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MACEDONIA

A PLEA FOR THE PRIMITIVE

Simplicity is Nature's first step and the last of Art.

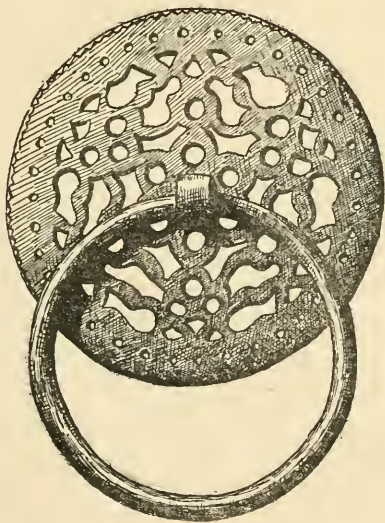
P. J. BAILEY.



MACEDONIAN NATIVE.

MACEDONIA

A PLEA FOR THE PRIMITIVE
BY A. GOFF AND HUGH A.
FAWCETT, M.R.C.S., D.P.H.
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
HUGH A. FAWCETT ◊ ◊ ◊



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INTRODUCTION

WHILST, in course of time, relatives and friends of those who fought with the British Army on the various fronts will have opportunities of paying visits to most of the theatres of war and of reviewing the scenes and surroundings in which their husbands, sons and brothers moved and fought, it is extremely doubtful whether such facilities for introduction to Macedonia will ever be available. There is one paramount reason for this ; for whereas such distant fields as Palestine and Mesopotamia will in due time be opened up and exploited by British enterprise, and rendered safe for travel by British custodianship, no such happy feature is likely to await Macedonia. Before the war the mountain fastnesses provided convenient retreats for brigands, no tracks outside the environs of a large town could be considered safe, and, even on the few broad highways, a rencontre with footpads was a contingency which it was inadvisable to ignore. Even so soon after the cessation of hostilities as November, 1918, there were ominous signs that the country was about to

resume its pristine state of semi-barbarism, so that although, thanks to prolonged Allied occupation of the territory, travelling facilities have been improved by the provision of additional roads and railways, it is probable that only the adventurous few will dare to penetrate far into a country whence egress might have to be effected by payment of a considerable ransom.

Undoubtedly, therefore, Macedonia is a country at whose portals the intending tourist will pause long and thoughtfully; for this reason, it is hoped that this volume may supply a much-needed want to those who, having ambled painfully over the cobbles of the Salonika streets, having toiled under a broiling sun on the arid plains and the mosquito-bearing swamps of the Struma, or having assailed the almost impregnable heights of Doiran, find themselves unable to depict the country, its inhabitants or its climate precisely as they found them. To such we venture to hope that this treatise may appeal, as much by the scenes and memories it may reconstruct and re-awaken as by the enlightenment it may provide for their friends. No less to that vast public whose interest in Macedonia has been no more deeply stirred than by the meagre information conveyed in the plain, much-censored and unpicturesque reports of the Salonika Army, we dedicate our efforts, in the hope that they will afford interest, instruction and enter-

tainment concerning a country which has hitherto remained almost a closed book.

The writers' observations extend over a sojourn of three years, during which period the most remote corners of the country have been probed, and manifold opportunities presented of studying the native at close quarters. So fortunate were the authors in their combined travels and experiences, comprising as they did every part of the former British front in Macedonia and an exhaustive itinerary of the city of Salonika itself, that they have been enabled to compile what is believed to be, from a non-political and non-military standpoint, the first detailed description of Macedonia.

Touching only lightly on the war, and then only when necessary for the purpose of the narrative, this book will have as its aim the presentation to its readers of a true picture of Macedonia—its wild grandeur and natural charm, its interesting antiquity and simple art, its picturesque peasantry and their primitive existence.

FOREWORD

IT seems almost incredible that a country, which at one time boasted sovereignty over half the known world, for the last few centuries should have groaned under the heel of Turkish oppression. It appears equally unjust that a nation which produced such warriors as Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great should have degenerated into a vassal State with a hybrid population. Yet, such is Macedonia. Its unique geographical position, once no doubt partly the source of its great strength, has proved its undoing. It marks the spot where Westernisation, baulked by the proud obstinacy and racial intolerance of the Turk, has reached its limit. For years Macedonia was the buffer state of East and West and, as such, suffered all the cruelties and all the tortures which seem to be the inevitable concomitants of the religious fanaticism of the Near East. Proud, narrow-minded and haughty himself, the Turk ruled by the most oppressive measures over an ignorant and dull-witted race. With a corrupt bureaucracy he combined the negation of order and justice. Such, in brief, were the political

disadvantages of the Macedonian up to a few years ago.

The end of the second Balkan War in 1913 saw the reversion of Macedonia to Greek rule and a slight mitigation in the hard lot of the inhabitants. The brief intervening period preceding the outbreak of the Great European War in 1914 scarcely allowed the Greeks sufficient time to effect any radical alteration in the conditions of the inhabitants. The latter, however, at once experienced a greater tolerance and freedom under the Greek régime, but there has been no general improvement in the standard of civilization, no definite up-raising of the native character, as a result of the transference of power.

Of the effects of the climate in moulding the native character, much might be written. The latitude in which Macedonia is situated renders it liable to violent extremes of heat and cold, and the rigours of a Russian winter will vie with the heat of a tropical summer to produce the greater impression on the inhabitants. Accustomed to the most harsh and inconsiderate treatment from both Nature and man, the Macedonian has developed a hardihood and a resignation to long-suffering which at once excites one's sympathy, one's admiration and one's compassion.

Marked by numerous mountain ranges, with here and there the intervention of a narrow, green valley or fertile plateau, Macedonia boasts

only a thin population which is necessarily confined, for its means of livelihood, almost entirely to the plains. Here, although escaping the worst of the hardships of the winter, the peasants are relentlessly pursued by an aftermath in the shape of pests and disease. The melting snows of the mountains and the heavy rain-storms of the spring achieve their natural end in swollen rivers and marshy swamps which are fostered and maintained by an entire lack of irrigation. The resulting stagnant pools, together with the heavily-shaded ravines, are the happy hatching-ground of mosquitoes, which ultimately become the carriers of malaria. Consequently, most natives of Macedonia are probably malaria carriers, so that each fresh generation of mosquitoes has no difficulty in infecting itself and thus assisting in the dissemination of the fever. For the native, however, continuous infection seems to have produced a chronic condition of semi-immunity. Certainly, with him, malaria is less of a scourge than it was with the British troops in Macedonia. Sand-fly fever, enteric and dysentery are other diseases which are indigenous to the country, but to which the native is less of a victim than was the British soldier. Cholera epidemics, too, are not unknown—indeed, at one period of its history they were an almost triennial experience in Salonika. Last, but by no means least, in this woeful tale of disease, is plague, which

has more than once decimated the population of these parts.

Macedonia has experienced more vicissitudes, probably, than any other country in Europe. Apart from epidemics, massacres and invasion, earthquakes have often rent the land in twain and fire has several times destroyed its chief city, Salonika. Moreover, in virtue of the wars which have been waged on its soil, Macedonia may not inaptly be described as the cock-pit of the Near East. In comparing it with Belgium in this respect, however, one is naturally led to inquire why so much blood should have been shed in the conquest of a country which is so comparatively poor in natural resources. The prize, however, has always undoubtedly been Salonika—sometimes alluded to as the “Pearl of the *Ægean*,” a name which would certainly appeal to any artist who has admired its appearance from the sea. Indubitably, however, it was its importance as a port of commerce and as a military stronghold which excited the avarice of the warrior-adventurer. With a fine natural harbour and a deep sea-frontage, Salonika is the only good port for the whole of the Balkan States. With the exception of the lesser port of Kavalla and a few mountain passes, it is the only means of export for the whole of Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria; and, naturally, agricultural produce of all kinds finds its way to its historic shore.

The contour of the country is bold and magnificent. Its volcanic nature is clearly exemplified in outlines which are as irregular as they are mountainous. Indeed, Nature seems to have vented some of her most wrathful moments on this part of the world with an effect which is calculated to overawe and inspire. A continuous, and apparently infinite, conglomeration of hills and mountains, interrupted only by deep narrow gullies and yawning chasms, at last terminates in a well-defined range of mountains which descends abruptly to a broad fertile plain several thousand feet below. Unfortunately for Macedonia, the area of mountainous regions far exceeds that of the plains. The latter, however, thanks to the heavy snows of winter and the plentiful rains of spring, are remarkably fertile. Of organized irrigation there is none, but so compensating are the forces and dispensations of Nature that the plains are abundantly auto-productive. Vegetables, fruit of a small dry nature and grapes in abundance, grow without distinction of class or kind. Other products of varying importance include maize, cotton, opium and tobacco. Most of these grow in a semi-wild state and, when once the sowing is done, the plants require very little human attention until their gathering is due.

In Macedonia, the proximity and power of Nature are so strongly felt as to be almost tangible.

She compels admiration and awe by her rugged scenes, just as she touches a tender chord in the human breast by her generous provision of effects—some pleasing to the eye, others essential to the sustenance of life.

Owing to its propinquity to so many other countries of different and distinct nationalities, the population of Macedonia can only be described as heterogeneous. A land which for ages has formed the common arena for the settlement of disputes between Serb and Bulgar, Turk and Greek, has inevitably produced a hybrid race. In spite of unrestrained intermingling, however, racial hatred is still astonishingly predominant—a state of affairs which is largely fostered by that insuperable gulf, the difference of religion, Mohammedan and Orthodox.

The generations of oppression and disaster through which the Macedonian has passed are chiefly responsible for his ignorance and for the scarcely veiled suspicion with which he regards strangers and intruders. The climate, too, acting on an inherently fatalistic temperament has evolved a phlegmatic personality, whose possessor is accustomed to remain unmoved to the point of helplessness under calamitous circumstances or in an overwhelming catastrophe. In most ways, the native seems to have changed but little since Biblical days, so that it may almost be said that in observing the modern Macedonian one

is studying the type amongst whom St. Paul preached and travelled.

The native is swarthy of countenance, picturesque in appearance and, amongst the peasantry, earnest and hard-working. He is, however, easily contaminated by the vicious life of a town, where he prefers to earn the best possible livelihood, without discrimination as to the means, in the easiest possible way. The glamour of the cafés fascinates him and he soon discovers that an indolent existence, sustained by numerous cups of coffee and less modest measures of inferior cognac, is his real *métier*.

To sum up one's impressions, then, it may be said that Macedonia is a country of a rugged and bizarre beauty. Kaleidoscopic is the key-word to its description, but no such instrument would serve adequately to portray its riot of colour and its forceful contrast of light and shade, just as no stereoscope would do justice to its vast perspectives and striking outlines. Uppermost in the memory are its cloudless blue skies, crystal-clear atmosphere and wealth of golden sunshine; its wild mountains and hills, velvety with scrub, of ever-changing tones, from the warm browns and chromes of mid-day glare to the pale mauves and pinks at sundown, when their clear-cut slopes are seamed by the deep purple shadows of winding ravines; and little white villages, nestling in the hollows or strewn amongst the tree-clumps

on the plain. With this picture, thoughts will turn to the great silence of Nature, broken only by the chirp of countless insects or the sweet varied tones of distant bells, as some shepherd gathers his flock on a rock-strewn track.

On the other hand, however, it grieves one to relate that Macedonia is a country in which the emotions of the artist will be constantly warring with the instincts of the municipal reformer. In contrast to the impression recorded above, one may experience sensations which are prompted by the almost entire absence of the signs of civilization. There is a picturesqueness of antiquity and decay which Macedonia possesses to an extraordinary degree; when the country loses these features, when it ceases to be primitive, it will sacrifice many of its characteristics and not a little of its charm.

Most of those who found themselves unwilling sojourners on a strange soil, as a result of the war, were naturally prone to discontentment with their lot and may therefore be pardoned if they regard Macedonia with a jaundiced (or shall we say, malarial) eye. We are inclined to believe, however, that had their visit been of a less obligatory and of a less circumscribed nature, they would have found much more to interest them and not a little which would have pleased them. Now that all the members of the British Salonika Force have realized a change of scene, now that

civilian routine has usurped the open-air freedom of a soldier's existence, we venture to think that they will often recall with longing the glorious open stretches of the Struma, the magnificent snow-capped peaks of the Bela Shitza, the still waters of Doiran, the wooded slopes of Stavros Bay and the deep azure blue of the Ægean bathing the white minaretted terraces of Salonika. They will remember with pride and affection their multifarious achievements in combating the forces of Nature, and, we are sure, they will decide that Macedonia is deserving of a warm corner in their hearts in that no other scene of strife could have brought them so intimately in touch with mother earth or so thoroughly at grips with Nature.

A. G.

H. A. F.



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MACEDONIA
A PLEA FOR THE PRIMITIVE



MACEDONIA

A PLEA FOR THE PRIMITIVE

CHAPTER I

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

THE approach, by sea, to Salonika through the Grecian Archipelago affords sufficient evidence of volcanic conditions, and actual contact with Macedonia—its deep valleys and mountains, its crags and ravines, a vast irregular mould cast by the violent forces of Nature—indubitably confirms this impression. The few plains, as flat and smooth as the remaining contour is broken and uneven, merely serve to accentuate the general disarray of the whole. Remarkable, indeed, are the sharp limitations of mountain and plain—the latter commencing almost at the very foot of precipitous heights without the natural intervention of gentle undulating grass lands. The surface of the plains consists of deep rich soil, well nurtured by mountain torrents and streams, whilst the high

ground and few plateaux lie on a bed of igneous mica-laden rock. With the exception, therefore, of one or two large plains and a few valleys, hidden in a mass of hills, the entire country, even to its very shores, is a wilderness of hills and mountains.

Although the central portion of Macedonia, lying between two great rivers (the Vardar and the Struma), includes only one range over three thousand feet, the natural frontiers present an almost unbroken line of snow-capped and formidable mountains. Separated from its neighbours in every case by mountain ranges—Bulgaria to the East and North, Serbia to the North and West—Macedonia yet possesses a larger area of land below a thousand feet than either of them ; and, even when we extend this comparison to old Greece, from which it is separated by the chain of the Pindus, or to Albania, we still find that the subject of our narrative can boast more land below a thousand feet than any of them. Its soil also, receiving the full benefits of the great rivers which flow down from Bulgaria and Serbia, is probably no less fertile, and the two largest plains (those of Struma and Langaza) are further enriched by four of the eight lakes of Macedonia which they share equally, namely, Butkova and Tahinos for the Struma, and Langaza and Besik for the Langaza plain. The two former are mere marshy expansions of the lower Struma river ; but Lakes Langaza and Besik have a distinct

geographical importance as, with the Rendina Gorge, they form almost a complete island of the Chalcidice peninsula.

The characteristics of the interior are no less pronounced when we review the coastline which, maintaining the rugged and broken contour, is cut into deep gulfs and well-sheltered bays; the inland hills, indeed, continue to the water's edge, so that except near the mouths of the rivers the shores are wild and rocky. As may be imagined, with such a sea-board natural harbours are not lacking, but indifferent access to the interior and the difficulty of town construction near the sea explain the limited extent to which they have been utilized. Thus the excellence of Salonika as a port, although threatened by the silting of the Vardar mud, needs no further comment; Kavalla is well-established and gives outlet through a mountain pass to the rich plains of Drama; Stavros, a beautiful sheltered bay near the mouth of the Struma, has yet to be developed.

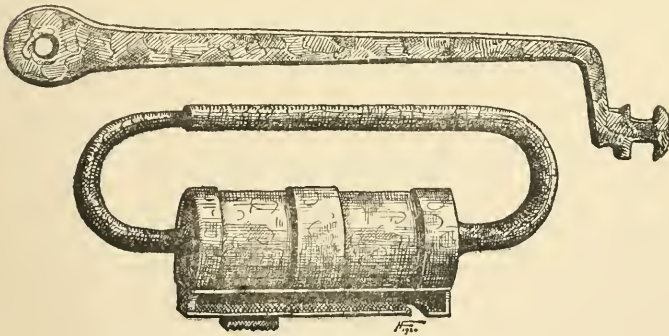
The features which militate against expansion within and intercourse without are legion. Rivers, with a rapid fall, almost dry in summer and torrential in winter, do not lend themselves to navigation; railways which have to follow the contours of the country rather than the will of man are necessarily few and circuitous, and transport which winds its way over trackless highlands is obviously slow and limited. Com-

munication with adjoining countries is restricted not only by the constant state of strife and general unrest in the Balkans but also by the almost impassable frontiers which, while hampering international trade, yet serve as natural barriers to covetous foes. Only in one or two places are they pierced by rivers which wind their way through passes in the mountains; of these the two most important are the Rupel Pass, which follows the Struma in its course from Bulgaria, and the pass or valley which encloses the Vardar from Uskub in Serbia almost to its very mouth in the Gulf of Salonika. Such passes—narrow, approached from comparatively low ground and commanded by fortress-like heights—are easily held by a handful of troops, and largely to this fact the Bulgars in the recent war owed their ability to resist, for so long, the attacks of the Allied armies.

It is to be regretted that so little praise has been offered, so little appreciation shown or so little information given, concerning those troops who, far from home and civilization, fever-stricken and apparently forgotten, lay, year after year, watching the impassable mountains or, at occasional intervals, dashed themselves hopelessly against impregnable strongholds. Too much cannot be written of those lonely months without prospect of leave, often without news from home; scarcely a word has been heard of those burning

days under bivouac sheets, of freezing nights on a rock-strewn hillside ; and never should we be allowed to forget those many graveyards far away in the bleak mountains or the shell-scarred heights above Doiran where so many fell in a mad, brave attempt to capture a mountain held by a cunning foe.

Such, then, is a rough outline of the broad physical geography of Macedonia. To enlarge on it further does not come within the scheme of this book, and reference to a map will serve to supplement this somewhat brief and inadequate description. How little this country has been explored and how casual the interest it had aroused before 1915 is exemplified by a glance at any map, on which the few names shown are mostly inaccurate and the inland portion often left completely blank.



CHAPTER II

THE MACEDONIAN PEASANT

IT is necessary, at the outset, to distinguish between the up-country Macedonian and the mere town-dweller. For although, in appearance and dress, there is scarcely any difference, in their pursuits and mode of life they are entirely dissimilar. In this instance, it is proposed to deal only with the up-country native.

The reader will no doubt have concluded from the prefatory statements that there is no real Macedonian nationality and that the term is merely a convenient expression to describe the inhabitants. Webster's pointed inquiry might well have been written of Macedonia when he asked, "Is it true that thou art but a name and no essential thing?" The Macedonian native, then, is merely a hewer of wood, a drawer of water or, to be more precise, a tiller of the soil. The townsman is generally an individual of more definite nationality but less certain habits. Of the entire population, although there is a preponderance of Greeks, it is by no means overwhelming, and, in the city of Salonika itself, the Jews are in a slight majority. Other nationalities which are

well represented are Turk, Serb, Bulgar and Armenian. Amongst the better or commercial classes, we find a small sprinkling of nearly every race in Europe, so that a description of all the types met with in Macedonia would almost comprise a catalogue of the nations of the world. In fact, the most casual and brief impression of the inhabitants of the country brings to one's mind the aptness of that well-known dessert, "Macedoine de Fruits."

A comprehensive description of the indigenous native, even were it desirable, would present many difficulties. In the first place, there is a number of different nationalities represented, sometimes with racial characteristics strongly defined and sometimes, owing to unrestricted intermingling, with scarcely any delineation. Secondly, there are two prominent religions in Macedonia—Mohammedan and Orthodox; they are practised simultaneously and, frequently, in the smaller villages, side by side. In a country under British rule, such a state of affairs would hardly call for remark, but in a country where religion plays so great a part, the situation, besides being bizarre, holds all the elements of political dissension and intrigue. Lastly, long accustomed suppression of real customs, independent thought and language, owing to tyranny of former conquerors, has stultified individuality and left varying types whose senses are blunted and whose character-

istics are indecisive. Nevertheless, there is a sufficient constancy to the original type to enable the close observer to divine the salient points of the native character and to differentiate and distinguish where origin, religion or environment have played their part in forming racial temperament.

The primitiveness of the native peasantry is their most marked feature. The most cursory glance creates this impression—an impression which is straightway confirmed by a closer insight into manner and customs. The old bearded Turk, with the solemn and mysterious air of one who has lived through all ages, the black-robed village priest, with his apostolic appearance, and the silent bare-footed women, all tend to complete, with the barbaric scenery, a tableau such as one might see in old Passion plays or depicted in the pages of a family Bible. Indeed, had St. Paul described the people to whom he preached, such might well have applied to the Macedonian of to-day. Time has stood still in the more remote corners of Macedonia, and it is difficult to associate calendars, anniversaries or any other measure of time, with the present-day native. He is, like most Eastern peoples, the living negation of the aphorism “*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.*” Many causes have conspired to produce this apathy. The internal inaccessibility of the country is one

of the greatest of these. A town and a village, maybe no more than a few miles apart as the crow flies, are, from the rugged and broken nature of the country, only reached after a wide detour over rocky tracks, involving a full day's journey or even more. One often observes, therefore, the peculiar situation where the inhabitants of two proximate villages, very rarely, if ever, hold intercourse the one with the other, although their homesteads may be so close as to permit clear uninterrupted observation of each other's doings. Perhaps, in explanation of this apparent phenomenon, it should be stated that Macedonia is blessed with a remarkably clear atmosphere, which necessitates, for the untravelled Englishman, a complete re-adjustment of his ideas of distance.

Constant war and repeated local disasters have combined to bring about a *laissez-aller* attitude towards mundane affairs and conditions. Under an overwhelming catastrophe, the native will merely shrug his shoulders or hold up his hands in impotent resignation or grief—the Moslem appealing to Allah and the Christian, with the crucial sign, to his patron saint. In the face of an unwonted calamity, the Macedonian, though comparatively unmoved, is helpless ; whilst, confronted with the prospect of personal castigation, he is prone to cry out like a child almost before he is touched. The contrast between his behaviour

before an unseen power and that when threatened with a big stick, says much for the influence of religion on an immature, unenlightened intellect. Oppression and an entire lack of education—the latter no doubt the natural corollary of the former—have joined forces and evolved a crafty disposition and a natural tendency towards savagery—a savagery, not born of aggressiveness, but of a kind which never forgets an injury, is patient and implacable in revenge, and generally strikes back in the dark. Such a temperament, having a cheap regard for human life, knowing no such deterrent as an efficient police force, regards lawlessness as a perfectly natural state ; it yields to no order or power, except that which is backed by stronger physical force or, to be more exact, superior armament in the shape of a longer-bladed knife or a larger-calibre pistol. Most Macedonian natives carry a formidable-looking knife, very closely resembling the ordinary butcher's knife, and they are not over-fastidious as to the uses to which it may be put. Outside England, fists are seldom used to settle disputes and, in the Balkans especially, deadly and more decisive weapons are employed. On the whole, however, the struggle for the means of livelihood occupies their lives so completely that they experience very little of that leisure or idleness which so often witnesses the beginnings and causes of disputes and quarrels.

The peasant lives on the land and by the land ; he very seldom buys food even if he has the money to do so. He relies for sustenance on what he actually cultivates and, after he has satisfied an inexorable tax-collector by heavy contributions from his produce, he has not so much left as will enable him to amass a fortune or even to save up for old age. Apparently, however, senility has no terrors for the Macedonian ; he is never obsessed by the ambition to give up work and enjoy a serene and comfortable old age. He has become so inured to labour from his childhood onwards that his mind has never grasped the possibility of existence without hard work and, supposing it were feasible, he would probably resent, or at any rate regard with suspicion, any suggestion that he should practise economy with the idea of securing rest in his declining years. The absence of banks (except in the larger towns) wherein he could deposit money, would justify such suspicion, and the general lawlessness of the country would warrant the fear that some one else might enjoy the fruits of his toil and thrift.

The rising generation are early taught to bear their share of the work in the household and to shoulder their burden in the fields. Further, although it does not indicate incipient emancipation, woman's sphere extends far beyond the hearth, and she bears her portion of the outdoor tasks with a resigned fortitude and an absence

of complaint. Both at planting and harvest time, the entire household takes to the land and spends the day, almost from sunrise to sunset, in the fields. There is usually a very old woman to take charge of the youngest offspring—probably her grandchild or, even more likely, her great grandchild—and these are the only two, out of the three or four generations abundantly represented, who do not take a thoroughly active part in the labour. The old lady, in the midst of alternately soothing and scolding the child or spinning her wool, will be occupied at midday in preparing a simple drink of grape juice and water for the thirsty toilers. An emaciated donkey, perpetually saddled, completes the *ménage* and, as his share of the common burden, usually carries his fourteen-stone master to and from his work. The women, of course, walk, whether the religion of their menfolk be Mohammedan or Christian. This unchivalrous arrangement is a relic of the Mohammedan religion which has not been eliminated by the advent of Christianity—the orthodox Greek, though professing the Christian faith, has probably found it convenient to ignore some of its more obvious tenets. However, the peasant is a hard worker all the year round on indifferent soil in the hills and against heat and malaria in the plains. The latter are particularly trying in the summer, but the native has adopted every possible means to combat the heat of the sun in

placing his villages amidst clumps of trees and constructing thick mud huts with double roofs and verandas. Under adverse conditions, he manages to live and produce a great deal with the simplest and most antiquated tools. He is primitive and ignorant, no doubt, but he is clever with his own industries and painstaking in his efforts to obtain the utmost out of Nature. This simplicity of implements and methods, together with the ingenious use of natural products, such as wood, mud and stone, is most illuminating, and leads one to wonder whether all the scientific and complicated aids to modern existence are not perhaps unessential to success and content in life. Indeed, it is possible that much of the natural joy and appreciation of this earth is lost in the intricate maze of invention and science. The very attempts to oil the wheels of life often clog a vital part or upset the even running of the daily round and the common task.

Being essentially cross-bred, the Macedonian is hardly distinguished for his physique, but the exacting climate, a hard life and the fight for existence have evolved a type which is capable of prolonged endurance and sustained effort on very indifferent nourishment. Although not powerful of limb, the native is more than ordinarily hardy. The Turks are perhaps the best physical specimens of the various Macedonian types, probably, because they have indulged in less

cross-breeding. We sometimes find them big-limbed, but heavy and lumbering in gait. The women are short, stunted and early obese. Insufficient food, extremes of temperature and the prevalence of malaria naturally have their most marked effect on children who are debilitated from birth. In the plains particularly infant mortality is high. Exposure too plays a vital part in the weeding-out process, and the mother, doomed to continual manual labour, is unable to devote requisite attention to the careful upbringing of her child. For this reason, the Macedonian child early acquires the habit or facility of fending for itself, and Nature herself is wonderful in the guardianship that she assumes of these little ones. To find a woman continuously engaged in manual labour almost until the day of her accouchement and to discover that she returns to work a day or so afterwards, is to comprehend the miraculous and ever-present power of Nature and to realize one of the retrograde influences of civilization. The hard life and the climate, however, conspire to bring about an early ageing of women. Girls mature very quickly and are frequently mothers between the ages of fourteen to sixteen and are fat and elderly-looking at twenty-five. Thus, it may be observed that there is very little childhood for the Macedonian girl or even for the boy. The children with their big dark eyes are often very pretty, exhibiting a freshness which, however,

time will early impair. Their appearance possesses something of old-fashioned solemnity which is probably largely due to the absence of anything resembling the games and toys of the British nursery. Of them no better description could be given than that of Byron in his "Eastern Picture." It is so true and withal so beautiful in conception that no apology need be made for quoting it in full :

" Their classical profiles and glittering dresses,
 Their large black eyes and soft seraphic cheeks,
 Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,
 The gesture which enchants, the eye that speaks,
 The innocence which happy childhood blesses,
 Made quite a picture of these little Greeks ;
 So that the philosophical beholder
 Sighed for their sakes—that they should e'er grow older."

Although, perhaps, they should not be judged by Western standards, the men, for the most part, are not bad looking. The Slav type, of broad features and high cheek-bones, is most common, Deep-set, dark brown eyes have an appropriate setting in a countenance of a very swarthy hue. The Turk, so often assumed to be dark, but actually often fair, is the best looking. He has the same kind of dark eyes which are common to all races in the Near East, but he is distinguished by a prominent and, usually, aquiline nose. Turkish women, when not interbred to any pronounced extent, are generally attractive, but

those of Bulgar or Greek extraction usually have broad and very coarse features of the Slav type. Such features, comprising thick lips, broad flat noses and high cheek-bones scarcely conduce to beauty in a woman. Darkish hair with yellowish brown complexions cause them to resemble the Greek type, which is invariably sallow, with jet black hair and luminous eyes.

All men grow big moustaches which, seldom trimmed, show a distinct tendency to droop. Some of the more modern town types are an exception in this respect and have even been known to wax the ends. With the exception of the elderly Turks, however, very few grow beards, but, on the other hand, they do not shave with any regularity. Consequently, the natives frequently have the appearance of being in the process of growing a beard, when, actually, they are only in need of a razor. This is a fashion which is not confined to the poorer classes, so one is almost persuaded that it is a custom which has its origin in lethargy and an utter indifference to personal cleanliness.

One important and admirable characteristic, concerning the women, which immediately arrests the eye, is the manner in which they hold themselves. This is mainly due to the practice of carrying heavy loads on the head and not on the back. Frequently, they wear on the head a cloth pad, so that the balancing of unwieldy burdens

becomes a less difficult matter. Every one has a mental picture of the woman of the East, carrying an ewer of water on her head, which is reasonably true to custom, but the ewer is not by any means the only article which is supported with such dexterity. However, the performance, as already indicated, has a very beneficial effect on the woman's carriage. Untrammelled with corsets, she walks very gracefully and with a freedom of movement and erectness of body which commands admiration. Likewise, the foot is well shaped, thanks to a lack of shoes and the consequent absence of high heels. In the towns, where an attempt is made by the better and commercial classes to keep abreast of Western modes, well-dressed ladies, smartly shod, who struggle painfully over the cobbled streets, apart from sacrificing the grace of natural movement, must frequently pay the penalty of their slavish adherence to fashion in the shape of a twisted ankle.

With a variety of types, living in such obscurity, it is rather difficult to gauge the precise disposition of the native as it would strike the casual observer. More frequently than one would expect, we find him, on the whole, good-natured and easy-going, but, withal, inclined to be suspicious both of his neighbours and of foreigners. His bearing is lacking in frankness; he fails to inspire confidence and does not seem to look for it in others.

He seems to be perpetually "on guard"; due, no doubt, to the tyranny and oppression to which he has become inured. At the back of his easy-going, yet suspicious disposition, there is usually the mind of a child—with all the child's love of colour, simple fun and curiosity. The nonchalant side of his nature probably springs from the fatalistic view he adopts towards mankind and events. He is much inclined to cry "Kismet" if he is afflicted, or to plead "the Will of Allah" if he causes injury to others. The latter trait is his nearest approach to a sense of humour (if such it can be described) and he is seldom seen to laugh or to give evidence of a zest in life. Indeed, the capacity for laughter is a feature rarely observed even amongst children. The latter, in fact, exhibit early signs of that moroseness which will surely overtake them in later days. Women are obviously shy, nay almost terrified of newcomers, but with children curiosity quickly supersedes initial fear.

The inhabitants, however, became more trusting after the great Salonika fire in August, 1917, when the troops who were stationed in or near the city behaved with a magnanimous consideration and compassion to the afflicted and homeless inhabitants and showed practical sympathy in their efforts at rescue and salvage. Hitherto, no doubt, a similar catastrophe—it was the eighth time that the city had been

partially or wholly destroyed by fire—had been marked by wholesale looting and unrestricted pillage, but the presence of the Allied troops ensured safety for the individual and comparative security for his possessions. As a result the native realized, with obvious astonishment, the natural honesty and kindness of the British, and soon learnt to be less suspicious or alarmed at the invasion of his country by a people possessing such new and, to him, incredible virtues. Ultimately, however, he learnt to appreciate these virtues to the extent that he never failed to take unfair advantage of them in his dealings with the British.

Religion, in all its aspects, will be treated in a subsequent chapter, but it may not be out of place here to remark its effect on the native character. Its corner stone is superstition. Only by inculcating and encouraging this quality do the priests maintain their sway over their adherents. Especially is this the case with the Greek or Orthodox religion in the profession of which the individual Greek is, at all events outwardly, very devout. Naturally, since the country has been under Greek rule, the Mohammedan religion is less conspicuous, so its effect on the individual cannot be so surely measured. A strict Moslem, however, is undoubtedly extremely pious in the practice of his faith.

As throughout the Mohammedan world, the men treat their women as mere household goods

and regard it a misfortune to have a female child. Knowing no other conditions, however, and accustomed always to the overlordship of the sterner sex, the women seem fairly happy and contented. Indeed so well and so continuously occupied are they, that they probably have little time to compare their grievances or to ruminate over, what the Western woman would consider, their unfortunate lot. Though far from ideal, when judged by our standards, there is no doubt that any attempt at adjustment of their conditions or alleviation of their burden would produce misunderstanding amongst the women and resentment amongst the men. East is East and West is West and the time is not yet for an inter-adaptation of conditions. Certainly the mondaine of to-day would scarcely regard with approval any application of the methods by which the Macedonian liege lord manages to keep his house in order. Probably, however, his household enjoys an even more calm and unruffled existence than the Western, but it is only because the husband's word is law and the wife's wishes and tastes are entirely subject to his.

The standard of morality between the sexes amongst the up-country natives is much higher than one would expect. The Mohammedans jealously guard the virtue of their womenfolk, and it is only the old women and young children who are allowed to mingle with any men but their

husbands and nearest relatives. Contrarily, the covetous gaze of the men is thwarted by the wearing of the "yashmak," a large scarf which plays the part of a hood and successfully screens the head and face from view. This also is a relic of Mohammedan teaching; for in the Koran it is laid down that no part of a woman's face shall be exposed to public view except the eyes. It is a provision not without points, for invariably the most beautiful feature of a Moslem woman is her eyes.

From such as these and many other curious customs, which almost invariably have their origin in sound sense or a wise and thoughtful provision against possible contingencies, it is obvious that we must not judge the character of the indigenous native by Western standards and ideas. His existence, his daily life, his general *entourage* bear no resemblance to anything British. For this very reason, there is much more that is commendable in the up-country Macedonian than at first view appears. One must ever be mindful of the trying times through which he and his antecedents have passed. No generation has been immune from war and massacre, no individual, probably, has been spared the sight of bloodshed; there is no man who has not, at some time or other, inflicted or received some bodily injury, no woman who has not either witnessed or experienced the horrors of rapine, and no child whose

heritage is not associated with burning homesteads, the din of battle or a headlong flight from an infuriated foe.

With these facts ever present at the back of the mind, one is forced to the conclusion that, although not living in the best of all possible lands, the Macedonian has accomplished the best out of his circumstances. No one is above reproach, but a close examination of the Macedonian peasant reveals the fact that his shortcomings are the results of an antiquated system of tyranny and of oppression and that, in his indefatigable industry, in his simple tastes and in his singleness of mind, there is much to appreciate and applaud.



CHAPTER III

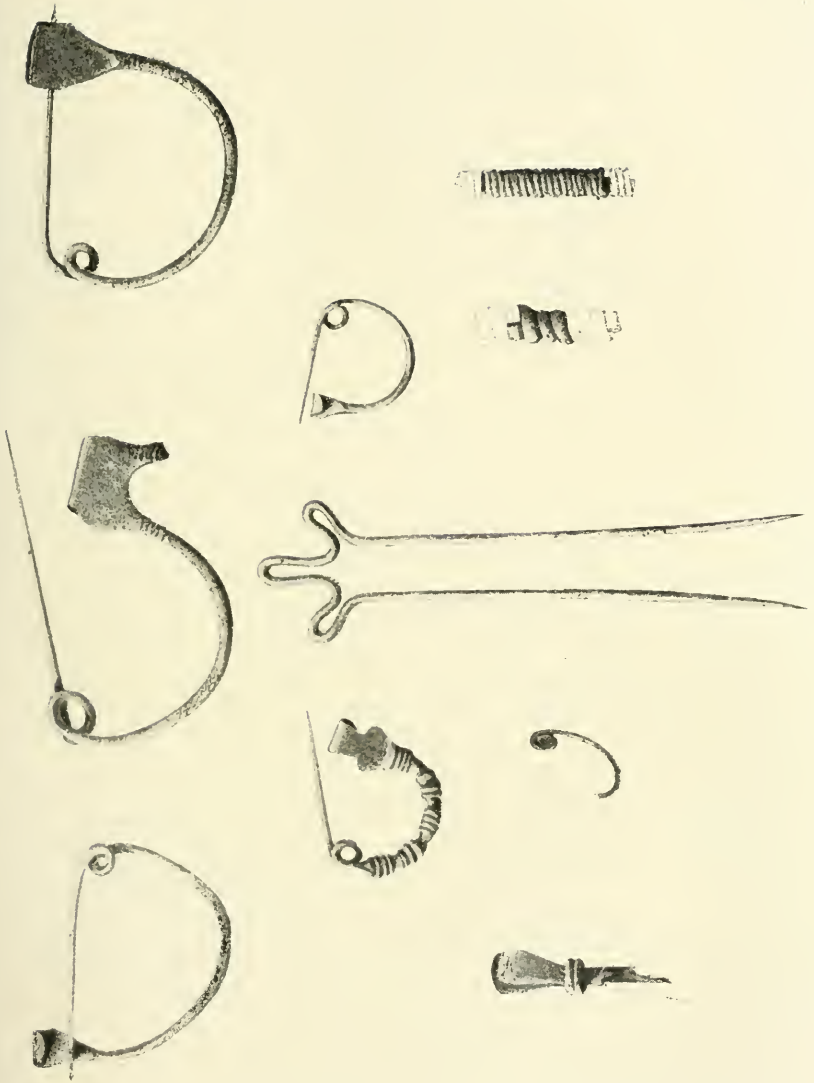
NATIVE DRESS

WHETHER by design or accident, it is impossible to say, but it is a noticeable fact that the dress of the Macedonian native assumes a diversity of colours which is quite in sympathy with the picturesque setting of the country itself. In fact, we may borrow a description from Pope and say, as he did of the gentler sex, that the natives "like variegated tulips show." The only ineptitude of the remark is that the men are much more worthy of the compliment than the women; for, true to type and exhibiting the only-to-be-expected characteristics resulting from their low origin, the men bedeck themselves in much more fantastic garb than the women. Strange as it may seem, however, in the glare of an eastern sun, a crude-coloured costume is pleasing to the eye, rather than otherwise; one has only to reconstruct a mental picture of the scarlet fez resting on a dusky head, amidst a setting of clear white houses or a background of golden sand, the whole illumined by the rays of a tropical sun, to realize that

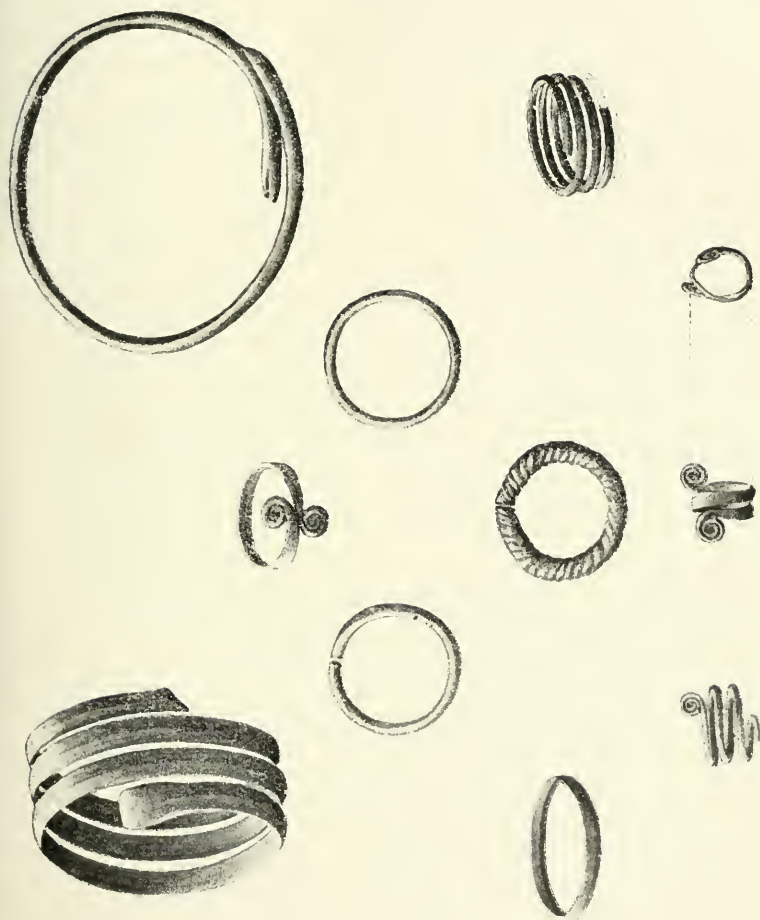
it is an exceedingly attractive colour scheme. The European, in his straw hat or topee, is, by contrast, a very dull, uninteresting figure and decidedly out of place. The comparison may be continued, to the garments which clothe the body, even less to the advantage of the Westerner. Even if he sports a white suit, the lack of the fez accentuates his failure to achieve the decorativeness of the native. Conversely, one need only imagine a Turk strolling down Piccadilly on a dull murky November day to grasp the importance of environment in its relation to dress.

The attractiveness of the native costume begins and ends in its colouring. There is no attempt at cut or style ; the garments fit where they touch and the general appearance is one of shapelessness. To the native mind, this is scarcely a defect ; for as long as he can adorn himself in a mixture of bright colours, he is satisfied that he is looking his best.

The peasant dress is fairly uniform and not so distinctive, in regard to the different races, as in Salonika. In texture, the tendency is towards garments of a thick coarse cloth and, in the matter of quantity, the native seems to believe in having, and wearing, two of everything. It is as if the Macedonian, when he walks abroad, goes in hourly fear of a fire at home, and so calms his mental anxiety by carrying the greater part of his belongings on his person. Possibly, also, there are



ANCIENT BRONZE ORNAMENTS FOUND BY AUTHORS
IN PREHISTORIC STONE GRAVES NEAR MOUTH OF
STRUMA RIVER, MACEDONIA



ANCIENT BRONZE ORNAMENTS FOUND BY AUTHORS
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those in his own particular village who would take advantage of his absence to increase their wardrobe at his expense. His inclination to overdress, therefore, or perhaps, to avoid misunderstanding, we should say his practice of overburdening his body with clothes is a wise provision for his own welfare though it may not conduce to his physical comfort in the hot weather. In this connection, one is impelled to remark the native's apparent imperviousness to temperature, for he wears the same quantity of clothing in summer as in winter. There are those in England who rather pride themselves on this achievement, but their hardiness is inconsiderable when compared with that of the Macedonian who has to contend with a range of temperature varying from twenty-five degrees of frost in the winter to one hundred and ten in the shade in the summer !

The reader will no doubt be tempted to inquire of what sort of garments this super-abundance of clothing consists. They do not materially differ in kind and, certainly, as far as essentials are concerned, they are similar to the garments worn by ourselves. It is rather in the amplitude of each class of garment, than in their diversity, that the Macedonian excels. Stranger than the mere possession of so many articles of clothing is the fact that they manage to wear them all at the same time. Women, especially, contrive to encircle the waist with an extraordinary number of

garments—a practice no less wise than convenient, inasmuch as sustained warmth for the abdominal region minimises the risk of fever, dysentery and cholera. The women, it would appear, do not vie with one another in the gaiety of their dress, but rather compete to hang as many dresses and petticoats as possible round the hips. The effect is extremely ludicrous, as the waist line becomes a misnomer and the graceful contour of the figure is much impaired. The men achieve the same abdominal warmth by winding a long red sash round the middle. The method of winding is rather ingenious—one man standing at a distance of a few yards and holding one end of the band, while the other, the wearer, fixes the other end of the band to his body and proceeds to wind himself into it.

However, costume and dress, no matter how unusual or curious, nearly always have a sane or comprehensible origin, especially among primitive people, and the Macedonian practice of burdening the waist and hips with clothing is induced by the number of Eastern diseases which attack the abdominal parts.

Allusion has already been made to the variety of colours in which the natives delight to adorn themselves, but the facility with which they blend and the complement that they form to the whole picture deserves a little further consideration. Wherever there is a risk of bright colours clashing,

the sun seems to exercise a beneficent toning-down influence. In the powerful sunlight of Macedonia, the bright crude colours quickly fade and develop rich old tones which at a distance are very beautiful. A scene of bright sunlit corn or grey barren rocks is often completed as a picture and enhanced in composition and effect by the old blues and bright scarlets of the peasantry. Colours which would be crude in our grey isles look perfectly harmonious in the bright clear atmosphere and huge spaces of Macedonia. The white glare of the villages or the deep shadows of the narrow cobbled streets are relieved and rendered " piquant " by the bright medley of colour supplied by the human element in them.

The head-gear of the men usually consists of a small skull-cap of red felt. This is bound round the temples and forehead with a long white or ornamented cloth, turban fashion, reaching to the back of the neck and so arranged as to leave the upper part of the fez, with its little button in the centre, protruding above the turban. The white cloth is brought low to protect the back of the neck from the sun. Sometimes, no fez is worn ; only a turban and then usually of reddish-coloured or black material. In a few districts a very small black skull-cap is popular ; it is lightly embroidered at the rim and, far from being made to fit, seems to be manufactured in only one size. With a large head and a swarthy countenance, the

wearer is not unlike a member of a minstrel troupe ! The true Turk—especially the older men and more fashionable youths in the bigger villages—wears the Turkish red fez, or tarbouche, without the black tassel—a head-dress with which every one is familiar.

With the exception of the Greek priests, who allow their hair to grow to considerable length, all degrees, sects and types crop the hair short to the scalp. The effect is scarcely prepossessing and it is just as well, perhaps, that the native is seldom seen without a head-covering. Indeed, contrary to Western notions, it would be a mark of disrespect if he remained uncovered in the presence of a stranger or an European. Far from removing his head-gear as a courteous greeting, he would, supposing he were uncovered, promptly replace it as an act symbolical of respect. This simple custom, perhaps more than any other, shows how diametrically opposed are the customs and ideas of East and West.

The articles of male attire present many curious features. The texture of the outer garment is always coarse and rough—raw wool is largely used, and though most unsuitable for a hot climate has the advantage of resisting very hard wear. Any linen which may be worn is composed of very coarse but strong cotton material. Silk, a product of the country, is also worn, but only on festival occasions.

For ordinary everyday usage, the men wear a long collarless shirt of white cotton. The sleeves are short, capacious and very loose. The front, open at the throat, is often garnished with multi-coloured stripes and trimmed off at the edges with crochet work. Over the shirt is usually worn a very small sleeveless waistcoat, so curtailed in girth that it cannot possibly meet in front. For festive occasions, a similar jacket, furnished with sleeves is *de rigueur*. This is often elaborately embroidered with gold or silver thread work on black or dark, thick smooth cloth. Sometimes, the sleeves, instead of appearing as such, are split down the entire length of the seam, the edges heavily ornamented with braid work, and the long shapeless material which would otherwise constitute a sleeve, allowed to hang loosely down the back of the arm. The object of this mutilation seems to be to exhibit the white shirt sleeves underneath. Such a garment, with its copious embroidery, is almost as heavy as a lounge coat.

The lower limbs, except in certain shepherd types, are clothed in shapeless trousers of thick black cloth, which are so baggy that, except at the waist and ankles, they run no risk of coming in contact with the body. Underneath, there are similar garments of varying degrees of bagginess, which the outer pair of trousers are designed to conceal. The word "pair" is, perhaps, not invariably correct when applied to the native's

nether garments, for a diversity of colours is not uncommon and, occasionally, one leg will compare unfavourably with the other in point of bagginess ! The garment is in fact much more like a sack, for, commencing at the waist, it is only when it reaches almost to the knees that it suddenly makes up its mind to become a pair of trousers. The comic effect is completed by a tapering towards the ends and a very close fit over the ankles.

Pockets, except a small one inside the waist-coat, are an unknown convenience. The Macedonian carries little or no money, and the few articles of daily use, such as tobacco box, knife, etc., are always tucked into the body belt. Before the population was disarmed on the occupation of the country by the Allies, some of the natives carried a whole arsenal of weapons in their body belt and, generally, presented a very good original of the type of brigand so familiar to musical comedy audiences.

The elongated sash or waist belt has already been described. It is the most constant feature of male attire, the most trim and the most imposing. It is usually of a bright scarlet hue and forms a pleasing line of demarcation between the white shirt and black trousers. In the winter a rough cloth coat or sheepskin is carried over the shoulders. Socks are very thick, usually white, and worn over the ends of the trousers. Like boots and shoes, however, they are rather in the

nature of a luxury. Women and children, particularly, seem to be deficient in hose and quite fifty per cent go barefooted. Some of the poorest classes wear cloth rags or sacking bound round their feet and fastened by cord in a cross-gartered fashion half-way up the legs. This device has much to commend it from the point of view of comfort and health. In the summer it obviates bites from insects and mosquitoes who easily penetrate ordinary socks and who seem to regard the ankle as a particularly delectable portion of the anatomy. In the winter, it compares favourably with the wearing of boots, which being frequently ill-fitting or tight-laced, restrict circulation and cause cold feet or frost-bite. The commonest foot-wear is a rough sole-shaped piece of raw hide bound to the foot by thongs of leather, fastened at intervals round the edge, and having the effect of drawing the corners over the toe and heel.

A better class of foot-wear, commoner in towns, is a kind of sandal, made of the one piece of leather turned up at two corners to make a pointed toe and fastened by three or four cross strips of strap leather. The toe is always pointed and up-turned and sometimes surmounted by a large pom-pom—shepherds, Cretans and Greek highland regiments especially affect this mode. Like so many quaint fashions, however, the picturesque sandal and pom-pom are gradually disappearing.

An all-leather slipper, with no heel, is seen a great deal in Salonika. Although one would expect such an article to be worn by women, it is chiefly confined to the men. As the reader will no doubt have observed, we have only now arrived at that low point in the scale where feminine foot-wear comes under review. As often as not, women, as well as children, have to dispense with such insignia of Macedonian opulence as boots and shoes. However, they are sometimes permitted to wear a heavy wooden shoe or clog. It has a high heel and tread, and is fastened across the toes by a single strap, so that to keep it on the foot necessitates a shuffling gait and consequent clattering on the stones. As may be surmised, foot-wear is very highly valued ; during the war, so nominal did paper money become as a means of exchange that Allied soldiers discovered that a pair of boots would often procure from the peasantry what money could not buy.

For the reason that they are expected to wear anything anyhow, women's dress possesses less characteristics than men's. No piece of material is too old or too mean to be omitted from their person and, as already indicated, they always seem to be wearing their entire wardrobe. Whether voluntarily or more by force of circumstances, they seem to take very little pride in their personal appearance. It is true that they do expend some time and trouble on their hair, which is invariably

worn in a loose twist or plait down the back, but this is almost their only vanity. It is fashionable to grease the hair well, part it in the middle and draw it back flat and tight from the forehead. A coloured triangular handkerchief is generally worn over the head, allowing the hair to protrude in front ; the ends are wrapped round the hair at the back and allowed to hang down over the neck—thus protecting the top of the spine from the sun's rays. It will thus be observed that hair-pins are a superfluity for a Macedonian woman which rather supports the theory that civilization may be measured by the number of hair-pins to the square yard.

A blouse of white material, not unlike the men's shirt, is a common garment. There is no collar to this blouse, but it is tight-fitting round the neck, where it is usually trimmed with embroidery or crochet-work. As in the case of the male sex, a small sleeveless vest or bodice of thick dark material is often worn over the blouse. The skirts are legion and full-length ; with this exception, that, sometimes, each skirt is cut a little shorter than the one underneath in order to display an embroidered hem of beautiful handiwork. An apron nearly always constitutes the supreme upper garment ; it is fashioned either of thick woollen material in which red (as with all primitive peoples) predominates or, for fête occasions, of black silk, embroidered at the bottom with heavy and

elaborate designs of gold thread. Nothing is worn as a waistband, but sometimes an old buckle of bronze or silver is fastened to the front of the skirt. Stockings, usually worn only by the more elderly women, are thick and sometimes coloured



MACEDONIAN NATIVE WOMAN SPINNING COTTON.

round the toes on a white wool basis. Bare feet or sandals, however, are most common.

Heavy necklaces of coins are suspended round the neck, earrings are much in vogue and bangles and rings of a large solid type serve to complete the burden of an already over-loaded body.

It is difficult to convey a precise impression of

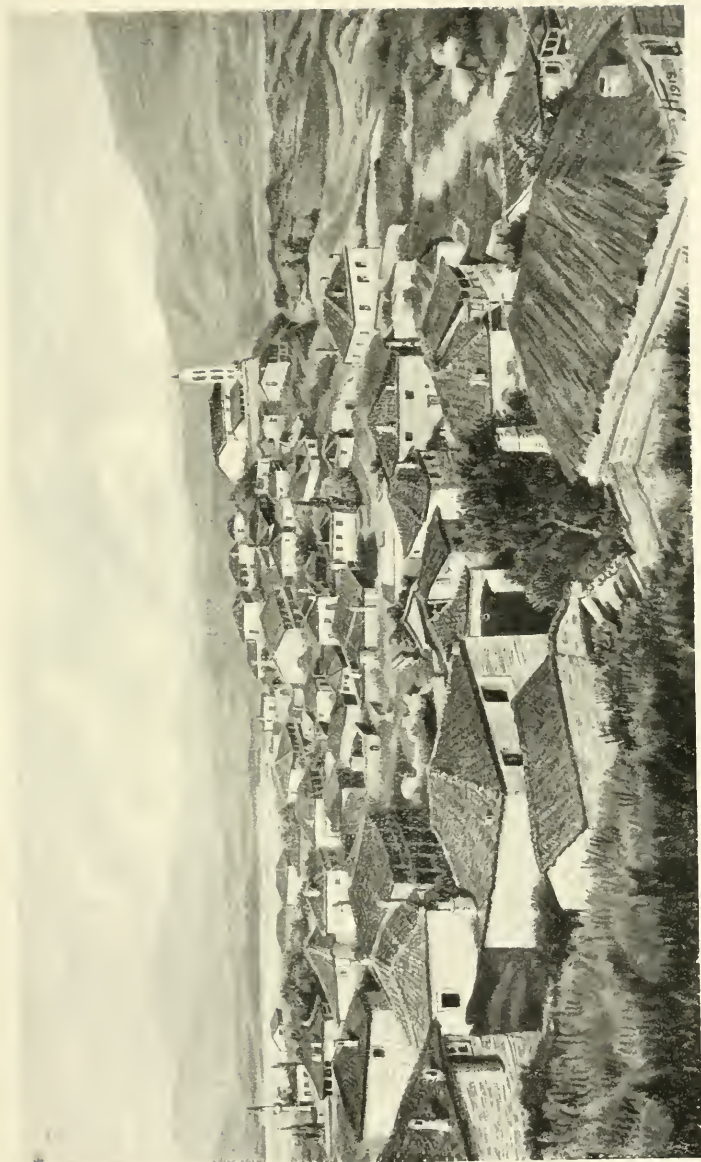
the peasant woman's dress by comparison with any recent Western fashion, but the puff sleeves and full skirts rather suggest the mid-Victorian era. Both vogues achieve a similarity in the distortion of the form by the capaciousness of their costumes. The old peasant dress of white material, with heavy embroidery and bright coloured facings is very picturesque and a touch of quaintness is added by jingling coins and a gaily coloured handkerchief bound round the head.

In purely Turkish villages, still to be found in remoter parts, and in some towns (such as Florina and Kavalla), the Turkish women of stricter order wear the combined black overall, hood and cloak, draping the entire body. The figure, including head and face, is completely enveloped in a thin black material without waist and often without sleeves. Better classes wear a lighter veil over the face and a common form of Turkish dress is all black with a white cloth over head and shoulders. The face is covered only in public and many have become very lax in regard to Mahomet's decree that only the eyes should be seen; they either merely put the end of the head-cloth in the mouth or else leave the face quite uncovered.

Of the children, there is not much to say. Generally they are dressed like adults in the cast-off, cut-down garments of their parents. The little girls are especially comic and, with their long skirts, tight bodices and copious jewellery,

look rather like diminutive old women in a marionette show or dwarfs in an exhibition. They are seldom blessed with shoes or socks; both sexes wear handkerchiefs over their heads and the little girls nearly always have coloured aprons.

From this all-too-brief description of the native costume one is inclined to picture the inhabitant as a shapeless mass of multi-coloured garments—an impression often correct. The fine embroidery, however, with the strange magic of southern light playing on already sun-bleached tints lends a charm to a dress, which, though no doubt grotesque in colour-scheme, is none the less striking and picturesque. Unfortunately, though contrary to acknowledged principles of art and design, the native costume is giving way to unsuitable and often unsightly Western garments, thereby sacrificing both dignity and beauty. Does not the case of the Macedonian constitute an opportunity for one of the societies identified with the preservation of antiquities to intervene and avert the disappearance of a national dress, which seems to have changed so little since Biblical days? A change of costume will not westernize the Macedonian—it will merely produce a travesty of the original and undermine individuality.



THE VILLAGE OF KATO,
MOUTH OF STRUMA

CHAPTER IV

VILLAGES

THE population of Macedonia is distributed among one metropolitan city (Salonika), a few less important towns (such as Seres, Kavalla and Drama) and innumerable villages. The last-named are scattered indiscriminately about the land, on hillside and on plain, sometimes approached only by a narrow mountain path, at others lying adjacent to an important main road. Each area or district, such as a valley with natural boundaries, seems to possess one or two major villages which have become market centres, around which cluster numerous other villages of comparative insignificance. A main road is usually responsible for two or three populous villages along its route, while, on the other hand, a very extensive hilly region often shelters in its fastnesses only one larger hamlet or township with a few of superior size included in a radius of many miles.

Considered as a whole, however, Macedonia is only sparsely populated. Many of the place-names which figure quite prominently on smaller

maps are found to comprise only one house which, in its turn, may be some three or four miles distant from any other habitation. Except in a few isolated districts, chief amongst which may be noted the Struma Valley, villages are few and far between and it is possible to wander for miles over hilly country without seeing a sign of human life.

In a country which contains two races so inherently hostile as the Turk and Greek, such irreconcilable faiths as Mohammedan and Christian, or such anomalies as Bulgarian-speaking Moslems and Turkish-speaking Orthodox, one would hardly expect to find villages which contain these various nationalities and creeds situated close to each other. Yet such is the case in some parts of the Struma Valley; Cerpista, for instance, is the Turkish part of Nigrita, which is Greek and from which it is less than a mile distant. Others which are within easy reach of each other and which, as a group, contain a very mixed population, are Barakli Dzuma, Ormanli and Haznatar, whilst Osman-Kamilla and Kristian-Kamilla speak for themselves. As often as not, however, a village itself will comprise all the various social and religious denominations which are to be found in Macedonia, each class merely selecting a quarter for itself.

Turkish village nomenclature is not by any means uncuphonic and generally the titles roll

pleasantly off the tongue. Yenikoi, Karasuli, Ortomar, Mahmudli and Nevoljen although distinctly foreign when written, present much less difficulty to an English tongue, no matter how inelastic it may be, than a great many place-names of Wales. Reference to any pre-war map will be found most confusing, as whatever its origin (the best was an Austrian publication) the compiler, in endeavouring to be impartial, has wavered hopelessly between Turkish and Greek names. Turkish village names when translated usually bear a designation of the simplest description—such as “large town,” “small village,” “lower town.” The result is, that such names as Jenimah, Djuma-mah, Jenikoi and Ismailli are found in several different places on the same map.

Generally the main road or track on which the village lies constitutes the line of demarcation, and the side selected by each can generally be ascertained by the respective positions of the mosque and the church. Thus the two religions will meet only in the main village street, at the café or well, and then only for marketing purposes. The children of the two races are brought up to regard each other with an indifference which is merely a disguise for animosity. There is no evidence that the Turks have paid any attention to education, and it is quite likely that of recent years, Greek children, whose school curriculum generally includes reading, writing, arithmetic and French,

have regarded the youthful followers of Mahomet with contempt. It is difficult to translate such a state of affairs, where two hostile races agree to live side by side in perpetual, though perhaps subdued enmity, into the peace and affability which usually characterize an English village. Properly to appreciate these remarkable conditions it is only necessary mentally to divide one's native village into two factions—one British and the other German. To the Macedonian such a situation was merely natural; each no doubt yearned for relief from the other, but to the Greek barber in the village street the Turkish café proprietor opposite re-appeared every morning as regularly as the rising sun, so that, recalling the long years of oppression under the Moslem yoke, the *κουρειων* (coiffeur) must have regretted the Mohammedan distaste for beard trimming!

With few exceptions, the most prosperous towns and villages are found on the plains or are so located as to be easy of access from the main highway and adjoining villages. Some of them, such as Langaza and Barakli-Dzuma, have their special market days as in English agricultural districts. Doiran, in ruins since the Balkan wars of 1912-13, is very prettily situated on a hillside overlooking the lake to which it gives its name, and was chiefly remarkable as a Serbian summer resort and an important railway junction from

which three different lines radiate. The town is some miles from the station, but such a feature is not uncommon in a country which abounds in natural obstacles to the engineer. Lying on the main road from Salonika to Sofia, on the Serbian frontier, Doiran was also the centre to which was brought the produce of the low-lying fertile country contiguous to the lake.

Suho (Turkish) or Sohos (Greek) situated at a height of two thousand feet above sea-level, the centre of a plateau known as Besik Dag, is approached by three or four mountain tracks which only reach it after long continuous winding of a most bewildering description. This town or major village is in direct contrast to the general arrangement of populous areas, for it looks down on a plain of considerable extent, known as Bogdansko, which (enclosing two lakes) is comparatively fertile and well-watered and yet does not contain another village of sufficient importance to give it a title. The chief interest of Suho, however, lies in the fact that its isolate and inaccessible yet central position, has made it the headquarters or stronghold of the Macedonian armed bandits, known as Comitadji and feared by all.

Villages amongst the hills are naturally the most picturesque and frequently are invisible at a distance except for the white gleam of a church or mosque tower. Set in a hollow, they are often discovered unsuspectingly—the houses straggling

over the hillside or perched like eagles' nests, on the edges of rocks and crags.

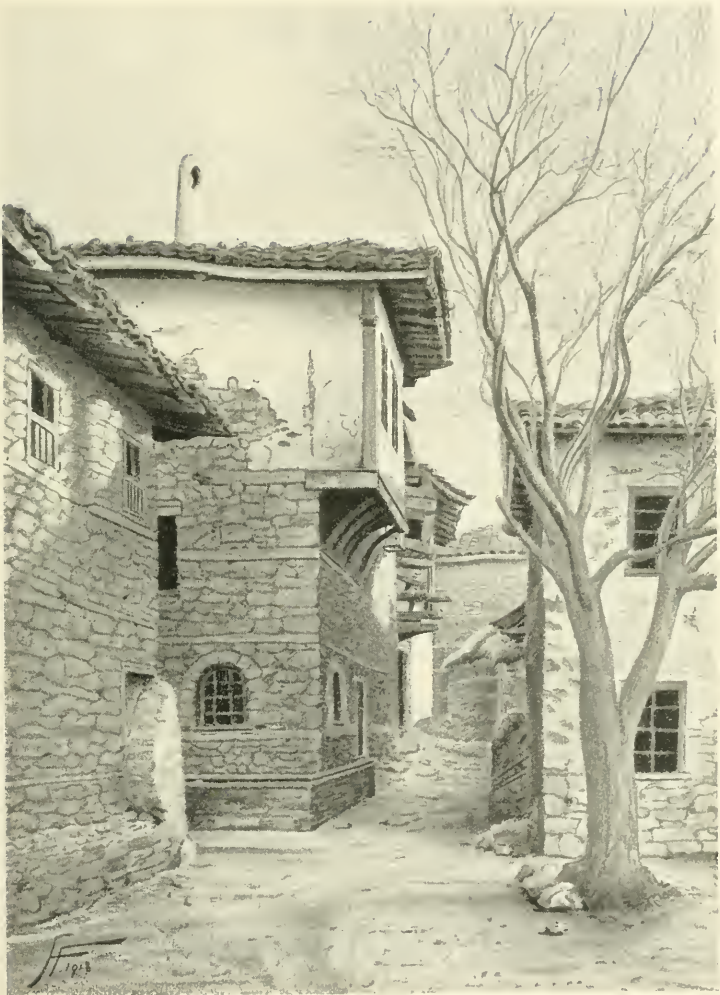
Macedonian villages are remarkable for their number rather than their size. They can hardly be described as straggling, for even in the smallest villages we find two or three short by-roads which may be nothing more than blind alleys between houses which serve as a retreat for a dozen families. The comparatively large number of villages in populous districts may be traced to a peculiar custom of the natives. A peasant, by dint of years of hard work and thrift, acquires a piece of land remote from his native village and, in order to obviate long continuous journeys from his home to his work, abandons the former and proceeds to build a new hut or barn in a sheltered corner near his newly acquired plot. The proximity of water is essential, but given that desideratum, one or two other families are probably attracted to the spot to assist or share in the cultivation of the land. In the next generation, the children of these households inter-marry, build houses of their own and in this fashion extend the village, so that the latter tend to expand and multiply rather than to concentrate. Indeed, it is just possible that such intelligent migration is responsible in a minor degree for the number of ruined and deserted villages to be seen throughout the countryside. In this respect, however, the almost intermittent and sometimes internecine

warfare has undoubtedly played the most prominent part. Once populous and peaceful villages have become mere heaps of stones and crumbling mud walls only inhabited by owls and jackals at night and flocks of sheep by day—sadly eloquent conditions of the uncertainty and insecurity of life in the Balkan Peninsula. The native seldom rebuilds a house ; once ruined—apart from superstition—it is probably scarcely worth while. Consequently, ruins are an inseparable feature of Macedonia and, since they are not always the result of aggressive hostility, have a depressing effect which is not always justified. The constant passing from place to place, the opening up of new land and the dissemination of young blood has many arguments in its favour, for are not these processes allied to the perpetual efforts of Nature to distribute the young of its creatures and scatter the seeds of its plants ?

It speaks volumes for the innate religious fervour of the Macedonian, be he Moslem or Christian, that even the smallest and most obscure village is sanctified by a place of worship. Humble it may be and, as has been observed elsewhere, built of the crudest material, but invariably consecrated by such religious ornaments as may appertain to the particular faith for which it stands and, in the case of the mosque, always graced by a white minaret. For the Greeks, let it be said that no house is complete without

that emblem of their faith—the ikon or holy picture—placed in a conspicuous position where the members of the household will frequently pause, and in the act of crossing themselves, offer up a silent prayer to the Almighty.

The haphazard settlement to which most villages owe their origin accounts for the lack of any arrangement of streets or alignment of houses—an asymmetry which combines compactness with the picturesque. The streets, if such they may be termed, are narrow, cobbled and often steep. Winding and twisting in labyrinthine fashion, in some places they are reduced to mere alleys between the houses, and at others, expand into wide open spaces. Projecting upper stories, sometimes so close as to invite hand-shaking across the street—though it cannot be said that this is a custom in which the native indulges—afford a dark and sinister contrast to the central “place” or square where the inhabitants of the village assemble to draw water at the well. The mysteriousness and obscurity of the narrow streets is enhanced at night by the absence of any system of lighting. At dusk, save for a few wayfarers, the streets become the haunt of wild dogs and jackals, who, led by hunger, scavenge in all directions for discarded fragments or putrefied refuse. These beasts, so thoroughly wolfish in appearance, bear many of the characteristics of that animal and, as they frequently hunt in



OLD HOUSES, ANO VILLAGE,
MACEDONIA

packs, an encounter with them is apt to prove a dangerous experience.

The villages in the plains are connected by sandy and uneven tracks—those in the hills by circuitous mountain paths cunningly cut round the peaks and across gully-heads. The latter do not permit of any means of transport except that of the ubiquitous and hardly-used donkey and, even on the plains, wheeled transport is a luxury confined to the few. Here and there, as at Kavalla, there are remains of fine “pavé” tracks, relics of Roman and Byzantine enterprise, which have resisted, in a marvellous manner, the wild mountain torrents of the rainy season.

A form of our old feudal system is still in vogue in Macedonia; for each village is a community unto itself. Recognizing no controlling authority such as a district council, most hamlets are presided over by a headman—usually the wealthiest and oldest inhabitant or village priest—who exercises considerable influence over his little parish and conducts negotiations or acts as an intermediary on their behalf with the inhabitants of other villages or with strangers.

Nearly every village boasts a hostelry of some sort. It can scarcely be glorified by the term *café*, and yet on the other hand to describe it as an inn might suggest that homeliness and rough comfort which were always associated with old English villages—conditions in which it is sadly

lacking. The Macedonian "house of call" is usually a low and dingy hovel situated on the main track of the village, fronted by a verandah, with a bench and one or two tables underneath. Coffee, cognac, mastic and Samos wine are here dispensed exclusively to men who sit at the tables and talk. Native women do not patronize the cafés, partly because their husbands do not provide them with the necessary pence and partly owing to the loss of dignity suffered by any Oriental seen sitting in public with women; or it may be due to the more pleasing fact that most Eastern women have not yet learnt that form of "freedom" which imitates the vices of men more readily than their virtues. Indeed, a group of gossiping women except at the common well or fountain is a rare scene in a Macedonian village, for the native woman, when abroad, usually seems to have some definite purpose or destination in view and is bent on achieving it with the least possible delay.

The cafés of Macedonia are not designed for the accommodation of travellers and it is obvious that the native when on "trek" has to shift for himself in every way. The old Turkish caravanserai where travellers could rest and stable their animals are now very rarely seen. Occasionally, however, in some of the larger villages the quaint old courtyard, with its cloisters, its white columns and its fountain, is to be seen. Such a retreat no

doubt saw the birth of Christ, and the misleading pictures so often drawn of the Holy Family in a barn-like English stable are due to faulty imagination or ignorance. And what could be more beautiful or appropriate to so great an Event than the simple white walls, the purity of the star-lit sky and the warm caress of an Eastern night ?

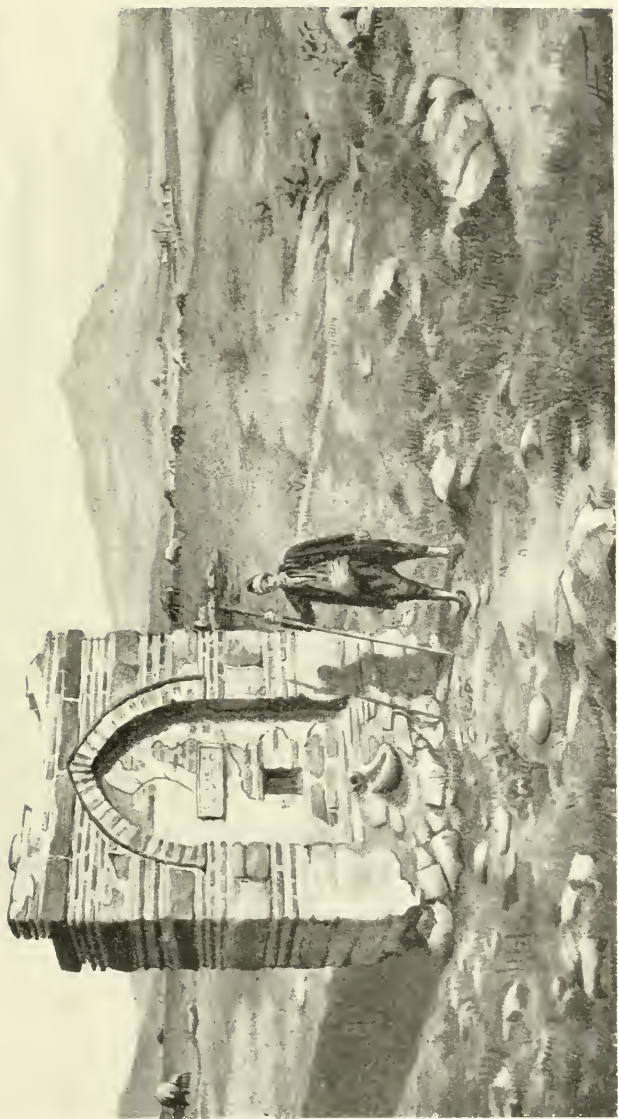
The vicinity of the fountain usually affords the most picturesque scene in the village, for it is here that the womenfolk, dressed in variegated garments, each bearing a pitcher on her shoulder or carrying a copper jug in her hand, congregate and exchange greeting while awaiting their turn at the well. Or it may be that they have brought their household washing—limited as it is—which they proceed to scrub on the marble slab provided for the purpose or beat between the round stones so abundant in the vicinity. The fountain itself is often an object of much interest and, as the inscription shows, occasionally owes its erection to some religious association or to an act of atonement.

Sometimes it will be discovered at the entrance to the village and the traveller, noting the group of women and young girls before an object in the wall, would be justified in assuming that they were worshippers at a wayside shrine. The latter, erected by the Greeks and constructed of brick and plaster, are not uncommon in Macedonia.

Brightly painted, with an ikon picture, a little lamp and a few flowers in a glass case, the shrine commands only a momentary pause and a brief prayer from the passer-by, whereas the fountain frequently detains a considerable gathering. The fountain itself consists of a section of wall, about eight to ten feet in height, four to six feet wide by one foot thick, and ornamentation, in brick or plaster, of a simple but effective nature adorns the top and face. At a few feet from the ground, a rough stone trough receives the water which is conducted, through the wall, to the outflow by an underground pipe or funnel. Above the outflow, set in the face of the wall, is a small rectangular panel often fitted with a marble slab bearing a Turkish or Greek inscription on its surface.

Whether half hidden in some dark corner or conspicuous by the roadside, these old fountains possess a quaint interest, and one may readily appreciate the semi-veneration with which the Turk, in his punctiliousness for ceremonial washing, regards such a monument. Far away in the uninhabited mountains these beautiful old monuments, in the boon they convey to thirsty travellers in a sun-dried wilderness, give a touch of human endeavour, kindness and even companionship.

The water supply of Macedonia, except towards the end of summer, is abundant, and some of the villages such as Osman-Kamilla and Ada in the



AN OLD WAYSIDE FOUNTAIN,
DOIRAN, MAURITANIA

Struma Valley have a magnificent artesian supply under considerable pressure. In a few scattered spots, the water is sulphurous and hot ; these naturally form the sites of old Turkish or even Roman baths. Those of Nigrita, Langaza and Sedes near Salonika, are well-known—particularly those of the last-named which are mentioned by earliest historians.

In the villages on the plains, in addition to the common well or fountain, nearly every household possesses a well of its own, sometimes shallow but occasionally deep, narrow and skilfully constructed. Surrounded by a platform of stones and shaded by a large tree, many of them have copings of marble cut deep in course of time by the constant friction of ropes. The spreading branches of the overhanging elm or sycamore frequently mark the spot chosen for the communal water supply on account of the welcome shade which not only tends to keep the water cool but affords relief from the scorching sun to those who wait their turn. Here, in addition to the familiar group of women, will be found any weary traveller who, having trudged far and ardently over treeless sun-baked tracks, is enticed to the spot by the hospitable shade and fresh trickling water. Man, however, is not the only creature who appreciates the welcome of these big trees, as the stork returns year after year and burdens the branches with his large unwieldy nest. Chim-

ney pots and roofs are no less favoured by this imposing bird, and no attempt is made by the inhabitants to dislodge him, since the former, always superstitious, regard his advent as a good omen. Often the rattle-like noise which he makes with his red beak—his white plumage gleaming in the waning sunlight, and his long legs standing out prominently against the sky line—is the only sound which disturbs the evening silence of a sleepy village. There is something so homely, so picturesque, so reassuring in the manner in which this bird chooses the habitation of man on which to rear his own young—something so enchanting in his solemn pose on the old roofs—that one no longer discredits his superstitious association with the infant arrival in the room below.

Shops, if such they can be termed, are few and far between. Apart from the café or inn, the main street may contain a small general store selling wine, biscuits, figs, sardines, dyes and cheap cotton materials. Occasionally we find a jeweller displaying watches, silver ikons and a few cheap trinkets. One or two tobacconists roll and sell their own cigarettes from the weed grown on a plantation perhaps no more than a few hundred yards away. The large villages and towns have permanent bazaars and markets, with sometimes a special day allotted for the latter. These supply a more comprehensive assortment of merchandise

and produce—the bazaars specializing in hardware, iron work, cooking utensils, drapery and donkey saddles and the markets exhibiting such commodities as fish, melons, vegetables and wine. Particularly worthy of note is the presence of such incongruous household goods as sewing machines, alarm clocks and even gramophones in far inland villages. The blacksmith is too familiar in our own country to awaken more than passing interest, but the tin-smith or copper worker with his beautiful collection of pots, pans, jugs, trays, cow-bells, etc., will cause the stranger to halt and inspect his ware.

Drainage is only very crude and even the simplest of municipal arrangements is lacking. Amongst the foothills, where the heavy storms of spring rapidly convert the main street into a cascade, the roads are roughly paved, or studded with large stones which act as stepping-stones when the street is flooded or knee deep in mud.

A few larger villages still retain a night watchman or “pazvan” who, accompanied by his faithful dog and armed with a flint-lock pistol, patrols the streets and regularly sounds the hour by striking the stones with a large ferruled club. Originally intended as an arm of the law, in later days he has become analogous to our old-time watchman and merely serves the community as a perambulating alarm signal. Every one is indoors at sundown or soon after and, owing to the lack of

lights and the necessity of rising early for work in the fields, villagers are early at rest. No one ventures out after dark and, as a lighted window makes a good target, the few who can afford lights seem disinclined to use them. Thus the nocturnal wayfarer derives no guidance or cheer from those twinkling lights which are a familiar aspect of our own countryside.

Most villages contain a few superior houses of modern construction which form the residences of tobacco or grain merchants as well as the village priest. As far as possible, every square inch of land round the village is cultivated and no patch of soil, even among the rocks, is too small or too inaccessible for the tiller's hoe.

In recent years a few schools have been founded by nations interested in the Balkans, but little is taught beyond religious extracts. In any case it is difficult to realize how indiscriminate learning can materially benefit a people whose charm and contentment lies in ignorance of the complications and disturbances caused by partial education. Their conquest of the problem of existence would seem to be sufficient ; indeed, from childhood onwards, their knowledge and understanding of the ways and peculiarities of Nature is a matter for admiration and wonder. With civilization, its customs, conventions and routine, must come learning, intelligence, responsibility and trouble ; but to deal with Nature in the

wild man requires only the instinct and physique of the creatures who inhabit it. It needs no great experience of life to know that to supply the means of education, without the closest supervision, to a primitive race is to place a box of matches in the hands of a child during the absence of its nurse ; for a moment it may mean the joy of the bright light but, in the end, destruction for itself and all who come near it.

At close quarters Turkish villages are more beautiful and quaint, more primitive and more solidly built than Greek which, for the most part, are of recent construction, and like the houses have no special points of beauty or interest. From a distance, however, all these villages both large and small play an equal part in contributing towards the beauty of the landscape. Whether dotting the plain or nestling in the foothills, they blend with the colours and shades of the country and harmonise with the wild magnificent scenery which mothers them. In the average panorama, they are mere specks—the white houses shining in the sunlight like tiny crystals of sugar—or dark patches velvety with trees, in a mighty waste of mountains and plains. Some of our largest cities, even London itself, would seem lost in the great expanses which Nature has made on so vast a scale in this untouched land. These little villages and patches of fields are such tiny efforts of man—mere scratches and marks on the

huge unchanging face of Nature. The toil and the hand of man—dig and build as he may—cannot touch those magnificent mountains, and in the course of years only a few ruins, perhaps, half-hidden in weeds, will mark where the human caravan has rested.

A SALONIKA
JEWESS



CHAPTER V

MACEDONIAN HOUSES

IN considering the above subject, we shall not concern ourselves to any extent with the white stone-built modern type of house which is found in Salonika and in the large towns. These possess few outstanding features ; they are built primarily to withstand heat and are mostly uniform. It is rather with the old type of farmhouse or peasant's domicile that we shall find most interest. These dwellings, though built of the crudest materials on unorthodox lines and without any architectural planning are, in fact, intelligently adapted to the climate. Generally consisting of thick mud walls, with a double thickness on the side facing north, and a large air space immediately under the roof, they are admirably designed to resist both heat and cold. The authors have lived in such abodes, both during the height of summer and the depth of winter and can vouch for their adequate, though somewhat unrefined, comfort.

The up-country house, the peasant's homestead, has many peculiarities. There is distinct evidence of adaptability to situation and soil.

Those in the hills are generally of a more solid structure than those on the plains, and in each case there is frequent proof of the surrounding geological formation. Wherever he has taken up his abode, the native, making a virtue of necessity, and at the same time exercising true economy, has indented on the adjacent soil and erected a dwelling of sandstone or mud, of igneous rock or of slate and shale. Mud is the commonest material. It is usually shaped into bricks which are baked hard in the sun and welded together by the liquid mud out of which they have been formed. Another method of ensuring solidity is by mixing mud with tibbin or chopped straw and plastering it over wattle-work.

The houses are low and seldom exceed two stories, even in the towns. The friableness of the material will not stand great height, and in a more humid climate the mud work would be considerably less durable. As it is, the strength of these mud-built houses is extraordinary. Many of them seem to be on the verge of collapse and yet they have been standing for generations. The native does not worry about foundations, and the floor of the ground rooms usually consists of mother earth, not systematically levelled, but stamped down hard by generations of feet.

The windows are small, but their size is counter-balanced by their number. It is quite evident that, to whatever other injustices the Macedonian



OLD HOUSES, LAKE
TAHINOS, MACEDONIA

has been submitted, the obnoxious and absurd window tax, at one time in force in this country, was not amongst them. The number of windows is all the more remarkable in that glass is a luxury except for the more modern buildings of the towns. Shutters, which keep out the light as well as the air, are the only substitute for glass, and for the greater part of the year the temperature permits this mania—more apparent than real—for fresh air.

Some houses, usually of Turkish construction, have a grid of metal or wood across the window-frame, and the shutters open and close on this. This grid is not found in all the windows of a Turkish house, but usually only in one room, that probably allotted to the womenfolk. In any case, in a country so over-run in the past by brigands and marauding bands, a grid-protected aperture was probably a form of security not altogether despised by even the male portion of the household.

The doorways are low, the door itself wooden and often of a very heavy, solid description. Frequently one observes a huge beam on the inside which slides across the door from an aperture in the wall—further evidence of that desire for security stimulated by the turbulent times through which some of these old houses have passed.

The roofs are large with enormous eaves. Their

pent or angle is not steep enough to cause the loose unattached gutter tiles to slide off, and only just sufficient to carry off the rare rain that falls. The entire roof is supported on huge beams which project beyond the tiles like spokes of an umbrella. The ceiling of the rooms is flat, thus leaving a large space between roof and room in which much rubbish and long forgotten articles are stored. In fact so heterogeneously stocked is this loft that one hardly knows whether to describe it as the native's souvenir-chamber or his family dust-bin. Here will be found an extraordinary collection of rags and skins, with old tins and odd pieces of metal—a usage for which it would baffle the most inventive mind to discover. It is rather difficult to divine the native's mentality in preserving what seems to be nothing better than a heap of rubbish. Possibly it is that particular trait of character which we have all observed at some time or other amongst our acquaintances, which seems to make it impossible for the possessor to throw anything away, no matter how useless the article may appear to have become. Or it may be that in a country of no municipal or urban district councils, in a land which has yet to experience the impudent impositions of the public scavenger, the native has no other recourse but to that of storage. Having nowhere to throw things away, no systematic means of disposal, he succumbs to that

curious streak of indolence in the native character, and preserves his rubbish rather than take the trouble to burn it or bury it. On the other hand, perhaps he should be less harshly judged and given credit for a real desire to preserve certain things which may, for all we know, have some sentimental or useful interest for him. Certainly the rags may have a definite future before them for we recall that we have often seen the women dressed in garments which resemble a patch-work quilt; and the animal skins, though not of the best, will serve to throw over the shoulders in wet weather or to nail across some of the cracks in the shutters when a Nor'-Easter from the Vardar is blowing.

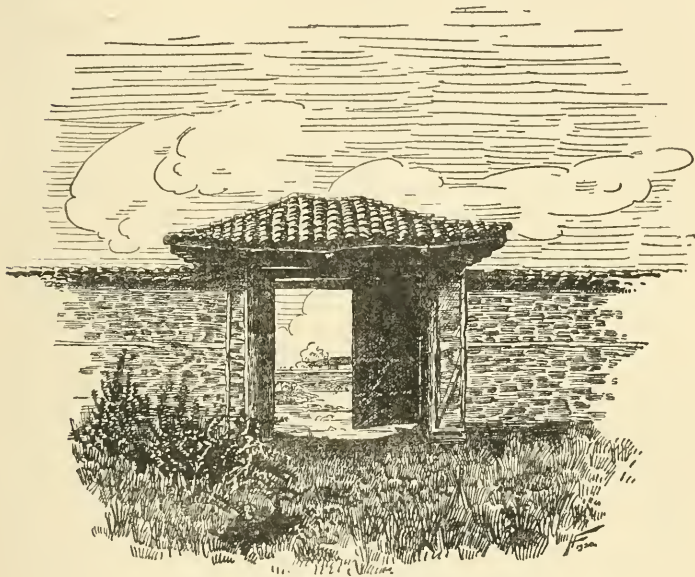
The roofs are ingeniously tiled, and the method adopted lends itself to subsequent picturesque-ness. Except in a few valleys between Provista and Orfano, on the way to Kavalla, where slate slabs are in use, the tiles are made of baked clay shaped into rough curved gutters about one foot long and four or five inches wide. These are placed in rows on lathes of wood and straw, the lower rows concave and the upper convex, each tile overlapping the next. These old red-tiled roofs quickly become covered with green lichens, so that the delicate blending of colour added to the corrugation or wavy effect of the tiles is extremely beautiful.

The houses themselves and the rooms are

generally rectangular. There are exceptions, however, and we sometimes come across walls which are not even parallel. In addition the upper story nearly always projects beyond the ground floor walls, and the overlapping portion is supported by sloping wooden struts which extend from the free edge of the first floor to the bottom of the ground floor wall. As far as one can judge there is no reason for such unconventional structure, and one can only assume that it is due to hasty or haphazard ground planning. Moreover, the houses, themselves, do not present any alignment with the road—additional proof of the lack of a controlling authority; frequently they are set at all angles to the highway and to each other. Indeed, quaint irregularity is the keynote of Macedonian house-building for, as often as not, the upper rooms are set at different angles from those below.

It almost seems as if the owner has started modestly with a one-story house and later, at intervals, as means and material allowed, added to it with careless abandon and a happy disregard of the laws of gravity. As may be imagined, these architectural methods, combined with the frequent eccentricities of the builder, produce a dwelling which, though somewhat bizarre, is extremely picturesque. It is interesting to note that this old-fashioned style and artistic disarray is receiving the flattery of imitation in the more

beautiful examples of modern architecture. As with a great many features of Macedonia, a display of weird notions, almost amounting to wizardry, combined with the action of the weather and natural magnificence of background, bring about a novel effect which is charming to behold.



GATEWAY : MACEDONIAN VILLAGE.

The white walls and red roofs, toned with green, like the "bloom" on old bronze; the rough, sun-bleached timber, the deep-shadowed eaves and the crude stonework all contribute to this attractive picture.

Though the more modern town houses are seldom built with fire-places—the householders

relying on portable stoves with chimney complete, for their heating—the up-country dwelling is nearly always provided with an open hearth and wide flue, similar to those of the old farm-houses of England. The style of the chimney-stack, however, affords a little variety. Sometimes there is nothing more than a hole in the roof, a deficiency due to a lack of material, just as the overlapping of the first floor beyond the ground floor may be accounted for by an unexpected windfall of timber and mud-bricks. Or the chimneys may be surmounted by a wide, straight shaft which is closed at the top and open at the sides to prevent rain falling down the flue. The ubiquitous stork's nest, like a great bundle of sticks firmly fixed in the chimney, often achieves the same end. This type of chimney is usually built of mud, but there is another variety made of pottery or tiles, or perhaps whitewashed mud, which has its opening at the top and is cut into pointed projections like a crown. Now and again, we find the flue carried out through a hole in the wall and projecting beyond.

The most constant feature of all village houses is what, for want of a better term, may be called the verandah. Every house, large or small, has a wall-less room enclosed by a low balustrade, either on the ground or first floor, and, when on the latter, communicating by doors with adjoining rooms.

The family spend most of their time on the verandah during summer, for it is nearly always so ingeniously situated that the sun does not play on it except perhaps for an hour in the early morning ; and with a roof overhead it is comparatively cool. In two-storied houses, the verandah is usually on the first floor and the space below is used as a store-room or stable. Indeed, in many Macedonian houses, the entire ground floor is used for such purposes, and often contains such a miscellaneous assortment as grain, vegetables and farm implements, together with pigs, cows, chickens, two or three goats and the family donkey. Were it not for their bulk, however, probably most of the animals would be equally at home on the first as on the ground floor and, in less spacious hovels, which do not boast an upper story, man and beast agree to share the restricted accommodation. As it is, the entire dwelling constitutes a poultry run for the feathered brigade.

The verandah is evidently regarded with some fondness by the household, as a great deal of patience and not a little skill are exhibited in the ornamentation of the balustrade. In some cases it is cut out stencil fashion or, in others, made up of elaborate hand-turned banisters. When there is no apartment immediately below, the verandah has a floor of boards, supported by posts of oak, and connected with the ground by an outside

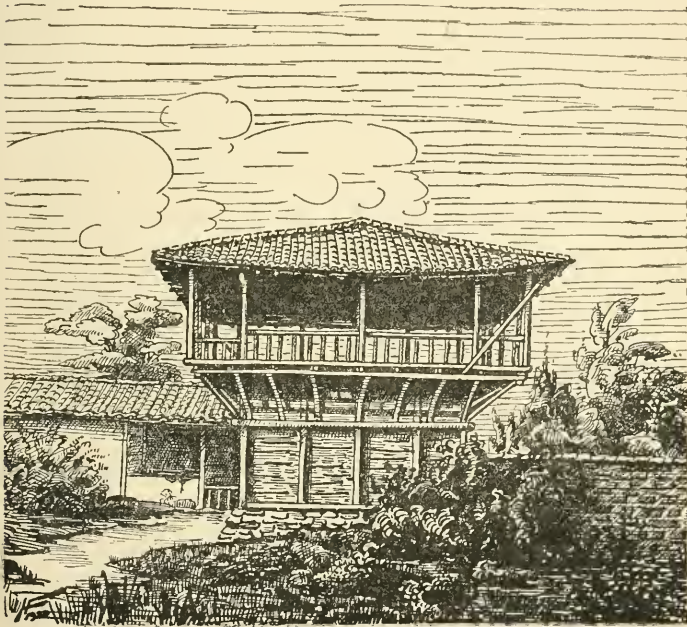
staircase, which is wisely closed by a trap door. Presumably the last provision is to prevent the children from falling down, and the animals from coming up, though whether it achieves this twofold purpose is open to question.

The free edge of roof over the verandah is supported from the ground, in most cases, by strong wooden posts ending in a simple ornamented shoulder.

It is interesting to note that the rough tools used for carving and shaping do not permit of the smooth machine-finish of woodwork to which Western peoples are accustomed. On the other hand, the rough, crude and uneven notches of the axe on the old weather-worn wood unintentionally produce that picturesque effect much sought after in that branch of modern architecture which aspires to art and beauty.

A common practice is to build two houses under one roof with a long verandah approached from opposite ends by separate wooden stairways; more particularly with Turkish families, we find three houses set at right angles to form part of a square. The enclosed space or quadrangle then serves as a farm-yard, and the corners become rubbish heaps. Even on this plan, however, there is seldom any uniformity, for each owner constructs his house on his own ideas, and according to his means, so that the three houses present a most attractive dissimilarity.

Contiguous to the houses there is sometimes a garden or small plantation of such trees as pomegranates, quinces or figs; occasionally, also, we find a patch of egg-fruit, tobacco, red-peppers or tomatoes. In addition a big vine frequently hangs from the verandah or is supported on a rough



SUMMER HOUSE : MACEDONIAN VILLAGE.

arch of wood. Apart from those which Nature supplies so lavishly in Macedonia, flowers are seldom seen, except perhaps roses and geraniums in tins or hanging wooden bowls.

The house and little garden are usually surrounded by a high wall built of mud bricks or

stones and protected on top by a double row of tiles or a mat of twigs. As with the walls of the house, traverses of wood running longitudinally at intervals of a few feet are used as supports. The entrance to this enclosure is by a large double-doored gateway higher than the wall and surrounded by a narrow roof of tiles entirely its own. The door is made of stout timber and invariably kept closed. The old gateways are most imposing and their bronze rings and handle mountings are articles of quaint design.

A curious structure which resembles a summer-house is occasionally observed in the gardens of old villages. It consists of an open first-floor room approached by a stairway and supported by numerous wooden struts. The ground floor of this quaint erection is closed and barricaded and used as a barn or granary. The roof is tiled or thatched, and the balustrade runs round the four sides of the first floor, which, being open to all points of the compass, is exceedingly light and airy. Sometimes reed mats are used on one or more sides to ward off the rays of the sun. The first floor overlaps the ground floor and well extended eaves give the building the appearance of a huge umbrella about to be opened—an effect which is completed by oblique slanting struts which slope outwards from the ground to support the edge of the roof. In the shade and cool of this capacious wall-less

room the women sit and spin while the men smoke.

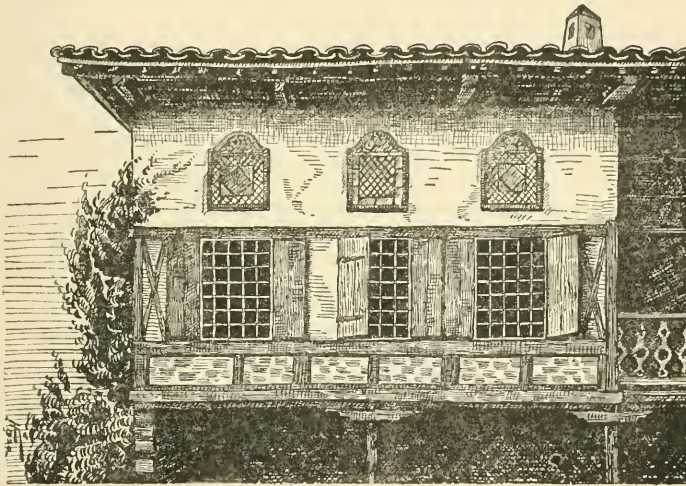
The native revels in a bright colour ; consequently, we often find houses with blue or pink exteriors, although, naturally, the more popular coating is whitewash. The surface is broken in many places by the insertion in the walls of cross and slanting pieces of wood, so that with patches of the outer coating of plaster in process of wearing off, an effect is produced which is decidedly old-fashioned.

There is sufficient disparity between the Greek and Turkish houses to render either one or the other fairly distinguishable. They are both found in the same village, but usually well apart. Although the Greek houses are more modern they are less tidy and cleanly than the Turkish ; but whereas the latter contain less rubbish in the mattresses and rags which cover the floor, they usually shelter more fleas and dirt. Greek houses are more finished, with machined woodwork and window frames, small panes of glass and sash openings ; but on the other hand, Turkish houses are more solidly built. Turkish windows are nearly always barred with trellis or a cross-framework of iron. They seldom contain glass and are nearly always shuttered. Here and there, however, we find the windows of a very old Turkish house made of a glass pane cut up into patterns by ridges of plaster fastened on to it,

giving a church window effect. Some of the shutters have very beautiful wrought-iron hinges and quaint old fasteners; and the cross-bars, sometimes of wood as well as of iron, are connected by hand-cut diamond-shaped joints. The Greek with a typical love of ornamentation likes a design over his portal such as the date of erection or a pattern of flowers in distemper.

The impression left on the mind in comparing Greek and Turkish village houses is that the former is entirely lacking in that artistic touch which, whether consciously or not, the Turk seems to effect. Both, though especially the Turk, show no little ingenuity in making the very best of the bare provision of Nature. We, nearing the top-most rung of the ladder of civilization, should be aghast at the prospect of having to build with our own hands, and live in, a house made out of Nature's raw material without the refining skill of the workshop or the well-wrought productions of the foundry. Yet such is the quandary in which the Macedonian finds himself. He has not the wherewithal to purchase bricks and mortar, or if he had he would probably be lacking in the means of power to transport them from Salonika to his native village. (Even for Salonika itself, most of the building material has to come oversea.) No, the peasant receives very little artificial aid in his battle for life and existence. Just as elsewhere we have appraised his efforts

in extracting the means of livelihood from the meagre fare which Nature provides in the wilds of Macedonia, just as we have applauded his success, sometimes in spite of her, so must we accord him a word of encouragement and appreciation for the style and quality of the house he constructs,



[FRONT OF AN OLD TURKISH HOUSE :
KUKOS, LOWER STRUMA.

usually with his own hands, and nearly always out of nothing more than the bare essentials of mud, stone and timber.

HOUSES—INTERIORS

Owing to the bareness and general lack of furniture, the task of describing the interior of Macedonian houses is by no means formidable.

Poverty is the predominant cause of the primitive interior but no doubt that is also partly due to the Eastern custom of sitting cross-legged on the floor, or, on the other hand, it may be that the paucity of furniture is responsible for the habit. However, to whatever extent the two conditions are interdependent, the nudity and simplicity of the interior has much to commend it, for it is not only economical from the point of view of material but also conducive to coolness and spaciousness. Moreover, even if household furniture were abundant, the unevenness incidental to a mud floor would scarcely ensure the firmness of tables and chairs.

The rooms, it may be observed, are small, with very low ceilings and rounded corners. Each room is self-contained—that is to say, that although there may sometimes be communicating doors between two rooms, every one has a door which opens on to the verandah or leads outside into the open. Such rooms are not set aside for any particular function ; hence that damp and musty sanctum, so often known as the “ parlour ” and used only on Sundays, is not a feature of Macedonian interiors. Space and accommodation are far too valuable and limited. Passages, except in the modern type of Greek house, are non-existent. Interior staircases are also lacking, but there is always an outside stairway or ladder which leads to the verandah when the latter is

situated on the first floor. Such an arrangement is an obvious solution of the difficulties which would arise when more than one family occupy the same house and is, no doubt, also induced by an insufficiency of material and the fact that the friableness of mud walls will not permit of any but the simplest architecture. In two-storied houses, the lower rooms, seldom used for living purposes, accommodate the more bulky live stock and that immense collection of odds and ends, big and small, so essential a part of the peasant family.

The floors are of mud and even upstairs the loosely-laid boards are covered by a layer of this simple commodity in order to exclude the draught. Recollection of the habit of squatting on the floor will convince the reader of the necessity of this provision. In better class houses, however, the floors are sometimes covered with matting or palliasses, and a divan or some sort of ottoman may rest against the wall in the manner of a couch. The latter is a feature of Turkish houses, rather than Greek, and usually denotes a certain amount of affluence on the part of the householder.

No decorative scheme adorns the walls except the simple artistic effect which is supplied by plaster or mud laid on wattle work. The interior of Macedonian houses almost establishes the superfluity of wall-paper, for the plain rough white walls or brown mud are anything but ugly. Decoration of interiors is grossly abused

and much overdone in some of our modern buildings. Cheap wall-papers and gilt plaster work can never look anything but what they are—short cuts to imitative art. With the slightest wear they look shabby, whereas the test of true ornamentation is that age increases its beauty. If the builder or occupier cannot afford the very best material or the most artistic workmanship, it is better to leave the harmless dignity of the plaster walls untouched.

The ceilings, when of mud or plaster, are whitewashed and, naturally, very uneven; often of wood panelling, a few are carved in concentric patterns or, in Greek cottages, painted blue with flowers or geometric designs. The windows, few in number, especially in older houses, are placed nearer the floor than the ceiling and such luxuries as curtains, pictures and ornaments are seldom seen. Most of them are barred and, if on the ground floor, stand some considerable height from the roadway or garden outside, the difference of level between exterior and interior being adjusted by two or three steps leading up to the doorway.

The Macedonian, being his own house-builder, is prodigal of fire-places and, except in absolute hovels, there is one in every room. In the poorest kind of dwelling—the crude one-storied hut—the native, by way of warmth, simply lights a fire in the middle of the room and the smoke,

which forms a dense upper layer, escapes slowly through a hole in the roof. The fire place usually consists of an open hearth, and a rough slab serves the purpose of a grate. From this the smoke ascends through a very wide chimney in the wall and a large rounded chimney-piece, projecting far into the room, ensures a good draught. The native seems indifferent to fire risks as the overhanging chimney-piece is generally made of wood covered by plaster, while the house itself is full of unprotected wooden beams. Of late the iron stove with its hideous chimney has, in the modern houses, replaced the picturesque and time-honoured hearth. Wood constitutes the chief item of fuel, but cakes of mud and dung, stuck on the outside walls of the house to dry, are extensively used; like peat they smoulder rather than burn but give out a surprising amount of heat. This artificial fuel is of special value in some parts of the country where not even a bush exists to break the monotony of a treeless waste.

A cupboard is represented by a recess in the wall provided with one or two partitions, and one long shelf about two feet from the ceiling running round the four walls, serves the same purpose—storage of food and household utensils.

All Greek households possess a family “ikon” or holy picture, a grease-stained, time-worn representation of the Virgin and Child or one of the

Saints, enclosed in a little glass cupboard which also contains modest offerings of dried flowers and coloured eggs. In this box, at the foot of the ikon, one also finds prayers folded in wallets (to be worn as charms), little brass or silver crucifixes, tiny boxes and horn crosses or even a fine old piece of Byzantine enamel from some ruined church or monastery. These pictures, generally, are crude representations copied from well-known sacred works of art or merely a product of the artist's imagination and done in oil colours on wood in the form of a single panel or triptych with folding doors. In front of this little household shrine hangs a tiny glass lamp, kept constantly burning and consisting of a naked wick floating in heavy oil. In addition to the ordinary local-made ikon, there is sometimes a beautiful and valuable example of old panel-painting art. A popular method seems to be to cover the wood with gold foil and use semi-transparent colours giving an enamel effect—the uncovered gold showing in the background and a "tooled" surface being produced by patterned ornamentation. The artist's lack of knowledge in perspective and proportion add to the quaint and grotesque beauty of these illuminated panels. The bigger ikons, especially those in the churches, are embellished with silver halos or representations of the hands and feet handsomely worked in repoussé and at times, even further elaborated

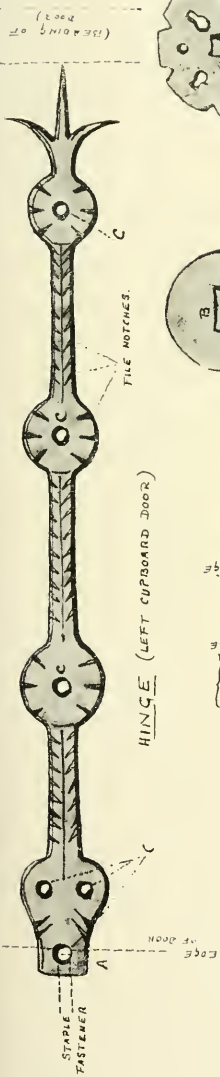
by plaques or medallions of enamel. Before leaving the ikon, so important a feature of orthodox creeds, mention must be made of the quaint custom of sticking coins to the face of these old pictures; any that will not adhere are given to the church and the fixing of a coin to the paint is taken as a sign of favour and luck.

In unpleasant contrast to any quaint but simple ornaments that the owner may adopt, the walls of the room are sometimes hung with glaring cheap oleographs from an Austrian press or deplorable prints of modern German origin. The Greeks are the chief offenders in this respect and, in addition to the prints of the Greek Royal Family, sometimes exhibit family groups taken on some fête occasion, with the various members all dressed in the "latest" style. These show that the Greek peasant delights in making himself look as big a villain as possible, and the height of fashion in woman's dress seems to be puffed sleeves and tight bodices. With the group holding hands in front of a small table supporting a book or flower pot, the early Victorian impression is completed.

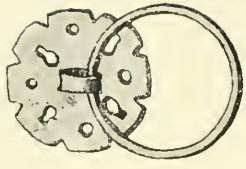
The woodwork of the houses usually consists of unstained, unpainted deal or pine which in time develops a rich buff tone so that the absence of paint or varnish—an omission which in no way detracts from the natural beauty of the woodwork—is scarcely felt. The interior of these old

houses, with their well-seasoned wood, deeply toned by time and their metalwork delightfully bronzed by Nature, accentuates the superfluity of paint or lacquer and discredits the present artificial aids to ornament and beauty. The rush of modern civilization has compelled the adoption of quick and cheap methods in a fruitless endeavour to attain that beauty of ornamentation and purity of art which time and patience alone can achieve. Even in the modern type of Greek house, the white walls, clean untouched woodwork and absence of all save bare necessities creates a cool, refreshing effect, so highly desirable in a climate which at times becomes tropical.

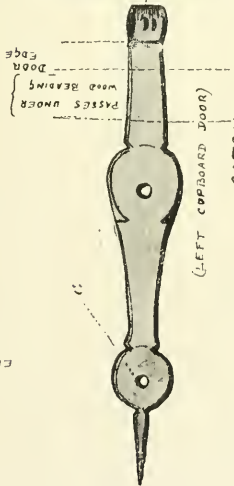
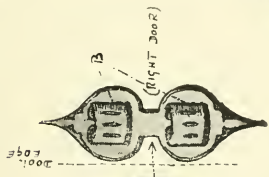
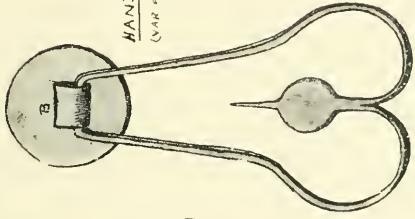
A few points concerning the essentially Turkish houses deserve special remark, as, since they are usually of more ancient construction, the abundant woodwork is of a deeper hue and very often black with age. Panelling, also, is common, and one side of the room may be completely covered by a system of wooden cupboards and pigeon holes in various patterns. These cupboards, adorned with beautiful and quaint wrought-iron fastenings or hinges are cleverly carved or panelled and sometimes even stained in various colours. Bedsteads, considered so essential in the smallest Western household, are unknown except in the larger modern houses of the merchant or landowner. The native sleeps on mats or straw mattresses laid on the floor, or occasionally



TILE NOTCHES.

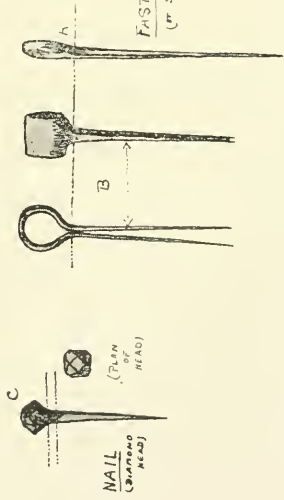


HANDLES
(VARIOUS)



IRON FITTINGS (CUPBOARD)

from old Turkish
ARABCO, CERPISTA,
MACEDONIA. 1918



CATCH (VARIETY)

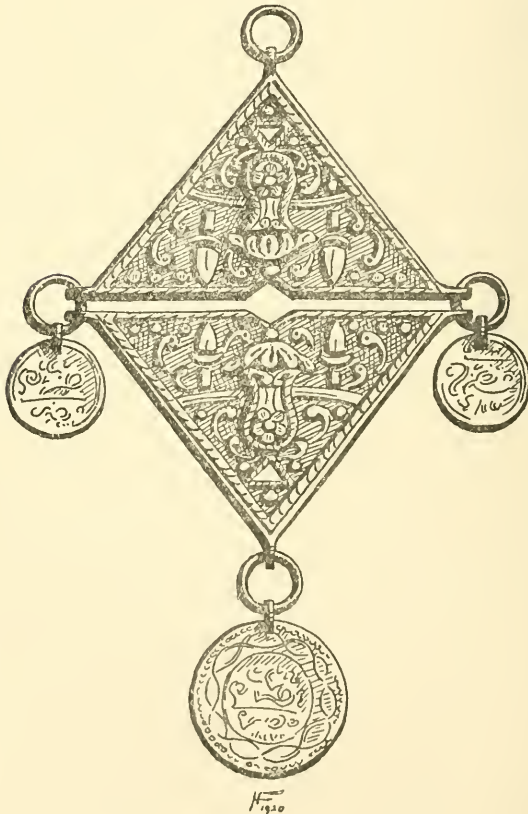
FASTENERS
(OR STAPLES)

CUPBOARD DOOR FITTINGS. IN WROUGHT
IRON—OLD TURKISH HOUSE, MACEDONIA

in a cupboard in the wall. A good class peasant's house may possess a corner cupboard which will contain cheap glasses, tins of spice (all his food is highly spiced) a limited amount of inferior mid-European cutlery, some enamel ware and copper plates. A low round table or stool, a few small hard cushions, a copper jug, some discarded garments and the ubiquitous wooden chest (in which the best clothes and other family treasures are kept) complete the interior of a peasant's living-room.

As he spends so much of his time out of doors, the native devotes scant attention to interior comfort or luxury and the simple, almost severe result is by no means unpleasing. The absence of over-ornamentation and dust-laden drapery, of discoloured paper and useless furniture gives the inhabitant a sense of freedom and air-space, even in so small a room, which the occupants of over-stocked and suffocating rooms of many small English homes never enjoy. Such is the influence of environment on the human mind that, were other conditions equal, the Macedonian in his bare simple dwelling, with its close alliance to Nature, would have no cause to envy the Western labourer, who though living on the land, has so often perverted his neat rural home with some of the purposeless effects of town-life and civilization. One may venture to hope that the new homes, for which there is such crying need, may

strike a happy medium not only in spaciousness and comfort but in simplicity and beauty. Just as the wild creatures of Nature first see life from the glades of forest or the open spaces of the field, moulding their lives to the dignity of their environment, so does man shape his destiny and find his soul through the windows of the house where he is born and bred.



CHAPTER VI

PRODUCTS

NATURE has endowed Macedonia with exceedingly fertile soil, which, though restricted in area, is remarkable for its versatility. It comprises to a large extent nearly all those classes of field and garden produce which are indigenous to a more or less humid climate such as ours, together with numerous plants and fruits which are only to be found in sub-tropical regions. The only drawback from which the land suffers is the lack of water, experienced towards the middle of summer, when a blazing sun, day after day, has dried up all vegetation hitherto kept green and fresh by the spring rains. Such an unfortunate state of affairs could be alleviated, if not altogether corrected, by a system of irrigation such as that in operation in the Egyptian Delta. Many of the plains and valleys would well repay such enterprise, as Nature, in her munificence, provides two crops of most products, and the effort of man would certainly in many cases raise a third. Moreover, as the labourer is content to turn over

a few inches only, the deeper soil has not yet been touched.

Certainly Macedonia experiences no long wet periods in the winter months and, even during the days of December, the afternoon sun is powerful enough to keep the ground hard-baked. But the native, so inured to strife, leaves the rare and meagre moisture to struggle alone, and offers little or no assistance in its contest against the sun ; or perhaps, to state his case literally and truly, it should be said that the benefit of many modern inventions and ideas has yet to be brought to his notice. For the present, therefore, he is, *faute de mieux*, content merely to scratch the soil, but even so, aided by his wonderful knowledge of the climate, he achieves results which stimulate one's interest and deserve one's admiration.

TOBACCO

Foremost on the list of industries must be considered that of tobacco-growing. The "fragrant weed" is the most lucrative and most ubiquitous of Macedonia's products. It is seen in all parts of the country, sometimes only on little patches planted in the most remote spots, and, although thousands of smokers have never heard of Macedonian tobacco, they have undoubtedly enjoyed its subtle flavour in the finest brands of Turkish cigarettes. For such misconception there is naturally some excuse, since the country



SPRING-TIME, STRUMA, MACEDONIA

groaned under the Turkish yoke for centuries, and the chief town of the export trade—Kavalla—was before recent Balkan wars under the suzerainty of the Turks and in possession of the Bulgars for the greater part of the late European war. Indeed, if one may particularize of a country which produces tobacco with such proximity throughout its entire length and breadth it may be said that the plains of Drama, which were likewise in the possession of Turkey till Macedonia came under Greek rule, produce the finest Oriental tobacco in the world. Kavalla, itself, owes its importance and wealth as a port to the tobacco trade, and many well-known firms, including a few British, have large warehouses on its quayside and around the little harbour.

In the fertile plains and valleys, there are large areas under cultivation as well as many small scattered fields and a number of privately-owned plantations. How national is the industry and how popular the weed is shown by the fact that almost every little cottage at the due season displays the fragrant leaves hung up to dry. It may not be generally known that the term “weed” is happily and correctly chosen; for, given a warm sun and a little water to start them on their career, the young plants require no other attention until the picking season. In spring they are transplanted in rows in freshly ploughed

ground at intervals of about eight inches, and when fully grown consist of a straight thick stem which reaches a height of about two feet. They bear a series of leaves springing by a short stalk at regular intervals up the main stem, somewhat reminiscent of the foxglove. The leaves are lanceolate in shape, rough and leathery to the touch and graduated in size from the bottom upwards. The topmost leaves are surmounted, in summer, by a bunch of pink or mauve trumpet-shaped flowers. Picking commences before the plants flower ; the bottom and largest leaves are gathered first and the upper ones at suitable intervals as they develop. Thus the advent of summer, which sees the end of the picking season, is marked by field after field of long bare stalks, crowned by a small cluster of pink flowers and undeveloped leaves. The spectacle is weird and almost forbidding, and to the uninitiated eye suggests the foul attack of a swarm of locusts disturbed before their dastardly work was complete.

After they are picked the leaves are strung on cotton or twine, necklace fashion, and hung on the verandahs so as to catch the sun, or against the wall, and left till quite brown and dry. By this process the leaves become crisp and friable and, before fit for smoking, have to be packed in bundles, pressed, and left for months in the dark to ferment. Finally, they attain a darker

hue, become soft and sticky, and are then ready to be cut into shreds and exported—chiefly to Egypt. At this stage the blender and manufacturer intervene and the tobacco grown in this obscure little-known corner of Europe finds its way, in the shape of superior Turkish and Egyptian cigarettes, into the drawing-rooms and clubs of connoisseurs.

OPIUM

Anyone who has seen a field of opium poppies in full bloom, will realize that Nature intended the product of this herb as a soothing and mitigating influence on mankind rather than as an agent to destroy the moral senses and ruin the physique of the individual. In a land already covered with flowers, blithe and gay under the benevolent care of Nature in her happiest mood, a huge expanse of white poppies stands out as one of the fairest corners of her garden. Tall and straight, the plants bow to the wind with a careless elegant ease and the flowers themselves, in the purity of their whiteness, proclaim that sweetness of character which can only be associated with a benign power and humane purpose.

The method of collecting the opium is extremely interesting. When the petals have fallen off and the seed-pods are full-grown, but still green, each one is scratched, three-quarters of the way round, by a double-pronged instrument. From these

parallel incisions exudes a thick and sticky juice, milky and white at first, but rapidly turning brown. Tiny drops form and are collected every few days—the process being repeated for some considerable time until the seed-pod has yielded its full quota. The sticky mass is then dried, moulded into cakes, which in time become black and “tarry,” and, wrapped in poppy leaves, is packed for export. Each cake, weighing about two pounds and having the characteristic smell and bitter taste represents the produce of many hundreds of poppies. Although not much larger than a big bun their value is considerable, so that opium, grown even on a small scale and produced with much tedious work, is by no means unremunerative.

The crude opium is sent to Europe and America, where it is refined and treated to form what, if properly used, is one of the most merciful and valuable of drugs—namely morphine, together with other derivatives such as codeine and narcotine. How much pain and suffering is avoided and mitigated by the juice of this simple white flower! The afflictions and agony which Nature causes with one hand, she soothes and relieves with the other. To whom does humanity owe the discovery that this beautiful poppy contained such potent and beneficent properties? Probably to some old Chinese sage from that mysterious country of the Far East, in dim

bygone ages, who has left to so many of his countrymen a heritage of vice and misery.

DRIED FRUIT

One of the commonest sights of Macedonia, especially on the southern slopes of the hills, is the vineyard. Large patches are covered with neatly-pruned low-lying vines bearing the appearance of dead tree stumps in winter and, in the summer, maturing to fresh green plants which, for their stunted size, bear a remarkable number of compact bunches of grapes, which in their turn, become currants. The vine is kept low and frequent cutting never allows it to exceed more than a few inches in height. The grapes themselves are small and round, purple or red in colour and grow prolifically on each bunch. Sweet to the taste and exceedingly juicy, they were eagerly welcomed by our soldiers after long hours spent under the burning rays of the relentless July sun.

Picking takes place as soon as the grapes are ripe and they are then hung, first in the sun and afterwards indoors, until dry and shrivelled, when they are then ready for packing as the domestic currant for use in cakes, puddings and buns.

Other dried fruits, which form a very important export industry, are figs, apricots, peaches and nectarines. The greater number of these are grown on the Struma plain, especially in the

extensive orchards near Nigrita, Cerpista, Kopriva and Nigoslav, where the trees (which, like the fruit, are small) grow along tracts of sand which have been left by dried-up mountain torrents. The fruit ripens quickly and, although quite palatable, is best suited for cooking and drying. In spring, large areas of pink blossom play a prominent part in the galaxy of flowers which is to be seen on the Struma plain during the early part of the year. Although none of these fruit trees require very diligent attention, they are not to be compared with the fig in point of hardiness. This fruit, so familiar to us in dried form, grows wild and is not only ubiquitous but frequently selects what appears to be the most barren places on which to thrive and ripen, long after all other vegetation has given up the unequal struggle against a three months' drought and scorching sun. For those who have seen it flourishing in the cleft of a rock or clinging lustily to the hard face of an exposed precipice, it is easy to appreciate the many parables in Oriental literature of which it has formed the theme. Its big leaves, erroneously associated with classical statuary, afford a welcome shade on a barren sun-baked hillside or almost treeless plain.

COTTON

Cotton is grown for home use rather than for export and, in consequence, the crop is incon-

siderable. Its quality is not high, the staple being short and attenuated. Quite frequently it is grown in the garden or on a neighbouring field for the purpose of the household, just as the war-time allotment holder looked to his cabbage patch for his daily supply of vegetables. The cotton fibres or downy covering to the seeds is used raw as mattress-packing or spun on distaffs into rough thread to be used in the hand-looms. None, worthy of mention, is exported or even manufactured into goods in the country. The plant is small and has a big yellow or pink flower; the seed-pod, divided in three portions, splits when ripe and a mass of "cotton wool" containing the seed bulges forth. The snow-covered appearance of a ripe cotton field is very striking as it appears in summer or autumn time and forms a vivid contrast with the brown country around. The plant is grown more extensively in the Chalcidice Peninsula, where the ground is open and fields are large, than up-country among the hills.

MAIZE OR "MEALIES"

This is one of the leading products of the more open parts of Macedonia, and enormous tracts of country on the Doiran, Struma, Vardar, Drama, Chalcidice (Karaburoun) and Langaza plains are covered with its tall green stems. Very little is exported as the bulk of it is required for home

consumption, the peasant relying on the product for his daily bread. The grains are ground by the simple process of pressing or beating them with a pestle in stone or brass mortars and then baked into brownish granular bread or a kind of coarse cake. The plant is sown in winter, and grows quickly in long rows at the bottom of shallow furrows which hold the water from winter rains, so that once matured, it requires little or no moisture and, like all Macedonian products, needs very slight attention. When young, the plants are of a very vivid green and form a refreshing contrast to the surrounding vegetation when the latter has early become brown and dry. The full-grown corn, reaching a height of four feet to six feet, has a thick cane-like stem ensheathed with big pointed leaves. Seldom more than three cobs form on one plant and each consists of a cone of tightly packed seeds which, when ripe, turn the beautiful golden-brown colour of old amber beads and are surrounded by an envelope of dry leaves or bracts. When these have been picked in the summer and the plants cut down to within a few inches of the ground, the core of the cob and its bracts are burnt as fuel or given to the animals as fodder.

The mealie fields are at their best in summer when the tall stems, bearing palm-like fronds of a brilliant green, hold up their flower-heads proudly and wave their tresses which droop like

fountains from their summits. So tall, indeed, and so aloof are they that little is seen of the great orange pumpkins growing always so modestly at their feet.

RUSH MATS

On the low-lying marshy ground adjoining the larger lakes, such as Tahinos, Besik, Langaza, Amatovo and Butkova, and also on the swamps in some parts of the River Struma, there grows a big reed, of the familiar bull-rush type, which the natives freely use as covering for roofs and floors or as sun-screens. In the autumn, when brown, the reeds are cut and dried, and afterwards cleverly woven into big mats. Our Army in Macedonia flattered the peasantry by adopting their method and eventually one more accomplishment was added to the list of those acquired by the British "Tommy" in the course of the war. Certainly the reed mat proves a cheap and most efficient shelter and affords one more example, if one were needed, of the forethought of Nature in providing a palliative for a necessary ill.

DRUGS

Apart from opium, which has been mentioned, Macedonia is responsible for a few other valuable drugs such as castor oil, stramonium, aconite, elaterium and scammony. Although they lend themselves to cultivation most of them are also found wild, and there is little to be said about

them beyond facts of purely scientific interest. Otto of roses, for which Turkey and Bulgaria are so famed, is only produced on a very small scale and rose trees, though ubiquitous, are grown more for ornament than utility or profit.

WINES

As there is no vintage peculiar to Macedonia a description of so world-wide a process as wine-making is out of place in these pages. The vats and old wooden wine bottles which are commonly seen in village houses are conclusive evidence that many natives make their own from the fine long grapes grown in the open. The chief wines drunk in the country, however, are those which come from old Greece and the islands of the Archipelago, such as Samos and Achäia. They are all heavy and tend to be sweet, with a characteristic flavour and a mead-like richness, which has probably changed little since the time when it flowed so freely in the Bacchanalian orgies of the classic days.

CEREALS

The chief cereals cultivated in Macedonia are rye and oats, with a little wheat. They are mostly stunted or poor in quality (especially rye which is perhaps the commonest crop and ripens quickly), but that defect is redeemed to some extent by Nature's provision of two, or even

three, crops a year. Modern agricultural machinery has scarcely yet found its way to the fields of Macedonia and all the details of cultivation are carried out by hand with a remarkable display of ingenuity and patience. A few American (and other) firms started a system of modern agriculture a few years ago in the Struma region with indifferent success but, apart from this, tools have remained remarkably primitive and yet astonishingly effective. Especially interesting is this, since such tools and methods can have changed little for hundreds, or even thousands of years and we see, in use to-day, slight modifications only of prehistoric ways and methods.

In the peninsula of Karaboroun and near Lakes Langaza and Besik, corn of good quality may be seen in fairly large fields. Generally, however, the fields are mere patches—small irregular pieces of ground ploughed up wherever a moist or rock-free area is found. In the hills, it is a matter for wonder how almost every tiny piece of soil lying amidst rock-strewn ground is eagerly claimed and turned to some use, no matter at what angle it lies or however inaccessible it may be. It is such minor effects as these which excite the stranger's admiration and compel his appreciation of the native's hard and bitter struggle for existence. Great indeed must be the envy of the hill-folk towards their more fortunate brothers in the well-watered valleys,

where the soil is rich and plentiful and well repays hard labour !

During the recent war the British introduced motor ploughs and sowing machinery and in 1918 placed large areas of the Doiran and Struma plains under cultivation. The rather disappointing results were due to ignorance of local climatic conditions and that all-too-common disregard of native knowledge and custom which leads to failure and mistakes. While native corn was almost ready for the first harvest, acres of English sown wheat were still green or scarcely showing those young shoots, so soon to be caught by a blazing sun.

As with everything else that is used by the native his ordinary plough is the acme of simplicity. A long beam of wood serves as handle, its broader end pierced by a block which, set vertically, carries the "share" or iron cutter. Yoked oxen separated by a shaft are harnessed to it by ropes or leather thongs and by them the plough is drawn stolidly and slowly along. A long pole which also serves to clean the share from time to time is carried in the ploughman's disengaged hand and with this the oxen are both guided and goaded. As may be imagined much skill, combined with unique sure-footedness of the animals, is required to negotiate a small triangular field set on a hillside at an angle of over thirty degrees with an overhanging rock one side and

a precipice the other ! The fields are ploughed in autumn and winter and again in summer or late spring, if a second crop is desired. As an extreme case of the patience of the native and primitiveness of his implements, the episode of a man " ploughing " a fairly large field with nothing more serviceable than a shovel must not pass unrecorded.

Sowing is done by hand just as in ancient days (or even more modern times) and the subsequent harrowing by dragging sticks and wooden frames set with spikes over the soil. In reaping, the picturesque sickle, of the usual hook pattern, is used and the corn gathered into the left arm in the manner so familiar to us in rustic pictures. Gypsies constitute a portion of the gatherers and from harvest time—the first crop is about May or June—these itinerants, black-skinned and half-naked, tour the country and, for small sums of money or food, assist in the work.

Irrespective of gypsies, however, the entire community, men, women and children, turn out to help in the common harvesting. Their very existence almost depends on an abundant crop and, for that reason, every member of the household is expected to bear his or her burden of the labour. When the crops to be harvested are situated at a distance the entire family take to the open-air life, living and sleeping in the fields under reed mats or in rush huts. The baby and the dog, the donkey and the chickens, together

with any valuables or other indispensables of a Macedonian menage, all join in the common exodus. Paterfamilias, the only one decently shod, invariably rides the donkey, carrying head downwards in his hand one or two feathered members of the farm-yard, whilst the less distinguished members of his household, including his dutiful spouse barefooted and over-dressed—indeed over-burdened with her entire wardrobe, none of which she dare leave at home—trudge meekly behind.

Threshing and winnowing processes are carried out in a very quaint old fashion in Macedonia and are most interesting to watch. Every village has its threshing floor, a flat circular piece of ground, beaten down hard and smooth, and used year after year. The corn is laid on this surface for a depth of an inch or more and large pieces of wood, like flat toboggans set underneath with sharp projecting flints, are dragged over it by donkeys, ponies or oxen. These flints are inserted in cuts in the wood swollen with water, and are firmly fixed when the latter dries. They are the result of a very clever chipping and are identical with the flakes used by prehistoric man before the discovery of bronze and iron. It is only very rarely that a more modern contrivance is seen in the shape of an iron roller with cutting discs. This "thresher" or sledge is driven round and round, over the corn—its

action, combined with that of the hoofs of the beasts, serving to separate the grain from the straw and partially "shell" it out. Heavy rollers of solid marble, which is abundant in Macedonia, are then run over it, after which the straw is collected and the grain, with its husks, stacked in heaps at the edge of the threshing floor.

Winnowing is carried out by the time-honoured and simple method of throwing the grain into the air by means of wooden scoops or shovels, when the chaff is blown to one side and the heavier grain falls down. The speed of the work and efficiency of these simple methods contrasts favourably with elaborate and expensive modern methods.

No scene could be more picturesque, no place present a busier or more pleasing spectacle than these village "threshing floors" in summer time. The bright costumes, the golden corn, the fountain of chaff in the air and the prancing ponies, pulling their little chariots, form a refreshing tableau for those who, living in modern countries, know only the hideous machinery and monotonous routine of "civilized" agriculture or industry. Phlegmatic to an extraordinary degree, and totally unappreciative of artistic surroundings, must be he whose admiration and wonder are not stirred by a scene, so simple and so elemental, so restful and so completely in harmony with

Nature herself. These simple folk have only barely solved the problem of existence, have just completed, and no more, their conquest over Nature, who, though at times she seems to give so lavishly, is a hard and stern mistress to the more slothful and indolent of her offspring. By force of circumstance, it is no pampered existence which the Macedonian native leads :

 Their's not to make reply,
 Their's not to reason why.
 Their's but to do or die.

The Macedonian, though our contemporary, lives in a different era and, ignorant and primitive though he may be, is not so much to be pitied as envied. He is constantly *en garde* against Nature, humouring and adjusting himself to her moods, anticipating her anger, seizing her generous moments and finally giving his labour and devoting his life in order that she shall sustain him in return. Nature indeed strikes a bargain with us all, but the deal is overlooked, largely forgotten, often abused even, in the stress and turmoil of civilization, where each strives not so much to extract the utmost which Nature is prepared to give, but rather to benefit himself at the expense of the rest of the human race or another portion of the community.



OLD TURKISH JUG (COPPER TINNED), MACEDONIA

CHAPTER VII

INDUSTRIES

OWING to the paucity of manufactured goods in a country which has never been sufficiently prolific in its own exports to enable it to import in any large quantities or on an economical basis, Macedonian domestic arts and crafts have experienced the stimulus of necessity in no mean degree. Though naturally simple, being made with only the roughest kinds of tools and out of the crude, though wonderful, products of Nature, the articles used in the home invariably bear that hall-mark of good workmanship, namely durability, and, well-seasoned by time, excite the envy of the connoisseur. Of recent years, however, there has been an invasion (which the lover of the antique would deplore) of manufactured goods and labour-saving appliances which have penetrated even into remote parts. Still more to be regretted is the eagerness with which the native welcomed these so-called aids to existence and the avidity—almost pathetic—with which, during the Allied occupation of the country, he seized upon such unornamental

articles as corrugated iron, petrol tins and sandbags for building and domestic purposes. Devoted, and certainly in the case of sandbags perverted, to such uses, this *matériel de la guerre*, far from supplying a long-felt want, merely tends to prostitute the character of the native. For, when dire necessity points the way, he is industrious and persevering, but easily succumbs when an opportunity of avoiding labour presents itself. In many cases, no doubt, actual want induced the use of military articles which the Allied Armies left in their "wake," but, on the other hand, their adoption in non-necessitous cases served to prove, regrettably be it said, that the native does not prosecute his simple domestic arts for their own sake. Such a state of taste and refinement—a condition only reached after long environment, amidst the present-day products of the factory, has produced its inevitable ennui—can hardly be expected of him. It must suffice to remark that whilst the unenlightened half of the world grasps a modern machine-made appliance with all the eagerness of a child confronted by a new toy, the other civilized portion reverts to the gems of ancient art and simple industry with the infantile tenderness which a man, in the last years of his life, bestows on the beautiful nonsense of the nursery. Both types of humanity are actuated not only by a trait of childish simplicity inherent to the race but also by that

necessity for change which is the inevitable penalty of excess. Content with his simple arts so closely allied to the source of all true beauty—Nature herself—the native is, however, easily lured by those ugly articles with which we, in an ever-increasing understanding, could so readily dispense. That human nature should tend to extremes rather than a sane mean is an unfortunate law that is beyond the purpose of this book to discuss. But, bearing these facts in mind, the reader may better appreciate the unconscious art and natural industry of the Macedonian native.

BREAD-MAKING

Though, possibly, it is not remarkable for any artistic features, bread-making, on account of the important part which it plays in the daily life of the individual and its antiquity as an industry, may appropriately be considered first. It is not surprising that in a country which is indifferently adapted to the growth of grain, no less than three other cereals beside wheat—namely maize, rye and barley—are used as the basis for bread. Maize, which contains a large proportion of fat, is the peasant's chief source of flour and, when baked, produces a coarse yellow loaf. Rye is also used as an alternative although not without risk on account of its liability to cause ergot poisoning.

By reason of the restricted crops, barley and wheat, which would otherwise no doubt form the most popular ingredients, are only sparingly used ; even were the contrary the case, the white bread of the modern bakery—whose purity has often been called into question—would never, on account of the old-fashioned methods of milling, find a place in the diet of the native. The out-of-date processes have much to recommend them—as a considerable portion of the Western world were induced to believe a few years ago ; for the stone milling process which preserves the rich covering of the grain produces a flour which, unsubjected to any bleaching process or refining, is darkish in colour and wholemeal in composition.

The mill-stones, one concave and the other convex, rotate on each other and the power is supplied either by hand or small water mills. The latter are of necessity confined to the hills or placed adjacent to streams in ravines where the torrent can be diverted through the mill. Marked by a tall poplar, their whiteness accentuated against the dark towering crags of the mountain, these unpretentious little barns are sadly picturesque and lonely. Their internal machinery, if such it may be termed, closely resembles the basis on which our old water mills are worked save that the rushing water impinges on a vaned driving wheel from below

instead of from above, and the bearings and fittings are made entirely of hand-cut wood. Particularly remarkable is the last-named feature when one visualises the rough-hewn driving wheel, set in motion by the force of water, turning a huge wooden cog-wheel, entirely shaped by hand, which, in turn rotates the upper stone. From this well-known and, for the Macedonian at any rate, comparatively up-to-date method of milling, it is rather a retrograde step to the essentially domestic use of the pestle and mortar. Cast from one piece of brass, although occasionally stone replaces the metal, the mortar is bell-mouthed with two handles and the pestle is shaped with a striking piece at each end. When even this humble appliance is lacking the native may be seen providing for his daily bread by grinding the maize between two large stones.

Except in large villages where big communal ovens are in use, the actual bread-baking is done at home. To this end, a small domed erection made of bricks or mud, is built in most gardens and, preparatory to the insertion of the loaves, the oven is thoroughly heated by burning inside it a quantity of sticks or brushwood. As no fire is made underneath the oven, it is difficult to realize that the heat is adequate or sufficiently lasting, but these ovens must retain it in an extraordinary manner for the natives experience no difficulty in baking therein large flat loaves (not

unlike a huge scone) about three inches high and twelve inches in diameter.

So limited is the daily menu of the Macedonian and so simple his fare, that the few varieties of cooked food may be mentioned here in one or two sentences. Frying is the chief means of cooking, and in the case of meat, the food is stuck on skewers in small round lumps and held over a fire. Generally, however, very little meat is eaten and rarely in the form of a joint except on special fête occasions. For vegetable, the native is partial to a green weed of the dandelion species which is boiled and mashed up with milk after the manner of spinach, but cabbages, leeks and onions are also grown and consumed in quantity. The climate is unsuited to the cultivation of the potato, but in place of this homely vegetable, the Macedonian enjoys green maize and several roots. Egg-fruit, salads, eggs, game and poultry, together with various kinds of fruit are available, but milch cows, for which the goat seems to be a reliable deputy, are very rarely seen. Nearly all food is heavily spiced so that the red-pepper or chili and garlic—especially the latter—achieve considerable popularity.

TEXTILES

Under this heading we are concerned with an industry which has not altogether resisted foreign invasion, for a large amount of cheap machine-

made cloth and printed calico now finds its way inland. Happily, however, such importation has not wholly supplanted the industry of the home since the hand-loom is still a common feature of the household and the Macedonian housewife may still be seen spinning her own thread and weaving a coarse, highly durable variety of cloth. The cotton or wool is spun into thread by the picturesque method of the hand distaff and wound on large cage-like reels ; indeed, the peasant woman, standing at her doorway, in her beautifully embroidered dress, balancing the distaff on her hip is a familiar and pleasing picture. That she seldom sits at her work is not a matter for surprise ; chairs are a superfluous luxury in the peasant's homestead since the inhabitants either stand or squat on their toes—a habit which has much to recommend it from the physical standpoint both in straightening the spine and strengthening the arch of the foot.

Though it has no features of originality to distinguish it, the Macedonian hand-loom is worthy of note in being entirely home-made. Somewhat complicated and certainly ingenious, the contrivance, consisting of huge beams, includes two swinging frames, one vertical, the other horizontal, which, armed with grids of cord, swing through one another to form the warp of the material ; the process is completed by the use of a wooden shuttle (for the woof thread) and

various "picking-out" implements. Both hands and feet are used by the operator, who sits at one end of this cumbersome structure which, indeed, occupying so much space, requires a small room to itself.

EMBROIDERY

There is nothing unfamiliar in the Macedonian process by which silk is obtained and, therefore, no lengthy description is necessary. Groves of mulberry trees, on the leaves of which the caterpillar or silk-worm feeds, are found in parts of the Struma plain, near Lake Besik, in the vicinity of Drama and elsewhere. The silk, which is obtained by the process of soaking the cocoons in hot water, unrolling the fibre and spinning it on bobbins, is of good quality and much used by the Turks in the making of embroidery and their clothes for fête occasions.

Embroidery is the art in which the peasant particularly distinguishes herself; the beauty of Turkish needlework is world-famed but it is also remarkable for the application of diligent care and extraordinary skill. On a coarse but strong cotton material as foundation, the embroiderer works a pattern of flowers or some simple design in silks embellished with thin gold or silver wire, and the finished specimen, identical on both sides, is used as a border to dresses, head scarves or aprons, or, in the case of heavier

gold thread work, as edging to jackets and skirts of thick material. Cotton and wool rather than silk are used for embroidery by Greek women, whose handicraft, noticeable for bright colouring and less intricate patterns, is more lightly sewn and often in the form of square or cross-stitch needlework. The older work, of which the silk is permanently coloured with vegetable dyes, is extraordinarily neat and, being eminently artistic in design and tint, is much coveted by collectors.

The unremitting care and patient skill required to produce such beautiful handiwork are perhaps inherent in the women of the Near East, whose day is one long record of toil. From early girlhood they are occupied in various domestic duties as well as assisting in the fields, tending live stock, and, when freedom from these multifarious tasks permits, sewing and embroidering the clothes which will one day constitute their wardrobes. The trousseau with which a Macedonian bride enters upon her new life is not a matter of pounds, shillings and pence, but a collection of treasured hand-made articles which represent many years' ceaseless labour with needle and thread.

METALCRAFT

For many reasons, both economic and material, copper is by far the most common metal used in the manufacture of domestic utensils. Not only is the commodity extensively found in the

Greek islands, but it is, in addition, pliable and easily worked without heat. Since it is sold by weight, there is always a marketable value and for many households it provides a means of investment for all their worldly wealth. Moreover, a metal dish, besides being unbreakable, can be easily cleaned, and, apart from the non-rusting properties, conveniently takes a coat of tin or other metals. Beaten out by hand—the hammer marks achieving a rough mottled appearance which is very artistic—the metal is made into dishes and vessels of all shapes and sizes. Generally, the work is done in one piece—the article being built up and hammered out from one thin sheet of copper—but, in some cases, the bottom of the dish or pot is made separately and joined by tongues of metal which interlock with corresponding laps on the main piece. Actual welding or soldering by heat is seldom done, and for the purpose of attaching handles or lids resort is made to copper rivets or bolts.

Macedonia is not a country which is obsessed by a long scroll of laws, especially those which have for their object the preservation of human life, yet there is one on the statute-book designed to enforce the covering of copper utensils with tin in order to obviate poisoning. As all the household pots and pans, comprising cauldrons, bowls, dishes, water-jugs and plates, are made from this metal, the above is a wise and essential



METALCRAFT
COPPER AND BRONZE WORK

provision, without which the peasant would scarcely attain that longevity of which, in spite of internecine strife and malaria, there are in the villages numerous examples.

No doubt with a view to establishing their antiquity and also to proclaim their ownership, some of the articles, especially the plates, are stamped with a name and date, but beyond this inscription there is seldom any ornamentation other than a simple herring-bone pattern. Turkish ware provides an exception for, apart from the Government stamp as to weight and value, we sometimes observe a scroll of writing or a simple design on a bowl or water-jug. Indeed, it is generally on the latter, which range from the common large-necked variety to the elaborate and elegant ablution jug, that the native lavishes all his decorative skill. Stately and majestic in outline, with a spout which is swanlike in the gracefulness of its curve, the ablution jug plays an important part in the observance of Moslem religious practices ; for all devout Mohammedans must wash before eating. This ceremony is performed when a servant brings round the jug to each guest and pours water over the hands whilst they are held over a bowl. As has been remarked elsewhere in this book, the Mohammedan religion has many points, unconsciously hygienic, to commend it. Naturally, many of these jugs no longer fulfil their former distin-

guished office and are now used for ordinary domestic purposes.

Another curious form of beautiful old work is a bowl with a boss or hump in the centre and engraved all over with verses from the Koran.



BRASS INCENSE BURNER : MACEDONIA.

It is interesting to note that the type is identical in shape with a bowl found by the authors in an ancient graveyard, dating back to over 250 B.C., near the mouth of the Struma—another instance showing how little the Macedonian has changed

in the course of time. Large flat trays, exquisitely engraved, and huge cauldrons with side handles are also much in use. With the tin brightened and partly worn, exhibiting the red copper underneath (like old Sheffield plate) and in their simple but elegant form and rough hand finish, these products of the coppersmith's art, so essentially Oriental, are indeed objects to be admired.

Another metal which is in fairly common use for general and decorative purposes and much favoured by the moulder is bronze. With the qualities of hardness and durability, it combines an appearance of distinction and beauty possessed by no other metal, which renders it particularly appropriate for such ornamental objects as door-plates and rings, bowls and cow-bells. The last-named, made in all shapes and sizes, are a constant feature of Macedonia, and, being carried by almost one in every ten sheep or cattle, enable the owner by their distinctive sounds to keep in touch with his flock or herd—a very necessary precaution amongst the thick scrub of the hillside or deep gullies of the higher ranges. The dulcet notes breaking the evening silence, as the herd winds slowly homeward, create an air of peace and serenity which is indefinably soothing in a country so much afflicted by strife.

Brass, except as an alloy with copper, is not so well known, but it forms the basis of such

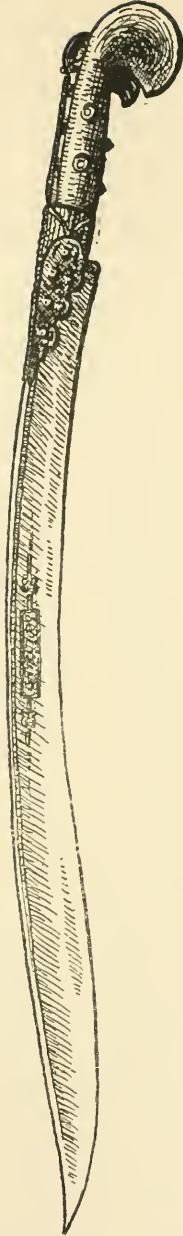
articles as the old ornamental grease boxes, once carried by soldiers, flintlock-pistol ramrods, incense-burners, lamps, mule stirrups and large church candlesticks.

Iron is sparingly used (and then always wrought) for farm implements, door hinges and fasteners, quaint old padlocks, meat skewers and harness fittings, many of which are fine examples of the blacksmith's work. Recently thin sheet iron and articles made from "tins," with which the path of our civilization seems to be strewn, have found their way into the remote parts of the country distorting with their semi-rusted ugliness surfaces which were formerly a delight to the eye.

Steel, which is used for knives, daggers and swords, is imported, being afterwards "worked" in the country, engraved and often finely inlaid with gold or silver. Everything is hand-made, and metalcraft, above all others, owes its beauty to that indefinable touch of the human hand which speaks so eloquently of the character of its moulder and seems imbued, even, with his own spirit.

POTTERY

Omar Khayyám and others have familiarized us with the potter of the East and in Macedonia the trade differs in few respects from that of more oriental peoples. Simplicity of manufacture, economy and easy replacement if broken, have led to the widespread use of pottery in all



NATIVE SWORD, DAGGER
AND FOLDING KNIFE

countries and at all ages ; it is only in the degree of artistic work that any dissimilarity arises.

In Macedonia the potter's handiwork may be divided under three heads, namely : unglazed, glazed and ornamental. In each case the articles comprise pitchers, water-jugs, platters and bowls. The commonest of these is the first—the figure of a draped woman, graceful and erect, carrying a pitcher on her head or shoulder is a familiar object and almost emblematic of the East—and, as in all hot countries, it is made of porous material so that the constant evaporation from the slow percolation of the water through the pores of the vessel keep the contents deliciously cool. The pitcher was an object of much popularity with the troops in Macedonia on account of its cooling properties and the fact that such an exceedingly useful and desirable household vessel could be purchased for a few pence.

The glazed variety is usually of a vivid green shade which blends exquisitely with the simple brown of the pottery, a limited amount of which is always left unglazed at the bottom. Water-jugs, pitcher-like in shape but with a short spout in addition to the handle, and large bowls are also glazed in this fashion.

For ornamentation, the potter relies on figures of reptiles, birds or flowers, modelled in clay and baked on to a surface of dark yellow or green pottery. Such objects, with a snake coiled round

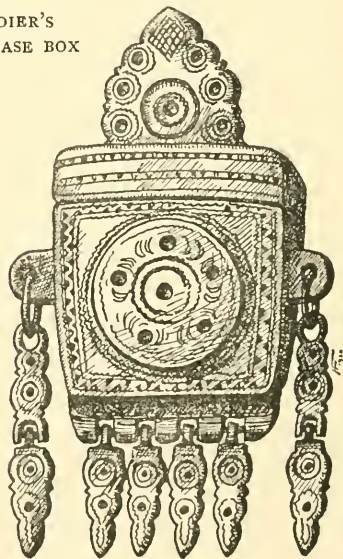
the handle and flowers decorating the spout, border on the grotesque and are too over-ornamental to be articles of beauty.

As with other classes of Macedonian work, the potter's art has changed so little with lapse of time that present day articles are found to differ only in a minor degree from those found in the prehistoric graves of the Struma valley and elsewhere. Until the war interrupted their importation, cheap German plates, cast glassware and enamel goods were replacing the picturesque pottery of primitive homes and it may be hoped that the Macedonian, by a realization of his own clever and independent handiwork and due economic provisions, will be enabled to resist such invasions for many years to come.

It can scarcely be said that the Macedonian has any special arts. His few simple industries comprise the necessities of existence rather than the embellishments of life and the few ornamentations he adopts are, from our standpoint, rough and primitive. Like all orientals, he has an unconscious, almost inborn sense of the picturesque ; his daily life and the crude materials associated with it, backed by the magnificent scenery of his country, form a series of pictures not only exquisite but, from a purely art point of view, almost perfect in composition, line and colour. The form of his household utensils is pure and often beautiful ; the workmanship

of his simple crafts creates an impression of care and dignity which machine-made articles can never attain, and the moderate though effective style of his decoration must be the product of a virgin mind which knows only the teaching of that supreme artist, Nature herself

SOLDIER'S
GREASE BOX



CHAPTER VIII

FISHING AND LIVE STOCK

FISHING

THIS ancient industry, which has interesting and sacred associations, merits attention on account of the curious means of netting employed in the course of sea-fishing. For the lakes, in which carp and other coarse fish are caught in large quantities, nets of circular pattern with cork floats are suspended between flat bottomed boats and the fish thus rounded-up and brought to shore. Along the coast, however, especially in the Stavros area, a structure consisting of two or three platforms, erected on piles near the shore with a net slung between, seems to be the *modus operandi*. Men stationed on each platform have a clear view through the water and, when a sufficient quantity of fish have collected over the net, haul in.

LIVE STOCK

Judged by their numbers and by the manner in which they are allowed to over-run the household, it would seem that fowls are kept entirely

as pets. Actually, however, they are a reliable and abundant source of food, particularly welcome to the up-country Macedonian who almost abjures red meat. Hen-coops and chicken runs are unknown conveniences for these members of the feathered brigade, who nest in baskets hung up in the farm-yard and penetrate into all the recesses of the house for pickings. Ducks, geese and turkeys may also be seen in fairly large numbers, although, owing to the conspicuous lack of ponds, it is open to doubt whether all the first-named are able to swim and there is certainly considerable excitement when it rains !

Pigs, of a very bristly appearance, closely allied to the wild hogs found in the mountain scrub, are kept and eaten young ; for the native had not appreciated the joys of bacon until British army rations became familiar to him !

Owing largely no doubt to the absence of suitable pasture land milch cows are rare, but oxen and the black water-buffalo are common enough and extensively used as draught animals for ploughing and transport. The black buffalo, a huge, unweildy beast and extraordinarily slow of movement, is never so happy as when wallowing in mud or, with his snout only protruding, lying in the shallow water of some lakeside swamp. Ferocious in appearance, but in reality remarkably docile, a pair of them may often be seen in charge of a tiny child who, having only recently learned

to toddle, is no more than their equal in the matter of pace. Such is indeed a strange sight and eminently illustrative of the superiority of the mind of man, however undeveloped, over the brute strength of the beast.

Besides being the most ubiquitous, the donkey is the most useful beast in Macedonia and the one who excites most interest and compassion on the part of the visitor. Generally not much bigger than a large dog, he is shamefully overladen—sometimes to such an extent as to be unable to rise under his burden after having fallen—and invariably so inured to cruelty and overwork as to be totally ignorant of any ordinary human kindness. These poor little beasts are used for every kind of pack transport work, and injury added to insult, cruelty to underfeeding, is their daily lot. Not only is the load they have to support excessive and the ground they have to traverse rough and steep, but their brutal masters always insist that, in addition to their heavy burden, they should carry them as well. The saddles, heavy contrivances made of bars of wood on a thin straw basis, are seldom if ever removed and their constant chafing results in a chronic sore which attracts a mass of flies.

SHEEP HERDING

Although a glance at the soil of Macedonia would probably cause dismay to anyone in Great

Britain who rears live stock, it is an incontestable fact that the dry hard grass of the foothills affords sufficient sustenance to innumerable flocks of sheep and a means of livelihood to a large number of natives. The shepherd, in the quaint highland garb of old Greece, is a familiar figure, whose shaggy beard, sheepskin cape and old-fashioned crook are strangely reminiscent of Biblical times. Unkempt, perhaps, but none the less picturesque—with a white kilt or fustanella, flounced out like a ballet dancer's skirt, long white hose, pom-pom shoes and a tasselled cap—these old shepherds seem part of the wild mountain scenery amidst which they move. To a group of such simple folk sitting round a brush-wood fire in the silence of the wilderness—a silence broken only by the howl of jackals and the chirp of insects—came the first news of the Miraculous Birth.

While the Western half of the world wearies itself, rushing from one new idea to another; while, in feverish unrest it chases the bubbles of impossible schemes, there are people in this odd corner of Europe who have neither changed with time nor perpetrated the folly of trying to be aught but what Nature has made them.



BYZANTINE TOWER, IVIRON
MONASTERY, MOUNT ATHOS

CHAPTER IX

SALONIKA: HISTORICAL

THE city of Salonika is replete with historical events and associations and a few chapters are quite inadequate in which to do justice to its pre-eminence in this respect. At the risk of marring the narrative, however, we must confine ourselves to a mere statement of the most outstanding features.

The origin and foundation of Salonika, to some extent wrapt in mystery, is somewhat legendary. We are told, however, that in the fourth or fifth century B.C., one of the principal towns which was bathed by the waters of the Ægean was Therma, situated in the interior of what is now called the Gulf of Salonika. Most ancient writers place it on the east of the gulf, near the point which is now Karaburoun. As its ancient name implies, it was distinguished for its hot springs and it has therefore been identified with the large modern village of Sedes, six miles to the east of the present city of Salonika. Subsequent history confirms this inference as, when Therma was destroyed after the third Median war, Cassandra,

in 315 B.C., gathered together the remnants of the inhabitants and founded a new city, four leagues from the old, to which he gave the name of Thessaloniki. Others attribute its foundation to Philip II, more generally known as Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great ; who, having defeated the Thessalians (no doubt the ancient warrior ancestors of the modern Greek province of Thessaly) on the present site of Salonika, gave to the city which rose on the battlefield the name of Thessalonika ; in doing so, it is said, he also honoured and perpetuated the memory of his daughter Thessalonika. The derivation of the word is enlightening—*θησσαλος*= a Thessalian, and *νικη*=a conquest ! A Greek expression—*θησσαλων σοφισμα*=“ a Thessalian trick,” had its origin in the faithlessness of the people and proves that the inhabitants of that province were held in somewhat light esteem.

Just as at the present day there is a variety of opinions as to the correct pronunciation of Salonika, so, among the ancients, there was a good deal of difference on the point of orthography. Thessalonika, Thessaloneika, Thessaloniki (the last-named probably Greek) are three distinct spellings and Thessalonikeon and Thessaloneiki have been traced on the coins. The Romans adopted Thessalonika, Salonica and Thessalonica ; the Bulgars and Serbs, Solon or Soloun ; the Turks, Selanik or Salonik, and the Greeks, Saloniki.

Although the town grew in importance under Alexander the Great, it was not until its conquest by the Romans that it flourished. Indeed, under their capable administration, it may be said to have reached its zenith, for, at that period, it attained a lustre perhaps second only to Rome itself. Vigorous colonizers as they were, the Romans quickly infused a considerable measure of their own vitality into the Saloniciens. Aided by Roman immigration, the population of the city grew to a quarter of a million souls. The Romans spent large sums on the fortifications, showed commendable enterprize in the development of commerce, constructed the historic Via Ignatia from Durrazo to Constantinople through Salonika, and encouraged intellectual pursuits in the way of literature and art by the establishment of a forum and theatres.

Salonika may be said to have achieved its crowning glory when, after having received a visit from Cicero in A.D. 58, she became, a few years later, an autonomous State under the Roman Empire. Certainly the last concession that any of her subsequent conquerors would have thought of granting to her would have been "Home Rule." In fact, the history of Salonika shows that she has been much more accustomed to enjoy everybody's rule but her own.

Although it had no direct bearing on the immediate fortunes or future history of Salonika,

a narrative of the events of the period cannot be considered complete without mention of the visit of St. Paul in A.D. 53. His reception, though not at first openly hostile, was not altogether free from molestation and after a brief sojourn of a few weeks he was compelled to flee the city. He left a number of converts, however, who practised his teachings, albeit in secret, long after his departure. Salonika cannot, however, claim to have been the first city in Europe to receive the teachings of the Gospel. To the ancient city of Philippi, whose ruins are still to be seen on the Drama-Kavalla road, belongs the distinction of having first welcomed the Apostle in A.D. 51. Amphipolis, another dead city, situated at the mouth of the Struma, was also visited by St. Paul at about the same period.

In A.D. 600, still under the Romans, Salonika was elevated to a metropolis, but the serenity of her existence was too unruffled to last much longer and during the governorship of Theodosius (A.D. 379-90) the city was the scene of an appalling massacre instigated by that proconsul in revenge for some petty slight. Threatened with excommunication, Theodosius repented and built a church which still stands to the memory of his victims and for the benefit of their orphans.

From the third to the sixth centuries, Salonika had to withstand numerous attacks from such tribes as the Huns, Goths, Visigoths and Avars ;

and on the partition of the Roman Empire, Salonika attached itself to the Byzantine Kingdom.

During the reign of Heraclius, whose name is perpetuated to this day in one of Salonika's chief streets, Slavs from across the River Struma, and other marauding bands, whose names have been engulfed in the maelstrom of history which has ever encircled this Ægean city, made repeated attacks on the town. So intolerable became the situation that at last Justinian II, a Byzantine emperor, led an expedition against the invaders and secured comparative peace for two hundred years. During this period, the inhabitants once more devoted themselves to the development of commerce, agriculture, industries and the prosecution of the arts ; but their intellectual progress was arrested by a sudden maritime invasion by Arab corsairs from Crete. Indescribable scenes of pillage and massacre ensued and the town was denuded of the more youthful portion of its population.

At the end of the ninth century the Bulgars crossed the border only to be repulsed several times. However, the attempts of the Latins (Venetian Genoese) in the fourteenth century were more successful. It is during the fourteenth century that our city, having shaken off the Latin tutelage, first inaugurated a separatist movement and showed signs of a genuine desire

to govern itself. A political emancipation, somewhat akin to democracy, exhibited itself only to be nipped in the bud by civil war in which the Turks, having overthrown the Byzantine empire, finally intervened. The Venetians were expelled, their defeat and the subjugation of the city being precipitated by a violent earthquake which terrorized the besieged but made no impression on the phlegmatic temperament of the Turks, who took quick and decisive advantage of the demoralization of the defenders. In consequence Salonika passed under the Turkish rule to which she remained subject until the treaty of Bucharest in 1913.

✠ Apart from the horrors and tribulations which have followed in the path of invaders, Salonika has repeatedly experienced almost every kind of affliction which the ingenuity of Nature has been able to devise. Storms, fires, epidemics and earthquakes have, at various times, spread havoc in the town and brought desolation and death to its inhabitants. Recent history records much damage and distress from floods and storms in which hailstones the size of walnuts were a phenomenal feature. On more than a dozen occasions during the last four centuries, the city has been almost destroyed by fire, and plague has just as often more than decimated its population. Several times during the last hundred years, the townspeople have escaped complete annihilation from

the last-named only by a wholesale exodus to the hills.

In 1657 and 1755, a dire visitation in the form of Siberian cold caused the deepest distress among the inhabitants who were reduced to burning their furniture or any dispensable parts of their houses in order to provide fuel. There is the record of an earthquake which destroyed a large part of the town as early as A.D. 52—a calamity which has been repeated, in a greater or less degree, several times up to as late as 1902 when the population, terrorized by a continuation of the shocks, sought refuge in the camps outside the town. Last but by no means least in the list of catastrophes must be mentioned the Great Fire of 1917 which destroyed more than half the city and rendered about one hundred thousand people homeless.

In 1492 the Turks welcomed the immigration of several thousands of Moorish Jews who had been banished from Spain by the decree of Ferdinand the Catholic and the sentence of the Inquisition. The population of Salonika had been for a considerable time declining, and these Jews from the West were the means of bringing much trade to the town.

No political event of importance occurred until the early part of the nineteenth century, when re-awakenings of the Greek national spirit made themselves evident in a number of risings and insurrections. The effort was short-lived, how-

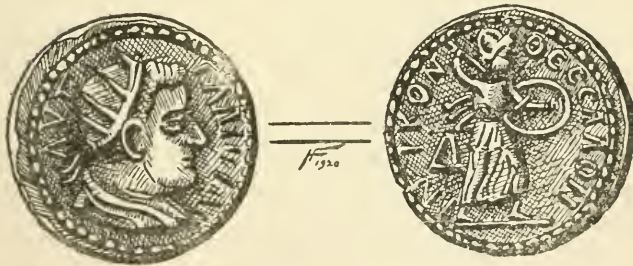
ever, and, for yet another century, Salonika was destined to remain under the Turkish yoke.

In 1908 the Young Turk revolution was joyously acclaimed in Salonika; Greek and Bulgar joined hands and "buried the hatchet," only to unearth it again towards the end of the first Balkan war, when their respective armies found themselves joint occupants of this much-coveted and oft-conquered city.

The Greeks forestalled the Bulgars by a few hours, but foolishly allowed the latter to enter on representations of their commander that his force was inconsiderable and in a parlous state of sickness and exhaustion. The Bulgars, however, much to the Greeks' disgust, entered the city as conquerors with bands playing and colours flying. Greek and Bulgar thus circumstanced were like two sticks in a bowl of water. To keep them apart would have been as difficult as to defy the laws of gravity. Sooner or later they were bound to meet in conflict. The two armies, both flushed with recent victories, could not agree to share such a prize as Salonika, and personal encounters between the soldiers soon developed into declared war. Considerable street fighting followed, of which many houses and public buildings, pock-marked from shells and bullets, still bear evidence. The minaret of St. Sophia, stubbornly held by the Bulgars, furnishes to this day ocular proof of the hot rifle fire directed on it by the Greeks.

However, the Bulgars were outfought in the city as they were later in the field, and, by the treaty of Bucharest, Salonika became definitely Greek.

Such in brief is the story of Salonika. If there is another metropolis in Europe which has been more ardently or more extensively coveted, history has failed to disclose it. If there is another city whose ancient wall is more battle-scarred or weather-beaten, the tranquillity of later years has sufficed to remove the deepest traces. If only the eye could re-visualize or the mind encompass the deeds and calamities which have had their enactment under the frowning brow of Mt. Hortiach, the brain would reel at the agglomeration of war and woe, just as one's pulse would quicken at the performance of numerous deeds of valour and feats of endurance.

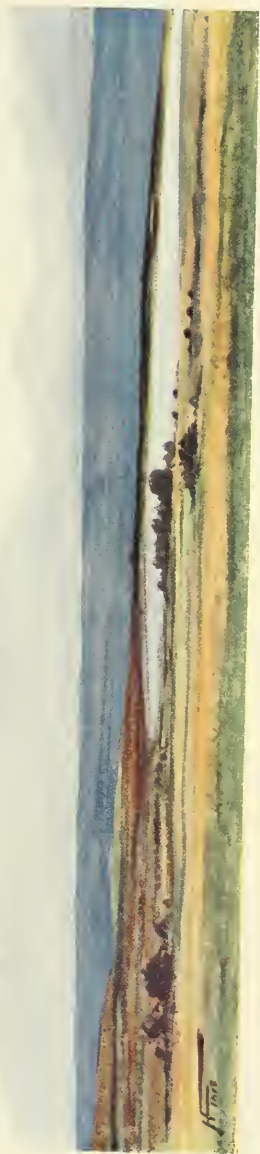


CHAPTER X

SALONIKA: THE MODERN TOWN

AT the risk of labouring the expression "Pearl of the Ægean," as applied to Salonika, one must repeat that whether on account of the cupidity it excited in foreign invaders or on account of its picturesque appearance from the sea, the title is amply justified. So pleasing is its setting and perspective that an artist or anyone with a sense of the beautiful is straightway filled with a desire to maroon himself in the middle of the harbour and endeavour to depict in colour the panorama before him. So perfect is the composition of the picture that it seems to have been controlled and set out from the sea, just as the expert window-dresser directs his scheme from the pavement. The tiers of white, red-roofed houses, interspersed with graceful minarets, stretch in a vast amphitheatre from the upper gallery of the ancient walls down to a proscenium of deep blue sea. With a fringe of boats as the foreground, the mauve-tinted heights in the distance and a middle theme made up of the multi-coloured terraces of the town, the picture seems almost unreal in its

MOUNT OLYMPUS FROM
KARABOURG'N, SALONIKA



perfection. From the city wall which occupies a commanding position four hundred feet above sea level, the whole city, the gulf and the neighbouring country, even the shores of old Greece and the mountains of Serbia are plainly seen. The flanks of the town provide a sharp contrast, for whereas to the south-east the eye is gratified by the sight of a long white-line of handsome residences gracefully curving with the line of the harbour, on the north-west side we search in vain over the uninviting space of the dull bronze-green marshes of the Vardar River for some sign of habitation or pictorial contrast.

Actual contact with the town produces rather a shock, for the houses regarded singly are much less attractive, the minarets are less conspicuous, and the cobble stones are a severe test of the feet and temper. However, the attention is soon absorbed by the host which throngs the streets—a host whose coat is motley and whose type is legion. We wander along the quay, observant and interested, when we are jammed against the wall by a tattered unkempt individual, bent double under the weight of two dead sheep which, with only a leathern “bustle” as a support, he carries on his back. He is the *hamal* or Salonika porter, who constitutes the “Carter Paterson” of the town, and who, in the execution of his duty, makes way for no man. In avoiding this victim of sweated labour, we stumble into a hole in the

pavement caused by the removal of one of the flag-stones and only just recover our equilibrium and composure in time to gaze at two venerable old Turks leisurely advancing towards us, engaged in earnest conversation. We note their long white gabardine, red sash and "tarbouche," and admire their dignified bearing and patriarchal appearance. Following in their wake are two Greek ladies of the *beau monde* dressed in the latest Parisian style, escorted by a black-eyed, sallow-faced youth in a neat lounge suit and tight patent-leather boots. Irresistibly we turn to gaze after this extraordinary contrast of types and remark with astonishment that the old Turks should be so unconcerned at the number of strangers in their midst. We instinctively compare their attitude of mind with what ours would be should we, at home, wake up one morning to find our native city suddenly invaded, albeit peacefully, by the armies of several different nationalities and the citizens of other empires.

We continue our itinerary at a comfortable pace, taking stock of everything about us, noting the programme of a cinema palace—an entertainment including a "Charlie Chaplin" film and, as far as subjects are concerned, not varying to any great extent from what we should expect to see at home. One day, perhaps, we shall venture inside and under the influence of extinguished lights and a cow-boy film, forget our surroundings and imagine

for a moment that just outside the door is an English street and fresh-looking, less sinister faces. The polyglot programme, set out in no less than six languages (English, French, Greek, Serbian, Yiddish and Turkish) for the convenience of its patrons, excites our curiosity just as the attempt to struggle with the niceties of English grammar amuses us.

However, we restrain our curiosity for the moment, only to regret it the next as we are made profoundly aware of the proximity of the fish market. Instinctively we quicken our pace and get to windward of the offending atmosphere, though, later on, we shall learn that to escape from one bad smell in the Salonika streets is only to run the risk of a worse. The spurt, combined with the effort to refrain from inhaling, has left us breathless and, at the same time, brought us to the moorings of the small shipping engaged in the Greek island trade. We willingly pause and watch the loading and unloading of the two-masted schooners or *caïques* by a swarm of *hamals*, who dart across the road with their heavy burdens, regardless of the swift-moving motor traffic of the Allied armies. The boats are packed so close together as to present from a distance a veritable forest of masts which, with a choppy sea, become imbued with an animation which suggests inebriety.

We are now overtaken by an electric tram,

packed to suffocation inside, with a crowd hanging on to the platform and footboards like a bunch of human grapes. We have had some experience of the art of strap-hanging at home, but this slender and somewhat precarious contact with the back of the tram by the tip of the toe and two fingers of the right hand, is an athletic accomplishment which is not without some novelty and considerable bodily risk. The tram gathers speed (which is rather remarkable considering its enormous human burden) apparently with the foul design of shaking off some of the less secure hangers-on. Indeed, we stand almost spellbound, expecting to see the human limpets drop off one by one, and only resume our walk when our mixed feelings of disappointment and fear have been completely allayed by the disappearance of the tram from view.

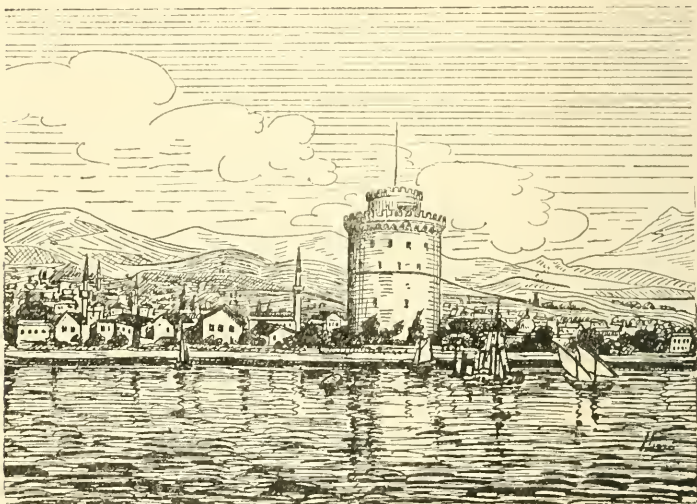
Stumbling along over the uneven stones, partly on the pavement with its numerous pitfalls, partly on the road with its wave-like surface—the bad going confining one's gaze largely to the ground—we venture now and then to raise our eyes in order to observe and compare the various uniforms of the Allied armies, worn by the passers-by; admiring the virility and fine stature of the Serb, the gay looks of the Frenchman, the heavy stolidity of the Russian, and the smart *débonnaire* bearing of the Italian.

And so we approach the White Tower—the

most important landmark in Salonika, at any rate to all those who served with the Macedonian forces. One hundred feet in height, situated on the water's edge just where the commercial quarter of the city ends and the residential district of Kalamaria begins, giving its name to a restaurant and *café chantant* in its vicinity, it was intimately associated with the lives of all those who ever spent three days' *permission* at the Base.

With what pleasure we recall the excellent fare of the French military club which was graciously thrown open to all Allied officers! How we enjoy recounting those evenings at the White Tower Music Hall when everyone "ragged" throughout the performance! How forcibly and vociferously we expressed our disapproval of nearly every turn and repressed a sneaking admiration for the determination with which the artiste continued! What "rags" we had in the boxes with a cord suspended across the auditorium along which we passed tankards of beer to the great discomfort of the audience in the parterre! How handy was a syphon when we wished to attract the attention of some one underneath and what an amusing scuffle we witnessed one evening between the management and some Frenchmen, when the latter, disgusted with the performance, lifted the piano from the orchestra to the stage and proceeded to give an

entertainment on their own account ! Such were Salonika nights at the White Tower and other music-halls. Alas, they are over, with no prospect of their reproduction in this dear old England, so decorous, so orderly. And, in any case, circumstances and environment are everything. Then, those seventy-two precious hours represented



THE WHITE TOWER : SALONIKA.

three days' " life " after several months exile up-country, miles from anywhere. Such are the associations and reminiscences conjured up by the White Tower for those who helped to keep the Bulgar at bay.

For the city itself the White Tower is the most interesting legacy that the Middle Ages have bequeathed to it. Circular, perfectly symmetrical,

towering above all adjacent buildings, it affords a commanding view of the city and the country around ; standing out boldly on the sea-front, it is a conspicuous object from the gulf. Though spotlessly white in colour and scarcely scarred, there is a grimness about its structure which breathes history. If only such old towers could relate their own story ! Fortress, prison and watch-tower, simultaneously and by turns ; built by the Venetians and stained with the blood of many nationalities, " La Tour Blanche " stimulates the imagination to mental pictures of dark nights, surprised sentries, quick silent blows, a stab or two, a few moans and then a successful escape from its dungeon cells. Now, long range guns have peacefully effected its impotence and the Morse code which is wirelessly to its summit has consummated the desecration of its antiquity. We have dallied over-long in its shadow but have a whole-hearted affection for it and could as well imagine London without its Nelson's Column, Windsor without its Castle or Hampton Court without its Palace as Salonika without its Tour Blanche.

We now turn away to the left and ascend the finest and most modern thoroughfare in the town, formerly named the Boulevard Constantin, now Boulevard de la Défense Nationale. Broad, straight, metalled and in good repair, it offers a sharp contrast to all other streets in the town,

particularly the one into which we shall turn at the top, namely, the Rue Ignatia. The latter is a portion of the Via Ignatia which the Romans constructed from Durazzo to Constantinople, but which, under the Turks, changed its name to "Tahta Kale." The Greeks have agreeably revised its historic associations by calling it the Rue Ignatia. Turning to the left we pass immediately under "L'Arc de Triomphe," the remains of a great monument, built by the Roman Emperor Galerius A.D. 305-11, to commemorate his victory over the Persians. It rises to a height of fifty feet above the roadway, with a base span of nearly eighty feet. Its antiquity is enhanced by its modern surroundings, such as the trams which run under its arch; and the beauty of its relief carving is accentuated by the hideous posters of small tradesmen's shops and the squalor of the adjoining houses. There was so much beauty of conception and purity of art in all the work of the Ancients that it is impossible to compare it with the temporary, over-ornamental, and often mean architecture that civilization seems contented with at the present day.

The Rue Ignatia is a fairly straight but narrow thoroughfare along which the trams run so close to the pavement as almost to touch passers-by, and, in one part, entrance to the shops can be made direct from the footboard. It is the line of demarcation between the upper and lower city, the old

and the new, the essentially native quarter and the more cosmopolitan district. Thronged at all hours of the day with a seething mass of humanity, Egnatia Street presented more than any other thoroughfare in Salonika and, certainly during the war, more than any other street in the world, the widest and most varied selection of human types it is possible to conceive.

In addition to the recognized shopkeepers, here one would meet the pedlars of almost every trade and the itinerant merchants of the town. Every kind of comestible is sold by them ; vegetables, pastry, nuts and fruit ; sweets, cakes "*lait caillé*" (the bacterial remedy of the Bulgarian Dr. Metchnikoff) and such commodities as ice and lemonade. The purveyor of the last-named, the *limonadji* or the *cafédji* (he usually carries both coffee and lemonade) bears on his back a large brass pitcher which glistens in the sun, and dispenses his beverage into a glass or cup (provided by him for all-comers !) by a simple tilting motion of the body. Then there is the street baker who carries rounds of bread or rolls on a stick ; the fruit merchant who takes his stand at the corner of a side turning and sells rows of figs pierced and held together by a long piece of reed ; the sweetmeat seller who, wizard-like, appears from out of the crowd, sets down a small portable table and, in the best professional manner of a conjuror, produces a variety of

bilious-looking sweetstuffs from different portions of his person. Or, another individual will go through a similar process, produce tobacco and cigarette papers and begin to roll cigarettes with a deftness of finger and a rapidity of manufacture which would fill an amateur with envy. Cigarette shops, with the counter abutting on the roadway or pavement, are already so numerous that there would seem to be very little livelihood for the street-corner merchant. However, possibly each one regards himself as a Matossian or Gianaclis in embryo, or, if not, he is quite content to make a profit of a few pence per day which suffices him to live.

We notice a quaint domed building on the right which we assume to be a mosque but which, in reality, is a Turkish bath reputed to be four hundred years old. The interior consists of a cooling room from which one passes through another one, moderately heated, to a large central chamber which resembles the nave of a church, with a number of little alcoves or recesses round the sides. Here one may bathe with the shades of departed Pashas, treading the well-worn flagstones and dodging the numerous beetles and cockroaches as no doubt they did.

The Salonician quickly realized the Westerners' weakness for souvenirs, and it was not long before a number of shops were doing excellent business selling cheap modern jewellery and antiques,

such as Turkish swords and pistols, Greek daggers, Albanian cartridge-cases and old coins dating from the Byzantine and Roman eras. The former class of shops may be found anywhere along Egnatia Street, but the antique dealers have congregated in the vicinity of the bazaar at the top of Venizelos Street, which we are now approaching. Jostled and baulked by the crowd, in constant peril from passing vehicles from which we are hardly safe even on the pavement, our progress is necessarily slow ; so that we do not miss the spectacle of a street barber plying his trade on the pavement to the inconvenience, but apparently not to the annoyance, of passers-by. Evidently the police have no orders as to loiterers or obstructors in this most " go-as-you-please " city. Neither whim nor necessity recognize any law or order ; every one seems to do just as they will, whenever they wish and in what manner they please.

In the midst of all this medley of merchants and merchandise, the professions are not unrepresented. For we once saw a formidable-looking dentist, who, if facial characteristics count for anything, ought to have been a prize-fighter, plying his handicraft, with a *gharry* as his surgery and anyone from the crowd, who happened to have the instincts of the martyr, as his patient. Possibly he was also the owner of the *gharry* and could thus, if necessary, more easily escape the fury

of an unfortunate victim from whom he had extracted the wrong tooth !

We are now at the point where Egnatia Street crosses Venizelos Street, down which we turn and thence saunter into the bazaars. Here we make the acquaintance of the merchants of textile and dry goods, and survey the general emporii which sell anything from a Gillette razor-blade to a Turkish carpet. We are greeted by importunate tradesmen's boys with cries of " Ver' goot Johnnie, anyting you like, Sair, souvenir Salonik'." Most of the shopkeepers wear the fez, a circumstance which is not necessarily indicative of Turkish nationality, as the Jews were compelled to adopt it many years ago by their overlords. Apart from its scarlet colour, anything more unsuited to the climate could not be devised. It leaves the nape of the neck—the most essential part to be protected—absolutely bare and affords no shade to the eyes.

Emerging again into Venizelos Street, we are once more concerned to notice the strange cosmopolitanism of the shopping crowd ; the trim, grey-clad figure of the British nurse, self-assured and observant, alongside the draped form of a Turkish lady, indifferent and unconcerned, but, withal, shunning the gaze of the curious stranger ; the British " Tommy," spruce and *débonnaire*, proclaiming his athleticism through close-fitting khaki, rubbing shoulders with a lugubrious-

looking gendarme from Crete in black tunic and baggy sack-seated breeches. Strangest of all is the British military policeman at the bottom of the street directing the traffic—a task in which he is somewhat doubtfully assisted by no less than three representatives of other nationalities.

We are now at Floca's café, the famous rendez-vous of Salonika, where, sooner or later, it was said, one was sure of meeting any friend in the Macedonian army. Here some three score tables, overflowing on to the pavement or even into the roadway, often accommodated a dozen different nationalities or a score or more different types. Amidst a clinking of glasses and calls for the *garçon* half a dozen diverse languages seemed shouting for mastery.

At Floca's, the strange admixture of people which we have been concerned to notice in the streets is brought together under one common roof. There, sipping *apéritifs* or drinking watery beer, we can observe them at our leisure : a small party of Serbian officers, immobile and saturnine of countenance, a French *poilu* talking broken English to a British sergeant, a V.A.D. engaged in animated conversation with an officer down from the line, a laughing vivacious quartette of French *chasseurs* enjoying their Vermouth or Dubonnet, or three British officers with seventy-two hours' leave at the base endeavouring to forget their "dug-outs" up-country in the novelty

of ices and cream-buns ! We note a green-tabbed captain of the British Intelligence Department pursuing a heated argument in Greek with a small officer of the Hellenic artillery and realize that we are not such a monolingual race as we thought ; seated at the same table as two much be-medalled Russian officers, are two sisters of the Scottish Womens' Hospital, in field service kit and hair "bobbed," recalling, perhaps, over their cigarettes and coffee, their experiences in the Serbian retreat. At another table sits a prosperous Salonika merchant with his wife and daughter, entertaining two ultra-smart lieutenants of the Italian army, and, further on, a *demi-mondaine* in the latest Paris creations, while, near the door, two young Turkish "bloods," affecting an air of hauteur towards this extraordinary collection of human types who have been brought thousands of miles to prevent this fair city falling into the hands of the Bulgars.

Occasionally, we find a Greek priest, in a black chimney-pot hat and his long hair tied in a little bun at the back, seeking shade and rest at one of the outside tables and a red-tabbed colonel of the Greek infantry in thin civilian boots making a square meal of a very sweet *gateau* and a glass of water. An *Evzone* (Greek Highlander), in his quaint little skirt, white stockings and pompon shoes, salutes his officer as he passes. We get a glimpse of some French sailors, with their red-

tasselled Tam-o'-shanters at a rakish angle, eyeing with admiration and not a little compassion a dirty but beautiful-eyed child appealing in broken French for "un p'tit morceau." Moving tortuously in and out of the tables, are inexorable little newspaper urchins who dodge and defy the waiters. They sell every kind of periodical and newspaper which is likely to be popular with the Allied troops, and, although they cannot read or write a word of any language, unerringly choose or name whatever paper may be demanded by a customer. The infallibility with which they offer *La Vie Parisienne* to the most youthful of British subalterns is as remarkable as their pronunciation of the famous *L'Independant*.

At Floca's, too, we shall receive the solicitations of the *lustradji* or boot-black, who seems to have been dogging our footsteps throughout our itinerary. He is as persistent as he is ubiquitous. Judging by the numbers which it supports, his trade must be highly lucrative and such as to suggest that the population of Salonika spend quite a considerable portion of their lives in having their boots polished.

However, though fascinated and engrossed by the scene, we reluctantly decide that it is time for us to leave and, after many calls for *l'addition*, succeed in bringing the waiter to our side. Extracting a pencil from the pocket of a greasy waistcoat, he makes a rough calculation on the

marble-topped table and snaps out the result with a strong flavour of garlic.

Immediately, we are reminded that this is not the first occasion on which we have inhaled this obnoxious odour—passers-by have wafted it in our faces, the atmosphere of the trams is charged with it and the customary perfumes of the barber's shop are overwhelmed by it. We learn on inquiry that it has the reputation of being a strong preventative of fever and also that it is, indeed, found to be a palatable form of flavouring by the natives. Although it is hard to credit the latter statement, we are quite ready to believe that no self-respecting mosquito would venture to attack anyone surrounded by a garlic-laden atmosphere.

We make a hurried exit from Floca's, though not without a final comprehensive glance at a scene, so novel and bizarre, which will never be completely obliterated from our minds. We turn towards the sea, hoping thereby to refresh our lungs, but disappointment awaits us. Arrived at the sea-front, we turn to the right, only to be met by a truly formidable blend of bad odours, so that we realize the truth of the saying that the streets of Salonika have a different smell for every yard and every one a bad one! Lack of sanitation is largely the cause, but it is doubtful whether the setting-up of the most advanced Ministry of Health, or even the reconstruction of

the town with open parks and model houses, would entirely banish those peculiarly nauseous odours—albeit occasionally mitigated by the subtle scents and perfumes of the East—which seem inseparable from the atmosphere of nearly all Mediterranean cities. The narrow stuffy streets, the great army of unwashed and their unclean habits would prove insuperable obstacles to a campaign of hygiene.

Continuing, we pass a jeweller's shop at the corner, stocked with latest treasures from Paris, and, next door to a picture post-card stall, we come across a little hole in the wall wherein is a man of immense proportions, wearing the smallest of "tarbouches," frying pieces of meat on the end of an iron skewer.

An individual who now commands our attention and who, at the same time, taxes our vocabulary to the utmost is the Salonika cab-driver or *arabadji*, dashing round the corner of a side street on the wrong side and, incidentally, almost running over our toes. This "Jehu" is worthy of notice, if only for his sagacity. Of uncertain nationality, variously attired, sometimes in fez and native dress, sometimes in straw hat and lounge suit, he is almost invariably accompanied by a second individual who seems to be the proprietor. Presumably the latter can so little trust his employee that he feels compelled to accompany him on all his journeys. However,

since one "gharry" can obviously support both master and man, the lucrateness of the business is clearly established. Possibly the two are in partnership; if so, the combine has often been in jeopardy, if not actually dissolved, by those hilarious parties doing the midnight "rounds" of the town in search of adventure. This was achieved by dislodging one of the principals from the box seat by the effective method of lying well back in the open *gharry* and placing both feet firmly under the driver's seat and straightening the knees; then, as the result of a little pressure, the individual on the hinged box found himself in imminent danger of being precipitated on to his horse's back. It would have been a shock that the emaciated steed would scarcely have survived!

The Macedonian has little love for the beast which carries him or earns his daily bread. The poor animal is worked in a deplorable condition, and subjected to such cruel punishments as blows on the mouth, pinching of the nostrils or kicks in the abdomen. Fares are levied at discretion and often paid on the same basis. There was a time when *gharries* carried a tariff slate, printed in Yiddish, Turkish and Greek, which the drivers, placing a very high estimate on the linguistic powers of members of the Allied Forces, were careful to turn upside down or else to secrete altogether, in case it might be understood! A

means of transport which is not only picturesque but savours less of cruelty, is the ox-drawn cart. Though slow-moving to the point of sluggishness, it is an economical turn-out, since the oxen, in addition to being hardy, are cheap to maintain.

Approaching 26th October Street, so-named in celebration of the date of the Greek conquest of the Bulgars, we remark two places where the roadway has sunk under the heavy traffic of the Allied armies, exposing the uncovered "drains" immediately underneath. A short distance along the Boulevard (though why such a very ordinary thoroughfare should be graced by the descriptive title "boulevard" it is impossible to say) brings us to the Orient station.

The railways of Macedonia are few and far between, and, owing to the rugged nature of the country, generally circuitous. There are four main lines: one to Athens, one to Monastir, a third to Uskub and another to Constantinople. Travelling on them is not remarkable for its luxury nor is the system distinguished for organization or punctuality. Trains usually leave the station to a discordant accompaniment of various noises—the stationmaster blowing a shrill whistle, the guard a tin trumpet and the engine-driver emitting long blasts from the steam syren. Here at the railway station the *hamal* or porter is in his element. He carries on his back quite as much baggage or merchandise as we should place on a

large station truck, and he pays just as little heed to the shunting operations of the locomotives as he does to passers-by in the street. The indigenous native also seems to exhibit a disappointing unconcern towards mechanical appliances; no doubt just because one would expect him to hold up his hands in wonderment. Although he has a lurking love for cheap prints, alarm clocks and indifferent gramophones, generally, he does not show as much interest in the great inventions of this century or the last as the average modern schoolboy. Thus, whether the on-coming train is composed of well-appointed modern ambulance cars or whether it is a mixed goods and passenger with, in addition to Greek rolling stock, carriages used by the Turks and freight waggons from Serbia, Bulgaria, Central Europe or France; whether the locomotive be German, Russian, Roumanian or British, the native remains quite unconcerned.

In the *salle d'attente*, a dirty unwholesome hall of considerable area and lofty proportions, we encounter, as at all places of assembly or rendezvous in Salonika, the usual medley of humanity. Soldiers of the French, Greek and Serbian armies returning to the front from *permission*, enveloped in accoutrements, are slumbering on the floor; the female luggage attendant is engaged in replying with some vehemence to what appear to be the accusations of a gesticulating French officer. Two peasant women with large bundles

of belongings and numerous children are seated on the floor waiting for the departure of a train which may not start until the following day. A swaggering, fierce individual of the *comitadji* type is vociferously arguing with an Italian gendarme in a totally different language; the former, by some extraordinary means, has managed to avoid military service—a difficult achievement in the Balkan States, where, if an able-bodied man is not claimed by one country, he is almost sure to be conscripted by another. An aged and poorly-clad shepherd, with a rough sheepskin slung loosely over his shoulders, leans meditatively on his crook. Some well-to-do citizens and a fair number of Greek officers, about to proceed to Athens on leave, pass through the waiting hall and into the mixed assembly march a small detachment of Algerian black troops, in blue overcoats and tin-hats, under the command of a dapper sub-lieutenant.

The station is not only void of platforms but it sometimes happens that there are a number of goods waggons on the permanent way intervening between the booking-office and the passenger train. Shunting operations are always in progress so that to reach the train or ascend a compartment is an undertaking not unattended with risk and a mild display of gymnastics. Intending passengers experience all the excitement and exhilaration of a well-planned obstacle race!

Their efforts, when laden with baggage, to crawl between the couplings of two waggons or climb through the open doors of a cattle-truck only to emerge in front of an approaching engine, engross our attention. Finally, with a longing sigh for the orderly bustle of one of the London termini, we turn our steps in the direction of "Piccadilly Circus," which is the point where the main roads leading to the Struma, Doiran and Monastir converge.

Christened in irony by our home-sick troops, "Piccadilly Circus" is, as its name implies, the hub of Salonika. Here we renew the acquaintance of all the different types that we have noticed in our itinerary, only with a larger proportion of peasant folk coming and going from the country districts. There may be others whom we have not caught sight of hitherto: the French marine in his little red pom-pom cap, a bronzed stalwart soldier of Morocco, some of the Franco-Chinese troops from the Ammon Islands, our own Indians, always so punctilious in saluting His Majesty's uniform, Zouaves in their red fez-like hats and baggy breeches, the fresh-looking British sailor and the red and grey capes of Queen Alexandra's nurses, all threading their way through the mass of slow-moving civilians, street hawkers, café idlers and merchants; mingling with Turkish women, long-bearded Jews and picturesque brigands; dodging the Staff cars, donkeys,



ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH, SALONICA

gharries, heavily laden carts, three-ton lorries and municipal trams. What a pageant ; what a magnificent drop-scene to a stupendous pantomime !

Such was the " Piccadilly Circus " of Salonika during the Great War. It is a fitting point at which to conclude this all too brief tour of modern Salonika. One never crossed that other Piccadilly without an affectionate recollection of the well-known one at home. Though outwardly entirely dissimilar, in the facility they gave for the study of the types and manners of humanity they had much in common.

THE TURKISH QUARTER

Such might be a brief circuit of the better known parts of the town. Interesting though it is on account of the strange motley of dress and types, by no means is it the most picturesque or most enchanting side of this wonderful old city. To the Western traveller, to the archæologist or to the artist, the old Turkish quarter—the great mass of the upper town, the quaint remote corners beneath the old walls—is a revelation and a delight.

Turning away off Rue Egnatia, either under the extremity of the city wall by " Piccadilly Circus " or by the arch of Galerius, past the old rotunda of St. George's Church, we are plunged into a different world. Up steep narrow cobbled

streets, with a stream of water running down the centre, we wend our way ; past old wooden gateways and cool half-hidden gardens, under the overhanging lattices of quaint gabled houses, beneath time-mellowed beams and wistaria-hung balconies. Round sharp corners we climb, catching glimpses of shady courtyards and little gardens, gay with pomegranate trees and fragrant with orange blossoms ; up a few steps, round again as in a maze and we find ourselves in the deep cool shadows of an old mosque. Above us towers the slim symmetrical column of the minaret, dazzling white against the blue sky ; to our right is the old marble ablution fountain, trickling with a sweet refreshing sound, and to the left the dark doorway of the mosque with its ancient text and hanging lamp, half-hidden in the shade of the stone-flagged cloisters.

The day is warm and the ascent, though by no means exhausting, has been sufficiently arduous to tempt us into the cooler atmosphere of the interior. We enjoy for a brief space the quiet repose and dignified simplicity of the old mosque, but do not venture far beyond the threshold lest our heavily-shod feet defile the holy carpet. Leaving the mosque, we climb again—twisting and turning—almost every step bringing a new picture before our eyes ; a fresh corner, an old Turkish fountain, a little “ cupboard ” of a shop, its wares overflowing in a waterfall of colour on

to the roadway ; a new vista of old woodwork supporting little close-latticed windows with enormous overhanging eaves ; a glimpse of a tall minaret or the sunlit glare of the hills behind the town.

Rounding a sharp bend, we stumble into a market square, set with trees and surrounded by bazaars, fruit-stalls and cafés ; noisy either with the chatter of the Turks, sitting on the pavement smoking, or with the clatter of an unwieldy cart which dives miraculously into a steep narrow alley. Perspiring, tired, but still intensely interested and attracted, we struggle on through this labyrinth, hopelessly lost except for the steep incline which preserves to us our sense of direction. The entrance to a courtyard between two beautiful old bronze-studded doorways is completely filled by a diminutive donkey, villainously overlaid, who sure-footedly clicks his way over the stones, followed by a picturesque native with a large stick and a varied vocabulary of epithets. Some children, dirty, but with eyes that would melt a stone, murmur : “ Baksheesh, mister, Engleesh ver' goot ” ; a dog, regarding us with suspicion, slinks by ; a woman suddenly emerges from a half-hidden door and empties her bucket almost upon us ; a lattice opens somewhere above us and all is once more quiet and mysterious.

What stories of love and tragedy could those quiet, sinister old houses tell ! What oppor-

tunities for an ambushade are afforded by these tortuous alleys ! The fatal fascination of conjecture takes possession of us. The mind strays from the reality of the present into the fantasy of the past and reconstructs family feuds and racial vendettas with their accompaniment of silent blows and flashing knives.

We wander on, soliloquizing, until we come upon a group of little girls solemnly playing a simple game which seems to centre round a tiny tot of some two or three summers, who, seated on a small box, beams upon all and sundry like some glorified sultana holding her court. Failing to comprehend, we resume our climb, dodging the stream of waste water which flows down the centre of the roadway and accounts for the unpleasant odour which has been following us, in varying degrees of intensity, ever since we left Egnatia Street.

A few steps farther on, this stream is suddenly augmented from an unobserved source almost immediately above us ; we halt instantaneously and decide that a warm corner in our memory shall be reserved for the playing children, but for whose brief entertainment and the consequent delay, we, and not the cobbled roadway, might have been the first recipients of the contents of the invisible basin.

Henceforward, our anxiety to reach the summit of the old town is enhanced, and so we resume

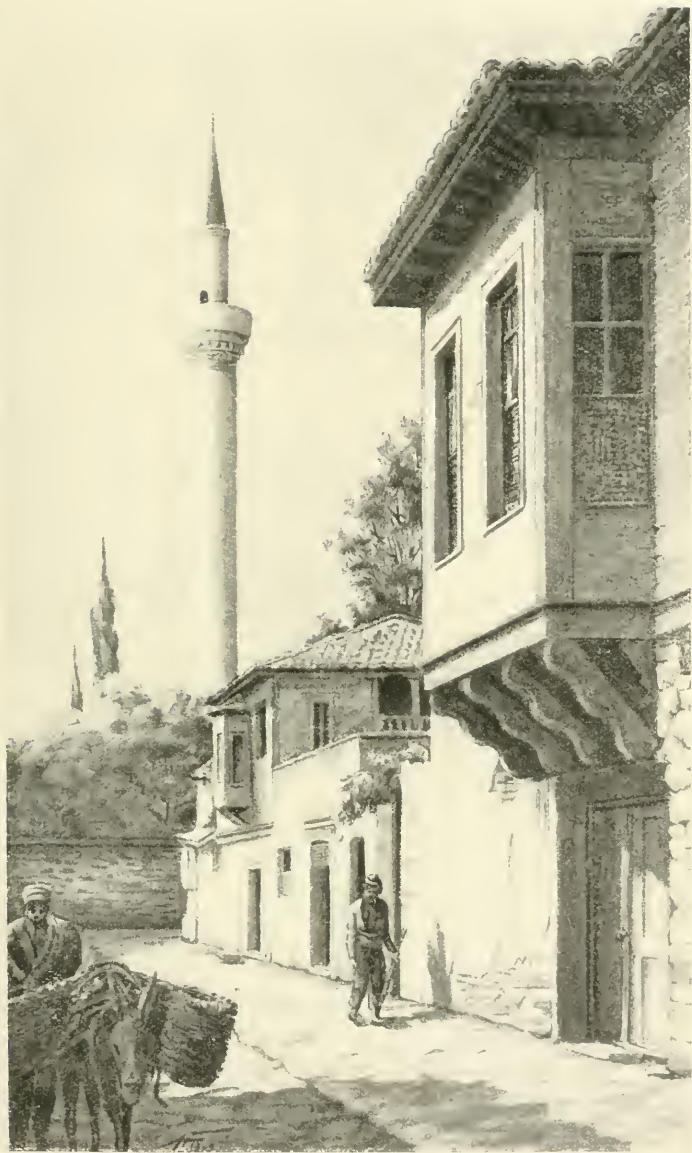
our struggle over the hard stones—now and again striking one which by its razor-like edge seems almost to penetrate the sole of the boot—until we find ourselves outside another mosque, inhabited to overflowing by refugees. With candles burning on the simple little altar, it affords shelter to some twenty or thirty families herded together in unwholesome confusion. Thereafter, our way lies under some trees, up a few steps, over a heap of garbage, round a beautiful old piece of Roman carving used as a doorstep, one more turn and we are out of this labyrinth of narrow walled-in alleys—out into the glare of blinding sunshine, with the old grey battlements above us, and, in front, a glorious panorama of old red roofs, graceful minarets, green trees and the blue of the Ægean beyond.

In an atmosphere, always crisp and clear, each detail is delineated with extraordinary keenness. Away to the left are the gardens and large houses of the residential quarter of Kalamaria. Beyond is the promontory of Karaburoun, white with hospital tents, so well known to those many thousands who fell sick during the Great War ; nearer at hand, the eye deplores a great bare patch devoted to the Jewish cemeteries, the tombstones appearing like hundreds of packing cases strewn haphazard over the ground. In front of us to our immediate left, the broad serrations of the old wall stretch down the hillside,

past the beautiful circular mass of the old Byzantine church of St. George, almost to the White Tower and the sea itself.

Right under the shadow of the wall is the old town—houses of all shapes and colours and sizes, jammed together in a glorious muddle so that no streets are visible—just a sea of old wrinkled tiles with, here and there, green garden patches or dark clumps of trees, broken only by the slender white masts of tall minarets. Closer inspection may reveal a little round-roofed tomb, the bronze domes of a Turkish bath, or the pink brickwork of a little Byzantine church. The curious and rare minaret with a double gallery is quite near, while further away another claims our attention by the “cross-gartered” effect of its red brick ornamentation. On the heights to our right a little monastery is seen nestling among the black cypress trees; lower down we observe the strange buttresses of St. Elias, another Byzantine relic, and the beautiful little cupolas of St. Catherine’s, standing out from the low lichened roofs of the host of houses round about. At this point, the eye is arrested by a large dark grey patch, devoid of trees, its monotony broken only by a few lonely minarets or the big skeleton frames of modern buildings in Venizelos Street. Such is the broad bare scar left by the last great fire.

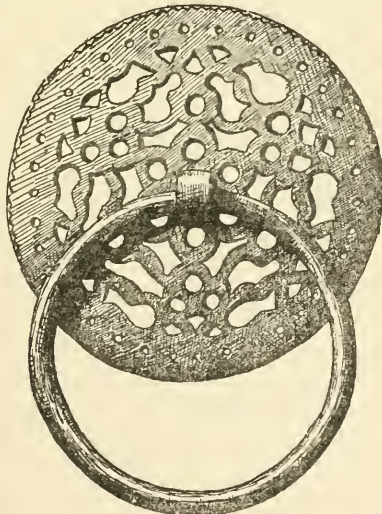
Far away to our right stretch the flat marshes of the Vardar, backed by the distant blue of the



STREET, TURKISH QUARTER,
SALONICA

great Serbian mountains. Lastly, we turn to the huge expanse of the harbour, dotted with Allied boats and battle-craft, to the Gulf of Salonika beyond, flanked by the shores of old Greece and the towering snow-capped " Home of the Gods "—Mount Olympus.

Such is the picture—so clear that it might almost be a fitting illustration by a fanciful artist to an Eastern fairy tale. For, indeed, is not the East one huge fairy tale? Are not the white minarets and the mysterious old houses, the storks on the roof, the beggar at the fountain, the very cobble-stones and, above all, the deep blue sky and the star-strewn night the very essentials of magic and romance?



OLD BRONZE DOOR RING : MACEDONIA.

CHAPTER XI

SALONIKA: THE GREAT FIRE

NO record of Salonika as she is to-day is complete without some account of the great fire which destroyed the greater part of the city in August, 1917. Although it is possible to describe the progress and material effect of the fire, it is impossible to convey in mere words the overwhelming sensations which were inspired by a survey of the scene shortly after the calamity. The human suffering, the inevitable deprivation, the tragedy of the catastrophe are too poignant to be adequately illustrated or described. A photograph of a devastated street, or of a block of burnt out skeletonized houses, does not necessarily bring before the mind the scores of ruined shopkeepers, the hundreds of destitute employés or the innumerable groups of homeless mothers and children—the women wringing their hands in mental anguish and the children weeping piteously in the presence of a calamity, the full extent of which their minds were scarcely able to grasp. For thousands the fire meant not only a disappearance of their means of livelihood,

but also the destruction of their dwellings, the inevitable abandonment of their fondest associations, the loss of many highly-prized family possessions and a complete rupture with all those innumerable memories—both tangible and abstract—which are comprised in the one word “Home.”

Fortunate indeed was it for the inhabitants of this sorely tried city that the Allies were in occupation of the country at the time. Through the exertions of the British and French military authorities, together with the readiness with which their organization, their personnel, and their transport were devoted unreservedly to the work of rescue and salvage, the disaster was to some extent mitigated. Initial good work was followed by provision of camps and settlements and finally by employment and relief for the homeless and destitute. The record of the work done by the British and French in the course of, and subsequent to, the great fire is truly laudatory. The gigantic character of the food problem may be realized to some extent when it is observed that almost the entire commercial quarter of Salonika was reduced to ruins and the city thereby rendered devoid of provisions. Consequently, even those fortunate ones whose homes were left intact had to be fed from the Allied Commissariat.

The great fire of Salonika broke out in the

afternoon of August 5th, 1917, in the north-east corner of the city farthest removed from the sea. There is no hesitation in prefixing the description "great" for, although the city has many times been nearly destroyed by fire, the conflagration of 1917 undoubtedly eclipses all previous disasters of this nature. Starting in a poor quarter of the town, where the houses were constructed of the flimsiest building material, and fanned by a Vardar wind, which can usually be relied on for support when there is any destructive work afoot, the flames spread with alarming rapidity. In the course of an hour more than fifty houses had been gutted—a rate of destruction which increased with the progress of time. In the vicinity of the fire the streets filled with a heterogeneous crowd—men, young and old, women and children, some distraught and wild-eyed, running they knew not whither with articles of furniture and hastily rolled bundles of belongings; others, incapable of thought or action, seeking a less crowded spot and there uttering wild cries of lamentation or phlegmatically resigning themselves to Fate. Household goods, domestic utensils, beds and bedding, the contents of shops and merchandize of all descriptions lay about the streets in confusion—a state of affairs which naturally impeded the efforts to stem the furious onslaught of this veritable sea of flame. Of public fire appliances, although their defec-

tiveness was so serious, it is almost impossible to speak without ridicule. The few machines which the city boasted were man-handled and the water pressure was produced by a hand-pump. The water supply was totally insufficient and it required the exertions of six men, three at either end of a long handle, to raise a narrow column of water eight or nine feet high. The force of the pressure can be roughly gauged from the fact that it was possible by standing on the hose to interrupt the flow of water. In such circumstances the Allied troops resorted to the creation of a firebelt by dynamiting blocks of houses. The flames, however, still powerfully seconded by the Vardar wind, leapt over all gaps and made nothing of occasional obstacles such as a fireproof concrete building in the commercial quarter of the town. Towards dusk, it became obvious that nothing except a sudden and apparently miraculous change of wind would stop the flames before they reached the sea. Householders who had hitherto merely gazed at the fire with interest and awe now made attempts to shift their valuables and belongings to a safe quarter. Shopkeepers who could not possibly remove even a tenth of their stores, realizing at length that their premises were doomed opened wide their doors to all who chose to help themselves. A notable instance of such unavoidable liberality was seen at the well-known "Floca"

café, by means of which more than one Allied mess was enabled to boast a well stocked cellar for several months to come.

The municipal buildings and the Prefecture situated on the higher reaches of the town were the first important edifices to be engulfed in this fiery sea. Next, the church of St. Demetrius, one of the most beautiful examples of Byzantine work in Europe, was rapidly reduced to a mere shell. It was thought that the Rue Egnatia, a comparatively broad thoroughfare running east to west across the track of the fire, would limit its sphere of destruction, but the flames eagerly spanned the cross-roads at the top of Venizelos Street, down which they shot as through a flue. The force and precision with which this wealthy street was attacked seemed almost to betoken a diabolical intelligence concerning the rich spoil it contained. From this moment the lower part of the town was doomed and chief concern was now centred on the salvation of the docks. Fortunately the distance separating them from the houses on the front was too great for the outstretched grasp of even this hitherto omnipotent and fiery monster ; but many handsome buildings, comprising the Olympus hotel, the Salonika Club and private residences on the front proved to be within the reach of its elastic maw and were incontinently devoured.

The minarets presented an incongruous and

amazing spectacle. Rising through the billows of smoke which surrounded them, their slim white forms standing out like lighthouses amongst these fiery breakers, their leaden spires burning like warning beacons to all who might venture near this turbulent sea, these slender columns of stone proclaimed a power greater than man and a faith which will outlast the ages.

Throughout the night of August 5th, the fire raged and the city continued in a state of turmoil. The air was filled with the shouts, cries and moans of a huge concourse of people, dishevelled in appearance, haggard of countenance and totally distraught. The city was lighted as by the setting sun and when dawn broke the contrast of the two effulgences was indescribably bizarre. What a transformation to have achieved in a single night ! The citizens must indeed have felt that "yesterday" had already sped into the oblivion of bygone ages (for one lives a lifetime in such a night); and with the coming of dawn surely they would rub their heavy inflamed eyes, gaze around in consternation and ask could such wholesale destruction be accomplished in the short space of a few hours. Must it not have seemed to them that they were looking upon the accumulated decay of centuries, and that "yesterday," with its lives and loves, its joys and sorrows, was merely an episode in a previous existence ?

Salonika, one day a great commercial centre and prosperous thriving city, alive with movement and bustle, most of her citizens contented and many of them opulent ; the next, a city of the dead, grim, silent and forsaken ! At one moment a living entity, virile and well nourished, her arteries pulsating with the coming and going of thousands of human corpuscles ; at the next, stricken with syncope, asphyxiated, her pulse imperceptible and her life almost extinct—in truth only the bare skeleton of her former self ! More awful, more horrifying, more grief-compelling than the sudden cessation of life in the human frame is the violent untimely end of a great city. Truly, of Salonika may it be said : “ A thousand years scarce serve to form a city, an hour may lay it in the dust.”

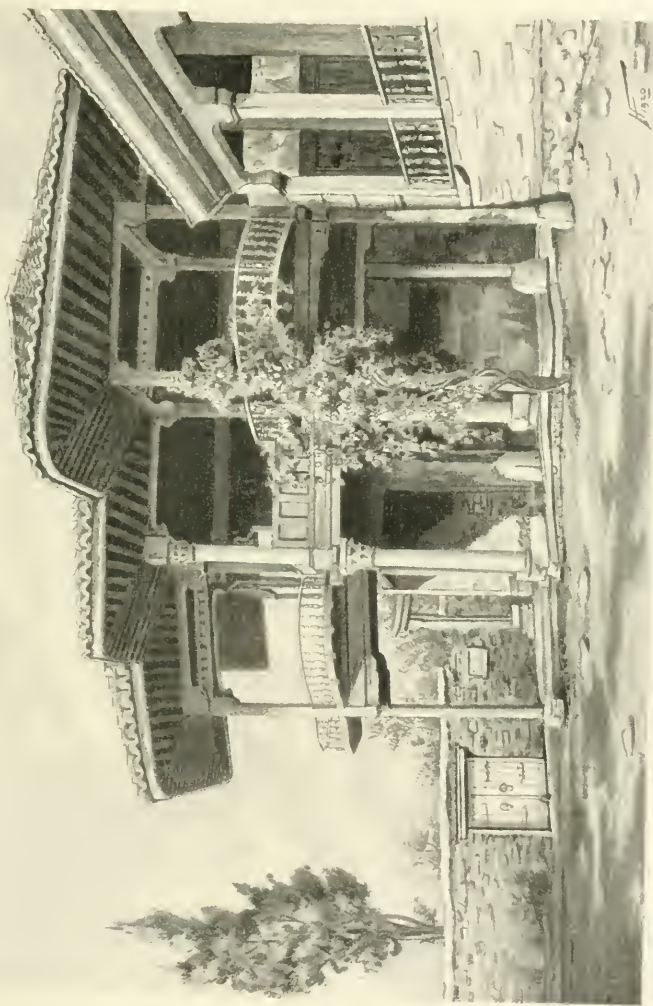
For a day or so it seemed possible that the distress caused directly by the fire might not be the sum-total of the disaster. Indeed, considering the black record of the city, it would not have been surprising if an epidemic or famine had followed. Fortunately, however, for the inhabitants the measures of relief afforded by the Allies averted any further catastrophe such as might have been brought about by a severe shortage of both food and water.

Statistics, although they do not serve to paint a picture of the heart-rending scenes, may convey something of the magnitude of the calamity. It is computed that nearly one hundred thousand

people were rendered homeless and the total loss amounted to the sum of £40,000,000. All the public buildings were destroyed, most of the banks, schools, and clubs, all the large hotels and, with only one exception—a modern concrete German building—all the big shops. In addition, numerous large warehouses with their enormous stocks of tobacco and other produce were consumed and many ancient synagogues, churches and mosques were reduced to mere framework. A source of constant danger was the number of tottering walls and it was many days before the Allied Engineers by a vigorous dynamite campaign were able to render the debris-strewn streets safe for passengers.

Incredible as it may seem, after the lapse of a few weeks, Salonika, with phoenix-like resurgence, slowly elevated its head from its dead ashes. Small shopkeepers, with the sky as roof and bare walls their only shelter, erected stalls on the site of their ruined establishments ; some of the café proprietors, with scarcely better conditions, once more retailed Turkish coffee at remunerative prices and two or three restaurants found new homes under other names in the undamaged residential quarter of the town. Once again, the streets resumed some slight semblance of animation and the demeanour of the inhabitants became less downcast, as hope once more resumed its sway. It would not have been sur-

prising however, if like old Cairo and other Eastern cities, the ruins of Salonika had remained untouched and the town "moved on." One may well ask, is it affection or blind obstinacy which induces the Salonicians to revive, to reconstruct their city after every attack on it or its inhabitants by Nature or man. In addition to a phlegmatic fatalism, must not the qualities of tenacity and invincibility be strongly inherent in a city which has recovered from so many overwhelming blows? A great nation, it is said, does not know when it is beaten; the spirit of a city which does not know when it is destroyed must be equally magnificent. Of such mettle Salonika seems to be made. Fire, war, earthquake, epidemic and disease have proved unable to bring about its irretrievable destruction. Much of the old mystery and romance of its narrow streets and quaint silent houses have gone; the fast decaying fairy-tale book of the East has had a few of its last pages torn from it, and at least one priceless gem of architecture has been lost; but with the ground cleared, there opens before Salonika a vista bright with great possibilities, a recrudescence of its prosperity and a future no less glorious than the past.



VERANDAH, MOSQUE OF THE
DANCING DERVISHES, SALANGKA

CHAPTER XII

CEMETERIES

GREEK

THE general appearance of the Greek cemeteries of Salonika bears a very close resemblance to any Christian cemetery in England or Europe—especially the Roman Catholic. This is no doubt largely due to the similarity, in outward signs and observances, which exists between the latter and the Greek orthodox religion. Holy pictures or ikons, the lighting of tapers to the departed, the frequent use of the crucial sign, the worship of saints and the observance of their days all endorse this comparison.

One of the largest Greek cemeteries is to be found on the west side of the Salonika-Seres road ; it is particularly conspicuous and forms a distant landmark on account of its dense mass of black trees, forming a dark patch on the barren sun-bleached slopes behind the town.

In the cemetery there are a few monuments to be seen but most of the graves have a single cross at the head. The Greek cross, or slight variations of it, is the symbol usually chosen and these, as

well as the tombs, are constructed of white marble.

The Greeks are generally assiduous in the upkeep of the graves of the departed. A photograph of the deceased is often laid against the tombstone and loving hands arrange frequent renewals of flowers. An ikon, illuminated by a small oil lamp, is also a favourite symbol to place at the head of the grave, before which relatives, in making the sign of the cross, offer up prayers for the departed. The funeral ceremony and final burial rites, however, are not altogether free from objection. The coffin, as a rule, is merely hired, and in order that it may not be damaged in any way the lid is left unsealed. Thus the corpse, surrounded by flowers, is conveyed through the streets, exposed to the morbid curiosity of the public view. Another custom which the natural British distaste of ostentation would surely deplore, is that of placarding the entrance-gate of the house with obituary intelligence. Whereas we content ourselves with a simple lowering of the blinds, the Greeks paste large black-edged printed notices at their door so that all the world who pass may be cognizant of their loss.

The saints' days are one of the outstanding features of the Greek religion. They are always kept as holidays by the masses and are so numerous as to render any sort of annual holiday entirely superfluous. In fact, the frequency of

saints' days is so remarkable as to have become almost a subject for ridicule. During the war, there was scarcely anything more disconcerting to the Allied soldiers than to journey several miles into Salonika and on arrival to find nearly all the shops closed because it happened to be the day of St. Nicholas.

As with the Salonika cemeteries, one inseparable association of those up-country is the cypress tree. There is very little other similarity, however, as, in the first place, the graveyards usually adjoin a church and, secondly, the gravestones are extremely simple and unpretentious. Frequently, the site of a grave will be marked only by a wooden cross, a rough hewn stone or even an unshaped upright slab on which the symbol of the cross is chiselled, and inscriptions of any sort are rare.

There are one or two quaint features of a Greek village burial ground which are worthy of notice. A short and very rough wooden fence often encloses the grave. In addition, it is a common practice to suspend a glass or wooden case from this fence or from the wooden cross and to deposit in it flowers, written or printed prayers, dried fruit or coloured eggs—offerings of a curious semi-pagan nature. Frequently, too, one will light upon a rough earthenware pot or vase placed on the grave and containing an offering of food or drink to the deceased.

Invariably, the graves are shallow and the same ground is used over and over again. This practice is rendered possible or, at all events, loses some of its irreverence by the custom of exhuming the bones, as in the more populous centres of the country, and placing each set in an embroidered bag. The bag which is of white canvas, with the sign of the crucifix and the name of the deceased worked in coloured silk, when filled with its gruesome remains, is deposited in a small chapel, usually adjoining the church.

This last custom is the most curious of all those pertaining to Macedonian burial rites, and calculated to fill the British mind with a certain sense of repugnance. One can discover in the practice, however, a fervent desire to perpetuate the memory of the deceased, and a strong disinclination to part with anything which can be preserved as an intimate and tangible association of a loved one who is no more. These osseous remains, preserved from generation to generation, are destined to form the subject of worship and veneration by those to come.

JEWISH

The Jews it need hardly be said are not one of the indigenous races of Macedonia, and their activities are confined to the commercial centre of the country. Consequently, in our search for a Jewish cemetery, we have not to look beyond

the precincts of Salonika, where as far as numbers are concerned the Jews are still in the ascendant.

In comparison with Turkish and Greek cemeteries, the Jewish is noticeable only for its mediocrity, and lack of any picturesque features. Just as it has not the same claim to antiquity as either the Turkish or Greek there is, in addition, a conspicuous absence of dignity about the Jewish cemetery ; we find no reposefulness, no soothing influence, and the entire surroundings bespeak temporariness rather than permanency.

Judged from the standpoint of opulence, the Jewish cemetery is superior to that of the Turk or the Greek in so far as rectangular box-like tombs displace the ordinary grave. They are monotonously uniform, however, and set so close together that it is possible to use them as stepping stones—an irreverent but none the less common practice when searching for a particular grave. Surmounted by a flat slab or stone, suitably inscribed in Hebrew, the tomb is built up of red bricks and mortar which are only very rarely concealed under an outer slab of marble or finished stone. The resultant structure, erring as it does on the side of crudity and economy of labour, fails to impress one with the awful beauty of death. Moreover, the handsome top slab, with its picturesque Hebrew characters, merely accentuates by contrast the shoddiness, for which the brick-work is primarily responsible, of the entire tomb.

The rare exceptions to the prevailing uniformity are a few small monuments and here and there a beautifully carved tomb erected in memory of a venerable Rabbi ; such provide the only attempts at ornamentation in the Jewish cemetery.

The desolate surroundings of the Jewish necropolis, like those of most oriental burial grounds, rather indicate that the Jews were given very little option in their choice of a burial site. Or, if they were, they have allowed its immediate environs to degenerate into a rubbish heap and a dumping ground for garbage—a haunt for dogs and jackals. One notices especially the absence of flowers either on the tombs or planted in the soil.

The main feature of interest appertaining to the Jewish cemetery in Salonika is the ceremony of “ Kippaw ” which is performed there once a year. It is, in fact, a day of lamentation and is attended by so many unusual features and customs that it merits the distinction of special description.

The Jewish ceremony of Kippaw bears some resemblance to the day of mourning observed by Mohammedans. With the latter, however, the mourners are hired, whereas with the Jews, the female relatives of the deceased resort to the cemetery in person and await the coming of the priest, who attends for the purpose of officiating for those who require his services. It is a curi ou

feature that, apart from the priests, no men are ever seen at the Kippaw and the women seize the occasion to don their finest garments, including the full head-dress or *capitana*; thus we see the unique costume of this branch of Jewry displayed in all its splendour. On the day appointed the mourners, accompanied by their friends, proceed to the cemetery outside the city walls and seek out the grave of the relative whom they have come to mourn.

As already mentioned, in addition to the women, the chief priest or *hanadji* and a few lesser rabbi attend the ceremony, both for the purpose of reading a prayer over the graves chosen by the mourners and paying homage to the tombs of venerated colleagues. The chief *hanadji* commences the ceremony by standing on a tomb and addressing the mourners or blessing the departed. Clothed in a long, wide-sleeved, black cloak over silken robes, his bronze and bearded face crowned by a small red and white turban, his venerable figure rendered conspicuous by the sunshine—the entire scene, completed by the white flat-roofed houses in the distance, presents a living picture of Moses addressing the tribes of Israel.

While awaiting the arrival of one of the *hanadji* at their particular graves the mourners sit in sad meditation and commence their lamentations by shedding tears on the slab of the tomb. On his arrival at one of the tombs the *hanadji* stands

above it and reads suitable prayers, at the conclusion of which the friends or visitors, before departing, place a token of respect, in the form of a small pebble, on the tomb. The chief mourners, however, remain at their posts a short while to continue their lamentations and, as they lean over the inscription, tears stream again down their faces, and shrill cries or screams are uttered. Afterwards, little groups collect and chat with the rabbi before returning to the town.

This quaint "lamentation," although in detail peculiar to the Salonika Hebrews, is a yearly custom which has its counterpart in many countries—such as the Japanese day of mourning when little boats, containing flowers and messages to the departed, are floated out to sea. Customs and outward appearances may vary, but throughout the world human nature is marked by the same sentiments and longings although they are masked by different characters and distinguished by different terms. Death, above all, with its power and mystery, brings out our deepest thoughts and, whether under the name of religion, science, or paganism, the effort to communicate with the dead, however futile, is universal in mankind.

TURKISH

As with every aspect of the Moslem religion, the Turkish cemetery is marked by a lack of ornamental ostentation. In fact, simplicity is

here carried almost to the extreme of disorder and incipient decay. The tombstones, sinking with the loose soil, lean in all directions so that, from a distance, the scene is reminiscent of an uncleared battlefield. The suffering and hardship, inflicted by man during life, are, it might seem, continued and aggravated by Nature after death. The cracked and weather-beaten tombstones seem to be the natural and appropriate sequel of the strife and duress of existence.

The cross is, of course, never seen in a Moslem graveyard. Instead the headstone, especially if the deceased had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, is crowned by a turban or tarbouche carved out of marble. With this turban poised on a thin neck and the body represented by a narrow oblong stone, the *tout ensemble* resembles the effigy of an old man, and the entire scene, when some of the tombstones have sunk or shifted to a jaunty angle, suggests an animation not unmixed with inebriety. Indeed, some of the oldest stones now lie half-buried and only the lichen-covered stone turbans appear above the ground like heads of men about to sink into a morass.

The better-class families, however, inter their dead in a sarcophagus which, together with the head and foot stones (which in these circumstances, resting on a solid foundation, are not deflected from the vertical), is elaborately carved. Most of the better tombstones are of marble,

which is fairly abundant in Macedonia, and diffusely inscribed in the most decorative of all languages—namely Arabic or Turkish. The well-rounded curves and bold flourishes of oriental lettering are pre-eminently adapted for ornamental work, and, in this respect, compare very favourably with the plain square letters of the Roman alphabet. Unfortunately it is only the very scholarly who can read or write Arabic and, for the European, its complete mastery is an accomplishment which requires many years of diligent application. The above type of headstone is quaint in design, almost mummy-like in outline, beautifully cut in marble, exquisitely carved and the whole effect exceedingly ornate.

Turkish graveyards are nearly always situated on a slope or hillside ; the graves are very close together and although land for burial or indeed for any other purpose is not very costly, the same ground is used for centuries. This disinclination to break fresh soil for burial purposes is a curious trait of Moslem character. Possibly it arises from an unwritten law against the seeking of new cemeteries when ground, which has become hallowed by many years of usage, is still available. The practice, which, no doubt, has its origin in a religious observance of this nature has, somewhat contrarily, brought desecration in its train ; for it is lamentable to find, as we do, fine old carved tombstones used as doorsteps and corner-

stones by the modern native, or a public foot-path traversing the cemetery so that the precincts become the haunt of beggars and pariah dogs.

So far, we have considered only the cemeteries which are found in or near the larger towns. Those of the villages are less pretentious and even less respected. Moreover, marble is not so freely used and a rough pointed slab of any kind of rock is evidently considered quite an adequate substitute; as the foundation is never deep enough to maintain the vertical the burial ground with its spiked grey stones, slanting in all directions, assumes rather the appearance of sword blades in a tottering army than the last resting place of men.

A remarkable circumstance of up-country churchyards is their isolation. Often one comes upon them quite solitary in their deathly silence and mournful desolation, far removed from any present village and apparently having no connection whatever with human existence. These graveyards are the relics of a bygone age, the only visible signs of a devastated township and the only remains of some long-forgotten generation. Here and there in a little walled enclosure we find a tall hexagonal stone or turban-crowned pillar marking the tomb, no doubt, of some ancient Turkish chieftain.

The main fountain or water supply of the village sometimes runs through the graveyard, but, to a

nature utterly opposed to all ideas of sanitation and almost equally immune from the diseases which follow on the neglect of elementary hygiene, this is a matter of minor concern.

Whether more by virtue of Mohammed's precepts or out of a spirit of neglect, it is certainly true that there is an entire absence of garishness in a Turkish cemetery. Free from any transient adornment the well-chiselled marbles and old grey stones sown among the mountains are often very beautiful and dignified, and the graves have an air of solemn simplicity which is more appropriate than our own crude glass cases, artificial flowers and general aspect of cheap over-ornamentation. Nature may in due time obliterate all trace of her creatures who die in the wild, but she does it with such dignity and tenderness that the departed are often more honoured by the oblivion laid on them, than by the memory we, by artificial means, so crudely try to perpetuate.



STAVROS CHURCH, GITI
OF ORFANO, MACEDONIA

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREEK CHURCH

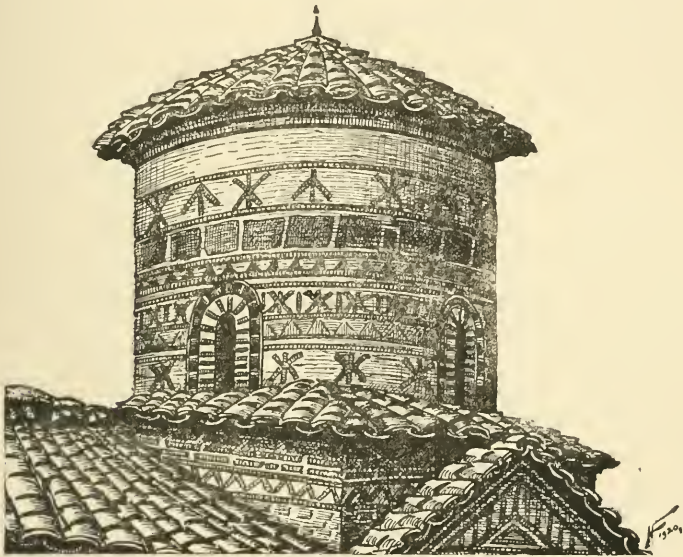
THE Greek church as at present constituted, was founded by the Roman Byzantine emperor, Constantine the Great who, having been converted to Christianity in A.D. 312, lent his support to the orthodox bishops at a great Christian council at Nicæa (Nice) in the same year. His baptism by Eusebius shortly before his death in A.D. 337, set the seal on his faith and confirmed the establishment of the orthodox church in the Byzantine kingdom. The outcome of the adoption of the Christian religion by the empire was the erection, in the sixth century, of the magnificent church, known as St. Sophia, at Constantinople—the city which was built on the ruins of Byzantium and to which Constantine gave his name. By concentrating all their art and skill on the interior rather than the exterior, the Romans of that period, under Justinian, established a principle which has been closely followed by the architects of more modern times. The exterior beauty of Hagia Sophia has suffered, through the ages, by additions and alterations, but the glories of its

interior have been so faithfully preserved that Ferguson in his "History of Architecture," is constrained to describe it as the "most perfect and beautiful church which has yet been erected by any Christian people." Its artistic style and architectural scale became the object of admiration and imitation throughout the empire, and thus, in Salonika, there are still a few magnificent specimens of Byzantine work. The great fire of 1917 destroyed the finest of these, St. Demetrius ; and no doubt others have disappeared in previous calamities. Constantinople, itself, preserves many interesting gems of this fine early Christian architecture, and numerous examples of an old and primitive type are to be found scattered through the Balkans, such as those at Kastoria in Albania and the monasteries of Thessaly.

Other countries in the near East, besides Greece, now embracing the orthodox religion are Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Roumania and they are under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow or Athens. The great centre of teaching in Greece is Mt. Athos, the holy mountain, distinguished for its numerous ancient monasteries and as the home of the priests. Here may be seen a number of Byzantine churches dating back to the tenth and eleventh centuries and in Salonika itself the finest and most important, now standing,

are St. Sophia, St. George, St. Catherine, St. Elias and the church of the Twelve Apostles.

In many respects, orthodox observances bear a close resemblance to Roman Catholicism. They are marked by elaborate symbolic decoration and high ritual, extensive use of religious pictures,



BYZANTINE TOWER : CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN, KASTORIA.

such as the ikon, the wearing of rich vestments and the celebration of many saints' days.

As has been observed in another chapter the Turkish mosque and Greek orthodox church are often to be found in the same hamlet ; and in some of the larger villages two of the latter may be seen. Usually, the up-country churches are

modern, on account of the very recent change which the national religion has undergone and the fact that there were only a few Byzantine relics left from the former Christian era. Although the village churches are simple in structure and externally solid, they lack the beauty of the mosques, and, internally, are over-ornamented with cheap furniture and gaudy fittings. In contrast to the serenity and dignity of the mosque, the Greek taste seems to aspire to the effect which a tawdry imitation of wealth, with a crude overcolouring on modern lines, may be calculated to produce on the superstitious and ignorant mind of the peasant. Gilt, bright paint, whitewash, brass-work, candles, and rich drapery are displayed in profusion and resort is made to symbols, realistic pictures, stage effects and even mechanical appliances in order to impress a dull-witted, though credulous congregation. A cause or a faith is indeed in dire straits when forced to rely, not on its own dignity or value, but on the conjuror's tricks and the actor's make-belief.

Every village, no matter how small, has some kind of a church. Sometimes it is nothing more than a severe rectangular, barn-shaped building—a mere hut of mud and wattle with a wooden belfry ; or, it may be, a glaring modern brick edifice of considerable size. Those of some antiquity are to be recognized by their grey stone

walls and tiled roofs or ornamental brickwork, and considerable beauty may be observed in the buildings constructed on the quaint turreted lines of Byzantine chapels. The commonest type, however, is a squat structure of simple design, built of a durable material such as brick, stone or cement, with a tiled roof and small, square, iron-barred windows. The church is invariably superior in construction to the houses and, in devastated villages, is often the only object intact. In all cases we find a tower or belfry adjoining the church—indeed it may be said of Macedonia that no house of religious worship, to whichever faith it may belong, is lacking in a tower of some description. While it undoubtedly enhances the landscape beauty of town and village, it is also a laudable and pleasing monument of the people's faith and devotion. White is the usual colour of the Greek belfry which is ascended by a ladder or steps. Of less height than the minaret, the tower is more varied in design and terminates, not in a pointed cone, but in a rounded top or cupola crowned by a cross. The most typical form is a square or hexagonal tower built of stone, skeleton in structure, and pierced in several places by arched openings—a series of landings supported on pillars. Usually, there is a small churchyard enclosed by a wall with two or three tall cypress trees planted in the corner. The doorway of the

church itself is often in the form of a porch, and the cloister which runs along one, two, or even three, of the sides, with its tiled floor below ground level, has a separate roof like a verandah supported by pillars and archways. This entrance is usually in the middle of the cloister and the doors themselves consist of heavy steel-studded wood with bronze "ring and plate" mountings. These are often very much older than the edifice to which they give entrance—for probably they have previously fulfilled a more humble and less sanctified office—and, though of a rough finish, are generally artistic.

In common with a large number of religious edifices, the interior is dark and inclined to be gloomy. No doubt, the original intention of the designer was to create an air of mystery and to accentuate the effect of the lamps and candles. Why should Christian places of worship shed this mantle of gloom on the worshippers? Surely a little of that beneficent sunshine by means of which God gives life to the world is most appropriate to His temples? In Macedonia, at any rate, climatic conditions cannot be advanced as a reason for excluding light and air, for did not the ancient Greeks sit for hours in an open-air theatre? Sunlight is an excellent germicide—although the Macedonian peasant would regard any argument on this point as unconvincing!—and small windows with insufficient daylight are anything

but hygienic in a building so often packed with unhealthy humanity. The native is content to spend all the hours of daylight in the fields—exposed with scarcely any protection to the rays of a virulent sun—yet, for religious worship, he is compelled to submit to the dinginess of a low, sparingly lighted building shut off from that sun to which he not only owes his existence but to which he has long grown accustomed. However, we can perhaps appreciate the attraction of cool shade and rest from a perpetual tropical glare, but curiously enough this religious gloom, not peculiar to the Balkans, is prevalent in countries where hours of sunshine are precious and rare.

The most noticeable difference between Greek and other churches is the absence of seats in the former. The resulting discomfort which the congregation must suffer is to some extent mitigated, if only for the few, by the provision of little wooden niches with arm-rests which, although he remains in a standing position, afford a certain amount of support to the occupant. Each niche is intended for one person only and they are arranged in rows round the walls and, occasionally, on either side of the aisle.

The whole interior is decorated with paintings, banners and wooden ikons. The first-named, comprising crude and realistic pictures of heaven and hell, the garden of Eden or the tortures of saints, are either done in oil on wood or painted in

flat colour on the walls and ceiling, and even extend, here and there, to the outer walls and the cloisters. Invariably there is a panel picture over the door lit at night by a small hanging lamp which, in its representation of a saint or martyr, indicates the name which the church bears.

There is no altar visible to the congregation and seldom any steps leading up to a chancel. A portion of the far end of the church is always screened off by a huge wooden partition (ikono-stasis) sometimes carved and adorned with rows of ikon pictures. Small low gates or doors, often expressively carved, pierce it in the centre and there are two more on either side covered with curtains. The top of this "rood screen" overhangs the lower portion so as to show the pictures set in it to those below, whilst the uppermost edge, which is always short of the roof, is ornate and stencilled; gilt wooden doves and various mechanical devices for raising and lowering crucifix and candle, more suitable to a circus side-show than a church, complicate the whole structure. A row of little lamps which are composed of simple glass bowls in brass or silver holders, and fitted with wicks floating in heavy oil are suspended by chains from the screen. From the roof above the partition hangs a copper cross, often fitted with candle sconces, which can be lowered on pulleys. Candelabra of glass and brasswork—hideously over-ornate—hang at inter-

vals down the aisle, whilst gilt and coloured globes, reminiscent of a child's Christmas tree, often complete the general resemblance to stage scenery.

Behind the screen is a small space, identical with the wings of a theatre, and generally in a dirty and untidy condition, which is the priest's sanctum. Chests containing robes, bowls, lamps, candlesticks, disused ikons and piles of books and banners may here be seen in a state of deplorable disarray—indeed a sanctum of disillusionment! The ropes of the mechanical devices and the rough wooden props of the pictures and screen form the crowning hypocrisy of a feeble effort to force religion on a credulous people by the most material and sordid means. The onlooker is filled with longing for the simple dignity of the mosques or the quiet solid beauty of our own village churches. The Greek church more than anything else in Macedonia is the very antithesis of that truism that “simplicity is the soul of all art and beauty.” A sound religion based on a true faith, surely needs no elaborate effects, no tricks of illusion and no gaudy display in order to arouse and retain the trust and devoutness of its followers.

Two enormous brass candlesticks, supported on three brass dogs (couchant), stand on either side of the aisle near the end screen, whilst others, somewhat smaller, are placed at intervals throughout the church. A pulpit of simple woodwork, small and painted in bright colours, always stands

at one side of the aisle. It consists of a small box-like compartment roofed by a canopy and approached by a short stairway.

A few more objects are worthy of mention before leaving the interior. Thus, at the lower end over the entrance, is a gallery, running the width of the church, approached by a stairway and screened off by high trellis-work, which is reserved for women, who worship apart. Under the gallery and near the door stands a cupboard containing candles and tapers which are purchased by worshippers to light before the picture of the patron saint or in honour of dead relatives or friends.

It is outside, however, that we come upon the strangest and most interesting feature of the village church—a small square building, used as an ossuary, where the disinterred bones of the dead are deposited in little bags. Its interior presents a gruesome sight; if one is unprepared for the spectacle, the sudden exposure of hundreds of human bones, like the grim relics of a battlefield, produces an unpleasant shock. The custom possesses two contradictory features; for, on the one hand, it is no doubt prompted by affection and a laudable desire to retain any mortal remains of a dear relative as long as possible and, on the other, the indiscriminate mixing of the osseous remains of a number of people savours of disrespect and irreverence.

A chapter of this description is not complete



KASTRI MONASTERY, MOUTH
OF STRUMIA, M. M. EDONIA

without some mention of the few isolated monasteries which, apart from Mt. Athos, are scattered about the country in remote and deserted spots. Bleak, lonely and mountainous regions are the usual sites chosen for these homes of asceticism, invariably quaint and so often beautiful. Immediately there recur to the mind, the monasteries set amidst the rocky heights overlooking the valley between Provista and Orfano or the little domed Sketa at the head of Lake Besik and the beautiful old monastic edifice perched, in splendid and commanding isolation, on a huge rock at Kastri near Lake Tahinos. Here and there amidst the dense scrub on a mountain side, especially in the vicinity of Stavros, one lights upon the ruins of ancient Byzantine chapels, enclosed by the remains of a village. A big village and monastery once stood on a hill in the Rendina Gorge and commanded one of the most magnificent views in Eastern Europe, extending over Lake Besik to Langaza in one direction and to the Gulf of Stavros and mouth of the Struma in the other. Much masonry is still extant together with manifold evidence of that strong fortification so essential, even for religious institutions, in those turbulent days of brigandage and warfare. Violent was the age and untamed were the people who inhabited these monastic strongholds; their defenders lived, as the eagle lives, a part of the magnificent mountains which protected them.

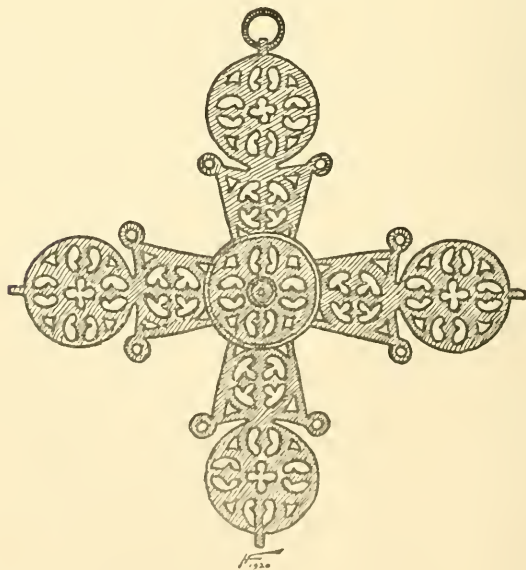
The Greek priest affords a curious combination of lay and ecclesiastic. Easily distinguished by his uncommon attire, he is at once an object of interest, and a closer acquaintance with his conditions arouses both admiration and sympathy. Of all the poorly paid clerics who labour under the Christian banner, the Greek priest is most deserving of pity. His is indeed a life of love and devotion. Indifferently, if not negligibly, recompensed by the church, he ekes out a more or less precarious existence by agricultural toil on his own patch of land and relies on the fees for baptisms, marriages and burials, together with occasional charity, for the few *drachmæ*¹ which come his way. A familiar figure in the streets and villages, he is a quiet, elderly, bearded man, dressed in black robes, with a high chimney-pot hat and long hair done up into a bun at the back. In the village he is often the "Pooh Bah" of the little community, for, in addition to fulfilling the duties of judge, doctor, advocate and confessor to his flock, he frequently acts as headman in their intercourse with other hamlets. Generally, he is one of the very few men in the village who can read and write or, indeed, who has any pretence of scholarship. Essentially, however, he leads a modest, meagre existence but, far from being a recluse, he is not averse to taking a hand at cards or backgammon at the local café.

¹ One drachma = 100 lepta = 10 pence.

The demeanour of the Greek congregation provokes a confusion of ideas. The stray worshippers who wander in at all hours of the day, buy a taper from the priest and light it at the ikon of their patron saint, create an impression of devotion which is apt to be contradicted when a service is in progress. There is an air of disorder and want of discipline which is no doubt due to the fact that the Greek liturgy is almost unintelligible to the Greek peasants. Moreover, when there is a choir, it must not be considered a matter for surprise if an altercation arises between two of its members or even if the choirmaster, in the midst of the service, punches a boy's head for singing out of tune. However, the visitor must not be unduly prejudiced by such incidents or the aspect of irreverence which seems to prevail. The Greek, in reality, takes his religion very seriously; it is not a mere matter of weekly performance, but a part of his daily life. Just as in the towns one may observe numbers of men, in the midst of their daily avocations, steal a few moments and enter a church to say a few prayers at the shrine or ikon of the saint whose anniversary it may happen to be, so in the village the peasantry may be seen from an early hour wending their way to the church, paying their humble *lepta* for a taper and devoutly crossing themselves before some sacred picture.

The village church, so characteristic of the Greek

people, affords a quaint mixture of modernity and antiquity and exemplifies, as nothing else, their curious efforts at civilization in the midst of pagan and primitive ideas. The countless variety of the little white belfries, marking each village, however small; the cheap tawdriness of the interior decoration, denoting a crude devotion; and lastly, the care, however misdirected, that these people bestow on their places of worship, enforce a conviction that religion, with them, is not merely a creed of phrase and fable, but a soothing influence and a laudable profession of faith.



CHAPTER XIV

THE TURKISH MOSQUE

THE Turkish Mosque is one of the outstanding features of Macedonia. With its white minaret, it is so characteristic as to be almost symbolical. No landscape is complete without this graceful ornament and, so numerous are they in the towns, that their quantity almost seems to be the result of rivalry between communities rather than of religious fervour amongst the inhabitants. Besides being a conspicuous landmark of the countryside—a minaret is often the only sign of a village hidden amongst a clump of trees—the mosque, together with an isolated cemetery, is sometimes the only memorial of a once populous village.

Since the termination of the second Balkan War, which signalized the return of Christianity to Macedonia, there has been a reduction in the number of mosques, as well as a certain amount of incipient decay in the buildings which have endured.

In many cases, only minarets remain as evidence of a former place of Moslem worship. In other instances, although the building itself may be

intact, all signs of its original usage has disappeared and we find its interior devoted to the practice of one of the simple trades such as boot-making and baking. There is at least one mosque in Salonika which has been converted into a laundry, and during the war some of the smaller mosques were utilized for the humanitarian purpose of housing families of refugees.

The ubiquity of the minaret in a country which is now Christian is explained by the fact that until the end of the second Balkan War in 1913 Macedonia had been under Moslem rule since 1430. The Turks, intolerant towards Christianity, celebrated their conquest by converting the beautiful specimens of Byzantine architecture in Salonika to Mohammedan use and setting up a minaret alongside but detached from the building. The Mohammedans allow no representations of living things in their decoration or ornament; therefore, in order that the transformations should be complete, they destroyed or obliterated with plaster all the beautiful Byzantine paintings and mosaics. Thanks, however, to the recent restoration work of the French the "scaling" of the whitewashed walls has revealed many unsuspected treasures. Though such deliberate perversion by the Turks was much to be deplored, it proved an act of preservation for which archaeologists might feel some gratitude; the Greeks also must have viewed with fervour the re-

conversion of these mosques in 1913 to the Christian faith. Alas, in so far as Salonika was concerned, it was a short-lived joy, as the Great Fire of 1917 left little but tottering walls where the most interesting Byzantine relic, St. Demetrius, once stood. Before this deplorable catastrophe, however, there were several examples of a somewhat incongruous anomaly, namely, a Greek Orthodox church ranged alongside the monument of the Moslem religion—a minaret.

In design and construction, the Turkish mosque is the essence of simplicity. Although it may be argued that this is due in some measure to lack of manufactured materials, yet it is an irrefutable fact that the Mohammedan deprecates garishness and ostentation. The most common type consists of a low square building with a tiled sloping roof, in shape resembling a one-storied house. With whitewashed stone walls, a solid heavy doorway and a cool shady verandah on one or two sides, the exterior is such as to inspire confidence rather than awe. Approached from the roadway, the mosque seems to offer relief and contentment; the eye is gratified by its simple outline, by the purity of its whiteness and by its graceful minaret. An enormous plane tree at the entrance entices one by the shade of its spreading branches. The ablution fountain, capacious and imposing, trickles with a refreshing sound and the wide open door shows the way to

an interior which by its shade and cooler atmosphere affords a pleasing contrast to the glare and dust of the street. From a purely physical sensation, there is a transition to one of mental repose and peace. An agreeable temperature, a minimum of furniture and fittings and an entire absence of ornamental excesses all contribute towards restfulness and tranquillity.

As exceptions to the general tone of simplicity, Salonika and Seres afford one or two examples of artistic designs. A many-domed roof, an imposing frontage of lofty arches, curiously ornamented in Turkish characters and an illuminated text, surmounted by a bas-relief moulding in stalactite pattern, distinguish the exterior from the more common type of mosque. Inside, however, there is less ornamentation. Large hand-made carpets of rich soft material which cover the floor, one or two Turkish inscriptions which adorn the walls, and the alcove or *Mirab* which faces the direction of Mecca, complete the interior. The ceiling is sometimes painted sky-blue, with stars, to represent the firmament, but the walls are left untouched. The *tout ensemble*, in fact, is such as to recall the nudity and severity begotten of the Arabian desert. The clear blue sky overhead, the soft yielding sand, the lack of gaudy colouring, the absence of applied or pictorial ornament which arrest the gaze and distract the thoughts, the scant trace of the hand of man—a



TURKISH MOSQUE, SALONICA

silent, sun-bathed trackless space wherein man is, indeed, alone with God—are all exemplified in the interior of a Turkish mosque.

The minaret, as its derivation (Arabic: *manârat* = *nâra*, to shine; *nar* = fire) denotes, resembles a lighthouse in outline and, during the feast of Ramadan, in all Mohammedan countries, they are illuminated so that the word is particularly apposite. Varying in height from twenty feet in the villages to about one hundred feet in Salonika, built of rough stone and usually attached to the mosque, the long circular column encloses a stone spiral staircase which leads to the gallery from which the "muezzin" or priest, at sunrise and sundown, calls the faithful to prayer. Upwards from the gallery, the tower is continued in a more narrow circumference for eight or ten feet to a leaden or zinc cone which is surmounted by the emblem of Islam—the crescent. As with the mosques, the minarets of Macedonia are simple in design and, in the matter of ornamentation, bear no comparison with those of Egypt or of farther East. Only rare cases of ornate effect have been noted—a cross-gartered design on the column of a Salonika minaret, the gallery used by the muezzin carved in trellis-work pattern on one in Kavalla, and, here and there, in villages as well as in towns, the perpendicular fluting typical of Ionic architecture.

The village mosque is characterized by pronounced simplicity in which poverty seems to

have been the governing factor. But, although its architecture may be unambitious, there is yet an air of dignity about the edifice which seems indigenous to the Moslem religion. Truly, the Mohammedan seems to have discovered that "Simplicity is the soul of Art." Generally, the body of the building is low and roughly square, consisting of one story and one large hall. The windows are small whether in a populous district or not, and always protected by iron cross-bars—evidence, even if only indirect, of the troublous times through which they have passed. Usually, a verandah runs along the whole length of one side under the common roof, the free edge of which is supported, as in the houses, by pillars of wood. Occasionally, one comes across beautiful Ionic or small Corinthian capitals, excavated near by, and used as bases or plinths for these pillars. The doorway seldom possesses any architectural feature or inscription, and the interior merely consists of a bare room furnished with a rough wooden pulpit (*mimbar*), a hexagonal lectern, a hanging oil lamp and a few reed mats on the floor. The familiar alcove, corresponding to our altar, surmounted by a text in Arabic, is found on the east side facing Mecca.

Village mosques, in fact, are even more lacking in embellishment than those in the towns. Frequently, the floor is bare or, at the best, covered only with the matting already mentioned, and the

handsome brass candlesticks which sometimes adorn the latter are very rarely seen in the village variety. Neither in the village nor town mosques is any accommodation set aside for women, and the latter are only very rarely seen in a mosque ; for, to the weaker sex, the Mohammedan offers no opportunity of treading the sacred carpet and no encouragement for closer communion with Allah. Where indeed is the need since the possession of a soul is denied them ? Of what use such a concession when, according to Islamism, only nymphs (houris) gain admission to Paradise ?

Although both Moslem and Orthodox religions are represented almost side by side in the same village, in the older ones the former is much more in evidence, showing that the original peasant-folk were chiefly of the Mohammedan persuasion. Indeed, it seems that although their genealogy may be uncertain, they have adopted or drifted towards the Turkish religion, either as the result of oppression or because there was no other faith available. Possibly the latter reason played a greater importance than might, at



BRONZE CANDLESTICK :
TURKISH MOSQUE.

first, be imagined, for, no matter how depraved or undeveloped the intellect may be, nearly every human soul is to some extent fitted for worship, whether that desire to worship is stimulated by reverence for an unseen power or by fear of the unknown. Such has been, no doubt, the case of the Macedonian throughout the last three or four centuries. Of mixed blood, member of a hybrid race, constantly embroiled in internecine strife, frequently afflicted by dire pestilence and sometimes victim of Nature's blind wrath, he must indeed have felt the need of sympathy from some Great Friend who might, it seemed, control and possibly alleviate his woeful circumstances or reward him with the prospect of future joy.

The Mohammedan precepts and ritual, in the calm quiet dignity which they exhibit, together with the "Nirvana" they promise, would appeal to a temperament overwhelmed with grief and disaster or assailed by that fatalism which continued misfortune inspires.

The follower of Mohammed makes no parade either of his distress or his religion. Thus we find him prosecuting his faith in a simple unostentatious fashion, and, in the mosque, he is indifferent to onlookers. Having spread his small square of carpet (or sometimes only a white handkerchief) and having made obeisance to Allah by kneeling and touching the floor with his forehead, he listens with rapt attention to a



VILLAGE MOSQUE, MACEDONIA

passage from the Koran. The priest, sitting on his heels with a book on a cushion in front of him, recites in a weird monotone, accompanied by a curious swaying movement of the body—an exertion at which he never seems to tire.

In every respect, the Moslem religion is instructive if only in regard to its inculcation of simplicity and fervour of belief. We find nothing mysterious in the Turkish mosque, nothing calculated to instil awe or terror; everything combines to produce mental tranquillity and content. With an innate sense of the dignity of simplicity, the Mohammedan conveys the idea that God is great enough and wonderful enough without the poor attempts of man to embellish his temples or to trick his worshippers into reverence. In the mosques themselves—cool, solemn and peaceful—there is no theatrical display, nothing to distract the attention and nothing to produce the impression that they might be intended for any other use but that of prayer and dignified worship.

Macedonia, without the little white minarets marking its villages, would lose much of its quaint charm. No scene seems complete without them, and they are landmarks for many miles in so clear an atmosphere. What could be more beautiful, more alluring than these slim white needles projecting into the deep blue sky, mirrored in the still waters from some lakeside village or gleaming against the dark towering mass of overhanging mountains?

CHAPTER XV

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

AS with all Eastern peoples, particularly those who at any time have come under the Mohammedan sway, marriages are consummated very early in life. Although the custom is somewhat opposed to Western notions, its foundation rests on correct eugenic principles. For one reason, the life of young people is less artificial, is, in fact, more akin to nature ; also, pubescence, in the case of both girls and boys, is reached at an earlier period than in our colder Western climate. Moreover, the school curriculum is brief and does not make the same inroad on adolescence as with Western races. The youth, at an early age, is earmarked for a trade or business and he knows that his parents will not countenance his union with anyone who has not a considerable dowry to recommend her. For the girl, there is no choice but to resign herself to whomsoever her parents may select for her. In regard to the religious rites and moral customs attending the *fiançailles* and the actual marriage ceremony, there is not a vast difference between Greek, Israelite and Turk.

As soon as the Turkish girl has taken the veil or *Tcharchaff* at about the age of thirteen, she is considered eligible for marriage. Her future husband having been selected, all is made ready for the nuptials. On the wedding day the bride, dressed in white, with a long flowing train, richly bejewelled and wearing a pretty coronet of white flowers, awaits the arrival of her future mother-in-law and other relatives and friends of the bridegroom. A simple and pretty ceremony of crowning the young bride is performed by a young married woman whose union has proved notoriously happy, and then the entire party, including the bride, no longer veiled, but carefully screened from prying eyes by an almost hermetically sealed coach, repair to the house of the bridegroom. There the first meeting between the bride and bridegroom takes place in strict privacy and, as may be imagined, it is a momentous occasion, as by the Mohammedan law the bridegroom has the option of repudiating the marriage any time within the first month. This is a cruel dispensation of the Koran if it be true that "love which is only an episode in the life of a man, is the entire history of a woman's life." The husband has only to say "I divorce you" three times in the presence of a witness and the marriage is annulled. At least four wives are allowed by the Moslem law, so that the husband may yet have two or three other spouses to whom he may turn for consolation.

After the initial interview between bride and bridegroom, the husband does not appear again until evening at dinner, which, as no strict Mohammedan eats with his womenfolk, the men and women take apart.

Although the Greek ecclesiastical law has fixed the ages of fourteen and twelve as those at which a boy and girl may marry, the Greeks of Salonika seldom embark on matrimony until a reasonable age. Contrary to the Turkish custom, the Greeks observe the *fiançailles* with some ceremony. The betrothal is celebrated about a week after the agreement which, largely a question of money, has been concluded between the parents. An exchange of rings, flowers or some other symbol marks this event ; on a later day, the parents and friends of the two betrothed assemble at the bride's house where a priest solemnizes the engagement at two ikons, in front of which have been placed the various tokens previously exchanged.

The wedding ceremony usually takes place on a Sunday in the evening, either at church or at the bridegroom's house. Having received the priest's exhortation and blessing the happy couple, with the guests, sit down at a light repast to the strains of oriental music. The music is weird and sensuous ; a type from which that presented at some of the Eastern spectacular plays recently seen on the London stage has gained its inspira-

tion. Dancing follows in which ultimately the entire company join.

Jewish marriages are permitted at just such an early age as the foregoing, but the exigencies of life, seconded by the intrusion of Western ideas, have postponed matrimonial ventures to a much later period of the young people's lives. With the Israelites, the period of betrothal is of greater duration, sometimes extending to six months or more. A few days before the wedding ceremony the trousseau and wedding gifts are exhibited to the relatives and friends of the espoused couple. On the day of the ceremony the wedding procession is played through the streets to the accompaniment of music to the synagogue. The service is largely choral, but, after the rabbi's benediction, a sinister note is struck by the breaking of a glass. This is emblematic of the suddenness with which grief or tragedy may supervene in an atmosphere of hitherto unalloyed bliss and happiness. The incident is intended to recall the bridal couple from the "seventh heaven" of delight to a realization of material affairs and the seriousness of life. Or it may be that the Jews appreciate that :

Love's of itself too sweet ; the best of all
Is when love's honey has a dash of gall.

The wedding day is closed with music and dancing, and according to the Israelitish law the married couple are not supposed to leave the house for a

week. A honeymoon, it may be observed, is an unknown joy. Indeed, anything resembling our annual holiday at the seaside is a regulation which has not yet been introduced into Macedonia.

Thus it may be seen that Macedonian marriages are usually unromantic. The chief actors in the matrimonial comedy are the parents of the intended couple—the part played by the latter who may have to spend the rest of their lives together is purely passive. One feels that, by way of atonement for an unhappy marriage, the parents of the participants also should be compelled to live together! It should prove an effectual corrective to unfortunate *mariages de convenance*.

As an engaged couple are never allowed to be alone, their attitude towards one another is never quite free from restraint and there must consequently always be a certain lack of naturalness in their manner towards each other which might be thought prejudicial to a complete understanding and future happiness. There is no interchange of sweet nonsense, no love-making in dark corners, for an affianced pair in Salonika. Boy and girl friendships are strongly discountenanced and, both before and after marriage, the sexes keep to their own sphere and duties in life. Both man and wife regard their married life from a point of view which is essentially un-English. The husband makes very little change in his mode of life as a

result of the transition from bachelorhood to matrimony and the wife is quite content to submit uncomplainingly to whatever treatment is meted out to her. There is no question of the equality of the sexes, no argument as to women's rights, for in Macedonia the former does not exist and of the latter there are none. Curiously enough, however, if statistics were obtainable it would probably be found that the percentage of unhappy marriages was less amongst Salonicians and the large towns of Macedonia than in our own country. Both sexes realize that Nature intended their paths to be diverse. The insidious drugs of modern thought and reform have still to work their doubtful cure among these unperverted people who know life only as it is presented to them by their Creator.

CHAPTER XVI

MALADY AND METEOROLOGY

MALARIA

FOR all those who served in the B.S.F., malaria and Macedonia soon became synonymous. After a sojourn of a year or so in what was one of the worst malarial districts of the world—the Struma Valley was known to the natives as the Valley of Death—the man who escaped the disease was regarded with a certain amount of awe and not a little envy. It was a greater enemy to the B.S.F. than the Bulgar himself and, as a consequence, many a battalion in summer-time was reduced to a mere handful of men.

Malaria it may be explained is a fever dependent on the bite of the mosquito, but varies in virulence as well as in type. The most serious variety is that prevalent in the autumn. Inoculation is conditional ; that is to say, it does not necessarily follow that a bite from a mosquito will cause malaria. In the first place it is only the female who bites man—our lady readers will respect our resistance to a temptation to be facetious at their expense—and then only a certain sub-

family, the Anophelinæ, which carry the malaria parasites. Secondly, it is necessary for the female anopheline to have bitten an infected case or a carrier (i.e. one in whose blood the parasites are present) and to bite again, after a suitable interval, another being (i.e. the next victim.) The other varieties of mosquitoes and gnats, though capable of carrying other diseases, such as relapsing fever and dengue, do not transmit malaria, but only give rise to the usual local symptoms well known in all countries. It would almost seem, therefore, that the risks of catching this particular form of ague are comparatively slight, in that they depend first on the number of female anophelines at large, and secondly on the number of active malarial cases unprotected from possible bites. On the contrary, however, malaria is as prevalent in Macedonia as are colds in the head in England. Almost every inhabitant of the country, if not an actual victim, is at any rate a carrier of the disease; consequently, each new yearly horde of mosquitoes loses very little time in becoming thoroughly contaminated. The process of dissemination, besides being remarkably ingenious, is profoundly instructive of the extraordinary instinctive powers of minute, low forms of life. Nature, also, is no less wonderful in providing maintenance to one class of creatures at the expense of others—from the lowest to the highest.

The cause of all the trouble is a minute organism, invisible to the naked eye, which lives the asexual part of its life in the cells of the human blood, where it passes through many forms. Taken into the stomach of the mosquito with the blood that the latter sucks up through a needle-like proboscis, the young parasite (the result of a sexual phase) passes into the circulation of the insect and finally finds its way into her salivary glands. Then, the next time that the mosquito's appetite is whetted by the taste of blood, saliva flows into the wound of her victim and with it, of course, a fine brood of the specific organisms. Planted in their favourite soil—the human blood—little time is lost in multiplying and carrying out the work of destruction. A repetition of the cycle, *ad infinitum*, may be easily understood and the intermittent attacks of fever merely correspond to the periodical production, *in situ*, of countless new parasites.

Where the health of an army was vitally affected by this scourge, as in the case of the B.S.F., vigorous preventive measures became obligatory to all concerned. Much good work was done in tracking the mosquito to his lair and in making existence difficult for him. Marshy ground and stagnant pools are the natural breeding places of mosquitoes and deep shady gorse-covered ravines are their favourite hiding-places by day. It is the habit of the mosquito to lay

her eggs (in little rafts) on the surface of the water, and of the larvæ, when hatched, to come up to breathe. Thus a layer of oil on the pool destroys its utility as a breeding place ; complete drainage, of course, also achieves the same result. With the ravines, a match is sufficient to render them uninhabitable, for so dry is the scrub that, fostered by a light breeze, a bush fire has been known to burn for two or three days and to cover many miles in the process.

However, having dealt with the origin of the malady and some of the preventive measures, let us revert to the fever itself. As already stated, malaria takes the form of intermittent fever, which is remarkable for the sudden and high temperatures recorded and the fairly rapid recovery from each attack. These vary in intensity but usually the first is the most severe and, generally, with the debility following, involves several weeks in hospital. Subsequent attacks will be in the nature of relapses and, although less violent, will probably be of a more persistent and less typical nature. The tertiary type is the most common, by which is meant the fever which returns on the third day after a period of quiescence. Afterwards, recurrences are likely to take place on the fifth, seventh and ninth days. The simplest check to this sequence is the specific drug, quinine, taken in large doses—a remedy, which though of great value, is not

popular with the patient. The headache, deafness, and vomiting which it produces are often as distressing as the symptoms of the ague itself.

The fever is curious in its operation. The victim will rise in the morning feeling tolerably well; at about midday, a sensation of profound *malaise* will intervene and, shortly afterwards, the unfortunate individual, if he is wise, will be between as many blankets as he can muster. Shivering and shaking, with a temperature which will probably have reached 103° or even 105° , he will shortly have the sensation of intolerable heat, which will be alleviated only by profuse perspiration. In the evening, feeling, as he will probably express it, like "nothing on earth" he may be about again. But his appetite is gone, thanks to the quantity of quinine he has taken, his vitality is lowered and he is liable to a further attack in two days' time. In the meantime, the malady is writing itself daily more indelibly on his countenance. A haggard look, marked apathy and a sallow anæmic complexion unmistakably spell this most chronic and often incurable disease.

Such is a typical case; but many grave complications may arise, among which may be mentioned pneumonia, profound debility or wasting and a malignant form often ending in cerebral symptoms with coma and death.

Possibly the milder forms of "quininism," combined with the mental apathy produced by

long isolation in a wild country, gave rise to the popular expression "Balkan Tap." With his incomparable faculty for extracting humour out of the most unlikely and most gloomy circumstances, the British "Tommy" seized the opportunity to make fun of his own mental peculiarities and those of his friends.

Such was the great scourge of an already trying campaign and one which called for the most devoted efforts from a large medical staff who were no less subject to the disease than the patients whom they tended. It has not only left a mournful legacy of hundreds of little white crosses, but has undermined the health and constitution of thousands of young lives.

VARDAR WIND

One of the ever-present scourges of Macedonia is the terrible wind which, as its name implies, sweeps across the marshes of the Vardar River. By ever-present is meant that it is not peculiar to either summer or winter, but seems to intensify the temperature of both. It is the modern appellation of the old Boreas or north wind which, according to mythology, was worshipped at Athens by the ancient Greeks because, in the Persian War, it destroyed the ships of the barbarians. It is hardly necessary to add, and certainly superfluous for those who have ever experienced it, that "Boreas" or the Vardar is not regarded with the

same veneration by the modern Greek or Macedonian.

The vagaries of the Vardar are inexplicable ; their record alone must suffice. In the summer time, according to all meteorological laws, a strong wind suddenly springing up from the north should lower the temperature at once ; but in July and August, when it seldom rains, the Vardar wind enhances the already oppressive heat. Such a phenomenon can only be explained by the fact that there is so much heat stored up in the soil, that no matter from what direction the wind may arise, it merely serves to convey hot air from one spot to another.

The heat-wind, for such we may term it to distinguish it from the winter variety, though comparatively innocuous, is none the less diabolical in its effect. Although perhaps less destructive, it yet inflicts the acme of personal discomfort on its victims, bringing in its train a fine though gritty dust which covers the face, envelops the clothes, clogs the nostrils and fills both eyes and ears. The air becomes so thick and stifling that inevitably, when one opens the mouth to breathe, it is promptly charged with dust.

There are occasions, however, when intense heat in the forenoon is followed by a Vardar, with heavy hailstorms, and a drop of twenty-five degrees in temperature by three o'clock. The wind which precedes a heavy storm is cyclonic in force,

and, as those of the Salonika force can testify, makes short shrift of hastily constructed dug-outs or badly pitched tents. The latter are quickly torn to ribbons or battered to the ground and pieces of corrugated iron from dug-outs are sent hurtling through the air. In this instance, the whirlwind, for such it is, is of short duration and rapidly followed by a terrific rain or hail-storms which can be heard approaching in the distance.

In the winter months, the Vardar is usually of much longer duration and generally extends to a forty-eight or seventy-two hours' gale. Frequently it is accompanied by piercing cold and a blizzard which sends the thermometer down to several degrees below freezing point. No one ventures out, unless compelled, during the raging of a Vardar storm, for, to extreme physical discomfort, is added the risk of losing one's way in surroundings which leave one with as little sense of direction as the worst London fog.

Standing pools and even rivers become frozen in a very short space of time, a solid block of ice replaces the washing water and the entire landscape is shrouded in a mantle of white. Most marked of all is the effect on visibility and the curious impression of imprisonment which it creates. Accustomed, on nearly every day of the year, to gaze on objects which may be anything

from ten to twenty miles distant, the senses are disturbed by the opaque veil which restricts the range of vision to as many yards. Landmarks which had become as familiar as pictures on the wall are now completely obliterated and a well-known camp no more than a mile away is sought in vain. The initial sensation of captivity is quickly followed by a vague indefinable suspicion of injury. The solitary occupant of an isolated dug-out becomes an unwilling hermit and even the reflection that "the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind" has mitigated the attentions of the enemy, will scarcely suffice to dispel his melancholy.

The little white villages and gaunt rugged peaks, whose picturesque splendour had never failed to charm the eye, have become, like the passing of a faithful dog, a dim and treasured memory. Their clear bright presence and calm reposeful bearing which on some days seemed almost monotonous, are now remembered with an indefinable sense of yearning. The gaze, though fully conscious of its impotence, vainly endeavours to penetrate the veil in search of them. With what welcome, therefore, will they reappear in two or three days' time when the storm has passed! With what relief will the upturned glance greet the clear blue sky, and, gently descending, pass from the glorious panorama of sun-lit mountain to placid lake and winding

river. Impossible will it be to reconcile the warm sunny Riviera-like weather to the almost Siberian cold of a few days ago. As easy would it be :—

To hold a fire in one's hand by thinking on the frosty
Caucasus

Or wallow naked in December snow, by thinking on fantastic
summer heat.

In such fashion does the Vardar transport the inhabitants of Macedonia at one season to the tropics and at another to the polar regions. The worship extended by the ancients to its *alter ego*, Boreas, must have been induced by fear and dread rather than by appreciation and esteem.

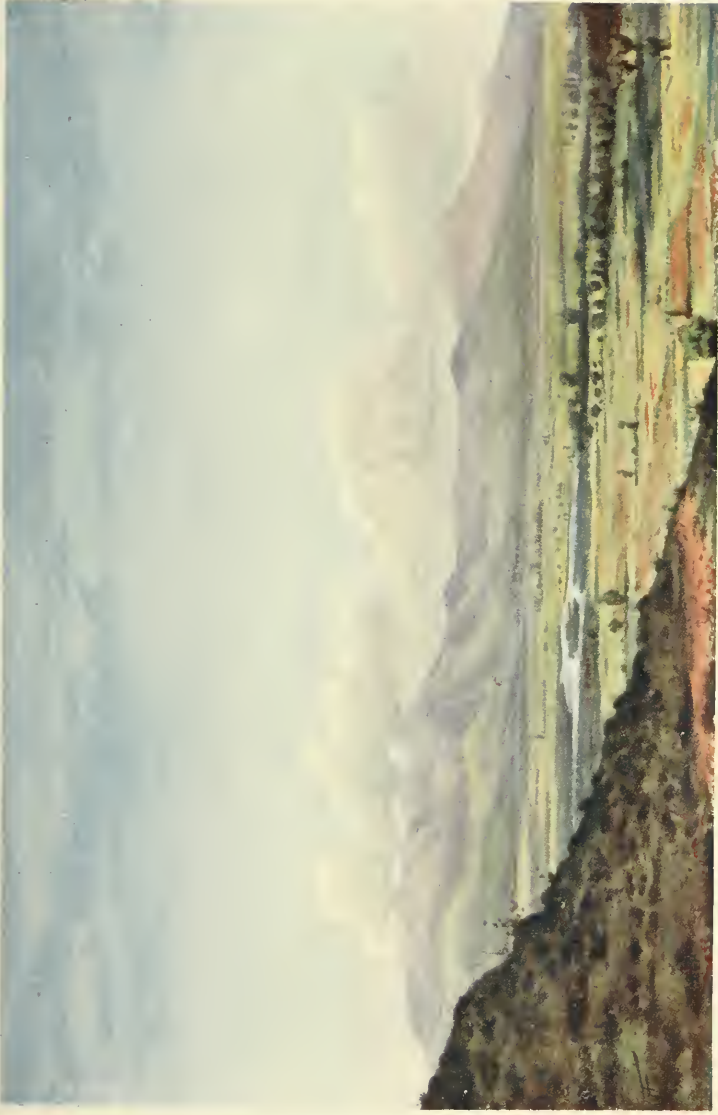


CHAPTER XVII

PLACES OF INTEREST

KAVALLA

THE town of Kavalla not only ranks as the second and only other port of Macedonia but, until the Great War, was a worthy rival of Salonika in size, wealth and trade prosperity. Although it contains many ancient relics of past fame, it would be unfair to compare it in this respect with one of the oldest remaining towns in history ; doubtless the civilizations that have affected Salonika also extended their influences to Kavalla. Lying, near the eastern frontier of Macedonia, at the head of a small bay and sheltered by the great mountainous mass of the island of Thasos, the harbour itself is further protected by the peninsula of the old town which is almost surrounded by the sea and stands high out of the water. From the sea the town bears a resemblance to Salonika itself—masses of white, red-roofed houses spread out in a great amphitheatre, extending from the water's edge, upwards at a steep incline, to the rocky slopes of the hills in the background. This chain of hills, affording yet another protection to the town



THE STRUMA VALLEY,
FROM ORIZAK, MACEDONIA

from the north, descends, on the far side, to the plains of Drama. A fine old road connects the two towns, passing across the plain, through the ruins of ancient Philippi, over a pass in the mountains, and finally zig-zags down the almost vertical slopes into the western quarter of the town to lose itself in a maze of narrow streets. The general arrangement of Kavalla, although compact, consists of two portions—the more modern part occupying the shore and foot-hills of the mainland and the old Turkish quarter covering the rocky peninsula which projects into the bay. The coast of Macedonia, throughout rocky and precipitous, allows of no stretch of sand or a beach, so that the town descends to within a foot of the water's edge from which the quays of the little harbour to the west of the peninsula are artificially constructed on concrete foundations.

It has already been observed that the success and trade of Kavalla depends not only on its natural harbour but on the outlet it provides to the rich tobacco plantations of Drama, Xanthi and other centres of the industry. The large warehouses near the quay disfigure the view of one of the most beautiful towns in Europe and afford a striking example of the incompatibility between modern industry and art.

During the Great War, Kavalla was seized and held by the Bulgars who not only destroyed

many houses in the town but allowed thousands of the inhabitants to starve. When the British reached the town soon after the Bulgarian Armistice, they found it almost deserted and the few remaining inhabitants, occupying the less dilapidated houses, living on offal and refuse in the lowest state of poverty—clinging to life with that wonderful instinct of self-preservation which governs the actions of all living things. But, in spite of the ravages of war and the decay which inevitably results from the arrest of work and progress, this old town still bears evidence of past industry and greatness.

With little modification our description of Salonika may be applied to the streets and houses of Kavalla. As in the former town, we must plunge into the narrow winding streets of the old Turkish quarter to obtain the real charm of Kavalla, or climb to the walls of the old citadel to appreciate the supreme beauty of the panorama. Having threaded our way through the motley throng which clusters around the small shops and cafés in the main street, we pass through an old Turkish graveyard, under the western arch of the great Roman aqueduct which spans the town, and climb a steep cobbled road winding upwards through the old town and leading to the battlements of the ancient citadel.

From this height, a panorama almost unequalled in magnificence greets us—sparkling in the

clear sunshine, superbly beautiful—and we are bewildered which way to turn. Before us, the town stretches in a huge amphitheatre—a mass of old red roofs and white-washed walls pierced by hundreds of windows which become mere specks on the rocky slopes in the background. The fine old Roman aqueduct, built in two tiers of arches, stretches across the town and a few minarets rear their slim white shafts above the roofs. Behind us lies the open sea, intensely blue, its horizon broken only by the purple mountains of Thasos, their peaks proudly uplifted from the sea which surrounds them, while far away in the west stands the clear-cut cone of the sacred Mount Athos. Immediately below us, with every detail visible and completely covering the little rocky peninsula on which we stand, spreads the Turkish town. Leaning over the massive lichened ramparts of the old Roman citadel we gaze down upon the gallery of a minaret or into some narrow cobbled street sunk between ancient wooden houses, winding its way in and out, up and down. Beneath lies a microcosm in bas-relief, a beautiful mosaic of old houses and streets; the domed roof of a Turkish bath, the courtyard of a mosque, the large crinkled tiles of a many-gabled house and a marble fountain in a green setting of trees; mysterious passages and archways, leading one knows not whither; a group of natives, a black-shrouded woman emerg-

ing from a hidden doorway, over-laden donkeys clattering over the stones, half-hidden faces behind latticed windows—a kaleidoscopic scene enacted amidst the mystic glamour of the East. With such a picture before our eyes we seem to have stepped back hundreds of years in history or to have been wafted by dream-fairies on a magic carpet over an enchanted city.

STAVROS

The Struma River flows into the sea on the eastern side of the Gulf of Orfano, and to the west of its mouth the shore sweeps round in a gentle curve to the rocky headlands near the island of Kafkana. A little village perched high in the hills and half-hidden in the luxuriant vegetation of a mountain ravine has given the bay the name of Stavros, and in this obscure corner, sheltered by the mountains behind and by the Athos peninsula in front, is found the most beautiful part of the Macedonian coast. Here is, indeed, the very antithesis of all that is characteristic of Macedonia ! The series of rocky headlands are definitely broken by a shingle, and, in some places, sandy beach ; screened from the icy blast of winter and the scorching sun of July, plant life thrives and flourishes abundantly throughout the year and large trees spread their leafy branches almost to the water's edge.

This delightful spot is reached by three different

routes : by a circuitous sea voyage from Salonika rounding the Chalcidice peninsula and Mt. Athos ; by winding tracks across the Langaza plain, skirting the waters of Lake Besik and through the beautiful Rendina Gorge, or, from the Struma plain, along the lower part of the river and through the hills which separate Lake Tahinos from the sea. Owing, no doubt, to its very isolation and inaccessibility, together with its wild and mountainous environment the district is but sparsely populated. Only one or two small hamlets lie on the shores of the bay and, even in the foothills, no more than one large village, Vраста, is to be found. Stavros itself, formerly a fishing village with one small jetty, became an important harbour and landing place during the war on account of its proximity to the Bulgar lines and the natural cover which its peculiar position afforded.

Above the lower reaches of the Struma and situated on the summit of the hills overlooking Lake Tahinos are the quaint old villages of Ano and Kato. Enjoying a position of splendid isolation, linked with the shore by no better communication than narrow mountain tracks, these two villages command a view of such magnificence of lake, river, sea and mountain that it will not easily be erased from the memory of those privileged to behold it. Standing in the churchyard of Kato (Krushoves) we seem to be suspended over the mouth of the river, with a map of the

surrounding country at our feet. So sharp is the picture that we notice a peasant toiling up a mountain path, observe the diminutive islands in the stream and allow our gaze to roam over the wide expanse of the lake to the white houses of Petelinos on its distant shore; the solid mass of the Pila Dag in front scarcely hides the distant mountains of the Bulgarian frontier, and, far out at sea, the blue peak of Mt. Athos stands isolated and majestic on the horizon.

Following the coast from the marshy ground round the ruins of Chai-Agazi, near the site of ancient Amphipolis, we are led in a gentle curve, some fifteen miles in extent, to the rocky headland of Stavros point. The flat shore, between the dense scrub on the foot-hills to our right and the calm sea to our left, is covered with bushes and small trees which, with the golden sand, form a fitting frame to the clear blue mirror of the bay. On arriving at the foot of Vrasta village, the narrow strip of ground between mountain and sea widens into a marshy expanse only to retract as it passes between two huge masses of rock, on either side of a little stream, into the beautiful Rendina Gorge.

At the entrance to the pass we halt in wonderment before the great mass of forest-covered hills, wild and uninhabited, which rise one above the other behind the little white church of Stavros. Had we time, on returning, to follow the rock-

strewn donkey tracks behind the village, we should be led, through a maze of beautiful dark glades, to the summit of the mountains—those trackless hills which lie between Stavros and Salonika and command, from their topmost peaks, a view of the forests of Stratonî, the bay of Erissos and the Athos peninsula. With what mixed feelings of awe and wonder we should emerge into the open after hours of climbing through dim-lit bush, to a limitless expanse of uninhabited hills—with what joy of freedom, yet with a touch of melancholy, we should realize our helplessness, our loneliness and, above all, our insignificance in the gigantic scheme of Nature! In front and all around us, under a cloudless sky, stretch the massed undulations of round-topped hills, one above the other, clothed in mantles of soft green velvet and rent, here and there, by deep chasms or masses of naked rock. Except the never-ceasing hum of insects, scarce a sound breaks the solemn silence—trespassers stand spellbound but fearful, imagining that the creatures of the wild, wondering who such may be, are whispering around them.

Resuming our wanderings we pass under overhanging crags, set with ferns, beneath huge trees, along the bank of a little bubbling stream, past the ruins of an old Byzantine monastery and catching glimpses of the sunlit slopes of Mt. Sugliani far above us. Now and again we eagerly

quicken our pace in the hope of discovering an even more gorgeous scene with every twist and turn of the track, until suddenly the mountain walls fall aside and the shining expanse of Lake Besik, with the little white villages at the foot of the purple hills on its distant shore, greets our eyes. So inspiring is the scene, with the waters of the lake sparkling in the sun and the blue sky toning to pink where it meets the horizon broken by distant mountains, so clear and wide is the expanse before us that our minds enlarge to meet it and we pause, silent, filled with that spirit of awe which, incapable of aught but noble thoughts, is almost divine.

Whether visited in winter with the snow on the mountains, in spring when the ground is carpeted with snowdrops and anemones, or in summer when the blue enamel of the sea and the green velvet of the hillside are only divided by the golden line of sand, this little bay forms the choicest corner of Macedonia's wild and magnificent garden.

DOIRAN

The town of Doiran has already been mentioned and, although mainly within the borders of Serbia, deserves further reference, not only on account of the singular beauty of its position but by reason of the part it has played in the recent and previous wars. Situated on a lake of the same name which

lies at the junction of no less than three countries (Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia) and standing on the main road from Salonika to Sofia, Doiran forms the gateway of one of the few passes out of northern Macedonia and is guarded by a natural mountain fortress. The long unbroken chain of the Bela Sica Mountains, which forms such an impregnable southern frontier of Bulgaria, extends round the north of the lake and, ending abruptly, allows the road to wind round them out of Macedonia. The railway station lies some distance from the town and the communicating road passes by a circuitous route through the hills which separate the vast plain of Doiran from the lake.

From the foregoing it may readily be understood how this beautiful lake-side town has formed the centre of so much strife, and suffered grievously therefrom, in the course of recent wars. The work of demolition commenced in the Balkan Wars was completed by the Allied artillery in recent operations and the once prosperous town is now but a heap of ruins, mournful and deserted. In former days, when popular as a Serbian summer resort, Doiran was the largest and most enterprising town for many miles around ; in fact it was a worthy rival to Seres, Strumitza (a Bulgarian town) and Monastir in Serbia. Its popularity, and hence its prosperity, was due partly to its position and accessibility and partly to the wild grandeur

of surrounding scenery enclosing the town and the lake as an oyster mothers its pearl.

The town itself lies on the western shores of the lake and the half-ruined houses, interspersed here and there with derelict minarets, straggle over the steep slopes of the hills which rise abruptly from the road at the water's edge. The narrow cobbled alleys, winding upwards between the old stone walls of the houses and connecting the main thoroughfare with the orchards and isolated dwellings on the rocky heights above, are typical of Levantine towns and require no further description.

Roughly circular in shape ; lying half-hidden and sunk in the mountains which surround it, the lake, the most beautiful in Macedonia, stretches from the town to the marshy tree-covered ground on its eastern shore, and from the low hills on the south to the magnificent chain of the mountains on the north.

Above the town, the ground rises to a mass of foot-hills, fissured by deep ravines, which culminate in the huge rocky mass, christened by the French, and now known to the world as "Grande Couronne." On this natural fortress, overlooking the vast plains to the south and commanding a view of Salonika harbour itself, the Bulgar built his concrete shelters and impregnable strongholds ; from these shell-scarred heights he watched the slightest movements of the Allies and held

them at bay year after year. It was against this sinister mountain that the fierce and desperate assault of September, 1918, was launched and around its summit that so many brave lives were lost in one of the most courageous ventures of the War. One of our last duties in Macedonia was to attach the marble memorial slabs to a monument on this mountain battlefield; the sad solemnity of the concrete pyramid, standing, dark against the sunset, on those wild magnificent hills, surrounded by the eloquent debris of a fierce and recent battle, will live in our memory for ever. We can see still the face of the mountain torn by heavy gun fire, the maze of trenches radiating in all directions, the tangled rusty wire, the large shell-holes, the abandoned equipment and armaments on every side, the burnt vegetation and above all the little wooden crosses—each a record of a life bravely sacrificed in one of the most glorious episodes of the War. With the knowledge that it was impregnable—a realization born of previous efforts—every man yet went bravely to the assault of Grande Couronne in order that the Bulgarian forces might be contained and their line broken further to the west by the Serbs and French.

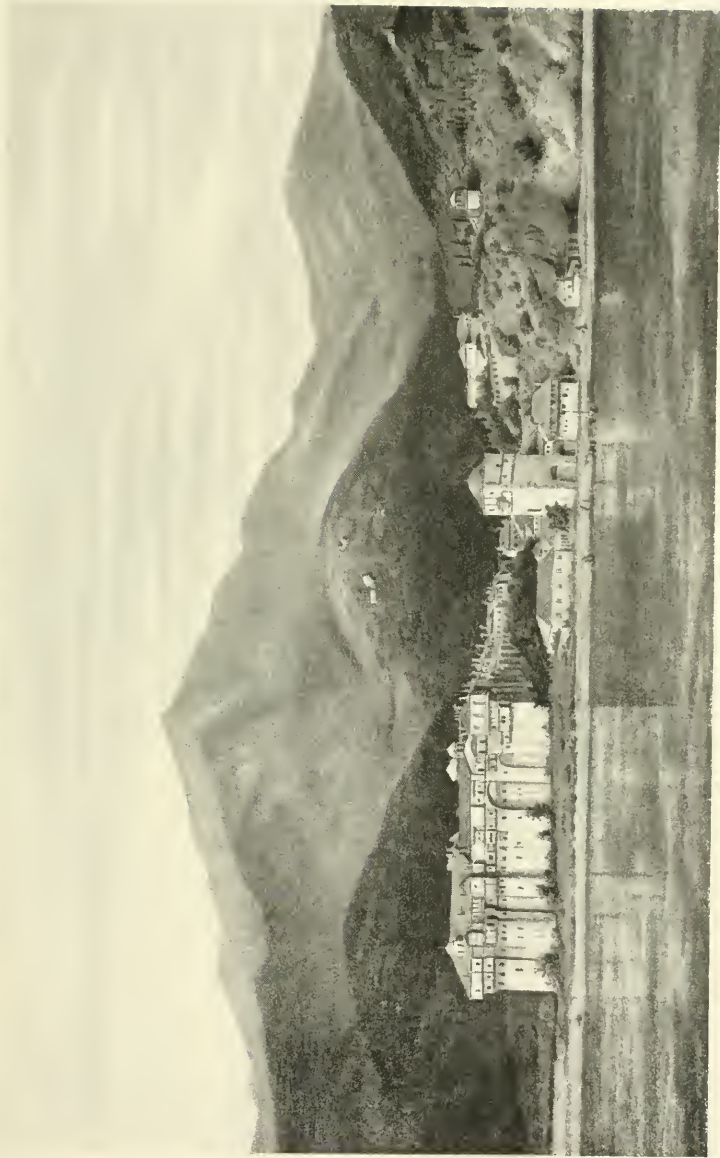
Wild and deserted, far from the often vulgar curiosity of the tourist and tended by Nature herself, lies this battle-scarred rock—a fitting scene for the fiercest human drama. The poignant

memories which are brought to our mind compel us to turn from this scene of desolation and strife and seek the reposeful beauty of the lake below, mirroring the girdle of snow-capped mountains in its calm waters. Can it be that a picture in which we seem to trace the perfect touch of the Divine Artist should have been desecrated and defiled by the wantonness and folly of the human race ?

MOUNT ATHOS

Anyone who has taken a more than cursory glance at the geography of the Near East is familiar with the three long narrow peninsulas of Chalcidice at the eastern extremity of Greek territory, which thrust themselves into the sea like three fingers of a hand. At the very tip of the third and most easterly of these fingers lies Mount Athos. At first view, it has the appearance of being an island mountain, but actually it is connected with the mainland by a very narrow ridge which though generally of a saddle-back description is, in parts, almost razor-edged.

The mountain, which gives its name to the peninsula on which it stands, culminates in a tall cone-shaped peak and stands out in a striking manner to a height of six thousand three hundred and fifty feet above the flat horizon of the sea and undulating hills of the adjoining country. Towards the sea, the incline of the mountain is even,



IVIRON MONASTERY AT
DAWN. MOUNT ATHOS

regular and graceful, but on the land-side the summit drops so abruptly, even precipitously, as to give the appearance of an inverted profile or a deliberate cutting-into the mountain-side. The peninsula, about forty miles in length and ten in width, is typical of the seismic character of the Grecian Archipelago. It abounds in crags and large boulders, interspersed with low bush and thorny undergrowth. Generally, too, the country bears that wild aspect which is the commonest feature of the Macedonian landscape. The enormous fissures in the mountain-side afford a protection from sun and wind which, assisted by a natural and munificent water supply has fostered the growth of trees and luxuriant wild plants. Unlike other parts of Macedonia, however, much care and industry have been expended on the cultivation of the peninsula and it is now very rich in sub-tropical produce, such as olives, vines, small fruits, melons, tobacco, cotton, maize and certain vegetables. The wild trees are, in sheltered places, larger and thicker than in most districts of the country and include many species common to England, while the low "scrub" on the hill-sides is almost entirely composed of a vast variety of evergreen shrubs. The flowers, as all over the Balkans, are magnificent and infinitely varied during the short wet spring. During this period the little gullies resemble a rich English rock garden, with here and there some overgrown

or sub-tropical plant that gives the whole a distinctive and "foreign" aspect.

The only means of transport are small native mules and ponies; the roads are mere mountain tracks, well constructed or *pavé* in rough stones. The "harbours," if such they may be termed, are merely rough wooden and stone jetties, and the boats, the usual Greek high-prowed, gaily-painted *caïques* that one sees in so many Levantine waters.

There are many references to Mt. Athos in Greek and Roman classics. Its fame seems to have been due chiefly to its great height which was probably enhanced in appearance by its almost unique situation and sharp conical outline. In fact, Homer's description of Mt. Atlas, probably the modern Teneriffe, "that it had its foundation in the depths of the ocean and that its lofty pillars reached towards Heaven," might almost have been written of Mt. Athos. The height of both mountains no doubt seems exaggerated by their isolation and abrupt manner of rising from the level of the sea.

Both Plutarch and Pliny make direct reference to Mt. Athos which according to their estimate projected its shadow at the summer solstice on the market-place of Myrina (Mudros), the capital of the island of Lemnos, eighty-seven miles away. The early geographer, Strabo, maintains that the inhabitants of the mountain saw the sun rise three

hours before those who lived on the shore at its base. Its proximity was dreaded by mariners and its chief historical association lies in the canal which Xerxes dug across the narrow neck of land which connects the peninsula with the mainland. The isthmus is only one and a half miles in width and this famous leader contrived to divert the sea water into the canal which was of sufficient width to allow two ships to pass one another. By this means he obviated the circumnavigation of the treacherous coast contiguous to the mountain and was thus probably the first monarch to see his fleet transported by water-way.

For centuries Mt. Athos has enjoyed the title of "Monte Santo," or Holy Mountain, and, indeed, so impressive is its form, so commanding is the peak that it is quite feasible that in days anterior to historical records, a form of fetichism was practised beneath its summit. The earlier veneration with which it was regarded and its original holy associations are perpetuated to this day in the monasteries which have found security on the peninsula.

Mostly founded by the great Byzantine emperor, Constantine, in the tenth century, these monasteries were for years the centre and hub of the Greek church. In all there are about twenty great monasteries (of which seventeen are Greek) scattered over the Peninsula with numerous *skelæ* or sub-monasteries and hermitages. The

monasteries may be said to constitute the life of the peninsula and indeed provide employment for a considerable army of natives, who are housed in separate dwellings. These peasants act as servants, muleteers, gardeners, etc., and are, for the most part, "lay-brothers" or prospective monks. Every form of industry, profession and trade is represented, for, apart from occasional visits to lands owned elsewhere, the monks do not leave the mountain and the community is almost entirely self-supporting.

The gardens and farms produce wine, fruit, vegetables and meat; the workshops turn out furniture, machinery, tools, etc., and the boats bring in fish. Every monk has a trade and most of the "elders" are learned and skilled in all arts; not a few speak French, and the authors met one who had spent most of his life on an English boat, knew London docks and New York and who (let it be whispered) smoked a pipe in the seclusion of his cell!

The monasteries include representatives of nearly all the countries of the Orthodox Church—Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Roumania and Serbia. The chief monastery is Greek and the richest and most ornate, and perhaps the most modern, is Russian. All the larger monasteries, however, are exceedingly wealthy. Grants of money are voted to them by the various countries represented and support, in other forms, extended

to them in no parsimonious spirit. Moreover, thanks doubtless to bequests and also perhaps to lifetime donations, large tracts of land and property are owned in various parts of Europe. The communities are policed and protected by armed guards of the Greek highland regiments and a few soldiers of the represented nations.

Each monastery is a complete and separate community consisting of from fifty to five hundred monks, and includes the sub-monasteries and hermitages where those monks who hold extreme or fanatical views may live separately. The monastic commune also includes the body-guard, the lay members and domestic and agricultural employees. The monasteries are each governed by a president, supported by a board or committee elected from the members, so that equity and fair ruling for all is assured. There is an archbishop who is supreme and a senior monk for the whole peninsula.

Many thousands of monks must have spent their lives in seclusion at Athos and many great and historical names are linked with it. Every monastery is rich with priceless relics, unique old libraries, historical church furniture and Byzantine architecture.

No female has ever set foot on this hallowed ground and very few people have ever had the privilege of visiting the monasteries. Always the monks have cut themselves off from the outside

world as far as possible and secluded themselves behind a veil of mystery. As already mentioned a certain number of laymen are employed by the monks in such occupations as those of gardeners, muleteers and shepherds, but neither these nor the monks ever leave the peninsula, except on occasions when some of the younger monks journey to neighbouring villages or even to Salonika, to make necessary purchases for the prosecution of their industries. Also, from time to time, dignitaries of the Greek Church pay official visits, and certain delegates, soldiers and representatives of the powers have landed there. But these foregoing instances of contact with the outside world represent the sum total of the monks' associations with mundane affairs. Wars, revolutions and great events of history have never touched them ; even the people of other faiths, remarkably the Turks, have respected them and their treasures.

The dress for everyday wear is the same for all ; a long black cassock with wide flowing sleeves, like a surplice, worn over trousers and boots, and a tall black hat with no brim. The hat, widening at the top, is sometimes covered with a black veil hanging down the back—no doubt, a precautionary measure against the rays of the sun. The hair of the face is never shaved and the hair of the head, grown long, is wound into a knot and stuffed under the hat, except on ceremonial occasions when it is combed out and

allowed to hang loose down the back. For those who may think that it is a woman's privilege to have beautiful hair it would come as a surprise to see what magnificent long thick tresses some of these men have. Many of them, with their graceful robes and calm faces, bear a striking resemblance to famous pictorial conceptions of the Son of God.

The chief occupations, when the monk is not attending divine service, engaged at some ceremonial or in learned pursuits, are wood-carving, book-writing, painting, agriculture and various necessary trades. The wood-carving is of special interest on account of its extreme delicacy and the extraordinary amount of care and patience expended upon it. One large piece of work representing heaven and hell, in which each of the hundreds of figures, perfect in detail, have been cut in perspective out of the solid wood, took two monks forty years to complete.

The buildings themselves defy short description ; every style of architecture from ninth-century Roman to modern Greek, from eastern Byzantine to elaborate Russian, is represented. The dome, the tower, the rampart, the cloister, the overhanging gable and the fortress-like masonry ; the arrow slit and sash window, the inlay of mosaics and the cheap plaster wall, the concrete shrine and the ivory fountain, Roman columns and cast-iron pillars are all mingled together. Ten centuries of

uninfluenced art on a few square yards! The priceless gems of antiquity with the imitation rubbish of mid-continental factories; electric light in an ancient Arab lamp, machinery plants pumping water beside a wooden oxen wheel; cheap oleographs on the same wall with unique old ikons; a machine-turned rocking chair and an inlay carved oak seat; a silver relic presented by a Sultan six hundred years ago surmounted by two gilt wooden doves and hung by a lacquered-tin chain! Such are some of the extraordinary incongruities one sees on all sides and which are so typical of the modern Greek, and very reminiscent of that mid-Victorian period in England when art was at its lowest ebb.

Yet in spite of this and although the general effect is bizarre, it is none the less pleasing. The old and beautiful eclipses the modern and ugly, and is, perhaps, by force of contrast (one of the chief laws of art) rendered all the more piquant and costly. The wild rough setting of the monasteries, the purposeless variety and confusion of ideas and style, the old masonry, the air of peace and mystery, the sparkling atmosphere and the wonderful history are all factors helping to instil that awe, wonder and interest that no visitor can fail to feel. Moreover, the simplicity of their lives, the ready hospitality and old-fashioned courtesy of the monks themselves are surprisingly refreshing and gratifying in these days of super-



A CORNER, KARVES MONASTERY,
MOUNT ATHOS

civilization and mechanical artificiality, when the simplest pleasures, even necessities of life, are valued in figures of gold and silver. Thus, independent of the value of money, unambitious, easily contented and non-pleasure seeking, the monk achieves the perfection of existence with a minimum proportion of the world's goods.

THE STRUMA PLAIN

As already stated, the contour of Macedonia is exceedingly irregular and rugged. Mountainous scenery predominates, and it is only here and there at wide intervals that the traveller comes upon a stretch of flat fertile country. For her seeming parsimony in providing so much unfruitful land in the mountains, Nature has endeavoured to compensate with a lavish hand in the richness of the plains. These are well-sheltered, well-watered and remarkably adapted for the cultivation of an extraordinary variety of valuable products. Of the very few fertile tracts with which Macedonia is blessed, one of the largest, most populous and best known is the plain on which a part of the British Army spent nearly two and a half years, namely, that of the Struma.

Contrary to popular impression, the extensive front which was held by Allied troops was not adjacent to the city of Salonika. It was at least forty-five miles to the north and north-east of the town. The intervening country is of the most

rugged description and, in the case of the Struma, the front was only reached by a road which winds in the most bewildering fashion, and in some parts runs for a considerable distance alongside a yawning precipice or an apparently bottomless abyss. Declivitous hairpin bends are a common feature of the Salonika-Seres Road which at one point reaches a height of two thousand five hundred feet, and at another drops with alarming suddenness from a considerable altitude to a level expanse of plain below.

A few kilometres from Salonika, the road begins to struggle up and through an irregular mass of hills, at some moments almost strangulated by the huge, almost overhanging boulders until it reaches a narrow defile which marks the summit of the Derbend Pass. Now commences a rapid descent, which with just a slight bend further down, brings into view a magnificent stretch of open country, fringed with bleak purple-tinged hills and having, as a centre-piece, the blue waters of Lake Langaza. The whole scene unfurls itself to the astonished and admiring gaze, as if it were the unveiling of a beautiful landscape picture, ambitious both in atmosphere and design. The eye wanders from water to distant hills, from white clear-cut villages to dark clumps of trees, from green mealie fields to barren foot-hills and from the golden glare of the earth to the calm blue sky above.

Further on, one may turn and gaze back over this wide expanse of the Guvesne (or Langaza) plain, with its now well-paved road cutting it in half, over the Salonika hills to the sea beyond. Away to the left, the eye lights on the placid waters of the Langaza Lake, shadowed by the commanding heights of Hortiach and Kotos. In the centre of the plain, standing out with solitary boldness, is a pyramidal rock which was immediately christened "Gibraltar" by the British troops. Although such a wide extent of country comes under view, there are few clumps of trees to be seen, no familiar hedge-rows which would remind one of our own country-side; scarcely a blade of grass in summer time, indeed nothing but hard-looking sun-baked hills and the parched burnt-up plain.

The approach to the Struma bears many similar features and the plain reveals itself with the same arresting suddenness. The traveller is riding along a winding road, now dipping, now ascending over a plateau of deep gullies and rolling scrub-clad hills, finding the country rather monotonous when, without the slightest warning of the scenic treat below, the rounding of a small peak discloses such a panorama as the eye is seldom privileged to see. The area of the Struma plain is roughly four hundred square miles, and when it is stated that the vision not only focuses this wide stretch of country, but also the hills and

mountains which enclose it, together with further ranges beyond, the reader may perhaps gain some vague idea of the wonderful scene presented to the beholder. Lying, almost at one's feet, is the Struma Plain (or as it is sometimes inadequately called the Struma Valley) with the river of that name winding in and out amongst little white villages and thick clumps of trees, here and there losing itself completely and showing up again where the sun, catching its shallow waters, is reflected as in a strip of glass. Trees grow in abundant patches near the water's edge, or cluster round the villages scattered about the plain. Here and there, a white house or church tower gleams in the sun and little tracks or roads run from place to place like the strands of a spider's web. Clear as crystal is the atmosphere and, dwarfed by the great distances, the scene seems almost fantastic—the component parts set out like toys in a gigantic game.

Straight ahead in the distance, lying on the opposite foot-hills fifteen miles away, is a large town, studded with minarets, looking remarkably white and fresh, and so clear that it appears within easy walking distance. It is Seres, the largest town in this part of Macedonia, apparently populous and well-cared for, but in reality ruined and devastated by the Bulgars in the Balkan War of 1913, and recently still further afflicted by the depredations of the Prussians of the Near East.

Far away to the left just where two ranges of mountains meet, and dip almost to the level of the plain, is the famous Rupel Pass, the eastern gate to Bulgaria.

The long saw-edged range on the left,
Soaring snow-clad thro' its native sky
In the wild pomp of mountain majesty

is known as the Bela Sica, a chain of mountains which proved an almost insuperable barrier to the British Army. Their topmost point is seven thousand feet above sea-level and for seven or eight months in the year the peaks are snow-covered. Viewed from the plain, the range has all the appearance of a huge, perpendicular, un-scaleable wall.

Turning to the right, below peaks faint in the distance, one catches glimpses of the glistening waters of Lake Tahinos, an expansion of the river where valley and foot-hills meet. From among these hills, one peak—Pila Tepe—stands out higher and bolder than the rest, reminiscent of Mt. Olympus in its solid solemnity. Further to the right, hidden by intervening hills, is the mouth of the Struma and the Gulf of Orfano. Immediately ahead, behind and on either side of Seres, the rocky foot-hills rise to broken masses of sunlit mountains, cut and scarred by the deep shadows of gorge and gully or veined by the broad white tracks of dried-up torrents. From the plain itself, overshadowed by huge over-

hanging crags, it seems as if the great walls of mountains, from every side, threaten to advance in their heavy masses upon the peaceful stretch of land lying at their feet, and crumple it up like a piece of paper.

From above, the plain is as flat as a sheet of calm water and indeed there is scarcely a rise of more than fifty feet throughout its entire length and breadth. It is well populated and remarkable for the number of villages which have sprung up on its soil. In fact, it can be confidently stated that in few parts of the world can so many villages, all separate and distinct entities, be encompassed in one sweep of the eye. It is computed that actually on the plain there may be counted at least one hundred hamlets, and there is probably an equal number dotted around amongst the hills. Some are exposed to the full glare of the summer sun, others nestle half-hidden amidst detached clumps of trees, their positions disclosed only by conspicuous church towers or minarets.

In the early spring, while the ground is yet green from winter rains, the plain is at its best. The most wonderful variety of wild flowers, not yet scorched by summer suns, cover the ground from end to end with a riot of colour ; patches of blood-red poppies, streaks of yellow mustard, squares of bright green mealies and stretches of white daisies are spread out like a magic carpet woven by a master hand. Such is Macedonia at

her best, clothed in her richest garments, bathed in her softest lights and bedecked with her gayest jewels before she dons the drab garments of summer time or the white cold robes of winter. Thus, as one looks down from the heights of Sivri, the whole scene is presented as a beautifully-tinted miniature. Indeed so complete are the details, so clear the little villages, so sharply defined the outlines of hill and mountain that it resembles a set-piece—an artist's ideal. Only the cloud shadows racing across the sunlit fields, only a flash of light on the winding river or a puff of dust on a white roadway enable one to grasp the living reality of one of the master-pieces of Nature. Such a picture indeed will live in the memory of all who were privileged to gaze on it ; so perfect in colour and composition, so admirably framed in snow-capped mountains, so cleverly lit by the golden sunlight and, above all, so cunningly hung from a deep blue sky.

Never tiring to the eye and always changing with each hour of the day, the Struma plain is one of Nature's vast open spaces which one seems to behold from the roof of the world ; it not only leaves the mind broader and cleaner, but creates a longing to return and to view it again.

CHAPTER XVIII

FLORA AND FAUNA

FLORA

THE vegetation, the fauna and the wild scenery are worthy of volumes; so little is known of them and the subject is so vast that we can only hope to skim the surface in the pages to follow. In comparison with our own country and certainly at first glance, Macedonia is a barren land in which vegetation, although dense and luxuriant in well-watered spots, is generally stunted or hidden. The extraordinary clarity of the atmosphere, however, the vastness of the scenery and immensity of the natural panorama reduce the perspective, so that distant trees resemble overgrown shrubs and large cultivated areas become nothing more than dark stains in the valleys or velvety patches on the mountain sides.

Forests are almost entirely absent, and it is only in shaded corners or in the deeper valleys that timber of any size is to be found. The natural growth on exposed sites consists of dense scrub or small stunted trees alternating with large areas of coarse grass land. The lack of woodland

and the preponderance of the quick-growing or hardier types of plant life is easily understood when we realize that, for six or even nine months of the year, the only rain that falls is storm water and that clouds seldom hide the intense rays of an almost vertical sun. Add to these adverse conditions a thin rocky soil, a violent wind and extremes of temperature, and we are surprised not at the scarcity but rather at the abundance of vegetation. This paucity of the larger trees, however, is not entirely due to climatic conditions, for the soil, though scarce, is not lacking in richness and most forms of plant-life flourish prolifically in warm sunshine.

Historical records show that Macedonia once produced magnificent timber and that the country in the vicinity of Salonika, now so hideously barren, was formerly renowned for its gigantic forests. The hand of man, so often against Nature and nearly always destructive to her interests (and, therefore, his own), has played a considerable part in the devastation of this fair land. Indifferent to the needs of generations to come the Macedonian has extensively destroyed the trees which gave him shade, brought rain to his land and equalized his climate. He has cut down timber to build his houses, unsparingly and thoughtlessly, and made little or no attempt to replant. It may be, however, that the peasantry were not altogether to blame, for the Turks, whose rule was

never distinguished by its foresight or tolerance, imposed a tax on trees and thus finally quashed any attempt at conservancy.

Here and there, however, good timber remains hidden in some deep mountain ravine or in the heart of the hills where transport is almost impossible. At Stravos, round Stratoni, along the Athos peninsula and near the Eastern Bulgarian frontier forests are still to be found and the wood, cut by the peasants, is conveyed in sections, on donkeys, down narrow mountain tracks. It is in the heart of such dense pathless scrub that one meets the charcoal burner—the solitary inhabitant of a wilderness—whose presence is proclaimed by the spiral column of smoke which rises above the trees.

The trees of Macedonia, apart from their comparative scarcity, differ in few respects from those of better known parts of Europe. Although the hot climate and long droughts have encouraged only the hardier species, there is a remarkable variety. Larger trees include the elm, Spanish chestnut, walnut, oak, and sycamore; poplars mark the site of lonely habitations and willow or aspen abound in the marshes around the smaller lakes. The oak, although very common in the hills, is nearly always stunted or gnarled by the axe of the charcoal-burner and, while beech is rare, fir or cedar is never seen. Many of the smaller trees are thorny in character

and thinly foliaged ; wild apples and pears, blackthorn, maple, holly, hawthorn, cherry, ash, pomegranate and fig all flourish wild. In addition to these and many others unknown in the British Isles, a few are so characteristic as to be worthy of mention ; the cypress, tall and black, so typical of Turkey, forms a fitting contrast to the white tombs or churches with which it is almost invariably associated. The huge plane trees surrounding the fountains or wells and beloved of the storks ; the walnut hidden in some deep hollow ; the Turkey oak with its huge acorns and prickly capsule ; the wayfarers' tree with its black or red berries and the ubiquitous olive reflecting the sunlight from its silvery leaves, all find some corner between the rocks to take root and flourish.

The variety of bushes is even more marked and a common type of shrub, small, hardy and evergreen, grows in massed profusion on the hillsides often so densely that progress is only made possible by hacking a path through it with knife or axe. Wherever the sun casts the longest shadows or wherever they can push their roots between the rocks, these dense little trees clothe the slopes with every shade of green. Here and there clumps of purple heather, patches of gorse or the golden seed pods of the "wait-a-bit" thorn give a touch of brighter colour to the velvet-like carpet of green which seems, at a

distance, to be poured, like icing on a cake, over the round summits of the foothills. Everywhere we find the little holly—or mountain-oak—a curious evergreen shrub with the leaves of a holly tree and an ordinary acorn as its fruit. Interspersed with this, we find a tall, often flowerless ling, the thick-rooted juniper, gorse, bramble or blackberry, dwarf oak trees, privet, rosemary and every conceivable variety of thorny scrub.

In attempting to describe the plants and flowers of Macedonia one is confronted not only by countless species but by many new and unknown varieties. Here, indeed, is material for the naturalist as well as new ground and unlimited scope for a keen botanist! The complete study of the flora of Macedonia, like the classification of its insects, would occupy the major portion of a lifetime.

At first glance, especially should he arrive in autumn or late summer, the visitor might be pardoned for discrediting this statement. The brown dry grass of the plains, the dark scrub-covered hills and rocky face of the mountains would convey an impression of exceptional sterility and barrenness; not until we led him into the cool ravines of the hills or bade him look under the rocks at his feet would he stand convinced. Some of the fairest products of Nature are not among the largest and, wisely, she has

planted many of her treasures where few can see them—as if she knew that her masterpieces were best hidden from the selfish desecration of man.

Like the flowers of the desert, those of Macedonia, though profuse, are mostly small and their life is short, but their magnificent colour and massed growth is ample compensation for their lack of size. Developed during the short winter in the moist womb of the earth, nursed by the rains of early spring and wooed by the hot sun of an ardent summer, these little flowers spring forth rapidly into the glory of maturity, and become a blaze of colour.

Thus, for a short period, even the most barren hills are green or carpeted with wild-flowers, and the plains are a quilt of many colours. Acres may be white, as though frosted, with camomile and scabeus; whole fields blue with chickory, like summer skies reflected in still waters; scarlet poppies incarnadine the valleys and ranunculus or St. John's-wort clothe the hillside in a mantle of gold.

But it is amongst the little streams falling from rock to rock in the ravines that we shall discover the greatest variety and the finest species—jostling one another in a wild scheme of colour, clambering over the rocks and filling every crack and cranny. Asphodel, gladioli, lilies, “love-in-the-mist,” orchids, potentilla, capanulæ and

a thousand others almost choke the little stream struggling through them and form a natural rock garden such as is seldom seen elsewhere. In darker corners, under the overhanging masses of rock, we find the ferns—"maiden-hair," "hart's-tongue," asplenium and many others, mingling with the grey scales of lichen, the strands of creepers or the green velvet of luxuriant mosses.

How can one describe the big white lilies, the blue crocus and the little cyclamen that hide under the holly-oaks in autumn-time, or those marvellous shades of red and mauve where the mountain anemones grow in such profusion; pages might be written of the grotesque little orchids, the giant evil-smelling arum or the blood-red "pheasant's-eye"; of the wild carnations, the blue gentians or the tall grasses and flowering shrubs, but space will not permit. The pictures of colour are endless, like the incomprehensible riot of pigments on an artist's palette, and the components, the little living units which make up the scheme, are perfect—each one a study of ideal form and balance.

"Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose"—the joyous picture is soon obliterated and the long burning days of summer bleach and wither the more delicate plants, leaving only the hardier and often uglier forms to adorn the dry brown earth.

FAUNA

If a difficulty confronted us in giving even the roughest sketch of the flora of this country, still more formidable is the task of outlining the species of animal, bird and insect life which abound in it. The complete catalogue of plant life would be small compared with that which would comprise the insects alone. As in so many warm climates, conspicuous for their stunted vegetation, the summer and autumn of Macedonia afford ideal conditions for most of the smaller and lower forms of life.

In contrast to insect and reptile life, mammals are scarce and represented by a few genera only. Many of those common in our islands, such as the rabbit and squirrel, are rarely seen in Macedonia, but the hare, fox, coney and small mammals, including mice and moles, are even more plentiful than in Great Britain. One of the most constant and numerous of the varieties not found in our country is the jackal; in appearance resembling a grey fox, this wily creature inhabits the rocks and hill-sides and, venturing forth only at night, rends the air with his weird and mournful howls. Nomadic dogs, fierce and powerful, wolves and even small bears may be seen in the wilder parts amidst the dense scrub of the mountains. These larger animals avoid habitations and, except when driven by starvation, seldom attack man. The

peasant is therefore rarely called upon to adopt protective measures against such roving hordes, but the wild pig causes a certain amount of dismay in agricultural areas. Mealie fields are particularly subject to the depredations of this usually domesticated quadruped and many a peasant keeps an all-night vigil, beating a drum to scare him away.

A casual observer would form the opinion that bird-life in the Balkans is less varied than that in our own islands ; in fact the whole grandeur and immensity of the scenery, together with the broken nature of the country, is misleading in this respect and the illusion, as already explained, applies to all forms of life. In England we live amongst things on a much smaller scale and even the lesser forms of life are comparatively conspicuous ; either the creatures of the wild are compelled to share our inhospitable towns or are driven to those ever-diminishing corners of Nature's garden which civilization has not yet desecrated. In Macedonia there are limitless regions in which these creatures can live a natural life without fear of the molestation of man or the encroachment of the builder. Not only, then, is avian life represented on a large scale but also in great variety. Many species unknown in Great Britain inhabit the remote uplands and others, rare in our own country, benefit by the absence of man to breed prolifically.

The sparrow, ubiquitous and inseparable from mankind, is common in town and village, but curiously scarce in the more uninhabited areas, where the goldfinch, which can be seen in enormous flights in autumn, replaces him. Lest the farmer's existence should be too free from care, magpies and jays—the latter distinguished for one very fine variety with magnificent blue plumage—swarm over his crops in embarrassing numbers. Birds of prey, from the large sinister vulture to the various species of hawks, abound everywhere and, in winter, newly-ploughed fields are often black with hooded and carrion crows, pigeons and the modest starling. In the villages, especially among the ruins, the little brown owl finds a suitable habitation and, at nightfall his plaintive cry accentuates the eeriness of the deserted homes. The stork has been mentioned elsewhere in this book, but no summary of Macedonian bird-life (which is all that this chapter can presume to be) is complete without his inclusion. This ungainly bird, with his long red beak, wide black and white wings and spindle legs, plays an equally essential part in any village scene, and many a peasant's homestead would be less than typical without his large capacious nest perched on the roof.

By lake or river, we encounter what would be considered some of the choicest exhibits of a well-stocked aviary; we get a glimpse of a king-

fisher, although his passing is little more than a rainbow flash in the sun ; a peep at a few pelicans and snipe, wading in the mud, a heron flopping along near the ground, small agile tern skimming the water, long-necked bitterns and, indeed, a host of others ; while, on the lakes themselves, especially on the mountain "tarns," coot and wild duck abound.

The weird cry of wild geese, flying in arrow-head formation like a huge squadron of aeroplanes under the control of a leader, becomes familiar in winter and spring, and the call of the cuckoo, together with the melodious song of the nightingale, induces thoughts of home. Other well-known sounds such as the purring of the nightjar, rising and falling in regular cadence, and the call of the plover, "nose-diving" over the fields, add to the incessant song of Nature. And lastly the great eagle, king of birds, draws our attention and fascinates our gaze, circling round and round in the blue expanse of sky or perched, proud and lonely, on the rocky crags of the mountain side.

As already suggested, amphibian and reptile life flourish in Macedonia as in all sub-tropical climates and even the summer drought has no inhibitory effect on the multitude of frogs which hatch out each year. Stagnant pools and sluggish weed-clogged streams are galvanized into life by their acrobatic feats and full-throated croaking

—indeed a variety entertainment which, in spring-time, commences every evening at sundown. Their combined vocal effort will frequently betray the proximity of a patch of water when none can be seen, and parts of the surface may be so thickly covered with this most graceful exponent of the art of swimming as scarcely to leave room for the full display of his wonderful jumping qualities. A noisy approach, however, puts an immediate end to all the hubbub and fun, and a remarkable silence ensues, broken only by the splash of a water-tortoise or terrapin as it slides off the bank into the water.

In spring and summer, Nature is alive with myriads of creatures which fly and numberless varieties which crawl. Every sun-bathed rock is the haunt of lizards; every heap of stones may shelter a deadly puff-adder or harmless grass-snake, and every available crevice seems to be the resort of those cold-blooded, often repulsive members of Nature's family which, including the centipedes and mollusca, hibernate in winter and shun the sunlight in summer.

The least timid, both as regards man and light, is undoubtedly the tortoise. Ubiquitous to the last degree, varying in size from the small pocket edition of a bright green hue to the large unwieldy brown specimen, his lined and dented shell betraying his threescore years and ten, this grotesque creature was wont to dog our foot-

steps, amble across our path and invite himself into our tents. Relying on the security of his portable and fortress-like casing, resembling in fact the now familiar Tank, he moved about at will in the open and only lost his imperturbability when the contempt born of familiarity brought him within the range of real danger. Even then, like a mediæval knight clad in armour, held prisoner by his own shell, he stood his ground and, like the knight unhorsed, admitted defeat only when turned on his back. The tortoise, in fact, excites our sympathy and commands our admiration. He is doubly interesting as constituting one of the curious links in the evolution of Nature's heterogeneous offspring, for the female lays eggs almost identical with those of a pigeon. Fortunately for her offspring, however, the female tortoise enjoys one great advantage which her sister of the feathered brigade may envy, as the former's eggs are hatched by the warmth of the sun and not by the process of "sitting"!

Having mentioned a few birds and touched on the subject of reptiles, we are finally confronted by the largest group of all—the insects and lower forms of life—and can only repeat how impossible it is to convey anything but the roughest impression in these few pages. Macedonia is a veritable Noah's Ark of insect life and it may well be that all the members of the group who entered that structure have been bound to the

East ever since by ties of affection and inheritance.

So many strange and beautiful forms exist, so much ingenuity of art and genius of design appear everywhere that we should be lacking in appreciation to close these pages without mention of some of them. What more perfect examples of balance and symmetry could we have than winged insects ; what colouring can compete with the shades on a butterfly's wing or what delicacy of design can compare with the veins on that of a fly ?

Curiously enough, some of our rarer species of Lepidoptera are the commonest in Macedonia, as, for instance, the Swallow-tail, which is even more abundant than the Cabbage White. White-admiral, Painted Lady and Long-tailed Blue are also beautiful examples seen hovering in large quantities round the flowers in the stream "gullies." The moths, which appear only at night and hide in dark corners during the day, are less noticeable but include many fine specimens of Tigers, Death's Head and, in the old woodwork of the houses, the giant Atlas moth—six or more inches across. By far the best represented order is, however, the Orthoptera, which includes the grasshoppers, crickets and earwigs. The numerous representatives of this group amount almost to a plague and, in fact, they sometimes become a serious menace to crops. Although the locust is common in Macedonia,

an actual plague, such as occurs in Egypt and Asia, is a rare event ; but it is sufficient to have walked through the grass and disturbed dozens of them, flying in all directions like little birds, or to have watched a plant denuded of leaves in a few moments, to realize the significance of such a catastrophe. Grasshoppers and crickets swarm everywhere and range from tiny green or black to the four-inch locust with a wing expanse as large as a sparrow. The crickets themselves are the chief among Nature's musicians and our wonder is excited by the volume and range of sound which this tiny hidden creature produces ; he seems to call us from all directions, and to trace the insect by its chirp is indeed a hopeless task.

One curious species, which soon became known as the "Balkan flea," proved a revelation and an object of much interest to the British troops. Red-brown in colour, in formation resembling a giant flea, provided with a long ovipositor in the case of the female, it was yet almost as large as a mouse, moved at a crawling pace and lived amongst the roots of long grass.

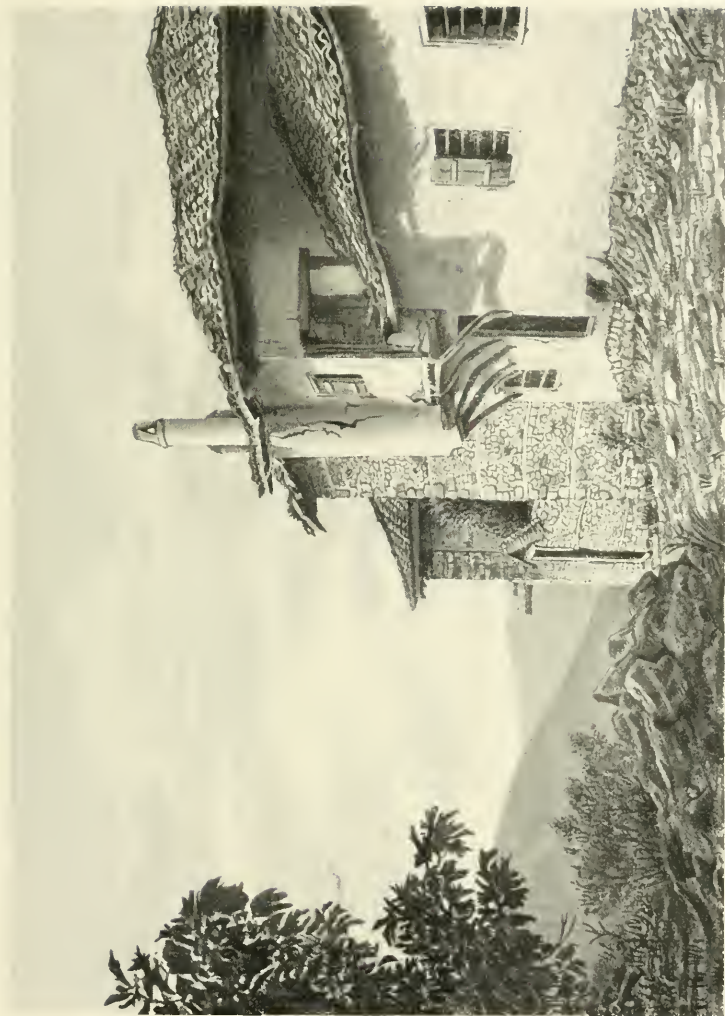
That vile pest and carrier of disease, the house fly, has already been mentioned, but there are many others—winged insects of a more beautiful and often more harmless nature. There are large clumsy-looking "ant-lions" with marbled wings, little fluttering flies with long trailing tails,

every possible colour and shape of dragon-flies and the "Cigala," so well known in Southern climates, which sits in the trees on hot afternoons and buzzes perpetually. Saw-flies, hornets, giant-ants, brilliant green beetles and a host of others dart about in the sunshine, humming on every side. A sharp eye can detect the "stick" insects, ghostly-looking creatures like dead twigs and wonderful examples of Nature's protective mimicry; patient search may reveal a green leaf-like mantis, sitting up, fore-legs folded, apparently in an attitude of prayer but, in reality, of defence or even aggression! At night, in summer-time, a lighted lamp attracts a horde of uninvited guests and the table soon becomes covered with tiny beetles, moths, crickets, mosquitoes and every variety of insect life, dead or dying, paying the usual price of curiosity combined with recklessness.

To the Westerner who has been confined to a cold or even temperate climate, where insect life is necessarily limited, a full conception of the degree of prolixity which it attains in a more southern latitude is perhaps scarcely possible. He has doubtless been troubled by house-flies, irritated by wasps, tormented by gnats or insulted by the vulgar flea, but he has never seen the sun darkened by a dense cloud of locusts, never recoiled from his food black with flies or entered his bedroom to the music of an orchestra of

mosquitoes. Every footstep in the grass throws up a cloud of grasshoppers and for a few moments only, at sunrise and sundown, is there any cessation of the otherwise perpetual hum and chirping of insects. The halo of flies which chase one over the plain, the fleas which swarm on one's legs after the briefest of visits to a peasant's hut, or the entomological collection which greets one on return to one's bivouac are experiences which must be personal to be appreciated.

But in spite of all this, the constant presence of these tiny and often beautiful atoms of life is not altogether unwelcome ; there is a companionship, a feeling of Nature's proximity—a lesson in the marvellous industry of the Wild—which, to a civilized man, isolated from his kind and at enmity with all other creatures, soothes and cheers. The silence of southern nights is only relative, and the perpetual music of unseen insects becomes as essential as the sunshine or the blue roof of sky ; it is only before a storm, when the buzzing ceases, that this is realized and the intense hush appreciated in a startling manner. Accustomed to the coarser sounds of Western life, the traveller is charmed by the stillness of the nights, and it is not till he returns that he feels the absence of that never-ending chirping chorus (a cadence, falling and rising in the warm scented atmosphere) and experiences a strange longing in his heart.



OLD HOUSES, ANO VILLAGE, MACEDONIA

CONCLUSION

MACEDONIA, one of the fairest lands God made, has been torn by strife and harassed by lawlessness for generation after generation. Lying between restless warlike States, a "no man's land" to which a dozen tribes lay claim, this natural battleground of the Balkans is held prisoner by the relentless sea and closely guarded by chain upon chain of mountains. Unloved, often exploited, bartered for, fought for—almost unknown except to military experts; never seen and scarcely heard of by those who, being lovers of the wild and beautiful, might come to admire—instead of the brush of the artist and pen of the poet, she became accustomed to the tramp of armies, the scream of the shell and the sword of the soldier. Such was Macedonia in recent years and such has she been throughout the ages. The notebook of the naturalist gave place to the despatch of destruction, and where there should have been villages and fair corn-lands were bivouacs of armies. The myriad columns of smoke rose, not from peaceful homesteads, but from glowing camp fires; in many parts one might have listened in vain for the sound of sheep bells or the call of

the home-going harvester, and hear only the roll of guns or the crackle of rifles. The beauty of Nature, the glory of the sunset, the majesty of the mountains, the wealth of hill and dale were eclipsed in the dust of conflict; deeper, uglier passions held sway than those which such a scene should inspire.

Yet Nature has, time after time, tried to wipe the blood away and clothe the naked ugliness of devastation; with characteristic irony, she has adorned man's battlefields with the fairest flowers which grow and lavishly strewn her choicest fruits in the path of destruction. Like a pearl which grows on a defect, so is this land built on the ashes of ugliness—a thing of wondrous beauty which men seek ever to spoil only to be re-built by Nature, fairer and more beautiful than ever. Each year the flowers seem to spring more thickly, maybe where men have died or lain in pain and misery, far from all they love, cursing the very loveliness around them in the bitterness of warfare. How apposite, indeed, are the lines of Omar Khayyám that :

. . . never blows so red

The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled.

Streams which ran red and may, even yet, wash the bones of the slain, flow to-day through fairy glens, sparkling and laughing in the sunshine, and the lark, pouring forth his song, soars above the ruins of a silent village.

Although, by inexorable laws, all living things must struggle for their existence and take their place, high or low, in the great scheme of Nature, yet man, armed with ingenuity and reason, is the only one of her creatures to destroy, wantonly, both himself and all that he has lived for. Every creature exists at the expense of another, every bird or beast hunts or is hunted, but they kill only by the instinct of self-preservation in hunger or defence. Man, however, never content with his lot, ever seeking some new sensation or driven by greed and jealousy, blindly brings ruin on his own happiness and that of others—destroying the gods he has set up after years of toil and, like Samson, in a childish rage, pulling down the pillars of his temple on himself.

Nature, the Mother of the Universe, although in the end she never fails to punish, remains unperturbed ; while patiently awaiting a better understanding among her children, she gathers up their broken toys and with a rough but kindly hand heals their wounds. Gardens spring up in the path of devastation and the ugly debris of mankind is hidden away. Day after day the sun rises and sets—every hour and every season brings forth a glorious picture, so full of joy and hope, if man would only pause and realize the happiness which lies in that which *is* and give up the futile hunt after that which *might* be. Engrossed in chasing a will-o'-the-wisp, expending all his

energy in attaining a phantom power or accomplishing a selfish scheme, man misses the feast of joy and beauty that is set around him.

Many have lost the power to appreciate the natural wonders of this world, others, engulfed in the soulless pursuit of modern industry or blinded by the glare of civilization, have never had an opportunity. To amend such defects and to enable others to understand the lesson of wild and simple Nature has been, among others, the aim and object of these pages.

To this end, therefore, before closing this book, let us draw one more picture—let us leave a scene in the reader's mind to colour his imagination and stimulate, if need be, his thoughts, that he may better appreciate the value of those elemental things which, blinded by familiarity or imprisoned by circumstances, he so often overlooks.

Let him climb with us to the foothills and, as the sun sets, watch the shadows of the mountains creep across the plain.

.

The glare of sunshine is softening ; a golden light bathes the panorama of valley and lake, and the ever-changing tints on the face of the distant mountains deepen, minute by minute. For a moment, before they are engulfed in the ever-rising tide of evening mists, all the details stand out like rocks in a purple sea—a dark clump of

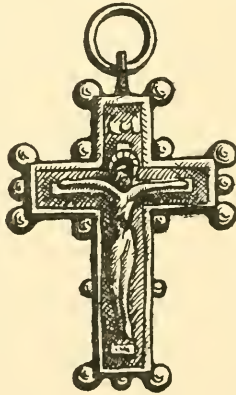
trees, a winding track, the gleam of a little stream or the white cubes of a distant village. The summits of the foothills, velvety with trees, are illuminated and tinged with gold—rising like breasts from the sunlit peaks above them—until they too are wrapt in gloom and only the mountains themselves remain bathed in the glow of the fast-reddening sky.

Gradually the shadowy sea rises and slowly the blue of the vaulted sky deepens, toning through green and orange until it merges into the crimson blaze of the west ; slowly and gently the hard rocks of the mountains seem to become translucent, their purples softening to pinks, and the deep blue shadows wrinkling their faces melt into the gossamer mist that floats to meet them from the plain below. And, at the moment when the topmost peaks, still glowing, become engulfed in the veil of night and the shining mirror of the lake becomes dulled, there seems to be a pause—a sudden silence among all things—as Nature gathers her choicest colours and richest effects to lay round the throne of the departing sun.

And long before the last glow in the sky has vanished, long before the evening star has been lost in the countless host of constellations which spangle the heavens, the orchestra of Nature's smallest creatures has opened its concert with the "nocturne" of a Southern night.

.

And thus, day after day, the sun rises or sets, and whilst men argue or quarrel, wearying themselves in the pursuit of futile ideals or hopeless ambition ; whilst some live in squalor and others grow tired in a surfeit of pleasure, this picture, in all its glory and beauty, is seen by few except the creatures of the Wild. They alone come out to view it and read the message of hope for the morrow or sweet memories of the past which it brings.



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