

**GREEK LIFE; AN ACCOUNT
OF PAST AND
CONTEMPORARY
CONDITIONS AND PROGRESS**

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Greek life; an account of past and contemporary conditions and progress by John M. Hall

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Edited and Arranged by
JOHN M. HALL

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PREFACE

THE world has long ceased to qualify influences and power by the size of a country or of occurrences by their limited theater of action. The ship in five minutes crosses the waters where a century ago was fought the battle of Trafalger, which changed the destinies of Europe; and on a spot scarcely large enough for a garden the Greeks at Marathon won a victory which saved the liberties of Europe for all time. In this little book we are to sketch the panorama of the rise and evolution of a little land, the impress of whose institutions, literature, and art is to be found in every part of the civilized world. The world has special need to read to-day the story of this wonderful land, lest in these times of material glory we forget—forget that the statue, the poem, and the things of the higher life shall outlast factories and fortunes. This is a little land, and so small as not to be considered by the “concert of nations,” but the vigor and grace of its imperishable monuments compel all nations to sit at its feet. No liberal education is ever complete without knowing this land and absorbing from its culture. When planning for the Bay View students to spend a part of a year in Greece, wide search was made for a book that brought the past and the present in brief and delightful review, but none could be found. Volumes of deep learning, and for readers

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who are specialists, abound, but these were not adapted to our use. And so this book has been prepared in the scope and plan of companion volumes on "England" and "The United States," to give a comprehensive view in a few pleasant hours. The canvass is not large, but it has its advantages. Here, by almost a single glance we can make out all the features of the wondrous landscape of Greek history and life. Many of the chapters have been especially prepared for the book, while others have been gathered from various reliable sources, and a key-letter at the end of each refers the reader to a page at the end of the book where due credit is given. Liberty has been taken to revise and correct the material to date, to eliminate unimportant matter, and to edit the whole in the interest of a smooth and harmonious fabric.

J. M. HALL.

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GREEK LIFE

CHAPTER I

THE GEOGRAPHY OF GREECE.

VERY many students and many casual readers have been inclined to pass slightly over the geography of Greece as something inconsequential, while, in reality, it is of the utmost importance. It is impossible to understand Greek history or Greek story without a clear knowledge of Greek geography; above all, the way in which the sea, mountain, and land locked in each other, influenced the national temper, and developed fundamental differences of character. A multitude of brilliant granules without cohesion, a string of miniature states with no more intimate connection than a string of beads that slide up and down a necklace, constituted the "Greece" of the ancients—a name that originally belonged to a single tribe on the north-western coast, and applied by the Romans indiscriminately to the inhabitants of the whole peninsula. For, though all these people whom we call "Greeks" spoke generally the same language, with unimportant differences, possessed the same gods, and had the same sharp and mobile physiognomies; though they worshiped and fought and wrestled and built together, and were

each and all characterized by the same gifts of head and heart; though they loved and hated and wedded in common words, and had an ancestral pride that counted back to a common origin, yet, in spite of all these bonds, in spite of common speech, common customs, common playgrounds, common ancestry, they never did and never could evolve a code or a system of legislation common to them all; and they never did and never could, even in the presence of the most imminent perils, constitute one state. Each must be by itself; each was a law and world unto itself; each developed only the pronoun of the first person—I—till it rose into a gigantic and overshadowing selfishness, like the image in the vision of Daniel, and ended in the ruin and desolation of Greece. And much, if not all, of this difference arose from the peculiar geography of Greece.

The Greek settlements ran like a line of light almost entirely round the Mediterranean Sea; but Greece thickest and densest, Greece fundamental and essential, lay on the peninsular leg of a geographical monster, projected into the sea by the kingdoms of Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece, and this leg was washed on the east by the Ægæan and on the west by the Ionian Sea—a leg composed of almost as many joints as the leg of an animal, and terminating in the Peloponnesus with its quadruple claws outspread on the Mediterranean. On the map three spider-web lines of latitude are festooned across the sea—three loops, one might well call them, hung on the rotundity of the