us to the noisy and stirring town of Pyrgos.[115] We found this town, one of the most thriving in Greece, quite as noisy as Naples in proportion to its size, full of dogs barking, donkeys braying, and various shopkeepers screaming out their wares—especially frequent where young shrill-voiced boys were so employed. Nowhere does the ultra-democratic temper of new Greek social life show itself more manifestly than in these disturbed streets. Not only does every member of human society,

how[pg 301]ever young or ill-disposed, let his voice be heard without reserve, but it seems to be considered an infraction upon liberty to silence yelping dogs, braying donkeys, or any other animal which chooses to disturb its neighbors.

The whole town, like most others in Greece, even in the Arcadian highlands, is full of half-built and just finished houses, showing a rapid increase of prosperity, or perhaps a return of the population from country life into the towns which have always been so congenial to the race. But if the latter be the fact, there yet seems no slackening in the agriculture of the country, which in the Morea is strikingly diligent and laborious, reaching up steep hillsides, and creeping along precipices, winning from ungrateful nature every inch of niggard soil.[116] This is indeed the contrast of northern and southern Greece. In Bœotia the rich plains of Thebes and Orchomenos are lying fallow, while all the rugged mountains of Arcadia are yielding wine and oil. The Greeks will tell you that it is the result of the security established by their Government in those parts of Greece which are not accessible from the Turkish frontier. They assert that if their present frontier were not at Thermopylæ but at Tempe, or even farther north, the rich plains of northern Greece would not lie idle through fear of the bandits, which [pg 302]every disturbance excites about the boundaries of ill-guarded kingdoms.

The carriage road from Pyrgos up to Olympia

was just finished, and it is now possible to drive all the way from the sea, but we preferred the old method of travelling on horseback to the terrors of a newly-constructed Greek thoroughfare. There is, moreover, in wandering on unpaved thoroughfares, along meadows, through groves and thickets, and across mountains, a charm which no dusty carriage road can ever afford. We soon came upon the banks of the Alpheus, which we followed as our main index, though at times we were high above it, and at times in the meadows at the water-side; at times again mounting some wooded ridge which had barred the way of the stream, and forced it to take a wide circuit from our course, or again crossing the deep cuttings made by rivulets which come down from northern Elis to swell the river from mile to mile.

Our path must have been almost the same as was followed by the crowds which came from the west to visit the Olympic games in classical days: they must have ascended along the windings of the river, and as they came upon each new amphitheatre of hills, and each new tributary stream, they may have felt the impatience which we felt that this was not the sacred *Altis*, and that this was not the famous confluence of the Kladeus. But the season in which they travelled—the beginning of July—can never [pg 303]have shown them the valley in its true beauty. Instead of a glaring dry bed of gravel, and meadows parched with heat, we found the Alpheus a

broad and rapid river, which we crossed on horseback with difficulty; we found the meadows green with sprouting corn and bright with flowers, and all along the slopes the trees were bursting into bud and blossom, and filling the air with the rich scent of spring. Huge shrubs of arbutus and of mastich closed around the paths, while over them the Judas tree and the wild pear covered themselves with purple and with white, and on every bank great scarlet anemones opened their wistful eyes in the morning sun.



The Banks of the Kladeus

When we came to the real Olympia the prospect was truly disenchanting. However interesting excavations may be, they are always exceedingly ugly. Instead of grass and flowers, and pure water, we found the classic spot defaced with great mounds of earth, and trodden bare of grass. We found the Kladeus

flowing a turbid drain into the larger river. We found hundreds of workmen, and wheel-barrows, and planks, and trenches, instead of solitude and the song of birds. Thus it was that we found the famous temple of Zeus.

This temple was in many respects one of the most celebrated in Greece, especially on account of the great image of Zeus, which Phidias himself wrought for it in gold and ivory, and of which Pausanias has [pg 304]left us a very wonderful description (V. II, *sqq.*). It was carried away to Constantinople, and of course its precious material precluded all chance of its surviving through centuries of ignorance and bigotry. The temple itself, to judge from its appearance, was somewhat older than the days of Phidias, for it is of that thickset and massive type which we only find in the earlier Doric temples, and which rather reminds us of Pæstum than of Athenian remains. It was built by a local architect, Libon, and of a very coarse limestone from the neighborhood, which was covered with stucco, and painted chiefly white, to judge from the fragments which remain. But it seems as if the Eleans had done all they could to add splendor to the building, whenever their funds permitted. The tiles of the roof were not of burnt clay, but of Pentelican marble, the well-known and beautiful invention of the Naxian Byzes. Moreover, Phidias and a number of his fellow-workers or subordinates at Athens, as well as other artists, had been invited to Olympia, to adorn the temple, and to them we owe the

pediments, probably also the metopes, and many of the statues, with which all the sacred enclosure around the edifice was literally thronged. Subsequent generations added to this splendor: a gilded figure of Victory, with a gold shield, was set upon the apex of the gable; gilded pitchers at the extremities; gilded shields were fastened all along the architraves by Mummius, [pg 305]from the spoils of Corinth, and the great statue of Zeus within still remained, the wonder and the awe of the ancient world.

But with the fall of paganism and the formal extinction of the Olympic games (394 A. D.) the glories of the temple fell into decay. The great statue in the shrine was carried away to Byzantium; many of the votive bronzes and marbles which stood about the sacred grove were transported to Italy; and at last a terrible earthquake, apparently in the fifth century, levelled the whole temple almost with the ground. The action of this extraordinary earthquake is still plainly to be traced in the now uncovered ruins. It upheaved the temple from the centre, throwing the pillars of all the four sides outward, where most of them lie with their drums separated, but still complete in all parts, and only requiring mechanical power to set them up again. Some preliminary shakes had caused pieces of the pediment sculptures to fall out of their place, for they were found at the foot of the temple steps; but the main shock threw the remainder to a great distance, and I saw the work of Alkamenes being unearthed more than

twenty-five yards from its proper site.

In spite of this convulsion, the floor of the temple, with its marble work, and its still more beautiful mosaic, is still there, and it seemed doubtful to the Germans whether there is even a crack now to be found in it. About the ruins there gathered some [pg 306]little population, for many fragments were found built into walls of poor and late construction; but this work of destruction was fortunately arrested by a sudden overflow of the Alpheus, caused by the bursting of one of the mountain lakes about Pheneus. The river then covered all the little plain of Olympia with a deep layer of fine sand and of mud. A thicket of arbutus and mastich sprang from this fertile soil, and so covered all traces of antiquity, that when Chandler visited the place 100 years ago, nothing but a part of the cella wall was over ground, and this was since removed by neighboring builders. But the site being certain, it only required the enterprise of modern research to lay bare the old level so fortunately hidden by the interposition of nature. The traveller who now visits Olympia can see the whole plan and contour of the great temple, with all its prostrate pillars lying around it. He can stand on the very spot where once was placed the unrivalled image —the masterpiece of Phidias's art. He can see the old mosaic in colored pebbles, with its exquisite design, which later taste—probably Roman—thought well to cover with a marble pavement. But far above all, he can find in adjoining sheds[117] not only the remains of the

famous *Niké* of [pg 307]Pæonius, which stood on a pedestal close to the east front, but the greater part of the splendid pediment sculptures, which will henceforth rank among the most important relics of Greek art. These noble compositions have been restored with tolerable completeness, and now stand next to the pediments of the Parthenon in conception and in general design.



Statue of Niké, by Paeonius

For even if the restoration were never accomplished, there is enough in the fragments of the figures already recovered to show the genius of both sculptors, but particularly of Alkamenes, the author of the western pediment. This perfectly agrees with the note of Pausanias, who adds, in

mentioning this very work, that Alkamenes was considered in his day an artist second only to Phidias.

It was objected to me by learned men on the spot, that the eastern pediment, being the proper front of the temple, must have been the more important, and that Pæonius, as we know from an inscription, boasts that he obtained the executing of it by competition, thus proving that he was, at least in this case, preferred to his rivals. But the decided superiority of Alkamenes's design leads me to suppose that the boast of Pæonius only applies to the eastern pediment, and that probably the western had been already assigned to Alkamenes. Nor do I agree with the view that the eastern pediment must have been [pg 308]artistically the most important. In several Greek temples—*e. g.*, the Parthenon, the temple at Bassæ, and in this—the great majority of visitors must have approached it from the rear, which should accordingly have been quite the prominent side for artistic decoration. Let me add that far more action was permitted in the groups on this side, while over the entrance the figures were staid and in repose, as if to harmonize with the awe and silence of the entering worshippers. Be these things as they may, the work of Alkamenes is certainly superior to that which remains to us of Pæonius in the eastern pediment, and in his figure of winged Victory, which was, I think, greatly overpraised by the critics who saw it soon after its discovery.[118]

The composition of the groups in the pediments and friezes has been described by Pausanias (v. 10, §§ 6–10) in a passage of great interest, which has given rise to much controversy. The general impression of Drs. Hirschfeld and Weil, when I was at Olympia, was against the accuracy of Pausanias, whom they considered to have blindly set down whatever the local cicerones told him. That of Dr. Purgold was in his favor. The traveller says, however, that the eastern pediment, in which, [pg 309]as already remarked, it was not usual to represent violent action, depicted the preparation of the chariot race between Pelops and Œnomaus. In the centre was Zeus, whose torso has been recovered, and at the narrow ends of the field were figures of the Alpheus and Kladeus, to the right and left of the spectator respectively. These figures are partly recovered—graceful young men lying forward on the ground, and raising their heads to witness the contest.

It is worth pausing for a moment upon this disposition, which was so usual as to be almost conventional in the pediments sculptured during the best epochs of Greek art. In the centre, where the field was very high, and admitted a colossal figure, it was usual to place the god whose providence guided the events around him, and this god was represented calm and without excitement. Then came the mythical event grouped on both sides; but at the ends, where the field narrowed to an angle, it was usual to represent the calmness or impassiveness of

external nature. This was done in Greek sculpture not by trees and hills, but by the gods who symbolized them. So thoroughly was nature personified in Greek art, that its picturesqueness was altogether postponed to its living conscious sympathy with man, and thus to a Greek the proper representation of the rivers of Olympia was no landscape, but the graceful forms of the river gods—intelligent and human, yet calm spectators, as nature is wont to be. [pg 310]The very same idea is carried out more characteristically in the pediment of Alkamenes, where, in spite of the violent conflict of Centaurs and Lapithæ, the central and extreme figures, as I shall presently notice, are perfectly unmoved witnesses of lawless violence.

The arrangement of the rest of the eastern pediment was evidently quite symmetrical. On Zeus's right hand was Œnomaus, his wife Sterope, his charioteer Myrtilus sitting before the four horses, and two grooms; on his left, Pelops, Hippodamia, and a like number of horses and attendants. A good many pieces of these figures have been found, sufficient to tempt several art-critics to make conjectural restorations of the pediment, one of which is now set up, I believe, in the museum at Berlin.

The western pediment, of which more, and more striking, fragments are recovered, is more difficult to restore, because Pausanias is unfortunately not nearly so precise in describing it, and because, moreover, he is suspected of a serious blunder about the

central figure. Contrary to the precedent just mentioned, he says that this central figure is Pirithous, whose wife is just being carried off by the Centaurs, and ought therefore to be in violent excitement. But there had been found, just before we arrived at Olympia, a colossal head, of the noblest conception, which seems certainly to belong to the pediment sculptures, and which must be the head of [pg 311]this central figure. It is perfectly calm and divine in expression, and almost forces upon the spectator the conclusion to which all the best judges lean, that it must be an Apollo, and that this was the central figure, while Pirithous was more actively engaged. There was on each side of this figure a Centaur carrying off, the one a maiden (I suppose the bride) and the other a boy, and Kæneus and Theseus at each side, coming to the rescue.

But on the other figures Pausanias is silent; and there were certainly two beautiful mountain or river nymphs at the extremities —lying figures, with a peculiar head-dress of a thick bandage wrapped all round the hair— which are among the most perfect of the figures recovered. It seems also certain that Pirithous must have been somewhere on the pediment; and this would suggest another figure to correspond to him at the other side, for these groups were always symmetrical. In this case Pausanias has omitted four figures at least in his description, and seems to have besides mistaken the largest and most important of all. The Germans cite in proof of

these strictures his passing remark on the Metopes, representing the labors of Herakles, on one of which was (he says) Herakles about to relieve Atlas, whereas this slab, which has been found, really represents Herakles carrying the globe, and one of the Hesperidæ assisting him, while Atlas is bringing to him the apple.

[pg 312]
This criticism will seem to most ordinary people too minute, and I am rather disposed to think well of Pausanias as an intelligent traveller, though he, of course, made some mistakes.

But since the above words were written sufficient time has elapsed not only to bring the excavations to an end, but to study more carefully the recovered fragments, and offer a calmer judgment as to their merits. On the whole, the strong feeling of the best critics has been one of disappointment. The design of both pediments still seems to me masterly, especially that of Alkamenes, but there can be no doubt that the execution is far below that of the Parthenon marbles. There are some positive faults—inability to reproduce drapery (while the nude parts are very true to nature), and great want of care in other details. It must be urged in answer that the pediments were meant to be seen about forty feet from the ground, and that the painting of the figures must have brought out the features of the drapery neglected in the carving. However true this may be, we can answer at once that the workmen of Phidias did not

produce this kind of work. The first quality of the Attic school was that conscientiousness in detail which meets us in every great age of art.

So serious have these difficulties appeared to some, that they have actually suspected Pausanias of being misled, and having falsely attributed the work of [pg 313]obscure local artists to Alkamenes, and perhaps also falsely to Pæonius. They say that nothing is more common with vulgar cicerones than to attribute to a great master any old work of uncertain origin. Others, who will not proceed to such extremes, hold that only the general design was made by the two sculptors, and its execution handed over to local artists. This may probably have been the case. But I am disposed to infer from the overpraised *Niké*, which certainly is the work of Pæonius, that he was not an artist of the quality of the great Attic school.[119] The whole external work of the temple seems to represent a stage of art rather earlier and ruder than the school of Phidias. This is eminently the case with the Metopes, which can hardly be later in date than 460 B. C., or pre-Phidian in time.

Very different is the impression produced by the greatest and most priceless gem of all the treasures at Olympia—the Hermes of Praxiteles, which was actually found on the very spot where it was seen and described by Pausanias, fallen among the ruins of the temple which originally protected it. This exquisite figure, much smaller than life-size, represents the god Hermes holding the infant

Dionysus on one arm, and showing the child some object now lost. The right arm and the legs from below the [pg 314]knees are gone; the right foot with its sandal, an exquisite piece of work with traces of gold and red, has been recovered. It is remarkable that the back of the statue is unfinished, and the child treated rather as a doll than a human infant; the main figure, however, now widely known through copies, is the most perfect remnant of Greek art. The temple in which the statue was found, the venerable Heræon, is the most interesting of all the Olympian buildings in its plan, and has solved for us many problems in Greek architecture. The acute researches of Dr. Dörpfeld have shown that the walls were not of stone, but of sun-dried bricks, and that the surrounding pillars had gradually replaced older wooden pillars, one of which was still there when Pausanias saw the building. The successive stone pillars and their capitals were of the same order, Doric, but varied in measurements and profile according to the taste of the day. So then this ancient building showed, like our English cathedrals, the work of successive centuries in its restoration. The roof and architrave were evidently of wood, for all trace of these members has vanished; but we learn from remains of the old "treasuries" described by Pausanias that in very old times wood and mud bricks were faced with colored terra cotta, moulded to the required form, and that this ornament was still used after stone had replaced bricks and mud as the material of the walls and architrave. [pg 315]These curious details, and

many others, have been the main result of the architectural inquiries made by the Germans into the archaic buildings at Olympia; but it would be tedious to the reader of this book were I to turn aside to discuss technical details. He will find them all put with great clearness, and indeed with elegance, in Bötticher's *Olympia*. The complete results of the excavations are now to be found in the official work issued by the German Government on the explorations.

Unfortunately, there only remains one very realistic head of a boxer from a large class of monuments at Olympia, that of the portrait statues of victors at the games, of which one was even attributed to Phidias, and several to Alkamenes, in Pausanias's time. All these were votive statues, set up by victors at the games, or victors in war, and in the early times were not portraits strictly speaking, but ideal figures. Later on they became more realistic, and were made in the likeness of the offerer, a privilege said at one time only to have been accorded to those who had won thrice at Olympia.

The commemoration of gymnastic victories by these statues seems to have completely supplanted the older fashion of triumphal odes, which in Pindar's day were so prized, and so dearly bought from lyric poets. When these odes first came to be composed, sculpture was still struggling with the difficulties of human expression, and there was no one [pg 316]who would not feel the great artistic superiority of Pindar's verse to

the cold stiffness of the archaic reliefs of the same epoch, which attempt portraiture. The portrait of Aristion by Aristokles, the similar relief by Anxenor the Naxian, and the relief of the discus thrower, are sufficient examples of what sculptured portraits were in comparison with the rich music of Simonides and Pindar. But while lyric poetry passed into the higher service of tragedy, or degenerated into the extravagance of the later dithyramb, sculpture grew into such exquisite perfection, and was of its very nature so enduring and manifest, that the Olympic victor choose it as the surest avenue to immortal fame. And so it was up to Pausanias's day, when every traveller could study the records of the games at Olympia, or even admire the most perfect of the statues in the palaces of Roman Emperors, whither they were transferred.

But the day came when the poets were avenged upon the sculptors. Olympia sank under general decay and sudden catastrophe. Earthquakes and barbarians ravaged its treasury, and while Pindar was being preserved in manuscript, until his resurrection in the days of printing, the invasion of the Kladeus saved the scanty remains in the *Altis* from destruction only by covering them with oblivion. Now, in the day of its resurrection, pedestal after pedestal with its votive inscription has been unearthed, but, except the *Niké* of Pæonius, no actual [pg 317]votive statue had been recovered when I saw the excavations, after two years of labor.

The river Alpheus, which has done such

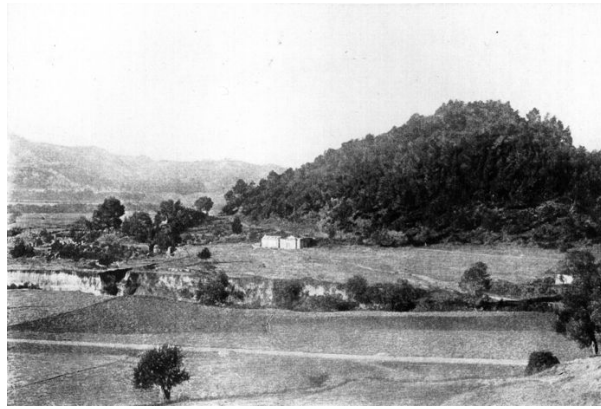
excellent work in its inundations, does not confine itself to concealing antiquities, but sometimes discovers them. Its rapid course eats away the alluvial bank which the waters have deposited ages ago, and thus encroaches upon old tombs, from which various relics are washed down in its turbid stream. The famous helmet dedicated by Hiero, son of Deinomenes, was discovered in the river in this way; and there is also in the Ministry of Public Instruction a large circular band of bronze, *riveted* together where the ends meet, with very archaic zigzag and linear patterns, which was found in the same way some twenty years ago, and which seems to me of great interest, as exhibiting a kind of workmanship akin to the decorations in the Schliemann treasure of Mycenæ. There is also a rude red earthen pot in the Turkish house on the Acropolis at Athens, which is decorated with the same kind of lines. It is very important to point out these resemblances to travellers, for there is such endless detail in Greek antiquities, and so little has yet been classified, that every observation may be of use to future students, even though it may merely serve as a hint for closer research.

The Stadium and Hippodrome, which lie farther away from the river, and right under the conical [pg 318]hill called Kronion, have not yet, I believe, been completely investigated; but they may no doubt offer us some new and interesting evidences on the management of the famous Olympian games.

These games were not at all what most people imagine them to be. I will, therefore, delay the reader with some details concerning this most interesting side of old Greek life.

The establishment of games at Olympia was assigned by the poets to mythical ages, and not only is there a book of the Iliad devoted to funeral games, but in Pindar's eleventh Olympic Ode this particular establishment is made coeval with the labors of Herakles. Whether such evidence is indeed conclusive may fairly be doubted. The twenty-third book of the Iliad, which shows traces of being a later portion of the poem, describes contests widely differing from those at Olympia, and the mythical founders enumerated by Pausanias (v. 7) are so various and inconsistent that we can see how obscure the question appeared to Greek archæologists, even did we not find at the end of the enumeration the following significant hint: —"But after Oxylus—for Oxylus, too, established the contest—after his reign it fell out of use till the Olympiad of Iphitus," that is to say, till the first Ol., which is dated 776 B. C., Oxylus being the companion of the Herakleidæ, who obtained Elis for his portion. Pausanias adds that when [pg 319]Iphitus renewed the contest, men had forgotten the old arrangements, and only *gradually came to remember them*, and whenever they recollected any special competition they added it to the games. This is the excellent man's theory to account for the gradual addition of long races, of wrestling, discus throwing, boxing, and

chariot racing, to the original sprint race of about 200 yards, which was at first the only known competition.



Kronion Hill, Olympia

The facts seem to me rather to point to the late growth of games in Greece, which may possibly have begun as a local feast at Olympia in the eighth century, but which only rose to importance during the reign of the despots throughout Greece, when the aristocrats were prevented from murdering one another, and compelled to adopt more peaceful pursuits.[120] It was in the end of the seventh and opening of the sixth centuries that the Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian games show by their successive establishments the rapid spread of the fashion, and a vast number of local contests diffused through every district in Greece the taste and the training for such

competitions.[121] These games lasted all through clas[pg 320]sical Greek history—the Olympian even down to later times, for they were not abolished till nearly 1200 years (Ol. 294) had elapsed since their alleged foundation. But the day of their real greatness was gone long before. Cicero indignantly repudiates the report that he had gone to see such games, just as a pious earl, within our memory, repudiated the report that he had attended the prize-fight between Sayers and Heenan. The good generals of earlier centuries, such as Alexander the Great and Philopœmen, set their faces against athletics as bad training for soldiers. Nay, even earlier, the Spartans, though they could contend with success in the *pentathlon*, when they choose, did not countenance the fiercer competitions, as engendering bad feeling between rivals, and, what was worse, compelling a man to declare himself vanquished, and feel disgraced. The Athenians also, as soon as the sophists reformed education, began to rate intellectual wrestling as far superior to any bodily exercise. Thus the supremacy of Athens and Sparta over the other [pg 321]Greek cities in the fifth century marked, in my opinion, the real turning-point in the Greek estimate of athletics, and the fact that the great odes of Pindar sing the glories of no Spartan, and only twice, very briefly, those of Athenians, seems to indicate that even then men began to think of more serious rivalries and more exciting spectacles than the festive meetings at Olympia. In the very next generation the poets had drifted away from

them, and Euripides despises rather than admires them. The historians take little notice of them.

Two circumstances only tended strongly to keep them up. In the first place, musical competitions (which had always been a part of the Pythian) and poetical rivalries were added to the sports, which were also made the occasion of mercantile business, of social meetings, and not seldom of political agitation. The wise responses of the Delphic oracle were not a little indebted to the information gathered from all parts of the Hellenic world at the games, some important celebration of which, whether at Nemea, the Isthmus, or the greater meetings, occurred every year.

Secondly, if the art of poetry soon devoted itself to the higher objects of tragedy, and created for itself the conflict which it celebrated, the art of sculpture became so closely connected with athletics as to give them an æsthetic importance of the highest kind all through Greek history. The ancient [pg 322]habit of setting up ideal statues of victors, which were made special likenesses if the subject was specially distinguished, supplied the Greeks with a series of historical monuments and a series of physical types not elsewhere to be matched, and thus perhaps the most interesting part of Pausanias's invaluable guide-book to Greece is his collection of notes (lib. vi., 1–20) on various statues set up in this way at Olympia, of which he mentions about two hundred,

though he only professes to make a selection, and though several of the finest had already been carried off by Roman emperors.

These things kept alive the athletic meetings in Greece, and even preserved for them some celebrity. The sacred truce proclaimed during the national games was of inestimable convenience in times of long and bitter hostilities, and doubtless enabled friends to meet who had else been separated for life.[122] But the Panathenaic festivals were better exponents of fourth century taste in Greece. There music and the drama predominated. Professional displays became equally admired as a pastime and despised as a profession; and I have no doubt that the athlete who spent his life going about from one contest to another in search of gymnastic triumphs [pg 323]was held in like contempt by Brasidas and by Cleon, by Xenophon and by Agesilaus.

In the days of Solon things had been very different. He appointed a reward of 500 drachmas, then a very large sum, for victors at Olympia, 100 for those at the Isthmus, and for the others in proportion. Pindar sings as if, to the aristocrats of Ægina, or the tyrants of Sicily, no higher earthly prizes were attainable. But we must not transfer these evidences—the habit or the echo of the sixth century B. C.—to the days of political and educated Greece, when public opinion altered very considerably on the advantage and value of physical competition. This being once understood, I will proceed to a short analysis of the sports, and will attempt to criticise the

methods adopted by the old Greeks to obtain the highest physical condition, the nature of the competitions they established, and the results which they appear to have attained.

The Greeks of Europe seem always to have been aware that physical exercise was of the greatest importance for health, and consequently for mental vigor, and the earliest notices we have of education include careful bodily training. Apart from the games of children, which were much the same as ours, there was not only *orchestic* or rhythmical dancing in graceful figures, in which girls took part, and which corresponded to what are now vulgarly called *callisthenics*, but also gymnastics, in which boys were [pg 324]trained to those exercises which they afterward practised as men. In addition to the *palæstras*, which were kept for the benefit of boys as a matter of private speculation in Athens, and probably in other towns, regular *gymnasia* were established by the civic authorities, and put under strict supervision as state institutions to prevent either idleness or immorality.[123] In these gymnasia, where young men came in the afternoon, stripped, oiled themselves, and then got a coat of dust or fine sand over the skin, running, wrestling, boxing, jumping, and throwing with the dart were commonly practised.

This sort of physical training I conceive to have grown up with the growth of towns, and with the abandonment of hunting and marauding, owing to the increase of culture.

Among the aristocrats of epical days, as well as among the Spartans, who lived a village life, surrounded by forest and mountain, I presume field sports must have been quite the leading amusement; nor ought competitions in a gymnasium to be compared for one moment to this far higher and more varied recreation. The contrast still subsists among us, and our fox-hunting, salmon-fishing, grouse-shooting country gentleman has the same inestimable advantage over the city [pg 325]athlete, whose special training for a particular event has a necessary tendency to lower him into a professional. There is even a danger of some fine exercises, which seemed common ground for both, such as boating and cricket, being vulgarized by the invasion of this professional spirit, which implies such attention to the body as to exclude higher pursuits, and which rewards by special victories, and by public applause rather than by the intrinsic pleasure of sport for its own sake. Thus the Spartans not only objected to boxing and the pankration, in which the defeated competitor might have to ask for mercy; they even for general purposes preferred field-sports, for which they had ample opportunities, to any special competitions in the strength of particular muscles. But in such places as Athens and its neighborhood, where close cultivation had caused all wild country and all game to disappear, it was necessary to supply the place of country sport by the training of the gymnasium. This sort of exercise naturally led to contests, so that for our purpose we need

not separate *gymnastic* and *agonistic*, but may use the details preserved about the latter to tell us how the Greeks practised the former.

There is no doubt that the pursuit of high muscular condition was early associated with that of health, and that hygiene and physical training were soon discovered to be closely allied. Thus Herodicus, a trainer, who was also an invalid, was said to [pg 326]have discovered from his own case the method of treating disease by careful diet and regimen, and to have thus contributed to the advancement of Greek medicine. Pausanias also mentions (vi. 3, 9) the case of a certain Hysmon, an Elean, who, when a boy, had rheumatism in his limbs, and on this account practised for the pentathlon, that he might become a healthy and sound man. His training made him not only sound, but a celebrated victor.

It would be very interesting to know in detail what rules the Greeks prescribed for this purpose. Pausanias tells us (vi. 7, 9) that a certain Dromeus, who won ten victories in long races at various games (about Ol. 74, 485 B. C.), was the first who thought of eating meat in his training, for that up to that time the diet of athletes had been cheese from wicker baskets (ἐκ τῶν ταλάρων).[124] It must be remembered that meat diet was not common among the Greeks, who, like most southern people, lived rather upon fish, fruit, and vegetables, so that the meat dinners of Bœotia were censured as heavy and rather disgusting. However, the discovery of [pg

327]Dromeus was adopted by Greek athletes ever after, and we hear of their compulsory meals of large quantities of meat, and their consequent sleepiness and sluggishness in ordinary life, in such a way as to make us believe that the Greeks had missed the real secret of training, and actually thought that the more strong nutriment a man could take, the stronger he would become. The quantity eaten by athletes is universally spoken of as far exceeding the quantity eaten by ordinary men, not to speak of its heavier quality.

The suspicion that, in consequence, Greek athletic performances were not in speed greater than, if even equal to, our own, is however hard to verify, as we are without any information as to the time in which their running feats were performed. They had no watches, or nice measures of short moments of time, and always ran races merely to see who would win, not to see in how short a time a given distance could be done. Nevertheless, as the course was over soft sand, and as the vases picture them rushing along in spread-eagle fashion, with their arms like the sails of a windmill—in order to aid the motion of their bodies, as the Germans explain (after Philostratos)—nay, as we even hear of their having started shouting, if we can believe such a thing, their time performances in running must have been decidedly poor.[125]

[pg 328]
In the Olympic games the running, which had originally been the only competition, always

came first. The distance was once up the course, and seems to have been about 200 yards. After the year 720 B. C. (?) races of double the course, and long races of about 3000 yards were added;[126] races in armor were a later addition, and came at the end of the sports. It is remarkable that among all these varieties hurdle races were unknown, though the long jump was assigned a special place, and thought very important. We have several extraordinary anecdotes of endurance in running long journeys cited throughout Greek history, and even now the modern inhabitants are remarkable for this quality. I have seen a young man keep up with a horse ridden at a good pace across rough country for many miles, and have been told that the Greek postmen are quite wonderful for their speed and lasting. But this is compatible with very poor performances at prize meetings.

[pg 329]
There were short races for boys at Olympia of half the course. Eighteen years was beyond the limit of age for competing, as a story in Pausanias implies, and a boy who won at the age of twelve was thought wonderfully young. The same authority tells us of a man who won the sprint race at four successive meetings, thus keeping up his pace for sixteen years—a remarkable case. There seems to have been no second prize in any of the historical games, a natural consequence of the abolition of material rewards.[127] There was, naturally, a good deal of chance in the course of the contest, and Pausanias evidently knew cases

where the winner was not the best man. For example, the races were run in heats of four, and if there was an odd man over, the owner of the last lot drawn could sit down till the winners of the heats were declared, and then run against them without any previous fatigue. The limitation of each heat to four competitors arose, I fancy, from their not wearing colors (or even clothes), and so not being easily distinguishable. They were accordingly walked into the arena through an underground passage in the raised side of the stadium, and the name and country of each proclaimed in order by a herald. This practice is accurately [pg 330]copied in the present Olympic games held at Athens every four years.

The next event was the wrestling match, which is out of fashion at our prize meetings, though still a favorite sport in many country districts. There is a very ample terminology for the various tricks and devices in this contest, and they have been explained with much absurdity by scholiasts, both ancient and modern. It seems that it was not always enough to throw your adversary,[128] but that an important part of the sport was the getting uppermost on the ground; and in no case was a man declared beaten till he was thrown three times, and was actually laid on his back. It is not worth while enumerating the various technical terms, but it may be observed that a good deal of what we should call foul play was tolerated. There was no kicking, such as there used to be in wrestling matches in

Ireland, because there were no boots, but Pausanias mentions (vi. 4, 3) a man who did not know how to wrestle, but defeated his opponents by breaking their fingers. We shall return to this point when speaking of the *pankration*.

When the wrestling was over there followed the throwing of the discus and the dart, and the long leap, but in what order is uncertain; for I cannot [pg 331]accept as evidence the pentameter line of Simonides, which enumerates the games of the pentathlon, seeing that it would be impossible to vary them from the order he gives without great metrical difficulties. Our only safe guide is, I think, the date of the origin of each kind of competition, as it was plainly the habit of the Greeks to place the new event next after those already established. The sole exception to this is in the establishing of contests for boys, which seem always to have come immediately before the corresponding competition for men. But we are only told that both wrestling and the contest of five events (pentathlon) dated from the 18th Ol. (710 B. C.), and are not informed in what order each was appointed.[129]



Entrance to the Stadium, Olympia

The discus-throwing was mainly to test distance, but the dart-throwing to strike a mark. The discus was either of stone or of metal, and was very heavy. I infer from the attitude of Myron's discobolus, as seen in our copies, that it was thrown without a preliminary run, and rather hurled standing. This contest is to be compared with our hammer-throwing, or putting of weights. We are, however, without any accurate information either as to the average weight of the discus, or the average distance which a good man could throw it. There is, indeed, one ancient specimen extant, which was found at Ægina, [pg 332]and is now preserved among the bronze antiquities at Munich. It is about eight inches in diameter, and something under four pounds in weight. But there seem to have been three sizes of discus, according as they were intended for boys, for grown youths (ἀγένειοι), or for

men, and it is not certain to which class this discus belongs. Philostratos mentions one hundred cubits as a fine throw, but in such a way as to make it doubtful whether he is not talking at random and in round numbers. Similarly, we have no details concerning the javelin contest. But I suspect that here, if anywhere, the Greeks could do what we cannot; for the savages of to-day, who use spears, can throw them with a force and accuracy which is to us quite surprising. It is reported by trustworthy travellers that a Kaffir who comes suddenly on game will put a spear right into an antelope at ten or twelve yards' distance by an underhand chuck, without taking time to raise his arm. This is beyond the ability of any English athlete, however trained.

The question of the long jump is more interesting, as it still forms a part of our contests. It is not certain whether the old Greeks practised the running jump, or the high jump, for we never hear of a preliminary start, or of any difficulty about "breaking trig," as people now call it. Furthermore, an extant epigram on a celebrated athlete, Phayllus of Kroton, asserts that he jumped clean over the prepared ground (which [pg 333]was broken with a spade) on to the hard ground beyond—a distance of forty-nine feet. We cannot, of course, though some German professors believe it, credit this feat, if it were a single long jump, yet we can find no trace of anything like a hop, step, and jump, so that it seems wonderful how such an absurdity

should be gravely repeated in an epigram. But the exploit became proverbial, and to leap ὑπὲρ τὰ σκάμματα (beyond the digging) was a constantly repeated phrase.

The length of Phayllus's leap would be even more incredible if the competition was in a standing jump, and yet the figures of athletes on vases which I have seen strongly favor this supposition. They are represented not as running, but as standing and swinging the dumb-bells or ἁλτῆρες (jumpers), which were always used by the older Greeks, as assisting them materially in increasing their distance. I can imagine this being the case in a standing jump where a man rose with the forward swing of the weights, but in a running jump the carrying of the weights must surely impede rather than assist him. I know that Irish peasants, who take off very heavy boots to jump, often carry one in each hand, and throw them backward violently as they rise from the ground; but this principle is not admitted so far as I know, by any scientific authority, as of the slightest assistance.

We hear of no vaulting or jumping with a pole, [pg 334]so that in fact the leap seems an isolated contest, and of little interest except as determining one of the events of the pentathlon, in which a man must win three in order to be declared victor. This pentathlon, as comprising gentlemanly exercise without much brutality, was especially patronized by the Spartans. It was attempted for boys, but immediately abandoned, the strain being thought excessive for growing constitutions.

There remain the two severest and most objectionable sports—boxing and the pankration. The former came first (Ol. 23), the other test of strength not being admitted till Ol. 33 (650 B. C.). But one special occasion is mentioned when a champion, who was competing in both, persuaded the judges to change the order, that he might not have to contend against a specially famous antagonist when already wounded and bruised. For boxing was, even from Homeric times, a very dangerous and bloody amusement, in which the vanquished were always severely punished. The Greeks were not content with naked fists, but always used a special apparatus, called ἱμάντες, which consisted at first of a weight carried in the hand, and fastened by thongs of hide round the hand and wrist. But this ancient cestus came to be called the gentle kind (μειλίχαι) when a later and more brutal invention introduced "sharp thongs on the wrist," and probably increased the weight of the instrument. The successful boxer in the Iliad [pg 335](Epeius) confesses that he is a bad warrior, though he is the acknowledged champion in his own line; but evidently this sport was not highly esteemed in epic days. In historical times it seems to have been more favored. There was no doubt a great deal of skill required for it, but I think the body of the evidence goes to prove that the Greeks did not box on sound principles, and that any prominent member of the P. R. with his naked fists would have easily settled any armed champion of Olympian fame. Here are my reasons:

The principle of increasing the weight of the fist as much as possible is only to be explained by the habit of dealing swinging or downward strokes, and is incompatible with the true method of striking straight home quickly, and giving weight to the stroke by sending the whole body with it. In Vergil's description a boxer is even described getting up on tip-toe to strike his adversary on the top of the head—a ridiculous manœuvre, which must make his instant ruin certain, if his opponent knew the first elements of the art. That this downward stroke was used appears also from the anecdote in Pausanias, where a father seeing his son, who was ploughing, drive in the share which had fallen out with strokes of his fist, without a hammer, immediately entered him for the boys' boxing match at Olympia. The lad got roughly handled from want of skill, and seemed likely to lose, when the father [pg 336]called out: "Boy, give him the plough stroke!" and so encouraged him that he forthwith knocked his adversary out of time.

It is almost conclusive as to the swinging stroke that throughout antiquity a boxer was not known as a man with his nose broken, but as a man *with his ears crushed*. Vergil even speaks of their receiving blows on the back. Against all this there are only two pieces of evidence—one of them incredible—in favor of the straight home stroke. In the fight between Pollux and Amykos, described by Theocritus (*Idyll* 22), Pollux strikes his man on the left temple, καὶ ἐπέμπεσεν ὤμῳ, which may

mean, “and follows up the stroke from the shoulder.” But this is doubtful. The other is the story of Pausanias (viii. 40, 3), that when Kreugas and Damoxenos boxed till evening, and neither could hit the other, they at last agreed to receive stroke about, and after Kreugas had dealt Damoxenos one on the head, the latter told him to hold up his hand,[130] and then drove his fingers right into Kreugas, beneath the ribs, and pulled out his entrails. Kreugas of course died on the spot, but was crowned as victor, on the ground that Damoxenos had broken his agreement of striking *one* blow in turn, by striking him with five sep[pg 337]arate fingers! But this curious decision was only one of many in which a boxing competitor was disqualified for having fought with the intention of maiming his antagonist.

Little need be added about the pankration, which combined boxing and wrestling, and permitted every sort of physical violence except biting. In this contest a mere fall did not end the affair, as might happen in wrestling, but the conflict was always continued on the ground, and often ended in one of the combatants being actually choked, or having his fingers and toes broken. One man, Arrachion, at the last gasp, broke his adversary’s toe, and made him give in, at the moment he was himself dying of strangulation. Such contests were not to the credit either of the humanity or of the good taste of the Greeks, and would not be tolerated even in the lowest of our prize rings.

I will conclude this sketch by giving some account of the general management of the prize meetings.

There was no want of excitement and of circumstance about them. In the case of the four great meetings there was even a public truce proclaimed, and the competitors and visitors were guaranteed a safe journey to visit them and to return to their homes. The umpires at the Olympic games were chosen ten months before at Elis, and seem to have numbered one for each clan, varying through Greek history from two to twelve, but finally fixed at ten. [pg 338]They were called both here and at the other great games Ἑλλανοδίκαι, judges of the Hellenes, in recognition of their national character. Three superintended the pentathlon, three the horse races, and the rest the other games. They had to reside together in a public building, and undergo strict training in all the details of their business, in which they were assisted by heralds, trumpeters, stewards, etc. Their office was looked upon as of much dignity and importance.

When the great day came, they sat in purple robes in the semicircular end of the racecourse—a piece of splendor which the modern Greeks imitate by dressing the judges of the new Olympic games in full evening dress and white kid gloves. The effect even now with neatly-clothed candidates is striking enough; what must it have been when a row of judges in purple looked on solemnly at a pair of men dressed in oil and dust—*i. e.*, in

mud—wrestling or rolling upon the ground? The crowd cheered and shouted as it now does. Pausanias mentions a number of cases where competitors were disqualified for unfairness, and in most of them the man's city took up the quarrel, which became quite a public matter; but at the games the decision was final, nor do we hear of a case where it was afterward reversed.[131] They were also obliged to exact [pg 339]beforehand from each candidate an oath that he was of pure Hellenic parentage, that he had not taken, or would not take, any unfair advantage, and that he had spent ten months in strict training. This last rule I do not believe. It is absurd in itself, and is contradicted by such anecdotes as that of the sturdy plough-boy quoted above, and still more directly by the remark of Philostratos (Γυμν. 38), who ridicules any inquiry into the morals or training of an athlete by the judges. Its only meaning could have been to exclude random candidates, if the number was excessive, and in later times some such regulation may have subsisted, but I do not accept it for the good classical days. There is the case of a boy being rejected for looking too young and weak, and winning in the next Olympiad among the men, But in another instance the competitor disqualified (for unfairness) went mad with disappointment. Aristotle notes that it was the rarest possible occurrence for a boy champion to turn out successful among the full-grown athletes, but Pausanias seems to contradict him, a fair number of cases being cited among the selection which he makes.

There is yet one unpleasant feature to be noted, [pg 340]which has disappeared from our sports. Several allusions make it plain that the vanquished, even vanquished boys, were regarded as fit subjects for jibe and ridicule, and that they sneaked home by lanes and backways. When the most ideal account which we have of the games gives us this information, we cannot hesitate to accept it as probably a prominent feature, which is, moreover, thoroughly consistent with the character of the old Greeks as I conceive it.[132]

The general conclusion to which all these details lead us is this, that with all the care and with all the pomp expended on Greek athletic meetings, despite the exaggerated fame attained by victors, and the solid rewards both of money and of privileges accorded them by their grateful country, the results attained physically seem to have been inferior to those of English athletes. There was, moreover, an element of brutality in them, which is very shocking to modern notions: and not all the ideal splendor of Pindar's praises, or of Pythagoras's art, can raise the Greek pankratiast as an athlete much above the level of a modern prize-fighter. But, nevertheless, by the aid of their monumental statues, their splendid lyric poetry, and the many literary and musical contests which were combined with the gymnastic, the Greeks contrived, as usual, to raise very common things to [pg 341]a great national manifestation of culture which we cannot hope to equal.

For common they were, and very human, in the strictest sense. Dry-as-dust scholars would have us believe that the odes of Pindar give a complete picture of these games; as if all the booths about the course had not been filled with idlers, pleasure-mongers, and the scum of Greek society! Tumbling, thimble-rigging, and fortune-telling, along with love-making and trading, made Olympia a scene not unlike the Derby. When the drinking parties of young men began in the evening, there may even have been a *soupçon* of Donnybrook Fair about it, but that the committee of management were probably strict in their discipline. From the Isthmian games the successful athletes, with their training over, retired, as most athletes do, to the relaxation afforded by city amusements. One can imagine how amply Corinth provided for the outburst of liberty after the long and arduous subjection of physical training.

But all these things are perhaps justly forgotten, and it is ungrateful to revive them from oblivion. The dust and dross of human conflict, the blood and the gall, the pain and the revenge—all this was laid aside like the athlete's dress, and could not hide the glory of his naked strength and his iron endurance. The idleness and vanity of human admiration have vanished with the motley crowd, and have left us [pg 342]free to study the deeper beauty of human vigor with the sculptor, and the spiritual secrets of its hereditary origin with the poet. Thus Greek gymnastic, with all its defects—perhaps even with its absurdities

—has done what has never been even the dream of its modern sister; it stimulated the greatest artists and the highest intellects in society, and through them ennobled and purified public taste and public morals.

When we left Olympia, and began to ascend the course of the Alpheus, the valley narrowed to the broad bed of the stream. The way leads now along the shady slopes high over the river, now down in the sandy flats left bare in the summer season. There are curious zones of vegetation distinctly marked along the course of the valley. On the river bank, and in the little islands formed by the stream, are laurels, myrtles, and great plane-trees. On the steep and rocky slopes are thick coverts of mastich, arbutus, dwarf-holly, and other evergreens which love to clasp the rocks with their roots; and they are all knit together by great creeping plants, the wild vine, the convolvulus, and many that are new and nameless to the northern stranger. On the heights, rearing their great tops against the sky, are huge pine-trees, isolated and still tattered with the winter storms.

“Ces adieux à l’Elide,” adds M. Beulé, “laissent [pg 343]une pure et vive impression. Rarement la nature se trouve en si parfaite harmonie avec les souvenirs. On dirait un théâtre éternel, toujours prêt pour les joies pacifiques, toujours paré pour les fêtes, et qui,

depuis dix-huit siècles, attend ses acteurs qui ont disparu."



The Valley of the Alpheus

Travellers going from Olympia northward either go round by carriage through Elis to Patras—a drive of two days—or by Kalavryta to Megaspilion, and thence to Vostitza, thus avoiding the great Alps of Olonos (as Erymanthus is now called) and Chelmos, which are among the highest and most picturesque in Greece. After my last visit to Olympia (1884) I was so tantalized by the perpetual view of the snowy crest of Olonos, that I determined to attempt a new route, not known to any of the guide-books,[133] and cross over the mountain, as directly as I could, from Olympia to Patras. It was easy for me to carry out this plan, being accompanied by a young

Greek antiquarian, M. Castroménos, and by Dr. Purgold from Olympia, who had travelled through most of Greece, but was as anxious as I was to try this new route.

So we started on a beautiful spring morning, up the valley of the Kladeos, with all the trees bursting into leaf and blossom, and the birds singing their hymns of delight. The way was wooded, and led [pg 344]up through narrow and steep, but not difficult glens, until, on a far higher level, we came in three or four hours to the village of Lala, once an important Turkish fort. Here was a higher plain, from which we began to see the plan of that vast complex of mountains which form the boundaries of the Old Elis, Achaia, and Arcadia, and which have so often been the scenes of difficult campaigns. From Lala, where we breakfasted, we crossed a sudden deep valley, and found ourselves, on regaining the higher level, in a vast oak forest, unlike anything I had yet seen in Greece. The trees had been undisturbed for centuries, and the forest was even avoided in summer by the natives, on account of the many poisonous snakes which hid in the deep layers of dead leaves. In that high country the oaks were just turning pink with their new buds, and not a green leaf was to be seen, so we could trust to the winter sleep of the snakes, while we turned aside again and again from our path, to the great perplexity of the muleteers, to dig up wood anemones of all colors, pale blue, pink, deep crimson, scarlet, snowy-white, which showed brilliantly on the

brown oak-leaf carpet.

We spent at least two hours in riding through this forest, and then we rose higher and higher, passing along the upper edge of deep glens, with rushing streams far beneath us. The most beautiful point was one from which we looked down a vast straight [pg 345]glen of some fifteen miles, almost as deep as a cañon, with the silvery Erymanthus river pursuing its furious course so directly as to be clearly visible all the way. But though ascending the river from this point, where its course comes suddenly round a corner, the upper country was no longer wooded, but bleak, like most of the Alpine Arcadia, a country of dire winters and great hardship to the population, who till an unwilling soil on the steep slopes of giant precipices.

We were much tempted to turn up another tortuous glen to the hidden nest of Divri, where the Greeks found refuge from Turkish prosecution in the great war—a place so concealed, and so difficult of access, that an armed force has never penetrated there. But the uncertainties of our route were too many to admit of these episodes, so we hurried on to reach the Kahn of Tripotamo in the evening —a resting-place which suggested to us strongly the inn where St. John is reported to have slept in the apocryphal *Acts* of his life. Being very tired with preaching and travelling, he found it so impossible to share the room with the bugs, that he besought them in touching language to allow him to sleep; practically in virtue of his apostolic

authority, he ordered them out of the house. They all obeyed, but when in the morning the apostle and his companions found them waiting patiently outside the door, he was so moved by their consideration for [pg 346]him, that he permitted them to return and infest the house.

Nor were the bugs perhaps the worst. Being awakened by a crunching noise in the night, I perceived that a party of cats had come in to finish our supper for us, and when startled by a flying boot, they made our beds and bodies the stepping stones for a leap to the rafters, and out through a large hole in the roof. By and by I was aroused by the splashing of cold water in my face, and found that a heavy shower had come on, and was pouring through the cats' passage. So I put up my umbrella in bed till the shower was over—the only time I felt rain during the whole of that voyage. I notice that Miss Agnes Smith, who travelled through these parts in May, 1883, and had very similar experiences at Tripotamo, was wet through almost every day. We did not see more than two showers, and were moreover so fortunate as to have perfectly calm days whenever we were crossing high passes, though in general the breeze was so strong as to be almost stormy in the valleys.

Next morning we followed the river up to the neighboring site of Psophis, so picturesquely described by Polybius in his account of Philip V., and his campaigns in Elis and Triphylia.[134] This town, regarded as the frontier-town of

Elis, Arcadia, and Achaia, would well repay an enterprising excavator. [pg 347]The description of Polybius can be verified without difficulty, and ruins are still visible. We found out from a solitary traveller that our way turned to the north, up one of the affluents of the Erymanthus, and so we ascended in company with this worthy man to a village (Lechouri) under the highest precipices of Olonos. He was full of the curiosity of a Greek peasant—Who were we, where did we come from, were we married, had we children, how many, what was our income, was it from land, was it paid by the State, could we be dismissed by the Government, were we going to write about Greece, what would we say, etc., etc.? Such was the conversation to which we submitted for the sake of his guidance. But at last it seemed as if our way was actually at an end, and we had come into an impassable *cul-de-sac*. Perpendicular walls of rock surrounded us on all sides except where we had entered by constantly fording the stream, or skirting along its edge. Was it possible that the curiosity of our fellow-traveller had betrayed him into leading us up this valley to the village whither he himself was bound? We sought anxiously for the answer, when he showed us a narrow strip of dark pine-trees coming down from above, in form like a little torrent, and so reaching with a narrow thread of green to the head of the valley. This was our pass, the pine-trees with their roots and stems made a zigzag path up the almost perpendicular wall possible, and so we [pg

348]wended our way up with infinite turnings, walking or rather climbing for safety's sake, and to rest the laboring mules. Often as I had before attempted steep ascents with horses in Greece, I never saw anything so astonishing as this.

When we had reached the top we found ourselves on a narrow saddle, with snowy heights close to us on both sides, the highest ridge of Olonos facing us a few miles away, and a great pine forest reaching down on the northern side, whither our descent was to lead us. About us were still great patches of snow, and in them were blowing the crocus and the cyclamen, with deep blue scilla. Far away to the south reached, in a great panorama, the mountains of Arcadia, and even beyond them the highest tops of Messene and Laconia were plainly visible. The air was clear, the day was perfectly fine and calm. To the north the chain of Erymanthus still hid from us the far distance. For a long time, while our muleteers slept and the mules and ponies rested, we sat wondering at the great view. The barometer indicated that we were at a height of about 5500 feet. The freshness and purity of the atmosphere was such that no thought of hunger and fatigue could mar our perfect enjoyment. In the evening, descending through gloomy pines and dazzling snow, we reached the village of Hagios Vlasos, where the song of countless nightingales beguiled the hours of the night, for here too sleep was not easily obtained.

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The journey from this point to Patras, which we accomplished in twelve hours, is not so interesting, and the traveller who tries it now had better telegraph for a carriage to meet him as far as possible on the way. By this time a good road is finished for many miles, and the tedium and heat of the plain, as you approach Patras, are very trying. But with this help, I think no journey in all Greece so well worth attempting, and of course it can be accomplished in either direction.

Patras is indeed an excellent place for a starting-point. Apart from the route just described, you can go by boat to Vostitza, and thence to Megaspilion. There are, moreover, splendid alpine ascents to be made for those who like such work, to the summits of Chelmos and Olonos (Erymanthus), and this is best done from Patras. Moreover, Patras is itself a most lovely place, commanding a noble view of the coast and mountains of Ætolia across the narrow fiord, as well as of the Ionian islands to the N. W. Right opposite is the ever-interesting site of Missolonghi. Last, and perhaps not least, there is at Patras a most respectable inn, indeed I should call it a hotel,[135] where the traveller who has spent ten [pg 350]days of rough outing in Peloponnesus will find a haven of rest and comfort. From here steamers will carry him to Athens round the coast, or home to Italy.

[pg 351]

CHAPTER XII.

ARCADIA—ANDRITZENA—BASSÆ—MEGALOPOLIS—TRIPOLITZA.

There is no name in Greece which raises in the mind of the ordinary reader more pleasing and more definite ideas than the name Arcadia. It has become indissolubly connected with the charms of pastoral ease and rural simplicity. The sound of the shepherd's pipe and the maiden's laughter, the rustling of shady trees, the murmuring of gentle fountains, the bleating of lambs and the lowing of oxen—these are the images of peace and plenty which the poets have gathered about that ideal retreat. There are none more historically false, more unfounded in the real nature and aspect of the country, and more opposed to the sentiment of the ancients. Rugged mountains and gloomy defiles, a

harsh and wintry climate, a poor and barren soil, tilled with infinite patience; a home that exiled its children to seek bread at the risk of their blood, a climate more opposed to intelligence and to culture than even Bœotian fogs, a safe retreat of bears and wolves—this is the Arcadia of old Greek history. Politically it has no weight whatever till the days [pg 352]of Epaminondas, and the foundation of Megalopolis. Intellectually, its rise is even later, and it takes no national part in the great march of literature from Homer to Menander.[136] It was only famed for the marketable valor of its hardy mountaineers, of whom the Tegeans had held their own even against the power of Sparta, and obtained an honorable place in her army. It was also noted for rude and primitive cults, of which later men praised the simplicity and homely piety—at times also, the stern gloominess, which did not turn from the offering of human blood.

I must remind the reader that rural beauty among the ancients, as well as among the Renaissance visions of an imaginary Arcadia as a rustic paradise, by no means included the wild picturesqueness which we admire in beetling cliffs and raging torrents. These were inhospitable and savage to the Greeks. It was the gentle slope, the rich pasture, the placid river framed in deep foliage—it was, in fact, landscape-scenery like the valleys of the Thames, or about the gray abbeys of Yorkshire, which satisfied their notion of perfect landscape; and in this the men of the

Renaissance were perfectly agreed with them.

How, then, did the false notion of our Arcadia [pg 353]spring up in modern Europe? How is it that even our daily papers assume this sense, and know it to be intelligible to the most vulgar public? The history of the change from the historical to the poetical conception is very curious, and worth the trouble of explaining, especially as we find it assumed in many books, but accounted for in none.

It appears that from the oldest days the worship of Pan had its home in Arcadia, particularly about Mount Mænalus, and that it was already ancient when it was brought to Athens at the time of the Persian Wars. The extant Hymn to Pan, among the Homeric Hymns, which may have been composed shortly after that date, is very remarkable for its idyllic and picturesque tone, and shows that with this worship of Pan were early associated those trains of nymphs and rustic gods, with their piping and dance, which inspired Praxiteles's inimitable Faun. These images are even transferred by Euripides to the Acropolis, where he describes the daughters of Aglauros dancing on the sward, while Pan is playing his pipe in the grotto underneath (*Ion*, vv. 492, *sqq.*). Such facts seem to show a gentle and poetical element in the stern and gloomy mountaineers, who lived, like the Swiss of our day, in a perpetual struggle with nature, and were all their lives harassed with toil and saddened with thankless fatigue. This conclusion is sustained by the evidence of a far later witness,

Polybius, who [pg 354]in his fourth book mentions the strictness with which the Arcadians insisted upon an education in music, as necessary to soften the harshness and wildness of their life. He even maintains that the savagery of one town (Kynætha) was caused by a neglect of this salutary precaution. So it happens that, although Theocritus lays his pastoral scenes in the uplands of Sicily, and the later pastoral romances, such as the exquisite *Daphnis and Chloe*, are particularly associated with the voluptuous Lesbos, Vergil, in several of his *Eclogues*, makes allusion to the musical talent of Arcadian shepherds, and in his tenth brings the unhappy Gallus into direct relation to Arcadia in connection with the worship of Pan on Mænalus. But this prominent feature in Vergil—borrowed, I suppose, from some Greek poet, though I know not from whom—bore no immediate fruit. His Roman imitators, Calpurnius and Nemesianus, make no mention of Arcadia, and if they had, their works were not unearthed till the year 1534, when the poetical Arcadia had been already, as I shall show, created. There seems no hint of the idea in early Italian poetry;[137] for according to the histories of mediæval literature, the pastoral romance did not originate until the very end of the fourteenth century, with the Portuguese Ribeyro, and he lays all [pg 355]the scenes of his idylls not in a foreign country, but in Portugal, his own home. Thus we reach the year 1500 without any trace of a poetical Arcadia. But at that very time it was being created by the single work of a single

man. The celebrated Jacopo Sannazaro, known by the title of Actius Sincerus in the affected society of literary Naples, exiled himself from that city in consequence of a deep and unrequited passion. He lay concealed for a long time, it is said, in the wilds of France, possibly in Egypt, but certainly not in Greece, and immortalized his grief in a pastoral medley of prose description and idyllic complaint called *Arcadia*,[138] and suggested, I [pg 356]believe, by the Gallus of Vergil. Though the learned and classical author despised this work in comparison with his heroic poem on the Conception of the Virgin Mary, the public of the day thought differently. Appearing in 1502, the *Arcadia* of Sannazaro went through sixty editions during the century, and so this single book created that imaginary home of innocence and grace which has ever since been attached to the name. Its occurrence henceforward is so frequent as to require no further illustration in this place.

But let us turn from this poetical and imaginary country to the real land—from Arcádia to Arcadía, as it is called by the real inhabitants. As everybody knows, this Arcadia is the alpine centre of the Morea, bristling with mountain chains, which reach their highest points in the great bar of Erymanthus, to the N. W., in the lonely peak of “Cyllene hoar,” to the N. E., in the less conspicuous, but far more sacred Lykæon, to the S. W., and finally, in the ser[pg 357]rated Taygetus to the S. E. These four are the angles, as it were,

of a quadrilateral enclosing Arcadia. Yet these are but the greatest among chains of great mountains, which seem to traverse the country in all directions, and are not easily distinguished, or separated into any connected system.[139] They are nevertheless interrupted, as we found, by two fine oval plains—both stretching north and south, both surrounded with a beautiful panorama of mountains, and both, of course, the seats of the old culture, such as it was in Arcadia. That which is southerly and westerly, and from which the rivers still flow into the Alpheus and the western sea,[140] is guarded at its south end by Megalopolis. That which is more east, which is higher in level, and separated from the former by the bleak bar of Mænalus, is the plain of Mantinea and Tegea, now represented by the important town of Tripolitza. These two parallel plains give some plan and system to the confusion of mountains which cover the ordinary maps of Arcadia.

The passage from Elis into Arcadia is nowhere marked by any natural boundary. You ride up the valley of the Alpheus, crossing constantly the [pg 358]streams, great and small, which come flowing into it from the spurs of Erymanthus, from northern Arcadia, and the adjoining highlands of Elis. The stream called Erymanthus, which is the old boundary, though called a λάβρος ποταμὸς by Polybius, does not strike the traveller here as it does higher up in its course, and the only other confluent water worth mentioning is the

Ladon, which meets the Alpheus at some hours' ride above Olympia, but which counted of old as a river of Arcadia. This Ladon seems to have specially struck Pausanias with its beauty, as he returns to it several times; and later observers, such as M. Beulé, have corroborated him, saying that on the banks of this river you may indeed find the features of the poetical Arcadia—grassy slopes and great shady trees, without the defiles and precipices so common in the inner country. The Ladon and its valley in fact, though in Arcadia, partake of the character of the neighboring Elis: it is the outer boundary of the real Alps. The Alpheus, on the contrary, which is a broad, peaceful stream when it passes into tamer country, comes through the wildest part of central Arcadia; and if you follow its course upward, will lead you first past the ancient site of Heræa, a few miles above the Ladon, and then through rugged and savage mountains, till you at last ascend to the valley of Megalopolis, round which it winds in a great curve. We did not follow this route, nor did we ascend the [pg 359]valley of the Ladon, in spite of its reputed beauties. For we were bound for Andritzena, a ride of eleven hours from Olympia, which lay to the S. E., and within easy distance of the temple of Bassæ. We therefore forded the Alpheus, just above the confluence of the Ladon, where the two rivers form a great delta of sand, and the stream is broad and comparatively shallow. The banks were clothed with brushwood, and above it with a green forest, along the grassy margin of which scarlet anemones were

scattered like our primroses among the stems of the trees, and varied with their brightness the mosses and hoary lichen. From this point onward we began to cross narrow defiles, and climb up steeps which seemed impossible to any horse or mule. We entered secluded mountain valleys, where the inhabitants appeared to live apart from all the world, and looked with wonder upon the sudden stranger. We rested beside tumbling rivers, rushing from great wooded mountain sides, which stood up beside us like walls of waving green. The snow had disappeared from these wild valleys but a few weeks, and yet even the later trees were already clothed with that yellow and russet brown which is not only the faded remnant, but also the forerunner, of the summer green. And down by the river's side the gray fig trees were putting forth great tufts at the end of every branch, while the pear trees were showering their snowy blossoms upon the stream. [pg 360]But in one respect, all this lonely solitude showed a marked contrast to the wilds of northern Greece. Every inch of available ground was cultivated; all the steep hill sides were terraced in ridges with infinite labor; the ravages of the winter's torrent were being actively repaired. There was indeed in some sense a solitude. No idlers or wanderers were to be seen on the way. But the careful cultivation of all the country showed that there was not only population, but a thrifty and careful population. All the villages seemed encumbered with the remains of recent building; for almost all the houses were

new, or erected within very few years. The whole of this alpine district seemed happy and prosperous. This, say the Greeks, is the result of its remoteness from the Turkish frontier, its almost insular position—in fact, of its being under undisturbed Hellenic rule. No bandit has been heard of in Arcadia since the year 1847. Life and property are, I should think, more secure than in any part of England. Morals are remarkably pure. If all Greece were occupied in this way by a contented and industrious peasantry, undisturbed by ambition from within or violence from without, the kingdom must soon become rich and prosperous. It was not uncommon to find in these valleys two or three secluded homesteads, miles from any village. This is the surest sign both of outward security and of inward thrift, when people cut themselves off from society for the [pg 361]sake of ample room and good return for their industry. Late in the evening we entered the steep streets of the irregular but considerable town of Andritzena.

We experienced in this place some of the rudeness of Greek travel. As the party was too large to be accommodated in a private house, we sought the shelter of a ξενοδοχεῖον, as it is still called—an inn with no chairs, no beds, one tiny table, and about two spoons and forks. We were in fact lodged within four bare walls, with a balcony outside the room, and slept upon rugs laid on the floor. The people were very civil and honest—in this a great contrast to the inn at Tripolitza, of which I

shall speak in due time—and were, moreover, considerably inconvenienced by our arrival during the Passion Week of the Greek Church, when there is hardly anything eaten. There was no meat, of course, in the town. But this was not all. No form of milk, cheese, or curds, is allowed during this fast. The people live on black bread, olives, and hard-boiled eggs. They are wholly given up to their processions and services; they are ready to think of nothing else. Thus we came not only to a place scantily supplied, but at the scantiest moment of the year. This is a fact of great importance to travellers in Greece, and one not mentioned, I think, in the guide-books. Without making careful provision beforehand by telegraph, no one should [pg 362]venture into the highlands of Greece during this very Holy Week, and it should be remembered that it does not coincide with the Passion or Holy Week of the Latin Church. It was just ten days later on this occasion; so that, after having suffered some hardships from this unforeseen cause in remote parts of Italy, we travelled into the same difficulty in Greece. But I must say that a Greek fast is a very different thing from the mild and human fasting of the Roman Catholic Church. We should have been well-nigh starved had I not appealed, as was my wont, to the physician, ὁ κύριος ἴατρος, of the town, a very amiable and cultivated man, and really educated in the most philosophical views of modern medicine. He was well acquainted, for example, with the clinical practice of the Dublin school, as exemplified in the works of Graves and

Stokes. It seems to me, from a comparison of many instances, that in this matter of medicine, as indeed generally, the Greeks show remarkable intelligence and enterprise as compared with the nations around them. They study in the great centres of European thought. They know the more important languages in which this science can be pursued. A traveller taken ill in the remote valleys of Arcadia would receive far safer and better treatment than would be his lot in most parts of Italy.

The gentleman to whom I appealed in this case did all he could to save us from starvation. He [pg 363]procured for us excellent fresh curds. He obtained us the promise of meat from the mountains. He came to visit us, and tell us what we required to know of the neighborhood. Thus we were able to spend the earlier portion of the night in comparative comfort. But, as might have been expected, when the hour for sleep had arrived our real difficulties began. I was protected by a bottle of spirits of camphor, with which my rugs and person were sufficiently scented to make me an object of aversion to my assailants. But the rest of the party were not so fortunate. It was, in fact, rather an agreeable diversion, when we were roused, or rather, perhaps, distracted, shortly after midnight, by piercing yells from a number of children, who seemed to be slowly approaching our street.

On looking out a very curious scene presented itself. All the little children were coming in

slow procession, each with a candle in its hand, and shouting *Kyrie Eleison* at the top of its voice. After the children came the women and the older men (I fancy many of the younger men were absent), also with candles, and in the midst a sort of small bier, with an image of the dead Christ laid out upon it, decked with tinsel and flowers, and surrounded with lights. Along with it came priests in their robes, singing in gruff bass some sort of Litany. The whole procession adjourned to the church of the town, where the women went to a separate gallery, the men gathered [pg 364]in the body of the building, and a guard of soldiers with fixed bayonets stood around the bier of their Christ. Though the congregation seemed very devout, and many of them in tears at the sufferings of their Saviour, they nevertheless all turned round to look at the strangers who chanced to witness their devotions. To those who come from without, and from a different cult, and see the service of a strange nation in a strange tongue, the mesquin externals are the first striking point, and we wonder how deep devotion and true piety can exist along with what is apparently mean and even grotesque. And yet it is in these poor and shabby services, it is with this neglect or insouciance of detail, that purer faith and better morals are found than in the gorgeous pageants and stately ceremonies of metropolitan cathedrals.

We rose in the morning eager to start on our three hours' ride to Bassæ, where Ictinus had built his famous but inaccessible temple to

Apollo the Helper. The temple is very usually called the temple of Phigalía, and its friezes are called Phigalian, I think, in the British Museum. This is so far true that it was built for and managed by the people of Phigalía. But the town was a considerable distance off, —according to Pausanias forty stadia, or about five miles,—and he tells us they built the temple at a place called Bassæ (the glades), near the summit of Mount Kotilion. Accordingly, [pg 365]it ought to be consistently called the temple at or of Bassæ.

The morning, as is not unusual in these Alps, was lowering and gloomy, and as we and our patient mules climbed up a steep ascent out of the town, the rain began to fall in great threatening drops. But we would not be daunted. The way led among gaunt and naked mountain sides, and often up the bed of winter torrents. The lateness of the spring, for the snow was now hardly gone, added to the gloom; the summer shrubs and the summer grass were not yet green, and the country retained most of its wintry bleakness. Now and then there met us in the solitude a shepherd coming from the mountains, covered in his white woollen cowl, and with a lamb of the same soft dull color upon his shoulders. It was the day of preparation for the Easter feast, and the lamb was being brought by this picturesque shepherd, not to the fold, but to the slaughter. Yet there was a strange and fascinating suggestion in the serious face surrounded by its symphony of white, in the wilderness around, in the

helpless patience of the animal, all framed in a background of gray mist, and dripping with abundant rain. As we wound our way through the mountains we came to glens of richer color and friendlier aspect. The sound of merry boys and baying dogs reached up to us from below as we skirted far up along the steep sides, still seeking a higher and higher level. Here the [pg 366]primrose and violet took the place of the scarlet and the purple anemone, and cheered us with the sight of northern flowers, and with the fairest produce of a northern spring.

At last we attained a weird country, in which the ground was bare, save where some sheltered and sunny spot showed bunches of very tall violets, hanging over in tufts, rare purple anemones, and here and there a great full iris; yet these patches were so exceptional as to make a strong contrast with the brown soil. But the main features were single oak-trees with pollarded tops and gnarled branches, which stood about all over these lofty slopes, and gave them a melancholy and dilapidated aspect. They showed no mark of spring, no shoot or budding leaf, but the russet brown rags of last year's clothing hung here and there upon the branches. These wintry signs, the gloomy mist, and the insisting rain gave us the feeling of chill October. And yet the weird oaks, with their branches tortured as it were by storm and frost—these crippled limbs, which looked as if the pains of age and disease had laid hold of the sad tenants of this alpine desert—were

colored with their own peculiar loveliness. All the stems were clothed with delicate silver-gray lichen, save where great patches of velvety, pale green moss spread a warm mantle about them. This beautiful contrast of gray and yellow-green may be seen upon many of our [pg 367]own oak-trees in the winter, and makes these the most richly colored of all the leafless stems in our frosty landscape. But here there were added among the branches huge tufts of mistletoe, brighter and yellower than the moss, yet of the same grassy hue, though of different texture. And there were trees so clothed with this foreign splendor that they looked like some quaint species of great evergreen. It seemed as if the summer's foliage must have really impaired the character and the beauty of this curious forest.

At last we crossed a long flat summit, and began to descend, when we presently came upon the temple from the north, facing us on a lower part of the lofty ridge. As we approached, the mist began to clear away, and the sun shone out upon the scene, while the clouds rolled back toward the east, and gradually disclosed to us the splendid prospect which the sanctuary commands. All the southern Peloponnesus lay before us. We could see the western sea, and the gulf of Koron to the south; but the long ridge of Taygetus and the mountains of Malea hid from us the eastern seas. The rich slopes of Messene, and the rugged highlands of northern Laconia and of Arcadia, filled up the

nearer view. There still remained here and there a cloud which made a blot in the picture, and marred the completeness of the landscape.

Nothing can be stranger than the remains of a beautiful temple in this alpine solitude. Greek life [pg 368]is a sort of protest for cities and plains and human culture, against picturesque Alps and romantic scenery. Yet here we have a building of the purest age and type set up far from the cities and haunts of men, and in the midst of such a scene as might be chosen by the most romantic and sentimental modern. It was dedicated to Apollo the Helper, for his deliverance of the country from the same plague which devastated Athens at the opening of the Peloponnesian War,[141] and was built by the greatest architect of the day, Ictinus, the builder of the Parthenon.

It was reputed in Pausanias's day the most beautiful temple in Peloponnesus, next to that of Athene Alea at Tegea. Even its roof was of marble tiles, and the cutting of the limestone soffits of the ceiling is still so sharp and clear, that specimens have been brought to Athens, as the most perfect of the kind. The friezes, discovered years ago (1812), and quite close to the surface, by Mr. Cockerell and his friends, were carried away, and are now one of the greatest ornaments of the British Museum. Any one who desires to know every detail of the building, and see its general effect when restored, must consult Cockerell's elaborate work on this and the temple of

Ægina. It affords many problems to the architect. Each of the pillars within the cella was engaged or [pg 369]attached to the wall, by joinings at right angles with it, the first pair only reaching forward toward the spectator as he entered. The temple faces north, contrary to the usual habit of the Greeks. In the very centre was found a Corinthian capital—another anomaly in a Doric temple, and at the epoch of Periclean art. In Mr. Cockerell's restoration of the interior, this capital is fitted to a solitary pillar in the centre of the cella, and close to the statue of the god, which apparently faced sideways, and looked toward the rising sun. It is a more popular theory that it was set up much later, with some votive tripod upon it, and that it does not belong to the original structure. The frieze in this temple was not along the outside wall of the cella, but inside, and over the pillars, as the narrow side aisle (if I may so call it) between the pillars and cella wall was broken by the joining of the former, five at each side, with the latter. I cannot but fancy that this transference of the friezes to the inner side of the wall was caused by the feeling that the Parthenon friezes, upon which such great labor and such exquisite taste had been lavished, were after all very badly seen, being "skied" into a place not worthy of them. Any one who will look up at the remaining band on the west front of the Parthenon from the foot of the pillars beneath will, I think, agree with me. At Bassæ there are many peculiarities in the Ionic capitals, and in the orna[pg 370]mentation of

this second monument of Ictinus's genius, which have occupied the architects, but on which I will not here insist.[142] The general effect is one of smallness, as compared with the Parthenon; of lightness and grace, as compared with the temple at Olympia, the Doric pillars being here somewhat more slender than those of the Parthenon, though the other proportions are not unlike. The style of the frieze has been commented upon in all our histories of Greek art. The effect produced is, moreover, that of lateness, as compared with the Athenian sculptures; there is more exaggerated action, flying drapery and contorted limbs, and altogether a conscious striving to give a strong effect. But the execution, which was probably entrusted to native artists under Attic direction, is inferior to good Attic work, and in some cases positively faulty. Unfortunately, this part of the temple is in London, not at Bassæ.

[pg 371]

The ruin, as we saw it, was very striking and unlike any other we had visited in Greece. It is built of the limestone which crops up all over the mountain plateau on which it stands; and, as the sun shone upon it after recent rain, was of a delicate bluish-gray color, so like the surface of the ground in tone that it almost seemed to have grown out of the rock, as its natural product. The pillars are indeed by no means monoliths, but set together of short drums, of which the inner row are but the rounded ends of long blocks which reach back to the cella wall. But as the grain of the

stone runs across the pillars they have become curiously wrinkled with age, so that the artificial joinings are lost among the wavy transverse lines, which make us imagine the pillars sunk with years and fatigue, and weary of standing in this wild and gloomy solitude. There is a great oak-tree, such as I have already described, close beside the temple, and the coloring of its stem forms a curious contrast to the no less beautiful shading of the time-worn pillars. Their ground being a pale bluish-gray, the lichens which invade the stone have varied the fluted surface with silver, with bright orange, and still more with a delicate rose madder. Even under a mid-day sun these rich colors were very wonderful, but what must they be at sunset?

There is something touching in the unconscious efforts of Nature to fill up the breaks and heal the [pg 372]rents which time and desolation have made in human work. If a gap occurs in the serried ranks of city buildings by sudden accident or natural decay, the site is forthwith concealed with hideous boarding; upon which, presently, staring portraits of latest clown or merriest mountebank mock as it were the ruin within, and advertise their idle mirth—an uglier fringe around the ugly stains of fire or the heaps of formless masonry. How different is the hand of Nature! Whether in the northern abbey or in the southern fane, no sooner are the monuments of human patience and human pride abandoned and forgotten, than Nature takes them into her gentle care, covers

them with ivy, with lichen, and with moss, plants her shrubs about them, and sows them with countless flowers. And thus, when a later age repents the ingratitude of its forerunners, and turns with new piety to atone for generations of forgetfulness, Nature's mantle has concealed from harm much that had else been destroyed, and covered the remainder with such beauty that we can hardly conceive these triumphs of human art more lovely in their old perfection than in their modern solitude and decay.

The way from Andritzena to Megalopolis leads down from the rugged frontiers of Arcadia and Messene, till we reach the fine rolling plain which has Karytena at its northern, and Megalopolis near [pg 373]its southern, extremity. Our guides were in high spirits, and kept singing in turn a quaint love song, which, after the usual timeless flourishes and shakes at the opening, ended in the following phrase, which their constant repetition stamped upon my memory:



The way was at first steep and difficult—we were still in the land of the violet and

primrose. But after an hour's ride we came into a forest which already showed summer signs; and here we found again the anemone, the purple and white cistus, among shrubs of mastich and arbutus. Here, too, we found the cyclamen, which is such a favorite in the green-houses and gardens of England. We passed a few miles to the south of Karytena, with its wonderful, and apparently impregnable Frankish fortress perched like an eagle's nest on the top of a huge cliff, from which there must be a splendid outlook not only down the valley of Megalopolis, but into the northern passes from Achaia, and the mountains of Elis. I can conceive no military post more important to the Arcadian plain, and yet it seems to have attained no celebrity in ancient history. From this fortress to the southern end of the plain, where the passes lead to Sparta and to northern Messene, there lies extended a very rich vein of country about twenty-[pg 374]five miles long, and ten or twelve broad, with some undulation, but practically a plain, well irrigated with rapid rivers, and waving with deep grass and green wheat. There are flourishing villages scattered along the slopes of the mountains, and all the district seems thoroughly tilled, except the region south of the town, where forests of olives give a wilder tone to the landscape.

I confess I had not understood the history of the celebrated foundation of Megalopolis, until I came to study the features of this plain. Here, as elsewhere, personal acquaintance with the geography of the country is the

necessary condition of a living knowledge of its history. As is well known, immediately after the battle of Leuctra the Arcadians proceeded to build this metropolis, as a safeguard or makeweight against the neighboring power of Sparta. Pausanias, who is very full and instructive on the founding of the city, tells us that the founders came from the chief towns of Arcadia—Tegea, Mantinea, Kleitor, and Mænalus. But these cities had no intention of merging themselves in the new capital. In fact, Mantinea and Tegea were in themselves fully as important a check on Sparta in their own valley, and were absolutely necessary to hold the passes northward to Argos, which lay in that direction. But the nation insisted upon all the village populations in and around the western plain (which hitherto had possessed no leading city) amal[pg 375]gamating into Megalopolis, and deserting their ancient homes. Many obeyed; Pausanias enumerates about forty of them. Those who refused were exiled, or even massacred by the enraged majority. Thus there arose suddenly the *great city*, the latest foundation of a city in Classical Greece. But in his account it seems to me that Pausanias has omitted to take sufficient note of the leading spirit of all the movement—the Theban Epaminondas. No doubt, the traveller's Arcadian informants were too thoroughly blinded by national vanity to give him the real account, if indeed, they knew it themselves. They represented it as the spontaneous movement of the nation, and even stated it to have been done in imitation

of Argos, which in older times, when in almost daily danger of Spartan war, had abolished all the townships through Argolis, and thus increased its power and consolidated its population.

But the advice and support of Epaminondas, which made him the real founder, point to another model. The traveller who comes, after he has seen northern Greece, into the plain of Megalopolis, is at once struck with its extraordinary likeness to that of Thebes. There is the same circuit of mountains, the same undulation in the plain, the same abundance of water, the same attractive sites on the slopes for the settlements of men. It was not then Argos, with its far remote and not very successful centralization, but Thebes, which was the real model; and [pg 376]the idea was brought out into actuality not by Arcadian but by Theban statesmanship. Any Theban who had visited the plain could not but have this policy suggested to him by the memory of his own home. But here Epaminondas seems to have concealed his influence, and carried out his policy through Arcadian agents, merely sending 1000 Thebans, under Pammenes, to secure his allies against hostile disturbances, whereas he proceeded to the foundation of Messene in person, and with great circumstance, as the dreams and oracles, the discussions about the site, and the pomp at the ceremony amply show, even in the cold narrative of Pausanias. But Megalopolis, though a great and brilliant experiment, was not a lasting success. It was

laid out on too large a scale, and in after years became rather a great wilderness than a great city.[143] It was full of splendid buildings —the theatre, even now, is one of the most gigantic in Greece. But the violences of its foundation, which tore from their homes and household gods many citizens of ancient and hallowed sites, were never forgotten. It was long a leading city in politics, but never became a favorite residence, and fell early into [pg 377]decay. "Although," says Pausanias (8. 33), "the *great city* was founded with all zeal by the Arcadians, and with the brightest expectations on the part of the Greeks, I am not astonished that it has lost all its elegance and ancient splendor, and most of it is now ruined, for I know that Providence is pleased to work perpetual change, and that all things alike, both strong and weak, whether coming into life or passing into nothingness, are changed by a Fortune which controls them with an iron necessity. Thus Mycenæ, Nineveh, and the Bœotian Thebes are for the most part completely deserted and destroyed, but the name of Thebes has descended to the mere acropolis and very few inhabitants. Others, formerly of extraordinary wealth, the Egyptian Thebes and the Minyan Orchomenus and Delos, the common mart of the Greeks, are some of them inferior in wealth to that of a private man of not the richest class; while Delos, being deprived of the charge of the Oracle by the Athenians who settled there, is, as regards Delians, depopulated. At Babylon the temple of Belus remains, but of this Babylon, once the greatest city under the sun,

there is nothing left but the wall, as there is of Tiryns in Argolis. These the Deity has reduced to naught. But the city of Alexander in Egypt, and of Seleucus on the Orontes, built the other day, have risen to such greatness and prosperity, because Fortune favors them.... Thus the affairs of men have [pg 378]their seasons, and are by no means permanent." These words of Pausanias have but increased in force with the lapse of centuries. The whole ancient capital of the Arcadians has well-nigh disappeared. The theatre, cut out from the deep earthen river bank, and faced along the wings with massive masonry, is still visible, though overgrown with shrubs; and the English school of Athens is now prosecuting its exploration (1892).

The ancient town lay on both sides of the river Helisson, which is a broad and silvery stream, but not difficult to ford, as we saw it in spring, and Pausanias mentions important public buildings on both banks. Now there seems nothing but a mound, called the tomb of Philopœmen, on the north side, with a few scanty foundations. On the south side the stylobate of at least one temple is still almost on the level of the soil, and myriads of fragments of baked clay tell us that this material was largely used in the walls of a city where a rich alluvial soil afforded a very scanty supply of stone—a difficulty rare in Greece. The modern town lies a mile to the south of the river, and quite clear of the old site, so that excavations can be made without considerable cost, and with good hope of

results. But the absence of any really archaic monument has, till recently, damped the ardor of the archæologists.

The aspect of the present Megalopolis is very pleasing. Its streets are wide and clean, though [pg 379]for the most part grown over with grass, and a single dark green cypress takes, as it were, the place of a spire among the flat roofs. We found the town in holiday, and the inhabitants—at least the men—in splendid attire. For the women of the Morea have, alas! abandoned their national costume, and appear in tawdry and ill-made dresses. Even the men who have travelled adopt the style of third-rate Frenchmen or Germans, and go about in tall hats, with a dirty gray plaid wrapped about their shoulders. To see these shoddy-looking persons among a crowd of splendid young men in Palikar dress, with the erect carriage and kingly mien which that very tight costume produces, is like seeing a miserable street cur among a pack of fox-hounds. And yet we were informed that, for political reasons, and in order to draw the Greeks from their isolation into European habits, the national dress is now forbidden in the schools!

We were welcomed with excellent hospitality in the town, and received by a fine old gentleman, whose sons, two splendid youths in full costume, attended us in person. Being people of moderate means, they allowed us, with a truer friendliness than that of more ostentatious hosts, to pay for the most of the materials we required, which they got for us

of the best quality, at the lowest price, and cooked and prepared them for us in the house. We inquired of the father what prospects were open to his hand[pg 380]some sons, who seemed born to be soldiers—the ornaments of a royal pageant in peace, the stay of panic in battle. He complained that there was no scope for their energies. Of course, tilling of the soil could never satisfy them. One of them was secretary to the *Demarchus*, on some miserable salary. He had gone as far as Alexandria to seek his fortune, but had come home again, with the tastes and without the wealth of a rich townsman. So they are fretting away their life in idleness. I fear that such cases are but too common in the country towns of Greece.

The people brought us to see many pieces of funeral slabs, of marble pillars, and of short and late inscriptions built into house walls. They also sold us good coins of Philip of Macedon at a moderate price. The systematic digging about the old site undertaken by the English school will probably bring to light many important remains.[144] There is a carriage road from Megalopolis to Argos, but the portion inside the town was then only just finished, so we preferred riding as far as Tripoli. Travellers now landing at Argos will find it quite practicable to drive from the coast to this central plain of Arcadia, and then begin their riding. There is now, alas! a [pg 381]railway from Argos to Tripoli in progress. By this means even ladies can easily cross the Morea. Two days' driving to Megalopolis, two

days' riding to Olympia, and an easy day's drive and train to Katakalo, would be the absolute time required for the transit. But the difficulty is still to find a comfortable night's lodging between the first and second day's ride, both of them long and fatiguing journeys. Andritzena is too near Megalopolis, and not to be recommended without introductions. But there is probably some village on another route which would afford a half-way house. From Tripoli and from Megalopolis, which command their respective plains, excursions could be made to Mantinea, to Sparta, and best of all to Kalamata, where a coasting steamer calls frequently.



A Greek Peasant in National Costume

As we rode up the slopes of Mount Mænalus, which separates the plain of Tegea from that of Megalopolis, we often turned to admire the splendid view beneath, and count the numerous villages now as of old under the headship of the *great town*. The most striking feature was doubtless the snowy ridge of

Taygetus, which reaches southward, and showed us the course of the Eurotas on its eastern side, along which a twelve hours' ride brings the traveller to Sparta. The country into which we passed was wild and barren in the extreme, and, like most so-called mountains in Greece, consisted of a series of parallel and of intersecting ridges, with short valleys [pg 382]or high plateaus between them. This journey, perhaps the bleakest in all Peloponnesus, until it approaches the plain of Tegea, is through Mount Mænalus, the ancestral seat of the worship of Pan, and therefore more than any other tract of Arcadia endowed with pastoral richness and beauty by the poets. There may be more fertile tracts farther north in these mountains. There may in ancient times have been forest or verdure where all is now bare. But in the present day there is no bleaker and more barren tract than these slopes and summits of Mænalus, which are wholly different from the richly wooded and well carpeted mountains through which we had passed on the way from Elis. Even the asphodel, which covers all the barer and stonier tracts with its fields of bloom, was here scarce and poor. Dull tortoises, and quick-glancing hoopoes, with their beautiful head-dresses, were the only tenants of this solitude. There was here and there a spring of delicious water where we stopped. At one of them the best of our ponies, an unusually spirited animal, escaped up the mountain, with one of our royal-looking young friends, who had accompanied us in full costume, for want of other

amusement, in hot pursuit of him. We thought the chase utterly hopeless, as the pony knew his way perfectly, and would not let any one approach him on the bare hillsides; so we consolidated our baggage, and left them to their fate. But about two hours afterward the [pg 383]young Greek came galloping after us on the pony, which he had caught—he had accomplished the apparently impossible feat.

At last, after a very hot and stony ride, with less color and less beauty than we had ever yet found in Greece, we descended into the great valley of Tripoli, formerly held by Tegea at the south, and Mantinea at the north. The modern town lies between the ancient sites, but nearer to Tegea, which is not an hour's ride distant. The old Tripolis, of which the villages were absorbed by Megalopolis, is placed by the geographers in quite another part of Arcadia, near Gortyn, and due north of the western plain. The vicissitudes of the modern town are well known; its importance under the Turks, its terrible destruction by the Egyptians in the War of Liberation;[145] even now, though not a house is more than fifty years old, it is one of the largest and most important towns in the Morea.

The whole place was in holiday, it being the Greek Easter Day, and hundreds of men in full costume crowded the large square in the middle of the town. There is a considerable manufacture of what are commonly called Turkey carpets, and of [pg 384]silk; but the carpets have of late years lost all the beauty and harmony of color for which they were so

justly admired, and are now copied from the worst Bavarian work—tawdry and vulgar in the extreme. They are sold by weight, and are not dear, but they were so exceedingly ugly that we could not buy them. This decadence of taste is strange when compared with the woollen work of Arachova. If the colors of the Arachovite rugs were transferred to the carpets of Tripoli, nothing could be more effective, or more likely to attract English buyers. I could not learn that any passing travellers save some Germans, are now ever tempted to carry them home.

It is my disagreeable duty to state that while the inn at Tripoli was no better than other country inns in Arcadia, and full of noise and disturbance, the innkeeper, a gentleman in magnificent costume, with a crimson vest and gaiters, covered with rich embroidery, also turned out a disgraceful villain, in fact quite up to the mark of the innkeepers of whom Plato in his day complained. We had no comforts, we had bad food, we had the locks of our baggage strained, not indeed by thieves, but by curious neighbors, who wished to see the contents; we had dinner, a night's lodging, and breakfast, for which the host charged us, a party of four and a servant, 118 francs. And be it remembered that the wine of the country, which we drank, is cheaper than ale in [pg 385]England. We appealed at once to the magistrate, a very polite and reasonable man, who cut it down to 84 francs, still an exorbitant sum, and one which our friend quietly pocketed without further

remonstrance. It is therefore advisable either to go with introductions, which we had (but our party was too large for private hospitality), or to stipulate beforehand concerning prices. I mention such conduct as exceptional—we met it only here, at Sparta, and at Nauplia; but I fear Tripoli is not an honest district. A coat and rug which were dropped accidentally from a mule were picked up by the next wayfarer, who carried them off, though we had passed him but a few hundred yards, and there could be no doubt as to the owners. Our guides knew his village, and our property was telegraphed for, but never reappeared.

The site of Tegea, where there is now a considerable village, is more interesting, being quite close to the passes which lead to Sparta, and surrounded by a panorama of rocky mountains. The morning was cloudy, and lights and shades were coursing alternately over the view. There were no trees, but the surface of the rocks took splendid changing hues—gray, pink, and deep purple—while the rich soil beneath alternated between brilliant green and ruddy brown. As the plain of Megalopolis reminded me of that of Thebes, so this plain of Tegea, though infinitely richer in soil, yet had [pg 386]many features singularly like that of Attica, especially its bareness, and the splendid colors of its barren mountains. But the climate is very different at this great height above the sea; the nights, and even the mornings and evenings, were still chilly, and the crops are

still green when the harvest has begun in Attica. There are a good many remains, especially of the necropolis of Tegea, to be found scattered through the modern village, chiefly in the walls of new houses. One of these reliefs contained a very good representation of a feast—two men and two women, the latter sitting, and alternately with the men; the whole work seemed delicate, and of a good epoch. These and other remains, especially an excellent relief of a lion, are now gathered into the little museum of the village of Piali, which occupies part of the ancient site. The circuit of the ancient walls and the site and plan of the great temple of Athena Alea have also recently been determined. The temple, rebuilt by Scopas about 395 B. C., had Corinthian as well as Ionic capitals, though externally Doric in character. Some remarkable remains of the pediment, especially a boar's head, are now in the Museum at Athens.

The way to Argos is a good carriage road through the passes of Mount Parthenion, and is not unlike the bleak ride through Mænalus, though there is a great deal more tillage, and in some places the hillsides are terraced with cultivation. It was in this [pg 387]mountain that the god Pan met the celebrated runner Phidippides, who was carrying his despatch about the Persian invasion from Athens to Sparta, and told him he would come and help the Athenians at Marathon. This Mount Parthenion, bleak and bare like Mount Mænalus, and yet like it peculiarly sacred to

Pan, “affords tortoises most suitable for the making of lyres, which the men who inhabit the mountains are afraid to catch, nor do they allow strangers to catch them, for they think them sacred to Pan.” We saw these tortoises, both in Mænalus and Parthenion, yet to us suggestive not of harmony but of discord. Two of them were engaged in mortal combat by the road side. They were rushing at each other, and battering the edges of their shells together, apparently in the attempt to overturn each other. After a long and even conflict, one of them fled, pursued by the other at full speed, indeed far quicker than could be imagined. We watched the battle till we were tired, and left the pursuer and the pursued in the excitement of their deadly struggle. The traveller who goes by the new railroad over this ground will never see sights like this.

These were the principal adventures of our tour across Arcadia. The following night we rested in real luxury at the house of our old guest-friend, Dr. Papalexopoulos, whose open mansion had received us two years before, on our first visit to Argos.

[pg 388]

CHAPTER XIII.

CORINTH—TIRYNS—ARGOS—NAUPLIA—HYDRA—ÆGINA—EPIDAURUS.

The Gulf of Corinth is a very beautiful and narrow fiord, with chains of mountains on either side, through the gaps of which you can see far into the Morea on one side, and into northern Greece on the other. But the bays or harbors on either coast are few, and so there was no city able to wrest the commerce of these waters from old Corinth, which held the keys by land of the whole Peloponnesus, and commanded the passage from sea to sea. It is, indeed, wonderful how Corinth did not acquire and maintain the first position in Greece. It may, perhaps, have done so in the days of Periander, and we hear at various times of inventions and discoveries in Corinth, which show that, commercially and artistically, it was among the leading cities of Greece. But, whenever the relations of the various powers become clear, as in the Persian or Peloponnesian Wars, we find Corinth always at the head of the second-rate states, and never among the first. This is possibly to be accounted for by the predominance [pg 389]of trade interests, which are the source of such material

prosperity that men are completely engrossed with it, and will not devote time and labor to politics, or stake their fortunes for the defence of principle. Thus it seems as if the Corinthians had been the shopkeepers of Greece.

But as soon as the greater powers of Greece decayed and fell away, we find Corinth immediately taking the highest position in wealth, and even in importance. The capture of Corinth, in 146 B. C., marks the Roman conquest of all Greece, and the art-treasures carried to Rome seem to have been as great and various as those which even Athens could have produced. Its commercial position was at once assumed by Delos. No sooner had Julius Cæsar restored and rebuilt the ruined city than it sprang at once again into importance,[146] while Delos decayed; and among the societies addressed in the Epistles of St. Paul, none seems to have lived in greater wealth or luxury. It was, in fact, well-nigh impossible that Corinth should die. Nature had marked out her site as one of the great thoroughfares of the old world; and it was not till after centuries of blighting misrule by the wretched Turks that she sank into the [pg 390]hopeless decay from which not even another Julius Cæsar could rescue her.[147]

These were our reflections as we passed up the gulf on a splendid summer evening, the mountains of Arcadia showing on their snowy tops a deep rose color in the setting sun. And passing by Ægion and Sikyon, we came to

anchor at the harbor of Lechæum. There was a public conveyance which took the traveller across the isthmus to Kenchreæ, where a steamboat was in readiness to bring him to Athens. But with the usual absurdity of such services, no time was allowed for visiting Corinth and its Acropolis.[148] We, however, stayed for the night in the boat, and started in the morning for our ride into the Peloponnesus. This arrangement was then necessary, as the port of Lechæum did not afford the traveller even the luxury of a decent meal. The Greek steamers are, besides, of considerable interest to any observant person. They seem always full of passengers with their dogs, and as the various classes mix indiscriminately on deck, all sorts of manners, costume, and culture can be easily compared.

[pg 391]
The fondness of the Greeks for driving a bargain is often to be noticed. Thus, a Greek gentleman on this boat, perceiving that we were strangers in pursuit of art and antiquities, produced two very fine gold coins of Philip and Alexander, which he offered for £5. That of Philip was particularly beautiful—a very perfect Greek head in profile, crowned with laurel, and on the reverse a chariot and four, with the legend, Φίλιππος. Not being a very expert judge of coins, and supposing that he had asked more than the value, I offered him £2: 10s. for this one, which was considerably the larger; but he would not take any abatement. He evidently was not anxious to sell them, but merely took his chance of

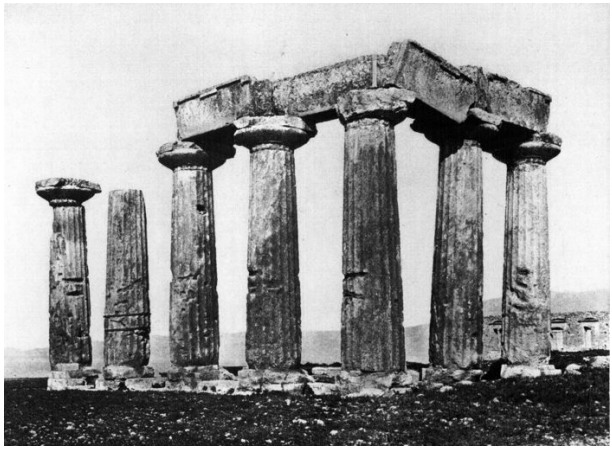
getting a good price, and investing it again at better interest. Seeing that the coin seemed but little heavier than our sovereign, and is not uncommon in collections, I fancy the price he asked was excessive. The Athenian shops, which are notorious for their prices to strangers, had similar coins, for which about £4 was asked. On this, and a thousand other points, the traveller should be instructed by some competent person before he sets out. Genuine antiquities seem to me so common in Greece, that imitations are hardly worth manufacturing. Even with a much greater market, the country can supply for generations an endless store of real remains of ancient Greece. But, nevertheless, the prices of these things are already very high. The ordinary tourist [pg 392]does not infest these shores, so that the only seekers after them are enthusiasts, who will not hesitate to give even fancy prices for what they like.

The form of the country, as you ascend from Lechæum to Corinth, is very marked and peculiar. At some distance from the flat shore the road leads up through a steep pass of little height, which is cut through a long ridge of rock, almost like a wall, and over which lies a higher plateau of land. The same feature is again repeated a mile inland, as the traveller approaches the site of ancient Corinth. These plateaus, though not lofty, are well marked, and perfectly distinct, the passes from one up to the next being quite sufficient to form a strong place of defence against an attacking force. How far these rocky parapets reach I

did not examine. Behind the highest plateau rises the great cliff on which the citadel was built. But even from the site of the old city it is easy to obtain a commanding view of the isthmus, of the two seas, and of the Achæan coast up to Sikyon.

The traveller who expects to find any sufficient traces of the city of Periander and of Timoleon, and, I may say, of St. Paul, will be grievously disappointed. In the middle of the wretched straggling modern village there stand up seven enormous rough stone pillars of the Doric Order, evidently of the oldest and heaviest type; and these are the only visible relic of the ancient city, looking [pg 393]altogether out of place, and almost as if they had come there by mistake. These pillars, though insufficient to admit of our reconstructing the temple, are in themselves profoundly interesting. Their shaft up to the capital is of one block, about twenty-one feet high and six feet in diameter. It is to be observed that over these gigantic monoliths the architrave, in which other Greek temples show the largest blocks, is not in one piece, but two, and made of beams laid together longitudinally.[149] The length of the shafts (up to the neck of the capital) measures about four times their diameter, on the photograph which I possess; I do not suppose that any other Doric pillar known to us is so stout and short. The material is said almost universally to be limestone, but if my eyes served me aright, it was a very porous and now rough sandstone, not the least like the bluish

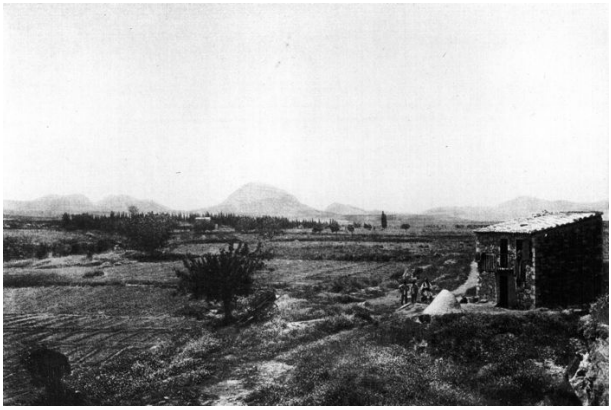
limestone in which the lions of the gate of Mycenæ are carved. The pillars are said to have been covered with stucco, and were of course painted. Perhaps even the figures of the pediment were modelled in clay, as we are told was the case in the oldest Corinthian temples, when first [pg 394]the fashion came in of thus ornamenting an otherwise flat and unsightly surface. The great temple of Pæstum —which is, probably, the next oldest, and certainly the finest extant specimen of the early Doric style—has no figures in the pediment, and seems never to have had them, unless, indeed, they were painted in fresco on the stucco, with which it was probably covered. Those who have seen the temple at Pæstum are, perhaps, the only visitors who will be able to frame to themselves an image of the very similar structure at Corinth, which Turks and earthquakes have reduced to seven columns. There must have been in it the same simplicity, the same almost Egyptian massiveness, and yet the same unity of plan and purpose which excludes all idea of clumsiness or disproportion.



Temple of Corinth

The longer one studies the Greek orders of architecture, the more the conviction grows that the Doric is of all the noblest and the most natural. When lightened and perfected by the Athenians of Pericles's time, it becomes simply unapproachable; but even in older and ruder forms it seems to me vastly superior to either of the more florid orders. All the massive temples of Roman times were built in the very ornate Corinthian, which may almost be called the Græco-Roman, style; but, notwithstanding their majesty and beauty, they are not to be compared with the severer and more religious tone of the Doric remains. I may add that the titles by [pg 395]which the orders are distinguished seem ill-chosen and without meaning, except, perhaps, that the Ionic was most commonly used, and probably invented, in Asia Minor. The earliest specimens of the Corinthian Order are at

Epidaurus, Olympia, and Phigalia;[150] the most perfect of the Doric is at Athens, while Ionic temples are found everywhere. But it is idle now to attempt to change such definite and well-sanctioned names.



Scene near Corinth, the Acro-Corinthus in the Distance

Straight over the site of the town is the great rock known as the Acro-Corinthus. A winding path leads up on the south-west side to the Turkish drawbridge and gate, which are now deserted and open; nor is there a single guard or soldier to watch a spot once the coveted prize of contending empires. In the days of the Achæan League it was called one of the fetters of Greece, and indeed it requires no military experience to see the extraordinary importance of the place. Strabo speaks of the Peloponnesus as the Acropolis of Greece—Corinth may fairly be called the Acropolis of

the Peloponnesus. It runs out boldly from the surging mountain-chains of the peninsula, like an outpost or sentry, guarding all approach from the north. In days when news was transmitted by fire signals, we can imagine how all the southern country must have depended on the watch upon the rock of Corinth. It is separated by a wide plain of land, ending in the isthmus, from [pg 396]the Geranean Mountains, which come from the north and belong to a different system.

Next to the view from the heights of Parnassus, I suppose the view from this citadel is held the finest in Greece.[151] I speak here of the large and diverse views to be obtained from mountain heights. To me, personally, such a view as that from the promontory of Sunium, or, above all, from the harbor of Nauplia, exceeds in beauty and interest any bird's-eye prospect. Any one who looks at the map of Greece will see how the Acro-Corinthus commands coasts, islands, and bays. The day was too hazy when we stood there to let us measure the real limits of the view, and I cannot say how far the eye may reach in a suitable atmosphere. But a host of islands, the southern coasts of Attica and Bœotia, the Acropolis of Athens, Salamis and Ægina, Helicon and Parnassus, and endless Ætolian peaks were visible in one direction; while, as we turned round, all the waving reaches of Arcadia and Argolis, down to the approaches toward Mantinea and Karytena, lay stretched out before us. The plain of Argos, and the sea at that side, are hidden by

the moun[pg 397]tains.[152] But without going into detail, this much may be said, that if a man wants to realize the features of these coasts, which he has long studied on maps, half an hour's walk about the top of this rock will give him a geographical insight which months of reading could not attain.

The surface is very large, at least half a mile each way, and is covered inside the bounding wall with the remains of a considerable Turkish town, now in ruins and totally deserted, but evidently of no small importance in the days of the War of Liberation. The building of this town was a great misfortune to antiquarians, for every available remnant of old Greek work was used as material for the modern houses. At all parts of the walls may be seen white marble fragments of pillars and architraves, and I have no doubt that a careful dilapidation of the modern abandoned houses would amply repay the outlay. There are several pits for saving rain-water, and some shallow underground passages of which we could not make out the purpose. The pits or tanks must have been merely intended to save trouble, for about the middle of the plateau, which sinks considerably toward the south, we were brought to a passage into the ground, which led by a rapid descent to the famous well of Pirene, the water of which was so perfectly clear that we walked into it on going down the steps, as there was actually no [pg 398]water-line visible. It was twelve or fourteen feet deep, and perhaps twenty-five

feet long, so far as we could make it out in the twilight underground. The structure of marble over the fountain is the only piece of old Greek work we could find on the rock. It consists of three supports, like pillars, made of several blocks, and over them a sort of architrave. Then there is a gap in the building, and from the large number of fragments of marble lying at the bottom of the well we concluded that the frieze and cornice had fallen out. The pediment, or rather its upper outline, is still in its place, clear of the architrave, and built into the rock so as to remain without its supporting cornice.

There are numerous inscriptions as you descend, which I did not copy, because I was informed they had already been published, though I have not since been able to find them; but they are, of course, to be found in some of the Greek archæological newspapers. They appeared to me at the time to be either hopelessly illegible, or suspiciously clear. This great well, springing up near the top of a barren rock, is very curious, especially as we could see no outlet.[153] The water was deep under the surface, and there was no sign of welling up or of outflow anywhere; but to make sure of this would have [pg 399]required a long and careful ride round the whole ridge. Our guide-book spoke of rushing streams and waterfalls tumbling down the rock, which we searched for in vain, and which may have been caused by a winter rainfall without any connection with the fountain.[154]

The Isthmus, which is really some three or four miles north of Corinth, was of old famous for the Isthmian games, as well as for the noted *diolkos*, or road for dragging ships across. The games were founded about 586 B. C., when a strong suspicion had arisen throughout Greece concerning the fairness of the Elean awards at Olympia, and for a long time Eleans were excluded. In later days the games became very famous, the Argives or Cleonæans laying claim to celebrate them. It was at these games that Philip V. heard of the great defeat of the Romans by Hannibal, and resolved to enter into that colossal quarrel which brought the Romans into Macedonia. The site of the stadium, and of the temple of Isthmian Poseidon, and of the fortified sanctuary, were excavated and mapped out by M. Monceaux in 1883. A plan and details are to be found in the French *Guide Joanne*.[155] Close by I saw in 1889 the interrupted work of the canal which was at last to connect the [pg 400]eastern and western gulfs, and which when well-nigh completed found its funds dissipated by the terrible crash of the Credit Mobilier in Paris, and now awaits another enterprise. The idea is old and often discussed, like that of the Isthmus of Suez. The Emperor Nero actually began the work, and the engineers of to-day resumed the cutting at the very spot where his workmen left off.

But if this very expensive work might have been of great service when sailing-ships feared to round the notorious Cape of Malea,

and when there was great trade from the Adriatic to the ports of Thessaly and Macedonia, surely all these advantages are now superseded. Steamers coming from the Straits of Messina would pay nothing to take the route of the Isthmus in preference to rounding the Morea, and the main line of traffic is no longer to the Northern Levant, but to Alexandria. Even goods despatched from Trieste or Venice may now be landed at Patras, and sent on by rail to Athens; so that the canal will now only serve the smallest fraction of the Levantine trade; and even then, if the charges be at all adequate to the labor, will be avoided by circumnavigation. Amid the promotion of many useful schemes of traffic, this undertaking seems to me to stand out by its want of common sense. Indeed, had it been really important at any date, we may be sure that the Hellenistic Sovrans or Roman capitalists would have carried it out. But in classical days [pg 401]their smaller ships seem to have been dragged across upon movable rollers by slaves without much difficulty.

But we had already delayed too long upon this citadel, where we would have willingly spent a day or two at greater leisure. Our guide urged us to start on our long ride, which was not to terminate till we reached the town of Argos, some thirty miles over the mountains.[156]

The country into which we passed was very different from any we had yet seen, and still it was intensely Greek. All the hills and valleys

showed a very white, chalky soil, which actually glittered like snow where it was not covered with verdure or trees. Road, as usual, there was none; but all these hills and ravines, chequered with snowy white, were clothed with shining arbutus trees, and shrubs resembling dwarf holly. The purple and the white cistus, which is so readily mistaken for a wild rose,[157] were already out of blow, and showed but a rare blossom. Here and there was a plain or valley with great fields of thyme about the arbutus, and there were herds of goats wandering through the shrubs, and innumerable bees gathering honey from the thyme. The scene was precisely such as Theocritus describes in the uplands of Sicily; but in all [pg 402]our rides through that delightful island[158] we had never found the thyme and arbutus, the goats and bees, in such truly Theocritean perfection. We listened in vain for the shepherd's pipe, and sought in vain for some Thyrsis beguiling his time with the oaten reed. It was almost noontide—noon, the hour of awe and mystery to the olden shepherd, when Pan slept his mid-day sleep,[159] and the wanton satyr was abroad, prowling for adventure through the silent woods; so that, in pagan days, we might have been afraid of the companionship of melody. But now the silence was not from dread of Pan's displeasure, but that the sun's fiercer heat had warned the shepherds to depart to the snowy heights of Cyllene, where they dwell all the summer in alpine huts, and feed their flocks on the upland pastures, which are covered with snow till late in the spring.

They had left behind them a single comrade, with his wife and little children, to protect the weak and the lame till their return. We found this family settled in their winter quarters, which consisted of a [pg 403]square enclosure of thorns θρίγκος ἀχέρδου, built up with stones, round a very old spreading olive-tree. At the foot of the tree were pots and pans, and other household goods, with some skins and rude rugs lying on the ground. There was no attempt at a roof or hut of any kind, though, of course, it might be set up in a moment, as we had seen in the defiles of Parnassus, with skins hung over three sticks—two uprights, and the third joining their tops, so as to form a ridge.

To make the scene Homeric,[160] as well as Theocritean, two large and very savage dogs rushed out upon us at our approach, but the shepherd hurried out after them, and drove them off by pelting them vigorously with stones. “Surely,” he said, turning to us breathlessly from his exertions, “you had met, O strangers! with some mischief, if I had not been here.” The dogs disappeared, in deep anger, into the thicket, and, though we stayed at the place for some time, never reappeared to threaten or to pursue us on our departure. We talked as best we could to the gentle shepherdess, one of whose children had a fearfully scalded hand, for which we suggested remedies to her occult and wonderful, though at [pg 404]home so trite as to be despised by the wise. She gave us in return great bowls of heated milk, which was

being made into cheese, and into various kinds of curds, which are the very best produce of the country. They would take no money for their hospitality, but did not object to our giving the children coins to play with—to them, I am sure, a great curiosity.

Most of our journey was not, however, through pastures and plains, but up and down steep ravines, where riding was so difficult and dangerous that we were often content to dismount and lead our horses. Every hour or two brought us to a fountain springing from a rock, and over it generally a great spreading fig-tree, while the water was framed in on both sides with a perfect turf of maiden-hair fern. The only considerable valley which we saw was that of Cleonæ, which we passed some miles on our left, and about which there was a great deal of golden corn, and many shady plane-trees. Indeed, the corn was so plentiful that we saw asses grazing in it quite contentedly, without any interference from thrifty farmers. We had seen a very similar sight in Sicily, where the enormous deep-brown Sicilian oxen, with their forward-pointing horns, were stretching their huge forms in fields of half-ripe wheat, which covered all the plain without fence or division. There, too, it seemed as if this was the cheapest grazing, and as if it were unprofitable [pg 405]labor to drive the cattle to some untilled pasture. As for the treading-out of corn, I saw it done at Argos by a string of seven horses abreast, with two young foals at the outside, galloping round a small

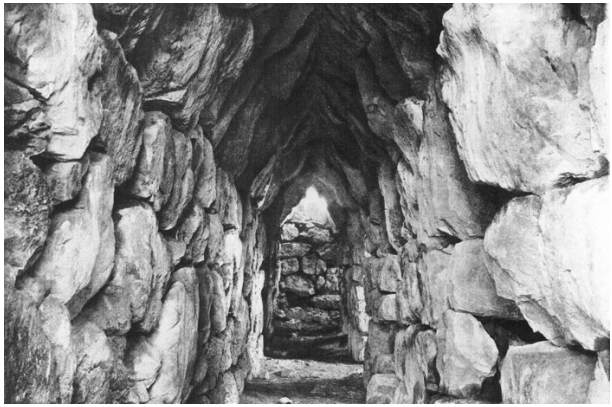
circular threshing-floor in the open field, upon which the ripe sheaves had been laid in radiating order. I have no doubt that a special observer of farming operations would find many interesting survivals both in Greece and the Two Sicilies.

Toward evening, after many hours of travel, we turned aside on our way down the plain of Argos, to see the famous ruins of Mycenæ. But we will now pass them by, as the discoveries of Dr. Schliemann, and a second visit to the ruins after his excavations, have opened up so many questions, that a separate chapter must be devoted to them.

The fortress of Tiryns, which I have already mentioned, and which we visited next day, may fitly be commented on before approaching the younger, or at least more artistically finished, Mycenæ. It stands several miles nearer to the sea, in the centre of the great plain of Argos, and upon the only hillock which there affords any natural scope for fortification. Instead of the square, or at least hewn, well-fitted blocks of Mycenæ, we have here the older style of rude masses piled together as best they would fit, the interstices being filled up with smaller fragments, and, as we now know, faced with mortar. This is essentially Cyclopean build[pg 406]ing.[161] There is a smaller castle of rectangular shape, on the southern and highest part of the oblong hillock, the whole of which is surrounded by a lower wall, which takes in both this and the northern longer part of the ridge. It looked, in fact, like a hill-fort, with a

large enclosure for cattle around it.

Just below the north-east angle of the inner fort, and where the lower circuit is about to leave it, there is an entrance, with a massive projection of huge stones, looking like a square tower, on its right side, so as to defend it from attack. The most remarkable feature in the walls are the covered galleries, constructed within them at the south-east angle. The whole thickness of the wall is often over twenty feet, and in the centre a rude arched way is made—or rather, I believe, two parallel ways; but the inner gallery has fallen in, and is almost untraceable—and this merely by piling together the great stones so as to leave an opening, which narrows at the top in the form of a Gothic arch. Within the passage there are five niches in the outer side, made of rude arches, in the same way as the main passage. The length of [pg 407]the gallery I measured, and found it twenty-five yards, at the end of which it is regularly walled up, so that it evidently did not run all the way round. The niches are now no longer open, but seem to have been once windows, or at least to have had some look-out points into the hill country.



Gallery at Tiryns

It is remarkable that, although the walls are made of perfectly rude stones, the builders have managed to use so many smooth surfaces looking outward, that the face of the wall seems quite clean and well-built.[162] At the south-east corner of the higher and inner level we found a large block of red granite, quite different from the rough gray stone of the building, with its surface square and smooth, and all the four sides neatly bevelled, like the portal stones at the treasury of Atreus. I found two other similar blocks close by, which were likewise cut smooth on the surface, and afterward, in company with Dr. Schliemann, a large Doric capital. The intention of these stones we could not guess, but they show that some ornament, and some more finished work, must have once existed in or near the inner building. Though both the main entrances have massive towers of stone raised on their right, there is a small postern

at the opposite or west side, [pg 408]not more than four feet wide, which has no defences whatever, and is a mere hole in the wall.

The whole ruin was covered in summer with thistles, such as English people can hardly imagine. The needles at the points of the leaves are fully an inch long, extremely fine and strong, and sharper than any two-edged sword. No clothes except a leather dress can resist them. They pierce everywhere with the most stinging pain, and make antiquarian research in this famous spot a veritable martyrdom, which can only be supported by a very burning love for knowledge, or the sure hope of future fame. The rough masses of stone are so loose that one's footing is insecure, and when the traveller loses his balance, and falls among the thistles, he will wish that he had gone to Jericho instead, or even fallen among thieves on the way.

Such was the aspect of Tiryns when I visited it in the years 1875 and in 1877. In 1884 I went there again with Dr. Schliemann, who was uncovering the palace on the height. The results of his discoveries are so important that I shall review them in another chapter.

We rode down from Mycenæ to Argos late in the evening, along the broad and limpid stream of the river Inachus, which made us wonder at the old epic epithet, *very thirsty*, given to this celebrated plain.[163] [pg 409]Though the night was getting dark, we could see and smell great fields of wild rose-

red oleander, blooming along the river banks, very like the rhododendrons of our demesnes. And, though not a bird was to be heard, the tettix, so dear to the old Greeks, and so often the theme of their poets, was making the land echo with its myriad chirping. Aristophanes speaks of it as crying out with mad love of the noonday sun.[164] We found it no less eager and busy in late twilight, and far into the night. I can quite understand how the old Greek, who hated silence, and hated solitude still more, loved this little creature, which kept him company even in the time of sleep, and gave him all the feelings of cheerfulness and homeliness which we northerns, [pg 410]in our wretched climate, must seek from the cricket at the fireside.

At ten o'clock we rode into the curious dark streets of Argos, and, after some difficulty, were shown to the residence of M. Papalexopoulos, who volunteered to be our host—a medical man of education and ability, who, in spite of a very recent family bereavement, opened his house to the stranger, and entertained us with what may well be called in that country real splendor. I may notice that he alone, of all the country residents whom we met, gave us wine not drenched with resin—a very choice and remarkable red wine, for which the plain of Argos is justly celebrated. In this comfortable house we slept, I may say, in solitary grandeur, and awoke in high spirits, without loss or damage, to visit the wonders of this old centre of legend and of history.

It is very easy to see why all the Greek myths have placed the earliest empires, the earliest arts, and the earliest conquests, in the plains of Argolis. They speak, too, of this particular plain having the benefit of foreign settlers and of foreign skill. If we imagine, as we must do, the older knowledge of the East coming up by way of Cyprus and Crete into Greek waters, there can be no doubt that the first exploring mariners, reaching the barren island of Cerigo, and the rocky shore of Laconia, would feel their way up this rugged and inhospitable coast, [pg 411]till they suddenly came in sight of the deep bay of Argolis, stretching far into the land, with a broad plain and alluvial soil beyond its deepest recess. Here, first, they would find a suitable landing-place, and a country fit for tillage; and here, accordingly, we should expect to find, as we actually do, the oldest relics of habitation, beyond the huts of wandering shepherds or of savages. So the legend tells us that Cyclopes came from Lycia to King Prœtus of Argos, or rather of the Argive plain, and built him the giant fort of Tiryns.[165]

This was evidently the oldest great settlement. Then, by some change of fortune, it seems that Mycenæ grew in importance, not impossibly because of the unhealthy site of Tiryns, where the surroundings are now low and marshy, and were, probably, even more so in those days. But the epoch of Mycenæ's greatness also passed away in historical times; and the third city in this plain came forward as its ruler—Argos, built under the huge

Larissa, or hill-fort, which springs out from the surrounding mountains, and stands like an outpost over the city.[166] [pg 412]Even now it is still an important town, and maintains, in the midst of its smiling and well-cultivated plain, a certain air of brightness and prosperity which is seldom to be seen elsewhere through the country.

We went first to visit the old theatre, certainly the most beautifully situated,[167] and one of the largest I had ever seen. It is far finer than even that of Syracuse, and whoever has seen this latter will know what such a statement implies. If the Greek theatre at Syracuse has a view of the great harbor and the coast around, this view can only have been made interesting by crowded shipping and flitting sails, for the whole incline of the country is very gradual, and not even the fort of Ortygia presents any bold or striking outline.

The Argive theatre was built to hold an enormous audience. We counted sixty-six tiers of seats, in [pg 413]four divisions—thus differing from the description of Colonel Leake, which we had before us at the time. As he observes, there may be more seats still covered with rubbish at the bottom—indeed this, like all the rest of Argos, ought to yield a rich harvest to the antiquarian, being still almost virgin soil, and never yet ransacked with any care. From the higher seats of the theatre of Argos, which rise much steeper than those of Syracuse, there is a most enchanting prospect to the right, over a splendid rich plain, covered, when we first

saw it, with the brilliant emerald-green of young vines and tobacco plants, varied with the darker hue of plane-trees and cypresses. After the wilderness through which we had passed this prospect was intensely delightful. Straight before us, and to the left, was the deep blue bay of Argolis, with the white fortifications of Nauplia crowning its picturesque Acropolis. All around us, in every other direction, was a perfect amphitheatre of lofty mountains. This bay is, for its size, the most beautiful I ever saw, and the opinion which we then formed was strengthened by a sunset view of it from the other side—from Nauplia—which was, if possible, even finer, and combined all the elements which are conceivable in a perfect landscape. Near the theatre there is a remnant of Cyclopean building, apparently the angle of a wall, made of huge uncut blocks, like those at Tiryns. There are said to be some similar substructures on the Larissa, which is, [pg 414]however, itself a mediæval ruin, and therefore, to us, of slight interest.

All the children about brought us coins, of every possible date and description, but were themselves more interesting than their coins. For here, in southern Greece, in a very hot climate, in a level plain, every second child is fair, with blue eyes, and looks like a transplanted northern, and not like the offspring of a southern race. After the deep brown Italian children, which strike the traveller by their southernness all the way from Venice to Reggio, nothing is more

curious than these fairer children, under a sunnier and hotter sky; and it reminds the student at once how, even in Homer, yellow hair and a fair complexion is noted as belonging to the King of Sparta. This type seems to me common wherever there has not arisen a mixed population, such as that of Athens or Syra, and where the inhabitants appear to live as they have done for centuries. Fallmerayer's cleverness and undoubted learning persuaded many people, and led many more to suspect, that the old Greek race was completely gone, and that the present people were a mixture of Turks, Albanians, and Slavs. To this many answers suggest themselves,—to me, above all things, the strange and accurate resemblances in character between ancient and modern Greeks,—resemblances which permeate all their life and habits.

But this is a kind of evidence not easily stated in [pg 415]a brief form, and consists after all of a large number of minute details. The real refutation of Fallmerayer's theory consists in exposing the alleged evidence upon which it rests. He puts forth with great confidence citations from MS. authorities at Athens, which have not been verified; nay, he is even proved to have been the dupe of some clever forgeries. A careful examination of the scanty allusions to the state of Greece during the time of its supposed *Slavisation*, and the evidences obtained from the lives of the Greek saints who belong to this epoch, have proved to demonstration that the country was

never wholly occupied by foreigners, or deserted by its old population. The researches of Ross, Ellissen, and lastly of Hopf,[168] have really set the matter at rest; but, unfortunately, English students will for some time to come be misled by the evident leaning of Finlay toward the Slav hypothesis. As has been fairly remarked by later critics, Finlay did not test the documents cited by Fallmerayer; and until this was done, the case seemed conclusive enough for the total devastation of Greece during four hundred years, and its occupation by a new population. But all this is now relegated to the sphere of fable. There is, of course, a large admixture of Slavs and Albanians in the country; the constant inva[pg 416]sions and partial conquests for several centuries could not but introduce it. Still, Greece has remained Greek in the main, and the foreigners have not been able to hold their own against the stronger nationality of the true Hellenes.

Another weighty argument seems to me to be from language.[169] There is really very little difference between the language of Plato and that of the present Greeks. There is, of course, development and decay, there are changes of idiom and corruptions of form, there are a good many Slav names, but the language is essentially the same. The present Greek will read the old classics with the same trouble with which our peasants could read Chaucer. It is, in fact, most remarkable, assuming that they are the same people, how their language

has not changed more. Had the invaders during the Middle Ages really become the main body of the population, how is it that they abandoned their own tongue, and adopted that of the Greeks? Surely there must be at least a fusion of different tongues, if the population were consider[pg 417]ably leavened. There are still Albanian districts in Greece. They are to be found even in Attica, and close to Athens. But these populations are still tolerably distinct from the Greeks; their language is quite different, and unintelligible to Greeks who have not learned it.

Again, the Greek language is not one which spread itself easily among foreigners, nor did it give rise to a number of daughter languages, like the Latin. In many Hellenic colonies, barbarians learned to speak Greek with the Greeks, and to adopt their language at the time; but in all these cases, when the Greek influence vanished the Greek language decayed, and finally made way for the old tongue which it had temporarily displaced. Thus the evidence of history seems to suggest that no foreigners were ever really able to make that subtle tongue their own; and even now we can feel the force of what Aristotle says—that however well a stranger might speak, you could recognize him at once by his use of the particles.

These considerations seem to me conclusive that, whatever admixtures may have taken place, the main body of the people are what their language declares them to be, essentially Greeks. Any careful observer will not fail to

see through the wilder parts of the Morea types and forms equal to those which inspired the old artists. There are still among the shepherd boys splendid lads who would adorn a [pg 418]Greek gymnasium, or excite the praise of all Greece at the Olympian games. There are still maidens fit to carry the sacred basket of Athene. Above all, there are still many old men fit to be chosen for their stalwart beauty to act as *thallophori* in the Panathenaic procession.

These thoughts often struck us as we went through the narrow and crowded streets of Argos, in search of the peculiar produce of the place—raw silks, rich-colored carpets and rugs, and ornamental shoes in dull red "morocco" leather.

We were taken to see the little museum of the town—then a very small one, with a single inscription, and eight or ten pieces of sculpture. But the inscription, which is published, is exceedingly clear and legible, and the fragments of sculpture are all both peculiar and excellent. There is a female head of great beauty, about half life-size, and from the best, or certainly a very good, period of Greek art, which has the curious peculiarity of one eye being larger than the other. It is not merely the eyeball, but the whole setting of the eye, which is slightly enlarged, nor does it injure the general effect. The gentlemen who showed this head to me, and who were all very enthusiastic about it, had indeed not noticed this feature, but recognized it at once when pointed out to them. Beside this

trunkless head is a headless trunk of equal beauty—a female figure without arms, and draped with exquisite grace, in a [pg 419]manner closely resembling the famous Venus of Melos. The figure has one foot slightly raised, and set upon a duck, as is quite plain from the general form of the bird, though the webbed feet are much worn away, and the head gone. M. Émile Burnouf told me that this attribute of a duck would determine it to be either Athene or Artemis. If so, the general style of the figure, which is very young and slight, speaks in favor of its being an Artemis. I trust photographs of this excellent statue may soon be made, and that it may become known to art students in Europe.

We also noticed a relief larger than life, on a square block of white marble, of the head of Medusa. The face is calm and expressionless, exactly the reverse of Lionardo da Vinci's matchless painting, but archaic in character, and of good and clear workmanship. The head-dress, which has been finished only on the right side, is very peculiar, and consists of large scales starting from the forehead, and separating into two plaits, which become serpents' bodies, and descend in curves as low as the chin, then turning upward and outward again, till they end in well-formed serpents' heads. The left serpent is carved out perfectly in relief, but not covered with scales.

I was unable to obtain any trustworthy account of the finding of these marbles, but they were all fresh discoveries, especially the

Medusa head, which [pg 420]had been only lately brought to the museum, when we were first at Argos. Future visitors will find this valuable collection much increased; and here in this important town it is advisable that there should be a local museum.

If we look at Dorian art, as contrasted with Ionian, there can be no doubt that the earliest centre was Corinth in the Peloponnesus, to which various discoveries in art are specially ascribed. In architecture, there were many leading ideas, such as the setting up of clay figures in the tympanum of their temples, and the use of panels or soffits, as they were called, in ceilings, which came first from Corinth. But when we descend to better-known times, there are three other Dorian states which quite eclipse Corinth, I suppose because the trading instinct, as is sometimes the case, crushed out or weakened her enthusiasm for art. These states are Ægina, Sikyon, and Argos. Sikyon rose to greatness under the gentle and enlightened despotism of Orthagoras and his family, of whom it was noticed that they retained their sovereignty longer than any other dynasty of despots in Greece. Ægina seems to have disputed the lead with Corinth as a commercial mart, from the days of Pheidon, whose coinage of money was always said to have been first practised at Ægina.[170] The prominence of Ægina in [pg 421]Pindar's Epinikian Odes shows not only how eagerly men practised athletics, and loved renown there, but how well able they were to pay for expensive monuments of their

fame. Their position in the Persian war, among the bravest of the Greeks, corroborates the former part of my statement; the request of an Ionian Greek lady, captured in the train of Mardonius, to be transported to Ægina, adds evidence for the second, as it shows that, to a person of this description, Ægina was the field for a rich harvest, and we wonder how its reputation can have been greater in this respect than that of Corinth.[171] But, a short time after, the rise of the Athenian naval power crushed the greatness of Ægina, and it sank into insignificance, and was absorbed into the Attic power.

Thus Sikyon and Argos remained, and it was precisely these two towns which produced a special school of art, of which Polycletus was the most distinguished representative. Dorian sculpture had originally started with figures of athletes, which were dedicated at the temples, and were a sort of collateral monument to the odes of poets—more durable, no doubt, in the minds of the offerers, but, as time has shown, perishable and gone, while the winged words of the poet have not lost even the first bloom of their freshness. However, in contrast to the flowing robes and delicately-chiselled features of [pg 422]the Ionic school, the Dorians reproduced the naked human figure with great accuracy; while in the face they adhered to a stiff simplicity, regardless of individual features, and still more regardless of any expression save that of a vacant smile. This type, found in its most perfect development in the

Æginetan marbles, was what lay before Polycletus, when he rose to greatness. He was the contemporary and rival of Phidias, and is said to have defeated him in a competition for the temple of Hera at Samos, where two or three of the greatest sculptors modelled a wounded Amazon, and Polycletus was adjudged the first place. There is some probability that one of the Amazons now in the Vatican is a copy of this famous work; and, in spite of a clumsily-restored head and arms, we can see in this figure the great simplicity and truth of the artist in treating a rather ungrateful subject—that of a very powerful and muscular woman.

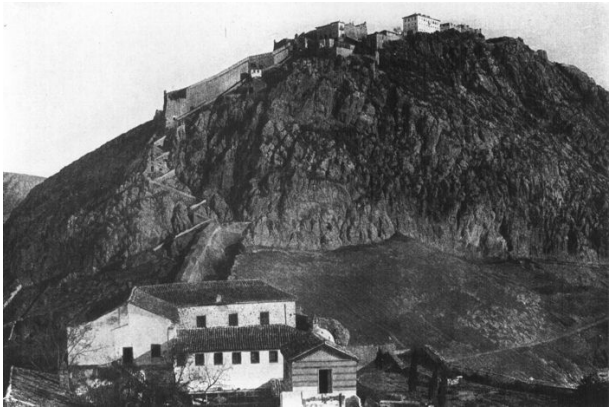
The Argive school, owing to its traditions, affected single figures much more than groups; and this, no doubt, was the main contrast between Polycletus and Phidias—that, however superior the Argive might be in a single figure, the genius of the Athenian was beyond all comparison in using sculpture for groups and processions as an adjunct to architecture. But there was also in the sitting statue of Zeus, at Olympia, a certain majesty which seems not to have been equalled by any other known sculp[pg 423]tor. The Attic artist who appears, however, to have been much nearer to Polycletus in style was Myron, whose *Discobolus* has reached us in some splendid copies, and who seems to have had all the Dorian taste for representing single athletic figures with more life and more daring action about them than was attempted by Polycletus.[172]

Herodotus notices somewhere that, at a certain period, the Argives were the most renowned in Greece for music. It is most unfortunate that our knowledge of this branch of Greek art is so fragmentary that we are wholly unable to tell in what the Argive proficiency consisted. We are never told that the Doric scale was there invented; but, very possibly, they may have taken the lead among their brethren in this direction also, for it is well known that the Spartans, though excellent judges, depended altogether upon foreigners to make music for them, and thought it not gentlemanly to do more than criticise.

The drive from Argos to Nauplia leads by Tiryns, then by a great marsh, which is most luxuriously covered with green and with various flowers, and then along a good road all the way into the important and stirring town of Nauplia. This place, which was one of the oldest settlements, as is proved [pg 424]by Pelasgic walls and tombs high up on the overhanging cliffs, was always through history known as the port of Argos, and is so still, though it rose under the Turks to the dignity of capital of the whole province of Greece. The citadel has at all times been considered almost impregnable. The situation of the town is exceptionally beautiful, even for a Greek town; and the sunset behind the Arcadian mountains, seen from Nauplia, with the gulf in the foreground, is a view which no man can ever forget.

A coasting steamer, which goes right round

all the Peloponnesus, took us up with a great company, which was hurrying to Athens for the elections, and carried us round the coast of Argolis, stopping at the several ports on the way. This method of seeing either Greece or Italy is highly to be commended, and it is a great pity that so many people adhere strictly to the quickest and most obvious route, so missing many of the really characteristic features in the country which they desire to study. Thus the Italian coasting steamers, which go up from Messina by Naples to Genoa, touch at many not insignificant places (such as Gaeta), which no ordinary tourist ever sees, and which are nevertheless among the most beautiful in all the country. The same may be said of the sail from Nauplia to Athens, which leads you to Spezza, Hydra, or Idra, as they now [pg 425]call it, to Poros and to *Æ*gina, all very curious and interesting places to visit.



The Palamedi, Nauplia

The island of Hydra was, in old days, a mere barren rock, scarcely inhabited, and would probably never have changed its reputation but for a pirate settlement in a very curious little harbor, with a very narrow entrance, which faces the main shore of Argolis. As you sail along the straight coast line, there seems no break or indentation, when suddenly, as if by magic, the rocky shore opens for about twenty yards, at a spot marked by several caves in the face of the cliff, and lets you see into a circular harbor of very small dimensions, with an amphitheatre of rich and well-built houses rising up all round the bay. Though the water is very deep, there is actually no room for a large fleet, and there seems not a yard of level ground, except where terraces have been artificially made. High rocks on both sides of the narrow entrance hide all prospect of the town, except from the point directly opposite the entrance.

The Hydriotes, who were rich merchants, and, I suppose, successful pirates in the Turkish days, were never enslaved, but kept their liberty and their wealth by paying a tribute to the Porte. They developed a trading power which reminds one strongly of the old Greek cities; and so faithful were they to one another that it was an ordinary habit for citizens to entrust all their savings to a [pg 426]captain starting for a distant port, to be laid out by him to the best advantage. It is said that they were never defrauded of their

profits. The Turks may, perhaps, have thought that by gentle treatment they would secure the fidelity of the Hydriotes, whose wealth and power depended much on Turkish protection; but they were greatly mistaken. There was, indeed, some hesitation among the islanders, when the War of Liberation broke out, what part they should take; for during the great Napoleonic wars the Hydriotes, sailing under the neutral flag of Turkey, had made enormous profits by carrying trade among the belligerents. They lived in great luxury. With the peace of 1815, and the reopening of the French and other ports to English ships, these profits disappeared, and the extravagant hopes of the Hydriotes ended in bankruptcy. This was probably a main cause of their patriotism. However, by far the most brilliant feats in the war were those performed by the Hydriote sailors, who remind one very much of the Zealanders in the wars of Holland against the Spanish power. Whether their bravery has been exaggerated is hard to say: this, at all events, is clear, that they earned the respect and admiration of the whole nation, nor is there any nobility so recognized in Greek society as descent from the Hydriote chiefs who fought for the Liberation.

With the rise of the nation the wealth and importance of Hydra has strangely decayed. Prob[pg 427]ably the Peiræus, with its vast advantages, has naturally regained its former predominance, now that every part of the coast and every port are equally free. Still, the

general style and way of living at Hydra reminds one of old times; and if the island itself be sterile, the rich slopes of the opposite coast, covered with great groves of lemon-trees, are owned by the wealthy descendants of the old merchants.

The neighboring island of Spezza, where the steamer waits, and a crowd of picturesque people come out in quaint boats to give and take cargo, has a history very parallel to that of Hydra. It is to be noted that the population of both islands is rather Albanian than Greek. A few hours brings the steamer past Poros and through narrow passages among islands to Ægina, as they now call it. We have here an island whose history is precisely the reverse of that of Hydra. The great days of Ægina (as I mentioned above) were in very old times, from the age of Pheidon of Argos, in the seventh century B. C., up to the rise of Athens's democracy and navy, when this splendid centre of literature, art, and commerce was absorbed in the greater Athenian empire.

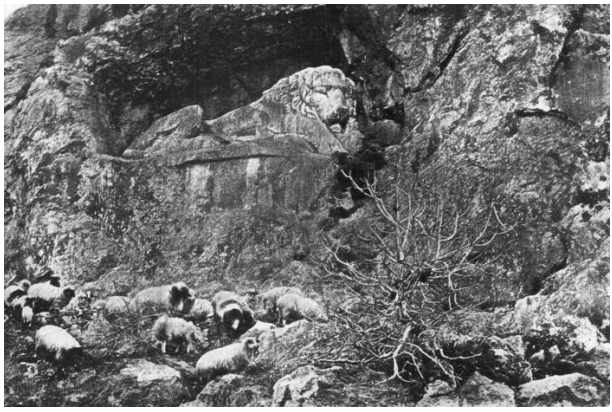
There is at present a considerable town on the coast, and some cultivation on the hills; but the whole aspect of the island is very rocky and barren, and as it can hardly ever have been otherwise, we [pg 428]feel at once that the early greatness of Ægina was, like that of Hydra in the last century, a purely commercial greatness. The people are very hospitable and interesting. Nowhere in Greece did I see more apparent remains of the purest Greek type. Our hostess, in particular, was worthy to take her place in the Parthenon

frieze, and among the children playing on the quay there were faces of marvellous beauty.

With enterprise and diligence, a trading nation or city may readily become great in a small island or barren coast, and no phenomenon in history proves this more strongly than the vast empire of the Phœnicians, who seem never to have owned more than a bare tract of a few miles about Tyre and Sidon. They were, in fact, a great people without a country. The Venetians similarly raised an empire on a salt marsh, and at one time owned many important possessions on Greek coasts and islands, without "any visible means of subsistence," as they say in the police courts. In the same way, Pericles thought nothing of the possession of Attica, provided the Athenians could hold their city walls and their harbors. He knew that with a maritime supremacy they must necessarily be lords of so vast a stretch of coasts and islands that the barren hills of Attica might be completely left out of account.

There is yet another and a very interesting way from Nauplia to Ægina, which may be strongly [pg 429]recommended to the traveller who does not arrive in due time to catch the weekly steamer. Horses can be hired at Nauplia, which can perform, in about seven hours, the journey to the little village of Epidauros (now pronounced *Epídavros*). Here a boat can be obtained, which, with a fair wind, can reach Ægina in three, and the Peiræus in about six hours. But, like all

boating expeditions, this trip is uncertain, and may be thwarted by either calm or storm.



Sculptured Lion, Nauplia

We left Nauplia on a very fine morning, while the shepherds from the country were going through the streets, shouting γάλα, and serving out their milk from skins, of which they held the neck in one hand, and loosened their hold slightly to pour it into the vessel brought to them by the customer. These picturesque people—men, women, and children—seem to drive an active trade, and yet are not, I believe, to be found in the streets of any other Greek town.

The way through the Argolic country is rough and stony, not unlike in character to the ride from Corinth to Mycenæ, but more barren, and for the most part less picturesque. On some of the hilltops are old ruins, with fine

remains of masonry, apparently old Greek work. The last two or three hours of the journey are, however, particularly beautiful, as the path goes along the course of a rich glen, in which a tumbling river hurries toward the sea. This glen is full of verdure and of trees. We saw [pg 430]it in the richest moment of a southern spring, when all the trees were bursting into leaf, or decked with varied bloom. It was the home, too, of thrushes, and many other singing birds, which filled the air with music—as it were a rich variation upon the monotonous sound of the murmuring river. There is no sweeter concert than this in nature, no union of sight and sound which fills the heart of the stranger in such a solitude with deeper gladness. I know no fitter exodus from the beautiful Morea—a farewell journey which will dwell upon the memory, and banish from the mind all thoughts of discomfort and fatigue.

In the picturesque little land-locked bay of Epidavros there was a good-sized fishing-boat riding at anchor, which we immediately chartered to convey us to Athens. The skipper took some time to gather a crew, and to obtain the necessary papers from the local authorities, but after some pressure on our part we got under weigh with a fair wind, and ran out of the harbor into the broad rock-studded sheet of water which separates Argolis from Ægina, and from the more distant coast of Attica. There is no more delightful or truly Greek mode of travelling than to run through islands and under rocky

coasts in these boats, which are roomy and comfortable, and, being decked, afford fair shelter from shower or spray. But presently the wind began to increase from the north-west, and our [pg 431]skipper to hesitate whether it were safe to continue the journey. He proposed to run into the harbor of Ægina for the night. We acquiesced without demur, and went at a great pace to our new destination. But no sooner had we come into the harbor, and cast anchor, so that the boat lay steady with her head to the wind, than another somewhat larger boat which came sailing in after us ran right into her amidships. The shock started up all my companions, who were lying asleep in the bottom of the boat, and the situation looked rather desperate, for we were in the middle of a large harbor, a long way from land. It was night, and blowing hard, and all our crew betook themselves to weeping and praying, while the other boat did her best to sheer off and leave us to our fate. However, some of us climbed into her by the bow-sprit, which lay across our deck, while others got up the baggage, and proceeded to examine at what pace the water was coming in. A boat from the shore came out in time to take us off safely, but when we had landed our skipper gravely proposed that we should pay for the boat, as she was injured in our service! Of course, we laughed him to scorn, and having found at Ægina a steam-launch belonging to Captain Miaoulis, then Minister of Marine, we went in search of him, and besought him to take us next day to the Peiræus. The excellent

man not only granted our request, but entertained us on [pg 432]the way with the most interesting anecdotes of his stay in England as a boy, when he came with his father to seek assistance from our country during the War of Liberation. Thus we came into the Peiræus, not as shipwrecked outcasts, but under the protection of one of the most gallant and distinguished officers of the Greek navy.

A great point of interest among newly-discovered sites is the great temple and theatre of Epidaurus, which I did not visit, on account of an epidemic of small-pox—εὐφλογία they call it, euphemistically. The very journey to this place is worth making, on account of its intensely characteristic features. You start from Athens in a coasting steamer full of natives, who carry with them their food and beds, and camp on deck where it pleases them, regardless of class. You see all the homeliness of ordinary life obtruded upon you without seeking it, instead of intruding upon others to find it; and you can study not only the country, but the people, at great leisure. But the ever-varying beauty of the scene leaves little time for other studies. The boat passes along Ægina, and rounds the promontory of Kalauria—the death-scene of Demosthenes—into the land-locked bay of Poros, where lay the old Trœzen and Hermione along the fruitful shore, surrounded by an amphitheatre of lofty mountains. The sea is like a fair inland lake, studded with white sails, and framed with the rich green of

vines and figs and growing [pg 433]corn. Even the rows of tall solemn cypresses can suggest no gloom in such a landscape. From here it is but a short ride to the famous temple of Æsculapius, though most people go from Nauplia, as I once did in former years, before the discoveries were made which now attract the student.

The excavations of the Greek archæological society have laid bare at least three principal buildings in connection with the famous spot; the old temple of the god, the theatre, and the famous *tholos,* a circular building, in which those who had been healed of diseases set up votive tablets. The extraordinary size and splendor of the theatre—Pausanias says it was far the finest in Greece—rather contrasts with the dimensions of the temple, and suggests that most of the patients who came were able to enjoy themselves, or else that many people came for pleasure, and not on serious business. The remains discovered are particularly valuable for the good preservation of the stage, but of this I can only speak at second hand. So also the circular building, which was erected under the supervision of the famous Polycletus, the great Argive sculptor, a rival of Phidias, has many peculiar features, and shows in one more instance that what earlier art critics assumed as modern was based on older classical models. Circular buildings supported on pillars were thought rather Græco-Roman than Greek, but here we see that, like the builders of the Odeon of [pg 434]Pericles, of

the later Philippeion at Olympia, so the Epidaurians had this form before them from early days. Inside the outer row of Doric pillars was a second circle of pillars, apparently Ionic as to proportions and fluting, but the capitals were Corinthian, so that this feature also in architecture has a venerable antiquity, and was not Græco-Roman, as was once supposed. For a long time the so-called Lantern of Demosthenes, built for Lysicrates at Athens in 335 B. C., when Alexander was leading his army into Asia, was considered the oldest, and perhaps the only pure Greek example of the Corinthian capital. People began to hesitate when a solitary specimen was found in the famous temple of Bassæ, where it could hardly have been imported in later days. Now the evidence is completed, and in this respect the historians of art are correcting the rash generalization of their predecessors.

[pg 435]

CHAPTER XIV.

KYNURIA—SPARTA—MESSENE.

Whatever other excursions a traveller may make in the Morea, he ought not to omit a trip to Sparta, which has so often been the centre of power, and is still one of the chief centres of attraction in Greece. And yet many reasons conspire to make this famous place less visited than the rest of the country. It is distinctly out of the way from the present starting-points of travel. To reach it from Athens, or even from Patras or Corinth, requires several days, and it is not remarkable for any of those architectural remains which are more attractive to the modern inquirer than anything else in a historic country.

Of the various routes we choose (in 1884) that from Nauplia by Astros, as we had been the guests for some days of the hospitable Dr. Schliemann, who was prosecuting his now famous researches at Tiryns. So we rose one morning with the indefatigable doctor before dawn,[173] and took a boat to bring us down the coast to Astros. The morning was perfectly fair and calm, and the great mountain chains of the coast were mirrored in the opal sea, as we passed the pic[pg 436]turesque rocky fort which stands close to Nauplia in the bay, the residence of the public executioner. The beauty of the Gulf of Argos never seemed more perfect than in the freshness of the morning, with the rising sun illuminating the

lofty coasts. Our progress was at first by the slow labor of the oar, but as the morning advanced there came down a fresh west wind from the mountains, which at intervals filled our lateen sail almost too well, and sent us flying along upon our way. In three hours we rounded a headland, and found ourselves in the pretty little bay of Astros.

Of course, the whole population came down to see us. They were apparently as idle, and as ready to be amused, as the inhabitants of an Irish village. But they are sadly wanting in fun. You seldom hear them make a joke or laugh, and their curiosity is itself curious from this aspect. After a good deal of bargaining we agreed for a set of mules and ponies to bring us all the way round the Morea, to Corinth if necessary, though ultimately we were glad to leave them at Kyparissia, at the opposite side of Peloponnesus, and pursue our way by sea. The bargain was eight drachmas per day for each animal; a native, or very experienced traveller, could have got them for five to six drachmas.

Our way led us up a river course, as usual through fine olive-trees and fields of corn, studded with scarlet anemones, till after a mile or two we [pg 437]began to ascend from the level of the coast to the altitudes of the central plateau, or rather mountain system, of the Morea. Here the flora of the coast gave way to fields of sperge, hyacinths, irises, and star of Bethlehem. Every inch of ascent gave us a more splendid and extended view back over coasts and islands. The giant tops of the

inner country showed themselves still covered with snow. We were in that district so little known in ancient history, which was so long a bone of contention between Argos and Sparta, whose boundaries seem never to have been fixed by any national landmark. When we had reached the top of the rim of inland Alps, we ascended and descended various steeps, and rounded many glens, reaching in the end the village of Hagios Petros, which we had seen before us for a long time, while we descended one precipice and mounted another to attain our goal. It was amusing to see our *agogiatæ* or muleteers pulling out fragments of mirror, and arranging their toilette, such as it was, before encountering the criticism of the Hagiopetrans. One of these men was indeed a handsome soldierly youth, who walked all day with us for a week over the roughest country, in miserable shoes, and yet without apparent fatigue.

Another, a great stout man with a beard, excused himself for not being married by saying he was *too little* (εἶναι μικρός), and so we learned that as they are all expected to marry, and do marry, twenty-five [pg 438]is considered the earliest proper age. One would almost think they had preserved some echo of Aristotle's views, which make thirty years the best age for marriage—thirty years! when most of us are already so old as to have lost interest in these great pleasures.

At Hagios Petros we were hospitably received by the demarch, a venerable old man with a white beard, who was a physician,

unfortunately also a politician, and who insisted on making a thousand inquiries about Mr. Gladstone and Prince Bismarck, while we were starving and longing for dinner. Some fish, which the muleteers had providently bought at Astros and brought with them, formed the best part of the entertainment, if we except the magnificent creature, adorned in all his petticoats and colors and knives, who came in to see us before dinner, and kissed our hands with wonderful dignity, but who turned out to be the waiter at the table. We asked the demarch how he had procured himself so stately a servant, and he said he was the clerk in his office. It occurred to us, when we watched the grace and dignity of every movement in this royal-looking person, how great an effect splendid costume seems to have on manners. It was but a few days since that I had gone to a very fashionable evening party at a handsome palace in Athens, and had been amused at the extraordinary awkwardness with which various very learned men[pg 439]—professors, archæologists, men of independent means—had entered the room. The circle was, I may add, chiefly German. Here was a man, ignorant, acting as a servant and yet a king in demeanor. But how could you expect a German professor in his miserable Frankish dress to assume the dignity of a Greek in palicar costume, in forty yards of petticoat, his waist squeezed with female relentlessness, with his ruby jacket and gaiters, his daggers and pistols at his belt. After all, manners are hardly attainable, as a rule, without costume.

We were accommodated as well as the worthy demarch could manage for the night. As a special favor I was put to sleep into his dispensary, a little chamber full of galley-pots, pestles, and labelled bottles of antiquated appearance, and dreamt in turns of the study of Faust and of the apothecary's shop in Mantua, which we see upon the stage.

Early in the morning we climbed up a steep ascent to attain the high plateau, very bleak and bare, which is believed by the people to have been the scene of the conflict of Othryades and his men with the Argive 300. A particular spot is still called στοὺς φονευμένους, *the place of the slain*. The high plain, about 3500 feet above the sea, was all peopled with country-folk coming to a market at Hagios Petros, and we had ample opportunity of admiring both the fine manly appearance and the excellent manners of this hardy and free [pg 440]peasantry. The complex of mountains in which they live is the chain of Parnon, which ultimately extends from Thyreatis through Kynuria down to Cape Malea, but not without many breaks and crossings. The heights of Parnon (now called Malevo) still hid from us the farther Alps of the inner country.

After a ride of an hour or two we descended to the village of Arachova, much smaller and poorer than its namesake in Phocis (above, p. 274), and thence to the valley of a stream called Phonissa, the murderess, from its dangerous floods, but at the moment a pleasant and shallow brook. Down its narrow

bed we went for hours, crossing and recrossing it, or riding along its banks, with all the verdure gradually increasing with the change of climate and of shelter, till at last a turn in the river brought us suddenly in sight of the brilliant serrated crest of Taygetus, glittering with its snow in the sunshine. Then we knew our proper landmark, and felt that we were indeed approaching Sparta.

But we still had a long way to ride down our river till we reached its confluence with the Eurotas, near to which we stopped at a solitary khan, from which it is an easy ride to visit the remains of Sellasia. During the remaining three hours we descended the banks of the Eurotas, with the country gradually growing richer, and the stream so deep that it could no longer be forded. There is a quaint [pg 441]high mediæval bridge at the head of the vale of Sparta. On a hot summer's afternoon, about five o'clock, we rode, dusty and tired, into Sparta.

The town was in holiday, and athletic sports were going on in commemoration of the establishment of Greek liberty. Crowds of fine tall men were in the very wide regular streets, and in the evening this new town vindicated its ancient title of εὐρύχορος. But the very first glance at the surroundings of the place was sufficient to correct in my mind a very widespread error, which we all obtain from reading the books of people who have never studied history on the spot. We imagine to ourselves the Spartans as hardy mountaineers, living in a rude alpine country, with sterile

soil, the rude nurse of liberty. They may have been such when they arrived in prehistoric times from the mountains of Phocis, but a very short residence in Laconia must have changed them very much. The vale of Sparta is the richest and most fertile in Peloponnesus. The bounding chains of mountains are separated by a stretch, some twenty miles wide, of undulating hills and slopes, all now covered with vineyards, orange and lemon orchards, and comfortable homesteads or villages. The great chain on the west limits the vale by a definite line, but toward the east the hills that run toward Malea rise very gradually and with many delays beyond the arable ground. The old Spartans therefore settled in the richest and best [pg 442]country available, and must from the very outset of their career have had better food, better climate, and hence much more luxury than their neighbors.

We are led to the same conclusion by the art-remains which are now coming to light, and which are being collected in the well-built local museum of the town. They show us that there was an archaic school of sculpture, which produced votive and funeral reliefs, and therefore that the old Spartans were by no means so opposed to art as they have been represented in the histories. The poetry of Alkman, with its social and moral freedom, its suggestions of luxury and good living, shows what kind of literature the Spartan rulers thought fit to import and encourage in the city of Lycurgus. The whole sketch of Spartan

society which we read in Plutarch's *Life* and other late authorities seems rather to smack of imaginary reconstruction on Doric principles than of historical reality. Contrasts there were, no doubt, between Dorians and Ionians, nay, even between Sparta and Tarentine or Argive Dorians; but still Sparta was a rich and luxurious society, as is confessed on all hands where there is any mention of the ladies and their homes. We might as well infer from the rudeness of the dormitories in the College at Winchester, or from the simplicity of an English man-of-war's mess, that our nation consisted of rude mountaineers living in the sternest simplicity.

[pg 443]
But if I continue to write in this way I shall have all the pedants down upon me. Let us return to the Sparta of to-day. We lodged at a very bad and dear inn, and our host's candid excuse for his exorbitant prices was the fact that he very seldom had strangers to rob, and so must plunder those that came without stint. His formula was perhaps a little more decent, but he hardly sought to disguise the plain truth. When we sought our beds, we found that a very noisy party had established themselves below to celebrate the Feast of the Liberation, with supper, speeches, and midnight revelry.

So, as usual, there was little possibility of sleep. Moreover, I knew that we had a very long day's journey before us to Kalamata, so I rose before the sun and before my companions, to make preparations and to

rouse the muleteers.

On opening my window, I felt that I had attained one of the strange moments of life which can never be forgotten. The air was preternaturally clear and cold, and the sky beginning to glow faintly with the coming day. Straight before me, so close that it almost seemed within reach of voice, the giant Taygetus, which rises straight from the plain, stood up into the sky, its black and purple gradually brightening into crimson, and the cold blue-white of its snow warming into rose. There was a great feeling of peace and silence, and yet a vast diffusion of sound. From the whole plain, with all its home[pg 444]steads and villages, myriads of cocks were proclaiming the advent of the dawn. I had never thought there were so many cocks in all the world. The ever-succeeding voices of these countless thousands kept up one continual wave of sound, such as I suppose could not be equalled anywhere else; and yet for all that, as I have said, there was a feeling of silence, a sense that no other living thing was abroad, an absolute stillness in the air, a deep sleep over the rest of nature.

How long I stood there, and forgot my hurry, I know not, but starting up at last as the sun struck the mountain, I went down, and found below stairs another curious contrast. All over the coffee-room (if I may so dignify it) were the disordered remains of a disorderly revel, ashes and stains and fragments in disgusting confusion; and among them a solitary figure was mumbling prayers in the gloom to the

image of a saint with a faint lamp burning before it. In the midst of the wrecks of dissipation was the earnestness of devotion, prayer in the place of ribaldry; perhaps, too, dead formalism in the place of coarse but real enjoyment.

We left for Mistra before six in the morning, so escaping some of the parting inspection which the whole town was ready to bestow upon us. The way led us past many orchards, where oranges and lemons were growing in the richest profusion on great trees, as large as the cherry-trees in the Alps. The [pg 445]branches were bending with their load, and there was fruit tumbled into the grass, and studding the ground in careless plenty with its ruddy and pale gold. In these orchards, with their deep green masses of foliage, the nightingales sing all day, and we heard them out-carolling the homelier sounds of awakening husbandry. During all the many rides I have taken through Greece, no valley ever struck me with the sense of peace and wealth so much as that of Sparta.

After an hour or so we reached the picturesque town of Mistra, now nearly deserted, but all through the Middle Ages the capital of the district, nestled under the shelter of the great fortress of the Villehardouins, the family of the famous chronicler. Separated by a deep gorge (or *langada*) with its torrent from the loftier mountain, this picturesque rock with its fortress contains the most remarkable mediæval remains, Latin, Greek, Venetian,

Turkish, in all the Morea. Villehardouins and Paleologi made it their seat of power, and filled it with churches and palaces, to which I shall return when we speak of mediæval Greece. An earthquake about fifty years ago destroyed many of the houses, and the population then founded the new Sparta, with its wide, regular streets, on the site of the old classical city. This resettlement is not so serious a hindrance to archæology as the rebuilding of Athens, for we know that in the days of its real greatness Sparta was a mere [pg 446]aggregate of villages, and the walls and theatre which are still visible must have been built in late Greek or Roman times. The so-called tomb of Leonidas, a square chamber built with huge blocks of ashlar masonry, of which three courses remain, appears like building of the best period, but its history is wholly unknown.

We reached in another hour the steep village of Trypi, at the very mouth of the great pass through Taygetus—a beautiful site, with houses and forest trees standing one above the other on the precipitous steep; and below, the torrent rushing into the plain to join the Eurotas. It is from this village that we ought to have started at dawn, and where we should have spent the previous night, for even from here it takes eleven full hours to reach Kalamata on the Gulf of Messene. The traveller should send on his ponies, or take them to Mistra and thence to Trypi on the previous afternoon. The lodging there is probably not much worse than at Sparta.

From this point we entered at once into the great Langada pass, the most splendid defile in Greece—the only way from Sparta into Messene for a distance of thirty miles north and south. It is indeed possible to scale the mountain at a few other points, but only by regular alpine climbing, whereas this is a regular highway; and along it strings of mules, not without trouble, make their passage daily, when [pg 447]the snow does not lie, from Sparta and from Kalamata.



Langada Pass

Nothing can exceed the picturesqueness and beauty of this pass, and nothing was stranger than the contrast between its two steeps. That which faced south was covered with green and with spring flowers—pale anemones, irises, orchids, violets, and, where a stream trickled down, with primroses—a marsh plant in this country. All these were growing among

great boulders and cliffs, whereas on the opposite side the whole face was bleak and barren, the rocks being striated with rich yellow and red veins. I suppose in hot summer these aspects are reversed. High above us, as it were, looking down from the summits, were great forests of fir-trees—a gloomy setting to a grandiose and savage landscape. The day was, as usual, calm and perfectly fine, with a few white clouds relieving the deep blue of the sky. As we were threading our way among the rocks of the river-course we were alarmed by large stones tumbling from above, and threatening to crush us. Our guides raised all the echoes with their shouts, to warn any unconscious disturber of this solitude that there were human beings beneath, but on closer survey we found that our possible assassins were only goats clambering along the precipice in search of food, and disturbing loose boulders as they went.

Farther on we met other herds of these quaint [pg 448]creatures generally tended by a pair of solitary children, who seemed to belong to no human kin, but, like birds or flowers, to be the natural denizens of these wilds. They seemed not to talk or play; we never heard them sing, but passed them sitting in curious vague listlessness, with no wonder, no curiosity, in their deep solemn eyes. There, all the day long, they heard no sound but the falling water, the tinkling of their flocks, and the great whisper of the forest pines when the breeze touched them on its way down the

pass. They took little heed of us as we passed, and seemed to have sunk from active beings into mere passive mirrors of the external nature around them. The men with us, on the other hand, were constantly singing and talking. They were all in a strange country which they had never seen; a serious man with a gun slung around his shoulder was our guide from Trypi, and so at last we reached the top of the pass, about four thousand feet high, marked by a little chapel to St. Elias, and once by a stone pillar stating the boundary between Sparta and Messene. It was then up this pass, and among these forests, that the young Spartans had steeled themselves by hunting the wolf and the bear in peace, and by raids and surprises in days of war.

The descent was longer and more varied; sometimes through well cultivated olive yards, mulberries, and thriving villages, sometimes along giant slopes, where a high wind would have made our progress [pg 449]very difficult. Gradually the views opened and extended, and in the evening we could see down to the coast of Messene, and the sea far away. But we did not reach Kalamata till long after nightfall, and rested gladly in a less uncomfortable inn than we had yet found in the journey.

The town is a cheery and pleasant little place, with remains of a large mediæval castle occupied by Franks, Venetians, Turks, which was the first seat of the Villehardouins, and from which they founded their second fort at

Mistra. The river Nedon here runs into the sea, and there is a sort of open roadstead for ships, where steamers call almost daily, and a good deal of coasting trade (silk, currants, etc.) goes on. The only notable feature in the architecture is the pretty bell tower of the church, of a type which I afterward saw in other parts of Messenia, but which is not usual in these late Byzantine buildings.

As there was nothing to delay us here, we left next morning for the convent of Vourkano, from which we were to visit Mount Ithome, and the famous ruins of Epaminondas's second great foundation in Peloponnesus—the revived Messene. The plain (called *Macaria* or Felix from its fertility) through which we rode was indeed both rich and prosperous, but swampy in some places and very dusty in others. There seemed to be active cultivation of mulberries, figs, olives, lemons, almonds, [pg 450]currant-grapes, with cactus hedges and plenty of cattle. There were numerous little pot-houses along the road, where mastich and lucumia were sold, as well as dried fruit and oranges. If the Nedon was broad and shallow, we found the Pamisos narrow and deep, so that it could only be crossed by a bridge. A few hours brought us to the ascent of Mount Ithome, on a high shoulder of which is situated the famous and hospitable convent of Vourkano (or Voulkano).

The building, very picturesquely situated high on the side of Mount Ithome, commands a long slope covered with brushwood and wild-

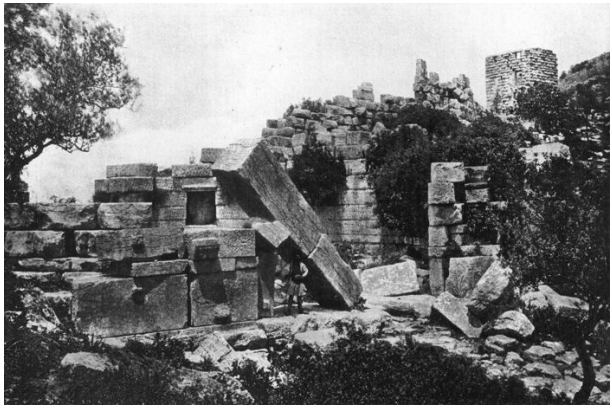
flowers, the ideal spot for a botanist, as many rills of water run down the descent and produce an abundant and various vegetation. There is not a sod of soil which does not contain bulbs and roots of flowers. Below stretches the valley of Stenyclarus, so famous in the old annals of Messene. It was studded with groves of orange and lemon, olive and date, mulberry and fig. The whole of this country has an aspect far more southern and subtropical than any part of Laconia.

The monks treated us with great kindness, even pressing us to sit down to dinner before any ablutions had been thought of, and while we were still covered with the dust of a very hot and stormy journey along high roads. The plan of the building, which is not old, having been moved down from [pg 451]the summit in the last century, is that of a court closed with a gateway, with covered corridors above looking into the court, and a very tawdry chapel occupying its centre. It seemed a large and well-to-do establishment, a sort of Greek Monte Cassino in appearance; and with the same stir of country people and passing visitors about it. Far above us, on the summit of Mount Ithome—the site of human sacrifices to Zeus Ithomates in days of trouble—we saw a chapel on the highest top, 2500 feet over the sea. Here they told us that a solitary anchorite spent his life, praying and doing service at his altar, far above the sounds of human life. We made inquiry concerning the history of this saint, who was once a wealthy Athenian citizen, with a wife and family. His

wife was dead, and his sons settled in the world, so he resolved to devote the rest of his years to the service of God apart from the ways of men. Once a fortnight only he descended to the convent, and brought up the necessary food. On his lonely watch he had no company but timid hares, travelling quail, and an occasional eagle, that came and sat by him without fear, perhaps in wonder at this curious and silent friend. The monks below had often urged him to catch these creatures for their benefit, but he refused to profane their lofty asylum. So he sits, looking out from his watch upon sunshine and rain, upon hot calm and wild storm, with the whole Peloponnesus extended [pg 452]beneath his eyes. He sees from afar the works and ways of men, and the world that he has left for ever. Is it not strange that still upon the same height men offer to their God these human sacrifices, changed indeed in appearance, but in real substance the same?

The main excursion from the monastery is over the saddle of the mountain westward, and through the “Laconian gate” down into the valley beneath, to see the remains of Epaminondas’s great foundation, the new Messene. There are still faint traces of a small theatre and some other buildings, but of the walls and gates enough to tell us pretty clearly how men built fortifications in those days. The circuit of the walls included the fort on the summit, and enclosed a large tract of country, so much that it would be impossible for any garrison to defend it, and accordingly

we hear of the city being taken by sudden assault more than once. The plan is very splendid, but seems to us rather ostentatious than serious for a new foundation liable to attacks from Sparta. The walls were, however, beautifully built, with towers at intervals, and gates for sallies. The best extant gate is called the Arcadian, and consisted of an outer and inner pair of folding-doors, enclosing a large round chamber for the watch. The size of the doorposts and lintels is gigantic, and shows that there was neither time nor labor spared to make Messene a stately settlement. There was [pg 453]almost enough land enclosed within the walls to feed the inhabitants of the houses, for their number never became very great. If Megalopolis, a far more successful foundation, was far too large for its population, how much more must this have been the case with Messene? In military architecture, however, we have no other specimen of old Hellenic work equal to it, except perhaps Eleutheræ, which resembles it in style strongly, though the enclosure is quite small in comparison.



Arcadian Gateway, Messene

We could have gone up from Messene by a very long day's ride to Bassæ, and so to Olympia, but we had had enough of riding and preferred to make a short day to the sea at Kyparissia, and thence by steamer to Katakolo, from which rail and road to Olympia are quite easy. So we left the convent in the morning and descended into the valley, to turn north and then north-east, along the river courses which mark the mule-tracks through the wild country. We crossed a strange bridge over the junction of two rivers made of three arches meeting in the centre, and of which the substructure were certainly old Greek building. We then passed through bleak tracts of uncultivated land, perhaps the most signal case of insufficient population we had seen in Greece. All these waste fields were covered with great masses of asphodel, through which rare herds of swine were feeding, and the sight of these fields suggested

to me that by the [pg 454]“meadow of asphodel” in Homer is not meant a pleasant garden, or desirable country, but merely a dull waste in which there is nothing done, and no sign of human labor or human happiness. Had there been night or gloom over this stony tract, with its tall straggling plants and pale flowers, one could easily imagine it the place which the dead hero inhabited when he told his friend that the vilest menial on earth was happier than he.

After some hours the mountains began to approach on either side, and we reached a country wonderful in its contrast. Great green slopes reached up from us far away into the hills, studded with great single forest trees, and among them huge shrubs of arbutus and mastich, trimmed and rounded as if for ornament. It was like a splendid park, kept by an English magnate. The regularity of shape in the shrubs arises, no doubt, from the constant cropping of the young shoots all round by herds of goats, which we met here and there in this beautiful solitude. The river bank where we rode was clothed with oleander, prickly pear, and other flowering shrubs which I could not name.

At last woods of ancient olives, with great gnarled stems, told us that we were nearing some important settlement, and the pleasant town of Kyparissia came in view—now, alas! a heap of ruins since the recent earthquake. Here we took leave of our ponies, mules, and human followers; but the pathos [pg 455]of parting with these intimate companions of

many days was somewhat marred by the divergence of their notions and ours as to their pay. Yet these differences, when settled, did not prevent them from giving us an affectionate farewell.

[pg 456]

CHAPTER XV.

MYCENÆ AND TIRYNS.

I have set apart a chapter for Mycenæ and Tiryns, because the discoveries of Dr. Schliemann there have raised so many new problems, and have so largely increased public curiosity about them, that a book of travels in Greece cannot venture to avoid the subject; even long before Dr. Schliemann's day, the learned and deliberate travellers who visited the Morea, and wrote their great books, found ample scope for description, and large room for erudite discussion. It is a curious thing to add, but strictly true, that all the new facts brought out by the late excavations have, as yet, contributed but little to our knowledge about the actual history of the country, and that almost every word of what was summed up from all existing sources twenty years ago, by Ernst Curtius, can still be read with far more profit than the

rash speculations which appear almost weekly in the periodical press.

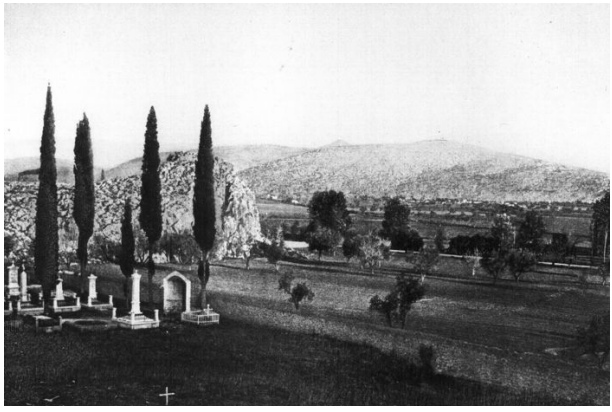
It is impossible to approach Mycenæ from any side without being struck with the picturesqueness of the site. If you come down over the mountains from Corinth, as soon as you reach the head of the [pg 457]valley of the Inachus, which is the plain of Argos, you turn aside to the left, or east, into a secluded corner—"a recess of the horse-feeding Argos," as Homer calls it, and then you find on the edge of the valley, and where the hills begin to rise one behind the other, the village of Charváti. When you ascend from this place, you find that the lofty Mount Elias is separated from the plain by two nearly parallel waves of land, which are indeed joined at the northern end by a curving saddle, but elsewhere are divided by deep gorges. The loftier and shorter wave forms the rocky citadel of Mycenæ—the Argion, as it was once called. The lower and longer was part of the outer city, which occupied both this hill and the gorge under the Argion. As you walk along the lower hill, you find the Treasure-house of Atreus, as it is called, built into the side which faces the Acropolis. But there are other ruined treasuries on the outer slope, and the newly-opened one is just at the joining saddle, where the way winds round to lead you up the greater hill to the giant gate with the Lion portal. If we represent the high levels under the image of a fishing-hook, with the shank placed downward (south), and the point lying to the right (east), then the Great

Treasury is at that spot in the shank which is exactly opposite the point, and faces it. The point and barb are the Acropolis. The New Treasury is just at the turn of the hook, facing in[pg 458]ward (to the south). This will give a rough idea of the site. It is not necessary to enter into details, when so many maps and plans are now in circulation. But I would especially refer to the admirable illustrations in Schliemann's *Mycenæ*, where all these matters are made perfectly plain and easy.

When we first visited the place it was in the afternoon of a splendid summer's day; the fields were yellow and white with stubbles or with dust, and the deep gray shadow of a passing cloud was the only variety in the color of the upper plain. For here there are now no trees, the corn had been reaped, and the land asserted its character as *very thirsty* Argos. But as we ascended to higher ground, the groves and plantations of the lower plain came in sight, the splendid blue of the bay began to frame the picture, and the setting sun cast deeper shadow and richer color over all the view. Down at the river-bed great oleanders were spreading their sheets of bloom, like the rhododendrons in our climate, but they were too distant to form a feature in the prospect.

I saw the valley of Argos again in spring, in our "roaring moon of daffodil and crocus;" it was the time of growing corn, of scarlet anemone and purple cistus, but there too of high winds and glancing shadows. Then all the plain was either brilliant green with

growing wheat, or ruddy brown with recent tillage; there were clouds about the moun[pg 459]tains, and changing colors in the sky, and a feeling of freshness and life very different from the golden haze and dreamy calmness of a southern June.



The Argive Plain

I can hardly say which of these seasons was the more beautiful, but I shall always associate the summer scene with the charm of a first visit to this famous spot, and still more with the venerable and undisturbed aspect of the ruins before they had been profaned by modern research. It is, I suppose, ungrateful to complain of these things, and we must admit that great discoveries outbalance the æsthetic damage done to an ancient ruin by digging unsightly holes and piling mounds of earth about it; but who can contemplate without sorrow the covering of the finest

piece of the Cyclopean wall at Mycenæ with the rubbish taken away from over the tombs? Who will not regret the fig-tree which spread its shade over the portal of the House of Atreus? This fig-tree is still to be seen in the older photographs, and is in the woodcut of the entrance given in Dr. Schliemann's book, but the visitor of to-day will look for it in vain. On the other hand, the opening at the top, which had been there since the beginning of this century, but which was closed when I first visited the chamber, had been again uncovered, and so it was much easier to examine the inner arrangement of the building.

I am not sure that this wonderful structure was visited or described by any traveller from the days [pg 460]of Pausanias till after the year 1800. At least I can find no description from any former traveller quoted in the many accurate accounts which the present century has produced. Chandler, in 1776, intended to visit Mycenæ, but accidentally missed the spot on his way from Argos to Corinth—a thing more likely to happen then, when there was a good deal of wooding in the upper part of the plain. But Clarke, Dodwell, and Gell all visited and described the place between 1800 and 1806, and the latter two published accurate drawings of both the portal and the inner view, which was possible owing to the aperture made at the summit.

About the same time Lord Elgin had turned his attention to the Treasury, and had made excavations about the place, finding several

fragments of very old engraved basalt and limestone, which had been employed to ornament the entrance. Some of these fragments are now in the British Museum. But, though both Clarke and Leake allude to "Lord Elgin's excavators," they do not specify what was performed, or in what condition the place had been before their researches. There is no published account of this interesting point, which is probably to be solved by the still unpublished journals said to be in the possession of the present Earl.[174] This much is, however, certain, that the chamber was not first [pg 461]entered at this time; for Dr. Clarke speaks of its appearance as that of a place open for centuries. We know that systematic rifling of ancient tombs took place at the close of the classical epoch;[175] we can imagine it repeated in every age of disorder or barbarism; and the accounts we hear of the Genoese plundering the great mounds of the Crimea show that even these civilized and artistic Italians thought it no desecration to obtain gold and jewels from unnamed, long-forgotten sepulchres. It seems, therefore, impossible to say at what epoch—probably even before Pausanias—this chamber was opened. The story in Dr. Schliemann's book,[176] which he quotes from a Greek newspaper, and which attributes the plundering of it to Veli Pasha, in 1810, is positively groundless, and in direct contradiction to the irrefragable evidence I have above adduced. The Pasha may have probed the now ruined chambers on the outer side of the hill; but the account of what he found is so mythical that the

whole story may be rejected as undeserving of credit.

I need not attempt a fresh description of the Great Treasury, in the face of such ample and accurate reports as those I have indicated. It is in no sense a rude building, or one of a helpless and barbarous age, but, on the contrary, the product of [pg 462]enormous appliances, and of a perfect knowledge of all the mechanical requirements for any building, if we except the application of the arch. The stones are hewn square, or curved to form the circular dome within with admirable exactness. Above the enormous lintel-stone, nearly twenty-seven feet long, and which is doubly grooved, by way of ornament, all along its edge over the doorway, there is now a triangular window or aperture, which was certainly filled with some artistic carving like the analogous space over the lintel in the gate of the Acropolis. Shortly after Lord Elgin had cleared the entrance, Gell and Dodwell found various pieces of green and red marble carved with geometrical patterns, some of which are reproduced in Dodwell's book. Gell also found some fragments in a neighboring chapel, and others are said to be built into a wall at Nauplia. There are supposed to have been short columns standing on each side in front of the gate, with some ornament surmounting them; but this seems to me to rest on doubtful evidence, and on theoretical reconstruction. Dr. Schliemann, however, asserts them to have been found at the entrance of the second treasury which Mrs. Schliemann excavated,

though his account is somewhat vague (*Mycenæ*, p. 140). There is the strongest architectural reason for the triangular aperture over the door, as it diminishes the enormous weight to be borne by the lintel; and here, no doubt, some orna[pg 463]ment very like the lions on the citadel gate may have been applied.

The extreme darkness of the chamber during our first visit prevented me from discovering, even with the aid of torches, the nail-marks which all the earlier travellers found there, and which are now again easily to be seen. So also the outer lintel-stone is not by any means the largest, but is far exceeded by the inner, which lies next to it, and which reaches on each side of the entrance a long way round the chamber, its inner surface being curved to suit the form of the wall. Along this curve it is twenty-nine feet long; it is, moreover, seventeen feet broad, and nearly four feet thick, weighing about one hundred and twenty-four tons!

When we first entered by the light of torches, we found ourselves in the great cone-shaped chamber, which, strange to say, reminded me of the Pantheon at Rome more than any other building I know, and is, nevertheless, built on a very different principle. The stones are not, indeed, pushed forward one above the other, as in ruder stone roofs through Ireland; but each of them, which is on the other surfaces cut perfectly square, has its inner face curved so that the upper end comes out several inches above the lower. So each stone carries

on the conical plan, having its lower line fitting closely to the upper line of the one beneath, and the [pg 464]whole dome ends with a great flat stone laid on the top.[177]

Dodwell still found copper nails of some inches in length, which he supposed to have been used to fasten on thin plates of shining metal; but I was at first unable to see even the holes in the roof, which other travellers had believed to be the places where the nails were inserted. However, without being provided with magnesium wire, it was then impossible to light the chamber sufficiently for a positive decision on this point. A comparatively small side chamber is hollowed out in the rock and earth, without any stone casing or ornament whatever, but with a similar triangular aperture over its doorway. Schliemann tells us he dug two trenches in this chamber, and that, besides finding some hewn pieces of limestone, he found in the middle a circular depression (apparently of stone), twenty-one inches deep, and about one yard in diameter, which he compares to a large wash-bowl. Any one who has visited New Grange will be struck with the likeness of this description to the large stone saucers [pg 465]which are still to be seen there, and of which I shall speak presently.

There has been much controversy about the use to which this building was applied, and we cannot now attempt to change the name, even if we could prove its absurdity. Pausanias, who saw Mycenæ in the second century A. D., found it in much the same state

as we do, and was no better informed than we, though he tells us the popular belief that this and its fellows were treasure-houses like that of the Minyæ at Orchomenus, which was very much greater, and was, in his opinion, one of the most wonderful things in all Greece. But it does not seem to me that his opinion, which, indeed, is not very clear, need in the least shackle our judgments.

The majority of scholars incline to the theory that it is a tomb. In the first place, there are three other similar buildings quite close to it, which Pausanias mentions as the treasure-houses of the sons of Atreus, but their number makes it most unlikely that any of them could be for treasure. Surely such a house could only be owned by the reigning king, and there is no reason why his successor should make himself a new vault for this purpose. In the next place, these buildings were all underground and dark, and exactly such as would be selected for tombs. Thirdly, they are not situated within the enclosure of the citadel of Mycenæ, but [pg 466]are outside it, and probably outside the original town altogether—a thing quite inconceivable if they were meant for treasure, but most reasonable, and according to analogy, if they were used as tombs. This, too, would of course explain the plurality of them—different kings having built them, just like the pyramids of Chufu, Safra, and Menkerah, and many others, along the plain of Memphis in Egypt. It is even quite easy and natural to explain on this hypothesis how they came to

be thought treasure-houses. It is known that the sepulchral tumuli of similar construction in other places, and possibly built by kindred people, contained much treasure, left there by way of honor to the deceased. Herodotus describes this in Scythian tombs, some of which have been opened of late, and have verified his assertions.[178] The lavish expense at Patroclus's funeral, in the Iliad, shows the prevalence of similar notions among early Greeks, who held, down to Æschylus's day, that the importance of a man among the dead was in proportion to the circumstance with which his tomb was treated by the living. It may, therefore, be assumed as certain that these strongholds of the dead, if they were such, were filled with many precious things in gold and other metals, intended as parting gifts in honor of the king who was laid to rest. Long after the devastation of Mycenæ, I suppose that these tombs [pg 467]were opened in search of treasure, and not in vain; and so nothing was said about the skeleton tenant, while rumors went abroad of the rich treasure-trove within the giant portal. Thus, then, the tradition would spring up and grow, that the building was the treasure-house of some old legendary king.

These antiquarian considerations have led us away from the actual survey of the old vault, for ruin it cannot be called. The simplicity and massiveness of its structure have defied age and violence, and, except for the shattered ornaments and a few pieces over the inner side of the window, not a stone appears

ever to have been moved from its place. Standing at the entrance, you look out upon the scattered masonry of the walls of Mycenæ, on the hillock over against you. Close beyond this is a dark and solemn chain of mountains. The view is narrow and confined, and faces the north, so that, for most of the day, the gate is dark and in shadow. We can conceive no fitter place for the burial of a king, within sight of his citadel, in the heart of a deep natural hillock, with a great solemn portal symbolizing the resistless strength of the barrier which he had passed into an unknown land. But one more remark seems necessary. This treasure-house is by no means a Hellenic building in its features. It has the same perfection of construction which can be seen at Eleutheræ, or any other Greek fort, but still the really analogous buildings are to be [pg 468]found in far distant lands—in the raths of Ireland and the barrows of the Crimea.

I have had the opportunity of comparing the structure and effect of the great sepulchral monuments in the county of Meath, in Ireland. Two of these, Dowth and New Grange, are opened, and can be entered almost as easily as the treasury of Atreus. They lie close to the rich valley of the Boyne, in that part of the country which was pointed out by nature as the earliest seat of wealth and culture. Dowth is the ruder and less ornamented, and therefore not improbably the older, but is less suited for the present comparison than the greater and more ornate New Grange.

This splendid tomb is not a whit less remarkable, or less colossal in its construction, than those at Mycenæ, but differs in many details. It was not hollowed out in a hillside, but was built of great upright stones, with flat slabs laid over them, and then covered with a mound of earth. An enormous circle of giant boulders stands round the foot of the mound. Instead of passing through a short entrance into a great vaulted chamber, there is a long narrow corridor, which leads to a much smaller, but still very lofty room, nearly twenty feet high. Three recesses in the walls of this latter each contain a large round saucer, so to speak, made of single stone, in which the remains of the dead seem to have been laid. This saucer is very shallow, and [pg 469]not more than four feet in diameter. The great stones with which the chamber and passage are constructed are not hewn or shaped, and so far the building is rather comparable with that of Tiryns than that of Mycenæ. But all over the faces of the stones are endless spiral and zigzag ornaments, even covering built-in surfaces, and thus invisible, so that this decoration must have been applied to the slabs prior to the building. On the outside stones, both under and above the entry, there is a well-executed carving of more finished geometrical designs.

Putting aside minor details, it may be said that while both monuments show an equal display of human strength, and an equal contempt for human toil, which were lavished

upon them without stint, the Greek building shows far greater finish of design and neatness of execution, together with greater simplicity. The stones are all carefully hewn and fitted, but not carved or decorated. The triangular carved block over the lintel, and the supposed metal plates on the interior, were both foreign to the original structure. On the contrary, while the Irish tomb is a far greater feature in the landscape—a landmark in the district—the great stones within are not fitted together, or hewn into shape, and yet they are covered with patterns and designs strangely similar to the carvings found by Dodwell and Dr. Schliemann at the Argive tombs. Thus the Irish builders, with far greater rudeness, show a [pg 470]greater taste for ornament. They care less for design and symmetry—more for beauty of detail. The Greek essay naturally culminates in the severe symmetry of the Doric Temple—the Irish in the glorious intricacy of the illuminations of the *Book of Kells*.

The second treasury lately excavated by Mrs. Schliemann has been disappointing in its results. Though it seems not to have been disturbed for ages, it had evidently been once rifled, for nothing save a few fragments of pottery were found within. Its entrance is much loftier than that of the house of Atreus, but the general building is inferior, the stones are far smaller and by no means so well fitted, and it produces altogether the impression of being either a much earlier and ruder attempt, or a poor and feeble imitation.

Though Dr. Schliemann asserts the former, I am disposed to suspect the latter to be the case.

A great deal of what was said about the tomb of Agamemnon, as the common people, with truer instinct, call the supposed treasure-house, may be repeated about the fortifications of Mycenæ. It is the work of builders who know perfectly how to deal with their materials—who can hew and fit great blocks of stone with perfect ease; nay, who prefer, for the sake of massive effect, to make their doorway with such enormous blocks as even modern science would find it difficult to handle. The sculpt[pg 471]ure over the gate fortunately remains almost entire. The two lions, standing up at a small pillar, were looking out fiercely at the stranger. The heads are gone, having probably, as Dr. Schliemann first observed, been made of bronze, and riveted to the stone. The rest of the sculpture is intact, and is of a strangely heraldic character. It is a piece of bluish limestone,[179] which must have been brought from a long distance, quite different from the rough breccia of the rest of the gate. The lintel-stone is not nearly so vast as that of the treasure-house: it is only fifteen feet long, but is somewhat thicker, and also much deeper, going back the full depth of the gateway. Still it must weigh a good many tons; and it puzzles us to think how it can have been put into its place with the appliances then in vogue. The joint use of square and polygonal masonry is very curious. Standing within the

gate, one side is [pg 472]of square-hewn stones, the other of irregular, though well-fitted, blocks. On the left side, looking into the gate, there is a gap of one block in the wall, which looks very like a window,[180] as it is not probable that a single stone was taken, or fell out of its place afterward, without disturbing the rest. What makes it, perhaps, more possible that this window is intentional, is the position of the gate, which is not in the middle of the walled causeway, as you enter, but to the right side.

When you go in, and climb up the hill of the Acropolis, you find various other portions of Cyclopean walls which belonged to the old palace, in plan very similar to that of Tiryns. But the outer wall goes all round the hill where it is steepest, sometimes right along a precipice, and everywhere offering an almost insurmountable obstacle to an ancient assailant. On the east side, facing the steep mountain, which is separated from it by a deep gorge, is a postern gate, consisting merely of three stones, but these so massive, and so beautifully hewn and fitted, as to be a structure hardly less striking than the lion gate. At about half the depth of these huge blocks there is a regular groove cut down both sides and along the top, in order to hold the door.

[pg 473]
The whole summit of the great rock is now stony and bare, but not so bare that I could not gather scarlet anemones, which found scanty sustenance here and there in tiny

patches of grass, and gladdened the gray color of the native rock and the primeval walls. The view from the summit, when first I saw it, was one of singular solitude and peace; not a stone seemed to have been disturbed for ages; not a human creature, or even a browsing goat, was visible, and the traveller might sketch or scrutinize any part of the fortress without fear of intrusion, far less of molestation. When I again reached the site, in the spring of 1877, a great change had taken place. Dr. Schliemann had attacked the ruins, and had made his world-renowned excavations inside and about the lion gate. To the gate itself this was a very great gain. All the encumbering earth and stones have been removed, so that we can now admire the full proportions of the mighty portal. He discovered a tiny porter's lodge inside it. He denied the existence of the wheel-tracks which we and others fancied we had seen there on our former visit.



Lion Gate, Mycenae

But proceeding from the gate to the lower side, where the hill slopes down rapidly, and where the great irregular Cyclopean wall trends away to the right, Dr. Schliemann found a deep accumulation of soil. This was, of course, the chief place on an otherwise bare rock where excavations promised [pg

474]large results. And the result was beyond the wildest anticipations. The whole account of what he has done is long before the public in his very splendid book, of which the illustrations are quite an epoch in the history of ornament, and in spite of their great antiquity will suggest to our modern jewellers many an exquisite pattern. The sum of what he found is this:—

He first found in this area a double circuit of thin upright slabs, joined together closely, and joined across the top with flat slabs mortised into them, the whole circuit being like a covered way, about three feet high. Into the enclosed circle a way leads from the lion gate; and what I noted particularly was this, that the whole circle, which was over thirty yards in diameter, was separated from the higher ground by a very miserable bounding wall, which, though quite concealed before the excavations, and therefore certainly very old, looked for all the world like some Turkish piece of masonry.

As soon as this stone circle was discovered, it was suggested that old Greek *agoras* were round, that they were often in the citadel at the king's gate, and that people were sometimes buried in them. Dr. Schliemann at once baptized the place as the agora of Mycenæ. It was a circle with only one free access, and that from the gate; it had tombstones standing in the midst of it, and there were the charred remains of sacrifices about them. The [pg 475]number of bodies already exhumed beneath preclude their

being all founders or heroes of the city. These and other indications were enough to disprove clearly that the circle was an agora, but that it was rather a place of sepulture, enclosed, as such places always were, with a fence, which seems made in imitation of a palisade of wood.

Inside this circuit of stone slabs were found—apparently at the same depth, but on this Dr. Schliemann is not explicit—very curious and very archaic carved slabs, with rude hunting scenes of warriors in very uncomfortable chariots, and varied spiral ornaments filling up the vacant spaces. These sculptures are unlike any Hellenic work, properly so called, and point back to a very remote period, and probably to the introduction of a foreign art among the rude inhabitants of early Greece. Deeper down were found more tombstones, all manner of archaic pottery, arrow-heads, and buttons of bone; there was also found some rude construction of hewn stones, which may have served as an altar or a tomb.

Yet further down, twenty-one feet deep, and close to the rock, were lying together a number of skeletons, which seemed to have been hastily or carelessly buried; but in the rock itself, in rudely hewn chambers, were found fifteen bodies buried with a splendor seldom equalled in the history of the world. These people were not buried like Greeks. They [pg 476]were not laid in rock chambers, like the Scythian kings. They were sunk in graves under the earth, which were large enough to receive them, had they not been

filled up round the bottom with rudely-built walls, or pieces of stone, so as to reduce the area, but to create perhaps some ventilation for the fire which had partly burnt the bodies where they were found. Thus the splendidly-attired and jewelled corpses, some of them with masks and breastplates of gold, were, so to speak, jammed down by the earth and stones above them into a very narrow space; but there appears to have been some arrangement for protecting them and their treasure from complete confusion with the soil which settled down over them. This, if the account of the excavation be accurate, seems the most peculiar feature in the burial of these great personages, but finds a parallel in the curious tombs of Hallstadt, which afford many analogies to Mycenæ.[181]

Dr. Schliemann boldly announced in the *Times*, and the public believed him, that he had found Agamemnon, and his companions, who were murdered when they returned from the siege of Troy. The burial is indeed quite different from any such ceremony described in the Homeric poems. The number of fifteen is not to be accounted for by any of the legends. There is no reason to think all the [pg 477]tombs have been discovered; one, or at least part of the treasure belonging to it, was since found outside the circle. Another was afterward found by M. Stamatakes. Æschylus, our oldest and best authority, places the tomb of Agamemnon, not at Mycenæ, but at Argos. They all agree that he was buried with contempt and dishonor. The

result was, that when the public came to hear the Agamemnon theory disproved, it was disposed to take another leap in the dark, and to look upon the whole discovery as suspicious, and as possibly something mediæval.

Such an inference would be as absurd as to accept the hypothesis of Dr. Schliemann. The tombs are undoubtedly very ancient, certainly far more ancient than the supposed date of Homer, or even of Agamemnon. The treasures which have been carried to Athens, and which I saw and handled at the National Bank, are not only really valuable masses of gold, but have a good deal of beauty of workmanship, both in design and decoration. Though the masks are very ugly and barbarous, and though there is in general no power shown of moulding any animal figure, there are very beautiful cups and jugs, there are most elegant geometrical ornaments—zigzags, spirals, and the like—and there are even imitations of animals of much artistic merit. The celebrated silver bull's head, with golden horns, is a piece of work which would not disgrace [pg 478]a goldsmith of our day; and this may be said of many of the ornaments. Any one who knows the Irish gold ornaments in the Academy Museum in Dublin perceives a wonderful family likeness in the old Irish spirals and decorations, yet not more than might occur among two separate nations working with the same materials under similar conditions. But I feel convinced that the best things in the tombs at Mycenæ were

not made by native artists, but imported, probably from Syria and Egypt. This seems proved even by the various materials which have been employed—ivory, alabaster, amber; in one case even an ostrich egg. So we shall, perhaps, in the end come back upon the despised legends of Cadmus and Danaus, and find that they told us truly of an old cultured race coming from the South and the East to humanize the barbarous progenitors of the Greeks.

I can now add important corroborations of these general conclusions from the researches made since the appearance of my earlier editions. I then said that the discoveries were too fresh and dazzling to admit of safe theories concerning their origin. By way of illustration I need only allude to those *savants* (they will hereafter be obliged to me for omitting their names) who imagined that all the Mycenæan tombs were not archaic at all, but the work of northern barbarians who occupied Greece during the disasters of the later Roman Empire! Serious re[pg 479]searches, however, have at last brought us considerable light. In the first place Helbig, in an important work comparing the treasures of Mycenæ with the allusions to art, arms, and manufactures in the Homeric poems, came to the negative conclusion that these two civilizations were distinct—that the Homeric poets cannot have had before them the palace of Mycenæ which owned the Schliemann treasures. As there is no room in Greek history for such a civilization posterior to the

Homeric poems, it follows that the latter must describe a civilization considerably later than that we have found at Mycenæ. Placing the Homeric poems in the eighth century B. C. we shall be led to about 1000 B. C. as the latest possible date for the splendors of Mycenæ. But this negative conclusion has been well-nigh demonstrated by the positive results of the various recent researches in Egypt. Not only has the Egypt Exploration Society examined carefully the sites of Naucratis and Daphne, thus disclosing to us what Greek art and manufacture could produce in the sixth and seventh centuries B. C. (665–565 B. C.), but Mr. Flinders Petrie has enriched our knowledge by his wonderful discoveries of Egyptian art on several sites, and of many epochs, fairly determinable by the reigning dynasties. He has recently (1890) examined the Mycenæan and other pre-historic treasures collected at Athens, by the light of his rich Egyptian experience, and has given a sum[pg 480]mary of the results in two short articles in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.

He finds that the materials and their treatment, such as blue glass, even in its decomposition, alabaster, rock-crystal, hollowed and painted within, dome-head rivets attaching handles of gold cups, ostrich eggs with handles attached, ties made for ornament in porcelain, are all to be found in Egyptian tombs varying from 1400 to 1100 in date. His analysis leads him to give the dates for the tombs I.-IV. at Mycenæ as 1200–1100 B. C. That an earlier date is improbable is

shown by the negative evidence that none of the purely geometrical false-necked vases occur, such as are the general product of 1400–1200 in Egyptian deposits. But as several isolated articles are of older types, as in particular the lions over the gate are quite similar to a gilt wooden lion he found of about 1450 B. C. in date, the Mycenæan civilization probably extended over a considerable period. He even finds proof of decadence in grave IV. as compared with the rest, and so comes to the conclusion, which I am disposed to question, that the tombs within the circle at Mycenæ (shaft-tombs) are later and worse interments made by the same people who had already built the more majestic and costly bee-hive tombs. Instead therefore of upholding a Phrygian origin, Mr. Petrie asserts an Egyptian origin for both Mycenæan and parallel Phrygian designs. The spiral pattern in its [pg 481]various forms, the rosettes, the keyfret, the palmetto, are all used in very early Egyptian decoration. The inlaid daggers of Mycenæ have long been recognized as inspired by Egypt; but we must note that it is native work and not merely an imported article. The attitude of the figures and of the lions, and the form of the cat, are such as no Egyptian would have executed. To make such things in Greece implies a far higher culture than merely to import them. The same remark applies to the glazed pottery; the style of some is not Egyptian, so that here the Mycenæans were capable of elaborate technical work, and imitated, rather than imported from Egypt.... The familiarity

with Egypt is further proved by the lotus pattern on the dagger-blade, by the cat on the dagger, and the cats on the gold foil ornaments, since the cat was then unknown in Greece. That the general range of the civilization was that of Africa, is indicated by the frequent use of the palm (not then known in Greece) as a decoration, and by the very scanty clothing of the male figures, indicating that dress was not a necessity of climate. On the other hand this culture reached out to the north of Europe. The silver-headed reindeer or elk, found in grave IV., can only be the result of northern intercourse. The amber so commonly used comes from the Baltic. And we see in Celtic ornament the obvious reproduction of the decorations of Mycenæ, as Mr. Arthur Evans [pg 482]has shown. Not only is the spiral decoration indistinguishable,[182] but also the taste for elaborately embossed diadems and breastplates of gold is peculiar to the Mycenæan and Celtic cultures. The great period of Mycenæ seems therefore to date 1300–1100 B. C., with occasional traditional links with Egypt as far back as 1500 or 1600 B. C.

Such is an abstract of Mr. Petrie's estimate.[183]

I will only here point out, in addition, the remarkable unity of style between the ornaments found at a depth of twenty-five feet in the tombs, the sculptured tombstones twelve or fourteen feet over them, and the lions on the gate of the citadel. It is, indeed, only a general uniformity, but it corroborates

Mr. Petrie's inference that there was more than mere importing; there was home manufacture. But still among the small gold ornaments in the tombs were found several pairs of animals placed opposite each other in this strictly *heraldic* fashion, and even on the engraved gems this symmetry is curiously frequent. It seems, then, that the art of Mycenæ had not changed when its early history came to a close, and its inhabitants were forced to [pg 483]abandon the fortress and submit to the now Doric Argos.

We are, indeed, told expressly by Pausanias and Diodorus that this event did not take place till after the Persian wars, when old Hellenic art was already well defined, and was beginning to make rapid progress. But this express statement, which I saw reason to question since my former remarks on the subject in this book, I am now determined to reject, in the face of the inconsistencies of these historians, the silence of all the contemporaries of the alleged conquest, and the exclusively archaic remains which Dr. Schliemann has unearthed. Mycenæ, along with Tiryns, Midea, and the other towns of the plain, was incorporated into Argos at a far earlier date, and not posterior to the brilliant rule of Pheidon. So it comes that historical Greece is silent about the ancient capital of the Pelopids, and the poets transfer all its glories to Argos. Once, indeed, the name did appear on the national records. The offerings to the gods at Olympia, and at Delphi, after the victory over the Persians, recorded that a

few patriots—460 in all—from Mycenæ and from Tiryns had joined the Greeks at Platæa, while the remainder of the Argives preserved a base and cowardly neutrality. The Mycenæans were very few in number; sixty are mentioned in connection with Thermopylæ by Herodotus. They were probably exiles through Greece, who had preserved their [pg 484]traditions and their descent, and gloried in exposing and insulting Argive Medism. The Tirynthian 400 may even have been the remnant of the slave population, which Herodotus tells us seized the citadel of Tiryns, when driven out from Argos twenty years before, and who lived there for some years. In the crisis of Platæa the Greeks were not dainty or critical, and they may have readily conceded the title of Tirynthian to these doubtful citizens, out of hatred and disgust at the neutrality of Argos. However these things may be, the mention of Mycenæans and Tirynthians on this solitary occasion afforded an obvious warrant to Diodorus for his date of the destruction of Mycenæ. But I am convinced that his authority, and that of Pausanias, who follows him, must be deliberately rejected.

On the other hand, the origin of Mycenæ, and its greatness as a royal residence, must be thrown back into a far deeper antiquity than any one had yet imagined. If Agamemnon and his house represent Hellenic princes, of the type of Homer's knowledge and acquaintance, they must have arisen after some older, and apparently different dynasties had ruled and

had buried their dead at Mycenæ.[184] But it is also possible that the Homeric bards, describing professedly the acts of a past age, imposed their [pg 485]new manners, and their own culture, upon the Pelopids, whom they only knew by vague tradition, and that thus their drawing is false; while the chiefs they glorify were the ancient pre-Hellenic rulers of the country. This latter supposition is so shocking a heresy against "Homer" that I will not venture to expand it, and will leave the reader to add any conjectures he chooses to those which I have already hazarded in too great number.

When the splendid findings of Dr. Schliemann are taken out of their bandboxes in the Bank of Athens, and arranged in the National Museum;[185] when the diligence of Greek archæologists investigates thoroughly the remainder of the site at Mycenæ, which is not nearly exhausted; when new accidents (such as the discoveries at Sparta and Vaphio) and new researches enlarge these treasures perhaps a thousand-fold, there will be formed at Athens a museum of pre-historic art which will not have its equal in the world (except at Cairo), and which will introduce us to an epoch of culture which we hardly yet suspected, when writing and coinage were unknown, when the Greeks had not reached unto their name, or possibly their language, but when, nevertheless, considerable commerce existed, when wonderful skill had already been attained in [pg 486]arts and manufactures, and when men had even

accumulated considerable wealth and splendor in well-established centres of power.

The further investigation of the remains of Mycenæ, with the additional evidence derived from the ruins of Tiryns, presently to be described, have led Dr. Adler to explain Mycenæ as the record of a double foundation, first by a race who built rubble masonry, and buried their dead in narrow rock-tombs or graves, piling on the bodies their arms and ornaments; secondly, after some considerable interval, by a race who built splendid ashlar masonry, with well-cut blocks, and who constructed great beehive tombs, where the dead could lie with ample room in royal state. The second race enlarged, rebuilt, and refaced the old fortifications, added the present lion gate, and built the so-called treasure-houses. For convenience' sake he calls them, according to the old legends, Perseids and Pelopids respectively. Hence the tombs which Dr. Schliemann found were really far older than any one had at first supposed, and if the record of Homer points distinctly to the Pelopids, then the gold and jewels of a far earlier people were hidden deep underground in the foundation of Agamemnon's fortress, merely marked by a sacred circle of stones and some archaic gravestones.

To which of these stages of building do the ruins of Tiryns belong? Apparently to the earlier, though [pg 487]here, again, the size of the stones used is far greater than those in the first Mycenæ, and it is now certain that the beginnings of artificial shaping are

discernible in them. Since the second edition of this book the walls have been uncovered and examined by Dr. Schliemann, with the valuable advice and assistance of Dr. Dörpfeld, so that I may conclude this chapter with a brief summary of the results they have attained.

The upper part of the rock of Tiryns, which consisted of two plateaus or levels, was known to contain remains of building by the shafts which Dr. Schliemann had already sunk there in former years. But now a very different method of excavating was adopted—that of uncovering the surface in layers, so that successive strata of debris might be clearly distinguished. This exceedingly slow and laborious process, which I saw going on for days at Tiryns with very little result, brought out in the end the whole plan of a palace, with its gates, floors, parting walls, and pillar bases, so that in the admirable drawing to be seen in the book called *Tiryns*, Dr. Dörpfeld has given us the first clear view of an old Greek, or perhaps even pre-Hellenic, palace. The partial agreement with the plan of the palaces of Troy, and of Mycenæ, since discovered, and the adoption in Hellenic temples of the plan of entrance, here several times repeated—two pillars between [pg 488]antæ—show that the palace at Tiryns was not exceptional, but typical.

All the gates leading up into this palace are still distinctly marked by the threshold or door-sill, a great stone, lying in its place, with grooves inserted for the pivots of the doors,

which were of wood, but had their pivots shod with bronze, as was proved by the actual remains. These doors divided a double porch, entered either way between two pillars of wood, standing upon stone bases still in their place, and flanked by antæ, which were below of stone and above of wood dowelled into the stone piers. All the upper structure of the gates, and, indeed, of all the palace, seems to have been of wood. There are clear signs of a great conflagration, in which the palace perished. This implies the existence of ample fuel, and while the ashes, mud-bricks, etc., remain, no trace of architrave, or pillar, or roof has been found. There are gates of similar design leading into the courts and principal chamber of the palace, the floors of which are covered with a careful lime concrete marked with line patterns, and so sloped as to afford easy drainage into a vent leading to pipes of terra cotta, which carried off water. The same careful arrangements are observed in the bath-room, with a floor of one great stone, twelve feet by nine, which is likewise pierced to carry off water. The remains of a terra cotta tub were found there, and the walls of the room were panelled with wood, [pg 489]set into the raised edge of the floor-stone by dowels sunk in the stone. No recent discovery is more interesting than this.

Of the walls little remains but the foundations, and here and there a couple of feet of mud-bricks, with signs of beams let into them, which added to the conflagration. But enough remains to show that the walls of

the better rooms were richly covered with ornament. There is a fresco of a bull still preserved, and reproduced in Dr. Schliemann's book; and there was also found a very remarkable frieze ornament in rosettes and brooch patterns, made of blue glass paste (supposed to be Homer's κύανος) and alabaster. This valuable relic shows remarkable analogies in design to other prehistoric ornaments found in Greece.

The size of the main hall, or men's apartment, is very large, the floor covering about 120 square yards, and the parallel room in the palace at Troy was consequently taken to be the cella of a temple. But there seems no doubt that the great room at Tiryns, with a hearth in the middle and four pillar bases near it, supporting, perhaps, a higher roof, with a clerestory, was the main reception room of the palace; a smaller room of similar construction, not connected with the former, save by a circuitous route through passages, seems to have been the ladies' drawing-room.

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If I were to attempt any full description of this wonderful place I should be obliged to copy out a great part of the fifth chapter in Dr. Schliemann's book, in which Dr. Dörpfeld has set down very modestly, but very completely, the results of his own acuteness and research. Many things which are now plain enough were perfect riddles till he found the true solution, and the acuteness with which he has utilized the smallest hints, as well as the caution of his conclusions, make this work of

his a very model of scientific induction.

He says, rightly enough, that a minute description is necessary, because a very few years will cover up much of the evidence which he had plainly before him. The concrete floors, the remains of mud-brick walls, the plan of the various rooms, will be choked up with grass and weeds, unless they are kept covered and cleared. The rain, which has long since washed all traces of mortar out of the walls, will wash away far more now that the site is opened, and so the future archæologist will find that the book *Tiryns* will tell him much that the actual Tiryns cannot show him.

The lower platform on the rock is not yet touched, and here perhaps digging will discover to us the remains of a temple, from which one very archaic Doric capital and an antefix have found their way to the higher rock. There are traces, too, of the great [pg 491]fort being the second building on the site, over an older and not yet clearly determined palace.

Two things are plain from these discoveries, and I dwell on them with satisfaction, because they corroborate old opinions of mine, put forth long before the principal evidence was forthcoming. First, the general use of wood for pillars and architraves, so showing how naturally the stone temple imitated the older wooden buildings. Secondly, the archaic or ante-Hellenic character of all that was found at Tiryns, with the solitary exception of the

architectural fragments, which certainly have no building to correspond to them where they were found. Thus my hypothesis, which holds that Tiryns, as well as Mycenæ, was destroyed at least as early as Pheidon's time (660 B. C.), and not after the Persian wars, receives corroboration which will amount to positive proof in any mind open to evidence on the point.

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CHAPTER XVI.

MEDIÆVAL GREECE.

When I first went to Greece, nearly twenty years ago, the few travellers one met in the country never thought of studying its mediæval remains. We were in search of classical art, we passed by Byzantine churches or Frankish towers with contemptuous

ignorance. Mr. Finlay's great book, indeed, was already written; but those who knew German and were bold enough to attack the eight volumes which Ersch and Gruber's *Encyclopædia* devote to the article on Greece, had been taught by Hopf's *Essay on Mediæval Greece* to fathom what depths dulness could attain. Whether the author, or the odious paper, and type in its double columns, contributed to this result, was of little consequence. The subject itself seemed dreary beyond description. All the various peoples who invaded, swayed, ravaged, colonized the country in the Dark Ages, seemed but undistinguishable hordes of barbarians, of whom we knew nothing, about whom we cared nothing, beyond a general hatred of them, as those who had broken up and destroyed the splendid temples and fair statues that are now the world's desire. Even the very thorough and learned [pg 493]scholars, who produced *Bædeker's Greece*, a very few years ago, never thought of putting in any information whatever, beyond their chronological table, upon the many centuries which intervened between the close of paganism and the recent regeneration of the country. The contempt for Byzantine work in the East was in our early days like the contempt of Renaissance work in the West. We were all Classical or Gothic in taste.

Now a great reaction is setting in. Instead of the dreadful Hopf, we have the fascinating Gregorovius, whose *Mediæval Athens* clothes even dry details with the hue of fancy; the

sober *Murray's Guide* includes Mt. Athos and its wonders as part of its task. Recent travellers, and the students at the Foreign Schools of Athens, tell us of curious churches and their frescoes, and now Mr. Schultz, of the British school, has undertaken to reproduce them with his pencil. Following the example of Pullen, whose pictures have secured for posterity some record of the churches of Salonica, so often threatened by fire, he will perpetuate the remnants of an architecture and an art which were rapidly perishing from neglect. When I was first at Athens men were seriously discussing the propriety of razing to the ground the most striking of all the Byzantine churches at Athens, because it stood in the thoroughfare which led from the palace to the railway station! Historians tell us the dreadful fact, that [pg 494]over seventy of these delicately quaint buildings were destroyed when the new cathedral, a vulgar and senseless compromise in style, was constructed. A few more years of Vandalism in Greece, a few more terrible fires at Salonica and at Athos, and the world had lost its best records of a very curious and distinctive civilization.

There are indeed no mean traces of this art in Adriatic Italy; the exarchate at Ravenna, the eastern traffic of Venice, have shown their influence on Italian art and architecture. The splendid mosaics of Ravenna, nay, even the seven domes of S. Antonio at Verona, the frescoes of the Giotto Chapel at Padua, above all, the great cathedral at Venice, are all

strongly colored—those of Ravenna even produced—by Byzantine art. Yet most travellers who visit S. Mark's at Venice have never seen a Byzantine church, and do not feel its Eastern parentage; still fewer visit the splendid basilica of Parenzo, which is a still more unmistakable example. But to those who have turned aside from Olympia and Parthenon to study the early Christian remains in Greece, all this art of Eastern Italy will acquire a new interest and a deeper meaning.

These are the reasons which have tempted me to say a few words on this side of Greek travel. I do not pretend to speak as an authority; I only desire to stimulate a nascent interest which will presently make what I say seem simple and antiquated. But [pg 495]as yet even high authorities are very much in the dark about these things. What would a student of Gothic architecture say to a discussion whether an extant building belonged to the fourth century or the eleventh? and yet such divergent views are still maintained concerning the origin of the Athenian churches.

Let us begin with the best and quaintest, the so-called *Old Cathedral*, which was fortunately allowed to stand beside its ugly and pretentious successor. The first thing which strikes us is the exceeding smallness of the dimensions, it is like one of the little chapels you find in Glendalough and elsewhere in Ireland. I do not know whether the Greeks contemplated a congregation kneeling in the

open air, as was the case around these chapels in Ireland, but such edifices were certainly intended in the first instance as holy places for sacerdotal celebrations, not as houses of prayer for the people. I was told on Mt. Athos that it was not the practice of the Greek church to celebrate more than one service in any one Church daily. Hence the monks, who are making prayer continually, have twenty or thirty chapels within the precincts of each monastery. Perhaps a similar motive may have led to the construction of a great number of smaller churches at Athens, where seventy have already been destroyed, and at Salonica, where remains of them are still being frequently discovered. Perhaps, also, that desire [pg 496]to consecrate to the religion of Christ the hallowed places of the heathen, which turned the Parthenon and the temple of Theseus into churches, also prompted the Byzantine bishops to set up chapels upon smaller heathen sanctuaries, where no stately temple existed, and mere consecration would have left no patent symbol of Christian occupation.

But if this Cathedral is small, it has the proper beauty of minute art; it is covered with rich decoration. All its surfaces show carved fragments not only of classical, but of earlier Byzantine work—friezes, reliefs, inscriptions, capitals—all so disposed with a general correspondence or symmetry as to produce the effect of a real design. Moreover, this foreign ornament is set in a building strictly Byzantine in form, with its rich doorway, its

tiny windows with their high semicircular arches supported on delicate capitals, and toned by the centuries of Attic dust to that rich gold brown which has turned the Parthenon from marble almost to ruddy gold. Never was there greater harmony and unity attained by the most deliberate patch-work. In the earlier works on Byzantine art, this church was confidently assigned to the sixth century. Buchon found upon it the arms of La Roche and of Villehardouin, so that he assigned it to the thirteenth. The character of the other buildings of these knights makes me doubt that they and their friends could have constructed such a church—the Western monks then [pg 497]built Latin churches in Greece—and I suppose that the arms, which I could not find, were only carved by the Franks upon the existing building. But I will not therefore subscribe to the sixth-century theory.

Of the remaining churches three only, the Kapnikarea, the Virgin of the Monastery, and S. Theodore, are worth studying, as specimens of the typical form of such buildings. The main plan is a square, surmounted by a cupola supported on four pillars, with a corridor or porch on the West side, and three polygonal apses on the East. Lesser cupolas often surround the central dome. The height and slenderness of this central dome is probably the clearest sign of comparative lateness in these buildings, which used to be attributed to the fourth and fifth centuries, but are now degraded to the eleventh. The

earliest form is no doubt that of the massive S. George's at Salonica—a huge Rotunda covered with a flat dome, not unlike the Pantheon at Rome, with nothing but richly ornamented niches, and a splendid mosaic ceiling in the dome, to give relief to a very plain design. The successive complications and refinements added to this simple structure may be studied even in the later churches of Salonica.

The traveller who has whetted his taste for this peculiar form of mediæval art, and desires to study it further, will find within reach of Athens two monasteries well worth a visit, that of the Phæneromené on Salamis, a very fair specimen of an un[pg 498]disturbed Greek monastery, and that of Daphne, which may be ranked with the ruins of Mistra as showing clear traces of the conflict of East and West, of Latin with Greek Christianity. This sanctuary, with its now decaying walls, succeeded as usual to a pagan shrine with hardly altered name. The Saints, still pictured in black and gold upon the walls, and worshipped upon their festivals, have become fantastic and unreal beings, well enough adapted to that mixture of superstition and nationalism which is the body of the Greek religion, and, despite a purer creed, not very far removed from the religious instincts of the old Hellenic race. Five or six wretched monks still occupy the dilapidated building, vegetating in sleepy idleness; they do nothing but repeat daily their accustomed prayers, and receive dues for allowing the people of

the neighboring hamlets to kiss, once or twice a year, a dreadful-looking S. Elias, painted olive-brown on a gold background, or to light the nightly lamp at the wayside shrine of a saint black with smoke.

The structure as we now see it is chiefly the work of the Cistercians who accompanied Otho de la Roche from Champagne to his dukedom of Athens, and was established round a far older Byzantine church and monastery. Like all mediæval convents, it is fortified, and the whole settlement, courts and gardens included, is surrounded by a crenelated wall, originally about thirty feet high.

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There are occasional towers in the wall, and remains of arches supporting a passage of sufficient altitude for the defenders to look over the battlements. The old church in the centre of the court has had a narthex or nave added in Gothic style by the Benedictines, and here again are battlements, from which the monks could send down stones or boiling liquid upon assailants who penetrated the outer walls. Three sides of the court are surrounded by buildings; beneath, there are massive arcades of stone for the kitchen, store-rooms, and refectory; above, wooden galleries which supplied the monks with their cells. Most of this is now in ruins, occupied in part by peasants and their sheep. But the church, both in its external simplicity and its internal grandeur, is remarkable for the splendid decoration of its walls with mosaics,

which, alas! have been allowed to decay as much from the indolence of the Greeks as the intolerance of the Turks. In fact, while some care and regard for classical remains have gradually been instilled into the minds of the inhabitants—of course, money value is an easily understood test—the respect for their splendid mediæval remains has only gained Western intellects within the last two or three years, so that we may expect another generation to elapse before this new kind of interest will be disseminated among the possessors of so great a bequest from the Middle Ages.

[pg 500]
The interior of the church at Daphne is a melancholy example. From the effects of damp the mortar has loosened, and great patches of the precious mosaic have fallen to the ground. You can pick up handfulls of glazed and gilded fragments, of which the rich surfaces were composed. Here and there a Turkish bullet has defaced a solemn Saint, while the fires lit by soldiers in days of war, and by shepherds in time of peace, have, in many places, blackened the roof beyond recognition. Within the central cupola a gigantic head of Christ on gold ground is still visible, or was so when I saw the place in 1889; but the whole roof was in danger of falling, and the Greek Government, at the instigation of Dr. Dörpfeld, had undertaken to stay the progress of decay, and so the building was filled with scaffolding. This, however, enabled us to mount close to the figures,

which in the short and high building are seen with difficulty from the ground, and so we distinguished clearly round the base of the cupola the twelve Apostles, in the bay arches the prophets, in the transepts the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Baptism, and the Transfiguration of Christ—all according to the strict models laid down for such ornaments by the Greek Church. The drawings are indeed stiff and grotesque, but the gloom and mystery of the building hide all imperfections, and give to these imposing figures in black and gold a certain majesty, which must have been [pg 501]felt tenfold by simple worshippers not trained in habits of æsthetic criticism.

We have, unfortunately, no records of the history of these convents, as in the case of many Western abbeys, and the old chronicles of wars and pestilences seldom mention this quiet life. We should fain, says M. Henri Belle, have followed the fortunes of these monks who left some fair abbey in Burgundy to catechise schismatics in this distant land, and bring their preaching to aid the sword of the Crusaders; but these Crusaders were generally intent on changing their cross for a crown, and were therefore not at all likely to favor the rigid proselytism of the Cistercians. It is very interesting to know that Innocent III., that great pope, who from the outset disapproved of the violent overthrow of the Christian Empire of the East, was the first to recommend, both to the conquerors and their clergy, such moderation as might serve to

bring back the schismatic Greeks to the Roman fold. There are still extant several of his letters to the abbeys of the Morea, and to this abbey of the duchy of Athens, showing that even his authority and zeal in this matter were unable to restrain the bigotry of the Latin monks. There were frequent quarrels, too, between these monks of Daphne and their Duke, and frequent appeals to the sovran pontiff to regulate the relations between the civil authority, which claimed the right of suzerain, and the religious [pg 502]orders, which claimed absolute independence and immunity from all feudal obligations. Still, in spite of all disputes, the abbey was the last resting-place of the Frankish Dukes of Athens, and in a vault beneath the narthex were found several of their rude stone coffins, without inscription or ornament. One only has carved upon it the arms of the second Guy de la Roche, third Duke of Athens—two entwined serpents surmounted with two fleurs-de-lis. Guy II., says the chronicle, behaved as a gallant lord, beloved of all, and attained great renown in every kingdom. He sleeps here, not in the darkness of oblivion, but obscured by greater monuments of the greater dead. Yet I cannot but dally over this interesting piece of mediæval history, the more so as it explains the strange title of Theseus, Duke of Athens, in Shakespeare's immortal *Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as the curious fact, at least to classical readers, that the poet should have chosen mediæval Athens as a court of gracious manners, and suitable for the

background of his fairy drama.

Neglecting geography, I shall carry the reader next to the very analogous ruins of Mistra, where, however, it was rather the Greek that supplanted the Latin, than the Latin the Greek ecclesiastic.

When the Franks invaded Greece a very remarkable family, the Villehardouins, seized a part of the Morea, and presently built Mistra, above Sparta; it was adorned with fair Gothic churches and palaces, [pg 503]and surmounted by a fortress. Sixty years after the conquest, William Villehardouin was captured by a new Byzantine emperor Palæologus, who was recovering his dominion. The Frank was obliged to cede for his ransom the forts of Mistra and Monemvasia, which from that time were strongholds of the Byzantine power till the conquest of the Turks. Still the Villehardouins long kept hold of Kalamata and other forts; and to the pen of one of the family, Geoffrey, we owe the famous old chronicle *La Conquête de Constantinople*, which is unique in its importance both as a specimen of old French and a piece of mediæval history.

The architecture of Mistra, begun at a noble epoch by the Latins, was taken up by the Byzantine Greeks, so that we have both styles combined in curious relics of the now deserted stronghold. For, since 1850, when an earthquake shook down many houses, the population wandered to the revived Sparta, which is now a thriving town. But as the old Sparta in its greatest days was only a

collection of shabby villages, showing no outward sign of its importance, so the new and vulgar Sparta has no attractions (save the lovely orange and lemon orchards round it) in comparison with the mediæval Mistra. The houses are piled one above another till you reach the summit crowned by the citadel which, itself a mountain, is severed from the higher mountains at its back by a deep gorge with a tumbling [pg 504]river. “The whole town is now nothing but ruined palaces, churches, and houses. You wander up rudely-paved streets rising zigzag, and pass beneath arches on which are carved the escutcheons of French knights. You enter courts overgrown with grass, but full of memories of the Crusaders. It is the very home of the Middle Ages. Passing through these streets, now the resort of lizards and serpents, you come upon Frankish tombs, among others that of Theodora Tocco, wife of the Emperor Constantine Palæologus, who died in 1430. The Panagia is the only church well preserved —a Latin basilica, with a portico in the form of an Italian loggia, and a Byzantine tower added to it. This building is highly ornamented with delicate carving, and its walls are in alternate courses of brick and stone, while the gates, columns, and floor are of marble. The interior is adorned with Byzantine frescoes of scenes from the Old Testament. Higher up is the metropolitan church, built by the Greeks as soon as William Villehardouin had surrendered the fort in 1263. This great church is not so beautiful as that already described, but has many

peculiarities of no less interest. The palace of the Frank princes was probably at the wide place on a higher level, where the ruined walls show the remains of many Gothic windows. The citadel was first rehandled by the Greek Palæologi, then by the Turks, then by the Venetians, who in their turn seized this mediæval [pg 505]'Fetter of Greece.' And now all the traces of all these conquerors are lying together confused in silence and decay. The heat of the sun in these narrow and stony streets, with their high walls, is intense. But you cannot but pause when you find in turn old Greek carving, Byzantine dedications, Roman inscriptions, Frankish devices, emblazoned on the walls. The Turkish baths alone are intact, and have resisted both weather and earthquake. But the churches occupy the chief place still, dropping now and then a stone, as it were a monumental tear for their glorious past; the Greek Cross, the Latin Cross, the Crescent, have all ruled there in their turn. Even a pair of ruined minarets remain to show the traces of that slavery to which the people were subject for four hundred years."

The occupation of the Frankish knights had not found an adequate historian, since old Villehardouin, till Gregorovius wrote his *Mediœval Athens*. The traveller still sees throughout Greece frequent traces of this short domination, but all of one sort—the ruins of castles which the knights had built to overawe their subjects, and of which Mistra was perhaps the most important. The same

invaders built the great towers at Kalamata, and most picturesque of all is the keep over the town of Karytena in Arcadia, the stronghold of Hugo de Bruyères. But the Frankish devices which adorned these castles have been mostly torn down by the Turks, or re[pg 506]placed by the Venetian lion, according as new invaders turned the fortifications of their predecessors to their own uses. Nor are any of these castles to be compared in size or splendor with those of northern Europe. The most famous of them, the palace at Thebes, was so completely destroyed by the Catalans, that all vestige of it has disappeared, and we owe our knowledge of it to the description of the Catalan annalist, Ramon Muntaner, who tells of the ravages of his fellows not without some stings of his æsthetic conscience.

But let us pass from these complex ruins, which speak the conflict of the East and West, to the peculiar quiet homes of the Greek monk, who spends his time not in works of charity, not in labors of erudition, not in the toil of education, like his western brother, but simply in performing an arduous and exacting ritual, in praying, or rather in repeating prayers, so many hours in the day, in observing fasts and vigils, above all in maintaining the strict creed which has given the title of orthodox to his Church. These resting-places (μόνη is the suggestive word) are of course settled in quiet regions, in the mountains, upon the islands, so that we cannot expect them near a stirring capital like

Athens. Yet in the gorge of the defile which leads up to Phyle there is a little *skete* (the house of *ascetics*) lonely and wild in site; and by the sea on Salamis, nearly over against Megara, the traveller [pg 507]will find a small but very characteristic specimen of the Greek monastery, the *Panagia Phœneromené*.

There he will see the tiny cells, and the library, almost as small as any of them, at the top of dark stairs, and containing some twenty volumes; he will be received by the Hegoumenos with mastic and jam, and then with coffee, and strive to satisfy the simple curiosity of the old men, who seem so anxious to hear about the world, and yet have turned away their eyes from seeing it. Above all, he will find in the midst of the enclosure a little model Byzantine Church, built with the greatest neatness, of narrow bricks, in which string courses and crosses are introduced by an altered setting of the bricks. Here too he will see the curious practice, which led to marble imitations at Venice, of ornamenting the walls by building in green and blue pottery—apparently old Rhodian ware, for it is not now to be found in use. It is a simpler form of the decoration already described in the Cathedral of Athens, that of ornamenting a wall with foreign objects symmetrically disposed, and no one who sees it will say that it is inartistic. Within are the usual ornaments of the Byzantine Church, but not in mosaic; for all the walls are covered with frescoes by a monk of the early eighteenth century, a genius in his way, though following strictly

the traditions of the school of Athos. The traveller who ascends the pulpit will thence see himself surrounded by very [pg 508]strange pictures—over the west door, as is prescribed, the Last Judgment, with the sins of men being weighed in a huge balance, and devils underneath trying to pull down the fatal scale. The condemned are escorted by demons to an enormous mouth breathing out flames—the mouth of hell. Beatitudes and tortures supply the top and bottom of the composition. Even more quaint is the miracle of the swine of the Gadarenes running down a steep place into the sea. They are drowning in the waves, and on the head or back of each is a little black devil trying to save himself from sinking. Similar creatures are escaping from the statues of heathen gods which tumble from the walls as the infant Jesus passes by on his flight to Egypt. This points to the belief that the statues of heathen gods were inhabited by an evil spirit, and so far actually bodies with souls within them!

These few details are sufficient to tempt the reader to visit this monastery, which is far better worth seeing than the beautifully situated and hospitable Vourkano described elsewhere in this work. I have no space to speak of Megaspilion, for this book must be kept within handy limits, and can never aspire to even approximate completeness. So also will I here pass by with a mere mention the eyries of Meteora in Thessaly, perched upon strange pinnacles of rock, like S. Simeon upon his pillar. The approach to, and descent

from, these monasteries in a swinging [pg 509]net is indeed a strange adventure to undergo, and more painfully unpleasant than most such adventures, but at the top there is little of interest. The hoards of precious MSS. which Curzon describes in his delightful volume, over which the monks quarrelled when he offered gold, and would not sell them because none would allow his brother to enjoy the money—these splendid illuminated books have either been cozened away by antiquarians, or are gathered in the University Library at Athens. They are there in their right place. I understand the peaks of Meteora, when the present occupants die out, are to receive not holy men, but criminals, who are to suffer their solitary confinement not in dungeons beneath the earth, but far above the haunts of men.

But all these monastic settlements pale into insignificance when we turn to Mount Athos, the real Holy of Holies of the Greek Church, which is indeed far from the kingdom of Greece, and therefore beyond the scope of this work, and yet a chapter on the mediævalism of Eastern Europe can hardly be written without some consideration of this strange promontory, in its beauty surpassing all description, in its history unique both for early progress and for subsequent unchangeableness, in its daily life a faithful mirror of long past centuries, even as its buildings are now mediæval castles inhabited by mediæval men. I will here set down the impressions, from a visit made in 1889, not

merely of the art, but of the [pg 510]life of this, the most distinctive as well as the largest example of Greek monasticism.

Velificatus Athos is an expression which has a meaning even now, though a very different one from that implied by Juvenal. The satirist would not believe that Xerxes turned it into an island, though the remains of the canal are plainly visible to the present day. But now the incompetence of the Turkish Government has turned Athos, for English travellers, into an island, for it may only be approached by sea. If you attempt to ride there from Salonica or Cavalla, you are at once warned that you do so at your own risk; that the tariff now fixed by a joint commission of Turks, dragomans, and bandits for the release of an English captive is £15,000; that you will have to pay that sum yourself, etc. etc. This is enough to drive any respectable and responsible person from the enterprise of the land journey, and so he must wait for the rare and irregular chances of boat or steamer traffic. It was my good fortune to find one of H. M.'s ships going that way from Salonica, and with a captain gracious enough to drop me on the headland, or rather to throw me up on it, for we landed in a heavy sea, with considerable risk and danger, and the τρικυμία, as they classically call it, lasted all day, and raged around the Holy Mountain. Yet this adventurous way of landing under the great western cliffs of the promontory, with the monasteries of S. Paul, Gregory, [pg 511]and Dionysius, each on their several peaks,

looking down upon us from a dizzy height through the stormy mists, was doubtless far the most picturesque introduction we could have had to the long-promised land.

For this had been many years my desire, not only to see the strangest and most perfect relic now extant of mediæval superstition, but to find, if possible, in the early MSS. which throng the libraries of that famous retreat some cousin, if not some uncle or aunt of the great illuminated MSS. which are the glory of the early Irish Church. The other travellers who have reached this place have done so by arriving at some legitimate port on the tamer eastern side; the latest, Mr. Riley,[186] by landing at the gentlest and most humane spot of all, the bay of Vatopédi. We, on the contrary, crept into a little boat-harbor under the strictest, the most primitive, and far the most beautiful of the western eagles' nests, whither English pickles, tinned lobster, and caviare have not yet penetrated. We were doing a very informal and unceremonious thing, for we were invading the outlying settlements, to demand shelter and hospitality, whereas we should have first of all proceeded to the capital, Karyes, to present pompous letters of introduction from Papas, Prime Ministers, Patriarchs, and to receive equally elaborate [pg 512]missives from the central committee, asking the several monasteries to entertain us.

But we took the place by storm, not by regular siege. We showed our letters, when we climbed up to Dionysiu, as they call it, and

prayed them to forestall the hospitality which they would doubtless show us, if we returned with official sanction. The good monks were equal to the occasion; they waived ceremony, though ceremony lords it in these conservative establishments, and every violation of it is called a προσβολή, probably the greatest sin that a monk can commit. At every step of our route this obstacle stood before us, and had we attempted to force our way past it, no doubt our dumb mules would have spoken, and reproved our madness. Yet when they had before them all the missives which were to be read at Karyes next day, to be followed up by a letter addressed to themselves, they actually antedated their hospitality and made us feel at home and happy.

Nowhere have I seen more perfect and graceful hospitality in spirit, nowhere a more genuine attempt to feed the hungry and shelter the outcast, even though the means and materials of doing so were often very inadequate to Western notions. But let me first notice the extant comforts. We always had ample room in special strangers' apartments, which occupy the highest and most picturesque place in every monastery. We always had clean beds to [pg 513]sleep in, nor were we disturbed by any unbidden bedfellows, these creatures having (as we were told) made it a rule of etiquette never to appear or molest any one till after Pascha, the Feast of the Resurrection. The feast was peculiarly late this year, and the weather

perfect summer; still the insects carefully avoided any such προσβολή toward us as to violate their Lenten fast. In addition to undisturbed nights—a great boon to weary travellers—we had always good black bread, and fresh every day; we had also excellent Turkish coffee, and fortunately most wholesome, for the ceremony of the place requires you to drink it whenever you enter, and whenever you leave, any domicile whatever. Seven or eight times a day did we partake of this luxury and without damage to digestion or nerves. There was also sound red wine, and plenty of it, varying according to the makers, but mostly good, and only in one case slightly resinated. There were also excellent hazel-nuts, often served hot, roast in a pan, and very palatable.

What else was there good? There was jam of many kinds, all good, though unfortunately served neat, and to be eaten in spoonfuls, without any bread, till at last we committed the *prosvolé* of asking to have it brought back when there was bread on the table. There were also eggs in abundance, just imported to be ready for Easter, and therefore fresh, and served *au plat*. Nor had we anywhere [pg 514]to make the complaint so pathetic in Mr. Riley's book, that the oil or butter used in cooking was rancid. This is the advantage of going in spring, or rather one of the many advantages, that both oil and butter (the latter is of course rare) were quite unobjectionable.

When I say that butter was rare and eggs

imported, I assume that the reader knows of the singularity of Athos, which consists in the absence of the greatest feature of human life —woman, and all inferior imitations of her in the animal world. Not a cow, not a goat, not a hen, not a cat, of that sex! And this for centuries! Three thousand monks, kept up by importation, three thousand laborers or servants, imported likewise, but no home production of animals—that is considered odious and impious. And when, in this remote nook of extreme conservatism, this one refuge from the snares and wiles of Eve, a Russian monk seriously proposed to us the propriety of admitting the other sex, we felt a shock as of an earthquake, and began to understand the current feeling that the Russians were pushing their influence at Athos, in order to transform the Holy Mountain into a den of political thieves.

Nothing is more curious than to study the effects, upon a large society, of the total exclusion of the female sex. It is commonly thought that men by themselves must grow rude and savage; that it is [pg 515]to women we owe all the graces and refinements of social intercourse. Nothing can be further from the truth. I venture to say that in all the world there is not so perfectly polite and orderly a society as that of Athos. As regards hospitality and gracious manners, the monks and their servants put to shame the most polished Western people. Disorder, tumult, confusion, seem impossible in this land of peace. If they have differences, and squabble

about rights of property, these things are referred to law courts, and determined by argument of advocates, not by disputing and high words among the claimants. While life and property is still unsafe on the mainland, and on the sister peninsulas of Cassandra and Longos, Athos has been for centuries as secure as any county in England. So far, then, all the evidence is in favor of the restriction. Many of the monks, being carried to the peninsula in early youth, have completely forgotten what a woman is like, except for the brown smoky pictures of the *Panagia* with her infant in all the churches, which the strict iconography of the orthodox Church has made as unlovely and non-human as it is possible for a picture to be. So far, so well.

But if the monks imagined they could simply expunge the other sex from their life without any but the obvious consequences, they were mistaken. What strikes the traveller is not the rudeness, the untidyness, the discomfort of a purely male society, [pg 516]it is rather its dulness and depression. Some of the older monks were indeed jolly enough; they drank their wine, and cracked their jokes freely. But the novices who attended at table, the men and boys who had come from the mainland to work as servants, muleteers, laborers, seemed all suffering under a permanent silence and sadness. The town of Karyes is the most sombre and gloomy place I ever saw. There are no laughing groups, no singing, no games among the boys. Every one looked serious, solemn, listless, vacant, as the case might be,

but devoid of keenness and interest in life. At first one might suspect that the monks were hard taskmasters, ruling their servants as slaves; but this is not the real solution. It is that the main source of interest and cause of quarrel in all these animals, human and other, does not exist. For the dulness was not confined to the young monks or the laity; it had invaded even the lower animals. The tom-cats, which were there in crowds, passed one another in moody silence along the roofs. They seemed permanently dumb. And if the cocks had not lost their voice, and crowed frequently in the small hours of the morning, their note seemed to me a wail, not a challenge—the clear though unconscious expression of a great want in their lives.

How different were the notes of the nightingales, the pigeons, the jays, whose wings emancipate them from monkish restrictions; and whose music fills with [pg 517]life all the enchanting glens, brakes, and forests in this earthly Paradise!

For if an exquisite situation in the midst of historic splendor, a marvellous variety of outline and climate, and a vegetation rich and undisturbed beyond comparison, can make a modern Eden possible, it is here. Nature might be imagined gradually improving in her work when she framed the three peninsulas of the Chalcidice. The westernmost, the old Pallene, once the site of the historic Olynthus, is broad and flat, with no recommendation but its fertility; the second, Sithonia, makes some attempt at being picturesque, having an

outline of gently serrated hills, which rise, perhaps, to one thousand feet, and are dotted with woods. Anywhere else, Sithonia may take some rank, but within sight of the mighty Olympus, and beside the giant Athos, it remains obscure and without a history. Athos runs out into the Ægean, with its outermost cone standing six thousand five hundred feet out of the sea, and as such is (I believe) far the most striking headland in Europe. You may see higher Alps, but from a height, and with intervening heights to lessen the effect; you may see higher Carpathians, but from the dull plain of land in Hungary. Here you can enjoy the full splendor of the peak from the sea, from the fringe of white breakers round the base up to the pale-gray, snow-streaked dome, which reaches beyond torrent and forest into heaven. [pg 518]Within two or three hours you can ascend from gardens of oranges and lemons, figs and olives, through woods of arbutus, myrtle, cytisus, heath, and carpets of forget-me-not, anemone, iris, orchid, to the climate of primroses and violets, and to the stunted birch and gnarled fir which skirt the regions of perpetual snow. Moreover, the gradually-increasing ridge which forms the backbone of the peninsula is seamed on both sides with constant glens and ravines, in each of which tumbling water gives movement to the view, and life to the vegetation which, even where it hides in its rich luxuriance the course of the stream, cannot hush the sounding voice. Here the nightingale sings all the day long, and the fair shrubs grow, unmolested by those herds

of wandering goats, which are the real locusts of the wild lands of southern Europe.

Each side of the main ridge has its peculiarities of vegetation, that facing north-east being gentler in aspect, and showing brakes of Mediterranean heath ten or fifteen feet high, through which mule paths are cut as through a forest. The coast facing south-west is far sterner, wilder, and more precipitous, but enjoys a temperature almost tropical; for there the plants and fruits of southern Greece flourish without stint.

The site of the western monasteries is generally on a precipitous rock at the mouth of one of the ravines, and commands a view up the glen to the [pg 519]great summit of the mountain. To pass from any one of these monasteries to the next, you must either clamber down a precipice to the sea, and pass round in a boat commanded by a skipper-monk, or you must mount the mules provided, and ride round the folds and seams of the precipices, on paths incredibly dangerous of aspect, and yet incredibly free from any real disasters. When you come to a torrent you must descend by zigzag winding till you reach a practicable ford near the sea-level, and cross it at the foot of some sounding fall. But the next projecting shoulder stands straight out of the sea, and you must climb again a similar break-neck ascent, till you reach a path along the edge of the dizzy cliff, where you pass with one foot in the air, over the sea one thousand feet beneath, while the other is nudged now and

then by the wall of the rock within, so that the cautious mule chooses the outer ledge of the road, since a loss of balance means strictly a loss of life. It was a constant regret to us that none of the party could sketch the beautiful scenes which were perpetually before us, or even photograph them. But the efforts of photographers hitherto have been very disappointing. There are indeed pictures of most of the monasteries, taken at the instigation of the Russians, but all so wretchedly inadequate, so carefully taken from the wrong point, that we deliberately avoided accepting them, or carrying them home. Mr. Riley too, a man of taste [pg 520]and feeling, had essayed the thing with leisure and experience in his art, and yet the cuts taken from the photographs, which are published in his book, are also hopelessly inadequate. When, for example, approaching from the north, we suddenly came in view of Simópetra—standing close to us, across a yawning chasm, with the sea roaring one thousand feet beneath, high in the air on its huge, lonely crag, holding on to the land by a mere viaduct, and behind it the great rocks and gorges and forests framed by the snowy dome of Athos in the far background—we felt that the world can produce no finer scene, and that the most riotous artistic imagination, such as Gustave Doré's, would be tamed in its presence by the inability of human pencil to exceed it.[187] The plan of this monastery and its smaller brothers (I was going to call them sisters!) is that of a strong, square keep, rising straight from the sheer cliffs, with but a single

bridge of rock leading landward, and when the wall has been carried to a height far more than sufficient against any attack save modern artillery, they begin to throw round it stories of balconies, stayed out from the wall by very light wooden beams, each balcony sheltered by that above, till a deep-pitched roof overhangs the whole. The topmost and outermost corner of these balconies is [pg 521]always the guest-chamber or chambers, and from this lofty nook you not only look out upon the sea and land, but between the chinks of the floor of boards you see into air under your feet, and reflect that if a storm swept round the cliff your frail tenement might be crushed like a house of cards, and wander into the sea far beneath. To me, at least, it was impossible to walk round these balconies without an occasional shudder, and yet we could not hear that the slender supports had ever given way, or that any of the monks had ever been launched into the air. On the divans running round these aerial guest-chambers are beautiful rugs from Smyrna and Bulgaria, the ancient gifts of pilgrims and of peasants, which were thrust aside in the rich and vulgar Russian establishments for the gaudy products of modern Constantinople and Athens, while the older and simpler monasteries were content with their soft and mellow colors. The wealth of Athos in these rugs is very great. There were constantly on the mules under us saddle-cloths which would be the glory of an æsthetic drawing-room.

But it is high time for us to take a closer view of the inside of these curious castles, some of which, Vatopédi, Ivíron, Lavra, are almost towns surrounded by great fortifications, and which possess not only large properties, outlying farms, dependencies, but within them a whole population of monks and their retainers. Let us first speak of [pg 522]the treasures accumulated within them, relics of ancient art and industry in the way of books, pictures, and work in precious metals. The reader will doubtless appreciate that the estimate of some of these things depends largely on the taste and education of the visitor. Mr. Riley thinks it of importance, in his excellent work, to enumerate the exact number of chapels contained in, or attached to, each monastery, whereas to me the exact number, and the name of the patron saint, seems about the last detail with which I should trouble my readers. So also some sentimental travellers enumerate with care the alleged relics, and Mr. Riley lets it be seen plainly not only that he is disposed to believe in their genuineness, but that, if proven, it is of the highest religious importance. Seeing the gross ignorance of the monks on all really important matters of history on the real date and foundation of their several monasteries, the ascription of a relic to some companion of our Lord, or some worthy of the first four centuries, seems to me ridiculous.

With this preamble I turn first to the books. Every convent we visited had a library containing MSS. The larger had in addition

many printed books; in one, for example, which was not rich (Esphigménu), we found a fine bound set of Migne's "Fathers." The library room was generally a mere closet with very little light, and there was no sign that anybody ever read there. The contents [pg 523]indeed consisted of ecclesiastical books, prayer-books, lesson-books, rituals noted for chanting, of which they had working copies in their churches. Still they are so careless concerning the teachings of their old service books that they have completely lost the meaning of the old musical notation, which appears in dots and commas (generally red) over their older texts, and they now follow a new tradition with a new notation. When one has seen some hundreds of these Gospels, and extracts from the Gospels, ranging over several centuries, some written in gold characters on the title-page, with conventional pictures of the Evangelists on gold ground, one begins to wonder what could have possessed the good monks to occupy themselves with doing over and over again what had been done hundreds of times, and lay before them in multitudes of adequate copies. I suppose the nature of their religious worship suggests the true answer. As they count it religion to repeat over and over again prayers and lessons all through their nights of vigil and their days of somnolence, so they must have thought it acceptable to God, and a meritorious work, to keep copying out, in a fair hand, Gospels that nobody would read and that nobody would disturb for centuries on dusty shelves.

In the twelve libraries I examined I did not find more than half a dozen secular books, and these of late date, and copies of well-known texts. There [pg 524]may of course be some stray treasures still concealed in nooks and corners, though a good scholar, Mr. Lambros of Athens, has spent much labor in classifying and cataloguing these MSS. But I saw chests here and there in out-of-the-way lumber rooms, with a few books lying in them, and believe that in this way something valuable may still be concealed. In general the monks were friendly and ready to show their books, or at least their perfect manners made them appear so; but in one monastery (Stavronikíta) they were clearly anxious that none of these treasures should be studied. They had not only tossed together all their MSS. which had been recently set in order by Mr. Lambros, but had torn off the labels with which he had numbered them, without any attempt, or I believe intention, of replacing them with new ones.

As I am not now addressing learned readers, I need not go into details about the particular books which interested me. My main object had been to find, if possible, at Mount Athos some analogy, some parallel, to the splendid school of ornamentation which has left us the *Book of Kells*, the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, *St. Chad's Gospel* at Lichfield, and other such masterpieces of Irish illumination. I have always thought it likely that some early Byzantine missionary found his way to Ireland, and gave the first impulse to a local

school of art. That there is a family likeness between early Irish and Byzantine [pg 525]work seems to me undeniable. I can hardly say whether I was disappointed or not to find that, as far as Athos went, the Irish school was perfectly independent, and there was no early book which even remotely suggested the marvellous designs of the *Book of Kells*. The emblems of the Evangelists seemed unknown there before the eleventh century. There was ample use of gilding, and a good knowledge of colors. In one or two we found a dozen kinds of birds adequately portrayed in colors—the peacock, pheasant, red-legged partridge, stork, etc., being at once recognizable. But all the capitals were upon the same design, all the bands of ornament were little more than blue diaper on gold ground. There were a good many books in slanting uncials, probably seventh to ninth century; an occasional page or fragment of earlier date, but nothing that we could see of value for solving the difficulties of a Scripture text. Careful and beautiful handwritings on splendid vellum of the succeeding centuries were there in countless abundance. They are valuable as specimens of handwriting and as nothing else. In many of the libraries the monk in charge was quite intelligent about the dates of the MSS., and was able to read the often perplexing colophon in which the century and *indiction* were recorded. But the number of dated MSS. was, alas! very small.

I now turn to the κειμήλια or treasures in precious [pg 526]metals and gems, which

have often been described and belauded by travellers. Each visitor sees something to admire which the rest pass over in silence, or else he is shown something not noticed by the rest. So the reader must consult first, Curzon, then Mr. Tozer, then Didron, then Mr. Riley, and even after that there remain many things to be noted by fresh observers. The fact is that the majority of these reliquaries, pictures, and ornaments of the screen are tawdry and vulgar, either made or renewed lately, and in bad taste. It is only here and there that a splendid old piece of work strikes one with its strange contrast. Far the most interesting of all the illustrations given by Mr. Riley is that of the nave of one of the Churches, which are all (except the old Church of Karyes) built on exactly the same plan, with small variations as to the lighting, or the outer narthex, or the dimensions. An architect would find these variations highly interesting; to the amateur there seems in them a great sameness. But among the uniform, or nearly uniform, features is a huge candelabrum, not the central one hung from the middle of the dome, but one which encircles it, hung by brass chains from the inner edges of the dome, consisting of twelve (sometimes only ten) straight bands of open-worked brass, of excellent design, joined with hinges, which are set in double eagles (the Byzantine emblem), so that they form large decagons or duodecagons, [pg 527]in the upper edge of which candles are set all round. The design and work of these candelabra appeared to me old. But the monks affirmed that they were

now made in Karyes. This I did not believe, and in any case my suspicions as to the antiquity of the design were confirmed by one I found in St. Paul's (Agio Pavlo), which bears on one of the double eagles an inscription that the Hegoumenos had restored and beautified the church in 1850. But this eagle joined brass bands on which was a clear German inscription stating that they were made in Dresden in the year 1660.

By far the finest embroideries in silk were at the rich convent of Iviron, and indeed the main church there has many features worthy of note. The floor is of elaborate old mosaic, with an inscription of George the Founder, which the monks refer to the tenth century. There are quaint Rhodian plaques, both set in the outer wall, and also laid like carpets, with a border of fine design on the walls of the transept domes. Beside them are remarkable old Byzantine capitals designed of rams' heads. But the great piece of embroidery is a πόδια (or apron of the Panagia). The ground is gold and green silk, on which portraits of the three imperial founders are worked, their crowns of pearls, their dresses of white silk, their beards of brown silk, and their faces painted most delicately in colors upon silk. Never in my life have I seen any embroidery so perfect and [pg 528]so precious. There were also occasional old crosses of great excellence, but to describe them here would be tedious and useless, unless it be to stimulate the reader to go out and see them for himself; nor can I recommend this, if he

be not a well-introduced traveller, ready to rough it and to meet with good temper many obstacles. Travelling in Turkey, where time has no value, and where restrictions upon liberty are both arbitrary and unjustly applied, is a matter of great patience.

What shall we say of the services which go on most of the day and night in these monastic churches, and which seemed to Messrs. Riley and Owen so interesting and so in harmony with the Church of England, that they were never tired of regretting the separation of Anglican from Greek Christianity, and hoping for a union or reunion between them? Mr. Owen went so far as to celebrate the Eucharist after the Anglican ritual in one or two of these churches before a crowd of monks, who could not understand his words, far less the spirit with which our Church approaches the Holy Table.

Yet here are large companies of men, who have given up the world to live on hard fare and strict rule, spending days and nights in the service of God, and resigning the ordinary pleasures and distractions of the world. Surely here there must be some strong impulse, some living faith which sways so many lives. And yet [pg 529]after long and anxious searching for some spiritual life, after hours spent in watching the prayers and austerities of the monks, we could not but come to the conclusion that here was no real religion; that it was a mountain, if not a valley, “full of dry bones, and, behold, they were very dry.”

It is of course very hazardous for a stranger to assert a negative; there may be, even in this cold and barren ritual, some real breath of spiritual life, and some examples of men who serve God in spirit and in truth. But the general impression, as compared with that of any Western religion—Roman Catholic, Protestant, Unitarian—is not favorable. Very possibly no Western man will ever be in real sympathy with Orientals in spiritual matters, and Orientals these monks are in the strictest sense. They put a stress upon orthodoxy as such, which to most of us is incomprehensible. They regard idleness as not inconsistent with the highest and holiest life. They consider the particular kind of food which they eat of far more religious importance than to avoid excess in eating and drinking. How can we judge such people by our standards? To them it seems to be religion to sit in a stall all night, perhaps keeping their eyes open, but in a vague trance, thinking of nothing, and not following one word that is said, while they ignore teaching, preaching, active charity, education of the young, as not worthy of the anchorite and the recluse. To us the [pg 530]ἀγρυπνία which we attended seemed the most absolute misconception of the service of God; to the monks this was the very acme of piety.

I have spoken unreservedly of these things, as I learned that these gentle and hospitable souls were impossible to please in one respect —they think all criticism of their life most rude and unjust. They complained to me

bitterly of Mr. Riley's book, which they had learned to know from extracts published in Greek papers, and yet could there be a more generous and sympathetic account than his? If, then, I must in any case (though I deeply regret it) incur their resentment, it is better to do so for a candid judgment, than to endeavor to escape it by writing a mere panegyric, which would mislead the reader without satisfying the monks. Indeed, in one point I could not even satisfy myself. No panegyric could adequately describe their courteous and unstinted hospitality.

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Footnotes

1. Though this statement is broadly true, it requires some modification. I should be sorry to be thought

insensible to the beauties, not only of Ravenna, with its mosaics and its pines, but of Ancona, of the splendid Monte Gargano, of Trani and Bari, and of the rich gardens and vineyards of Apulia.

2.

Cf. Strabo, viii. c. 2, ἐστι τοίνυν ἡ Πελοπόννησος ἐοικυῖα φύλλῳ πλατάνου τὸ σχῆμα.

3.

These words were written in 1873. On a later occasion, our ship was obliged to run into this bay for shelter from a storm, when we found some cultivation along the coasts, and a village (Koron), with extensive fortifications above it, said to be Venetian. The aspect was by no means so desolate as appeared from a passing view outside the headlands. Coasting steamers now call here (at Kalamata) every second day.

4.

Which the reader will find best portrayed in Prosper Mérimée's *Colomba*.

5.

See the remarks of Polybius, who was himself witness of this great change, quoted in the last chapter of my *Greek Life and Thought, from Alexander to the Roman Conquest*.

6. We hailed him with a steam whistle in 1886, in vain; so it may be that he has passed to some newer and more social kind of life.

7. A closer view of Crete disclosed to me the interesting fact that the island is turned to the north, as regards its history. It is barred on the south by great walls of rock, with hardly any landing-places, so that all traffic and culture must have started from the slopes and bays on the north side, where the Cyclades are its neighbors.

8. I should except the splendid *Venus victrix*, as she is called, found at Capua, and now in the Museum of Naples.

9. In my *Social Life in Greece, from Homer to Menander*.

10. The words are M. About's.

11. I beg to point out to a learned and kindly critic in the *Athenæum*, who corrected several faults of spelling in the first edition, that this is the form of the name warranted by inscriptions, and now to be received by scholars: cf. Wachsmuth's *Stadt*

Athen, i. p. 49.

12.

This beautiful monument has been so defaced and mutilated that the photographs of to-day give no idea of its decoration. The careful drawings and restorations of Stuart and Revett were made in the last century, when it was still comparatively intact, and it is through their book alone that we can now estimate the merits of many of the ancient buildings of Athens. It should be added that there was a solitary Corinthian capital found in the temple of Bassæ, which I will describe in another chapter. But this still affords an unsolved problem. The Philippeion at Olympia (built by the famous Philip of Macedon) also contained an inner circle of Corinthian pillars, while the outer circle was Ionic.

13.

The following remarks on the polychromy of Greek art are not intended for Professors of Fine Art, to whom, indeed, few things in this book, if true, can be new, but for the ordinary reader, who may not have seen it discussed elsewhere.

14.

By the way, the appellation “Temple of Theseus” is more than doubtful. The building fronts towards the east.

This is proved by the greater size and more elaborate decoration of the eastern portal. It is almost certain, according to an old scholion on Pindar, that the temples of heroes like Theseus faced west, while those only of the Olympian gods faced the rising sun. The temple, therefore, was the temple, not of a hero, but of a god. Probably the Temple of Heracles, worshipped as a *god* at Athens, which is mentioned in the scholia of Aristophanes as situated in this part of Athens, is to be identified with the building in question. But I suppose for years to come we must be content to abide by the old name of Theseon, which is now too long in general use to be easily disturbed.

15.

I was since informed at Athens that this complaint had not been without results, and that steps are being taken to prevent quarrying at random on classical sites.

16.

Even the marble statue set up to the patriot Botzari over the grave of the heroes of Missolonghi was so mutilated by the inhabitants that the authorities have removed it from mere shame.

17.

It is fair to add that an exception has been made for the discoveries at

Mycenæ, which have been almost all brought to Athens; and that a handsome museum has now been built at Olympia, and a good road from Pyrgos, which has a railway to the sea.

18.

Since this was written there have been published (in German) two careful catalogues of the sculptures of Athens by V. Sybel and by Milchhöfer (1881), and there is besides the excellent *Handbook for Greece* by Dr. Lolling (Bædeker). The new edition of Murray's Handbook is very dear and not very satisfactory. There is a small Greek Catalogue published by Stanford, translated by Miss Agnes Smith. The Mycenæan antiquities are described in a separate book by Schliemann, and by Schuchhardt.

19.

There is no more pathetic instance than that described by Mr. Squier (in his admirable work on Peru) of the tomb of a young girl which he himself discovered, and where he comments on the various objects laid to rest with the dead: cf. Squier's *Peru*, p. 80. There has since been found at Myrina, on the Asiatic coast, a great store of these clay figures, also in tombs. Some sets of them were made to represent the

sculptures of a pediment, such as that of the Parthenon, or rather of the east front of the temple of Olympia.

20.

If I mistake not, Mr. A. S. Murray seems disposed to date them about the first century either B. C. or A. D., thus bringing them down to about the time of Strabo.

21.

There is already quite a large collection of them in the British Museum, *e. g.* Vase Room I., case 35, where there are many of these figures from Tanagra. In Room II. there is a whole case of them, chiefly from Cyrene, and from Cnidus.

22.

No. 53, Mus. Pio Clem., in a small room beside the *Apollo Belvedere* and *Laocoon*.

23.

There is now an excellent publication of the archaic statues found in the Acropolis, by Cavvadias (Wilberg, Athens).

24.

I endeavored to examine these drums by looking down through a hole in the wall over them. They seemed to me not fluted, and rather of the shape of barrels, very thick in the middle, than of the drums of pillars

in temples.

25.

It is asserted somewhere by a Greek author that the temples burned by the Persians were left in ruins to remind the people of the wrongs of the hated barbarians. But we have distinct evidence, in some cases, that this assertion is not true, and besides, using the materials for other purposes is not the same thing. We now know that a quantity of mutilated statues were shot as rubbish into the space between the old Parthenon and the wall, to make a terrace for the newer and greater building. Here they were found in the recent excavations.

26.

Aristion is also mentioned among the artists of the period.

27.

“Vultum ab antiquo rigore variare.”—Plin. xxxv. 35.

28.

They have been published in the first part of an excellent work on the treasures of Athens, reproduced in phototype by Rhomaïdès Brothers, with an explanatory text by various Athenian scholars.

29.

I cannot do better than quote the admirable description of M. Ch.

Diehl: “C’étaient surtout de nouvelles statues de jeunes femmes, au mystérieux sourire, à la parure étincelante, de ces idoles fardées et peintes, bien faites, par leur saveur étrange, pour tenter le pinceau d’un Gustave Moreau ou la plume d’un Pierre Loti. Comme leurs sœurs, ces nouvelles venues ont la même attitude et le même costume, les mêmes coquetteries de parure, le même soin de leur chevelure, la même expression aussi; pourtant à la série déjà connue elles out ajouté quelques œuvres exquises, et trois d’entre elles en particulier méritent d’être signalées. L’une est une merveille de coloris; sa tunique à large bande rouge, sa chemisette d’un vert foncé, bordée de pourpre, son manteau orné de méandres du dessin le plus fin, ses vêtements parsemés de croix rouges ou vertes, qui se retrouvent sur le diadème de ses cheveux, sont d’un incomparable éclat. Sous les tons chauds de ces riches couleurs disposées avec un goût exquis, il semble que le marbre s’anime et fasse la chair vivante; et un charme étrange émane de cette figure. Celle-ci (cf. Plate) d’une date plus récente, probablement l’une des plus jeunes de la série, montre l’effort d’un artiste habile pour créer une œuvre originale. Dans ces formes élancées, dans cette tête petite et

fine, dans ces bras jetés en avant du corps, on sent la volonté du maître qui cherche à faire autrement que ses devanciers; le sourire traditionnel est devenu presque imperceptible, les yeux, qui souriaient jadis à l'unison des levres, out cessé de se relever vers les tempes; les joues creuses se remplissent et s'arrondissent; avec des œuvres de cette sorte, l'archaisme est prêt à finir.... La troisième enfin est une des œuvres les plus remarquables de l'art attique. Plus ancienne que la précédente, elle est d'une valeur artistique bien supérieure. Le modelé en est exquis, et son irréprochable finesse fait un contraste singulier avec les procédés qui sentent encore les conventions de l'école. Suivant les traditions de l'art antique, les yeux sont obliques et bridés, le sourire fait toujours grimacer les levres; mais dans les yeux le regard n'est plus indifférent et fixe; il brille d'une lueur de vie et de pensée; le sourire de ces levres n'est plus sec et dur, il semble avoir une douceur attendrie. Certes il n'y a dans cette sculpture nul effort pour chercher des chemins nouveaux; mais parmi les œuvres de l'art archaïque, parmi celles où le maître a docilement suivi la route frayée et battue, cette sculpture à l'expression candide et presque attristée est l'une des plus

admirables."—*Excursions archéologiques en Grèce*, p. 104.

30. When I revisited Athens in the spring of 1889, the National Museum, which is a fine and spacious building, was quite an orderly museum, and it was easy to see and enjoy the works of art preserved in it. The archaic things were, moreover (as in the Acropolis), placed by themselves; so were the tombs, and so were most of the portrait busts. All that was still wanting was a good and complete catalogue.

31. These panegyrics—λόγοι ἐπιτάφιοι they were called—were a favorite exercise of Greek literary men. There are five classical ones still extant—that mentioned, that in the *Menexenus* of Plato, that of Hypereides, and those ascribed (justly) to Lysias and (falsely) to Demosthenes. That of Hypereides, very mutilated as it is, seems to me the finest next to that of Thucydides. But they are all built upon the same lines, showing even here that strict conservatism in every branch of Greek art which never varied, for variety's sake, from a type once recognized as really good.

32.

Roubillac's monuments in Westminster Abbey, which excited the admiration of his contemporaries, are the best example I know of degradation in public taste on this question.

33.

I did, indeed, see one relief at Athens, in which the relatives are represented as rushing forward in agony, as it were to delay the departure of the fainting figure. It is right that this exception should be noted, as it shows that they understood what violent grief was, and yet avoided representing it as a rule.

34.

I fancy, from the unity of type shown in many of them, that they may even have been designed by the artist without regard to the special case, and purchased by the family of the deceased ready made. The figures upon them do not seem to me personal likenesses.

35.

In the *Adonais*, Shelley affords a curious contrast to the somewhat morbid prominence of the poet in the case before us. The self-effacement of Shelley has centred all our interest on his lost friend.

36.

He also supposed that the tower was

Frankish, and built long before the Venetian conquest. But here he was wrong. The stones inside the tower, when taken down, showed clear traces of gun-powder, as was clearly shown in a learned refutation of his views, printed at Athens.

37.

Other specimens are preserved in the little Turkish house on the Acropolis, and should be noted by the visitor, who may easily pass them by.

38.

I speak, of course, of the copies of these famous statues which are to be seen in the Vatican Museum.

39.

The illustrated work of Michaelis is probably the most complete and critical account both of the plan and the details, which have often been discussed, and especially with great accuracy by Mr. Penrose, whose monumental work, the *Principles of Athenian Architecture*, has recently been republished. Among the many newer works, I would call special attention to the first volume of Viollet-le-duc's *Entretiens sur l'Architecture*, already translated into English, which is full of most instructing and suggestive observations on Greek architecture; also to M. E. Bournouf's *Acropole d'Athènes*.

40. They will be most readily consulted in the plates of Michaelis's *Parthenon*.

41. The discovery of the figures from the western pediment of the temple at Olympia, carved by Alcamenes, a contemporary of Phidias, will hardly lead us to modify this judgment. For though they show a great talent in the composition, the defects in execution are so grave as to lead many critics to suspect that we have in them the work of mere local artists, certainly not the masterful hands that adorned the Parthenon.

42. It is very uncertain, perhaps unlikely, that any of the architectural sculpture we possess was actually finished by Phidias's own hand. But there can be no doubt that he directed it, and must have designed much of it in detail, since the general composition was certainly his creation.

43. This very pattern, in mahogany, with cane seats, and adapted, like all Greek chairs, for loose cushions, was often used in eighteenth century work, and may still be found in old Irish mansions furnished at that epoch.

44. I state this because many critics have drawn an opposite inference from a mistranslation of a passage in Plato (*Apol.* 26, E).

45. The exact number, according to Papadakis (cf. A. Müller, *Bühnenalt.*, p. 47), is stated at 27,500. But I am convinced this is a great exaggeration. I should rather give 15,000 as a liberal estimate; and this agrees with the measurements made for me by Dr. Dörpfeld in 1889. This mistake is also due to misunderstanding a passage in Plato's *Symposium*, which says that "Agathon, whom 30,000 citizens hear——". It is not said that they heard him at the same time.

46. Cf. on this point my *History of Greek Literature*, i. p. 345.

47. Cf. on the details of Greek painting the last chapter of my *Social Life in Greece*.

48. The actual passage is well worth quoting—"Au reste, je n'ose encore ajouter que cette pièce soit en effet la meilleure de mes tragédies. Je laisse et aux lecteurs et au temps à décider de son véritable prix. Ce que je puis assurer, c'est que je n'en ai

point fait où la vertu soit plus mise en jour que dans celle-ci; les moindres fautes y sont sévèrement punies; la seule pensée du crime y est regardée avec autant d'horreur que le crime même; les faiblesses de l'amour y passent pour des vraies faiblesses; les passions n'y sont présentées aux yeux que pour montrer tous les désordres dont elles sont causes, et le vice y est peint partout avec des couleurs qui en out fait connaître et haïr la difformité. C'est là proprement le but que tout homme qui travaille pour le public se doit proposer; et c'est que les premiers poètes tragiques avaient en vue sur toute chose. Leur théâtre était une école où la vertu n'était pas moins bien enseignée que dans les écoles des philosophes.... Il serait à souhaiter que nos ouvrages fussent aussi solides et aussi pleins d'utiles instructions que ceux de ces poètes. Ce serait peut-être un moyen de réconcilier la tragédie avec quantité de personnes célèbres par leur piété et par leur doctrine, qui l'ont condamnée dans ces derniers temps, et qui en jugeraient sans doute plus favorablement, si les auteurs songeaient autant à instruire les spectateurs qu'à les divertir, et s'ils suivaient en cela la véritable intention de la tragédie."

49.

Racine is here the exception.

50.

Alfieri, though starting with a violent feeling of reaction against some of the faults of the French drama, was wholly trained upon it, and only knew the Greek plays through French versions until very late in life, when most of his works were already published. I therefore class him unhesitatingly as an offshoot of that school.

51.

There is now (1891) a controversy raging concerning the height of the Greek stage and its arrangements, owing to the researches of Dr. Dörpfeld. I cannot enter upon it here.

52.

This was written before the very interesting revivals of Greek plays which do such honor to Cambridge. Those who had the privilege of seeing them can judge not only how far a reproduction was possible, but how far it can succeed, for never will it be more ably undertaken and carried out.

53.

The reader who cares to consult the various prices cited in my *Old Greek Life* will see the grounds for assuming some such change in the value of money between the fourth century B. C. in Greece and the

nineteenth A. D. in England.

54.

I perceive that M. Renan, who alone of skeptical critics is persuaded, possibly by the striking picturesqueness of the scene, to accept it as historical, considers it not impossible that S. Paul may have been actually brought before the court. He notices that in later days it assumed a general direction not only of literature, but of morals, and that any new teacher might fairly have been summoned before it to expound his views. This does not seem to me to agree with the ironical and trivial character of the whole audience, as intimated by the historian. The author of the work called *Supernatural Religion*, when analyzing, in his third volume, the Acts of the Apostles, is actually silent on this speech, though he discusses at great length the speeches of S. Paul which he thinks composed as parallels to those of S. Peter. Most German critics look on the passage as introduced by the author, like the speeches in Thucydides or Tacitus, as a literary ornament, as well as an exposition of the Apostolic preaching of the early Church. They also note its many contrasts to the teaching of such documents as the Epistle to the Romans. I have assumed, as even M. Renan seems to do, that the Apostle

told Timothy, or Luke, or some other follower, the main purport of this memorable visit, and also the headings of the speech, which is too unlike his received writings to be a probable forgery.

55.

The fact that the title of Menander's famous play was Δεισιδαίμων has escaped the commentators. S. Paul must have meant "rather superstitious," as the A. V. has it.

56.

Though ἄγνωστος may surely have this meaning, I do not find it suggested in any of the commentaries on the passage. They all suppose some superstitious precaution, or else some case of the real inscription being effaced by time, and supplied in this way. The expression in Pausanias—the gods called unknown, τοῖς ὀνομαζομένοις ἀγνώστοις—seems to suggest it as a regular title, and we know that there were deities whose name was secret, and might not be pronounced. But in the face of so many better critics I will not insist upon this interpretation.

57.

This depends on no mere accident, but on the essential features of the spiritual side of Greek character, on which I will quote an admirable

passage from Renan's *S. Paul*:

"Ce qui caractérisait la religion du Grec autrefois, ce qui la caractérise encore de nos jours, c'est le manque d'infini, de vague, d'attendrissement, de mollesse féminine; la profondeur du sentiment religieux allemand et celtique manque à la race des vrais Hellènes. La piété du Grec orthodoxe consiste en pratiques et en signes extérieurs. Les églises orthodoxes, parfois très-élégantes, n'ont rien des terreurs qu'on ressent dans une église gothique. En ce christianisme oriental, point de larmes, de prières, de componction intérieure. Les enterrements y sont presque gais; ils ont lieu le soir, au soleil couchant, quand les ombres sont déjà longues, avec des chants à mi-voix et un déploiement de couleurs voyantes. La gravité fanatique des Latins déplaît à ces races vives, sereines, légères. L'infirme n'y est pas abattu: il voit doucement venir la mort; tout sourit autour de lui. Là est le secret de cette gaieté divine des poëmes homériques et de Platon: le récit de la mort de Socrate dans le *Phédon* montre à peine une teinte de tristesse. La vie, c'est donner sa fleur, puis son fruit; quoi de plus? Si, comme on peut le soutenir, la préoccupation de la mort est le trait le plus important du christianisme et

du sentiment religieux moderne, la race grecque est la moins religieuse des races. C'est une race superficielle, prenant la vie comme une chose sans surnaturel ni arrière-plan. Une telle simplicité de conception tient en grande partie au climat, à la pureté de l'air, à l'étonnante joie qu'on respire, mais bien plus encore aux instincts de la race hellénique, adorablement idéaliste. Un rien, un arbre, une fleur, un lézard, une tortue, provoquant le souvenir de mille métamorphoses chantées par les poëtes; un filet d'eau, un petit creux dans le rocher, qu'on qualifie d'antre des nymphes; un puits avec une tasse sur la margelle, un pertuis de mer si étroit que les papillons le traversent et pourtant navigable aux plus grands vaisseaux, comme à Poros; des orangers, des cyprès dont l'ombre s'étend sur la mer, un petit bois de pins au milieu des rochers, suffisent en Grèce pour produire le contentement qu'éveille la beauté. Se promener dans les jardins pendant la nuit, écouter les cigales, s'asseoir au clair de lune en jouant de la flûte; aller boire de l'eau dans la montagne, apporter avec soi un petit pain, un poisson et un lécythe de vin qu'on boit en chantant; aux fêtes de famille, suspendre une couronne de feuillage au-dessus de sa porte, aller

avec des chapeaux de fleurs; les jours de fêtes publiques, porter des thyrses garnis de feuillages; passer des journées à danser, à jouer avec des chèvres apprivoisées—voilà les plaisirs grecs, plaisirs d'une race pauvre, économe, éternellement jeune, habitant un pays charmant, trouvant son bien en elle-même et dans les dons que les dieux lui ont faits. La pastorale à la façon de Théocrite fut dans les pays helléniques une vérité; la Grèce se plut toujours à ce petit genre de poésie fin et aimable, l'un des plus caractéristiques de sa littérature, miroir de sa propre vie, presque partout ailleurs niais et factice. La belle humeur, la joie de vivre sont les choses grecques par excellence. Cette race a toujours vingt ans: pour elle, *indulgere genio* n'est pas la pesante ivresse de l'Anglais, le grossier ébattement du Français; c'est tout simplement penser que la nature est bonne, qu'on peut et qu'on doit y céder. Pour le Grec, en effet, la nature est une conseillère d'élégance, une maîtresse de droiture et de vertu; la 'concupiscence,' cette idée que la nature nous induit à mal faire, est un non-sens pour lui. Le goût de la parure qui distingue le palicare, et qui se montre avec tant d'innocence dans la jeune Grecque, n'est pas la pompeuse vanité du barbare, la sotte

prétention de la bourgeoise, bouffie de son ridicule orgueil de parvenue; c'est le sentiment pur et fin de naïfs jouvenceaux, se sentant fils légitimes des vrais inventeurs de la beauté.

"Une telle race, on le comprend, eût accueilli Jésus par un sourire. Il était une chose que ces enfants exquis ne pouvaient nous apprendre: le sérieux profond, l'honnêteté simple, le dévouement sans gloire, la bonté sans emphase. Socrate est un moraliste de premier ordre: mais il n'a rien à faire dans l'histoire religieuse. Le Grec nous paraît toujours un peu sec et sans cœur: il a de l'esprit, du mouvement, de la subtilité; il n'a rien de rêveur, de mélancolique. Nous autres, Celtes et Germains, la source de notre génie, c'est notre cœur. Au fond de nous est comme une fontaine de fées, une fontaine claire, verte et profonde, où se reflète l'infini. Chez le Grec, l'amour propre, la vanité se mêlent à tout; le sentiment vague lui est inconnu; la réflexion sur sa propre destinée lui paraît fade. Poussée à la caricature, une façon si incomplète d'entendre la vie donne a l'époque romaine le *græculus esuriens*, grammairien, artiste, charlatan, acrobate, médecin, amuseur du monde entier, fort analogue à l'Italien des XVIe et XVIIe siècles: à

l'époque byzantine, le théologien sophiste faisant dégénérer la religion en subtiles disputes; de nos jours, le Grec moderne, quelquefois vaniteux et ingrat, le *papas* orthodoxe, avec sa religion égoïste et matérielle. Malheur à qui s'arrête à cette décadence! Honte à celui qui, devant le Parthénon, songe à remarquer un ridicule! Il faut le reconnaître pourtant: la Grèce ne fut jamais sérieusement chrétienne; elle ne l'est pas encore. Aucune race ne fut moins romantique, plus dénuée du sentiment chevaleresque de notre moyen âge. Platon bâtit toute sa théorie de la beauté en se passant de la femme. Penser à une femme pour s'exciter à faire de grandes choses! un Grec eût été bien surpris d'un pareil langage; il pensait, lui, aux hommes réunis sur l'*agora*, il pensait à la patrie. Sous ce rapport, les Latins étaient plus près de nous. La poésie grecque, incomparable dans les grands genres tels que l'épopée, la tragédie, la poésie lyrique désintéressée, n'avait pas, ce semble, la douce note élégiaque de Tibulle, de Virgile, de Lucrèce, note si bien en harmonie avec nos sentiments, si voisine de ce que nous aimons.

"La même différence se retrouve entre la piété de saint Bernard, de saint François d'Assise et celle des

saints de l'Église grecque. Ces belles écoles de Cappadoce, de Syrie, d'Égypte, des Pères du désert, sont presque des écoles philosophiques. L'hagiographie populaire des Grecs est plus mythologique que celle des Latins. La plupart des saints qui figurent dans l'iconostase d'une maison grecque et devant lesquels brûle une lampe ne sont pas de grands fondateurs, de grands hommes, comme les saints de l'Occident; ce sont souvent des êtres fantastiques, d'anciens dieux transfigurés, ou du moins des combinaisons de personnages historiques et de mythologie, comme saint Georges. Et cette admirable église de Sainte-Sophie! c'est un temple arien; le genre humain tout entier pourrait y faire sa prière. N'ayant pas eu de pape, d'inquisition, de scolastique, de moyen age barbare, ayant toujours gardé un levain d'arianisme, la Grèce lâchera plus facilement qu'aucun autre pays le christianisme surnaturel, à peu près comme ces Athéniens d'autrefois étaient en même temps, grâce à une sorte de légèreté, mille fois plus profonde que le sérieux de nos lourdes races, le plus superstitieux des peuples et le plus voisin du rationalisme. Les chants populaires grecs sont encore aujourd'hui pleins d'images et

d'idées païennes. À la grande différence de l'Occident, l'Orient garda durant tout le moyen âge et jusqu'aux temps modernes de vrais 'hellénistes,' au fond plus païens que chrétiens, vivants du culte de la vieille patrie grecque et des vieux auteurs. Ces hellénistes sont, au XVe siècle, les agents de la renaissance de l'Occident, auquel ils apportent les textes grecs, base de toute civilization. Le même esprit a présidé et présidera aux destinées de la Grèce nouvelle. Quand on a bien étudié ce qui fait de nos jours le fond d'un Hellène cultivé, on voit qu'il y a chez lui très-peu de christianisme: il est chrétien de forme, comme un Persan est musulman; mais au fond il est 'helléniste.' Sa religion, c'est l'adoration de l'ancien génie grec. Il pardonne toute hérésie au philhellène, a celui qui admire son passé; il est bien moins disciple de Jésus et de saint Paul que de Plutarque et de Julien."

58.

The reader will find in my last chapter some further information concerning the remains of mediæval Greece.

59.

I have seen it very full in June; I have also seen it almost dry in April, so that it depends upon the season

whether the traveller will enjoy the coolness of the river, or turn with disappointment from its stony bed.

60.

On a fine summer's day, in the meadows about Eton, I was struck with the truth of this phrase. A light breeze was making all the poplars shiver beside the great elms, which stood in silence.

61.

This was the military harbor, at least in the fourth century, B. C., when the architect Philo built a famous arsenal (σκευοθήκη) at its north-east corner, of which the plan and even details have been reconstructed by Dr. Dörpfeld from an important inscription recovered in 1881.

62.

Thucydides, followed by modern historians, has nevertheless been inaccurate in his use of the expression *Long Walls*. He sometimes means the north and Phaleric wall, sometimes the north and south parallel walls, to the exclusion of the Phaleric wall. The long walls rebuilt by Conon were the latter pair, and thus not the same long walls as were finished in 456 B. C.

63.

The reader who desires to see the best poetical picture of modern Athens should consult the tenth

chapter in Mr. Symonds's *Sketches in Italy and Greece*—one of the most beautiful productions of that charming poet in prose.

64.

IX. § I. p. 244 (Tauchn.).

65.

He reads, however, φρίξουσι, instead of Herodotus's φρύξουσι.

66.

There is now a railway from Athens to the mines (1887).

67.

The earliest allusion to them is a line in Æschylus's *Persæ*, where they come in so peculiarly, and without any natural suggestion, that they must have been in his day a new and surprising source of wealth. Atossa is inquiring of the chorus about Athens, and whether it possesses any considerable wealth. The chorus replies (v. 238):

> ἀργύρου πηγή τις αὐτοῖς ἐστι,
> θησαυρὸς χθονός.

This inference of mine, made years ago, is now strongly confirmed by the recovered *Polity of the Athenians*, which says (chap. xxii.): "In the archonship of Nicodemus [484–3 B. C.], when the mines at Maroneia [as he calls them] were discovered (ἐφάνη), and there was a profit of

100 talents from the work, Themistocles," etc.

68.

It is possible that in the days of Eretria's greatness, when she ruled over a number of the Cyclades, Eretrians may have worked the mines. These occupants probably preceded the Æginetans. But the strange thing is, that the mines and their large profits appear suddenly, and as a novelty, at a particular point of Greek history.

69.

Arist. *Œcon.*, II. 4.

70.

Since I visited the place there are actually five companies—two Greek and three French—established to work the district.

71.

There is also a quotation in Strabo (iii. 3, § 9), from Demetrius Phal., implying their activity in the third century B. C. Plutarch (*de defectu or.* 43) speaks of them as having *lately* failed.

72.

Byron, who loved this spot above all others, I think, in Greece, speaks of sixteen as still standing in his day.

73.

Dr. Dörpfeld has since shown that the marble temple at Sunium was

built on the site of an older temple, with a very slight but distinct enlargement of the plan. The older temple was of the ordinary poros-stone found on the site.

74.

"Aujourd'hui tout ce district est presque désert; seuls, quelques archéologues et quelques artistes affrontent ces gorges pierreuses et ces scabreux sentiers; on prend alors ce chemin pour aller de Marathon à Chalcis et revenir à Athènes par Décélie, entre le Pentélique et Parnès. Ces monuments de Rhamnunte offrent des traits curieux qui les rendent intéressants pour le voyageur érudit; mais de plus les ruines mêmes et le site ont assez de beauté pour dédommager de leur peine ceux qui recherchent surtout le pittoresque. Je n'oublierai jamais les quelques heures que j'ai passées là, il y a déjà longtemps, par une radieuse matinée d'avril. Pendant que nous examinions ce qui restait des anciens sanctuaires et de leurs défenses, notre guide songeait au déjeuner; il avait acheté un agneau à l'un de ces pâtres appelés *Vlaques* qui, avec leurs brebis et leurs chèvres éparses dans les buissons de myrtes et de lentisques, sont à peu près les seuls habitants de ce canton. Quand nous revînmes, l'agneau, soutenu sur deux fourches fichées en terre par un

jeune pin sylvestre qui servait de broche, cuisait tout entier devant un feu clair, et la graisse coulait à grosses gouttes sur les charbons ardents. Devant notre tapis étendu à l'ombre avait été préparée une jonchée de verts branchages sur lesquels le succulent rôti, rapidement découpé par le coutelas d'un berger, laissa bientôt tomber côtelettes et gigots.

"Ce qui nous fit prolonger là notre halte après que notre appetit fut satisfait, ce fut la vue magnifique dont on jouissait de la plate-forme où nous étions établis, dans un coin de l'acropole. A nos pieds, c'était la mer, veloutée de chatoyante reflets par le soleil, par la brise, par les nuages qui passaient au ciel. En face de nous se dressaient les hautes et sévères côtes de l'Eubée, dominés par la pyramide du Dirphys. Ce fier sommet était encore tout blanc des neiges de l'hiver; au contraire, si nous nous retournons vers les gorges qui se creusaient autour de nous dans la montagne, entre des parois de marbre rougies et comme hâlées par le soleil, c'était le printemps de la Grèce dans tout son épanouissement et son éclat. Dans le fond des ravins, là où un peu d'eau filtrait sous les cailloux, arbres de Judée et cytises mêlaient leurs

brillantes couleurs au tendre feuillage des platanes, et sur les pentes les plus âpres des milliers de genêts en fleur étincelaient parmi la verdure des genévriers, des chênes et des oliviers francs.

“Dans l’antiquité, toute cette portion du territoire athénien, qui faisait partie de ce que l’on appelait la *Diakria* ou le ‘haut pays,’ sans avoir de gros villages ni une population aussi dense que celle des plaines d’Athènes ou d’Eleusis, devait pourtant présenter un aspect assez diffèrent de celui qu’elle offre aujourd’hui; je me la représente assez semblable à ce que sont maintenant certains districts montueux de la Grèce moderne où le désir d’éviter le contact des Turcs avait rejeté et cantonné les Hellènes: il en était ainsi du Magne, de la Tzaconie, des environs de Karytena en Arcadie. Partout là, une industrieuse persévérance a mis à profit tout ce que pouvaient offrir de ressources le sol et le climat. Sur des pentes abruptes et presque verticales, de petits murs en pierres sèches s’efforcent de retenir une mince couche de terre végétale; malgré ces précautions, les grandes pluies de l’hiver et les vents de l’été en emportent une partie jusqu’au fond de la vallée, sans jamais se lasser,

hommes, femmes, enfants, travaillent sans relâche à réparer ces dégâts. Que de fois, admirant la patience de ces sobres et tenaces montagnards, je les ai suivis des yeux pendant qu'ils allaient ainsi lentement, le dos courbé sous leurs hottes pleines, gravissant des sentiers sablonneux ou d'étroits escaliers taillés à même la roche qui leur renvoyait touts les ardeurs du soleil! Au bout de quelques années, il n'est pas peut-être une parcelle du terrain dans chacun de ces petits champs qui n'ait fait plusieurs fois le voyage, qui n'ait glissé jusqu'au bord du torrent pour être ensuite ramenée pelletée par pelletée, sur une des terrasses supérieures. Ces sacrifices sont récompensés. Le long du ruisseau, là où les côtes s'écartent et laissent entre elles un peu d'espace, l'eau, soigneusement ménagée, mesurée par heures et par minutes à chaque propriétaire, court bruyante et claire dans les rigoles; elle arrose des vergers où croissent, suivant les lieux, soit l'oranger, le citronnier et le grenadier, soit les arbres de nos climats tempérés, le pêcher, le pommier et le poirier; à leur ombre grossissent la fève et l'enorme courge. Plus haut, sur les versants les moins roides et les moins pierreux, là où la légère charrue inventée par Triptolème a trouvé assez de place

pour tracer le sillon, l'orge et le seigle verdissent au printemps, et, dans les bonnes années, profitent pour mûrir des tardifs soleils d'automne. Ce qui d'ailleurs réussit le mieux dans ces montagnes, ce qui paye vraiment les habitants de leurs peines, c'est l'olivier, dont les puissantes racines étreignent le roc et semblent faire corps avec lui; c'est la vigne, qui, d'étage en étage, grimpe presque jusqu'aux sommets. A l'un et à l'autre, pour donner une huile et un vin qui seraient les plus savoureux du monde, s'ils étaient mieux préparés, il suffit de beaucoup de soleil, d'un peu de terre et de quelques coups de hoyau qui viennent à propos ameublir le sol et le dégager des plantes parasites.

"C'est ainsi que dans l'Attique, au temps de sa prospérité, même les cantons aujourd'hui les plus déserts et les plus stériles devaient être habités et cultivés. Sur beaucoup de ces croupes où le roc affleure presque partout, où verdit à peine, aux premiers jours du printemps, une herbe courte, diaprée d'anémones et de cistes, qui jaunira dès le mois de mai, il y avait jadis une couche plus épaisse de terre végétale. Dans les ravins, là où j'ai perdu plus d'une fois mon chemin en poursuivant la perdrix rouge ou la bécasse à travers

des maquis touffus, on a, pendant bien des siècles, fait la vendange et la cueillette des olives; c'est ce dont témoignent, sur les pentes les mieux exposées aux rayons du midi ou du couchant, des restes de murs et de terrassements que l'on distingue encore dans l'épaisseur du fourré. Dans les endroits où la culture était à peu près impossible, des bois de pins, aujourd'hui presque entièrement détruits, empêchaient la montagne de se dénuder; dans les clairières et entre les rocs mêmes poussaient la sauge, la campanule et le thym, toutes ces plantes aromatiques, tous ces vigoureux arbustes que se plaît à tondre la dent des moutons et des chèvres."

75.

πολλαὶ δ' ἀμὶν ὕπερθε κατὰ
κρατὸς δονέοντο
αἴγειροι πτελέαι τε· τὸ δ'
ἐγγύθεν ἱερὸν ὕδωρ
Νυμφᾶν ἐξ ἄντροιο
κατειβόμενον κελάρυζε

—

THEOCR. VII. 135.

76.

Since M. Trikoupi's long and effective administration, brigandage was so effectually put down that, although there were plenty of

brigands in Mount Olympus close to the frontier, it was perfectly safe to wander about in Northern Greece up to the vale of Tempe. Such was the state of things in 1889. Whether his recent successor will keep as good order remains to be seen.

77.

Social Life in Greece, p. 23.

78.

Xen. *Hell.*, iv., 3, § 1. To cite a parallel in modern history: a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (July 12, 1876) says: "I witnessed a battle during the War of Greek Independence. It lasted three days; the quantity of ammunition expended was enormous, and the result was one man wounded!"

79.

So Strabo describes it, IX. 1, § 12. For further details consult the *Guide Joanne* for Athens (1888), p. 201.

80.

De Legg., II. 14, § 36.

81.

in Cer. v. 480.

82.

Thren. (frag.)

83.

Œd. Col. 1042.

84.

Ran. 455.

85. *Phæd.* cc. 29, 30.

86. *Paneg.* § 6.

87. *Etym. Mag.*, s. v. τελετή.

88. There seems no doubt that some of these symbols, derived from old nature-worship, were very gross, and quite inconsistent with modern notions of religion. But even these were features hallowed and ennobled by the spirit of the celebrants, whose reverence blinded their eyes, while lifting up their hearts.

89. In the fragments of Plutarch's *De anima* there are some very striking passages on this subject. "After this," he says, evidently describing some part of the ceremony, "there came a great light, there were shown pure places and meadows, with dances, and all that was splendid and holy to see and hear, in which he who is now perfected by initiation, and has obtained freedom and remission, joins in the devotions, with his head crowned, in the company of pure and holy men, and beholds from thence the unclean uninitiated crowd of mortals in deep mire and mist, trodden down and crowded by each other, but in fear of death, adhering

to their ills through want of faith in the goods beyond. Since from these you may clearly see that the connection of the soul with the body is a coercion against nature."

90.

The Greeks always regard these nomads as foreigners in race, and incapable of any settled or civilized life. They do great mischief to young trees and fences, which they never respect. Yet when arrested for doing mischief they are protected by the sympathies of the Greeks, who hate all coercion, however reasonable.

91.

Colonel Leake already felt these difficulties, and moves Eleutheræ a few miles to the south-west. But Œnoe and Eleutheræ must have been close together, from the allusion in the *Antiope* of Euripides. Cf. Eurip., frag. 179 (ed. Nauck), and the passages quoted there.

92.

This the Peloponnesians did at Œnoe, according to Thucydides; perhaps therefore at this very place.

93.

There was no photograph of this very fine building existing when I was in Greece. The only drawing of it I have seen is in the plates of Dodwell's *Archæological Tour in Greece*—a splendid book. The fort of

Phyle, though smaller, possesses all the features described in this fort, and shows that they represent a general type.

94.

This pass (seized by the Persian cavalry before the battle of Platæa, in order to stop the Greek provision trains) was called τρεῖς κεφαλαί by the Thebans, but δρυὸς κεφ. by the Athenians (Herod. IX. 39)—evidently the same old name diversely interpreted by diverse *Volks-etymologien*. τρεῖς and δρυός are pronounced almost alike in modern Greek, probably therefore in old Greek likewise. But I will not touch the thorny question of old Greek pronunciation.

95.

Cf. what I have said in relation to Polybius's account of it in my *Greek Life and Thought*, pp. 534 *sq.*

96.

Cf., for example, the figures in the recent (1891) *Guide Joanne*, ii. xxxvi.

97.

There was, indeed, a splendid *pleasaunce* built at Thebes by the Frankish knights, which was completely destroyed by the grand Catalan company. It is described by their annalist Ramon Muntaner. The remains of one Frankish tower mark the place.

98. See his life in Gregorovius's *Athen*, vol. i. pp. 144 *sq*.

99. The legend of the name is now fully explained in the fragments of the *Antiope* published by me in the *Petrie papyri* (Williams & Norgate, 1891).

100. I trust none will imagine that I intend the least disrespect to M. Boulgaris, who was, according to far better authority than that quoted in the text, an honorable and estimable man. But some of his Ministers have been since convicted of malpractices concerning certain archbishoprics, which were bought for money. The trial is now a matter of history, to which an allusion is sufficient.

101. Since that time, the chief power has for the most part been in the hands of M. Trikoupi, an honest patriot. Yet it was the misfortune of the country to be reduced by M. Delyanni to the verge of bankruptcy through his absurd war policy against Turkey. It is probable enough that he did not lead, but was carried along by this policy, with which all the Athenian "Jingoes" were possessed.

102. This plague seems unavoidable in a southern climate, wherever the

houses, however good, are built of wood, and does not imply any ungrateful reflection upon my refined and generous hosts. In the Morea, where houses are built of masonry, even badly-kept houses are comparatively safe.

103.

Cf. Polygnotus's picture of Agamemnon (Paus. x. 30, 3), σκήπτρῳ τε ὑπὸ τὴν ἀριστερὰν μασχάλην ἐρειδόμενος.

104.

Since these words were written, M. Holleaux's researches at Akræphiæ have not only discovered the inscription containing the Emperor Nero's speech to the Greeks, but also many curious remains from the temple of Apollo Ptoos.

105.

ὅστις δὲ τὰ σὺν τέχνῃ πεποιημένα ἐπίπροσθε τίθεται τῶν ἀρχαιότητα ἡκώτων, καὶ τάδε ἐστιν οἱ θεάσασθαι. I. 24. 3.

106.

Cf. Plut. *Agesilaus*, chap. xvii.

107.

An account of the discovery, by the only surviving member of the party, Mr. G. L. Taylor, has been published by Mr. W. S. Vaux in the *Trans. of the Roy. Soc. of Lit.*, 2nd series, vol. viii. pp. 1, *sqq.* The latter gentleman

called attention to his paper when the subject was being discussed in the *Academy* in 1877. A very different story was told to Colonel Mure, and has passed from his *Travels* into Murray's *Guide*. The current belief among the Greeks seems still to be that a Greek patriot called Odysseus, perceiving the stone protruding from the clay, and, on striking it, hearing its hollow ring, dug it out and broke it in pieces, imagining it to be a record of Philip's victory over Hellenic liberty. Some ill-natured people added that he hoped to find treasure within it.

108.

Mr. Taylor and his friends thought it must have stood in the attitude of the now abolished lion on Northumberland House. This did not appear so to us; but it is difficult to decide. The restoration by Siegel in the *Mon. of the Soc. Arch.* of Rome, for 1856, of which Mr. A. S. Murray most kindly sent me a drawing, makes the posture a *sitting* one, like that of the sitting lion in front of the Arsenal at Venice. There is a small sitting lion from Calymnæ, of the same posture, in the Brit. Museum. The Greeks, when my account was first published in their papers, became fully alive to the value of this monument, and anxious for its restoration. There had been a

custodian appointed to watch over it, even when I was there, but he chanced to be absent when we paid our visit.

109.

Since these words were written, the labors of the Greek archæologists have discovered the great *polyandrion* or common tomb of the dead, which the lion commemorated. They lay in rows, many of them with broken bones, showing how they had received their death-wound, and with them were fragments of broken weapons. Never have we come closer to an ancient battle, or discovered more affecting records of a great struggle.

110.

This seems to be implied in the account of the murder of Laïus by Œdipus, on this very road, as it is described in Sophocles's *Œdipus Tyrannus*.

111.

Indeed Tripolitza lies between the ancient sites of Mantinea and Tegea, and quite close to the latter.

112.

This was done by the monks at Athos, when Mahomet II. was threatening Constantinople. They foresaw his victory, and by early submission made their own terms, and saved both their liberties and

their property.

113.

Cf. also Plutarch's tract *de Pyth. orac.* for details of *ciceroni* and visitors in his day.

114.

The hippodrome for the chariot races was, however, in the plain beneath, as Pausanias tells us (x. 37, 4).

115.

This journey I since made by rail, in this place a harmless innovation.

116.

Cf. the passage quoted from M. Georges Perrot above, p. 185.

117.

A commodious stone museum has since been built, and the treasures are doubtless by this time transferred to it. But the great earthquake of 1885, so near Olympia, makes us tremble for the safety of any sculpture in a stone building under a solid roof. How terrible if the house were to fall on the *Hermes*!

118.

This judgment of mine has since been confirmed by the authority of Overbeck. It is indeed very hard to estimate rightly a new discovery of this kind. I rated the work of Alkamenes, perhaps, too highly.

119.

The student who desires to prosecute this difficult subject should study Overbeck's *History of Greek Sculpture*, or the works of Mr. A. S. Murray, or Mr. Copeland Perry, on the same subject.

120.

The fact that some of these public meetings are associated with the fall of tyrants does not, I think, disprove what is here advanced.

121.

I have not room here to give in full my reasons for rejecting the earlier part of the Olympic register, as being the manufacture of Hippias of Elis, later than 400 B. C. But the reader who is curious on the subject may either consult my article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1881, or the appendix to my *Problems in Greek History* (1892). He will then see that there is no direct evidence whatever for any early list, and that the antiquarian Pausanias, in his hunt after ancient monuments at Olympia, could find nothing earlier than the so-called 33d Olympiad. Plutarch, moreover, in the opening of his *Life of Numa*, tells us plainly that the list was the manufacture of Hippias, *and based on no trustworthy evidence*. To accept the list, therefore, in the face of these objections, is to exhibit culpable credulity.

122. So also under the early Roman Empire the exiles on the barren islands of the Ægean seem to have been allowed this indulgence. Cf. the curious passage from Plutarch I have quoted and explained in my *Greek World under Roman Sway*, p. 261.

123. The very stringent laws quoted by Æschines *in Timarchum* may possibly be spurious, since we know from other allusions that they were not enforced. But more probably they existed as a dead letter, which could be revived if occasion required.

124. The modern Greeks make their cheese for keeping, even now, in wicker baskets, and distinguish it from χλωρὸς τύρος, which now means cream cheese, and which they carry to market in woollen bags. There was a special market for it in Athens in Aristophanes's day, but not in woollen bags; for, as Mr. Pickering (of Shrewsbury School) pointed out to me, the cream cheese of Aristophanes's day was kept in wicker work. I gladly here acknowledge this correction of the note in my former edition.

125. I should, however, call attention to an exceptional vase in the little

Turkish house on the Acropolis, probably of late date, in which a runner is represented with his elbows back and hands closed, and near his sides, in very good form.

126.

Pausanias is responsible for the date, which he probably copied from Hippias of Elis. It is noted as a special wonder that the same man should win the sprint and long races at Olympia, which shows that the latter must have been mainly a test of staying power. The Spartan Ladas died at the winning-post, and this endurance was thought rather a wonderful feat, but of course his death may have resulted from bad training, or from heart disease.

127.

"Know ye not," says St. Paul, "that all run, and *one* receiveth the crown?"—a quite different condition of things from that of the Iliad, where every competitor, like the boys at a private school, comes off with a prize.

128.

Possibly this special sort of wrestling has been confused with the *pankration*, from which it can have differed but little, if it indeed subsisted permanently as a distinct form of wrestling.

129.

The single competitions in running and wrestling were distinct from those in the pentathlon, and rewarded by separate crowns.

130.

This is the moment chosen by Canova in his celebrated representation of these boxers in the Vatican, a fact of which I was ignorant till it was pointed out to me, in correcting an error I had made about them, by Mr. M'D. Campbell, of Glasgow.

131.

The first case of cheating was said to have taken place in the 98th Ol. (388 B. C.), when the Thessalian Eupolos was convicted of bribing the three boxers opposed to him, one of whom had won at the previous meeting. Such crimes were commemorated by bronze figures of Zeus (called Ζᾶνες at Elis), which were of the value of the fines inflicted, and had inscriptions warning all athletes of the dangers and the disgrace of cheating.

132.

The reader will find some illustrations of it in my *Social Greece*, 6th edition, p. 96.

133.

It has been since inserted from my notes in the English translation of Bædeker's *Greece*.

134.

Polybius, iv. 70.

135.

By this time (1891) there are probably three or four rivals, which the traveller will see noted in his guide-book, provided he does not depend on the *Guide Joanne*, which neglects to give such information. The house to which I allude in the text is the Hotel S. George.

136.

This is not contradicted by the fact of there being isolated Arcadian poets, such as Echembrotus and Aristarchus, distinguished in foreign schools of art.

137.

The *Eclogues* of Petrarch are modelled upon those of Vergil to the exclusion of the most characteristic features borrowed by the latter from Theocritus.

138.

The following extract from the first prose piece of the book will show how absolutely imaginary is his Arcadia, with its impossible combination of trees, and its absence of winter:—

"Giace nella sommità di Partenio, non umile monte della pastorale Arcadia, un dilettevole piano, di ampiezza non molto spazioso,

peroche il sito del luogo non consente, ma di minuta e verdissima erbetta sì ripieno, che, se le lascive pecorelle con gli avidi morsi non vi pasceresso, vi si potrebbe d'ogni tempo ritrovare verdura. Ove, se io non m'inganno, son forse dodici o quindici alberi di tanto strana ed eccessiva bellezza, che chiunque le vedesse, giudicherebbe che la maestra natura vi si fosse con sommo diletto studiata in formarli. Li quali alquanto distanti, ed in ordine non artificioso disposti, con la loro rarità la naturale bellezza del luogo oltra misura annobiliscono. Quivi senza nodo veruno si vede il dritissimo abete, nato a sostenere i pericoli del mare; e con più aperti rami la robusta quercia, e l'alto frassino, e lo amenissimo platano vi si distendano, con le loro ombre non picciola parte del bello e copioso prato occupando; ed evvi con più breve fronda l'albero, di che Ercole coronare si solea, nel cui pedale le misere figliuole di Climene furono trasformate: ed in un de' lati si scerne il noderoso castagno, il fronzuto bosco, e con puntate foglie lo eccelso pino carico di durissimi frutti; nell' altro l'ombroso faggio, la incorruttibile tiglia, il fragile tamarisco, insieme con la orientale palma, dolci ed onorato premio dei vincitori. Ma fra tutti nel mezzo,

presso un chiaro fonte, sorge verso il cielo un dritto cipresso," etc., etc. The work is, moreover, full of direct imitations of Vergil, not, I fancy, of Theocritus also, as the Italian commentators suppose, for that poet was not adequately printed till 1495, which must have been very near the date of the actual composition of the *Arcadia*.

139.

It is worth noting that the Arcadian vision in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, describing a scene of twelve mountains of varied and contrasted aspect, though intended for an allegorical purpose, is really faithful to nature, and suggests that the author knew something of the country he describes.

140.

Pausanias places the source of the Alpheus higher up, and close to Tegea in the eastern plain.

141.

This is what Pausanias says, though modern scholars seem very doubtful about it.

142.

Several details, such as the unusual length in proportion to the breadth, the engaged pillars inside the cella, and the forms of the capitals, have now been explained as deliberate

archaicisms on the part of Ictinus, who here copied far older forms. The curious Ionic, and even the Corinthian, capitals, may point back to old Asianic, or Assyrian, models, and the proportions of the cella with its engaged pillars have their prototype or parallel in the curious old *Heræon* (cf. p. 304) found at Olympia. This seems to me a very happy solution of the difficulties, and shows us Ictinus in a new light. Another specimen of his art, with unexpected features, may be the newly unearthed Hall of the Mysteries at Eleusis, already described, if indeed this be his work, and not a late copy of it.

143.

The same must have been the case with Messene, which was laid out likewise by Epaminondas on an absurdly large scale, as the remains of the great walls still show. They seem intended to enclose a whole parish, and not a city. But of these I shall speak again, p. 452.

144.

The results hitherto attained are still uncertain, owing to an active controversy between Dr. Dörpfeld and the English explorers, which has not yet (1892) been settled. I forbear entering upon it here.

145.

It is usually forgotten in recent accounts that this sacking of the town was no more than a retribution for the hideous massacre of the whole Turkish population, including women and children, in cold blood, by the insurgent Greeks. The details may be had in General Gordon's *Memoirs* or in Finlay's *History*.

146.

Strabo mentions that the new settlers, coming upon old tombs in the digging for new foundations, found there quantities of graceful pottery, which was sold to Romans, and became the fashion there. Hence it was diligently sought and sold under the title νεκροκορίνθια. We may be sure that every ancient tomb was rifled in this way.

147.

On the foundation of the new Greek kingdom, it was seriously debated whether Corinth should not be the capital; but the constant prevalence of fever in the district, together with sentimental reasons, determined the selection of Athens in preference.

148.

Even the new railway has not altered this. The journey up and down the bay in a coasting steamer is still well worth undertaking.

149.

M. Viollet-le-duc, in his *Entretiens sur*

l'Architecture, vol. i. p. 45, explains the reason of this. Apart from the greater facility of raising smaller blocks, most limestones are subject to flaws, which are disclosed only by strain. Hence it was much safer to support the entablature on two separate beams, one of which might sustain, at least temporarily, the building, in case the other should crack.

150.

Cf. pp. 370 and 433.

151.

Strabo, who had apparently travelled but little through Greece, speaks with admiration of this view, which he had evidently seen. The fortress of Karytena is some twenty or thirty feet higher in situation and far more picturesque from below, but is too much surrounded by other high mountains to admit of a prospect like that from the Acro-Corinthus.

152.

See also *Guide Joanne*, ii. p. 197.

153.

This is just what Strabo says (viii. 6, § 21): ἔκρυσιν μὲν οὐκ ἔχουσαν μεστὴν δ' ἀεὶ διαυγοῦς καὶ ποτίμου ὕδατος, and Corinth was one of the few Greek places he visited.

154.

So also learned men speak about the

amphitheatre. Herzberg (ii. 253) says: “Seine Ruine steht noch heute.” Cf. also Friedländer, ii. 383, but I could not find it.

155.

Part ii. p. 198, *sq.* (1891).

156.

The reader who performs this journey by train may consider whether what here follows is not an older and better way.

157.

πολλὸς δὲ καὶ ὡς ῥόδα κίσθος ἐπανθεῖ.—THEOCR. v. 131.

158.

There is a tract of sea-coast on the east side of Italy, about halfway between Ancona and Monte Gargano, which has this Theocritean character to perfection. Even the railway passenger can appreciate the curious contrast it affords to the splendid orchards and gardens about Bari, which are still farther south.

159.

οὐ θέμις, ὦ ποιμήν, τὸ
μεσημβρινόν, οὐ θέμις ἅμμιν
συρίσδεν. τὸν Πᾶνα
δεδοίκαμες· ἦ γὰρ ἀπ’ ἄγρας
τανίκα κεκμηὼς ἀμπαύεται,
ἐστι γὰρ πικρός,
καὶ οἱ ἀεὶ ὁριμεῖα χολὰ ποτὶ
ῥινὶ κάθηται.—THEOCR. i. 15.

160.

τοὺς μὴν ὄγε λάεσσιν ἀπὸ
χθονὸς ὅσσον ἀείρων
γευγέμην ἄψ ὀπίσω δειδίσσετο,
τρηχὺ δὲ φωνῇ
ἠπείλει μάλα πᾶσιν,
ἐρητύσασκε δ' ὑλαγμοῦ,
χαίρων ἐν φρησὶν ᾗσιν,
ὀθούνεκεν αὔλιν ἔρυντο.

THEOCR. xxv. 73, and cf. *Odyss.* xiv. 29 *sq.*

161.

Pausanias speaks of Mycenæ and Tiryns as of like structure, which is not true. He often refers with wonder to these walls, and reflects upon the care with which Greek historians had described foreign curiosities like the Pyramids, while equally wonderful things in Greece were left unnoticed. Thus, he says that no pair of mules could stir from its place the smallest of the blocks in the walls of Tiryns. Cf. ii. 25, 8; and ix. 36, 5.

162.

The same effect is observable in Staigue Fort, in the county of Kerry, and has led some people to imagine that its stones were rudely fashioned. Cf. the splendid photographs of this Irish Tiryns in Lord Dunraven's *Notes on Irish Architecture*.

163.

πολυδίψιον. A fragment of Hesiod (quoted by Eustathius in *Il.*, p. 350) notes this epithet, in order to account for its being no longer true, Ἄργος ἄνυδρον ἔον Δαναὸς ποίησεν ἔνυδρον. Strabo (viii. p. 256) explains it by confining the epithet to the town of Argos, which Homer certainly did not, and by admitting that the country was well watered. Pausanias (ii. 15, 5) says that all the rivers ran dry, except in rainy weather, which is seldom true now.

164.

ἀλλ' ἀνθηρῶν λειμώνων,
φύλλων τ' ἐν κόλποις ναίω,
ἡνίκ' ἄν ὁ θεσπέσιος ὀξὺ μέλος
ἀχέτας
θάλπεσι μεσημβρινοῖς
ἡλιομανὴς βοᾷ. (*Aves*, 1092–8.)

The little-known lines in the *Shield of Hercules* are also worth quoting (393, *sqq.*):—

ἦμος δὲ χλοερῷ κυανόπτερος,
ἠχέτα τέττιξ,
ὄζῳ ἐφεζόενος, θέρας
ἀνθρώποισιν ἀείδειν
ἄρχεται, ᾧ τε πόσις καὶ βρῶσις
θῆλυς ἐέρση,
καί τε πανημέριός τε καὶ ἐῷος
χέει αὐδὴν

ἴδει ἐν αἰνοτάτῳ, ὁπότε χρόα
Σείριος ἄζει.

165.

These Cyclopes, cunning builders, and even workers in metal, are to be carefully distinguished from the rude and savage Cyclopes represented in Homer's *Odyssey* as infesting Thrinacria, in the western seas.

166.

In the days of the composition of the *Iliad* we see the power and greatness of Mycenæ distinctly expressed by the power of Agamemnon, who appears to rule over all the district and many islands. Yet the great hero, Diomedes, is made the sovereign of Argos and Tiryns in his immediate neighborhood. This difficulty has made some critics suppose that all the acts of Diomedes were foisted in by some of the Argive reciters of the *Iliad*. Without adopting this theory, which seems to me extravagant, I would suggest that, in the poet's day, Argos was rapidly growing into first-rate importance, while all the older legends attested the greatness of Mycenæ. Thus the poet, who was obliged to put together the materials given him by divers older and shorter poems, was under the difficulty of harmonizing the fresher legends about Argos with the older about Mycenæ.

167. I prefer this view even to that from the theatre of Taormina in Sicily, which is so justly celebrated, and which many people think the finest in Europe.

168. Cf. his exhaustive article on the Mediæval History of Greece, in Ersch and Gruber's *Encyclopædia*, vol. lxxxv., and more especially his refutation of Fallmerayer's theory, pp. 100–19.

169. A great authority, whose opinion I deeply respect—Prof. Sayce—goes so far as to say that language is by itself no proof of race, but only of social contact. I will not venture to deny that there are instances where this is so, and where invading strangers have adopted the language of the vanquished, though quite foreign to them. But surely this is the exception, and not the rule, and there is a *primâ facie* probability in favor of a well-preserved language indicating a well-preserved race.

170. This fact strengthens my conviction that at an early period Ægina worked the silver-mines of Laurium.

171. Cf. Pindar's frag. for the Corinthian ἑταίραι.

172. The bronze cow of Myron seems also to have been a wonderfully admired work, to judge from the crowd of epigrams written upon it, which still survive.

173. Cf. the account of his habits in his work, *Tiryns*, cap. I.

174. I have made special inquiries for these, but without any result. They seem to be lost.

175. Cf. p. 389, and the outrages of the Galatian mercenaries under Philip V. of Macedon.

176. *Mycenæ*, p. 49.

177. According to Pausanias, the treasury of Minyas was differently built; for the top stone of its flat dome was the keystone (ἁρμονία) of the whole. This is not true. The stone roofs in Ireland seem to me far more curious in construction, for two reasons: first, because the stones used are so very small; and secondly, because there can be, of course, no pressure on a roof like the pressure brought to bear on a subterranean chamber from above.

178.

Cf. Macpherson's *Antiquities of Kertch*.

179.

There has been strange diversity of opinion about the nature of this stone. Dodwell and Leake call it basalt. Moreover, Dodwell thought it greenish. Some one else thinks it yellowish. The French expedition and Curtius call it limestone. Dr. Schliemann says it is the same breccia as the rest of the gate. It is in the face of these opinions that I persist in the statement that it is bluish, and limestone.

It is owing to this note that it was again critically examined by Mr. Tuckett, who published his result in the *Architect* of 19th January, 1879, and who had fragments of the stone analyzed, which justified my observation. He also notes that several observers erred as to the shape of the central pillar, which does not diminish in bulk downward.

180.

This, I perceive, is Dr. Schliemann's opinion also. He was the first to show that along the entrance-wall the fine building with square blocks was only a facing laid on irregular building with small stones. This points clearly to two successive stages in the work.

181.

These analogies are brought out by Mr. A. S. Murray, in the *Academy*, No. 29. Cf. also Dörpfeld in *Schuchhardt*, p. 161.

182.

This is not true of Irish designs, which I compared carefully with the Mycenæan, and failed to find any identity, though many close resemblances.

183.

It agrees with that of Schuchhardt (in *Schliemann's Excavations*, 1891), and of Busolt in the new edition of his Greek history, 1892.

184.

This theory of mine, stated in my first edition, is strongly supported by Dr. Adler in his preface to Schliemann's *Tiryns* (1885).

185.

This has all been done, and alas! many of the gold cups have been polished by the barbarous zeal of the curators, so destroying the exquisite red bloom which made them so remarkable.

186.

Athos, or the Mountain of the Monks. By Athelstan Riley. Longmans, 1887. This is the newest and best book on the subject.

187.

The very few travellers who have seen this, the most picturesque of all European buildings, must have heard with a painful shock that it was burned down in the spring of 1891.

Transcriber's Note

The illustrations in the original volume were printed on separate, not paginated plates. The captions were printed on the reverse side of the plates.

The following changes have been made to the text:

page 59, apostrophe added in "à l' Eugénie"
page 101, "Erectheum" changed to "Erechtheum"
page 125, period added after "Bühnenalt"

page 140, “Anaxgoras” changed to “Anaxagoras”
page 144, “than” changed to “that”
page 147, “fueillages” changed to “feuillages”, “caractèristiques” to “caractéristiques”
page 188, “aujhourd'hui” changed to “aujourd’hui”
page 197, “pollared” changed to “pollarded”
page 201, period added after “23”, “Xenophen” changed to “Xenophon”, single quote changed to double quote before “I witnessed”
page 211, “Oed.” changed to “Œd.”
page 213, “initation” changed to “initiation”
page 216, “Emile” changed to “Émile”
page 263, period added after “originals”
page 282, comma changed to period after “memory”
page 369, “Basse” changed to “Bassæ”
page 471, “haraldic” changed to “heraldic”
page 481, quote removed before “but”
page 519, “still” changed to “till”

page 531, comma added after “Alkamenes”, period added after “154”, semicolon changed to comma after “*sq.*” and “321–324”
page 532, “plagues” changed to “plaques”, “Copias” changed to “Copais”, period added after “131” and “246”
page 533, dash added between “425” and “427”, period added after “505”, semicolon changed to comma after “*sq.*”
page 534, “Pausanius” changed to “Pausanias”, “Mycenæn” changed to “Mycenæan”, “151,;” changed to “151;”
page 535, semicolon changed to comma after first “*sq.*”

Variations in hyphenation (e.g. “prehistoric”, “pre-historic”; “halfway”, “half-way”) have not been changed. Neither have variant spellings in the captions to the plates and in the index.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RAMBLES AND STUDIES IN GREECE ***

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