

are bought by people who have but one at a time, and just wear it whilst it will hang together. I sold one that I was forced to take through having soiled it. I got a shilling for it from a decent neighbour, and when it was washed she showed me how thin it had gone. I felt properly shamed, and I made up my mind to bide by the loss if I had a misfortune of the sort again, for I would never take money for such another. There's a better article made of flannelette, or cotton-flannel, that wears well. These have duck, or shaped collars, with long points. For machining only, these are a shilling a dozen; for finishing out and out, sixteenpence, or, with two vents or gussets, one and five. This is at a tip-top warehouse. For handkerchief hemming a penny farthing a dozen, or fifteen pence a gross, is paid. A girl I know does handkerchiefs, and gets ten shillings a week or so without expenses off. One week she'd been at it nearly night and day. She was saving for a new gown.

She carried in fifteen shillings'-worth of work, and the master said she was earning too much, and knocked off a shilling!"

"Why, that was not honest," said Susan. "Surely she would not submit to that!"

"She had to do, or no more work from that place. She cried bitterly when she told about it."

"But out of the sixteen hours you must have taken time for meals," said Susan.

"Not me. The teapot was always on the hob, or a jug of coffee and the bread on the table; but we did not leave off. We lost too much time in fetching and carrying work for that. We snatched a bite and a drink as we could. I told you that a woman needed the best of health for shirt machining, which was my work. Of course you only want to look in the shop windows to know what beautiful garments and costly materials pass through first-class machinists' hands,

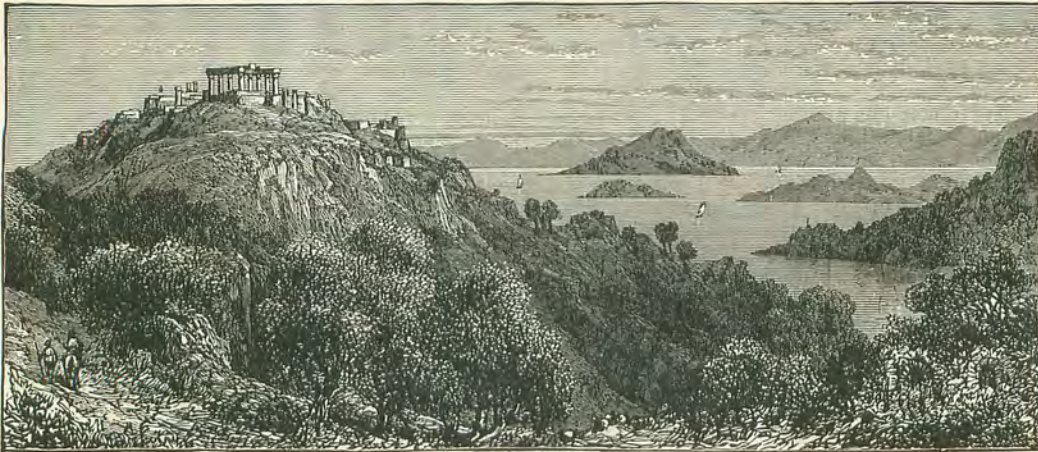
but I never had to do with such. Even shirt-makers do better as indoor workers. They are first served, no orders being given out till they are supplied, and the machines belong to the employers. Take my advice and get work as an indoor hand if you can, seeing you have only yourself to consider."

Susan thanked Mrs. Wilkins very heartily for her information and advice, but said, "I suppose only real good workers get indoor employment. I must try at home first, I think."

"Perhaps it will be best," said Mrs. Wilkins, "if you must have a try at it; but you know what I think of the trade."

After a kindly leave-taking, Susan returned to Morton Place, more than ever concerned for and anxious to help her neighbours, and more full of womanly sympathy for them as she realised how wearing and ceaseless must be the toil by which they gained their bread.

(To be continued.)



### GREEK PEASANT GIRLS, AND HOW THEY LIVE.

It is a warm day in May, warm as it would rarely be in an English July or August; down from the cloudless brilliant blue of the heavens the sun sends his burning beams; already the freshness of spring has passed, and the earth looks parched and dry. Away in the distance the dark shadows are strongly defined on the hills, which lift their graceful outlines into the sky, their sides hardly clothed by a single tree or shrub. The azure and gold of the island-studded sea extends away to the verge of the horizon. A drowsy heat is in the clear fine air; great grasshoppers, a couple of inches long, flit from one of the tall amaranth plants to another; green lizards flash here and there amidst the lower vegetation, or cross the path with a speed that defies capture, hastening to their little white nests, which hang like fleecy balls from the branches of the few stunted bushes or are hidden amongst the stones; meek-looking goats with pendant ears, and thin dingy-coloured sheep, patiently crop the dusty grass from which an English-bred animal would turn in disgust. Nothing preserves its green hue but the young vine shoots, destined to fade too into a dirty grey and yellow as the summer goes on and the heat increases.

This is a Greek landscape; a landscape such

as one may see almost anywhere in that wonderful old-young land of Hellas, which awoke some seventy years ago from a sleep of twenty centuries.

In the midst of a field a peasant girl sits on a stone, resting, as people rest in tropical or semi-tropical countries, for the mere pleasure of being still, only her black eyes seem on the alert, glancing here and there, taking in all around her, and appearing to seek for the least thing new or strange in the familiar scene. It is these eyes which chiefly distinguish her from the Oriental, the Turkish, or Syrian woman, who could continue to gaze at vacancy for hours together, her large full orbs showing no consciousness of any external object. These same restless eyes light up a face certainly not pretty, but distinctly refined in type. Over her head she has twisted a kerchief of coloured cotton stuff—she probably has an embroidered one for Sundays and feast days—and from its material and the arrangements of its folds the initiated could tell with accuracy what is her native province, and even her native district. Below her long bed-gown-like white garment her bare brown ankles appear, while on her feet she wears heelless leather shoes. Around her waist a sash is fastened; she has a long

apron, and over all a jacket of white woollen stuff bordered with black.

What sort of life does this girl lead? Well, it differs widely enough from that of our country lasses in England; she lacks a good many of their advantages, but also several of their troubles and cares; for she lives in a land where the wants of man are few and easily supplied, where warm clothes or comfortable dwellings are little needed during at least nine months of the year.

Probably when little Maria, or Photiné, or Sophia (it matters little what name we give her), was born, her parents did not receive her with as much joy as they would have done had she been a boy; at least unless they were well-off people already provided with sons enough. Daughters are expensive articles in a Greek peasant family; they cannot earn much, and they must be provided with a dowry; for without it, however attractive they may be, they will scarcely be likely to find a husband; and an old maid is deemed a disgrace to the family to which she belongs, or at least a burden on its resources.

So Photiné's father, while she was still swathed up in the bands and bandages which gave her no power of moving her limbs, made

her look like a juvenile mummy, and generally rendered her infant life a misery to her, began to think of laying by something for her *preeka*, and her mother considered what collars and waist-buckles and bracelets she would take out of her store to give to her daughter on her wedding-day.

But Photiné as yet was serenely indifferent to such matters, and lay peacefully in her little wooden cradle, formed of a block of wood hollowed out in the centre, while her mother or an elder sister soothed her to sleep with quaint old cradle songs.

When four or five months old, Photiné was baptised, and received an official name, having been until then only the *paidaki* (the baby). Her godmother carried her to the church, and the *papas* (the village priest), having anointed her with oil, plunged her into a great caldron of water, immersing her whole body; then she was dressed in fresh garments as a symbol of her new position as a member of the Christian Church, and carried back to her mother, who was waiting at home; for it is not customary in Greece for a mother to attend the baptism of her child.

The years passed by, and Photiné grew; by-and-by she was able to toddle about, and when her mother went to the fields to work, she would carry her on her back and set her down to play the livelong day in the sun, or to sleep in the shade of the grey-green olive trees. In the winter things were not so pleasant, for then Photiné, and her mother too very often, stayed at home; and home was only a one-roomed cottage, with probably nothing in it that we should call furniture; no table, nor chair, nor bed—only a few water and wine jars of baked clay and a couple of big boxes to contain clothes and ornaments. On a raised platform at one end the entire family slept, wrapped in rugs and sheep-skins, and always fully dressed. Sitting on the floor, they ate their simple food of coarse unleavened bread, cheese made from the milk of goats or sheep, olives and various vegetables prepared with oil, and now and then a little salt fish. Yes, it was very dreary in winter, and cold too, for the fire in one corner yielded more smoke than heat; and when in severe weather the goats and sheep were brought in to sleep in the house with their masters, Photiné was often glad to lie down beside them for the sake of the warmth they afforded.

Photiné rejoiced when the warmer air of February enabled her again to play out of doors; and then too Easter was near—Easter, the greatest festival of all the year. Lent came and dragged itself along, from "Clean Monday," when all traces of grease or oil were to be removed from cooking vessels in preparation for the great fast, to "Great Saturday" (Easter Saturday), when the festal lamb was slaughtered by each family. On Saturday evening all the inhabitants of the village flocked to the church for the Resurrection service, each carrying a candle. Photiné is very pleased to go, and stands holding her mother's dress, and looking with awe-struck eyes on the gilded pictures of the saints and the *Panagia*, the All Holy One, the Virgin, in the centre, with her Child on her knee, His hand raised in an attitude of benediction. These pictures are stiff and conventional generally; there is a traditional attitude and a traditional type for every figure; and the same Saint Michael, Saint George, and Saint Demetrius that Photiné saw in her church may be seen in almost every village church throughout the length and breadth of Greece.

Just before midnight the priest, followed by the congregation, went out into the open air and finished the service, standing before the church door. When he reached the part of the Gospel narrative which tells of Christ's resurrection, he paused, and waited till the sound of a bell told him that it was midnight;

then raising his voice he cried, "Christ hath risen!" and all the people, raising their candles above their heads, answered, "He hath risen!" Photiné does not attend much to the rest of the prayers; she is generally rather tired, and glad to return home to taste a very little of the soup which has been prepared from portions of the slaughtered lamb, and to go to sleep, while her parents finish their supper with hard-boiled eggs stained red, milk, and *koulouro*, or twisted cakes.

The next day is a great holiday. The father wears his clean white kilt, his embroidered jacket, and red cap; the mother dons her finest ornaments, her silk apron, and embroidered veil.

Photiné and her brothers and sisters have plenty of red-stained eggs given them, and with these they play a game very similar to what English boys call "hacking," before they finally eat them. The lamb is roasted whole over a wood fire, a long stake being run through its entire body, and kept perpetually turning till the meat is ready, and in the evening there is a great feast. There are other festivals too, which bring their own pleasures to Photiné—the feast of the patron saint of the church, when the village matrons and maidens dance hand in hand on the grass, their black hair hanging in long braids to their waist, and decorated with red tassels and ribbons and silver coins.

The New Year, when the King's Cake, in which the lucky coin is hidden, is divided and eaten; the Day of the Three Kings (our Twelfth Day), *Ta Photo* as it is called in Greek, which is the special feast of our little heroine; the May Feast of Flowers, when the young people go out to collect the purple and scarlet anemones, the golden wild chrysanthemums, and the big dog daisies, and form them into garlands for their own heads, and for the decoration of the doors of their cottages; the Feast of the Panagia in August, that of the Cross in September, besides saints' days too numerous to mention.

Photiné's life was not all play, however, even in her childhood. If the village boasted of a school for girls, she probably attended it more or less regularly. The law of Greece requires all children to attend school between the ages of five and twelve; but this provision is not very strictly carried out, and it may be that Photiné received no education at all, or that she was removed from school when but nine or ten, and sent to herd her father's sheep and goats.

Possibly, though, that eager desire of knowledge, which is a marked characteristic of most Greek children, induced the little girl to endeavour, even though employed during the day, to learn something, and that she attended an evening school, trudging along the road in the warm spring or summer nights, while the beautiful Greek moon, larger and brighter far than the moon we know at home in England, swam in the dark blue of the sky, and she sang to it softly—

"Pretty moon, that shines so brightly,  
Shine on me, that I may go  
To the school and foot it lightly,  
That my lessons I may know.  
Learn to stitch and learn to sew,  
And the things of God to know,  
Who walked on earth long years ago.  
Pretty, pretty Moon."

Photiné's religion is rather a vague thing, made up of many outward observances strictly executed, but lacking in inward life. She has quite a fund of superstitions. When March comes, she binds round her left wrist a piece of red thread, to avert the danger of sunstroke, and to protect her complexion from injury during the approaching summer. When a passer-by regards her with too curious a glance, she stretches out her finger towards him to

defend herself from the evil power of his eye. When the dark clouds are driven in long procession over the mountains, she crosses herself with awe, for Charon, she thinks, is leading the sorrowful band of the dead across the earth away to the other world.

In the house Photiné, as she grows older, helps in the household duties, which, as may be supposed, are simple enough.

With her mother and sisters she prepares the stuff and makes the clothes of the family, embroidering the jackets and veils in the traditional patterns which are handed down in peasant families for generations. Then she spins and weaves the cotton and silk stuffs, which are afterwards sold in the neighbouring town, and perhaps helps in the manufacture of the carpets and rugs so well known in the West, but under the name of *Turkey* carpets.

Out of doors she takes her share in the lighter agricultural labours, gathering the small black grapes which are known in England in their dried form as currants, or the larger ones, which are to be made into wine, or the olive berries from which the clear colourless oil is pressed, which is the substitute for butter in all culinary operations in Greece. Or, if her home is in the Morea, she will probably be much engaged in the rearing of the silkworms and the care of preparing the raw silk.

But Photiné is growing up apace; she is nearly sixteen, and her parents must begin to bestir themselves about her marriage; they must let it be known that her daughter is to marry, and that she has a dowry.

They have not long to wait for a suitable son-in-law. A young *Pallikar*, resplendent in white *fustanella*, embroidered jacket, and red cap, has seen and admired Photiné as she danced with her companions on the occasion of the last *Panegyris*, or village festival, and he now hastens to make his proposals, which are accepted. In a few weeks' time, Photiné, dressed in her best array, is led by her parents to the church, and takes her place before the altar with the youth who is to be her husband. The *papas* places two candles in their hands, and their crown-bearers (equivalent both to our best man and our bridesmaids) put on their heads garlands of white flowers joined by long ribbons; prayers are recited, and the wedding-rings interchanged thrice between them. Then the *papas* pronounces, "I join in marriage the servant of God, Demetrius (or George, or Michael), and the servant of God, Photiné." A glass of red wine is given to them, from which first the man and then the woman drinks, and the ceremony is over.

So Photiné is married, and most likely she goes home to the cottage of her parents-in-law to help the women folk there, and to wait respectfully on her husband and the other men of the household.

There her children are born and brought up. Probably she loses one or more of them from the terrible ague fever which is so fatal to the young in most parts of Greece, and then she weeps over them as she lays them, dressed in white and crowned with flowers, in their little coffins. So amidst joys and sorrows her life goes on for a greater or less number of years, until her hour comes too, and she is laid away in the cemetery close by the little round-domed church, in which, as an infant, she was baptised, and, as a girl, married, in the shelter of those eternal hills which have seen so many generations bloom and fade in that old Hellenic land. Such is, in its chief features, the simple life of a Greek peasant girl. Perhaps in another paper we may consider how her richer sisters of the middle and upper classes fare in the Greece of to-day.

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