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ANCIENT GREECE

A Study by

STANLEY CASSON

FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD



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ANCIENT GREECE

I.

THE study of the language, art, and culture of a dead civilization must always be an unprofitable and unproductive study except to antiquarians and lexicographers. To call the language, art, and culture of Ancient Greece dead is to beg the very question at issue. Different views may be held to-day as to the vitality of the Greek culture that has come down to us, but much that the ancient Greeks themselves achieved was destined, consciously or unconsciously, for posterity. Thucydides rightly or wrongly said that his history was 'an everlasting possession, not a prize composition that is heard and forgotten'. Plutarch, speaking of the great public buildings of Athens,[1] says:

'The works of Pericles were the more marvelled at seeing that they were achieved in but a little time though they were designed for the ages. Each building at the moment of its completion had the stability of age, while in fullness of growth it was as though modern and newly created; thus a freshness still blooms upon it, keeping it in appearance unsullied by time, as if some ever-fresh breeze and unaging spirit were in its very substance.'

The truth that Plutarch wrote five centuries after these buildings were erected is not rendered less true to-day by the ravages of time.

[1] *Life of Pericles*, ch. 13.

In the same way the poet Theognis, in a stanza dedicated to his friend, says :

'Thou shalt live as a song for all who love music, living or yet to be, as long as earth or sun remain.'

Another poet, Callimachus, sings of his dead friend, the poet Heracleitus :

'Thy nightingales still live, and Death, who grasps at all, grasps not at them.'

If, then, what the Greeks themselves considered to be designed for posterity are to be dismissed as the antiquities of a dead civilization it can, at least, be urged that we are gainsaying the intentions of the authors themselves.

The legacy of Ancient Greece must be examined according to the terms by which it was left to us. If we accept it we must do so in the spirit in which it was given. If we reject it we must do so by showing that the legacy was left to us in error. Because the history of Thucydides and the buildings of Pericles were meant for the ages, the same spirit that infuses them must be sought for in all the other branches of Greek culture which the scholars of so many lands have laboured for so many centuries to present to us in acceptable form. And we can use our own discretion to reject what does not seem to be infused with the spirit of permanence, for not everything that Greece produced was destined for posterity. Some things are of antiquarian interest alone, others are superseded. But what remains will be found to be so fine and so golden a residuum that only short-sightedness will reject it.

'Dead languages' and 'the remains of a dead civilization' are thus criticisms that cannot justly be levelled at the legacy of Ancient Greece without doing violence to the intentions of those who left it.

It may be asked what we have in common with Ancient Greece. It will be sufficient answer if we say that we have common ideals. The Greek strove, as we strive, to think clearly, to act justly, and to live freely. That he did not succeed completely in doing any one of these things for long is the clear verdict of history, for Greek culture faded in the twilight of philosophic decadence, moral failure, and political subjection. But it is from the failures as well as from the successes of Greece that we can strive to establish the outlines of our own life. Complete success is a hard taskmaster just because it is so hard to live up to. Partial success and the causes of failure provide better instructors to an imperfect world. From its imperfections we can get a hint of what the greatness of Greece might have been; from its perfections we can learn our own shortcomings.

What makes Greece so unbounded a store of wealth for us to draw from is that the Greeks at the time of the height of their greatness never lost touch with humanity. Whatever they did or thought was judged by the one standard of mankind. 'Man is the measure of all things', said their own proverb. And this greatness was the greatness of a national spirit, not of a party, a sect, or a dynasty. Assyria and Egypt lack this claim on our human interest just because, in the days of their greatness, humanity appealed less to them than the great ambitions of princes and parties. Herodotus marvelled that Egypt lived according to a rigid class or caste system just because in Greece no such system existed. Egyptians were classified according to their own system as tradesmen, soldiers, priests, and kinglets;[1] Greeks could be each and all at the same time. Socrates fought as a soldier in his country's battles at one moment and at another he was arguing philosophy at

[1] Herodotus, ii. 164 (seven classes are here given).

the street corners. Aeschylus the poet, in writing his own epitaph,[1] referred to himself merely as a soldier who had fought at Marathon. Thucydides commanded a naval unit in the very war that he describes.[2] Sculptors were politicians and potters were public men; Pheidias was impeached by his political opponents,[3] while Mnesiades or Pamphaios[4] the potters dedicated to Athena as fine a monument as did any statesman.

The whole difference between the new Hellenic world and the old world of static empires is put most clearly and forcibly by Plato. He describes[5] how Solon the Athenian visited Egypt and conversed with the wisest and most distinguished of the Egyptians.

'He made the discovery', says Plato, 'that neither he nor any other Hellene knew anything worth mentioning about the times of old. . . . One of the priests, who was of very great age, said to him, "O Solon, Solon, you Hellenes are never anything but boys, and there is not an old man amongst you. . . . In mind you are all young; there is no old opinion handed down among you by ancient tradition nor any science that is hoary with age."'

If humanity is the key-note of Greece we shall not, then, go far wrong in studying what she has left us. But what counts more than the mere fact of her humanity is the fact that Greece represents humanity's first essay on the grand scale. Never before had mankind set out to solve all the most urgent problems that beset it, and set out in so courageous a spirit.

[1] Athenaeus, 627.
[2] Thucydides, iv. 106.
[3] Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*, ch. 31.
[4] *Acropolis Museum Catalogue*, Vol. I, p. 273 and Vol. II, p. 284.
[5] Timaeus, 22.

That is why the energy and vigour of the morning of mankind infuse into the works of Ancient Greece what Plutarch calls an 'ever-fresh breeze', which keeps them fresh and clean. Time and time again in philosophic dialogues, in poems, and in sculpture and the other arts we encounter this clear-cut freshness of mind. Everything which concerned man was of a nature which 'admitted of being otherwise' as Aristotle said. It was man's task, then, to control it as far as possible and understand it according to his standards, to sift the gold from the mud and to put what he found to the best advantage of mankind. In doing this he had to form his own tests, his own theories of action, and guide his hand by methods which he had to invent, for the most part, for himself. Authority was practically non-existent. He had no centuries of ecclesiastical discipline behind him, no codes of moral behaviour or theological creeds to guide him into the right path or the wrong. A few vague legends of vaguer empires which had perished before he began; a story here and there of god or hero that echoed some old half-forgotten origin; some amazing custom that belonged to the pure barbarism which, with the traditions of broken empires, had contributed to his upbringing—such were what the ancient Greek had as a basis for his speculations, his experiments, and his plans. The barbarous elements in his life are often emphasized; but every nation in every age has had barbarisms as crude and as distasteful. We ourselves are not free from them; it is only about a century since we ceased to punish theft with hanging, while lynching is still practised. In our own judgements of Ancient Greece we must take what was representative, not what was exceptional; we must face the difficulty of finding the normal in a state of civilization that presents to us every type of the normal and abnormal together.

From this blend of old memories and new ideas arose the civilization of Ancient Greece:

> The half-remembered prowess of dead kings
> And strange adventures of our fathers, cleaving
> New pathways in their endless wanderings,
> Grew dim and faded in the distance, leaving
> A heritage of tangled memories,
> Sea-faring and old wars and destinies.
> . . . . . .
> So silently a new age came to birth.
> Hellas, new-risen on the hills, was throwing
> The splendour of its morning on the earth—
> The sun was up, and the dawn-breezes blowing.'[1]

This freshness of spirit and cleanness of outlook was in the nature of the people of Ancient Greece. But freshness and cleanness were also in the nature of the land in which they lived, above all in Attica, the land of the Athenians, and at Corinth.

'Attica', says an old writer,[2] 'has neither vast crags nor rivers rushing between them, as in the Peloponnese and Thessaly; the land of the Athenians is of light soil and the air they breathe is light and fine, and it rains but seldom and when it does there is no flooding. Their land is skirted by the sea . . . while their city lies in a hollow facing the south. . . . At Corinth the summer is cooled by the gulfs that run into the land from which breezes perpetually blow, while the rock of Acrocorinth casts shadows. These cities, then, are far better than Babylon and Ecbatana and their great buildings are far better built than those of the latter . . . they are inferior in size alone . . . and Athens is half the size of Babylon.'

The truth of these assertions can be verified by any traveller to-day. The dry brightness of the air and the clear clean

[1] From *Achilles*, by R. M. Heath, 1911.
[2] Dio Chrysostom, Oration VI, 197.

sunlight give a crystalline appearance to things which cannot but affect the minds of those who come fresh to such surroundings. The visitor to Greece feels at once the stimulating effect of these natural properties. So, too, the ancient Athenian, newly evolved from the disrupted fragments of old empires, felt the stimulus and reacted upon it. And what is true of Athens is true of much of the rest of Greece and the Greek islands. Only as far north as Macedonia does the air lose its clarity and become foggy and dull—and after Macedonia we are in 'Europe' and finally out of range of that one unifying factor in all Greek history, the sea.

It is clear, then, that Greece cannot be classed with things dead, gone, and to be forgotten, for two main reasons; the first is because there is in all the products of Greek activity a literal inspiration—a breathing in of their temporal and physical environment, which is of so fine and rare a quality as to deserve our instant attention; the second is because much, if not most, of what the Greeks produced, was destined for posterity and so demands examination.

Let us, then, briefly examine the outlines of Greek life as a whole, taking into account its failures as well as its successes.

The origins of Greek civilization, like the causes of its decay, remain obscure. Of one thing alone we are certain—that the Greeks were racially a mixture which ultimately developed a remarkably unified idea of culture. What this mixture was is not definitely known. Archaeologists and historians alone are competent to hint at a solution. From their researches it seems that for a period of at least two thousand years preceding the year 1000 B.C. there was a civilization which, with its centre in the island of Crete, controlled a very large part of the eastern Mediterranean. This civilization, which we know only from its material remains and from a few vague

traditions, had nothing in common with that of the Greece of the thousand years after 1000 B.C. Its political systems, its art, and its architecture were of the type to which we have become accustomed from our knowledge of Egypt and Assyria in antiquity and of the Moghuls and Seljuks in more recent times. In some details it was superior to them, as in certain artistic conventions and in certain architectural devices, but it belonged essentially to the older world, to the world of caste systems, of princedoms and pageantry, of temporal power. Being an island civilization it was naval rather than military, and, as such, seems to have controlled most of the Mediterranean, at least for a time, and to have kept it to a large extent free from piracy for the advantage of commerce. At the height of its power this civilization was in touch with the great powers of the day—Egypt, Assyria, and the Hittite empires—and met them on equal terms. Its influence spread from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, and we find traces of its works in Spain and Palestine, at the head of the Adriatic, and in Egypt. It had all the advantages that profound technical knowledge could confer in matters of handicraft and architecture. It had mastered the elements of sculpture and painting and metal-work and had developed and elaborated one or more systems of writing. But fully developed art we do not find in the sense of *free* art. Highly developed craftsmanship is there and a capacity for design and form, but artistic creations untrammelled by convention, such as were achieved by Classical Greece within a century of the commencement of artistic production, we do not find.

Nevertheless the importance of this great culture is very great for subsequent Greece. By establishing in the area which was later to produce the historic Greeks a strong, vigorous, and (as far as its conventions would allow) original craftsmanship,

it laid the foundations of an artistic tradition which the invasions and disturbances of subsequent times could not wholly eradicate. The new art of Classical Greece found itself active in a region where the elements of art were not unknown, though we are hardly entitled to infer from this a continuity of artistic tradition.

Towards the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. signs of the break-up of this great Cretan culture are apparent. Whether this break-up came ultimately from internal or from external causes we do not know; all we can be certain of is that the Cretan civilization develops, reaches its zenith, and declines. The period of its decline is marked by the complete disappearance of whatever original tendencies in craftsmanship had made their appearance. They are displaced by rigid formality and uniformity in design and conception. It is to this period that the term Mycenaean is usually applied; it is the period of the greatest expansion of commerce, and we can detect signs of the decay of empire, of secession and separation. The great cities on the mainland of Greece, colonized originally from Crete, grow in power and seem to have established themselves in a more or less independent position. The mother country is losing its importance. But before things can develop farther along these lines a new factor emerges; new peoples are making their influence felt from a new direction—from the north. The flat rich plains of Central Europe have bred sturdy folk who are pressing to the south towards the region about whose wealth and prosperity stories must have filtered through to the north. At first they come in parties, later in greater bodies, and they are the people who were to form one of the most important ingredients in the future Greece. The main invasion was known in antiquity as that of the Dorians. Almost devoid of art, as are from their nature most nomad

peoples, they finally enveloped and engulfed the peoples of the mainland and the islands. They came down the valley of the Vardar, through what is now Serbia, and, dividing into two streams, went down the east and west coasts of Greece. These two streams finally converged near the apex of the Peloponnese at Sparta, driven towards each other by the triangular shape of the Greek peninsula. At Sparta the bulk of the invaders halted, because they could go no farther. Detachments and separate bodies had halted in and near different towns on the way or gone across the water to various islands. The old citadels of the Cretan colonists fall one after the other. The villages of the indigenous inhabitants must have been overwhelmed in most parts of Greece except where the country was too mountainous for the invader to penetrate. Arcadia was just such a place as this, and tradition agrees that it was immune from invasion. To speak metaphorically of an Arcadia is to depict some quiet peaceful land far removed from the clamours of daily life. The picture is literally true of the Arcadia of history. The metaphor is sound.

This invasion, which brought with it the break-up of the old Cretan culture, laid the foundations of what was to be the Greece that we know. By the ninth century before Christ the position of Greece was becoming more stabilized. The main force of the invasion was over; a halt was called, and men could pause and think. The old world was definitely destroyed and a new one had not quite emerged. The elements now in the mainland civilization of Greece were threefold. There were the Dorians, newly arrived, dominant and vigorous; the indigenous peoples, some in subjection, others free, the rest exiles; lastly, the remains of the Cretans on the mainland and in Crete—but what exactly their position was we do not know. In the islands much the same grouping was ultimately reached,

but with minor variations. For the most part the Dorians outside the mainland were probably fewer in number than the peoples whom they ruled. In one part of the mainland things went differently. Attica met and received the invaders on equal terms; she was not subdued. History and tradition are unanimous on this point. So to Attica there came refugees, driven east from the Peloponnese. Finally, says Thucydides, it became so overcrowded that its barren fields could no longer support so great a population. The result was a fresh move eastwards to the coasts of Asia Minor. This move is known in history as the Ionian emigration, because the majority of the refugee colonists were by origin Ionian, and hatred of the invader for the refugee and of the refugee for the invader never died. Near the end of the fifth century a Spartan general encourages his men with the words, 'You are Dorians and are about to fight with Ionians whom you have beaten again and again'.

The Dorians in the meantime at Sparta, their chief city in the Peloponnese, were taking their place in a fully developed Hellenic world. They had reopened relations with the great empires with which their Cretan predecessors had been in touch. Egypt and the powers of Asia thus again make their influence felt in the Greek peninsula. Lydia and Sparta establish a close relationship, and the old habits of the nomad invader are fast vanishing. The Dorian is merging into the other races, his corners are rubbed off, and his harshness toned down. The old foreign influences reappear to leaven the newly-found art and thought of Hellas.

By the seventh century the germs of everything that was later to be characteristic of Greece had appeared. Literature was firmly established, its finest masterpieces, by a curious turn in the course of development, having been produced

early. Homer is the product of the Dark Ages between the fall of the Mycenaean and Cretan peoples and the establishment of Dorian power. Under what circumstances the Homeric poems were composed is still a matter of dispute. The fact of their existence alone concerns our rapid survey. After Homer comes a pause in literary production, and then it is resumed again, but more along the lines we might have expected. The centres of Hellenic culture, owing to defective communications, are not in close touch. Villages, towns, and occupied regions live secluded and isolated lives. Literature and art, in consequence, acquire local characteristics. Hesiod in the plains of Boeotia sings of the farmer's life, of husbandry and cattle, fruit and harvests. Alkman, a little later, writes for the more polished and luxurious city of Sparta, which already in the seventh century was the leading state of Hellas, and was held in repute as such in Asia Minor and the outer world.

Artistic production, too, is local. There is no uniform style of sculpture or drawing; Hellas is a collection of groups, held together by a unifying principle which has not as yet been consciously realized. Life is communal, not federal, and the Greeks have not as yet understood what elements of culture and civilization they have in common.

The first appearance of this unifying principle is probably to be found in a tendency to collect outlying settlements in a district into one place, called in Greek tradition a 'settling together'. This process is recorded in the history of many of the Greek states. Though not always historically a fact, it represents, at any rate, a tendency to unification which must have taken place in most occupied areas. From the nuclei thus created arose later the completely developed Greek state—the 'city-state' of historians. In essence the city-state was a concentration into one spot of men whose pursuits and

interests were similar and whose method of living was limited largely by geographical considerations. The variety of the geographical setting and various limitations of mountain and plain went far to determine the ultimate nature of the state. A plain, a sea-coast, and a rock-citadel were the elements that went to make up the setting of the majority of Greek states. Athens, Eleusis, Corinth, Megara, and Argos were of this type. In others one or more of these elements were lacking. Sparta had her plain, but no coast, and an insignificant citadel. Larissa in Thessaly was of the same type. Island towns, for the most part, were rock-citadels only or else placed on the inaccessible parts of the islands, seldom if ever on their harbours. The cause of this was the ever-present danger of piratical raids, for, after the fall of Cretan sea-power, there was no guaranteed policing of the seas. Melos, Euboean Kyme, and most of the island towns were of this nature. Later in the fifth century, when the seas were safer, towns were built on the coasts. In Thrace the colonies of Ionia feared aggression not from the sea, for they had no harbours, but from inland, for the tribes of Thrace were unsubdued and turbulent. Abdera and Ainos and the cities founded by Miltiades in Gallipoli were of this type. Colonies so founded served as trading stations or military forts and were stationed either on main trade routes or at places of strategic importance.

Founded originally for the sake of self-preservation and safe within the girdle of its walls, the city-state soon became a means of self-development and culture. Each citizen was at the same time both creator and administrator of the laws which controlled the destinies of himself and his fellow citizens. He voted for the enactment and for the administration of the laws, and thus affords us almost the only instance of a constitution in which the citizen took a *direct* share in the control of his



THE COAST OF THRACE NEAR MESEMBRIA

country. In principle all city-states were of this type, at least during the fifth century, though in detail they differed considerably. Some of the most successful of the city-states seem to have thrived in Magna Graecia, in Sicily, and on the shores of Italy, and also on the coast of Thrace. The lands from which they drew their wealth were richer than those of mainland Greece, and they were farther removed from the larger political combinations and interstate intrigues of the Peloponnese and Central Greece. Selinus, Catana, and Gela in Sicily; Tarentum, Thurii, and Cumae in Italy; Abdera, Maroneia, and Ainos in Thrace, afford us better examples of the city-state than we can, as a rule, find in Greece proper. Few of these cities suffered the more devastating results of internal strife or external intrigue and, as a result, art, literature, and philosophy flourished undisturbed by the intermittent cataclysms that were the price that so excellent a mode of living had to pay in many other cities. The history of Megara, Eretria, Argos, Amphipolis, and Olynthus is of cities ravaged by continual strife, whether from within or from without. Except for Theognis, the exiled poet of Megara, or for the sculptors of Argos we hear of nothing but one long tale of party faction. In the group of wealthy Greek cities of Italy and Sicily which the Greeks called Magna Graecia was stored, on the other hand, the wealth of Greek art at its best, and much of the best of literature and philosophy gravitated to or came from their shores. In Thrace too the standard of art was high. Abdera in the days of its prime paid to the treasury of Athens the third largest tribute of all the cities of the Athenian Empire. Pindar wrote a Paean for the Abderites, and Democritus the philosopher and Protagoras were among its citizens. The coins of the cities of this coast rank among the most beautiful of Greece.

The city-state was thus an institution, peculiar to Greek

thought and ideals, which was the form under which Greeks chose to live wherever they settled. Panticapaeum in the Crimea, Massalia in France, or Cyrene in Africa, were, as far as concerned the citizens, organized on the same lines. The city in which they lived was at once their home and their country. The boundaries were, if need be, the city walls. If no danger threatened, the boundaries were rather what were fixed by Nature, the mountains that bounded the plain in which the city was built, for it was largely Mediterranean geography that conditioned the growth of the city-state. Within their city they controlled, either as a democracy with a majority vote, or as a minority of ruling classes, or again under the control of a family or of one leading man, the internal and external policy of their land. Whatever the political form of government, the mode of life remained approximately the same for the citizens, with its possibilities of culture and spiritual development. The rougher work and the routine work were frankly and openly given over to slaves, a fact which to-day often meets with harsh criticism. But slaves in Ancient Greece were almost always foreigners or barbarians, though even then they could obtain their freedom by serving well the city of their adoption. Yet while slaves they were treated as slaves, and distinguished from the citizens. An inscription on the wall of the Stadium at Delphi says: 'Food shall not be sold here: punishment—for a citizen a fine of 5 drachmae, for a slave a beating.'

To understand the freedom of the citizen in the city-state we have to appreciate the fact that in Athens the policemen were slaves! indeed a paradox to us!

Greece in the sixth century had at last found her feet; her various elements had realized a certain union, not so much of culture as of aim. The various subdivisions of the whole

Hellenic race had in common the simple ideal of 'living the good life', and this to a Greek meant rather the negation of certain things than the assertion of definite intentions. Life was *not* to be standardized into rigid formulae; men were *not* to be ruled by blind authority or by self-imposed potentates; the city they inhabited was *not* to consist of a royal palace and its dependent outhouses, like Mycenae, where the dynasts lived on the highest and finest parts of the town and the servile population in what was left. Cretan Cnossos, Babylon, and all the great cities of the old Principalities were not fit habitations for the free Hellene, to whom life in a city meant that he could go where he willed when he willed. So the true Hellenic city from the earliest time differed radically from all types of city that had preceded it. The royal palace even as early as Homer, when royal traditions were still strong, was a palace more by general consent than by its outward appearance. It is true that the palace of Alcinous in Phaeacia is described as a glorious and resplendent building, but the king's daughter washed the family linen herself. The brothers of Andromache, princess of Troy, were herdsmen, and Herodotus tells us definitely that 'in olden times princes were no richer than other men'.[1] Athena, in the *Odyssey*, appears before Odysseus disguised as 'a young man, the herdsman of a flock, a young man most delicate as are the sons of kings'.[2]

The glories of the palaces of Alcinous and of Priam, as Homer describes them, were thus rather survivals in literature from a time when such things really existed, when palaces were inhabited by real kings and kings were rich and the old order of static Principalities held the day. The Hellene as he emerged from the Dark Ages had no truck with such things. He had all the world to play in and no rules to spoil the game. Even

[1] viii. 137. [2] xiii 222.

his gods had no share in the old pageantry. They moved among men almost as equals, differing from them only in their supernatural habits and the advantages that resulted from them. Athena and Odysseus in the *Odyssey* confer as friends on the problems that confront them.[1] Strangers were always well treated, not so much on the ordinary grounds of hospitality as for the reason that they might be gods in disguise. 'You never know whom you may be entertaining' was what the Greek said to himself. 'The early Arcadians,' says Pausanias,[2] 'by reason of their righteousness and piety were guests of the gods and sat with them at table.' How different from the Egyptians, who worshipped cats and monkeys and crocodiles, or from the Israelites, who prostrated themselves in awe before a remote and relentless Jehovah. We, with our centuries of abstract religious training behind us, find it hard to see the Greek point of view. Had the Greek no higher conception of gods than this? had he no idea of what is sacred and holy? But the Greek himself would not have understood such questions. 'Have you no higher opinion of yourself than this?' he would have replied. 'First perfect yourself and your capacities, and then, when you can use them, think hard on what is behind, beneath, and above you.' That, roughly, was his way of being religious.

But with all his freedom of religious opinion and thought the average Greek was to a large extent restricted by the countless conventions of the supernatural. His gods might be almost men and his men 'divine', a constant epithet in Homer, but behind and below his idea of the gods there lay a dark region of superstition, one of the legacies inherited from his ancestors, who themselves had barely emerged from the labyrinth of tribal magic and mystery.

[1] xiii. 372. [2] viii. 2.

Thus, through the upheavals of the Dark Ages of the Mediterranean the Greek tribes emerged at last, welded into some semblance of a race with certain characteristics in common. The first two or three centuries of their existence they were faced with the elementary difficulties of a settled life wherein the habits of a nomadic existence avail but little. In the process of solving these problems different districts adopted different methods. The inhabitants of the plain of Sparta, in whose blood the spirit of the conqueror was still strong, used the conquered as serfs. To ensure their position they encroached on their neighbours' lands. Tegea and Messenia are two names that bulk large in Spartan history of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. In the end Messenia was conquered and occupied, her fertile plains yielding great gain to the conqueror, for Messenia consists of a series of shelf-like plateaux well watered and wooded, which then, as to-day, could yield harvests of first-rate quality with the minimum amount of labour. Tegea was never beset so fiercely and held out.

Corinth approached the problem of how to live in a way that was conditioned by her natural surroundings. Situated, as she was, on an isthmus with a harbour on each gulf, the sea was clearly destined to be her source of revenue. At the same time two great land-routes passed through her territory. The road from west to east along the north shore of the Peloponnese, and so on to the Megarid and Attica, crossed a northern route from Boeotia to the Argolid.

Other cities met their problems in different ways, according to their conditions and situation.

The Greeks were thus well drilled in the hardest school of life, in the struggle to make the crude forces of nature conform to the uses of mankind. 'The earth is full of ills and full the

sea',[1] says Hesiod. 'Bright-eyed hunger', as he calls it, and the need of water—these two things meant much, and much labour was needed to satisfy both. Water, above all, had a sanctity that we who live in well-watered lands can barely understand. The plain of Argos, 'thirsty Argos' as Homer calls it, in the height of a Greek summer gives us some idea of what a waterless Greek plain can be. The smaller citadel of Argos can still show wells cut in the dry rock which could only be filled by rain and the condensation of dew, and they are so cut that if only a cupful of water remained it was accessible. In later days the springs and fountains were the first care of reformers, of benevolent despots, and of architects.

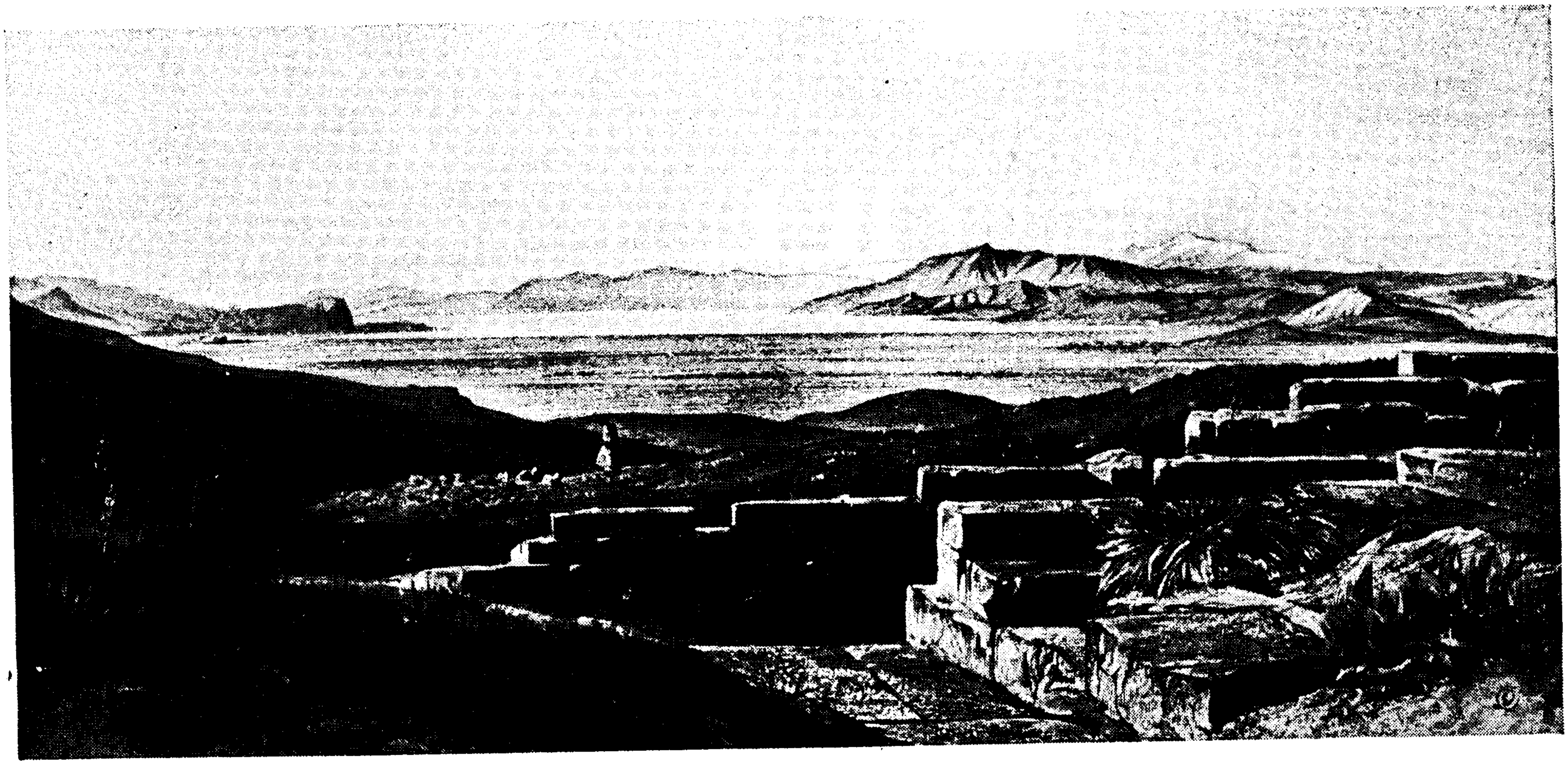
The famous 'Hymn of Man' in the chorus of the *Antigone* of Sophocles is the hymn of those who have at last emerged victorious in the struggle with the crude forces of inanimate nature. But greater contests are to come, contests of the soul and of the mind. The first fight only has been won. The groundwork has been laid.

'Many are the marvels of the earth, but none more marvellous than man; man is a creature that ranges the grey ocean in the gales of winter, crossing on its sounding breakers; and that chiefest of the gods, Earth the indestructible, the unsubduable, he furrows with the plough year in year out, his helper the strong breed of horses; the care-free tribe of birds and the creatures of the deep and savage beasts he snares with encompassing nets—O careful-minded, cunning Man!'[2]

This is a hymn not of mankind of the great days of Greek culture but of man of only a few centuries before, so close was the border between the developed and the immature. It is this feeling which is characteristic of Greece in evolution.

[1] *Works and Days*, 101.

[2] Sophocles, *Antigone*, 332 ff.



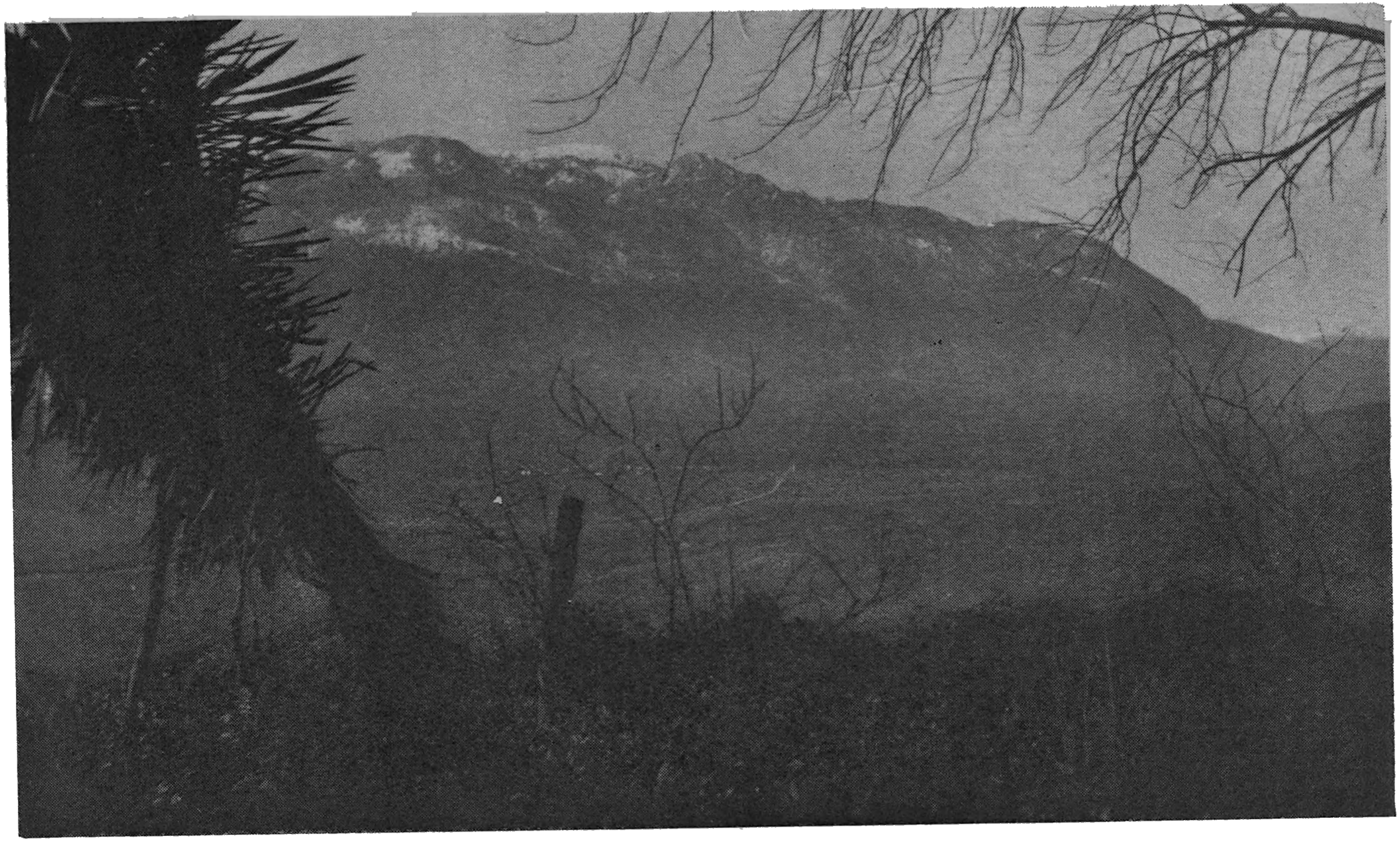
THE GULF OF NAUPLIA AND THE PLAIN OF ARGOS

Man is newly fledged, and that only within six or seven generations; the old dark wilderness is just close at hand and still within sight; man must move forwards and not look behind. For these reasons we find little or no trace of the antiquarian spirit, no looking back, no appeal to precedent until much later in his development. Only during the Peloponnesian War did the Greeks begin to talk of 'what their fathers did', and this, in nine cases out of ten, refers to the great deeds of the Persian wars when the barbarian had been repulsed—a bare fifty years previously.

But this consciousness of their recent growth is not surprising. Thessaly that bordered upon the marches of civilized Greece remained as savage as Central Asia down to historic times. The frowning buttress of Oeta and the Trachinian cliffs that formed the northern barrier of Greece barely a hundred miles north of Athens looked over country that, even to the sixth century, was quite out of touch with Greek civilization. Farther north still Macedonia was even more primitive, and its peoples were still nomadic; some of them were scarcely beyond the Neolithic stage of culture and lived, like the Neolithic Swiss, in lake dwellings.[1]

It is hardly surprising, then, that the Greeks felt all too clearly that they had nothing behind them to which they could appeal for guidance—no traditions, no precedents, no accumulations of wisdom. We in England, who have sixteen centuries of continuous history of our own kith and kin to guide us, can hardly imagine the way in which the Greeks found themselves thrown on the world into a long struggle against purely physical odds. Can we blame them if, victorious, they speak at times with the boastful *naïveté* of children? To-day, to the ordinary thinker, there are many stranger things than Man. To the

[1] See Herodotus, v. 16.



MOUNT OETA

Greek who had just emerged from the struggle Man was something triumphant. He was free to move as he willed on land and sea and to gather his sustenance from their unwilling grasp.

Under these conditions, then, the Greek spirit was moulded. Free to choose his own means of shaping his actions to suit his surroundings and physical conditions, which, as Aristotle said, 'do not admit of being otherwise', his methods varied with the varied nature of his surroundings. But in the process of struggle he had acquired much that contributed later to the completion of his development: tireless activity, eager and unfettered curiosity free from the shackles of tradition, and a sleeplessness of mind which kept keen and unwearying watch on the hazards of daily thought and action. The old empires of Crete and Mycenae were scarcely even memories; the wanderings of the invaders from the north were almost forgotten; dangers of sea and sky were overcome, the reluctant fruits of the earth were gathered, and he was ready for the greater tasks—the perfecting of mind and body and the development of all human faculties.

Thus, early in his growth, the Greek had firmly implanted in his character certain qualities which we of an older world strive hard and only too often unsuccessfully to acquire. His methods were direct, his endurance unlimited, and his energy tireless. He could call a spade a spade without self-consciousness, he could worry at a problem until he solved it, or thought he had solved it, and he was always ready to consider and deal with something new.

In a nature composed of such elements possibilities are infinite. Hence the poetry, drama, art, and philosophy of his day had no common standards of type. Every variety of talent was exhibited. One common factor alone distinguishes the early history, literature, and art, and survives until the

full perfection of Greek culture—the factor of originality. As we have seen, self-consciousness was not in the nature of early Greek thought and action. The individual as such seldom counts. History in the seventh and early centuries is the history of clans, of families, and of states. The affairs of Athens in the sixth century are largely managed by the old families such as the Alcmaeonidae, the Gephyraei, or the Paeonidae, or by social groups such as the 'sea-shore folk', the 'farmers from over the hills', or the 'merchant landowners of the Athenian plain'. Sparta at the same period is controlled by Spartiates, the old stock of the conquerors, amongst whom personal ambition was sternly repressed; under them was the subject population of the conquered. Most individuals in early Greece whose names have come down to us have had an individualism that is largely spurious attributed to them. But the history that gives their records is for the most part history written in times when individualism, as we know it, had at last manifested itself. Zaleukus, Draco, and Lycurgus—three of the earliest recorded statesmen—are generally believed by historical critics to be mythological personages. No true facts of the lives of Zaleukus and Draco are known, and Lycurgus is generally admitted to be an entire myth. Each was rather the convenient centralization in a name of a process of political development. Solon and Peisistratus, on the other hand, were authentic people, but Solon was the mouthpiece of a social movement, and Peisistratus, whatever else he represented, represented also the ideals and policy of an Athenian family. So too, in literature, the earliest poets write for the most part not as individuals but as representatives of times and conditions. Their talent is the only individual thing about them. Tyrtaeus was the poet of triumphant Spartan soldiers. Alkman was the bard of Spartan youth and splendour; Hesiod of the Boeotian

farmers and shepherds. Pindar was the poet of the pageantry of knights and nobles. Even Theognis of Megara, who might well be the exception to the rule, is the poet of exiles.

It is characteristic too that in these days poetry was for all men to write. The finest 'Songs of the People'—the *Carmina Popularia* of the Anthologists—belong to the sixth and early fifth centuries. But generalizations of this nature have their pitfalls, particularly in regard to Greece. If individualism, as we know it to-day, is not the prevailing tendency of Greek life in early times, it does not follow that it never existed in early Greece at all. Lesbos in the sixth century produced a group of poets whose individualism is almost modern. A famous inscription from Sparta of the early fifth century records the athletic prowess of a certain Damonon and his son in terms which, for their egotistic fulsomeness, would be hard to parallel. Yet such people as these were not really *characteristic* of their age and they scarcely affected the course of its progress and development.

Sentimentality, which is characteristic of individualism as we know it and which, to be effective, requires a brooding over the past, found no home in Greece for the simple reason that the Greeks were not conscious of their past. The delicate sentimentality of Browning's 'Love among the ruins' or of the majority of the poems of William Morris finds no echo in early Greece. As modern critics have discovered, the Greeks 'saw life steadily and saw it whole', and there was no place for sentimentality. Even the melancholy and pessimism of so much early Greek poetry is not sentimental. It is simply hard fact—the reflections of delicate minds upon the tragedies that beset them. Such reflections bear no relation to the 'Weltschmerz' of modern poets. There is courage rather than despair in them. Man is thinking of what he has to face, rather than of what

he has lost and regrets—and this, as recent critics have shown, is characteristic of Greek thought and literature at its prime. Pericles, in a speech to the parents and relatives of Athenian soldiers killed in battle, dwells not on the past but on the future.

'Some of you', he says, 'are at an age when you may hope to have other children, and you ought to bear your sorrows better. Not only will the children who may be born hereafter make you forget your own lost ones, but the city itself will be the gainer.'

To us this is sheer callousness or else profound cynicism. But to the Greek it was simply his way of facing facts and looking life and death alike in the face, without fear or prejudice, not so much as an individual as the member of a brotherhood. Only at the approach of death itself did he at last look backward with a certain regret that betrays the elements of modern introspection and individualism.

'Those who have left the sweet light I bewail no longer, but rather those who live ever in expectation of death',

says an unknown Greek poet. This is the gospel of facing facts with a vengeance; live when you are alive and die when the time comes; do not live with an eye on the dead past or on death to come. Pericles said no more and no less than this.

Another unknown poet writes:

'I was not and I came into existence. I was and now I am no longer. That is all. If any one says otherwise he lies. I shall not be.'

Here are the same beliefs written by a cynic; it is easy for the open direct view of the Greek to be interpreted as the irony of a scoffer.

Just as in history and in literature the individual counts for

less than the community, at any rate down to the time when Greece had reached the height of normal development in the first half of the fifth century, so in art the same characteristics are apparent. But our authorities on art almost all date from the fourth century and later, and writers in the fourth century were working in an age when individualism, as we know it, had not only developed but had developed to its fullest extent. The individual whose aims were personal, and who sought rather to impose his own ideas than to develop the latent capacities of the state itself by personal force of character, had made his appearance. The Alcibiades type had succeeded that of a Pericles. Later an Epaminondas had given place to an Alexander the Great, the type of whose greatness was seen in the germ in Alcibiades. The whole century, in fact, was coloured with this sort of individualism. So too in art Pheidias, whose achievements were the result of personal genius developing the full possibilities of communal art, had given way to Praxiteles, Scopas, and Lysippus, whose works reflect personality and individuality in conception and execution alike. Sculpture was beginning to represent not so much ideals as types; emotions and personal human things rather than cold ambitions and representations of man idealized. Refinements on the personal theme begin to appear as well. To Scopas is attributed a group of three figures, 'Desire, Longing, and Love', a subtle distinction in representation which only a supremely individualist artist could produce.

The fourth century, then, would naturally tend, in writing the history of earlier times, to read into them, to a large extent, its own ideas. Individuality would be given to artists and politicians who had none. Art and politics alike would be thought of as in the hands of ambitious men with strong personal aims.

But in fact, as we have seen, the fight against hardship that resulted in the emergence of Hellenism had produced in the seventh and sixth centuries a type whose energies, consciously or unconsciously, aimed at the common good of a unit, of the city, of the commonwealth, of the tribe, of the family, or of the guild. There was no room for the abnormal, for the over-developed, for the unusual, or for the genius, unless he conformed to the common type and aim in his works and in himself. The struggle for existence was too near at hand, the old natural law of mutual aid within a group, of common action for common welfare, still held. Only so had man achieved his position in a world that was still filled with hostile things, bordered by savagery, beset with natural dangers and hardships and with great and possibly hostile empires of the old static type looming in the background like a thundercloud.

Thus in the early days of Greece the politician was merged in his politics, the poet in his poetry, and the artist in his art. Attica was a union of parishes, tribes, and families; poetry was of the clan, the state, and the type, and art was of the guild, the school, or the group.

Thus did the group work in politics, in literature, and in art, varying its nature in each. In politics and in literature the group ideals were crystallized in a single personality. In art the personality was less prominent and the group idea appeared in a style.

We have seen, then, in the broadest outlines, from what conditions the Greek emerged, under what conditions he developed, and in what direction he was tending. We have seen shortly what tendencies of mind and character he acquired in the process, due both to the various forces acting upon him and to his own reactions in response. The period we have covered is roughly from 1100 B. C. to 450 B. C.

II.

Let us pause for a moment and look at the Greek himself. Let us reconstruct, as far as we can, his ordinary daily life. But this reconstruction must not be for the purpose of drawing comparisons or emphasizing differences between the Greeks and ourselves. We are different from them, it is true. We have centuries of history behind us and have lived in the same land for many generations; from our earliest times, except for brief interludes in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, we have bred a highly individualized type, usually at the expense of the community. We have drawn on the traditions of many lands for our guidance; above all we have used the traditions of the Middle East, of Syria, and Judaea. We live in a fertile land where extremes of heat and cold are less marked, and our struggle with the crude forces of nature has been shorter and, on the whole, more successful; we live in a dark and misty land where the cleansing sunlight is all too rare, and we have acquired the habit of taking a cold dispassionate outlook upon things which people who live in a more volatile climate find hard to maintain.

On the other hand, we resemble them in much that is of vital importance. We are always face to face with the main problems which beset the Greek in every stage of his history; though neither they nor we may have succeeded, at least we are always searching for the true social and political virtues; though we endure the rule of authority and tradition and acknowledge our debts to them, we are always seeking to improve upon them. We have the same ideals of freedom, though, perhaps, different ways of achieving them; adventure

and enterprise are the characteristics of our own as of the Greek maritime communities.

And between us and the old empires of Assyrians, Egyptians, Hittites, Cretans, and the rest there lie the differences that separate peoples different in race, development, and ideals; the similarities are chiefly in externals—similarities of pageantry, of kings, priests, armies, and all such expensive splendours.

We shall then, perhaps, derive a more useful and a more correct view of Greek ideals and of our own indebtedness to them if, having summarized the history of his development, we study the Greek as he lived, thought, and acted.

It seems, perhaps, a paradox, but the ancient Greek had nothing which corresponded exactly to what we understand by country life. He lived in the country only in so far as he was unable to live in the town. During invasions the scattered country population gravitated to the towns and sought safety behind the walls—as, for example, at the commencement of the Peloponnesian war. In times of peace the countryman earned his livelihood and spent most of his time on his farm or on his fields, but his real life, his existence as a member of the social unit, was in the towns. Thither he came in to vote and legislate. The country voters at Epidaurus were called 'Dusty-feet' because they had far to come from the outlying farmsteads to the city. The farmers of the central plains of Attica trudged for a four-hour climb over Hymettos to Athens to record their votes.

The type of countryman was twofold. He was either a farmer or mountaineer shepherd, the distinction of types being as sharp as the distinction of the lands which held each type, between the flat plainland that starts where the mountain abruptly ends and the rugged pine-covered mountains themselves. The mountaineer shepherd was essentially a nomad.

In the depths of the short sharp winter that is so characteristic of Greece he and his flocks would hardly stir from the shanty where man and beast lived together.

'Heaven rains,' says Alcaeus, 'a great storm comes out of the sky, and frozen are the streams. Cast out winter! pile high the fire, fill up the cup with wine without stint, and wrap a soft hood round your head.'

It was at the approach of seasons like this that the Attic shepherd would place offerings on the shrines of Rainy Zeus which lay on the summits of Hymettos and Parnes. The Greek, like most other Mediterranean peoples, endures cold as unhappily as we endure heat. Heat was, in fact, considered the normal thing, the ordinary condition of an active life. There is a Greek word meaning 'to bring up in the shade', which is used invariably in a sense of scorn, implying effeminacy.[1] It strikes curiously on our ears. It is remarkable that in Greek history and literature we hear only a little of the discomforts of heat, while those of the winter bulk large. A seventeenth-century translation of a Greek romance[2] gives us the setting of a Greek winter:

'And now winter was come on . . . for on a sudden there fell a great snow, which blinded all the paths, stopped up all the ways, and shut up all the shepherds and husbandmen. The torrents rushed down in flood, and the lakes were frozen and glazed with crystal. The hedges and trees looked as if they had bin breaking down. . . . And therefore no man drove out his flocks to pasture or did so much as come out of the door, but about the cock's crowing made the fires nose-high, and some spun flax, some wove tarpaulin for the sea, others with all their sophistry made gins and nets and traps for birds. At that time their care was employed about the oxen and cows that were foddered with chaff in the stalls, about the goats and about the sheep which fed on green leaves in the sheepcotes

[1] Compare the use of the Latin word *umbraticus*.

[2] *Daphnis and Chloe* (George Thornley's translation), Book III, ch. 3.

and the folds, or else about fatting their hogs in the sties with acorns and other mast.'

Winter was thus a thing to be borne in patience. A Greek winter is sudden and violent. A sudden swift gale on a sunny day in January will bring great cloudbanks from the north; a sharp fall in temperature, and the next day all the hills are covered with snow. Three weeks or a month of biting wind, lashing rainstorms, and perhaps more snow; then suddenly the sun comes blazing out in the crisp air. A little frost and then at last the earth softens, the anemones and wild narcissus, crocuses and rock-hyacinths come out, and here is the spring. The shepherd emerges with his flocks to the places where the fresh green grass has already started sprouting and the wild olives and other shrubs are taking on a new lease of life. The sheep will eat the former and the goats the latter, with anything else they can find. The shepherd has dogs, but their duty is to guard the flock, not to guide it. This latter the shepherd does himself with his voice or his pipe or by clapping his hands. I have seen shepherds in Greece controlling their flocks in these ways to-day. One old experienced shepherd explained to me that when he has his sheep and goats together in the same flock he employs one series of cries for the sheep and another for the goats in order to make the flock move as he wishes. What is probably a rather exaggerated description of the same process is to be found in *Daphnis and Chloe*, in which, with all its affectations and posturing, there is a strain of the real old Greek country life:

'First he blowed something that was low and smart', says the same translator, 'and presently the goats rose up and held their heads bolt upright. Then he played the pastoral or grazing tune, and the goats cast their heads downwards to graze. Then again he breathed a note was soft and sweet, and

all lay down together to rest. Anon he struck up a sharp, violent, tumultuous sound, and they all rushed into the wood as if a wolf had come upon them. After a while he piped aloud the recall, and they wheeled out of the wood again and came up to his very feet. Never was there any master of a house that had his servants so obsequious to his commands.' [1]

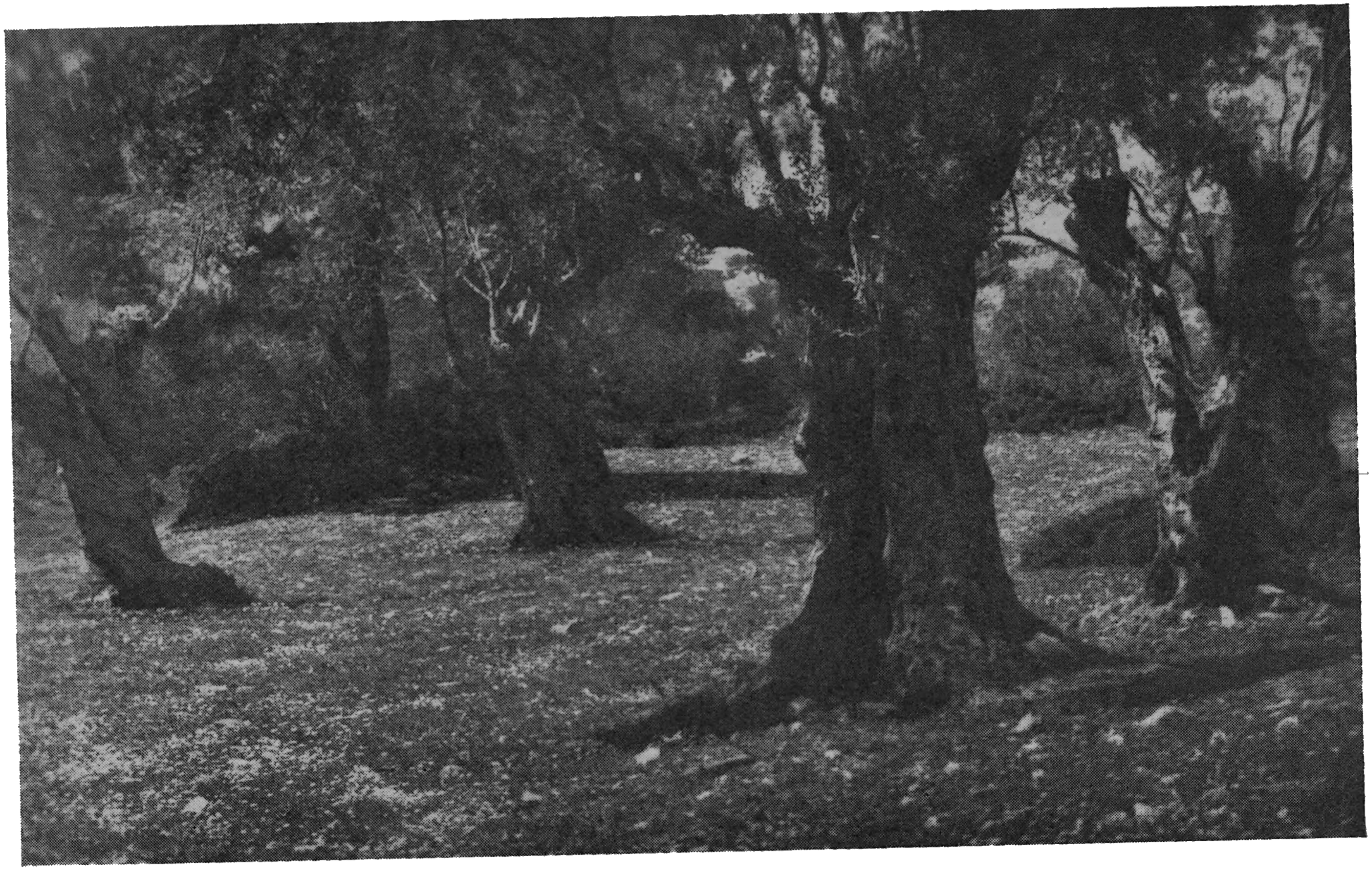
It reminds us of sheepdog trials in Wales or Scotland.

Up in the hills there were wolves to guard against, and on the coast care had to be taken lest the kids and lambs fell into the sea. Then there were snakes or eagles ever ready to snatch off the unweaned or the lost.

In the early summer in May and June the sheep have to be driven into the towns to be sold. As summer advances the shepherd drives his flock into the upland plains and high plateaux round the mountain tops, like the plains on Parnassus above Delphi, or the high meadows of Parnes and Pelion, or the dells and hollows of the Arcadian hills. Here he spends the summer, sleeping at nights with his flock in the open with his fur garments for warmth and a fire to sleep by. So to-day on a summer's night the sides of the hills in Greece are lit up with shepherds' fires sparkling in the dark.

The husbandman, unlike the shepherd, lives all the year in a smaller area—the area of his farm. He has his vines and his trees to tend, each a thing of age and value, for in this dry land trees and vines do not spring up in a year or so. An olive tree needs twenty years to attain its full growth and a vine at least four or five. So when invaders came their first aim was to 'waste their enemies' lands', and the wasting of lands took the form of cutting down the trees and hacking up the vines. The Turks so ravaged Greek lands a hundred years ago, and so too Archidamus, the stern old Spartan king, came every year to

[1] Book IV, ch. 15.



AN OLIVE GROVE IN ATTICA

waste the lands of Attica. When he passed the little city of Plataea, an old ally of Athens, he offered it immunity from the ravages of war if it would be neutral. To ensure its neutrality it was to supply him with an inventory of all its property, particularly its *trees*, and when the war was over it could claim compensation if anything recorded in the inventory had suffered damage.[1]

'How many vines have you got?' a Greek farmer from Euboea is asked.[2] 'There are two before the door,' he replies, 'and twenty inside the yard and twenty again on the other side of the river. Splendid vines they are and bear enormous clusters if only the passers-by leave them alone.'

The rest of this farmer's stock consisted of eight she-goats, a cow with a calf, four sickles, four mattocks, three spears, and a hunting-knife; three bushels of wheat, five of barley, five of millet, and a gallon of beans. Not much this for a fully equipped farm in fertile Euboea. Yet we can take it as typical of the small Greek farmer, who had always before him the fear of a bad harvest, of the ruin of invasion, or of winter storm or summer forest fire. If nature was conquered, the victory was always a Pyrrhic one and the enemy reserves were as yet unbeaten.

Even if all prospered, and his corn was garnered, it was a meagre crop at the best, and the means of garnering it were primitive. A stone-paved threshing floor and a few flails; at best a wooden sledge with flints set in the under side served to separate corn from chaff, pulled by a horse or ox and with the heaviest member of the family standing on the sledge. Such contrivances they use to-day and such they used in antiquity. 'She drove her oxen about the floor to break the ears very small

[1] See Thucydides, ii. 72.

[2] Dio Chrysostom, Oration VII, 108.

and slip out the grain, with her hurdle set with sharp stones,' says the writer of *Daphnis and Chloe*.[1]

No wonder that Achilles thought that the lot of a labourer was the hardest lot on earth.

But with autumn come many fruits that need but little tending, and life in September and October becomes easier. But like the Greek winter the Greek autumn is short. To the outward eye it hardly exists at all, for few of the trees of Greece are deciduous. The plane, the oak, and the poplar alone shed their leaves and get autumn tints; but they grow only in valleys and along rivers. For the bulk of the trees of the landscape are pines, which in autumn put forth their new green sprouts and make one think that it is spring.

Of the spiritual life of these country folk we know little. When they came into the towns they would certainly visit the great shrines of the gods and join in the festival and processions. But in the country there were few temples and only small shrines of gods and heroes along the roads. Some of these were of gods who counted more in the country districts, such as Rainy Zeus, Hecate of the Three Ways, or Hermes. But there were also the rites of certain dark and fearsome deities. In Arcadia there is the mysterious pool of Pheneus that rises and sinks in its bed, so that one year it is a marsh and the next a lake. Here, says Pausanias,[2] the people used to celebrate what they called the 'Greater Mysteries', in which the priest put on a mask and smote the 'Underground Folk' with rods. Then there is a hill in Arcadia on the summit of which there was a sanctuary of certain gods called the Pure. 'Here it is customary to take a most solemn oath, but the people either do not know or will not divulge the names of these gods.'[3]

[1] Book III, ch. 30.

[2] viii. 15.

[3] Pausanias, viii. 44.

The Greek countryman, like all peasants, had, too, his rigid codes and formulae. This brought bad luck and that good.

'Never cross the sweet flowing water of ever rolling rivers on foot,' says Hesiod, 'unless you have prayed, gazing into the soft flood, and washed your hands in the clear lovely water. Whoever crosses a river with hands unwashed of wickedness, the gods are angry with him and bring trouble upon him afterwards.'[1]

There is something sacrilegious about cutting the flow of a stream, for a stream is symbolic of life and change. 'You will never step into the same stream twice', said Heracleitus the sage.[2]

All kinds of pulse are the sacred gift of Demeter to men, except beans, which are unclean, said the Arcadians.[3] Empedocles, the mystic, it was said, called the bean his brother!

But the real gods of the country were few in number. Chief of them were Pan and the Nymphs, a contrast of opposites like Beauty and the Beast. Pan to the shepherd and farmer was the real country god, guardian of goats, the keeper of the hill-tops, jovial, cheerful, and human. The Nymphs were the guardians of waters, trees, and mountains; there were Dryads of the trees, Naiads of springs and streams, Oreiads of the hills, and Epimeliads[4]—an unknown kind. All about Greece are caves and grottos sacred to Pan and the Nymphs, or sometimes to the Nymphs alone. On Hymettus and on Parnes, near Marathon, and on Parnassus are caves of Pan and the Nymphs, or sometimes of the Nymphs alone or of Oreiads. Near Pharsalus in Thessaly is another in which a hymn to the Centaur Cheiron and the Nymphs was found, inscribed on the rock.

In all these caves were humble dedications, often illiterate,

[1] *Works and Days*, 737–41.
[2] Fragments 41, 42.
[3] Pausanias, viii. 15.
[4] See Pausanias, viii. 4, 2.

and small offerings or, at the most, small sculptured reliefs and figures. This humble worship meant something very real to the mountaineers of Greece. They were giving offerings to what they thought of as the spirits of their surroundings. The rocks and the springs and the trees are there and are good; they are surely the property and the habitation of some one—hence the Nymphs and Pan, who never become abstractions or even personifications. They are just simply the owners of lands where man is only an intruder.

From these simple hard-working men the strength of the Greek city was derived. They brought their herds and fruits into the towns, they joined up and served as soldiers when called upon, and they voted and legislated with the rest.

Of life in the town we know, curiously enough, not very much more than of life in the country, except that it had more variety. It varies, of course, from town to town. Life in Sparta was radically different from life in Athens or Thebes, and life in Corinth was different from either. We get glimpses of town life from the dialogues of Plato, of Lucian, or of Xenophon which are more lively and realistic than we can get from a mere repiecing of the towns themselves or from any patchwork account of Greek life. The chief and most important thing about town life was the community of existence. People were continually meeting. Life was not an alternation of office and home as it is with so many families to-day. Work was mainly done in the open air or in the public buildings; the house was for sleeping, eating, and entertaining one's friends. Rest and leisure were for the open air; there were all the public temples, terraces, and halls in which to rest or talk during the heat of the day. The distinction between public and private was not so marked. The temples and halls were public only in so far as they represented the ambitions of the com-

munity as a whole; they were the product of the will and the energy of individuals. The same man that sat in the shade of some temple or hall had perhaps voted for its erection and paid his contribution towards it. There were no dim abstractions like county councils, that by a brief edict could make some mushroom growth to spring up in the city. Public buildings and their adornments were the product of social aims and ideals rather than of civic needs or religious movements. The old temple of Athena on the Acropolis of Athens was the earliest of the large shrines of Athens, put up in the time of Solon or earlier, before the people of Attica were affected by the influences of other lands. They were simple Attic folk, and their buildings reflect their simplicity. Then Peisistratus burst on the scene with his new ambitions and new ideas. He renovated the old temple of Athena and erected an imposing colonnade round it, and gave it finer and better sculptures to adorn it. Then later Peisistratus died, and his sons, who interpreted his position in a personal and narrow way, were disposed of, the one by assassination, the other by exile. The democracy of Athens had reasserted itself. It celebrated its new activity by starting to build a new temple, greater and finer in every way than that adorned by Peisistratus. The vast and rather pretentious temple of Olympian Zeus, started by Peisistratus, was left in neglect, unfinished and forgotten. But before the new temple of the democracy was finished the storm-cloud of Persia broke, and all was swept away. After the defeat and dispersal of the Persians the democracy, triumphant once more, set to work to remake its shattered glory. But even the earlier beginnings of the preceding revival were swept away: it was a generation confident of its own ability for the future. A still newer temple was started, and the unfinished beginnings of the other were used as building material for its walls. At last a new temple

was achieved, the Parthenon, the ruins of which are the glory of Athens to-day. Such was the history of one sanctuary, but nearly all the others have similar histories behind them. The Erechtheium, the little temple of Athena Nike, and the entrance gates to the Acropolis itself were each built as the result of certain movements, half social, half political. To imagine similar conditions to-day would be difficult and almost comic; but if we can conceive a certain party after a success at the elections putting up a new War Office or a new Board of Education as a kind of thank-offering, with the cordial approval of all London, we shall be in a position to understand, rather vaguely perhaps, what went to make up ancient civic spirit, and to realize how in ancient times politics and town-planning often went hand in hand. The main differences between ourselves and the Greeks in these matters is that the Greeks owned their public buildings in a way in which we cannot do. They knew personally the architect and the sculptor or some other person connected with the work, for the world was very small, and every one could watch what every one else was doing. They could watch the building grow under the architect's hands. If they objected to it for some reason they could step in and prevent its completion, as they did in the case of the Propylaea at Athens, which was commenced by Mnesicles and never finished according to his plans.

Public buildings thus represented public ideals in a closer and more satisfactory way than ever happens to-day. We only become articulate in opposition. Some building is proposed that meets with universal ridicule. In such cases building can be stopped by the sheer force of public opinion. But the bulk of the people are not interested. The origination on the part of the public of ideas for building does not exist. Perhaps this is because the capacity of the age for producing *style* in building,

as in furniture and the minor arts and crafts, has vanished. A hundred years hence what will be understood by the 'George Vth style of architecture'? what will a 'George Vth' chair or spoon be like? But style died early in the reign of Queen Victoria. Public taste, never vigorous, is getting weaker and weaker, and our only salvation is that we may have men of taste in influential positions who can control tendencies and movements in architecture and the arts and crafts.

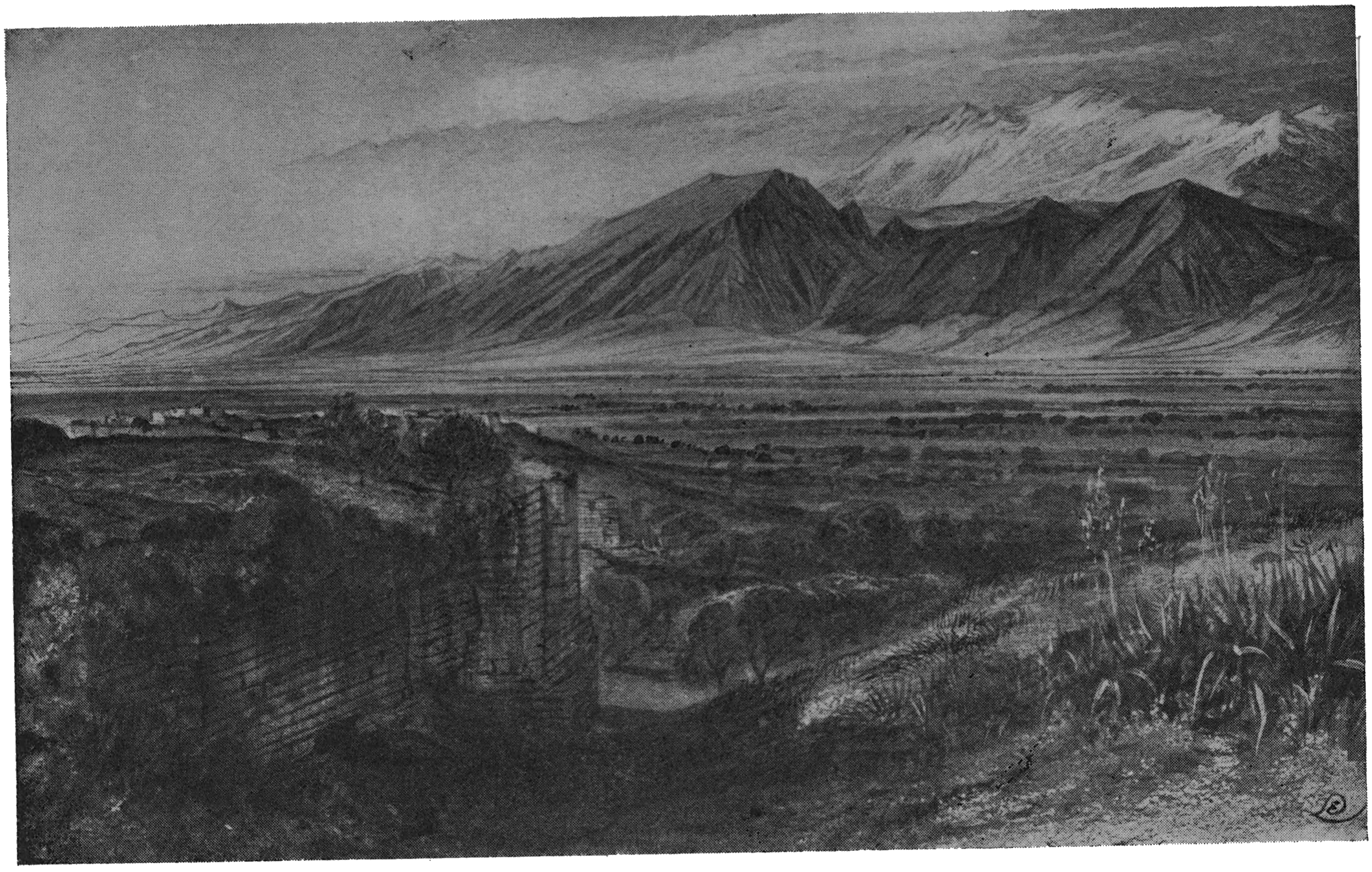
Athens we take, as a rule, as a standard type of a Greek city. But this is unsafe. Athens openly and admittedly had more than her fair share of beauty and public adornment. Thucydides, thinking, as he always did, of posterity and its verdict, makes a prophecy which has literally come true.[1]

'Suppose', he says, 'the city of Sparta to be deserted, and nothing left but the temples and the ground plan, distant ages would be very unwilling to believe that the power of the Lacedaemonians was at all equal to their fame. And yet they own two-fifths of the Peloponnesus and are acknowledged leaders of the whole, as well as of numerous allies in the rest of Hellas. But their city is not regularly built and has no splendid temples or other edifices; it resembles rather a straggling village, like the ancient towns of Hellas, and would therefore make a poor show. Whereas if the same fate befell the Athenians the ruins of Athens would strike the eye, and we should infer their power to have been twice as great as it really is.'

The truth of this criticism must strike any one who has seen the two sites. The remains of Sparta are so insignificant that it is only with the greatest difficulty that one can recognize the ancient site at all. The Acropolis of Athens, with its marble buildings, can be seen from twenty miles away.

There can be read, however, into Thucydides' remark the

[1] i. 10.



THE PLAIN OF SPARTA

suggestion that Sparta had never risen above the condition of a straggling village. This would be a misconception. As has already been hinted, Sparta in the seventh and part of the eighth century B.C. was undoubtedly the leading city of Hellas. Recent excavation has amply confirmed this view. In the days of the poet Alkman the town was a centre of culture. Music and singing, choirs and bands of dancers were there. Artists, sculptors, potters, and craftsmen plied their trades. There was gold from Lydia and rich eastern embroideries, and the strangers who brought them thronged the streets. Up on the little acropolis was a group of small but rich shrines, in which that of Athena, guardian of the city, was the chief. Below, on the banks of the Eurotas, was the curious shrine of Artemis Orthia, where strange rites were performed. Scattered around were numerous other shrines and sanctuaries. The nature of the people and the general atmosphere of the place were as different as one could imagine from Athens; yet the Sparta of those days was no mean city.

But early in the sixth century B.C. the Spartans appear to have undergone something in the nature of a puritanic revival. Culture and luxury are banished, strangers expelled, and foreign relations confined to the most formal of alliances. It was a nationalist revival such as most states pass through at some time in their history. The old Dorian strain was reasserting itself in the face of the degenerating influences from outside. Thus came the end of Spartan art and literature. We hear no more of either. Only the severe elements remained, and the Sparta of the Histories of Herodotus and Thucydides is a hard grim place where beauty of building and public adornment was limited and restricted. Only the old shrines still remained, and the town well deserved the description of a 'straggling village'. It was managed as though under

martial law and all semblance of family life or of ordinary comforts eliminated. Boys were taken from their mothers before the age of seven and trained in state schools until they were nine. From the age of ten to thirteen they were still undergoing state training and were made to go in for tests of endurance and skill. These contests were held in the shrine of Artemis before an audience of friends and relations. The winner received as a prize nothing more precious than a steel sickle, which he had to dedicate to the goddess.[1] Music entered also into these contests. But the most severe of all the tests which the children had to undergo was that of the 'ordeal by lash', a test of endurance of a brutal and savage nature.

Between this grim stern city and the light-hearted city of Athens there was a gap which was never bridged. The fierce invader from the north who halted at last at Sparta could never forget that he was a conqueror; the life-loving, generous Athenian made it his boast, on the other hand, that he had neither conquered nor been conquered, and that he let the soul find its own wings.

'We rely', said Pericles,[2] 'not upon management and trickery but upon our own hearts and hands. In the matter of education, whereas the Spartans, from early youth, are always undergoing laborious exercises which are designed to make them brave, we live at ease and yet are equally ready to face the perils that they face.'

Finally it is often a matter of wonder that with all the temples and shrines that existed in a city like Athens so little is heard of religion in the sense in which we understand the word. It is remarkable that in the whole of the Funeral Speech

[1] Some of these sickles, fastened to the dedicatory tablets, have been found at Sparta. The more cruel contests may have originated later.

[2] Thucydides, ii. 39.

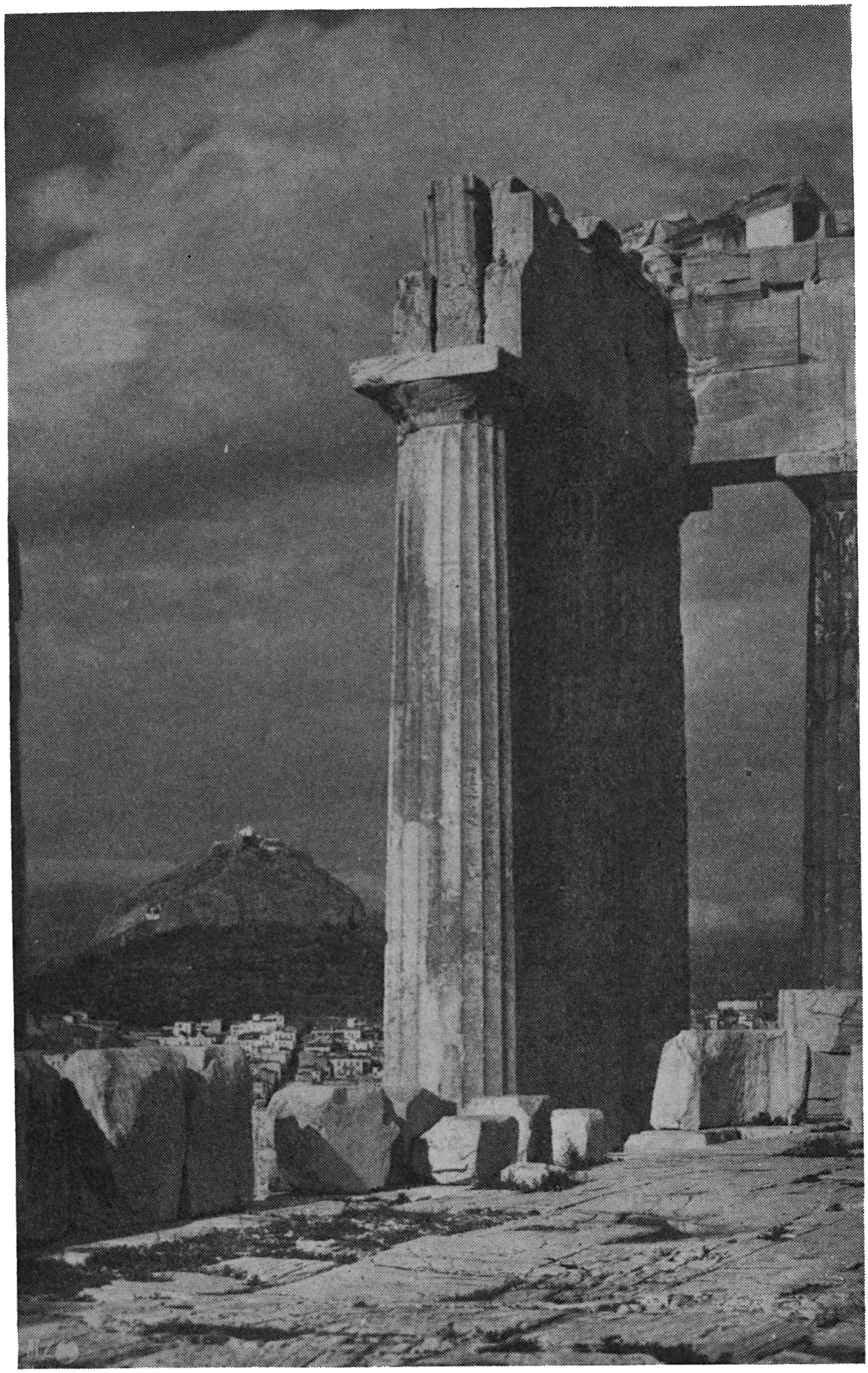
of Pericles there is no mention of religion, of the future life, or of the fate of the dead over whom the oration is being held. The whole of the speech looks to the front, as it were, and takes a pitilessly realistic view of things. The dead are dead, and that is the end of them. They have done their part and contributed to the glory of the living. Let the living comfort themselves by looking back on the happiness that they have already had.

There is no religion here except the religion of Humanity; no seeking after God or an existence beyond the grave. It is the creed of mankind consciously at the summit of its development, of a mankind proud of and *satisfied with* its achievements and meeting its deficiencies not with pride nor yet with humility but with the steady gaze of perfect control. Pericles may have been a rationalist, he may have scorned the religious observances of his time—but he built the Parthenon. Had his speech been delivered to-day he would have been clamorously condemned as an atheist. Yet we have no record that his speech brought anything but comfort to his hearers. At any rate he remained in power for some time after its delivery. He was, in short, voicing the opinions of the average Athenian.

We shall not be far wrong, then, in thinking that the city Greek of the fifth century B. C. accepted his gods in a spirit of reasonable criticism. *Their* temples were the adornment of *his* city, the work of *his* hands. It was *he* who lived near them and saw their beauty and benefited from it. In so far as they were monuments erected to the glory of the gods the traditions of his race were being carefully observed, and he was glad.

All the time it is the man who counts; always it is Humanity which is really the deity that is worshipped.

If cities varied largely in nature and if, in the different states, the most different kinds of one general type of Humanity were



THE PARTHENON

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produced, there still remained one unifying factor that affected all Greek states without exception—the sea.

Throughout Greek history there is no Greek city or province which did not to a very large extent make its actions, if not its ideals, conform to maritime conditions. By this I do not mean that each state either aimed at or achieved having a navy; I refer rather to the wider influences of sea-coast life. The only marked exception to this generalization seems to be Arcadia, which is given special prominence in the Homeric catalogue of the ships that went to Troy. Agamemnon, says Homer, had given them ships because, while good warriors, the Arcadians 'cared not for the things of the sea'.[1]

The effect of sea-coast life upon the Greeks was marked and complex. We who know, however indirectly, the effects of maritime conditions, the limitations and advantages of insularity, can, perhaps, the more appreciate the Greek position. Mobility and vulnerability were, perhaps, the chief characteristics which Greek states acquired from the sea: mobility, in that a city could remove its citizens *en bloc* to another sphere; vulnerability, in that whatever a city did could hardly be kept hidden from the rest of the world, and an enemy with a more powerful navy could, at any time, make a descent upon it and, if need be, destroy it. Phocaea, when Harpagus the Mede was at its gates, got into its ships and sailed away for distant Corsica —there to start afresh. Many of the Ionian cities founded themselves anew on the north coast of the Aegean or in the far west. Teos established its replica at Abdera, and Maroneia on the Thracian coast was also Ionian. Samos migrated to Zancle in Sicily, whither also had gone Messenian refugees from the Peloponnese, driven out by the Spartans. The whole North Aegean and Italian coasts were, in effect, a home for

[1] *Iliad*, ii. 611.

refugees from the cities of Asia Minor. Time and time again in Greek history a city on the coast packs up its goods and moves to some more prosperous or more peaceful region.

Colonies were thus, in many ways, the same in origin. They were not, however, so much the re-establishment of a home on the part of oppressed peoples as the means of relieving the pressure of increased population. But there were many types of colony. Some were mere commercial enterprises, others political ventures, others of purely military importance. The remote city of Gelonus in the frosty Caucasus, built of wood, surrounded by a stockade and inhabited, as Herodotus says,[1] by a Hellenic people who were trappers and hunted otters and beavers, is surely the farthest eastern settlement of early Greek enterprise. Tartessus in Spain is perhaps the farthest west; thither certain Phocaeans once sailed in fifty-oared vessels.[2] The wise king of Tartessus, reputed to be a hundred and twenty years of age, liked them and begged them to stay and dwell there wheresoever they wished; but they would not leave their home in Ionia. Nevertheless the king, hearing of the danger that threatened the Ionian cities from the Medes, offered the Phocaeans a sum of money to enable them to build a city wall. This same city of Tartessus was at another time visited by a storm-driven ship from Samos. 'Tartessus was at that time', says Herodotus, 'a virgin market, and so they made from their cargo a profit greater than any other Hellenes of whom we have certain knowledge.' The historian does not say what merchandise it was that made so great a profit, but we can guess, not without reason, that it was Spanish silver, for Diodorus tells of ships of the Phoenicians that, sailing to these parts, brought back so much of the metal that they made their very anchors of it.

[1] iv. 108.

[2] Herodotus, i. 163.

Thus from the earliest days Greeks were seafarers who, whether by accident or by design, reached the uttermost ends of the known world and looked out upon the unknown Atlantic from Cadiz or on the Indian Ocean from Egypt. Sheer enterprise alone took them to the places they reached. But it must not be thought that they were either born sailors or that they picked up their knowledge here and there.

'Maritime skill', says Pericles [1] to the Athenians, the most expert sailors of his day, 'is like skill of other kinds, not a thing to be cultivated by the way or at odd times. It is jealous of any other pursuit which distracts the mind for an instant from itself . . . even you yourselves, who have been practising ever since the Persian war, are not yet perfect.'

But in estimating the importance of the sea in Greek life we must remember how much the Mediterranean and in particular the Aegean differ from our own North Sea. Subject to sudden and violent tempests at all times of year its navigation by sailing-ships has always been difficult. In the summer months there is the least chance of storms, but the rocky promontories that project into it create serious difficulties of atmosphere and current. Athos and Olympus are storm centres in the hottest days of August; the clouds collect from nowhere and thunderstorms burst from their midst. The famous Doro channel between Euboea and Andros is impassable to small steamships, even in a moderate gale from the north. They have to bide their time in the shelter of Carystus Bay. The notorious Hollows of Euboea have seen many a wreck, and the Euripus, with its six-mile-an-hour current that changes its direction six times in twenty-four hours, is now as great a risk as it always was. But the dangers of the Aegean are for the most part local, and our own North Sea would be far more

[1] Thucydides, i. 142.



CHALKIS AND EUBOEA

formidable to the sailor unprovided with the advantages of a thousand years of nautical experience.

Still, to the Greeks the sea meant freedom—freedom to go whither they wished, freedom to exchange the benefits of culture and commerce, freedom to move unrestrained by the mountain barriers and narrow passes that confined the landsman. So in Greek history men and movements, commerce and politics, culture and ambition are conditioned by this one factor; the veterans of the Ten Thousand who, on reaching the coast near Trebizond, raised the cry of 'The Sea! the Sea!' and wept with joy at the sight of it, did so because they knew that it meant to them freedom and home, because it was something that they understood—in a word their element.

Conversely the effect of the peaceful spread of Hellenic culture by commerce and exploration upon the people whom it reached was very great. The most distant parts of Europe absorbed Greek ideas and Greek civilization in a remarkable way. We learn from Strabo,[1] who quotes the earlier historian Ephorus, that in the west the peoples of Iberia, from Cadiz to the coast of France were 'lovers of the Greeks', Philhellenes. Diodorus[2] tells us that 'the inhabitants of that part of Britain which is called Belerion are very fond of strangers and from their intercourse with foreign merchants are civilized in their mode of life'. Occasional Greek objects are found in Britain, the latest discovery having just been made this year in the very centre of London—a Greek gold ornament of the fifth century B.C.—below the Roman level. In France they are more common, especially in the Somme region and in the Jura and Provence. Still more appear in the Moselle and Saar valleys and along the upper Rhine. Many other traces of Greek commerce are to be found in the west, and it seems clear

[1] iv. 199. [2] v. 22.

that trade was established there by the Greeks in the sixth century B.C. or even earlier. Two main trade routes seem to have been used; one ran from Marseilles and Narbonne via Corbilo on the Loire to Brittany and thence to the Isle of Wight and the North. The other went northwards directly across France to the Seine. The tin-mines of Britain were the objective of each of these routes.

The total effect of all these influences of commerce and enterprise upon the semi-barbarous provinces of Britain, France, and Germany was immense. Greek seems to have been in use in Gaul and in Germany fairly extensively during the last two centuries before Christ. A large majority of the extant Celtic inscriptions of Gaul are written in Greek characters, while at least four of the princes of northern Gaul used Greek for the inscriptions on their coins. The use of Greek in these parts persisted for some time. Julius Caesar, after defeating the Helvetii, found in their camp a nominal roll of all the men of the tribe capable of bearing arms *written in Greek*. In the lower Rhine valley, near Cologne, Greek inscriptions are found and Greek legends persisted.

In the north-east the great Hellenic trading stations in and near the Crimea led to an artistic and cultural intercourse between Greeks and Scythians on an extensive scale at an early date. In the south Greek influences are perceptible as near the Equator as Meroe, near Khartoum, a town known to Homer and Herodotus.

Eastwards little that was Greek penetrated before the time of Alexander the Great, and he led his Greeks to regions to which neither Greek nor Barbarian of the Mediterranean had ever ventured before and to which since his day few have penetrated. It is remarkable that since Alexander led his army back to Babylon across the forbidding and desolate coast-lands of the

Indian Ocean south of Baluchistan, no known traveller had seen those parts again until A.D. 1809. The effects of the introduction of things Hellenic by Alexander into the fastnesses of Central Asia were immense and lasting. He planted colonies as he went and left detachments of Greeks to control and organize them. In the face of the snowy barrier of the Pamirs and on the banks of the Indus Alexander left the indelible traces of his people. For centuries after Indian princes and provinces bore testimony to the way in which Hellenic traditions had, at the least, captured the fancy of Indian artists and moulded their art. The sculptures of Northern India and the coinage of the Bactrian kings are, for many generations, moulded on Greek lines, and local deities are in many cases identified in artistic tradition with Greek deities such as Athena and Herakles. Even in distant China there are faint echoes of Greek art and Greek influences, chiefly in the time of the Han dynasty.

But it was rather the humble Greek sailor than the great generals who carried the gospel of Greek culture more permanently into the remote corners of the known world. It was the sailor who started from his city harbour upon voyages that in those days were as difficult and formidable as those of Drake or Cook in later times, when navigation was a more highly developed thing, who achieved the real spread of Hellenism. Of such men we have but rare records. The Greek Anthology preserves many an epitaph of men who started on their voyages and never reached their destinations. Other records of these humble explorers are hard to find, but the dangers they risked and the fears that beset them still remain enshrined in two places in the Mediterranean to bring vividly before us the danger of maritime enterprise in those days. In the little island of Proti on the stormy western shore of the Peloponnese

is a rough natural harbour on whose cliffs storm-bound mariners scratched their prayers for a 'Good voyage'. At a similar harbour in the island of Syra in the Cyclades the cliffs are covered with countless inscriptions of the same type covering a vast period of time from Hellenic to Christian days. The earlier Greek prays to 'Gentle Herakles', to 'Gentle Asklepios', or to 'the Sun'. The later Christian prays in the same way, but to St. Phokas, patron saint of sailors, and to Christ himself. Of the latter inscriptions nearly fifty are still visible.

The continuity of this shrine-harbour from Hellenic to Christian times, with the deity alone changing, is testimony to the ever-present dangers that beset the humble sailors of the Aegean.

The material surroundings and the setting of Greek life have been described. The influence of material Greek life upon the outside world has been demonstrated. The subjective reaction of the Greek upon his setting was, as with every other nation, largely affected by the setting itself. The clear air and the bright sun stimulated his mind. The variation of the climate without serious extremes kept him active. Recent scientific research suggests that the effect of a climate where storms are frequent is beneficial and that the stimulation that results leads to the increase of activity and the production of a good type.[1] Static empires and static climates seem, on the other hand, for the most part to be found together; where intense cold and intense heat prevail during the greater part of the year man is compelled to work out for himself a rigid and monotonous scheme of domestic economy and there is little scope for the unconventional or the unusual.

Generalizations of this type are at all times dangerous, but

[1] See Elsworth Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia*, Introduction.

to a very large extent they are valid, and some valuable results may be derived from them. If they are as true as those who formulate them suggest, we have in them a basis for the study of history of exceptional value. Geology and meteorology may be able to fill the gaps where history is silent or inarticulate.

But without laying too much stress upon the influence of the 'material setting' of Greek history upon Greek modes of thought and expression we can, perhaps, examine cursorily the modes of thought and expression themselves and derive from them what is, after all, the kernel of the whole problem—the subjective point of view of the Greek and his way of thinking, his hopes and fears, his attitude to the problems of morality, his behaviour in the face of death, and his view of death itself, in a word, the characteristic Greek outlook.

Of the religion of the Athenian of the middle of the fifth century B.C. we have already spoken. The countryman had his shrines, his local heroes, his rural gods, and his superstitious background of rules and canons which he shares in common with the countrymen of all ages and all climes. The man of the city also had his shrines and hero-cults and greater temples. How large and how varied was the number of these is shown clearly in the account of Greek town and country life given by the traveller Pausanias. What strikes the reader of such records is the amazing variety of religion in those days. Men could worship any sort or kind of deity they wished. At the same time they were not under the *necessity* of worshipping any.

The history and composition of Greek religion is far too vast and complex a subject to summarize here. I can only indicate its nature and effects.

The *variety* of Greek religion is, perhaps, the most remarkable thing about it. The gods of Olympus have their shrines side by side with such demi-gods as Herakles and with curious half-

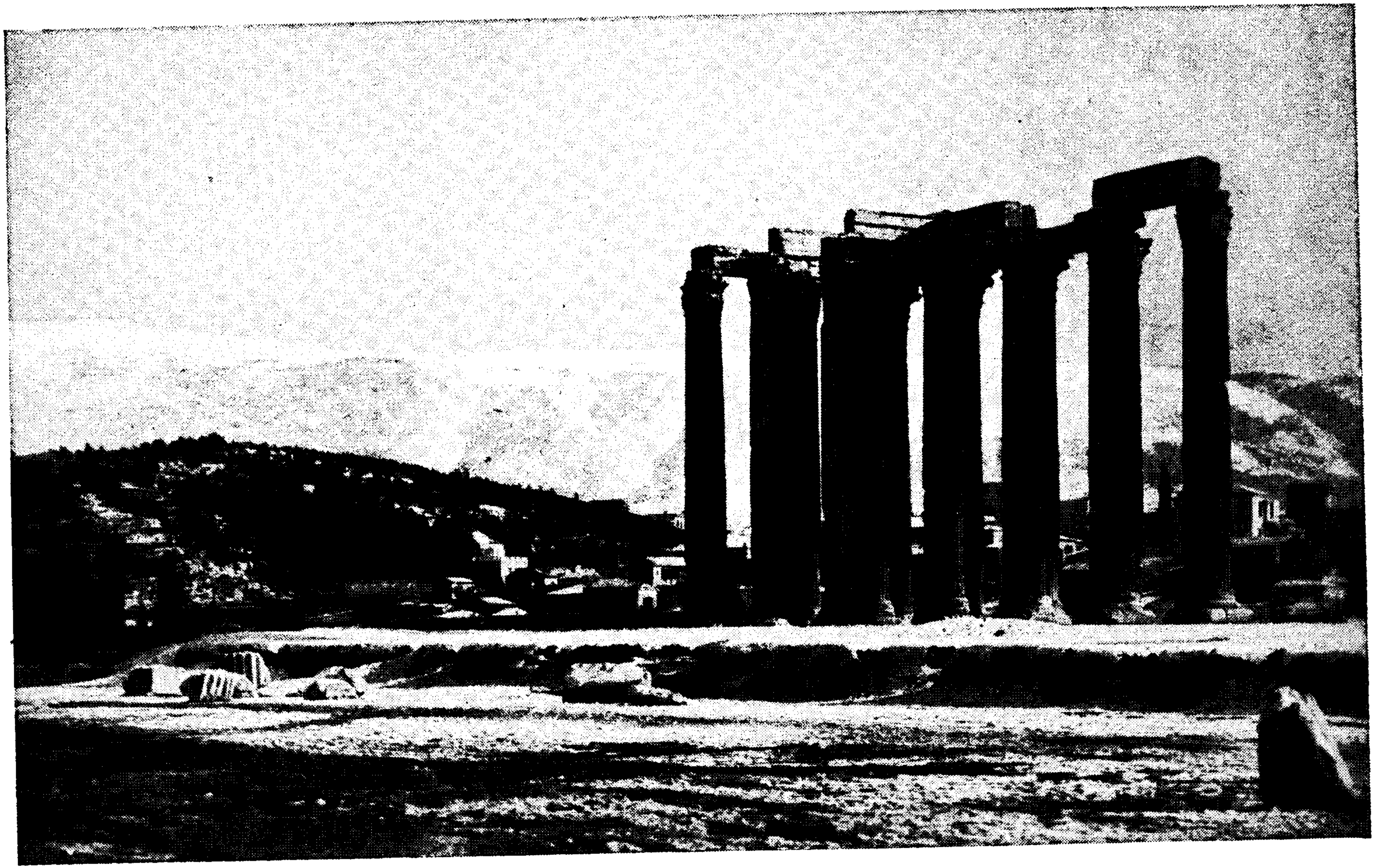
Olympian, half-savage deities. On the Acropolis at Athens Athena had her sanctuary cheek by jowl with Artemis Brauronia, a bear-goddess. Poseidon and Herakles also had places in her sanctuary. At Sparta Athena, guardian of the city, shared the worship of the town with such deities as Ammon, Eileithyia goddess of fertility, Mother Earth, and other non-Olympian deities, and with Artemis Orthia, whose rites were famed for their brutality.

The reason for this intermixture is the same as for the intermixtures that characterize all religions—the growth of new cults upon the old. Later religions take over shrines of religions which they supersede and impose new names or new cults upon old. Even such apparent opposites as Christianity and Islam interact in this way, and in the religious practices of the obscure Bektashi dervishes we find to this day a blending of the two systems, a worship of Christian saints by Moslems, and of Moslem prophets by Christians.

The different strata that went to the making of Greek religion were approximately three in number. There was first the old Minoan, in which a mother goddess and feminine deities were paramount. Then came the vigorous Olympian deities of the northern invaders, Zeus, Hera, Athena, and the rest, with female goddesses almost of equal status with the male. Lastly, there were alien deities such as Poseidon and Dionysus and semi-Asiatic deities. Associated with the old Minoan strain were the primitive and local earth and water deities, and deities of fertility. They survived the stress of invasions chiefly in Arcadia in the Peloponnese right down to late times, even as late as the second century A.D.

What concerns our present purpose, however, is not so much the composition of Greek religion as the attitude of the Greek towards it. The variety of religion was the product of the

variety of Greek race and temperament. Religion was always free in Greece and no man was forced to worship. Consequently every type and kind of cult developed freely. The difference between this religious freedom and the rigid religious hierarchies of the static empires is clear and obvious. So too the priest in Greek religion held no position comparable to the priests of Egypt, Persia, or Assyria. In these empires the priest was of equal importance with the prince; he served his empire as well as his gods. In Greece the priest served his gods alone and seldom ranked high in the political world. He was essentially a functionary whose duties were limited and defined. At no time in Greek history do we hear of an individual Greek priest controlling a political decision or promoting or inhibiting a political movement. If such things were done they were done by the religious feeling of the people as a whole. Sparta delayed sending her troops to fight the Persian because the Spartans were engaged in a religious festival. A battle was delayed or precipitated not by the personal influence of the priest but by the effect which the preliminary omens and other religious observances had on the whole body of the soldiers. The priests whom Solon and Herodotus saw in Egypt belonged to a world wholly different from and for the most part alien to all the essential ideas of Hellenism. The priestly hierarchy that condemned Galileo in the Middle Ages or Dreyfus in our own days was a thing unknown in Greek life. The condemnation of Socrates may be adduced as a proof of the existence of a hierarchy of this type at Athens. But Socrates was condemned not so much on religious grounds as on grounds of general prejudice against a reformer and idealist at a time when the public conscience was at the lowest ebb and when men's minds were clouded and warped by a generation of one of the most demoralizing wars of ancient times. Perhaps the most



THE TEMPLE OF OLYMPIAN ZEUS AT ATHENS

important factor in his condemnation was the fact that amongst his pupils had been Critias, the most ruthless of the Thirty Tyrants at whose hands the people of Athens had suffered so much, while his accusers belonged to the party which had driven out Critias and the rest. The speedy repentance of the Athenians for the condemnation, if it does not palliate the offence, shows at least that they were no priest-ridden people.

As a corollary to the fact that Greek religion had no priest-craft, as we understand the term, comes the fact that there was no centralization of religion. Delphi alone bears some resemblance to a unifying factor. But Delphi centralized the material aims and ambitions of Greece rather than her spiritual ideals. At Delphi was centralized all the intelligence system of ancient Greece. All who visited the great shrine from all the ends of the ancient world must have given, as well as their offerings, information which, to Greece, was of priceless value. Throughout early Greek history it is always the oracle of Delphi which advises or dissuades in matters of commercial enterprise and political decision. Its judgement was seldom at fault, for its information was good. Once only did it blunder, and its prestige never really recovered from the error. It counselled submission to the Persian invader at a time when every heart in Greece was against it. All too late it altered its decision, but Themistocles, keen-witted and irreligious, had seen through the oracle and proclaimed its falsity. The reasons for this great blunder are obscure. Corruption or genuine error may explain it. But for once the real insight that characterized the usual decisions of the oracle was lacking. Probably the oracle adopted a pacific attitude because it knew so much about Persia and its knowledge bred fear. 'Pacifists' in recent times have been produced for the same reasons and under similar circumstances.

But even at Delphi priestcraft was in the background. It is remarkable that in the whole history of the oracle we hear of no single priest pre-eminent as an individual. It is always the 'oracle' or 'Apollo' who advises or acts. The oracle was managed by priestly clans of which we barely know even the names. They must have developed the system and organization well, for we never hear of them as individuals.

Thus Delphi achieved its reputation more by its practical help to civilization and by its monopoly of good information than by its sanctity. It warned the oppressor of cities and helped the enterprising citizen. Its attitude for the most part favoured moral action and condemned injustice. Above all Delphi superintended and encouraged the liberation of slaves. If, as a sanctuary, it was pre-eminent in Greece it was supreme also as an Intelligence Bureau.

Religion then to the ancient Greek was largely his own affair, the choice of the individual. To-day we seem to have much the same state of affairs in our own country. But this resemblance in type between the religion of the ancient Greek and that of the ordinary English citizen is of the slightest nature. To the Greek religion was observance, ritual, and awe combined, with lurking in the background great forces whose action revolved on mighty wheels. 'What is fated, fixed, or destined'—it is seldom made into a personification—is at the back of all action. Men must see to it that the smaller wheels of their own actions revolve in harmony with the greater mechanism; otherwise the smaller will be shattered. This is no more akin to the Oriental idea of destiny than is the universe of our own Victorian philosophers. Again we meet the distinction between static and living. The Destiny of the Oriental is written down once and for all:

> The moving finger writes, and having writ
> Moves on ; nor all thy piety nor wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
> Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

The Destiny of the Greeks was a thing that worked perpetually, without going backwards. It was like a river that flows on and on and is never the same twice. Perhaps the comparison to a vast mechanism is unfair. It would resemble rather something that works out its growth according to inexorable laws. John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer held to a view of existence little different from this.

In this vast revolving scheme of the ancient Greek that changes not and yet is never the same, is Man, an infinitesimal unit. His actions and his wishes must be governed and controlled in subservience to the scheme. If he does this all will be well and harmonious ; if he does the reverse something will go wrong and he, not the mechanism, will be destroyed. Blasphemy was what the little infinitesimal creature Man shouted against the mechanism that crushed him silently. Sin was what he did that caused him to be crushed. Such, at least, was what the Greek thought in the dawn of his history. Later reflection modified his views to a large extent, but, for the most part, this fundamental idea of a fixed destiny working on its own lines persisted throughout the years of the full bloom of Hellenism. Aeschylus and Pindar, essentially poets of a period and of a people, gave these ideas fixed literary form. One of the words used for this unchanging fate is used by both these writers to describe life and death alike as ‘ fated ’, or as we should say ‘ natural ’. It describes also all the normal events of life. A king to Pindar is ‘ fated ’ to be such ; later Xenophon calls death the ‘ fated end of life ’ and war a thing ‘ fated always to be among men ’.

Morality as we know it grew out of this larger cosmology. Man's behaviour to man was regulated by these larger destinies. Wrong takes the form of 'going too far', of overstepping limits enjoined by the scheme of things. An oath is in the Greek word literally 'a fence'; to break it down is wrong because it offends against the order of things. The early words for 'justice' mean the 'normal course of events'. The Greek word for Law and Order in its earliest usage means literally 'what is fixed or fated'. The word 'Themis' which the Greek used in this meaning is, in language, identical with the English word 'Doom'.

Thus from the earliest times the idea of *personal* right or wrong doing does not appear. Man is sinning when he is breaking down the established order of things. Morality, in short, is social, not individual; it is of the community and of the group. Death, in the words of Xenophon, is the 'fated end' of a normal life, and so it does not control or affect the moral outlook in any appreciable way. Still less does any conception of an after-life do this. Man's life was orientated to face neither the past nor the future but the present. There might be an after-life or another existence, but man was too small a creature to know of it. How could the cog in the great wheels of the mechanism realize how and why and to what end the mechanism worked? Euripides, candid and direct as ever, sums up the question in a way in which we, with nineteen centuries of 'other worldly' teaching, should find it hard to do:[1]

> If any far-off state there be
> Dearer than life to Mortality,
> The hand of the Dark hath hold thereof
> And mist is under and mist above,
> And we drift on legends for ever.

[1] *Hippolytus*, 191–197.

The ordinary Greek peasant or citizen took, implicitly or explicitly, just such a view as this. He did, nevertheless, visualize a rather indeterminate kind of existence after death. But it was rather an existence which from its drear misery made life the sweeter. The Hades of Homer shows us the other world with the spirits of the dead, bloodless shadows of reality. In one of the finest passages in any literature Odysseus describes his visit to the dead :[1]

'Brides and youths unwed, and old men of many and evil days, and tender maidens with grief fresh at heart; and many there were wounded with bronze-shod spears, men slain in fight with their bloody mail about them. And these spirits flocked together from every side . . . with a wondrous cry; and pale fear gat hold on me.'

He sees his own mother among the throng. 'Dear child,' she says to him, 'how didst thou come beneath the darkness and the shadow, thou that art a living man?'

This old view of the after-life changed but little in the course of years. In the tombs of the fifth century and fourth century we find vases depicting the living sorrowing for the dead. The tombs of the dead are shown, and round them flit little winged human figures like small gnats—the souls of the dead.

Such, then, was the view of the ordinary Greek. Death was the fated end of life, and little more that mattered. But so varied and so rich was the genius of Greek thought that here and there some thinker or poet arose above the common view or expanded it into something greater and more significant. There was immortality inherent in the fullest and finest type of mortality, said Plato :[2]

'Even in the life of the same individual', he says, 'there is

[1] xi. 36.

[2] *Symposium*, 207 (Jowett's translation).

succession and not absolute unity. A man is called the same, and yet in the short interval which elapses between youth and age, and in which every animal is said to have life and identity, he is undergoing a perpetual process of loss and reparation—hair, flesh, bones, blood, and the whole body are always changing; which is true not only of the body but also of the soul, whose habits, tempers, desires, pleasures, pains, and fears never remain the same in any one of us, but are always coming and going; . . . and in this way the mortal body, or mortal anything, partakes of immortality.'

Plato treats elsewhere of immortality in the dialogue which enshrines his account of the death of Socrates, 'concerning whom', he says, 'I may truly say that of all the men of his time whom I have known he was the wisest and justest and best'.[1] Here his belief in immortality of the soul is based upon the permanent and durable character of spiritual and ideal things. For, perhaps, the first time in the history of Greek thought the ethical element is introduced into the idea of immortality. Bad souls are those in which the corporeal and material elements prevail; consequently their immortality is decreased.

'This corporeal element', he says, 'is heavy and weighty and earthy and is that element of sight by which a soul is depressed and dragged down again into the visible world . . . prowling about tombs and sepulchres, near which, as they tell us, are seen certain ghostly apparitions of souls which have not departed pure but are cloyed with sight and therefore visible.'[2]

Thus for the first time in Greece moral behaviour and immortality are brought into relation, perhaps rather fantastically. Milton echoes the same idea in *Comus*:

[1] *Phaedo*, 118. [2] *Ibid.*, 81.

> But when lust . . .
> By lewd and lavish act of sin
> Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
> The soul grows clotted by contagion,
> Imbodies and imbrutes, till she quite lose
> The divine property of her first being.

But Plato was not a characteristic Greek. He stood on a pinnacle alone, his genius unreached and unequalled. He was Greek only in so far as he followed no authority and was not the direct product of some development of philosophy. His views in his day were the exception rather than the rule. The ordinary Greek, nimble-minded and broad-thinking though he was, still never rose to these heights. He still thought of the dead as poor pathetic disembodied spirits hovering aimlessly in the grey under-world. Immortality to him meant little or nothing. His views are voiced for us by Homer, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, and to a less extent by Euripides. Grave monuments and vases depict for us a stately and restrained grief for the dead. One sees the stateliness of sorrow with all its intensity in these representations. The more articulate grief and the pomp and ceremony of oriental peoples is absent. Only later, towards the end of the fourth century B.C., did grief begin to exceed its proper bounds and the ornaments of the grave became too lavish and tasteless. Then a certain Demetrius of Phalerum, as governor of Athens, set himself up as an arbiter of taste, armed at the same time with the power to execute his decisions. He enacted legislation limiting and restricting the expenses incurred in the erection of tombs and tomb-sculptures. From the end of the fourth century for a long period graves are composed of simple slabs or pillars quite undecorated.

These briefly were the ideas of the average Greek upon the

fundamental things of life and death. Individual views varied, as they vary in all free communities, and it is almost impossible to generalize; but ideas such as I have described formed the background of the daily life of the Greek at a time when the foundations of social intercourse and development had not begun to be shaken by that most demoralizing and devastating of all the works of man—civil war.

In one thing the Greek outlook on life was, in its forms of expression, less like what we are accustomed to. Love in its various forms meets with but scant treatment, so it seems to us, at the hands of the great Greek poets and dramatists. Of all the Greek plays known to us few treat of love as it is treated in modern drama. In one play only is it a vital and functional part of the plot—the *Hippolytus* of Euripides. In the *Medea* it is not so much love revenged as a punishment of a dishonourable action that is the plot. Yet love in all its most characteristic aspects appears in Greek art and literature the more subtly drawn just because it is not, as with us, the central figure. But it is always human love, the love of lovers, of husband and wife, of parent and child, and it is always love unsentimental, direct, and genuine. Only when Hellenism was a shadow and the world was old does a tone of melancholy akin to sentimentality begin to appear:

'When I am gone, Cleobulus, cast among the fire of young loves, I lie a brand in the ashes—I pray thee make the burial urn drunk with wine ere thou lay it under earth, and write on it "Love's gift to Death".'

How different is this from the clear bold hymn of Sophocles:

'Love unvanquished, Love that wastest wealth, that broodest at night upon the soft cheek of Youth; Love that movest o'er the deep and in the wildest corners of the earth,

no mortal or immortal can escape thy fierce grasp . . . resistlessly doth Aphrodite play her game.' [1]

The clear-minded Greek saw at once how love, whether the passion of lover for lover or the blind protective love of a mother for her offspring, was a thing that man could not control. As such it had for him something of a subversive nature; it was dangerous. Medea destroys a dynasty; Phaedra, in killing herself, makes a father kill his son. It had all the elements of ruin and destruction. Plato, in revolt against the unreason of love, approaches the problem, as he approaches all problems, from the point of view of reason. He tries to rationalize the irrational. There are two Aphrodites, he says, one coarse, the other refined. Love which is the gift of the former

'has no discrimination . . . and is of the body rather than of the soul; the most foolish beings are the objects of this love which desires only to gain an end, but never thinks of aecomplishing the end nobly, and therefore does good and evil quite indiscriminately.' [2]

The love which comes from the latter loves 'intelligent beings whose reason is beginning to be developed'. 'Any one', he says, 'may recognize the pure enthusiasts in the very nature of their attachments.'

Love is thus made wholesome. Love of the immature or unintelligent is base and wrong. Here we have love idealized and made fine and worthy. The Greek, to whom reason and intellect, when his mind was unclouded by emotion, always came first, tried, as Plato tried, to cleanse simple passion and idealize it. Ancient Greece has long lain under the accusation of condoning unnatural vice. Here in Plato we see at once the

[1] *Antigone*, 781.

[2] *Symposium*, 181.

reason and the cure. Greeks valued the intellect above all things; but their patriarchal traditions were strong, inherited from a day when women were for the most part in the background. Women thus seldom attained to the intellectual development and freedom reached by the men. So from an unnatural state of society arose an unnatural state of affairs in which friendship between men ripened at times into a stronger affection, while the love of woman was relegated to a lower plane. 'Discrimination', says Plato in effect, 'is everything.' Fastidiousness was ever a Greek virtue, and so the love of a being whose intellect was not on a level with that of the lover was to Plato, as to many Greeks, something outrageous.

In all Greek literature we find this fear of the irrational, and above all of the unreason of love. Plato alone tried to rationalize it.

The scheme of life that philosophers and politicians evolved for the Greeks meant that, explicitly or implicitly, some co-ordination of behaviour was necessary, some fixing of the moral code. Aeschylus, Hesiod, Pindar, and others had based it upon the eternal order of creation. Evil was what transgressed, what broke the rules. Good was what was done in submission to them. From this it was easy for two lines of thought to develop. The one held that the scheme of things was either irrational or else incomprehensible, and man was driven to solve his problems in his own way, as best he might. Thus Euripides, tending to scepticism, presented the problems of life to his audience, solving some and leaving others unsolved.

The other way accepted the universe as a scheme, but interpreted it as a rational scheme and so tried to rationalize all action. Plato solved the problems of action and behaviour by appealing to reason and, through reason, to the firmer founda-

tions of all existence which he took to be both good and just. All actions must be judged by the standard of perfection.

Later Aristotle undertook the analysis of the motives for good and bad action, following the lead of Plato and judging them by the light of reason. But Aristotle, unlike Plato, had the methods of a scientist. He presents his material and his evidence and lets his conclusions emerge. In his treatise on Ethics we find set down a list of what he considered were reasonable attitudes to life, in a word virtues.[1]

From this list we can derive a remarkably accurate idea of the moral and intellectual life of the average Greek. The differences and similarities between what the Greek held to be virtues and what we believe them to be ourselves to-day are striking, so striking, in fact, as to enable us to get a very clear idea of the immense debt we owe to Greece. But to understand this properly we must examine Aristotle's account.

The most important thing about this list drawn up by Aristotle is perhaps the fact that all the various qualities he selects are so selected because of their suitability not so much for the individual of pre-eminent merit as for the average citizen. Genius, as we know it, and its elements figure but little in the list. The virtues have been scientifically chosen—in other words, they have been collected from observed phenomena—the usual scientific method. Aristotle has not analysed the internal working of the human mind and gone to the founts of action themselves. He has rather observed the social organism from without as a detached scientist, and from within as a member of the organism. He has noticed that certain frames of mind and certain attitudes produce the most favourable results or tend to the most favourable developments in society. To these frames of mind or attitudes he gives

[1] For the following pages see Aristotle, *Ethics*, Books II and VII.

names or scientific terms as far as he can. Unlike modern scientists, however, he chooses his terminology from the current language of the day. Where no suitable term exists he but rarely invents a new one. Terms used vaguely in the current language were thus given more precise meanings, and what they described thus became more clearly understood. The effect of this scientific precision and fixing of thought and language in matters of ethics and human behaviour was of immense value to posterity. It has been rightly said of Aristotle that 'his influence upon the forms of language of civilized Europe can hardly be overrated. It is far greater than has ever been exercised by any one man beside.'[1] Aristotle's system of examining and treating the attitudes of mind which he selects as the best virtues for the citizen to cultivate is simple. Each virtue selected is found to be midway between an inadequate and an extreme version of the attitude of mind that it represents. Thus, to take the simplest, Courage is a virtue lying midway between Fear and Foolhardiness. The rest are chosen, it is true, arbitrarily. But the principle of selection in Aristotle's mind is sound; it is based on scientific observation. Those virtues are selected which are the virtues not so much of an individual as of a group. As will be seen later, there are, from our point of view, remarkable omissions. But these omissions are due largely to the changed nature of society, the different system under which we live to-day. An examination of the rest of Aristotle's list leads to interesting results.

Temperance and Liberality are the next two virtues. The former is a mean between Unrestraint and Extreme Asceticism. For this latter extreme Aristotle uses a term meaning Insensibility of a passive kind. There is no adequate word for active Asceticism as we know it. We may infer from this

[1] Sir A. Grant, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, i. 507.

that active Asceticism played little or no part in Greek life, a useful inference.

Liberality is a mean between Prodigality and 'Stinginess'.

Truthfulness and Restraint are two more in the list. Truthfulness is a virtue because it lies midway between two unbalanced frames of mind. In its exaggerated form it is a kind of False Pretension—the term given to it (*alazoneia*) is used sometimes in Greek to denote 'over-responsiveness' or 'over-readiness to sound' in the case of a badly played musical instrument. The other extreme of Truthfulness is 'Irony', which is ignorance purposely affected.

Restraint clearly lies midway between hot temper and impassivity. A man should curb his anger without being quite unresponsive.

Liveliness or Wittiness is, rather to our surprise, included in the list. It is essentially a quality that helped on the life of a social unit. It lies midway between Buffoonery, which is wittiness pushed to an extreme, and Boorishness, which is the absence of all liveliness and wit.

Friendliness, which is fully and closely analysed by Aristotle, holds an important place in the list. The extremes to be avoided are Flattery on the one hand and Quarrelsomeness on the other.

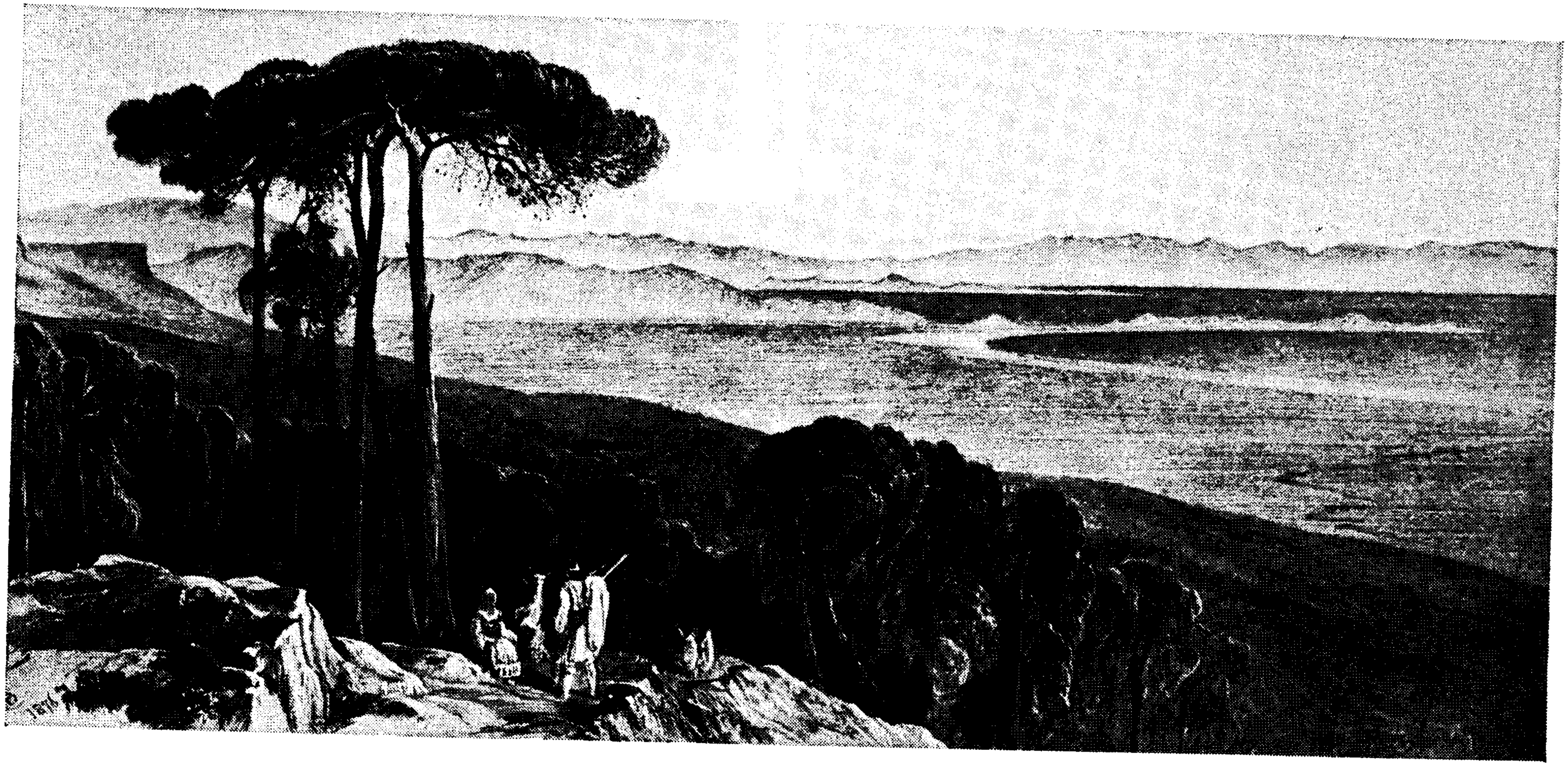
Finally we have three qualities, closely related and remarkable because of the light they throw upon the Greek outlook. They are called Proper Ambition, Magnificence, and Greatness of Spirit. The first lies between a frame of mind that never rests from ambition regardless of friendship and happiness, and one which is impassive and has no ambition at all. Magnificence, an unusual quality *we* think to count as a virtue, means rather 'Doing a thing on a proper scale'.[1] If you entertain a king, see

[1] For a fine description of the social value of such a quality see Demosthenes, *Androtion*, 617.

that you entertain him royally; if a great man visits you, have fitting company to meet him. Polycrates of Samos, says Herodotus, had this virtue more than any other man of his day. He was open-handed and large-minded. Xenophon speaks of a race-horse as having the quality. One of the extremes of which this virtue is a mean is 'want of taste' or lack of interest in the good things of life; a man would so entertain 'on the cheap' or furnish his house 'shoddily'. The other extreme is sheer vulgarity or Bad Taste—the behaviour of the ambitious profiteer who spares no expense and achieves no good result.

Last is Greatness of Spirit, a quality essentially Greek throughout Greek history. It can best be understood from its extremes. Of the latter, one is a kind of puffed-up pride or unsubstantial show. The actual word Aristotle uses is used in Greek for a variety of things. It is used of the sea-foam and of snow, things which give most show and have little substance. 'Sponginess' or 'porousness' is a common literal translation of the word. On the other extreme is Pettiness or Littleness of Spirit. Thus midway between a spirit that is 'spongy' or 'inflated' and one that is withered and petty lies this Greatness of Spirit, Generosity of Soul or Breadth of Mind, whichever we wish to call it. Socrates possessed the quality; he died with no recrimination on his lips and no bitter words. Pericles faced his critics with a breadth of mind that put them to confusion. The History of Thucydides, which holds no spitefulness or rancour, is a fine example of it.

From the observation of his fellow men Aristotle thus picked out what he thought, and what certainly most of his readers would have agreed, were the best social virtues and those most likely to lead to the increase of the amenities of life in a city. Most prominent throughout the finest periods of Greek



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history were the virtues of Temperance, Greatness of Spirit, and Friendliness. The excesses of all three in the same way were uppermost on the occasions when there occurred those brief but black periods of sudden break-down, when morality seemed to have vanished and every social virtue to have been extinguished.

This hard and fast list drawn up by Aristotle may seem to us to be arbitrary, incomplete, and narrow-minded. It certainly has all these three faults. But it is arbitrary only in so far as all classifications are apt to be so; it seems incomplete mainly because it excludes many good qualities and attitudes of mind that are the growth of a later age and other circumstances; it is narrow-minded, perhaps, because all the spiritual aims of past ages seem to be such in comparison with our own.

The gaps in the list are what interest us most. Humility, or anything remotely resembling it, is absent. Self-sacrifice is not there. Charity does not figure in any shape or form, nor Hope, nor Faith. There is an illimitable chasm between our world of ideal behaviour and that of Ancient Greece, it seems.

But the gaps are not so empty as it appears. Humility is to be found in the Aristotelian Temperance, though it is not the abject self-abasement which some people imagine it to be. Charity lies in Liberality, but it is neither the charity that proclaims itself from the hill-tops nor yet that which indulges a secret pride from being hid. Self-sacrifice must, to a certain extent, be latent in the Restraint and Truthfulness of Aristotle's list, though not consciously there. Hope may be found in Courage. Faith alone finds no place at all. If Faith, as St. Paul says, is the ' evidence of things not seen ', its omission is comprehensible. The Greek was too direct, too scientific, too exacting, for it to mean anything to him.

Plato, whose list of virtues was never worked out in detail,

but is in essence the same as that of Aristotle, gives us Courage, Temperance, Justice, and Wisdom and (though unemphasized) Holiness (*Hosiotes*). This virtue of Holiness does not appear in Aristotle. It was not characteristically Greek, and Plato himself was not characteristic of Greece. What Holiness meant exactly to Plato it is hard to say. 'Respect for religious practice' is really the most that it can mean. As such it would approximate almost to Tolerance and so be largely implicit in Temperance. In any case it had no wider meaning and little resembled what Holiness means to us. Aristotle recognized no connexion between established Religion and Ethics. The old cosmology of Pindar and Aeschylus was superseded by a more rational scheme of things. Plato, essentially a mystic, may not have recognized this severance so clearly as Aristotle did. To realize what this separation of Religion and Ethics meant we can find a good example of it in the case of the Orthodox Church to-day, especially in modern Greece, where religion is simply religious observance and has little or no moral teaching attached to it. Sermons and moral instruction are quite incidental in the Orthodox Church and are mainly the affair of laymen.

But there are serious gaps in our own system of the good life, according to the Greek idea. Good Taste is hardly a common attitude of mind to-day. Greatness of Spirit is a virtue that seems negatived by Christian Humility. Magnificence of behaviour seems contrary to our code, because it is essentially an attitude of mind of a limited circle.

But the differences are incidental and not fatal. The Aristotelian list still remains at once a model of social virtues and an illuminating commentary upon the life and thought of the average Greek of those times. From a consideration of all these Greek qualities certain generalizations emerge. What the

Greek condemned above all was impassivity of mind, lack of responsiveness, and shoddiness. 'Illiberality', 'Littleness of Spirit', 'Lack of Proper Ambition', are all wrong qualities: they all lead to stagnation. No vigorous social group can survive their deadening influence. Conversely a true development of the individuality that is not egotism leads to a healthy development of the State. The higher qualities of the self are thus at the back of all the Aristotelian virtues. Greatness of Spirit, above all, means progress and growth to society. Pettiness leads to its disruption. It is remarkable that in all Greek history we hear little either of hypocrisy, shoddiness, or snobbery, the besetting petty sins of modern life. Only once in Greek literature do we hear of anything of the kind. Theophrastus, who wrote a series of sketches of Queer Characters, describes the Greek snob of his day. But his snobbery is political rather than social. He is essentially the old Conservative of a bad type, hating Democracy and longing for the 'good old days'.

From these individual virtues emerged the virtues of society as a whole. Constant activity and liveliness of mind in the citizens led to the development of corporate excellences. Most notable and most remarkable of these was the political freedom ('Freedom of speech' is a literal translation of the word) that was the pride of Periclean Athens. Any man could express publicly any opinion on any subject. In the darkest days of Athenian history the tradition held firm. When the empire of Athens was on the point of collapse, when Athenian might was humbled and almost broken, on the stage and in the streets men could pass any criticism they wished upon the management of state affairs or upon politics or upon religion. The condemnation of Socrates, as we have seen, was the one apparent exception. But his condemnation was one of the results of a sudden and temporary cessation of this right. The

Thirty, justly called Tyrants, were directly responsible for a reign of terror identical with the worst proscriptions of the Roman Republic. That Athens for the greater part of the fifth century should have reached the height of political freedom that she did is a token of her greatness. In England it is barely a generation since the Blasphemy Laws were used to suppress genuine freedom of speech. To-day an accusation of seditious behaviour can make almost similar restrictions possible, while temporary legislation and censorship during the war entirely destroyed freedom of speech for a time. Yet Athens in the middle of a war to the death permitted the performance of the plays of Aristophanes wherein generals and admirals were held up to derision and Athenian policy was subjected to the severest criticism. English freedom has taken over twelve centuries to achieve. Athens achieved hers in one.

But if Greece had brought her social virtues to a pitch of perfection in theory and largely also in practice, her very immaturity led to the growth of social vices as terrible and as disruptive as any in history. In an impartial estimate of the debt we owe to Greece they must not be omitted: from a consideration of her failures we can infer the greatness of her virtues.

Internal political strife and its concomitant of treachery are the two most disruptive factors in Greek history, factors that went far towards the break-up of that long-planned Utopia, the Greek City-State. Pausanias, the traveller, in a sombre passage[1] describes the fatal tendency of Greece to breed traitors within her gates:

> 'That foulest of all crimes,' he says, à propos of the history of the fourth century, 'the betrayal of native land and fellow countrymen for personal gain, was fated to be the source of a series of disasters to the Achaeans as it had been to others.

vii. 10.

Indeed the crime has never been unknown in Greece since time began. . . . The plague of treachery never died out.'

He adds a long list of notorious traitors.

So great and abundant is our evidence for treachery of this nature that we are driven to the conclusion that it was due to some defect or defects inherent in the Greek character. Nothing is worse, said the Greeks themselves, than the moral degeneration of good men. If bad men become worse, we know at least what to expect; but when good men become evil, we are at a loss and the future cannot be foretold. In times of peace it was just possible to control or restrain these outbreaks or to prevent the moral collapse of state or group; but in war-time, when all moral sanctions are loosened, it becomes almost impossible to control this spirit of evil.

'In peace and prosperity', says Thucydides,[1] 'both states and individuals are actuated by higher motives, because they do not fall under the common dominion of imperious necessities; but war, which takes away the comfortable provision of daily life, is a hard master and tends to assimilate men's characters to their conditions.'

One is tempted to believe that Greece might have kept her spiritual grasp of the world if the Peloponnesian War had not taken place. Yet this war itself was part of the price which civilization will always have to pay. Where spiritual ideals and spiritual development vary in quality there will always be the envy and hatred of the perfect by the imperfect. Where three such different varieties of the same culture as Sparta, Corinth, and Athens existed, envy and hatred were sure to be found. Gradually the clash of ideals changed to a clash of arms. But it was from within that disruption and dismember-

[1] iii. 82 (Jowett's translation).

ment came. Strife within cities spread to strife between states and so to divisions that grew and multiplied and were always changing. Gibbon, summarizing the causes of the fall of Rome from her greatness, reproduces for his readers conditions which, originating from the same reasons, were almost identical with the conditions that brought about the fall of Greece.

'Under the dominion of the Greek and French emperors', he says, 'the peace of the city was disturbed by accidental though frequent seditions; it is from the decline of the latter, from the beginning of the tenth century, that we may date the licentiousness of private war, which violated with impunity the laws of the Code and the Gospel, without respecting the majesty of the absent sovereign or the presence and person of the vicar of Christ. In a dark period of five hundred years, Rome was perpetually afflicted by the sanguinary quarrels of the nobles and people, the Guelphs and Ghibelines, the Colonna and Ursini.'[1]

The first serious form of this spirit of sedition that made its appearance in Greece, called by the Greeks 'stasis' (or 'secession'), was in the year 427 B.C., when Greece had been involved in internal war for four years. Thucydides, with the acuteness of perception that makes him the greatest of all historians, saw and foretold that it was the germ of the destruction of all Greek culture. By an irony of Fate the beautiful island of Corfu chanced to be the scene of the drama, a setting as exquisite as the tragedy was awful.

'This seemed to be the worst of all revolutions,' says the historian,[2] 'because it was the first.'

From the sixth century until this time there had been what Gibbon calls 'accidental though frequent seditions', but this

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. 71, sec. 4.
[2] iii. 81.

sedition of Corfu was of a kind which Thucydides immediately recognized as a real scourge of civilization. Above all, it was a sedition that was the worse because it took place in war-time without any direct connexion with military events, because it occurred when moral sanctions were shaken and men's characters were 'assimilated to their conditions'.

'This revolution', says Thucydides,[1] 'gave birth to every form of wickedness in Hellas. The simplicity which is so large an element in a noble nature, was laughed to scorn and disappeared. An attitude of perfidious antagonism everywhere prevailed; for there was no word binding enough nor oath terrible enough to reconcile enemies. . . . Inferior intellects generally succeeded best, for, aware of their deficiencies and fearing the capacity of their opponents . . . they struck boldly and at once. But the cleverer sort, presuming in their arrogance that they would be aware in time and disdaining to act when they could think, were taken off their guard and easily destroyed.'

Thus in a small place and on a small scale Greece saw its coming ruin enacted; all the elements of the larger tragedy were there, but the actors were as yet but few. Thucydides was probably not the only man who saw the way in which things were trending. But all who saw were powerless. The break-up had begun, and from 427 B.C. onwards the history of Greece is a record, not of development and advance, but of a fight against the disintegrating factors within, moral, political, and social.

What was begun in the fifth century increased and multiplied in the fourth. We have no Thucydides to put his finger on the vital spots and tell us grimly but clearly how events were shaping. Our history of the fourth century lies in a variety of books of moderate worth written by men whose historical ability lay rather in the recording than in the interpretation of facts. Inscriptions, perhaps, give us a clearer picture of

[1] iii. 83.

things—and they are numerous for this period. From one such we get an insight into the state of affairs in a group of small Greek cities in Crete. The two cities of Dreros and Cnossos were in alliance together against a third which lay between them—Lyttos. What had taken place we do not know for certain, because our only record is in the inscriptions, but it appears that Lyttos had occupied territory claimed by Dreros. Our inscription [1] preserves for us an oath sworn by the young men of Dreros. For sheer grim hatred unrelieved by any element of forgiveness it is hard to find a parallel, unless it be in the notorious German Hymn of Hate. The oath runs thus :

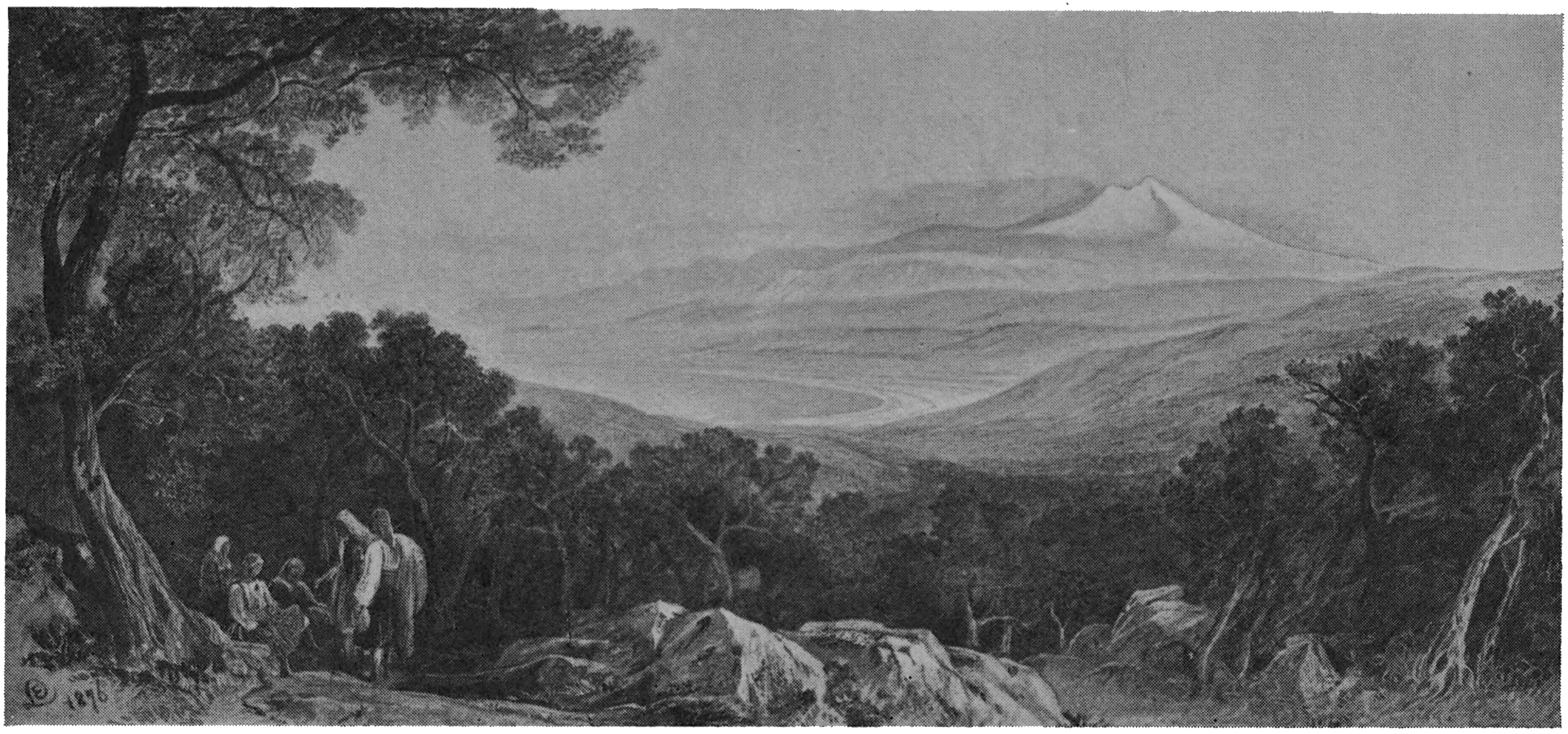
'This is the oath of the young men (of Dreros) not yet of age for military service, to the number of a hundred and eighty :

'"I swear by Hestia of the Prytaneium, by Zeus Agoraios, Zeus Tallaios, by Delphinian Apollo, by Athena Guardian of the city, by Pythian Apollo, by Leto, by Artemis, by Ares, by Aphrodite, by Hermes, by the Sun, by Britomartis, by Phoenix, by Amphiona, by Earth and Heaven, by Heroes male and female, by springs and rivers and all gods male and female that I will never bear good will towards the men of the city of Lyttos in any act or plan of mine, either by night or by day, and I will contrive evil as far as in me lies against the city of the men of Lyttos." '

More follows in the same strain, giving in full the penalties resulting from the breaking of the oath. Furthermore, each of the youths is to plant an olive tree in the territory conquered back from Lyttos and to see to its tending and growth, subject to a severe penalty.

Surely history has nothing worse to record than this solemn compact to do evil in the name of all the gods of Greece,

[1] Collitz and Bechtel's *Greek Inscriptions*, No. 4952



MOUNT IDA IN CRETE

old and new, local and universal. The sedition of Corfu had set the ball rolling. Away in the mountain fastnesses of Crete these tiny cities, in working their own ruin, were working that of Greece as well.

It forms a grim comment that by the irony of fate this very city of Dreros was almost destroyed by internal civil strife during the ensuing century and had to appeal for arbitration to its ancient enemy Lyttos. The arbitrators who came thence saw, in the words of a later inscription, 'how everything was ruined and in the utmost confusion and all sanctions destroyed'. They were publicly hailed as 'saviours, helpers, and protectors'.

That so great changes in one little city could have taken place in a century, an eternal oath sworn and forsworn, a neighbour cursed for ever and then hailed as a saviour, is eloquent testimony to the moral collapse of the times.

For us this record of decay is, or should be, of inestimable value for our own guidance. We have before us the picture, with all its detail remorselessly and pitilessly set down, of a culture at its prime slowly and inexorably declining, breaking up and finally frittering away its greatness in a hundred minor futilities. What makes the tragedy the more worth our study is that it is the tragedy of a people who for the first time in the history of the world brought to the highest pitch of perfection the majority of the activities of the human spirit. We can learn the more from our study of it because we ourselves have followed to a very large extent the same lines of development and because few, if any, of the spiritual activities of ancient Greece are alien to our own.

But if Thucydides shows the way in which Greece began to decline, he does not, because he cannot, tell us the reasons. He gives us the 'How' but not the 'Why'. For the reasons for the decline of Greece we must consult a variety of authorities,

political, biological, racial, and physical, and we thus find ourselves at once faced with a variety of theories as to the decline of Greek culture, adequate and inadequate, serious and fantastic, probable and improbable.

Unfortunately our authorities are not all of equal merit and the evidence shows gaps. Thus we know much of the political and racial conditions, but little of the biological and physical. It has, therefore, been possible, by elaborating one of these aspects at the expense of the rest, to produce quite plausible theories to explain the downfall of Greek culture. It has been explained often on political grounds as the natural decadence of societies which were politically corrupt and unstable; Thucydides in his account of the Corcyrean revolt gives the hint.

Biological reasons have been suggested, as, for instance, that the purity of Greek stock was early contaminated, leading later to a lowering of the standard. One recent suggestion [1] places the beginning of the decadence as early as Cleisthenes, when Athens, destined by the purity of her stock and her elaborate tribal system of inbreeding to be the leader of Hellas, broke her traditions by admitting foreigners in large numbers to the citizenship. The result of this was a thinning out of her stock and a weakening of her national character which became evident within two generations.

Racial reasons are also adduced. Here the commencement of the decay is put later. The rise of the kingdom of Macedon led to the infusion of Greek blood with a barbarian strain and to the weakening of manners and morals by the adoption of Macedonian and Oriental customs.[2]

[1] See 'Presidential Address' of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, *Report, 1914*, p. 34.

[2] This seems the view of Ferguson in his *Hellenistic Athens*.

Explanations are suggested on physical grounds. There are general reasons of climatic change that affected the character of the people. During the last century B.C. and the early centuries of the Christian era there is believed to have been a period of marked aridity in Europe and Asia. Such a change would have led to unrest and suffering which in turn would have produced political changes.[1]

Special reasons may also have operated. The appearance of malaria in Greece at a fairly early time is held by many to have affected the minds and morals of the Greeks so severely that they were never able subsequently to recover their original vigour. Exponents of this theory find proof in the decadence and despondency which are evident in the Literature and Philosophy of Hellenistic times and in the decay of morals and taste which seems to have set in by the fourth and third centuries B.C.[2]

While all these explanations are interesting, none seems either satisfactory or adequate. On the other hand, none of them seems false.

It seems safer to combine them all without giving the obviously weaker theories an undue predominance. Greek political systems had indeed become corrupt by the end of the Peloponnesian War. The Spartan pretence of freeing the late dependencies of Athens was but a travesty of her original intentions. The foundation of the second Athenian Empire which resulted from the collapse of Spartan idealism was no more honest or ideal than the campaign of the Spartan commissioners after the fall of Athens. The intrigues of Greek states with Persia at the close of the Peloponnesian War and their bargaining with barbarian Thracians and Macedonians

[1] See Elsworth Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia.*

[2] See Ross and Jones, *Malaria and Greek History.*

during the first half of the fourth century show the level to which Greek nationalism had sunk. The great days were indeed over. This was directly the result of thirty demoralizing years of war and hatred.

To this political decadence the decadence of stock had undoubtedly contributed to some limited extent. Greece of the sixth century was a little world of heroes and artists of the bluest blood and the highest ambitions; but it yet has to be proved that the introduction of new blood did not bring as much benefit as it caused damage to the older stock. Thueydides himself, who was in character most characteristic of his time, was born of a Thracian mother, and many of the most prominent men of the fifth century had foreign blood in their veins.

The rise of the kingdom of Macedon brought great changes of character and of outlook in Greece, but they were changes of degree rather than of kind, for there is no adequate reason yet for believing that the Macedonians were not of the same stock as that from which the Greeks were for the most part sprung. Besides, the stock of Macedon, if uncouth and apparently barbaric, was at any rate vigorous and not decadent. No more brilliant group of men has ever been seen in so short a period of history than Alexander and his companions. Only in so far as the new vigour of the Macedonians destroyed the old vigour of Greece and left the destinies of the world in the hands of a few young and ambitious men can it be said that Macedon contributed to the break-up of Greece.

Of malaria and such special causes our evidence is unreliable and largely unsafe. We are told that the disease had taken a firm hold of Central Greece by the fourth century B.C. Yet we find the plain of Marathon, where to-day the inhabitants are 100 per cent. malarial, was the country estate and contained

the country house of Herodes Atticus, the millionaire, at a date as late as the second century A.D., a fact which renders it most unlikely that Attica was seriously malarial even at that late date.

On the other hand, the great Plague of Athens and all the campaigning diseases must have gone far to undermine the stamina of the Greeks at the end of the fifth century and the foreign campaigns of the fourth must have introduced fresh complaints. It is noteworthy that all the great healing sanctuaries of Asklepios begin to flourish only in the fourth century.

General causes, such as changes of climatic conditions, seem to be substantiated in fact, and must be taken seriously into consideration as long as they are considered only as contributory causes.

The Greek was thus at the mercy of certain conditions, over some of which he had no control. His decadence and the collapse of the culture which he had initiated were due, it seems, to the same causes as those which made the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War inevitable, and of these the most cogent was the fact that his race was outstripping its neighbours just as Athens had begun to outstrip her sister states. A great city cannot thrive in a wilderness unless it conquers the wilderness; if it does not prevail, the wilderness comes once more into its own. Greece stood for a while like an embattled city set in a desert of barbarism. She had none of the material means of ensuring her position, and she neglected even the weeds that sprang up within her own walls. Gradually, tower by tower, her battlements fell and there were none to rebuild them.

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NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispiece. Head of a youth from Beneventum, now in the Louvre at Paris. The head is in bronze and comes, in all probability, from a complete bronze statue. It is in the finest style of the middle of the fifth century B.C. and belongs to the Attic school. It shows the ideal type of *Greek* sculpture and, both in conception and in technique, is representative of the best that *Greek* art produced.

On title-page. Small bronze figure, probably a dedication from one of the shrines on the Acropolis, representing a winged Victory. This figure is one of the finest small *Greek* bronzes of the sixth century and belongs to the Ionic school of art. It was probably made at Athens during the government of Peisistratus or that of his sons and belongs to the period 530 to 520 B.C. It is now in the National Museum at Athens.

The Thracian coast looking eastwards from the site of an ancient town near the mouth of the river Hebrus. The town was probably Mesembria, near Maroneia, and is situated about a hundred feet above the sea on a fertile plateau. (p. 18.)

The gulf of Nauplia and the plain of Argos from Mycenae. The town in the plain at the right of the picture is Argos with its citadel rising above it. The cliff at the left of the picture is the citadel of Nauplia. The time is early spring. (From a watercolour now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. There is a large copy in oils of this picture now at Trinity College, Cambridge. Another copy in water-colours is in private possession at Oxford.) (p. 25.)

Mount Oeta seen from Lamia. The view is taken from a hill just west of Lamia and looks towards the west.. To the right of the picture the Spercheius valley runs up into Aetolia. In front is the plain of Malis, through which the river Spercheius flows. At the back rises Mount Oeta, the most formidable barrier that guards the entry into *Greece*. Two ways only lead past it, one on the east round its eastern end and through the pass of Thermopylae, another directly through its foothills near Thermopylae by way of the Asopus ravine. The former is the only route practicable for an army. (From a photo by M. C. Picard.) (p. 27.)

An olive grove in Attica. This is a characteristic scene in the plains of Attica. The trees are about twenty years old. (p. 39.)

The plain of Sparta, looking south-west. The view is taken from the acropolis of Sparta near the Roman theatre. The modern town of Sparta lies in the plain on the left of the picture. Mount Taygetus rises above the plain on the right. The picture was painted in the spring and the snow is still on Taygetus. (From a watercolour by Edward Lear, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.) (p. 47.)

The Parthenon. The view is taken from inside the building facing towards the north-east. The hill of Lycabettus is seen in the background. The columns in the foreground represent the north-eastern corner of the Parthenon. (p. 51.)

The city of Chalkis in Euboea. To the left of the town is seen the old bridge over the Euripus and the mediaeval castle which guarded it. This castle is now destroyed. The mountain at the right of the picture is Mount Dirphys. The picture is taken from the coast of Boeotia, not far from the bay of Aulis. The time is about midsummer. (From a watercolour by Edward Lear, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.) (p. 55.)

The temple of Olympian Zeus just east of the Acropolis at Athens. This temple was commenced in the time of Peisistratus in the sixth century B.C., but remained unfinished until the time of Hadrian in the second century A.D. The existing columns belong to the latter period.

Behind the temple rises Mount Hymettus, covered with snow. The time is winter. (p. 63.)

The bay and plain of Marathon from the northern slopes of Mount Pentelicus. The hills of Euboea are seen in the distance. The Persian fleet anchored in the sickle-shaped bay, and the battle was fought in the plain adjoining. (From a watercolour by Edward Lear, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.) (p. 78.)

Mount Ida in Crete, seen from the west. The foreground shows the well-wooded nature of this part of Crete. (From a watercolour by Edward Lear, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.) (p. 86.)

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