

Books and Authors.

A NEW HISTORY OF GREECE.

In the light of impending events in the East, a new history of Greece is opportune, and especially so in the case of a work written from a new point of view. Greek nationality is a subject of growing interest among thoughtful men, and if, as is more than probable, Greece is about to add a new and stirring chapter to the long story of her struggles and achievements, her history may profitably be read from the Hellenic standpoint. With Grote and Curtius, the history of Greece as an autonomy ends with the battle of Chæroneia, in 338 B. C., and the magnificent lion which once crowned the tumulus on that memorable field was the memorial of a dead nationality.

Mr. Timayenis is a Greek, and has written the history of his race with a profound hold upon its historic continuity. Hellenism, which Mr. Symonds declares was never territorial, but the intangible, pervasive spirit of the Greek race, he believes had definite geographical limits, and still exists in its integrity within the boundaries of modern Greece. This conception of Greek history is radically divergent from that held by those historians whom the world has accepted as authorities, and in several important particulars puts Mr. Timayenis in antagonism to the standard works in this department, and to opinions generally held by scholars. He sketches the early development of Greece with a bold, free hand, and by virtue perhaps of his race affinity with the people of that far-off time, succeeds in giving to his narrative a color and freshness which one misses in other records of the same period. The struggle between Greece and Asia is told with uncommon vigor and vivacity, the descriptions of the great battles notably gaining in impressiveness and interest under a Greek hand. This human, sympathetic interest is one of the most striking features of this work, and recalls the remark that the history of a race ought always to be written by a man born of it. The glory of Athens under Pericles, and her transient successes and subsequent disasters in the Peloponnesian war, are outlined with considerable pictorial power; Mr. Timayenis taking issue with Grote on the question of responsibility for the struggle by throwing it on Athens. His estimate of the motives and character of Cleon is also at variance with the older historian.

It is, however, his conception of Philip and Alexander and of the Macedonian conquest which emphasizes his divergence from the commonly accepted view of Greek national development. He claims for these conquerors of ancient Hellas Hellenic descent and the Hellenic spirit. In his view they were no semi-barbarians, but members of a Greek tribe whose germs of culture under harder conditions had been longer in coming to maturity, but who became, when the hour was ripe, the true representatives of Greek genius and spirit, destined to open a new and glorious chapter of Hellenic history and to extend almost immeasurably its territorial limits and its intellectual dominion. Demosthenes is no longer the eloquent statesman, staking his fate on the preservation of his country's liberty, but the mistaken and short-sighted patriot, blind to the true historical development of Greece, and unwisely provoking a hopeless struggle against destiny. This view is not likely to be generally accepted, but it is very skillfully set forth. The Macedonian conquest of Asia, and the consequent diffusion of Hellenism throughout the East, are graphically described, and in their fullness and interest add not a little to the value of the work.

The narrative of the subsequent vicissitudes of the Greek race, of its decline under the Eastern empire and its restive bondage under Turkish rule, is hurried and unsatisfactory. The charge of plagiarism which some reviewers have brought against this part of Mr. Timayenis's work is utterly unwarranted in view of his frank acknowledgment of the use of authorities, but looseness of construction and a falling off in literary interest and power are unmistakable, and are doubtless due in great measure to haste. The recital of the struggle against Turkey out of which the modern kingdom of Greece had its birth, and a succinct account of subsequent progress and of the present status of Greece politically, commercially and intellectually, complete this unbroken survey of the Greek race from its earliest appearance in history to the present time.

The modern Greek Mr. Timayenis regards as the lineal descendant of the men who fought at Marathon, built the Parthenon, conquered Asia, and gave the whole world an impulse toward freedom and beauty which has made all ages and nations their debtors. He rejects utterly the theory that Greece has been practically repopulated by fusion with and introduction of other and lower races, affirms that the only true settlement of the Eastern question involves the restoration of all

their ancient territory to the Greeks and the surrender of Constantinople to their keeping, and believes that Greece still possesses within herself the elements of a vigorous national life. Such a view, picturesquely set forth, will have great interest for all who are following the course of events in the East, even if it fails to command their assent.

Mr. Timayenis's history is very unequal in parts, as has been indicated, and is occasionally marred by an exuberance of Greek complacency, but it has the striking merits of comprehensiveness, originality, picturesqueness, and a certain contemporary interest, which make it very entertaining to the general reader, without diminishing its value to the student.

¹ *A History of Greece from the Earliest Times to the Present.*
By T. T. Timayenis. B. D. Appleton & Co.