



AN OLD ATHENIAN
OF THE PRESENT DAY.

track is a mere shelf cut in the face of the cliff and so narrow that one could look out of the car window straight down into the blue water; then down along the winding shore, with views of rich green valleys and white villages half hidden amid dense foliage, and always, far or near, the glorious background of the mountains, and on the other side the wide, sparkling blue sea.

As we crossed the narrow isthmus of Corinth, only three miles in length, we went over the famous canal, so greatly needed and so long projected. It was empty yet, and from our elevation of nearly two hundred feet above it looked like a ditch, though it is really one hundred feet wide.

And now the water had changed sides, the Gulf of Corinth lay on our right hand, and we could look across its blue surface and tantalize ourselves with the reflection that Helicon and Delphi were there, and that one of these snow-capped mountain-peaks was Parnassus.

The richly-watered country between Corinth and Patras is almost a continuous vineyard, where the small seedless grape, known as the "dried currant," is grown. The name as well as the fruit, belongs to Corinth; we have only corrupted and borrowed it. Not knowing this I spent some hours that day looking for currant bushes, and seeing everywhere nothing but dwarf grape vines, I reluctantly concluded that Baedeker had made a mistake, until

the guard set me right, with a kindly tolerance of my ignorance that I appreciated.

As the Gulf of Corinth narrows towards the western end its scenery is not surpassed by any of the Italian lakes; in the dying light of the sunset it was beautiful as a dream.

We reached Patras after night and left it early next morning for Olympia. The railway had only been completed a few months and afforded but one though train each day, yet that is something to be thankful for. Before its completion it was only possible to visit Olympia at the expense of a good deal of time and trouble; now it is a charming ride of only five hours. The road follows the west coast, with the sea nearly always in sight, until at Pyrgos it turns to the south-east, and winds amongst the hills, gradually descending to the plain of the river Alpheios.

In spite of the near neighbourhood of the busy modern town of Pyrgos, in spite even of railway and telegraph, Olympia belongs entirely to the past, and, once yielded to its magic influence, one forgets, not



ALBANIAN PEASANT AS HE APPEARS IN
THE STREETS OF ATHENS.