

ELEMENTARY GREEK EDUCATION

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Elementary Greek Education by Frederick H. Lane

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—BY—

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PRINCIPAL OF BABYLON UNION SCHOOL



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PREFACE

This Essay on Elementary Greek Education is the amplification of a paper prepared as a part of the class work of the writer while a student in the classes of Dr. James M. Milne of the Oneonta Normal School. The information here collected is derived from sources not accessible to the average reader and while not the result of original research in all cases, has enough of the author's own investigation and enough of arrangement and presentation of diffuse material to induce the hope that it may not be without value to his fellow-teachers and to warrant its foisting on an indulgent public.

Elementary Greek Education

INTRODUCTION

From ancient Greece all the streams which swell the current of modern civilization have proceeded. Greek philosophy, painting, architecture, history, sculpture, poetry and oratory have furnished suggestion and inspiration for all the centuries since; pedagogy should absorb what it may. If there are mistakes to avoid, practices to modify, or successes to imitate, the knowledge should be obtained and advantage taken. That the foundation of all other achievements which glorify the Hellenic name must have been in the educational system, is sufficient enticement for its study.

Greece proper included only that portion of the peninsula lying between the parallels $36^{\circ} 30'$ and 40° north latitude, about that of Virginia and Maryland, and was in extent about one-half the size of Pennsylvania. It had a rich diversity of surface, a delight-

ful and equable climate and a coast line much indented. A study of the physical features alone would give a key to the organization of its inhabitants. The natural divisions of the land must produce nations differing in customs and tendencies, yet the narrow limits of the whole country and the proximity of neighboring peoples precluded an essentially distinct language or an entire dissimilarity of customs. In harmony with this, Greece was peopled by a race allied in language and religion, but divided by differences of dialect, and by the existence, here and there, of various minor deities essentially local.

During the Heroic (Legendary) Age, Greece was inhabited by four seemingly distinct nationalities,—Dorians, Æolians, Ionians, and Achæans. Their genealogy was traced in myth directly from Prometheus, the parallel of the Hebrew Adam. After the "general deluge" which Zeus sent upon the earth in consequence of the iniquity of the "brazen race," Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, preserved by an ark which Prometheus, the father of Deucalion, had forewarned them to build, found themselves the

sole inhabitants of deserted Greece. Descending from Mt. Parnassus where their ark had rested after the subsidence of the nine days flood, they prayed that the land might again be relieved of its solitude by the creation of a race of men. In answer to their petition Zeus directed them to gather stones from the ground and cast them over their shoulders. Those cast by Pyrrha became women, those by Deucalion, men. Thus was created what in Latin and Greek literature, is called the "stony race of men."

The offspring of Deucalion and Pyrrha were two sons, Hellen and Amphictyon, and a daughter, Protogeneia. Hellen had three sons, Dorus, Æolus, and Xuthus. Between these three Greece or *Hellas* was divided, Æolus reigning in Thessaly, and Dorus in the country lying north of the Corinthian Gulf, opposite Peloponnésus. To Xuthus, two sons were born, Achæus and Ión, between whom his territory of the Peloponnésus was divided. Thus originated the four tribes, to all of whom, however, was applied the name Hellenes, from their common ancestor.

Besides the fraternal feeling which their



supposed ancestry would engender, the Amphictyonic Council, which met semi-annually in the spring at Delphi, and in the autumn at Anthela, near Thermopylae, the national games, and a common interest in the Delphic oracle all conspired to unify the varied tendencies of each division into an approximately general aim. The aim was that thorough individualization should be modified by mutual interdependence. The realization of this ideal placed Greece foremost among the nations whose education has been distinctly "national."

In that time which the epic poets have rendered immortal as preëminently the "Age of Heroes," is found the first phase of Greek Education. This period extends from the darkness of an unknown past, down through the legendary days, misty, yet luminous with the names of Hercules, Eurystheus, Jason, Achilles, Agamemnon, Ulysses, Hector and Meleager; it comes forth into light with the return of the Heracleidæ (Dorian Migration); and sinks into historical oblivion during the three centuries immediately preceding the first recorded Olympiad, 776 B. C.