

Historic Athens—Impressions of a Canadian

FOUR or five miles from the sea—that great inland sea, the Mediterranean, on or near whose shores arose the mightiest empires the world has ever seen—there rises above the level plains of Attica, a little hill. It is only about 150 feet high, 1,000 feet in length, and half as many in width. Here, centuries ago, a few buildings perched on the top of the rock, and surrounded by a palisade, formed the beginning of that capital whose fame has spread over all the world, and whose glory will never die.

Greece was and is a hard country—a land for the most part of desolate hills and bare, scanty forests, with but a few small rivers that are hardly navigable, and which are useless in summer. And yet, one forgets the Greece of true physical facts as one sails on, day after day, through the deep blue waters, along its coasts, among myriads of islands, bound for Piræus, the harbor of Athens.

Eternal summer smiles under the roof of a cloudless sky. Everywhere is perfect shelter; a coast abounding in deep bays and sunny coves; and scenery of the highest possible historical interest. One unconsciously looks for the Greek cities clustering richly together; cities shining with marble and built in fairy form; before them the still tranquil harbor; behind the purple valley, myrtle groves and green seas of waving corn. Instead, there are only visible, here and there, the simple little groups of low white houses with flat roofs, glistening in the sunshine, and nestling close to the water's edge, while at the back, as a shadow only of past glory, stand the ruins of marble temple or column.

The approach to the Piræus is wonderfully interesting. At the southern extremity of Attica, high up on a rocky ledge, there are the beautiful remains of the temple of Pallas Athena guarding the entrance to the harbor, while just before the narrow opening to the port is visible the first grand view of the bold square Acropolis crowned by the Parthenon. When once the narrow entrance is passed, the Piræus opens up into a great sheet of water. The little modern town, with its pretty public garden, extends in a sort of circle round the harbor, and here are all the quaint small shops with their beautiful polished marbles and pottery, their fruits and picturesque cloths.

One hastens, however, to get on to Athens; just five miles away, and which is reached by road or rail. Modern Athens, though so bright and charming, with its good shops, hotels, open squares and shady gardens, will stir no one's soul. It is the dream, the ideal of it, as it is in back ages, in the zenith of its power, that will ever draw men's hearts.

And now, just as then, the chief glory of Athens is undoubtedly the citadel or Acropolis, on which stand those past monuments of greatness which even in their present ruined state excite the admiration of the world.

Wherever one goes in the city one's eyes turn at all moments towards that rock to look untrudgingly at a splendor that has outlived twenty centuries.

In ages past, when Athens had reached the proud position as supreme head of the Greek empire, it was Pericles who persuaded his art-loving citizens to adorn their city with such masterpieces of architecture, incomparable statuary and lasting monuments. The most noteworthy work of his time and later is confined to the Acropolis.

At the foot of the magnificent Propylæa, or gateway, as one enters, there are still visible marks of the chariot wheels of centuries ago, and the marble steps of approach to the sacred enclosure of the citadel are worn with the feet of the Athenian pilgrims of old. The Acropolis formerly must have been one huge mass of marble architecture and statuary in ivory gold and bronze. Now, the most beautiful temples still standing are the Propylæa already mentioned, the Erechtheum and the Parthenon. Its featured seem modeled after the hills that lie with such clearness of form against the blue sky behind. It is built in the Doric style, of pure white marble, and is certainly the best specimen of Greek architecture. The subject of the wonderful frieze that ornamented it was the procession of a festival held in honor of Athena, to whom also the temple is dedicated. There is an awe-inspiring grandeur about these mountainous masses of ruins, in the great roofless columns, and in the solitude which surrounds one everywhere that suggests another world. One has to stand on the Acropolis to feel antiquity. Things are so old here that the rest of Europe seems new-born in comparison.

And so one wanders on, day after day, among all these, and other ancient wonders. There is the so-called Temple of Theseus to see; the Phnyx Hill, with its steps and pulpit cut in the rock, and from where orators addressed the Assembly, the supposed prison of Socrates; and also the theatres. Of these last, that of Dionysius is the best preserved. It lies on the southern slope of the Acropolis, and like all Greek theatres is semi-circular in form and open to the sky, with beautiful carved marble chairs and platforms for actors and orchestra. Originally it must have been able to seat as many as thirty thousand spectators.

The most thrilling part of all to us, however, is the Acropolis, or Mar's Hill, where St. Paul preached. It is a great bare brown rock standing below the Acropolis, and looks as though it has been swept up by an enormous tidal wave. Who that has stood here with daylight showing faintly in the east, and watched the sun rise amid an unspeakable glory, lighting up the whole fair city, could help crying out now, as

St. Paul did ages ago from the same spot, "God made the world. He is Lord of Heaven and earth."

The "Orthodox" Greek churches are extremely curious and beautiful. They are mostly Byzantine in style. The oldest one, in the very centre of the Main street, is remarkable for the numerous occasions on which it has been able to withstand devastation. It is a gem of a church, very minute, and contains endless relics. The museums are storehouses of all that is priceless in the way of statuary, vases, reliefs and friezes. The best master-pieces of Greek sculpture have perished, and we only know them through Roman copies, but there are parts here at least of a genius of the highest culture in form that has ever been. The statues are strikingly lifelike, and absolutely natural in

took our way to a tramcar, which for farthing tickets carried folk to the railway station. We gave the conductor a silver coin equal to a sixpence, and waited for the change. After making it clear that we were waiting, the conductor gave us back twopence. Then Genghiz took out his knife and began sharpening it on the seat, glaring meanwhile at the conductor, and muttering bad words in Greek. Soon we had our full change. Genghiz is of Tartar extraction, and when he looks angry and shows weapons only the stout-hearted can resist him.

At the station we took first-class tickets and entered the train. When the guard came round to inspect, he said that we must pay more money, as we were traveling first-class with second-class tickets. Genghiz was furious to think that we had been betrayed, and

the guide. We chose several other wishes, and sat down.

The soup we could not eat because of the olive oil in it, but the guide ate both portions with great gusto. We tried the country wine, and nearly burnt our tongues off. Here again the guide came to our rescue, and drank it all up. Then we had two special bottles of horrid, acrid red stuff which the guide also drank. Meanwhile we walked into bread, fish, veal, and glorious grapes. When it was all over we offered to pay. The guide said it came to nine and a half francs. We protested, and asked for details. The guide wrote down the price of each item on a piece of folded pink paper, and we saw that the charges were worthy of the Carlton.

Then we called for the bill of fare, and were told that there was none. They did not have such a thing. I opened the sheet of pink paper, however, and found all the menu written down, with the prices opposite. We had been charged exactly four times for everything we had ordered. Genghiz was thoroughly roused, and commanded the waiter to go for the police, whereupon the guide began blustering and shouting that he would have us killed. A peep at the long, ugly knife that Genghiz was so fond of made him quieter, and he tried to bolt. But we meant to frighten him properly, and escorted him outside, Genghiz threatening to slice his gizzard in seventeen different directions if he attempted to escape. When we reached the vicinity of the square we pushed him into a dirty gutter, and told him to leave, which he did with more speed than dignity. Then we tried a guide without an evangelical appearance.

This man was horrified to hear British tourists should have been so treated; it was enough to make Mr. Gladstone turn in his grave. We desired to post some letters, and requested our guide to take us to the post-office. The guide suggested that we should sit down in a coffee house while he ran off and did our business. Genghiz Khan just looked at him. At the post office we got stamps for our letters, and thence went to the telegraph desk. While waiting there the guide asked me for my letters so that he might go round the corner and drop them into the post box. I was about to comply, when Genghiz interfered, and indignantly asked me if I wanted to make the man a present of the stamps. My telegram having been despatched with the assistance of the guide, we then departed for the British Embassy, where I had some small business to do. There I asked about the price of a telegram to Turkey. We then checked my change, and found I had been charged two pence a word too much, whereupon Genghiz Khan got up in a rage, and ran out to the door to find the guide. When I had finished my business I went out, and found Genghiz the centre of an interested crowd, all gazing into the distance. Genghiz waved his stick, and asked me if I couldn't see the guide running for his life.

We now bought a packet of Egyptian cigarettes and entered a cafe, where we thought a cup of Turkish coffee would soothe our nerves and put us in a more suitable frame of mind for visiting the Acropolis. The coffee was first-class, and Genghiz Khan began to expand as he sniffed its fragrance, and opened

spread abroad, and even the carriage drivers would have none of us. But we found one man coming from the suburbs, and had boarded him before he had time to discover that we were Tartars. We said we wanted to go to the Acropolis, and he replied that as the distance was great we would have to pay fifteen francs. Genghiz pretended not to understand and just waved and nodded. It took five minutes to drive to the bottom of the hill and a few more to crawl up the low eminence crowned by the Parthenon. Near the top we were besieged by crowds of people trying to sell us picture post cards and sheets of stamps. I asked one man whose stamps were old and varied how much he wanted for them. He said five francs. Incautiously I offered fifty centimes, one-tenth of his own price, and he leapt at the money. Genghiz Khan then offered a penny for a similar sheet, and had thousands pressed upon him.

An official rescued us from the crowd, and politely offered to show us the Parthenon. We thanked him, and followed. As we climbed up the broad steps and passed through a gateway of massive stone, our self-constituted guide rather disappointed us, for he began speculating upon the grandeur and beauty of these wonderful old ruins. We told him to shut up. He kept quiet until we came to the place where Socrates had been wont to address the assembled Greeks, and then he burst out into impassioned eulogy upon the mighty dead, and so forth. I asked him who was Socrates. With real indignation he stated that Socrates was the greatest philosopher that ever lived, and that— But I interrupted to ask if Socrates was still alive. I apologize to the reader for inflicting upon him this well known joke, but Genghiz had never read Mark Twain, and was so delighted with my wit that he gave me a silver cigarette box.

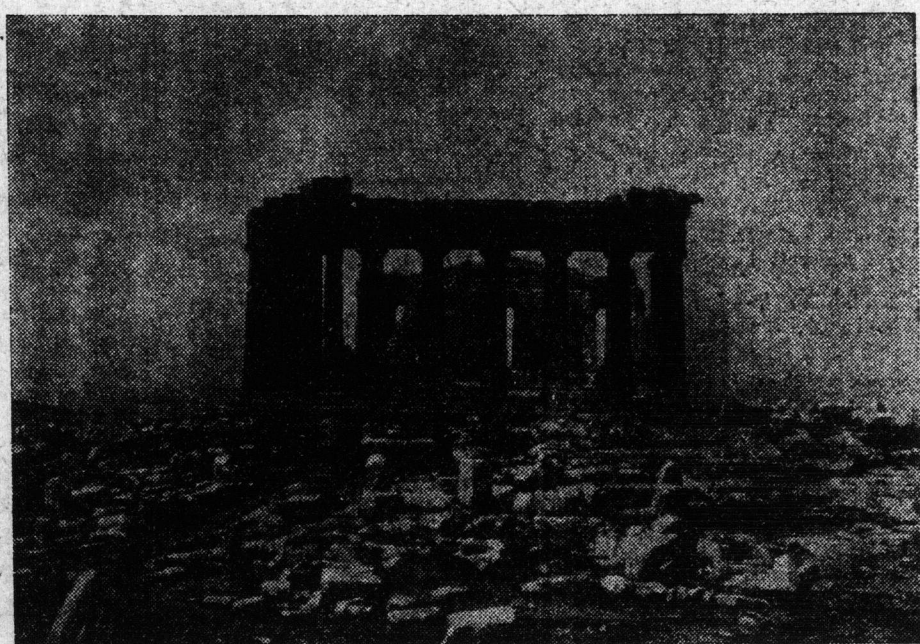
Our saddened guide continued to ramble on about the ancient Greeks in an ecstatic manner, until Genghiz asked him why the Greeks, once so great, were so rotten now. The poor man took it much to heart, and almost wept out that Greece had been the "bastion of Europe," and that Mr. Gladstone was the greatest friend the Greeks had ever had. Genghiz told him to stow Mr. Gladstone, and to explain why the Greeks ran away from the Turks. When I began to take photographs our guide recovered courage. He said that we must both go and stand in the gate of the parthenon, and that he would take the photograph, showing us standing upon historic ground. I just glared at him. Then he took up his position in the very middle of my picture, which made me threaten to wring his neck. He could only stammer out that I seemed a very different gentleman from Mr. Gladstone. This remark brought him into greater peril than he guessed, but I let it pass. When we returned to our carriage he asked for his pourboire. Genghiz affected not to understand him, and begged to know why we should give him a present. He pointed out his services, and the many beautiful things he had shown us, adding that his usual fee was five francs. But Genghiz said that he had volunteered to guide us, and that we took him for a government official who had accompanied us for his own pleasure. This time he invoked the aid of the stamp dealers, a vicious-looking crowd, and we thought it well to pay him a franc and depart.

When we discarded our cabman at the railway station we gave him three francs instead of fifteen. The consequence was a revolution, out of which we were rescued by the police. At the booking office I watched Genghiz with great interest—he was paymaster for the day—and was delighted to hear him enter into loud argument with the clerk, the while a long queue of people waited patiently. He emerged smiling and triumphant. "That devil tried to cheat me, but I tell the fool he catch a Tartar." Give me Genghiz the next time I am sightseeing.—The Scottish Review.

AULD REEKIE REVISITED

A correspondent, writing in Country Life, giving his impressions on revisiting Edinburgh after an absence of twenty years, says: The Braid Hills have been made to furnish a golf course, and Blackford Hill, from which Marmion was made to enter the city for the express purpose of giving Sir Walter Scott an opportunity of describing the view dearest to his heart, has been laid out with walks of a beauty that it would be hard to parallel anywhere. We were glad to notice one or two specimens of the Newhaven fishwives, who seemed to have changed in no way with the changing times. There were the same bright colored print dress, the same heavy creel of fish hanging over the shoulders, the same pink and white complexion that distinguished these women when "Callin' Herrin" was written.

The writer notes with pleasure the look of increased sobriety, which was very noticeable. Indeed times have changed much since the late Lord Cockburn's circuit days, when he tells us, at one house, where the Bar was entertained, a man servant's duty was to watch the guests go under the table and then loosen their neckcloths. At the dinner at which the writer in our contemporary was present, there were among fifty people only two or three who tasted alcohol at all. With all this there is an increase of politeness (he adds) that Stevenson, who liked the old manners, would, perhaps, have been rather more inclined to ban than to bless. —Edinburgh Scotsman.



View of Athens: Showing the Acropolis and Parthenon; Theatre of Dionysius Below, at Right Hand Side; Temple of Theseus More in the Foreground.

proportion. The Greeks placed beauty next to goodness and made nature their model—no more fitting mistress could ever be.

How was it, one asks; that whatever came into the hands of these Greeks became transmuted into gold? How was it that they, who had received from Egypt their first ideas of portraiture of a human form, afterwards soared into regions of the ideal, and created in marble or metals, a beauty more exquisite than can be found on earth—a vision, as it were, of some unknown, yet not unimaginable world? How was it, too, that Asia was only their "Dame's school," and that they discovered the greater branches of knowledge themselves—that they who had learnt in Babylon to divide the day into twelve parts afterwards exalted astronomy into a perfect science? How was it, above all, that so small a country could exert so remarkable an influence on the course of events and on the intellectual prowess of mankind? These and other thoughts occur as one looks over the fair city and goes back in imagination to the time of gods and goddesses meeting Olympus with the great Zeus rising above its cloudy height. If it be only the poets' imagination which has moved the world, still, love and hate, life and death, joy and sorrow, pulsated then in the souls of men as now, and Helen's was the face that launched the ships and set their hearts on fire. Theirs was, too, the imagination ready to receive immortalities, and to create them afresh. Oh, imagination divine! that strove after perfection, that sought completion, that reaches an ideal, for where there is this, there will be art and poetry and song.

A TOURIST'S LOT IN ATHENS

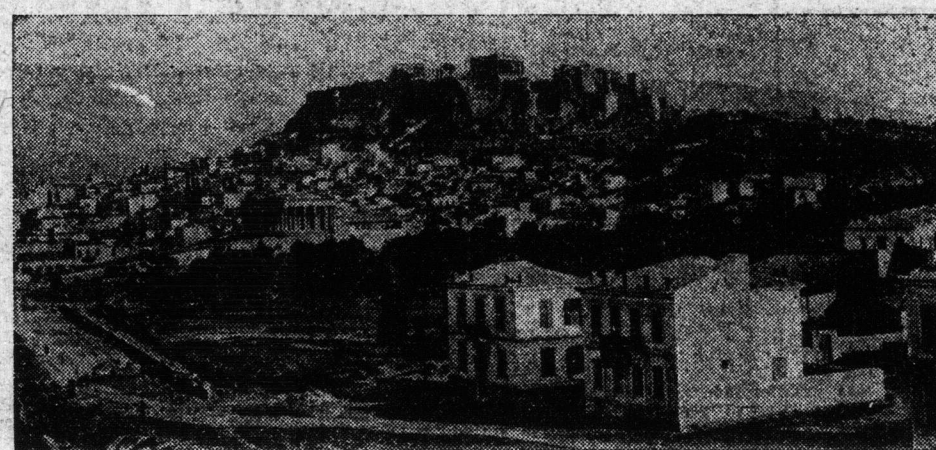
Mr. Djingheuz was my fellow-passenger on board a steamer voyaging between Marseilles and Constantinople, and, of course, I called him Genghiz Khan within five minutes of our becoming acquainted. He was a Russian from the Caucasus, and had no quarrel with the name. He had been in England, and had learnt that everybody there was eccentric, both in manner and sentiment. That he should be thus nick-named by a perfect stranger was entirely consonant with his ideas of the British.

Genghiz was a great student of the classics, and when we sailed up to Piræus he said we must surely visit Athens together. He told me all about Mr. Gladstone's championship of Greece, and added that every Greek dining-room was adorned by an enlarged photograph of our great statesman, and every church altar ornamented by his portrait in oils. Genghiz has much of the spirit of truth in him, but less of the letter. When the anchor dropped he said to me, "Come!" and we stumbled down the gangway into a boat. Two ruffians paddled us ashore in thirty seconds, and demanded a franc apiece for their services. I paid, but Genghiz glared at his boatman and gave nothing. Genghiz is very fierce to look at, so the boatman did not press the matter.

Having landed, we were assailed by many well dressed and gentlemanly-looking conspirators, who spoke English and American with great fluency. Genghiz said that I must leave them to him, for he declared me unfit to deal with Greek "peoples." The guides melted away from before Genghiz, and we be-

declared that we would change carriages sooner than be further molested. The conductor, seeing that we could not be induced to pay, said we might remain, particularly as the other gentleman was English. Here he bowed to me, and showed me the portrait of Mr. Gladstone in a locket containing his wife's hair. When the conductor had gone, a Greek gentleman in the compartment asked to look at our tickets, which he declared were perfectly in order. He said the man had only been trying to get money out of us. Genghiz asked how much we ought to have paid for our tickets, and the gentleman having explained the prices, we counted our change, and found that we had been charged for return tickets, but had only received single ones. That made Genghiz fairly grind his teeth.

On reaching Athens, we were again besieged by crowds of respectfully-dressed men with sinister countenances. We chose one who bore a slightly evangelical look, and who



The Parthenon (Pallas Athena) on the Acropolis, Athens

spoke English very badly, thinking perhaps that he might be more genuinely Greek than the others, who evidently were sophisticated in the highest degree. This man wanted a sovereign to take us round, whereupon we moved away to another street. But he followed us, and eventually he agreed to come for three francs, Genghiz Khan demonstrating that for this sum in Greece a man and his whole family might live for a week. We demanded first to be taken to a restaurant, where we might have breakfast, and cleanse our palates of all recollections of the vile cuisine of our steamer. A Turkish pillay, suggested our guide. The very thing, we declared.

We left the politer parts of the town, and entered a region of dark lanes and low vegetable shops. Genghiz wondered if the man thought us such fools as to allow ourselves to be murdered. In case, he took out his revolver, and began blowing down the barrel and snapping the trigger. Then he stopped at a wooden railing and commenced stropping his knife. The guide took note of these preparations, and remarked that we would soon come to the place. When we did, Genghiz walked straight into the kitchen and looked into all the pots. There was no pillay, a fact which he carefully and threateningly pointed out to

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