

INTRODUCTION.

THE flight of cranes, murmur of bees that from their hollows in the rocks seek the spring flowers, swarming of flies to the spring milk, the west wind waving the grain, and the east and south raising the waves of the Icarian Sea; man, conscious of beauty in the world around, labouring upon the soil, tending his herds, labouring at the loom, the forge, the potter's wheel, and by the work of his hands adding new beauty; man, worshipping on hills and heaths the powers of Nature; sacrificing to the power of the air by lifting the head of the ox, and causing the blood of sacrifice to spirt towards the sky, sacrificing to the power of the sea by slaying the victim where its blood reddens the wave, and to the power of the under-world by making the blood pour from the lowered neck into a hollow of the ground; each warrior-chief his people's priest, earth, sea, and air, temple and Gods in one; the wealth and the worship of Nature, were in Homer's world. It was still night over Europe. Our earliest rays of intellectual light were yet to spread along the shores of the Mediterranean from that dawn in the east which first shone upon Greece.

Close to the source of light, closer than men of Attic or Achaian Greece, were the kindred people on the isles and mainland of that Asian shore to which afterwards the Greeks across the sea sent colonies. Here, in a far past to which we can assign no date, perhaps in the island of Chios, by the coast of Lydia, Homer lived. The energies of man, much occupied with strife, were shaping, under happiest conditions of race, soil, and climate, a