

AGORA AND AREOPAGUS.

BY J. B. GREENWOOD.

"I cannot make the Bible seem real," said a schoolmate. "I read it as if it were a fairy tale or ancient legend. It does not seem as if the people it tells of had really lived and walked about and talked as we do."

Many others have probably the same difficulty, especially we who live in America for the countries of the Bible are so distant and their customs so strange to us that we cannot imagine how Abraham or David or Peter dressed or lived or talked, and hence they seem shadowy and unreal. I have thought much of this lately, for when I came to Athens and said to myself, "The Apostle Paul was once here," I felt almost an electric thrill run through me as if for the first time I realized that such a man as the Apostle Paul had really lived because I was walking where he once had walked and seeing sights he once had seen. And as "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," so when, according to his description of himself in the third chapter of his first letter to the Thessalonians, from whom he had been reluctantly separated and sent to Athens for safety, we pictured him as longing for his absent friends, night and day praying exceedingly that he might see their faces, desiring so greatly to hear from them that, when he could no longer forbear, he sent Timothy, his only companion, to them, thinking it better to be left alone for a season, if by that means he might hear the sooner, he became a man with feelings like our own and a reality.

And, anxious to make sure that I walked where he did, I opened my Bible to learn the particulars of his stay in Athens. I read first: "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews and with the devout persons and in the market daily with those that met with him." Acts 17: 17. All memory of the synagogue has passed away, but the place of the market is attested by a lasting memorial. The Emperors Julius and Augustus Caesar, although displeased with the attitude taken by the Athenians at times toward themselves, were yet so delighted by the beauty of the city that they made it large grants of money which the citizens employed in erecting a magnificent marble gateway at the entrance of the market or Agora, as the Greeks call it. This gateway was a sort of double porch or portico, of which the front row of four pillars, with the marble pediment or roof, and one pillar of the second row are still standing.

Of course, I went at once to this interesting spot. As I stood looking up at the inscription which covers the face of the marble slab resting upon the pillars, now black and dim from the action of the nearly 2,000 years that have looked upon it, the sun brought out in vivid characters one single word in the centre, KAISEROS, Caesar, the name which, from the great power the first Caesar took unto himself, has come to be a synonym for emperor; the Emperor William of Germany being often, as we all know, called the Kaiser William, and in its shortened form of Czar it is the usual designation of the Emperor of Russia.

So this beautiful gate must have been in its pristine magnificence when Paul's eyes looked upon it. The houses now are built thickly around as appears in the illustration, but the present Agora is quite new, and the more readily to imagine the busy scenes that lonely but enthusiastic preacher frequented I turned thither. Stall after stall I passed of fruit; white grapes with red cheeks hanging above oranges, citrons, lemons, pomegranates, quinces, apples, figs, dates, coconuts, almonds, and other nuts then stalls of vegetables, next of butter and cheese in great masses, both so white I could hardly conjecture their nature, while in the next stalls were great pans of black olives, a red paste of dried and ground tomatoes which, mixed with oil, forms a sauce for

cooked meats, pickles of various kinds, and bulging goatskins in their original shape the hair turned in, full of "honey of Hymettus;" then come little bakeries with windows full of round flat loaves of bread and dark ovens behind, while outside men are crouching beside their large mangals or braziers full of glowing charcoal, over which are frying sausages, fish, fritters and the like, which hungry passers-by purchase and eat as they pursue their course. Candy stalls are here, filled with candies no American child has seen, and beside them little coffee-shops, with strangely-dressed Greeks sitting sipping from tiny cups of black coffee as black as ink and sickly sweet, and smoking cigarettes between the sips, and lastly the meat stalls hung with game, par-

Mars, is distant but a short walk from the Agora. As the story goes, in very ancient times the god had murdered Halirrhothius, the son of Neptune, and was taken to the top of this hill and tried. Orestes also, after killing his mother Clytemnestra for the murder of his father Agamemnon the famous leader of the Trojan war on his return from Troy, was pursued from country to country for his crime by the avenging Furies, until on Areopagus he was tried by the gods, and when their vote proved a tie, was acquitted by the casting vote of Athena or Minerva.

Whether in consequence of ancient events changed in time into mythological legends, or whether these mythological legends were an afterthought to give the

the road through it, the Acropolis, on whose broad summit gleaned in the sunlight its glory, even in its ruins, the Parthenon the temple of the parthenos or virgin, Athena. There, too, was the tastefully ornamented Erechtheum, a temple dedicated to two deities, Minerva Polias and Pandrosium, and holding the dust of two ancient heroes, Cecrops and Erechtheus, while beside the Propylaea, which was not a temple but a fortification, was the temple of the winged Victory.

These in their ruined and shattered condition still meet the traveller's eye, but in St. Paul's time the sides and summit of the Acropolis were crowded with other temples, altars, caves, shrines, statues, one of the latter of ivory with raiment of gold, while the tips of the brazen spear and helmet of the gigantic statue of Minerva Promachos or Protectress, was visible from Sunium. On Mars' Hill itself, at its western end, were temples to the Furies, to Vulcan, to Minerva, and to numberless other gods, while the apostle probably looked down upon many altars smoking with incense at his feet, and on the plain in the rear stands the Theseum, a temple dedicated to Theseus and Hercules jointly, the best preserved of any ancient edifices and still wonderfully perfect in its old age, as appears from the illustration.

Can we wonder that the spirit of that godly man was stirred within him when he saw the city thus wholly given to idolatry, or that daily he frequented the busy, bustling, noisy Agora, to dispute? So rarely were the Greeks to worship any and every deity that when in the 40th Olympiad, 616 B.C., upon the occasion of a plague, one Epimenides advised the Athenians to propitiate the unknown gods, they at once complied, and "anonymous altars" became common throughout Greece. Epimenides himself came to Athens to establish the new worship and sacrificed on the Areopagus. Perhaps this altar continued to stand in the same place and may have suggested the text which the apostle used with so much tact,

the text of a sermon which reveals to us the judicious and kindly manner, the learning, the power, the enthusiasm, the earnestness, the becoming all things to all men that he might save some, which made the apostle to the Gentiles so successful in his work. Alas! for his audiences, they were too worldly wise to be moved by his words, though Dionysius, the Areopagite, probably one of the judges of the court, and Damaris, a woman, for he preached to both men and women, gave unto him.

The hand of man did nothing for this natural court-room as far as we can judge, except to cut a flight of steps in the rock at the southeast end, which a little care can discover in the illustration. As we descended these steps, broken and rough after so many centuries, I noticed that my companion went from side to side of each stair, and my inquiring look drew forth the answer: "I wish to step exactly where Paul did, if it is a possible thing." Some of God's saints, who never expect to visit the scenes of the apostle's earthly life or to stand in the flesh where he trod, are yet in a higher and better sense, endeavoring, with God's help, to follow in his footsteps. May all who read these lines be of that blessed number.—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

THOMAS CARLYLE'S temperance appeal to the "free and independent" voter long since became famous. He said—"No one oppresses thee, O free and independent franchiser; but does not this stupid pewter pot oppress thee? No son of Adam can bid thee come or go, but the absurd pot of heavy wet, this can and does! Thou hast the thrall, not of Cedric the Saxon, but of thy own brutal appetites and this scoured dish of liquor, and thou pratest of thy liberty! Thou entire blockhead!"



THE MARBLE GATEWAY OF THE AGORA, ATHENS. AREOPAGUS, OR MARS' HILL, FROM THE SOUTH.

tridges, ducks of beautiful plumage, rabbits and many birds new to me, as also with chickens, turkeys, beef, pork, mutton, and goat, which are adorned with bright ribbons and gilt paper on Christmas and New Year's eves.

The little narrow lanes of the market are constantly thronged, the noise and confusion great and we realize the zeal and enthusiasm of the great apostle, when we think of him as disputing here daily with those that met with him. It is no wonder that the curiosity of the hearers being excited by all that he tells them of a new and better religion they lead him to Mars' Hill where he can explain himself fully without interruption.

Areopagus, the hill of Ares, whom the Romans worshipped under the name of

place importance, the eastern end of Areopagus was the court-room of ancient Athens, a court-room open to the sky with no artificial adornment. Two stones in the middle were one for the accuser the other for the accused. Here Socrates was brought at the age of seventy on the charge of teaching strange gods, and here, 450 years after, a greater than Socrates was brought on the same charge, so to speak, for St. Paul was not brought here for trial. Hear the polite tone with which they ask him, "May we know what this strange doctrine whereof thou speakest is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know, therefore, what these things mean." Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and as he stood there rose abruptly before him, separated by a chasm but little wider than

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