

James Ewing Ritchie

# Cities of the Dawn



James Ritchie

**Cities of the Dawn**

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**Ritchie J.**

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# **Ritchie J. Ewing James Ewing Cities of the Dawn / Naples – Athens – Pompeii – Constantinople – Smyrna – Jaffa – Jerusalem – Alexandria – Cairo – Marseilles – Avignon – Lyons – Dijon**

## **CHAPTER I A RUN ACROSS FRANCE**

To leave London one day and to arrive in Marseilles the next would have been deemed impossible – the dream of a madman – in the age in which I was born, when steamships and railways were unknown. Yet it is a fact, to the truth of which I can testify. Half a century has elapsed since the fair fields, leafy woodlands, and breezy chalk downs of Kent were invaded by a band of navvies, who, under the skilful direction of the late Sir William Cubitt, built up the main line of the South-Eastern Railway. The next thing was to connect France and Europe, which was done by means of steamers running between Calais and Dover, and thence by rail to all the chief Continental cities and health resorts.

I leave London by the Continental express at eight in the morning one cold day in October; in eight hours I am in Paris, passing Calais and Abbeville, both of which places, especially the former, are, I believe, pretty well known in these days of universal restlessness and travel. It is little we see of Paris, the gay and beautiful. We have to dine – for man must dine, if possible, once a day – and to Paris we turn for its cooks and cookery. It is there that the art of dining is carried to perfection. ‘Unquiet meals make ill digestions.’ There is no fear of that as I sit down to my well-prepared repast at the handsome buffet attached to the French Northern Railway, and yet there my troubles begin. As a barbarous Englander, I ask why in Paris, the centre, as it deems itself, of civilization and refinement, I am compelled to help myself to salt by putting my knife into the saltcellar. Then, again, it seems curious to me, and what I am not accustomed to, to eat my fish without a fitting knife and fork. Surely one may expect to find in Paris the refinement one is accustomed to in one’s native land! As to being cheated with one’s eyes open, one does not complain – you expect it, and it is not worth while losing your temper merely for the sake of a few paltry centimes; and yet I felt that I had been done unfairly when, on asking a waiter for a cup of coffee *noir*, and giving him an English shilling, and particularly calling his attention to the value of the coin, he coolly treats it as a franc, and gives me change accordingly. That was rather a dear cup of coffee, I calculate; but, then, the fault was mine, and mine alone. I ought to have provided myself with French money before I started.

I am going on what Dr. Lunn calls an educational tour on the Continent. It seems to me I shall get a good deal of education of some kind or other before I return to my native land again. There are about 112 on board from London and the provinces. As we are bound for Jerusalem, we have, as was to be expected, a large proportion of the clerical element. Ladies are not so numerous as one would expect from what one knows of the curiosity and fondness for adventure of lovely woman. The worst part of the trip is the long, wearying ride from Paris to Marseilles, where we found peace and plenty on board the *Midnight Sun*. We saw but little of the country on leaving Paris; but when we reached Lyons, where we were refreshed with delicious coffee and bread-and-butter, and were provided with a handsome lunch, to be eaten in the course of our journey, consisting of a bottle of

claret, beef and fowl, bread-and-butter, and cheese and fruit – a handsome meal, to which we all did justice – the day broke on us clear and fine.

But I pause to make another little grumble. In barbarous England the lunch would have been neatly packed away in a basket specially provided for the purpose, and a knife and fork would have been included. On the Lyons railway a brown paper bag was deemed all that was necessary, and instead of a knife and fork we had to use our fingers. As there was no convenience for washing – at any rate, as regards second-class passengers, *quorum pars fui*; I recommend the traveller to go first-class on such a long ride – you can imagine our disgusting state. It seems to me that the rule that they do things better in France is one to which there are several exceptions. But in some respects France beats us. It will be hard to find anywhere in England a prettier ride than that we enjoyed from Lyons to Marseilles. The white houses, with their green blinds and red tiles, nestling in and among the trees, always make a French landscape bright and gay. Their great industrial and manufacturing centres also always look cleaner and less forbidding in their dreariness than ours at home; and if the little narrow plots you see suggest peasant farming, rather than the high and costly farming patronized at home, you feel that the peasant of gay and sunny France – for such France undoubtedly is – has a happier lot than with us. But as you travel you have no time to think of such things. It is all one can do to watch the fairy panorama of rock and river, of waving woods and smiling plains, as you glide by. At all times the Loire is a grand river, but to-day it is flooded, and seems to be made up of lakes and seas, in which struggle haystacks, farmhouses, barns, the everlasting poplars, and, what is worse, the poor man's garden, and I think, in one or two cases that met my pitying eye, his vinefields as well.

One word before I have done with the *Midnight Sun*. 'In the new yachting,' writes Sir Morell Mackenzie, 'there is no unpleasantness as to the change of places to be visited, nor are carefully-arranged plans to be disarranged at the last moment by the thoughtlessness or unpunctuality of friends. You have the pleasure of companionship, without any of the responsibilities of a host or the obligations of a guest. You can enjoy the sea and the air charged with ozone, which is the champagne of the lungs, and free from any taint of animal or vegetable corruption, just as freely as if you were an Alexander Selkirk on a floating island; and you have many comforts which cannot be had even on the largest and best-appointed yachts.' Such were the results of the great physician's experience on board one of the fine excursion steamers of the Orient line. 'I felt,' he writes, 'like Faust after his great transformation scene from age to youth.'

I am not on an Orient steamer, but I am on the *Midnight Sun*, and to that Sir Morell Mackenzie's testimony is equally applicable. The *Midnight Sun* is a grand steamer of 3,178 tons, and she was especially fitted out for yachting purposes. She may be said to be the best of the class. For instance, take the sleeping cabins. They contain no upper sleeping berths – a boon most acceptable to passengers who have had to pass many nights, as I have done, in cabins overcrowded with passengers and luggage. An idea of the magnificent proportions of the *Midnight Sun* may be gathered from the fact that seven times round her deck is equal to one mile. The upper deck forms a promenade over the entire length of the ship, with uninterrupted views on either side. She has been engaged by Dr. Lunn for his co-operative educational cruises, which become more popular every year. I note especially the smoking-room on the upper deck, capable of accommodating nearly 100 persons. There is a crew of 110 on board for the purpose of ensuring our safety and supplying our comforts and wants. Truly, if one cannot enjoy himself on such a trip, and with such a company of gentlemen and ladies as Dr. Lunn succeeds in drawing around him, he must be hard to please. Dr. Lunn, who is not on board, is in himself a host, and so is his popular brother, who supplies his place. We are now approaching Corsica. I will spare you my feelings as I gaze on the land that gave birth to a Napoleon Bonaparte, and that sheltered Seneca in his dreary exile, but which in modern times Lady Burdett Coutts finds to be a very beneficial health resort. They are all that should inspire the virtuous emotions of a true-born Englishman.

## CHAPTER II

### OFF TO NAPLES

I left off my last letter opposite Corsica. Since then – and this is the charm of coming to Naples in the *Midnight Sun* – we have passed quite a cluster of isles more or less renowned in history – such as Caprera, the rocky home of the great Italian, Garibaldi – of which, alas! we see nothing. In old times Caprera derived its name from the wild goats, its original inhabitants. Later on it was colonized by monks. ‘The whole island,’ says a contemporary writer quoted by Gibbon, ‘is filled, or, rather, defiled by men, who fly from the light. They call themselves monks, or solitaries, because they choose to live alone, without any witnesses of their actions. They fear the gifts of fortune from the apprehension of losing them, and, lest they should be miserable, they embrace a life of voluntary wretchedness.’ Elba, however, is visible, which the wiseacres whom Providence, for mysterious reasons of its own, at one time permitted to rule over European affairs, fixed on as the residence of the Corsican adventurer, in the childish belief that he who had aimed almost at universal empire, and had in vain attempted to grapple with and overthrow the pride and power of England, would be content to remain on that puny isle, within a hop, step and jump of France, as it were, and almost within speaking distance of the legions whom he had led to glory. Then we sailed past Monte Cristo, the scene of Dumas’ celebrated romance of that name. Mostly, at a distance, the isles look bare of life and vegetation, rocks rising out of the blue waves; and yet we know it to be otherwise. At best, however, they must be poor places to live in, far from the great battle of life, and out of touch with human progress. We pass Sardinia, but see little of it. This is Sunday, and to-day the Church clergy, who are numerous, seem to have had a good innings. Unfortunately, I came into collision with one of them. As I entered the smoking-room after breakfast, I saw there had been held there an early Communion, and the implements utilized on such occasions were lying about. In a light and flippant tone I asked whether this was High Church or Low Church or Broad Church. A little oily parson, who was apparently guarding the vessels, angrily exclaimed, ‘Sir, it is the *Church*!’ ‘Thank you,’ I said; ‘I only wanted to know. To me it is a matter of indifference.’ ‘That was very naughty of you,’ said a mild, gentlemanly young man at my side. Let everyone worship God, or what he takes to be God, as best he may. I scorn not the savage who bows down to idols of wood and stone. To him they represent a Divine presence and power. I claim a similar liberty for the High Churchman, who sees sacred emblems in vessels of human device to be bought in the shops, or wrought by devout females; but let him give me the same freedom, and not denounce me as little better than one of the wicked, as void of Christian faith, because I turn from man’s devices to cry out of the aching heart to the living God, if haply I may find Him.

But I am digressing; for the fact is that I always see more of sacerdotalism afloat than I do on land. We are getting on pleasantly as regards social companionship. It was very cold in the train to Dover, and I felt inclined to take rather a gloomy view of the situation. It was worse on board the Dover and Calais packet, where the whole of the deck was set apart for first-class passengers, while we unfortunate second-class men were sent down below to see what we could out of the cabin windows. But once in the French second-class carriages, really much nicer than our own, reserve was broken, the tongue began to wag, and all went merry as a marriage-bell. I was much pleased with my neighbour – a Yorkshireman, I think, who had brought with him a bag of new farthings to be utilized for backsheesh. He offered me some, but I refused. At my time of life I should not like to be caught by a wild Arab of the desert to whom I had offered a new farthing for the familiar sovereign, the use of which is known from China to Peru. The pompous elderly first-class passenger amuses me. He has got his English paper, and he carries it with him everywhere, in spite of the fact that its news is some days old. One of my fellow-passengers had bought himself

at Marseilles a small footstool to keep his feet dry – a needless precaution, as all the seats are built with a view to protect the passengers from the damp of the decks, always rather moist after the early morning scrub and scour. The daily bath is in much request. The young Englishman must have his morning bath – a favourable sign, if it be true that cleanliness is next to godliness. We are rather a miscellaneous lot – there are Scotchmen, whose sweet Doric I fail to understand, and Cockneys, who ignore the letter *h*; but some of the ladies are charming, and that is saying a good deal.

Long before we reach Naples the awnings are put up and we rejoice in all the warmth of an English summer; and never did the far-famed bay look more beautiful, and the towns and castles and convents that line the cliffs in every direction for miles look more bright. The usual babel of sounds reigned in the bay as singers and divers and dealers in fruit and other articles of Neapolitan production were clamorous to sell them. The worst feature of the Neapolitan petty dealer is that he is too anxious to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. I know of many English who stay in Rome merely because the people deal fairer with the stranger within its gates. It is quite otherwise in Naples. The native pays fourpence for his two pounds of bread; the Englishman always has to pay fivepence. It is in vain you go to another baker. For a week he will charge you fourpence, and then he raises his price. One peculiarity of the Naples tradesman is that men of the same trade always stick together; and he does not spread out his business like the English shopkeeper of to-day. For instance, if he is a baker he does not deal in pastry, and the pastrycook does not interfere with him. But away from the trading classes the poverty of the people is really awful. You see men very lightly dressed sleeping on the broad pavement at all hours; and yet they adore their King, and are now building him a grand new monument just in front of the Royal Palace. Naples still needs better drainage; and the substitution of current money in gold or silver for its copper coinage would be a great improvement. Personally, this time I had no reason to find fault with the people. I found an honest boatman who rowed me to the ship for half a franc.

The one redeeming point in Naples is the untiring efforts of the Protestant ministers of all denominations – Church, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan, the latter especially active and doing a good work in the way of schools. I called in at the Sailors' Rest, an awful climb to get to, but a real rest when you get there. The present missionary is Mr. Burrowes, and his wife, the latter a genuine Scotchwoman of the better sort. They deal in the institution and on board ships with other peoples, with other religions and political opinions, and the result is very satisfactory. The number of destitute persons who have been relieved is as large as ever. Seamen are relieved and weaned from drink. Almost every evening there is something going on bright and cheerful at the Rest. The Sunday evening services have been found especially useful. After the evening service of a Sunday a large number of men stop to sing their favourite hymns, and the number of interesting temperance and religious works circulated is very large. The English colporteur, Mr. Copley, has given away 1,000 copies of the New Testament during the year, and he is aided by a band of foreign colporteurs quite as active as himself. It is work that ought to be more liberally supported by Christians at home. The good it does is great; its needs are pressing. I hope I may not appeal for the Sailors' Home of Rest at Naples in vain. During the year 1895, 176 persons stayed in the Home, including those sent there by the British and foreign consuls, passing travellers from ships. Many stayed only one night, such as seamen from warships. About 140 persons got free teas, not including the relief given to destitute people. It is a pity that such a real good work should languish for want of popular support amongst the wealthy English residents at Naples and at home.



## CHAPTER III

### NAPLES OF TO-DAY

Once more I am in Naples, with its houses rising one over another, in front of me, and Vesuvius looking down on me, and across the loveliest bay the world has yet seen. There is little to see in Naples beyond its museum, which no one should omit to visit, and Pompeii, to which you are conveyed by train, where you come face to face with ancient civilization and ancient life. For the traveller the city is rich in hotels, and at one of them – the Hôtel Vesuve, a magnificent structure with stately halls – I once spent a happy week. I had come with money enough to defray my two days' expenses; but, to my horror, I had to stay longer than I intended, and you may judge of my delight when the manager, who knew me, at the end of the week refused a penny for my board and daily food. I wish I could speak as well of the shopkeepers, who fleece you as much as possible, and are prone to give you bad money for good.

The people are industrious, and mostly very poor; but they don't drink, and content themselves with water and a slice of lemon – always on sale in the streets. They are devout Roman Catholics, but, nevertheless, an official said to me, 'Morality is unknown here.' I met with a man from Newcastle, an engineer, who employs a thousand people here, and gave them an excellent character. 'Do you employ any English?' I asked. 'Not one,' was his reply; 'they drink too much and are too troublesome.' Taxes are awful and Custom dues ditto. I landed here once with twenty-five cigars, a present from one of the gentlemanly captains of the Orient line. I could have put them in my pocket, and no one would have been any wiser. I thought, however, 'Italy is a poor country, and I might as well contribute my mite towards its exhausted exchequer.' My confidence was misplaced; for those cigars I had to pay a duty – incredible as it may seem – of three shillings and ninepence! Only fancy!

What I like best in Naples are its tram-cars, which are cheap, and the attendants are civil. Riding and driving seem to be the principal amusements of the people, especially on a Sunday, when the poor horses have to rattle along with tremendous loads, which makes one regret that in this part of the world there seems to be no society for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Pope Pius IX. did not think one required. Artistic manufactures seem to constitute the staple trade. In every hotel there are fine marble busts for sale. Vesuvius supplies abundant lava, which is utilized in a thousand forms. On many a housetop you may see the macaroni spread out to dry, and in many a street you may watch through the windows the tortoiseshell manufacturers at work. To the city there appears to be no end, as it stretches away to the right and left, and climbs up the hills on which it is built. It boasts two Gothic cathedrals, and numerous churches, and many public buildings of a handsome order. Little of female loveliness, however, is to be seen in the streets – not half so much as in Oxford Street at home any day in the week. Miss Cobbe writes: 'Naples struck me on my first visit – as it has done again and again – as presenting the proof that the Beautiful is not by itself the root out of which the Good spontaneously grows.' I quite agree with Miss Cobbe.

In the wide and sunny expanse of blue waters that surrounds Naples there is much to be seen. Rocky Capri lies just opposite – the home of artists and English residents. In the bay on our left are Baiæ and Puteoli, the latter the port at which St. Paul landed on his way as a prisoner to Rome to appeal to Cæsar. Baiæ was the Brighton of ancient Rome; the remains of its temples and baths are scattered freely among the fig-trees and olives of the peasant. Emperors dwelt there. There Cæsar sought retirement, and the warm springs on the side are yet called by his name. Behind, Virgil placed the entrance of Avernus, and not far off is his reputed tomb. Between Baiæ and Puteoli was the Lucrine Lake, over which coloured sails wafted the small yachts of fashionable visitors, and which contained the oyster-beds for the luxurious tables of Rome. Vitellius the beastly, as Gibbon

calls him, seems to have been the greatest oyster-eater in the ancient world. He is said to have eaten oysters all day long and to have swallowed a thousand at a sitting. There are no oysters in the Lucrine Lake now, for the simple reason that an earthquake long ago destroyed the lake. All that now remains of that famous fishery is a small and shallow stream, which is separated from the sea by a narrow strip of sand. Further north is Misenum, where Æneas came to land; where the navy of old Rome rode secure; from whence Pliny sailed away to get a nearer view of the celebrated eruption of Vesuvius, and where he met with his death by the ashes discharged from the burning mountain. On the other side of the bay lie Sorrento and other charming spots. It was here the Greeks sent colonists. The Greeks were the colonizing people of antiquity, as much as the English are colonizing people of to-day. It is pleasant of a night to stand on the deck of the steamer to see the gas-lamps on the shore glittering like glow-worms or fireflies all along the romantic coast.

If possible, the tourist should find time to have a look at Pæstum. In his diary Rogers the poet thus describes his visit: 'Country green and level. The temples in a plain shut in on three sides by the mountains, on the fourth open to the sea; and the sea itself half shut in them by the promontory of Sorrentum, within which are the Isles of the Sirens. A magnificent theatre, worthy of such objects: the columns almost bare – broken and of an iron-brown, like iron rust; the floor green with moss and herbage; the columns and cornices of the richest tints, and climbed by the green lizards that fly into a thousand chinks and crevices at your approach; fluted fragments of columns and moulded cornices among briars strew the middle space between the temple and the basilica.' Let me add, the temples are all in the same Doric style. Poseidonia, as its inhabitants, the Greek colonists, called it, was founded in the seventh century b. c., and, as the name imports, was specially sacred to Poseidon, or Neptune. The principal temple, which was probably that of Neptune, was that of the sea god.

Let me remind my readers that in the English burial-place at Naples was laid one of the very greatest and best of Englishwomen – the late Mrs. Somerville – where a marble monument has been placed over her grave by her daughter. It represents her, heroic size, reclining on a classic chair, in somewhat the attitude of the statue of Agrippa in the Vatican. It is a shame that she was not buried in Westminster Abbey. When asked, Dean Stanley assented, as was to be expected, freely to the proposal. Mrs. Somerville's nephew, Sir William Fraser, promised at once to defray all expenses. There was only one thing further needed, and that was the usual formal request from some public body or official persons to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Dean Stanley immediately wrote to the Astronomer Royal and the President of the Royal Society, as representative of the science with which Mrs. Somerville was immediately connected, to ask him to authorize the Dean proceeding in the matter. But that gentleman refused to do so on the ground that he had never read Mrs. Somerville's books. 'Whether he had read,' writes Miss Cobbe, commenting indignantly on the above, 'one in which she took the opposite side from his in the bitter Adam Le Verrier controversy, it is not for me to say.' Any way, jealousy, either scientific or masculine, declined to admit Mrs. Somerville's claim to a place in our national Walhalla, where so many men neither intellectually nor morally her equal have been received.

In one respect Naples has improved since I was here last. The drainage has been rendered better, and the fearful odours that met you at every turn have disappeared. The poor are indolent, dirty, thriftless, and ill-housed; but that does not much matter, as most of their lives are passed in the open air. The convents are suppressed, the schoolmaster is abroad, and they may grow better as the years roll by, and Italy, as a nation, once more becomes great and renowned. But a good deal has yet to be done. I heard of things to be seen in Naples of the most disgraceful and disgusting character. At the dawn of the Reformation Naples took the lead among the Italian cities in the adoption of its principles. Then came a bitter persecution, and the triumphs of the Pope and the Inquisition. As the result, Naples has been given up for years to the most abject superstition, and its people have become the most ignorant and demoralized in Europe. But the city is full of life – far more

so than is to be found in any other Italian city. Such talking, shouting, and rushing to and fro can hardly be found anywhere else. Nowhere is there more life than is to be seen on the Toledo. One of the quaintest objects is that of the letter-writer, seated at his desk in the open air, with his clients waiting to have their letters written – some of business, some of love. The cab-driver is better than he looks, and it is not difficult to get along with him. But you must be on your guard with waiters. More than once one has come to me with a bad franc, which he pretended I had given him; but I turned a deaf ear to his complaint, and left him to do the best he could with his spurious coin.

If you want to visit Vesuvius, apply at Cook's offices, where you will find everything arranged for you in the most agreeable manner, and no difficulty of any kind. His funicular railway is one of the wonders of the place. The ascent of the cone requires two hours' hard walking in deep ashes and on hard rubble lava – an undertaking not very pleasant for people affected with delicate hearts and constitutions, or bordering on old age. Get into one of Cook's railway cars, and you are up in a few minutes. At the lower station there is an excellent restaurant belonging to the wonderful John Cook, whose headquarters are the Piazzzi del Martini. I dined once at his restaurant at the foot of the cone, and it is one of the few dinners in my life to which I look back with pleasure. I had a friend with me, of course. It is never pleasant to travel – at any rate, in a foreign country – alone. We had a good rumpsteak and French beans, an omelette, and a bottle of the wine whose praises were sung by Horace when the world was much younger and fresher than it is now. After dinner we sat on the terrace, drinking black coffee and smoking cigars. Of course, as an Englishman, it gave me pleasure to reflect that our beautiful Princess of Wales had been there before me in 1893, with Victoria of Wales, the Duke of York, and a distinguished suite. As I sat smoking, it seemed to me as if I was monarch of all I surveyed. Naples was at my feet, far away behind was the green Campagna, with but here and there a solitary dwelling, and before me, in all its glory, the bay and its islands. If old Sam Rogers had gone up there to write his 'Italy,' I think he would have done better than he did – at any rate, I was never so near heaven before; and this reminds me that I have said nothing of the means of grace available to English Protestants when they come to Naples. There is an English Church in the San Pasquale à Chiagia, a Scotch Presbyterian opposite Cook's offices, and a Methodist.

There are many ways of getting to Naples. I came this time overland by Paris and Marseilles, and thence, as I have said, by the *Midnight Sun*. If the weather is fine, and the Bay of Biscay in good form, I prefer to come by the Orient steamers right away from London. You have then no trouble till you land in Naples. We leave Black Care behind as we slip out of English fog and cold into the region of cloudless skies and starry nights. We smoke, or read, or feed, or walk the deck, or talk in the pleasantest manner. Perhaps we get a glimpse of Finisterre. Heroic memories come to us as we pass the seas where the *Captain* was lost – it is to be feared in consequence of defective seamanship. All along the coast and on those faraway hills the noise of battle rolled, and not in vain, for the struggle that ended in Waterloo placed England in the first rank among the nations of the earth.

As soon as we cross the bay we think of Corunna and Sir John Moore. Afar off are the memorable heights of Torres Vedras. Cape St. Vincent, a bluff sixty feet high, with a convent and a lighthouse, reminds one of the brilliant victory won by Sir John Jervis, with Nelson and Collingwood fighting under him; and in a little while we are at Trafalgar, to which sailors still look as the greatest sea-fight in the history of our land, and as the one that saved the nation; and then you spend a day at Gibraltar. A Yankee friend once said to me, 'I must go back to America. I can't stay any longer in Europe; I shall get too conceited if I do.' I, too, feel conceited as I skirt along that romantic coast, which you sight in a few hours after leaving Plymouth. Englishmen are always grumbling. There is no country like England; and an Englishman who is not proud of his native land, and ready to make every sacrifice for her, ought to be shot, and would be if I had my way.

## CHAPTER IV

### POMPEII AND VESUVIUS

It is needless to write that no one can go to Naples without paying a visit to Pompeii, if he would get a true idea of a Roman city, with its streets, and shops, and baths, and forum, and temples; and it is as well to read over Bulwer's 'Last Days of Pompeii' – that master work of genius, compared with which our present popular novels are poor indeed – and then let the reader spend an entire day, if he can, among the Pompeiian remains, in the museum at Naples, which Garibaldi, when Dictator of Naples, handed over to the people. Pompeii is easy of access by the railway, which lands you at the very spot, after a short but pleasant trip. Much can be accomplished there and back for a little more than three francs. On Sundays Pompeii can be visited for nothing; on other days the charge is one franc, and when you have paid the guide the franc, I think you will agree with me that in no other part of the world can you see so much that is truly wonderful at so small an expense. Close to the gate are a hotel – the Hôtel du Diomede – and a restaurant, at either of which you can get all the refreshments you require; and if it is too hot to walk – and in the summer months Pompeii is a very hot place indeed – there are chairs in the grounds in which you can be carried all round and see all that is to be seen at very little personal fatigue.

Pompeii is spread out in an elliptical form on the brow of a hill, and extends over a space of nearly two miles. On one side of you is Vesuvius, and on the other the blue waters of the bay. One of the towns through which you pass in the train is Portici, the ancient Herculaneum; as it is, you are lost in wonder at the awful extent of the catastrophe which turned all this smiling land into a scene of desolation and death, and which, at any rate, led to the extinction of one philosophic career – that of the elder Pliny, a real victim to the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. At the time of its visitation, Pompeii is reputed to have had a population of about 26,000.

Imagination fails to realize the agony of the hour as the swift, black, sulphurous death came down on all – the patrician in his marble halls, the tradesman in his shop, the miser at his desk, the devotees who cried to their gods for safety in vain, the slave, the freedman, the aged, to whom life had nothing to give, the tender, the beautiful, the young, to whom life seemed an exhaustless dream of joy. As in the days of the flood, there was marrying and giving in marriage. Here the baker had fled, and left his loaves in his oven; there was an eating-house, in which were found raisins, olives, and fish cooked in oil. There stands the tavern, indicated by the sign of the chequers, while the amphoræ of wines are still marked with the year of the vintage. An election was going on at the time of the catastrophe, and appeals to the free and independent are still preserved. In one place a schoolboy has scratched his Greek alphabet. In his sentry-box a sentinel was discovered, a grisly skeleton clasping his rusty sword. And the streets tell a piteous tale. In one a young man and woman had fallen together; in another part a lady was discovered attempting to flee with a bag of gold, and then there was seen the skeleton of a mother with her children, whom she was vainly seeking to save. In the house of Diomede, or, rather, in a vaulted cellar underneath, eighteen bodies were found of men and women who had evidently fled there for shelter. The probable proprietor of the house was found near the garden door, with the key in his hand, while beside him was a slave with valuables. It is evident that the city was a scene of vice and dissipation. Some of the inscriptions are too indecent to reproduce. I know not whether for this it becomes us to point the finger of scorn, we who read 'Don Juan,' who revel in Fielding, who reverence Dean Swift, who know what goes on in Paris and London by night, when respectability has gone to bed and Exeter Hall is shut up.

Let me turn to the streets – they are very narrow – and to the houses, which strike me as generally very small. In that grand climate the people must have mostly lived in the open air. One of the most elegant houses is that of the Tragic Poet. On the threshold was a dog in mosaic, with the

inscription ‘Cave canem’ – now in the museum at Naples. I was much interested in the public baths, or thermæ, which indicate with how much care the ancient Romans attended to cleanliness and health. They must have been on a somewhat extensive scale. A passage leads to the chamber for undressing. Beyond this is the cold bath. Thence we make our way to the warm bath, or tepidarium. The baths also possessed an extensive colonnade, now converted into a garden, besides several other chambers and baths for women, none of which are now open to the public. But we see wonders everywhere, in spite of the fact that all that is best in Pompeii has been moved to the museum at Naples, where remains one of the finest of the Pompeian mosaics – that representing a battle between Darius and Alexander, which no one who wishes to have a competent idea of ancient art should avoid going to see. Let me add that no visitor should go to Pompeii without having first got a clear idea of what he is going to see. The guides are but poor helps, as mostly they speak nothing but Italian. Further, let me say that if you have at Naples only the day allowed by the Orient Company, while waiting for the overland mails, which generally reach Naples in a little over two days and nights after leaving London, your best plan is to get hold of Cook’s agent, who reaches the ship in a boat with a flag bearing the well-known name. He will take you off, drive you straight to Pompeii, give you time to ‘do’ the place and to get a good lunch there, and bring you back in time to the ship to pursue the even tenor of your way to Egypt, or Ceylon, or Australia, as the case may be. If you have time, pursue your studies by a day in the museum, or more if you can. It is there you can realize best, as you study the grand statues of great men and women and gods and goddesses, the Diana of Ephesus being one of them – statues in which the

‘Majesty of human passion  
Is to the life expressed’ —

what men the world’s masters were. Nero has a shocking head; Caligula looks an empty-headed fop; but I gazed admiringly on the grand features of my guide, philosopher, and friend – Marcus Aurelius. And I thought of Voltaire, as I stood opposite the noble statue of Julius Cæsar, on your left just as you enter the museum. Voltaire tells us men may be divided into two classes – hammers and anvils. Julius Cæsar evidently belonged to the former class. It was there, too, I saw a Venus, radiant in innocence and beauty and sweetness and grace, as if new ‘bathed in Paphian foam’ – the only Venus I ever could have loved. But I had no guide-book, and the day was hot, and all the attendants were fast asleep.

Let me add a caution: Never change money if you can help it. You are sure to get a bad franc if you do. At Pompeii the guide tried it on with me. Again, while waiting for the train at Pompeii, I was tempted to have a deal with a pedlar, who asked me ten francs for souvenirs, which I subsequently bought, after a good deal of haggling, for five. Unfortunately, I had only a ten-franc note, and he had to give me change – not in coppers, as they generally do in Naples, where silver is scarce, but in francs; and one of them was bad, as I found out when I went to the museum next day. To my disgust, the civil gentleman who takes the money kindly cut it in two.

‘I will call for you at a quarter-past seven,’ said Cook’s agent to me, as he left the *Ormuz*.

‘Come at that hour,’ I replied; ‘I will be ready.’

Alas! man proposes – often in vain. I went to bed early. I had made arrangements for an early meal. I had agreed to see that a fellow-passenger who was to come should be ready; but I could not sleep – the heat in the bay was too great, the odour of the tide-less waters seemed to possess my soul, and as I lay awake all the chronic diseases by which I am borne down reasserted themselves, and I didn’t get a wink of sleep till just as it was time to get up. I have an early breakfast, and yet there is no sign of Cook’s agent. In due time I see him, and my friend and I and Cook’s agent are rowed on shore, and we drive to Cook’s headquarters. There we are put into a carriage drawn by three horses, and away we go along the crowded streets. What a display we have on every side of

the unwashed, as they sit at the shop doors, or at the corners of the long narrow alleys in which most of them live! There are naked children, hideous old women, and very unlovely young ones. A fat priest passes with his beaver hat and black robes, and a young woman rushes at him and kisses his hand. The priest and the militaire are to be seen everywhere. No wonder the country is poor.

As we proceed the ground begins to rise, and we see pleasant villas with decent gardens. As we rise so does the dust; for mostly we are shut in between two walls, over which we see the vine hang heavily, or apricots glitter among the green branches on either side. Here and there is a break in the wall, and, seated at rustic tables, peasants and their families are enjoying a holiday, looking under their vine arbours across the blue bay or pleasant Capri, or glancing upward at the smoking mountain above. At one of these wayside publics our driver stops to water horses, which are useful animals, and, in spite of the heat, never turn a hair. We enter the principal room, at one end of which is a big bed, while nearer the door is a table with wine and glasses, and fruit, and specimens of lava and other matters. My friend, with the recklessness of youth, spends his money. I refuse to do anything of the kind; and again our coachman urges on his wild career. He pulls up again as a woman rushes out of her cabin to offer us drink. Again we are tempted, and in vain. Then we reach a level of reeds and rushes, where resides a venerable and unwashed hermit, who sighs as he turns in and thinks of the hardness of our hearts. We are now nearly out of the cultivated land, as we see the gigantic fields of lava on every side; where it can all have come from is a mystery. You can scarcely realize how all this lava – stretched on every hand, far and wide – can ever have come out of that crater. There seems more lava than you could get into the mountain itself; and how terrible must have been the scene when the red-hot lava rushed down the mountain-side, overwhelming green vines, and square-roofed huts, and living animals, and smiling babes, and weak and helpless old age! As it cooled, it seems to have wreathed itself into a thousand fantastic shapes – and yet the scene is fair and tranquil. A small wreath of smoke at the top only suggests a feeble fire within, and down far below the blue Mediterranean sleeps, and gay Naples sparkles, and the great Campagna opens up its vast green solitudes, save where, here and there, a white-stoned villa varies its monotony. Around me animal life exists not. The yellow birch blooms in her golden beauty, that is all, and the common white butterfly of England has the upper airs all to herself.

As we reach the observatory – an oasis in the desert – we meet a couple of sportsmen; they have a gun between them, though why I cannot understand, as I see nothing to shoot at but lizards, and so we are drawn slowly on the dusty road, which zigzags in the most wonderful manner every few yards. We enter through a gateway which, I presume, marks the bounds of the Cook territory, as one of his agents takes a look at our tickets. With joy our brown-faced coachman points us to a white, flat-roofed building, which he declares truly is the hotel, where he intimates we can have lunch, and where he intimates he can do the same if we will supply the cash – which we do, though he had no right to ask it – and weaned and parched we enter the grateful portals of the hotel to feast, and to enjoy a refreshing breeze, which we should have sought for in Naples in vain. As I rested there, I felt no wish to depart either upwards or downwards.

Of course the summer is the bad time for the crater. In the season Cook has his pilgrims, sometimes to the number of 200 a day. The cars are airy and light. As one goes up, another descends, and thus the work goes on under the care of an able German, who caught a fever in Egypt, and has been ordered here for the benefit of his health. The whole country should be called Cooksland. It is there John Cook reigns supreme. Just as I was leaving London a Leicester gentleman said to me: ‘I wonder Mr. Gladstone did not make John Cook a baronet.’ ‘The man who does what Mr. Cook does, for all travellers, whatever their nationality, surely deserves public recognition,’ says a commercial Dutchman to me as I write; ‘I am off to Palermo and Catana and Messina. I have taken Cook’s tickets for all the way.’

I found in my subsequent travels every one of us had more or less to enjoy the assistance of Cook’s agents. In many cases travellers derive great pecuniary benefit from doing so. I remember

a friend of mine got some money changed for him by Cook's agent on very much cheaper terms than he could anywhere else.

Italy is a poor country; yet it displays a sense of humour highly creditable under the circumstances. The site of the Custom House in Naples is locally known as the Immaculate.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ISLES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Remember, as the great Dr. Johnson remarks, how life consists not of a series of illustrious actions or elegant enjoyments; the greater part of our time passes in compliance with necessities in the performance of daily duties, in the procurement of petty pleasures; and we are well or ill at ease as the main stream of life glides on smoothly, or is ruffled by small obstacles and frequent interruptions. This is emphatically true as regards life at sea. But as we steam along we see much to attract and excite in the isles of the Mediterranean, that diversify the travel all the way from Marseilles to Jaffa. It is said that there are eighty ports in the Mediterranean, and that into all of them Lord Brassey can take his yacht without a pilot. Alas! I am permitted to tarry at none of them.

As we sail out of the Bay of Naples we pass Capri – a rocky island, where there is scarce a yard of level ground – dear to Englishmen and artists. The highest point of Capri is about 1,960 feet above the sea. The traveller will find there several hotels. Roman remains abound, and Tiberius, the drunken and dissolute, had twelve palaces there. There he was in no fear of unwelcome intrusion, and gave himself up to shameless and unnatural lusts; while his worthy lieutenant, Sejanus, carried on a series of persecutions against all who stood in any relation to the imperial family, or excited the suspicions of the tyrant by freedom of speech, independence of character, or position, or popularity. The famous Blue Grotto of Capri is on the northern side, near the landing. In the great war with France, Sir Hudson Lowe – the same General who had subsequently charge of Bonaparte at St. Helena – had to surrender the island to Murat, after a fortnight's siege, and had the mortification of seeing reinforcements arrive just after the treaty was signed. Leaving Capri, the Gulf of Salerno opens; Pæstum, with its temples, lying on the southern bight of the gulf. Then follows the elevated headland of Cape Palinure – named after Palinurus, the pilot of Æneas, whose tomb is marked by a tower on the cliff some eight miles northward, thus fulfilling the Sibyl's promise in the 'Æneid,'

'And Palinurus' name the place shall bear.'

We next get a peep at the now active volcano of Stromboli, and the Lipari Islands to the northward. On these islands, the Insulæ-Eoliæ, also the Vulcaniæ of the ancients, Æolus held the winds enclosed in caverns, letting them blow and howl as it seemed good in his sight. There, too, Vulcan forged the bolts of Jove.

From Naples we steer for Sicily, once, though only for a short time, prosperous under British rule, when we took possession of it in the name of the King of Naples, after he was driven away from Italy by the soldiers of France. Garibaldi handed it over to United Italy. Sicily is a country which is almost unknown to tourists, though in his youth Mr. Gladstone visited the island and wrote: 'After Etna, the temples are the great charm and attraction of Sicily. I do not know whether there is any one, if taken alone, which exceeds in interest and beauty that of Neptune at Pæstum, but they have the advantage of number and variety as well as of interesting position.' We pass Catania, which had the most celebrated University in Italy. The present town is comparatively new; many of its more ancient remains are covered with lava; among them the theatre, from which it is probable Alcibiades addressed the people in b. c. 415. What memories rose up before us as we steamed along the Straits of Messina! It was from Syracuse that St. Paul sailed away to Reggio, on the coast of Italy, and all the parsons on board pull out their Testaments and compare notes. I trow I know more of the Greeks, and Romans, and Carthaginians, who shed so much blood, and waged so many desolating wars in these now peaceful regions. The town was founded by the Greeks nearly 3,000 years ago. All the nations seem at one time to have held Sicily – Romans, Greeks, Moors, Turks, and Normans. There are some of us who can yet remember how Cicero thundered against Verres for his misgovernment of Sicily. It was to Sicily that Æschylus retired to die after Sophocles



had borne away the prize from him for his tragedy. The pet of the Athenian mob, the gay and graceful Alcibiades, fought against the Sicilians in vain. At that time they must have been a more intelligent people than they are now. Take, for instance, their appreciation of Euripides. Of all the poets, writes old Plutarch, he was the man with whom the Sicilians were most in love. From every stranger that landed in their island they gained every small specimen or portion of his works, and communicated it with pleasure to each other. It is said that on one occasion a number of Athenians, upon their return home defeated, went to Euripides and thanked him for teaching their masters what they remembered of his poems; and others were rewarded when they were wandering about after the battle, for singing a few of his verses. Nor is this to be wondered at, since they tell us that when a ship from Cannes, which happened to be pursued by pirates, was going to take shelter in one of their ports, the Sicilians at first refused to receive her. Upon asking the crew whether they knew any of the verses of Euripides, and being answered in the affirmative, they released both them and their vessel. We are a cultured people. The Americans, according to their own ideas, are yet more so. Yet it is evident that the Sicilians were far before us in their admiration of poetic genius. Alas! Pompey the Great, as we still call him, gave the Sicilians a different lesson when he summoned the people of Messina before him, who refused to obey his summons, arguing that they stood excused by an ancient privilege granted them by the Romans. His reply was, and it was worthy of the present Emperor of Germany, ‘Will you never have done citing laws and privileges to men who wear swords?’ Another lesson Sicily teaches us is how much readier the world is to remember its oppressors than its benefactors. We all have a vivid impression of Dionysius, the Tyrant of Syracuse, yet how few of us are familiar with the fame of Dion the Patriot, who was the pupil of Plato when the philosopher dwelt for a time in Syracuse. It is to the credit of the Sicilians that they were a grateful people. When Timoleon died they gave him a public funeral, and instituted games in his honour, ‘as the man who destroyed tyrants, subdued barbarians, repopled great cities which lay desolate, and restored the Sicilians their laws and privileges.’

Gradually we make our way through the Straits, sailing between Scylla and Charybdis, which for the modern traveller has no terrors. Our last view of Sicily gives us a fine glimpse of Etna, with the crater into which Empedocles threw himself, 400 b. c. Men are immortalized as much by their follies as by their virtues. As we onward press we get a glimpse of Candia, with the snowy peaks of Mount Ida, and Gavodo, or Goro, supposed to be the Claudia of St. Paul’s voyage to the westward. What associations rise as we see Cephalonia, Zante, Corfu! – all looking dry and bare in the scorching sun. We manage to make our way, though with some difficulty, through the Canal of Corinth, a work which I fear can never pay, as it is not large enough for the big steamers which now plough these waters. Everywhere islands, or rather rocks, diversify the scene, and every day we have more radiant sunsets and sunrises than you can realize in a Northern clime. To sail on this summer sea is indeed a treat. No wonder old Ulysses loved to wander among these isles, and to leave Penelope to do her knitting and to look after her maids at home. I regret that I cannot have a peep at Crete and Cyprus, the most famous islands in the Mediterranean, and we pass over the far-famed bay of Salamis almost unconsciously.

It is not my privilege to sail from one of the historic isles of the Mediterranean to another, nor do I know that in all cases it would be safe. In many cases besides Corsica and Sicily the traveller has to look to his ways. There are brigands to be met with still and as we travelled we heard of a British officer who had just been made captive as he wandered about in search of a day’s shooting. As you may well suppose, I gave the brigands a wide berth. I am quite content with being fleeced by guides and hotel-keepers. When I was in Australia, I was amused to learn that the last of the bushrangers had sailed to America to carry on a hotel. I fear that in many parts of the world the two callings have much in common. I believe the British pay no taxes – at any rate, they do not in Jerusalem – and this is one reason why we meet with such swarms of shady Greeks who claim to be British subjects. In this part of the world the *Civis Romanus sum* of old Palmerston seems to

me in danger of being carried a deal too far. Not that I am a Little Englander; I am, in fact, very much the reverse.

Over these waters sailed the hardy mariners of ancient Greece in search of the Golden Fleece, and the brave Theseus, as he went to do battle with the monster Minos, who demanded a yearly tribute of Athenian maids. We all went on deck to have a look at Patmos, where the Apostle John wrote that wondrous dream, the Revelation, and viewed with interest the white convent on the island which still bears his name.

In the Sea of Marmora we pass the Princes Islands, four of which are inhabited. In one of them is the grave of Sir Edward Barton, the first resident British Ambassador in Turkey. He was sent by Queen Elizabeth to the Sultan Mahommed III., and died in 1507. Another of them, Plati, was purchased by Sir H. Bulwer while Ambassador to Constantinople. He built a castle on it, which is now falling into ruins, and later sold the island to the ex-Khedive of Egypt, to whose family it still belongs. Steaming south, we pass Alexandria Troas, which was twice visited by St. Paul. On the first occasion he came down from Mysia and went to Macedonia; on the second, on his return from Greece, he had an interview with a large body of fellow-workers. It was there he restored Eutychus, who had fallen from an upper window in his sleep.

Next we pass the ancient island of Lesbos, one of the most beautiful in the Ægean Sea. Islands are around us everywhere. There is no end to them. The most thickly populated of them is Chio; another is Cos, of which we see the chief town, the birthplace of Hippocrates, the great physician. Then we pass Rhodes, famous for its renowned knights, who did battle with the ever-advancing Turk, of whom Luther had such fear, and its grand Colossus overthrown and broken in pieces by an earthquake fifty-six years after its erection, b. c. 224; and then we leave the lovely Mediterranean at Jaffa, where, according to Greek mythology, Andromeda was chained to the rock and delivered by Perseus, and where the prophet Jonah embarked when he tried to escape the command of God to go and warn Nineveh of its impending fate. Of course I went to the house where St. Peter lived, the dwelling of Simon the tanner, a very dreary, tumbledown old place, which required a good deal of climbing, rather trying in that sultry clime. And here I leave that wonderful Mediterranean over which the navies of all the world in all ages have swept.

‘Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee —  
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?  
Thy waters washed them power while they were free,  
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey  
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay  
Has dried up realms to deserts: not so thou;  
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves’ play —  
Time writes no wrinkles on thine azure brow —  
Such as Creation’s dawn beheld, thou rollest now.’

## CHAPTER VI ABOUT ATHENS

For the first time in my life, I realize the fact that the Mediterranean is a lake – calm and blue as the eyes we love. What astonishes me is the absence of life in these waters. All is barren as that dreary sail across the Indian Ocean from Ceylon to West Australia. Really, if it were not for the photographers, who are always at work on board, we should be rather dull. It is really wonderful the number of amateur photographers who have come out in the *Midnight Sun*, and are daily having recourse to their art; and sometimes the consequences are ludicrous. For instance, we have a considerable number of respectable married people on board. Amongst them are a young couple whose experience of matrimonial felicity has been, I suspect, somewhat of the shortest. One morning they were ‘far from the madding crowd,’ indulging in little familiarities, such as leaning on one another’s shoulders – quite proper, as we must all admit, but rather suited for private than public life. Well, a photographer had his eye on them, and straightway made them his victims. There they were, large and fully recognisable. His praiseworthy attempt was greeted with a roar of laughter, of which the victims, far away (the artist was on the upper deck), had not the remotest idea. Let me add the moral: let me beg the newly-married ones to beware of the photographers. More numerous than the photographers are the ladies and gentlemen who spend their mornings in writing their diaries – if with a view to publication, a sad look-out.

In due time we reach Attica, and are landed at the Piræus, which is busy now as when Themistocles planned the harbour and Pericles planted its walls, five miles in length. The town has quite a modern look; nothing of its ancient glory remains. Its modern history dates from 1834. A modern lighthouse marks the site of the tomb of Themistocles. A railway, made in 1869, now connects the Piræus with Athens, and it grows apace. In old times there was rarely to be seen any boat in the harbour. In 1871 the population was only 11,000; in 1890 it had grown to 36,000. About 6,000 vessels of over two and a half millions of tonnage, one half of which is in Greek bottoms, enter the harbour annually. As a town, it consists chiefly of commercial buildings and unpretending private residences. It has, however, an arsenal, a military and naval school, several handsome churches for the orthodox members of the Greek Church, an interesting museum of antiquities, and a gymnasium. Trains run to Athens through the whole day until midnight. We land in a homely quarter of the town. ‘It is in the spring,’ writes Edmond About, ‘one sees Attica in her glory, when the air is so clear and transparent that it seems as if one had only to put forth one’s hand to touch the furthest mountains; when it carries sounds so faithfully that one can hear the bleating of flocks half a mile away, and the cries of great eagles, which are lost to sight in the immensity of the skies.’

I find Athens hot and dusty – a fine white dust, which makes everything look desolate. I get hold of a plan of Athens, showing me how to make the most of six days, but as I have not that time to spare, one’s first thoughts turn naturally to the Acropolis, a rocky plateau of crystallized limestone, rising to about 200 feet. Romans, Goths, Byzantines, and Turks have done their best to make Athens a heap of ruins. It was well that Lord Elgin did so much to preserve some of the choicest relics of Athens by bringing them to England and sending them to the British Museum. Had he not done so, they would have been inevitably destroyed by the unspeakable Turk, a fact deeply to be deplored.

One night we had an amusing illustration of the qualification of the fair sex for the right to rule over man. There was a concert in the smoking-room, the finest apartment in the ship. Amongst the performers were some ladies, and a good many were auditors. Suddenly a large rat made its appearance, when all the ladies, shrieking, fled. I may not be equal to the New Woman – of course

she is far above me – but, at any rate, I am not afraid to face a rat. Fancy a rat appearing in the House of Commons with a lady speaker on her legs, and a Government of ladies seated gracefully and in the loveliest of toilettes! The result would be appalling and disastrous.

The country through which we passed was quite dried up, and quite prepared me for the tasteless beef and skinny fowl of which I was to partake afterwards at the Hôtel Grand Bretagne, where they charged me two francs for a cigar; and where, when I remonstrated, I was told that the taxes were so high that they could not afford to let me have one for less. There are a great many trees about, but they have all a dwarfed and dried-up appearance. Far off rises the great Acropolis; you may see it from the steps of the hotel, and the ruins on its top. The life of the streets amuses me. It is incessant and ever varying. The soldier is conspicuous, as he is everywhere on the Continent; priests in black robes and peculiar black hats are plentiful, grave and black-bearded, though I am told that in reality they have little hold on the people of Athens. I have been in one of the churches, very dark, and with a lot of ornamentation; and quite a number of people – very old ones – came and crossed themselves, after the Greek fashion, before a picture just inside the door. Ladies are to be seen, few of them with any particular personal charm, but all in the latest fashions of Paris; and there come the girls with pigtails. I see one of the French illustrated newspapers everywhere. Among the daily papers published in Athens are the *Ora* (Hour), the *Plinghensia* (Regeneration), *Neai Ideai* (New Idea), *Aion* (Era), *Toia* (Morning), and *Telegrafui* (The Telegram). The most curious people you see are the men from the country, with black waistcoats, white petticoats – I can give them no other name – dark hose, and antique-looking shoes turned up at the toes and decorated – why, I know not – with enormous tufts. The living objects I most pity are the forlorn, half-starved donkeys, loaded fore and aft with luggage, while in the centre, on his saddle, is seated his hard-hearted proprietor. Some of the shops are fine, but few of the houses are lofty – the most striking being modern buildings, built on the plan to admit as much air as possible, and to exclude the light. But you see no beggars in the streets, and that is a good sign. Greece has, as you know, the most democratic Government of any. The King, who is not very popular, reigns, but does not govern. The real power is in the hands of the Legislative Chamber – there is no Upper House – consisting of 150 members, all paid for their services, and elected by means of universal suffrage and the ballot every four years. The population of Athens is about 160,000, with the addition of 3,000 Armenian refugees who have found there a city of refuge. Education is free and compulsory, reaching from the lowest strata to the University, so that every lad of talent has a chance. If democracy can make a people happy and content and prosperous, the Greeks ought to be content. There must be a good many wealthy men at Athens, however, whom the democracy have wisely spared. It is not right to kill the goose that lays the golden egg, as is desired by some of our Socialists.

Modern Greece, with the exception of America, is the most republican Government in existence; at any rate, it is ahead of England in this respect. We want, or, rather, some people do, who do not know any better, to agitate for payment of members. I object because I have seen the mischief of paid members in all our colonies, and because when I part with my scanty cash I like to have value for my money; and as I know the average M.P., I think he is dear at any price. The men in office are bitterly opposed by the men who languish in the cold shade of Opposition, and that really seems the only line of cleavage. For instance, if a Minister proposes that a certain work should be done by a certain number of horses, the Opposition argue that oxen should be used, and so the battle rages, for the modern Greek, degenerate though he is, is still as fond of talk and windy declamation as any long-winded and ambitious M.P. at home. Ministers, though appointed by the King, are amenable to the Chamber, but under this system we do not hear of the great Parliament, such as we have at home or in Italy or France.

For administrative purposes Greece is divided into sixteen monarchies, governed by municipalities, who alone have the power to levy rates and taxes. These monarchies are divided into eparchies and domarchies, the later under the control of the mayor, elected by the people.

Thus in Greece alone, in the Old World, we have government of the people and for the people. For purposes of justice there are local courts; five Courts of Appeal, and a Supreme Court at Athens. In matters of education, again, Greece is far ahead of us. We want to connect the people with the Universities, so that the poorest lad may have his chance. In Greece this result is obtained. Ample provision is made for the elementary schools, leading from the lowest strata of society up to the Universities, free and compulsory – not that the latter provision needs to be enforced, as naturally there is a great desire for education all over the land. The Greek Church is the established one, but any undue zeal on the part of the priest is held in check both by law and the spirit of religious toleration. Among her subjects Greece reckons as many as 25,000 Moslems.

Passing out of the Piræus, to our right we notice a monument to the memory of one of the wild heroes of Grecian Independence, whose insolent followers were a great trouble to our Lord Byron during his fatal sojourn at Missolonghi. In due time we arrive within sight of the Temple of Theseus and the other well known landmarks familiar to the cultivated reader. Nevertheless, the approach to Athens is not very interesting, as we enter through one of its most homely quarters. The principal modern institutions are the Polytechnic School, divided into three branches – the School of Fine Art, the Industrial School, and the Holiday School, where on Sundays and feast-days instruction is given in writing, elementary drawing, etc.; there is also a School of Telegraphy. In the same neighbourhood is also to be found the Academy of Science; next to the Academy is the University, adorned with statues of the famous men who helped to make modern Greece. The classes at the University are practically free, and the number of students attending is generally between 3,000 and 4,000. The library in connection with the University has 100,000 volumes.

It is impossible to do justice to the activity of the life in these parts; there are many steamers in the harbour – I saw two steam away one morning. Naples seems a very sleepy place compared to the Piræus. Little white boats, with leg-of-mutton sails, skim the blue waters of the harbour all day long, and the men are lean and dark, and wonderfully active, a great contrast to our English sailors. Once upon a time, coming from New York, we called off Portland Bill for a pilot. It was midnight, and dark as Erebus, but we all sat up waiting for the pilot, to hear the English news. Suddenly there climbed up the ship's side, and stood on the deck in the full glare of light, two awful living mountains of flesh, as fat as beer and bacon could make them – a couple of English pilots. We had some skinny American ladies on board, and when they saw these men they uttered quite an appalling shriek. They had never seen such specimens of humanity before. I own I felt really ashamed of my fellow-countrymen, and asked myself why on earth men should make themselves such guys. Happily, in Australia I lost a couple of stone, and I have been mercifully preserved from laying on flesh ever since. Flesh is the great source of human depravity. With Falstaff, I hold the more of it the more frailty.

And now let me return to Athens, the Acropolis of which I see in all its glory, and on which by night lights gleam that you can see in the harbour, crowning the belt of bright lamps which by night glorify the whole front of the town. They show you Mars' Hill, where Paul preached the unknown God; the porch of the Erechtheum, sacred to the olive-tree, brought to Greece by Athene; and the Parthenon, which still attests the genius of Phidias. Of Athens it may be said:

‘Her shores are those whence many a mighty bard  
Caught inspiration glorious in their beams;  
Her hills the same that heroes died to guard,  
Her vales that fostered Art's divinest dreams.’

Modern Athens is bright and cheerful, the shops gay and lofty, with well-known Greek names. The latter remark also applies to the streets. The hotels are magnificent. The Hôtel d'Angleterre is well spoken of, and the dragoman Apostoles will be found an intelligent servant, who will arrange

for the traveller who is disposed to make an excursion in the Morea for food, lodging, mules or horses at a reasonable rate. The Hôtel Grand Bretagne, just opposite the palace – and a far finer building to look at – is about as good a hotel as I was ever in. The rooms seem awfully dark as you enter from the glare of the ever-shining sun, but the rooms are lofty, well ventilated, and everywhere you have marble floors and marble columns, and the feeding is good, considering what a parched-up land Greece is, and how dried-up its beef and skinny its poultry. I have seen cheaper hotels in Athens, such as the Hôtel des Îles Ionienic, the proprietor of which, a Greek from Corfu, strongly recommended it to me; but on the whole, in such a place as Athens, I should think it preferable to pay a little more for the comfort of a first-class hotel, even though it may make one indifferent to the ‘Laurels’ or the ‘Cedars’ of his own native land.

How to live rationally is an art the majority of Englishmen have not yet acquired. I leave Athens with regret; its people are all industrious. At any rate, there are no beggars in its streets; and if this be the result of its democratic Government, so much the better for the coming democracy, which, whether we like it or not, is sure to rule at home. Here the Government is popular, and the people are content. Manufactures are almost unknown. They have a woollen factory at Athens, and a cotton-mill in the Piræus, and there must be a busy agricultural population, as a good deal of the land between the Piræus and the capital is laid out in market-gardens. I am troubled as I think of our great cities, with their vices and slums. I hold, with the poet, God made the country and man the town.

It is a chequered history, that of Athens. Once it was occupied by the Goths. The Romans fortified it; but the ancient walls, which had been strengthened by Sylla, were unequal to its defence, and the barbarians became masters of the noble seats of the Muses and the Arts. Zosimus tells us that the walls of Athens were guarded by the goddess Minerva, with her formidable ægis, and by the angry phantom of Achilles, and that the conqueror was dismayed by the presence of the hostile gods of Greece. Yet, nevertheless, Alaric a second time mastered the city by means of his barbarian troops. It is wonderful that any remains of the Athens of its prime exist. As it is, it requires a good deal of enthusiasm to ‘do’ its ruins, with which photography has long made the world familiar. The glory of the Parthenon, however, remains. Gibbon tells us in the sack of Athens the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were about to set fire to them, when one of the chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, dissuaded them from the design by the profound observation that as long as the Greeks were exercised in the study of books they would never apply themselves to the exercise of arms. But, as Gibbon writes, the Gothic arms were less fatal to the schools of Athens than the establishment of a new religion, whose masters resolved every question into an article of faith, and condemned the infidel to eternal flames. For centuries Athens had flourished by means of her schools. After the settlement of the Roman Empire, it was filled with scholars from every part of the known world, even including students from Britain. In the suburbs of the city tradition still lingered of the Academy of the Platonists, the Lycæum of the Peripatetics, the Portico of the Stoics, and the Garden of Epicurus. The Attic schools of rhetoric and philosophy maintained their reputation from the Peloponnesian war to the reign of Justinian. It was he who suppressed the school which had given so many sages to mankind, and whose influences have quickened and invigorated the human intellect ever since. The art of oratory may soon be held to be almost a doubtful boon – at any rate, so far as senates and parliaments are concerned. It was not so when the eloquence of Demosthenes

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