

**COLLINS' SCHOOL SERIES. A HISTORY  
OF GREECE FOR JUNIOR CLASSES,  
WITH AN APPENDIX GIVING A SKETCH  
OF THE HISTORY FROM THE ROMAN  
CONQUEST TO THE PRESENT DAY**

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**LEONHARD SCHMITZ**

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HISTORY OF GREECE.

Collins' School Series.

A

# HISTORY OF GREECE

FOR

JUNIOR CLASSES,

BY

LEONHARD SCHMITZ, LL.D.,

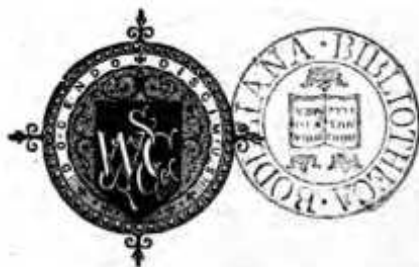
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WITH AN APPENDIX,

GIVING A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY FROM THE ROMAN CONQUEST  
TO THE PRESENT DAY,

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HEAD OF THE OLYMPIAN ZEUS.

## HISTORY OF GREECE.

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### INTRODUCTION.

THE first people we meet with at the very threshold of European history are the Greeks, or, as they called themselves, Hellenes, occupying the south-eastern peninsula of our Continent. At the time when they first appear in history, they were not yet known by any name common to them all, each tribe having its own special name; and it was not till between 800 and 700 years B.C. that the name Hellenes was applied to the whole nation, extending from the Cambunian mountains in the north to the southern extremity, and over the adjacent islands. In the earliest times the greater part of the country was inhabited by a race called the *Pelasgians*, of whom a great deal has been written, but very little is known. It is certain, however, that they were not materially different from the Hellenes, and belonged to the same race as they, for in the course of time, and without any wars or violent commotions, we find them united with the Hellenes into one nation, speaking everywhere essentially the same language, and entertaining essentially the same views about

their gods. The differences in this respect appearing in the different parts of the country, so far as the language is concerned, were only of a dialectical nature; and in like manner, though some of their gods were worshipped in one district more particularly than in others, yet all were recognised in all parts of the country.

This nation of the Hellenes is one of the most remarkable, if not the most remarkable, among the civilised peoples of the earth, and has exercised both on contemporary nations and upon posterity an influence which it is scarcely possible to over-estimate. They were endowed by nature with the rarest qualities both of mind and body; their minds were ever active and striving to improve upon what they had already attained; they attempted to solve the loftiest problems in religion, philosophy, art, and literature; they never rested satisfied with what they had achieved, but were ever eager to advance and improve. Nothing was stationary with them, and although they disdained everything that was foreign, which they called barbarous, yet they never scrupled to adopt whatever they found useful or beneficial among the barbarians, and so to assimilate it as to give it the stamp of their own character and genius. They did not, indeed, always succeed in their lofty aspirations after perfection, for in their religion they did not arrive at the idea of one God as the creator and preserver of the universe; in their philosophy they at once boldly grappled with the highest problems, which even yet are awaiting their solution; and in their love of freedom they passed through all the constitutional changes from royalty to a wild and unbridled democracy, until their political life was extinguished by the overwhelming power of Rome. But in the arts and literature, they attained an eminence which has never been surpassed and hardly equalled. The Greeks, therefore, are a noble example of what human ingenuity and perseverance can accomplish, and that, too, at a period when the best part of the human race may be said to have been still in its infancy. They have, moreover, *developed a language* which, by its beauty, subtlety, and flexi-

bility, is capable of expressing the most delicate shades of human thought, and still commands universal admiration.

We naturally ask, Who were these Hellenes? When and whence did they come into Europe? Their own belief in later times was that they had sprung from the soil on which they lived; nay, some of them maintained that they were older than the moon—so completely had they forgotten their origin and their past history. But their language and their religious ideas incontrovertibly show that they were a branch of the great Aryan family of nations, which also includes the Hindoos, Persians, Armenians, Italians, Slavonians, Germans, and Kelta. The Greek language, not only in its roots, but even in its inflections, bears a more or less close resemblance to the languages of the nations just enumerated, and thus proves that they are all descended from one common stock. All circumstances confirm the now universal belief that they immigrated into Europe from Asia, and descended into the peninsula of Greece from the north. When this immigration took place it is impossible to ascertain; but if we may venture a guess, it would seem that the time of their arrival in Europe may be fixed at about 2000 years before the Christian era.

The nearest kinsmen of the Hellenes were the inhabitants of the greater part of Italy—that is, those Italians who spoke Latin, or a dialect of Latin, for the resemblance between the Latin and the Greek languages is so great and so striking that we are forced to suppose that the nations speaking them formed at one time only one people which afterwards broke up into two branches, one occupying the peninsula of Greece, and the other that of Italy; and in each country they again became divided into a number of tribes speaking different dialects. The country occupied by the Hellenes, *Hellas* or Greece, is very small, and on the whole, mountainous, but it contains some very fertile plains. It has scarcely any navigable river, but to compensate for this, the country abounds in excellent bays and harbours, facilitating the intercourse with the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean. When they