

BALLADS OF HELLAS

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Ballads of Hellas by W. H. Mills

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W. H. MILLS

**BALLADS
OF HELLAS**

BALLADS OF HELLAS.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

THE following versifications of three of the principal battle-stories of Greek History are intended for School use. I hope that, as running commentaries on the text of the original accounts, they will meet, so far as they go, the difficulty that small boys experience in grasping the subject-matter of their translation-work, and that they will also be useful as repetition verse. I have of course imitated (*longo intervallo*) Lord Macaulay's 'Lays of Ancient Rome,' but I have not, consciously at least, borrowed more than their metre and general idea; and, my object being purely scholastic, have had no higher poetical aim than a certain amount of run and swing in the verse — enough, it is hoped, to attract the interest and attention of boys. The original accounts in Herodotus and Xenophon I have had constantly before me; and I have also

consulted with advantage Mr. Keightley's and Dr. Smith's Histories of Greece, and Mr. Phillpotts' Selections from Xenophon. Incidental obligations are acknowledged where they occur, but I must take this opportunity of thanking generally several friends who have helped me with suggestions and kindly encouragement. The spelling of Greek Proper Nouns appears to be in a somewhat unsatisfactory state of transition, and I have found it difficult to lay down any fixed rule for myself in the matter. One of my principles, however, has been not to alter the commonly received forms of the more familiar names. I may say, in conclusion, that I have tested the ballads by actual use, and am quite convinced of the value of the principle on which they have been written. I can only hope that numerous faults of execution will not seriously detract from that value.

W. H. M.

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“ The mountains look on Marathon,
And Marathon looks on the sea ;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free ;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.”

LORD BYRON.

MARATHON.

I.

WRATHFUL is Persia's monarch,
Wrathful the Persian court,
For post on post is bringing
Tidings of dire import:
How that the sons of Athens,
From Hellas' distant strand,
Have sacked and burned fair Sardes,
Pride of the Lydian land.

II.

"Who are these sons of Athens?"—
In scorn Darius cries;
He takes his bow; the arrow
Flies hurtling to the skies;
"Grant me"—his prayer indignant—
"Great Ormuzd, lord of light,
That I may take full vengeance,
And break proud Athens' might."