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Literature.

TRAVELS.

GREECE AS A KINGDOM, BY MR. STRONG.

Mr. Strong is a banker and agent at Athens, as well as Consul to the Kings of Hanover and Bavaria. He also appears to enjoy the patronage of Otho; for as soon as the Sovereign of Greece was informed of his intention to write a book on the country, he issued an order to all the public offices to assist Mr. Strong "in the prosecution of his object, and allow him to inspect and make copies, notes, or extracts, of whatever documents were to be found in the archives." A statistical description compiled under such auspices was likely to be as full and complete as the original authorities would allow; but the peculiar position of the author was not such as to render him a clear and impartial critic on the subject of his book.

And this is the character of "Greece as a Kingdom." The statistics, both tabular and explanatory, are elaborate; whether they relate to general questions—as the population, the area of the country, the extent of cultivation, the nature of the soil and climate, and the leading particulars connected with agriculture, manufactures, commerce, navigation, the arts; or to matters more immediately connected with the state—as the finances, the army, the navy, justice, religion, and public education; whilst chapters devoted to Government and the Court give a view of the royal household, and the different official personages, as well as of the state of affairs previous to the arrival of the King, and an account of the constitution, such as it is.

On all these topics Mr. Strong's book may be advantageously consulted, especially by persons who take a great practical interest in Greece, for though we doubt whether some of the facts, especially as regards population, the quantity of land capable of cultivation, &c., are anything more than approximate accounts, yet they are the most correct that can be obtained. The descriptive commentary must be received *cum grano*; for Mr. Strong, however unconsciously, paints every thing in the most favourable light, or at least in a favourable light as he can.

Incidental passages, however, are scattered throughout the pages of Mr. Strong's book, that have a more general interest than mere statistics, conveying an account of the natural and unalterable features of the country, or the changes that time has made, or some particulars connected with the modern inhabitants and their pursuits. Such are the following extracts.

CLIMATE OF GREECE.

The climate of Greece generally is one of the finest in the world, and has always been celebrated for its mildness and salubrity. The air is dry and elastic, and the atmosphere so beautifully clear that space appears to diminish, and objects which are really at a distance seem close at hand. It is owing to this that the views are far more extensive in Greece than in most other latitudes, and not from the elevation of the spot on which the spectator stands. From the summit of Hymettus and Pentellicus, for instance, which are not more than three thousand feet above the level of the sea, the whole of Attica, Bœotia, Eubœa, most of the islands of the Ægean, and a great part of the Cyclades, are overlooked as in a map. From the top of the Acro-Corinthus the traveller discerns to the westward the whole of the Gulf of Corinth as far as the mountains beyond Missolonghi, whilst the view to the east embraces at one glance the islands of the Ægean, the background being formed by the noble chain of Hymettus. Even the Acropolis of Athens is distinctly visible from it, although at a distance of sixty geographical miles; and it is well known that, in former times, night-signals were exchanged between the two cities by means of rockets and other fireworks.

In summer the heat is very oppressive. During the months of July and August of this year, the thermometer at Athens stood for weeks together at 98 deg.—102 deg. Farenheit in the house, and in the open air at 108 deg.—112 deg. in the shade, notwithstanding the sea breeze. The islands are in general much cooler; and on the continent, elevated situations and the sides of mountains are chiefly selected for the sites of country-houses. During the summer months, not a single cloud is seen floating in the atmosphere, to keep off, if only for a moment, the intense heat of the sun's scorching rays; but the sky presents by day one continued mass of deep cerulean blue, and a blaze of brilliant stars by night.

CHANGES IN GREECE.

There is no doubt that in Greece the appearance of the country has changed most materially during the last twenty or thirty centuries; and though the position of mountains and rivers remains the same, even their aspect must have undergone a complete change. Herodotus says that the Athenians hunted bears in the forests on Mount Lycabettus, where now there is scarcely a shrub to be found a foot high. From other writers we know that Hymettus, Pentelicon, and Parnassus, were covered with forests to their