

# WITH THE GODS ON MOUNT OLYMPUS

By Aristides E. Phoutrides and Francis P. Farquhar

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHORS

Olympus—hark!—and Kissavos, the brother mountains quarrel.  
Which of the two shall throw the rain, and which shall throw the snow;  
And Kissavos does throw the rain; the snow, that throws Olympus.

To Kissavos Olympus turns and speaks to him with anger:  
"Chide me not, Kissavos, Turk-trodden, shameless mountain!  
On thee a faithless breed, Larissa's Turks are trampling;  
Olympus am I! Great of yore, and in the world renowned!  
My peaks are forty-two, my fountains two and sixty;  
On every peak there flies a flag, 'neath every branch rest Klephtes;  
And yearly, when the springtime comes, and when the young twigs blossom,  
My warring Klephtes climb my peaks—the slaves may fill my valleys.  
Mine is the golden eagle, too, the bird of golden pinions,—  
Look!—perched on the cliff he stands and with the sun converses:  
'Sun mine, why from the early morn sendest thou not thy sunbeams?  
Strike with thy light! Why must I wait till noon to warm my talons?'"

—*Translation of a folk-song known all over Greece, and sung in every country district, whether in Thessaly or Macedonia, or in Central Hellas or the Peloponnesus.*



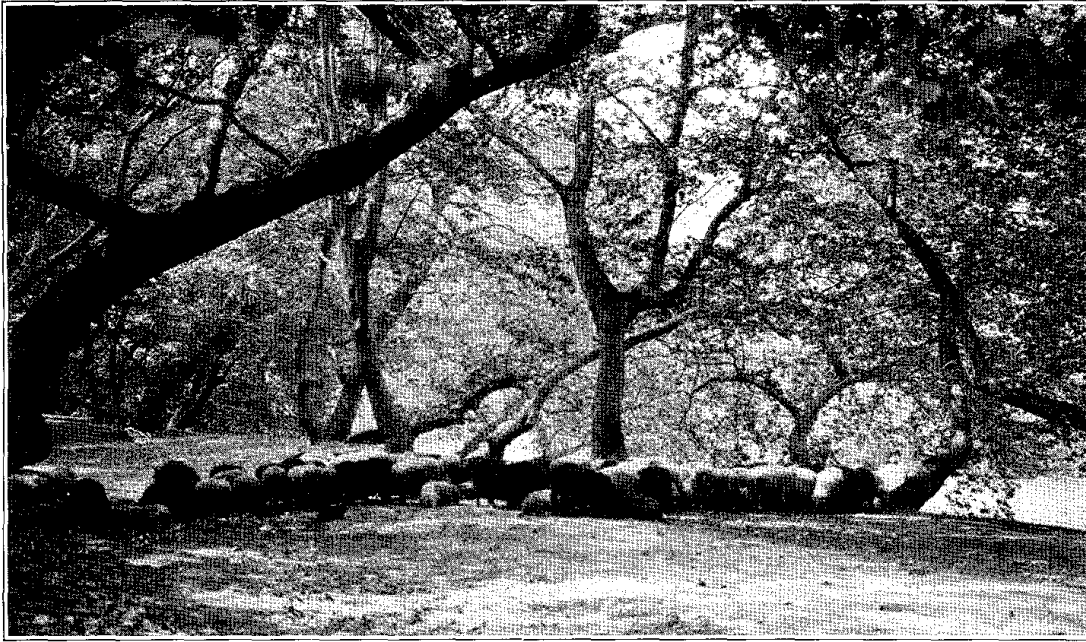
ANY one travelling across the plain of Thessaly in the vicinity of Larissa cannot help being impressed with the sharp contrast between the two mountains that rise in the northeast. To the left the majestic range of Olympus flings its huge buttresses far out from glittering snowy crests that tower to a height of almost 10,000 feet. (The height of Mount Olympus, the loftiest peak of the Balkan peninsula, is generally given as 2,985 metres, or 9,794 feet. Mount Ossa is 1,953 metres, or 6,407 feet, in altitude.) To the right, beyond the depression that marks the Vale of Tempe, rises the graceful pyramid of Ossa, untouched by snow, and lacking the splendor of its northern neighbor. One might well liken them to two kings: Olympus, a warlike sovereign surrounded by puissant lords; Ossa, an elegant monarch of a more peaceful country, reigning supreme over humble subjects.

When the storm-clouds gather over the mountains and their forests pipe to the fury of the reckless winds, and when the lightning snakes dart about them and the thunder shakes their aged summits, it is no wonder that the peaceful dwellers of the plain are led to believe that the two

mountain kings battle against each other. It was this spectacle that suggested to the ancient Greeks the world-war between the Olympian gods and the Titans of Ossa; and to their modern descendants the strife of an animate Olympus with an animate Kissavos, as they have now called Ossa.

In the spring of 1914 we had come north from Athens and Central Greece to behold with our own eyes these famous mountains. We had scaled the heights of Parnassus, and had seen the splendid peaks of Helicon, Korax, Erymanthus, and others of classic fame. We hardly dared hope to climb the peaks of great Olympus, but were nevertheless eager to see them and perhaps go a little way. We first saw Olympus one afternoon as we were returning to Larissa from a visit to the Vale of Tempe. The clouds that had hidden it from us in the morning had lifted, and the sun now glistened upon the snowy arches that seemed to span the horizon. It surpassed even our greatest expectations. We were filled with enthusiasm and a determination to explore the summits, which promised sights truly fit for the gods.

In Larissa that evening we eagerly discussed the project. We had little to guide



*Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.*

The wide-spreading plane-trees are among the most delightful features of the Vale of Tempe. Their branches overhang the waters of the silvery Peneius.

us, for in Athens we had made no inquiries about the mountain, and in Larissa we could find no one who knew anything about it. All that we could learn was that it would be very dangerous: there were bandits in the ravines, there were many wolves, and the snow was deep and impassable. No one had heard of any one climbing the mountain, and no one had any idea as to how to approach it. Our only aid was a fairly accurate map published by the Royal Military-Geographic Institute of Vienna. A careful study of this map seemed to indicate two possible routes: one by the Vale of Tempe and along the coast of the Gulf of Salonica to the village of Litochoron; the other by way of Melouna Pass and the village of Ellassona on the westerly side of the mountain. We determined upon the latter as seemingly the more direct. The remainder of the evening we spent in negotiating for a carriage and in purchasing some dates and bread and cheese. This was the full extent of our preparations for what proved to be a formidable and arduous undertaking.

Early the next morning we left Larissa in a dilapidated open carriage drawn by two stringy horses that were scarcely a credit to a region once famous as the home of the centaurs. Passing out of the town,

we headed for the long range of hills that form the northern barrier of the Thessalian plain. It was a beautiful day, and a splendid scene lay before us. In the foreground were green fields of newly sprung grain, splashed with bright purple and yellow flowers, with here and there a group of dark-red poppies. Beyond were the hills, and above them towered Ossa and Olympus, splendid in the morning light. Toward noon we passed through the little village of Turnavos, and emerging from its narrow streets we encountered a motley caravan of Turks, their women's faces carefully swathed against the glance of the stranger. Shortly afterward we began the long, winding ascent of Melouna Pass.

We were now on the threshold of new Greece. Until the recent Balkan War these hills marked the boundary between Greece and Turkey. Once before, in 1897, Greece had endeavored to push this boundary northward, but had met with dismal failure in battles fought on the very fields through which we had just passed. But in the war of 1912 Greece was more successful. In the latter part of October, during the first week of that war, the Greek army stormed over Melouna Pass from Larissa, driving the Turks from their frontier outposts. The Turks made

a brief stand at Elassona, but, seeing that they were about to be surrounded, they fled to the Pass of Sarantapouro, twenty miles to the northward. Here the Greek army, under Crown Prince Constantine, advanced upon them and a pitched battle ensued. Sarantapouro has been reputed from ancient times to be an impregnable defensive position; so when the report was sent out that the Greeks had captured it in two days it was received with incredulity. But confirmation followed almost immediately, with the undeniable news that the Greek army had occupied the village of Servia on the north side of the pass, had crossed the Vistrizza River, and was on its way to Verria and Salonica.

Thus in one week was set free an integral part of Greece which for many centuries had been under the domination of alien races; and with this district there was restored to the Greek dominions one of the most illustrious landmarks of antiquity—the majestic Olympus.

Unvexed now by the formalities of a Turkish custom-house, we crossed freely into this newly liberated territory. We rapidly descended the northern slope of the pass and, passing through the village of Tsaritsane, soon came to Elassona. As we alighted before an inn in the middle of the town a curious throng gathered about us. Bakers left their ovens and cobblers their lasts to ask us the old Homeric questions:

“Whence came you?”

“Whither are you bound?”

“What may be your names?”

“And what land claims you for its own?”

Presently came two young men who surprised us by addressing us in English. They had been in America—one in Florida, the other in Manchester, New Hampshire—and had come back to Greece to serve in the war. They welcomed us to their native town, and cordially offered to show us its points of interest. Leaving our knapsacks—our only baggage—at the inn, we accepted their offer and strolled down through the steep streets of the picturesque little town to a quaint, humpbacked bridge that spanned a lively stream. Our friends told us of the battle that had been fought here a year and a half before, and pointed out the positions occupied by the

contending armies. Here fell the first victims of the war, and here they rest now in the little graveyard just outside of the town. On a simple wooden cross marking the grave of the first officer killed we read four verses. No known poet has written them: they are a fragment from the lore of a people who live close to the very sources of the Fountain of Pieria:

“Light be the earth on thee:  
Light like the leaf of the olive-tree,  
Like the tear on a virgin’s cheek;  
Yea, light like a dew-drop in spring.”

In the approaching twilight we ascended to the ancient monastery of Panaghia, or the Most Holy Virgin, that overlooks the town. Mounting the well-worn steps, we had a beautiful view of the surrounding country. Below us lay the plain, inevitably suggesting the dry bed of some prehistoric lake—now green with fields of grain and groves of mulberry-trees. Beyond, to the west and north, stretched the long line of the Pindus and Cambunian Mountains. And as we reached the monastery there came into view in the opposite direction great Olympus himself, near at hand now, so that we could see the deep ravines that penetrate to the very heart of the range. Ages have looked upon the mountain from this point. For the hill on which now stands the monastery of the Holy Virgin was once the citadel of a very ancient city, adorned with temples of other gods. Through more than three thousand years this spot has not even changed its name. In the time of Homer it was known as the “White City Oloosson,” inhabited by Lapiths and ruled over by their famous king, Polypetes (*Iliad*, II, 739). Yet, ever young and ever beautiful, the mountain on which were born the gods of ancient Greece stands through the centuries, still a king among mountains, sending forth its songs and myths, its legends and its heroes.

Returning to the village, we continued our inquiries about how to reach the mountain. We now first learned of a small monastery, known as Hagia Trias, (or Hagia Triada), which means Holy Trinity, situated at Sparmos, close to its very base. There, we were told, we might find a lodging for the night. One of our Greek-American friends was able



*Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.*

In the heart of the Vale of Tempe.

Steep cliffs of the Lower Olympus form its northern wall. A railroad has lately been opened through the gorge, giving access from Larissa to the Ægean Sea. During the past year this road has been extended to Salonica.

to direct us to this spot, as he had often hunted game on the slopes near by. From him we received our first encouragement. He had never attempted to go to the top of the mountain, but he believed that it might be done from Hagia Trias. Our chief difficulty, in his opinion, would be the snow. Wolves were very scarce, he said, and not to be greatly feared, except perhaps at night. He knew of no bandits or robbers now that the Greek Government was in control. Before the war there might have been danger from that source.

Early the next morning we left Elassona on foot. From the brow of the hill that overlooks the village our path led through many little ravines and over many ridges, until it descended to the banks of a stream which takes its source from the foot of the great mountain and,

under the name of Diava, flows into the river of Elassona, the ancient Titaresios. Here we encountered a flock of goats scattered among thickets of prickly holy-oak and mastich bushes along the steep banks of the stream. Down below a shepherd boy watched us approaching. We called to him in the language of Athens, "Chairete!" which means "Rejoice!"

Seeing that he was puzzled, we addressed him with a greeting more familiar to the peasants: "Health be to thee!"

"Health to you, too!" he cried; and then wanted to know what our first word had meant. When he heard that it was just another manner of greeting he answered:

"We can't learn such good manners all at once. The Turks frightened us so around here that we hardly dared talk."

"You must be happy now," we replied.

"Ah, yes, thank God, we can now breathe without fear. It was another thing when the Turk was here—you lived, and you hated every day you lived."

He expressed his regret that he was not anywhere near his fold that he might "befriend us" with milk.

Not long afterward we came to a primitive flour-mill, where we found an old man of whom we inquired the way. His voice was very weak, and sounded as if it came from far away—from another age almost. Evidently he had little opportunity to speak in the beautiful but deserted land where he lived. He knew neither reading nor writing, but he astonished us when, after the introductory questions, he sat by us and candidly asked:

"You are people of the cities and you may know more about the world than we out here. They say there is war now in America. Whom do they fight, and what for?"

Yet it was only a few days since the episode had occurred that led to the occupation of Vera Cruz by United States troops. The old man was anxious to know how this war would affect the Greeks in America.

"For war is a bad thing," he concluded, "in spite of all the blessings that it has brought us here."

Then he showed us the direction we should take in order to reach the monastery.

Continuing our way across the valley, we came to a group of rough stone huts and a square, high-walled sheepfold, and presently began to enter the forest and at the same time to ascend. We were entering the great gorge that we had seen from Ellassona, splitting the mountain to

its heart. We now began to feel something of the mystery of the place—a spot which even before the dawn of history was renowned as a holy shrine. For on these very slopes must have been celebrated the rites of Pelasgian Zeus, introduced into this region by the Perhebian,

who, according to Homer, "cultivated the fields by the lovely Titarosios" (*Iliad*, II, 751). This was in a period so remote that it seemed a legendary age even to those whom we are accustomed to call the ancients. Here, then, in old times came pilgrims to worship at the shrine of their highest divinity; and here again in a more modern age have come pilgrims to worship at the shrine of the Holy Trinity of the Christian religion.

Mounting upward through the open forest of oaks, we came at length

to a winding path paved with large, flat stones. We followed this, and in a few minutes were before the gate of the monastery. The entrance was through an arch in the high wall that everywhere else ran around the enclosure, unbroken save by small, barred windows high above the reach of man or beast. We knocked, and in a few moments there came to receive us a tall, brown-bearded monk with kindly brown eyes.

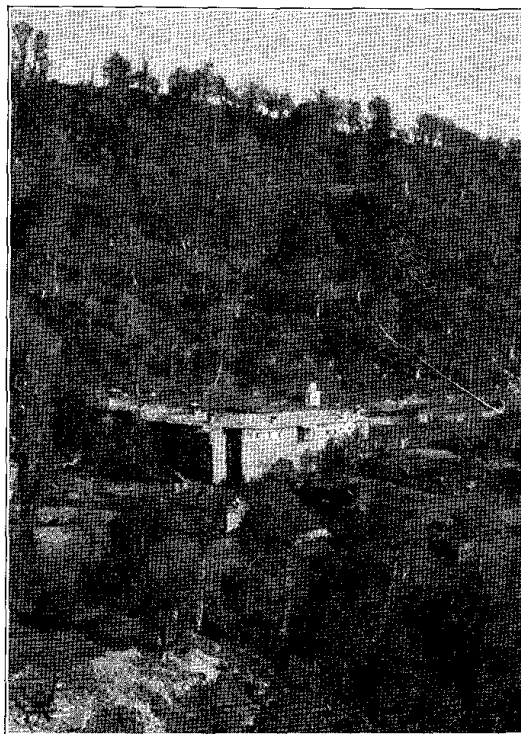
"Thy blessing, father," we asked.

"The blessing of the Lord be upon you."

"We have come to visit the country round about, and ask for your hospitality."

"You are welcome. Command us."

He led us into the courtyard and up a flight of stairs into the "xenon," or strangers' room, large and bare, with two windows closed by iron bars, suggesting



Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.

The monastery of Hagia Trias, or Holy Trinity, at Sparmos, situated on the lower slopes of Olympus.



*Photograph by Francis P. Furquhar, 1914.*

The monks of the monastery of Hagia Trias at Sparmos.

Father Auxentius, Father Nicephorus the abbot, Father Cyril, and the lay reader, standing before the chapel entrance. The slab of wood at the left is the chapel "bell."

rather a prison cell than a guest-chamber. Our host, whose name was Father Auxentius, left us for a moment and returned with two other monks—the abbot, Father Nicephorus, a fine old man with white hair and beard, and Father Cyril, a small man, black of beard, but kind of heart: as we soon found.

The abbot repeated the welcome to the monastery, and then called a boy, who presently brought in a tray with coffee and masticha, a light cordial used everywhere in Greece. We drank and conversed for a few minutes, and then the monks excused themselves, as the hour for the Angelus had arrived. They seemed much pleased when we asked to be present at the service, and led the way to the little chapel which stood in the middle of the courtyard. The rough, whitewashed exterior was without ornament, save over the door, where was painted a rude fresco with a lantern hanging before it. At one side of the entrance a rounded slab of hardwood rested on a stone support. As we came into the courtyard, Father Auxentius, who had preceded us, took a wooden mallet and struck rhythmically on this slab for a minute. It was the chapel bell.

The three monks entered the chapel and took their places. Father Auxentius led the service, standing before the altar, a stole of red brocade about his neck, with silken tassels and gold ornaments. The abbot sat upon his throne by the right choristers' stand, and by his side stood Father Cyril. The left choiristry was taken by a layman who served in the monastery. Small tapers shed a soft light over the frescos and paintings: everything seemed old, very old, as if time had stood still in this ancient place of worship. And indeed the years have brought but few changes here. The psalm-books from which we read were a century old; the paintings upon the walls dated from the seventeenth century; the abbot's throne, inlaid with mother-of-pearl in Byzantine designs, was much older; the building itself must have been almost contemporary with the founding of the monastery a thousand years ago.

The service was that of the Orthodox Greek Church, dignified and simple. The dim light of the tapers, the smoke from the censers, the fragrance of the offering—all conduced to heighten the Old World

atmosphere of the place. We were profoundly impressed with the sincerity of the monks and the devout spirit of the three or four shepherds who attended the service. Reverently we joined in their psalms and in their prayers.

At the end of the service Father Auxentius led us to a terrace outside of the mon-

boys," he said, "and my eyes have seen many things. We are ignorant in other things, but we know what suffering is. Every white hair that I have can tell you a story. Thirty years! how many months and weeks and days do they make? Every day came with cares; every day went with cares. Bandits ran wild all over



*Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.*

As we mounted higher and higher other peaks began to come into view, springing from the ground full-grown, like the armed men of Cadmus.—Page 573.

astery commanding a beautiful view of the valley of Sparmos and the mountains beyond. We watched the shadows deepen in the ravine as all things bowed before the "reigning" god of the day. Among the Greeks the sun does not "set" when he reaches the western horizon; he "reigns."

Supper was served soon after sunset. Black bread, cheese, yaourt (a universal Greek dish made from sour milk), warm goats' milk, and wine comprised our fare. We ate alone in our little room, but when we had finished the abbot came to visit us, with Father Auxentius and Father Cyril, and the chief herdsman of the monastery, John Phteriotos. The subject of the conversation was mainly the change in the régime since the last Balkan War. The abbot told us of the sufferings that he and the people of the neighborhood had to go through under the Turks.

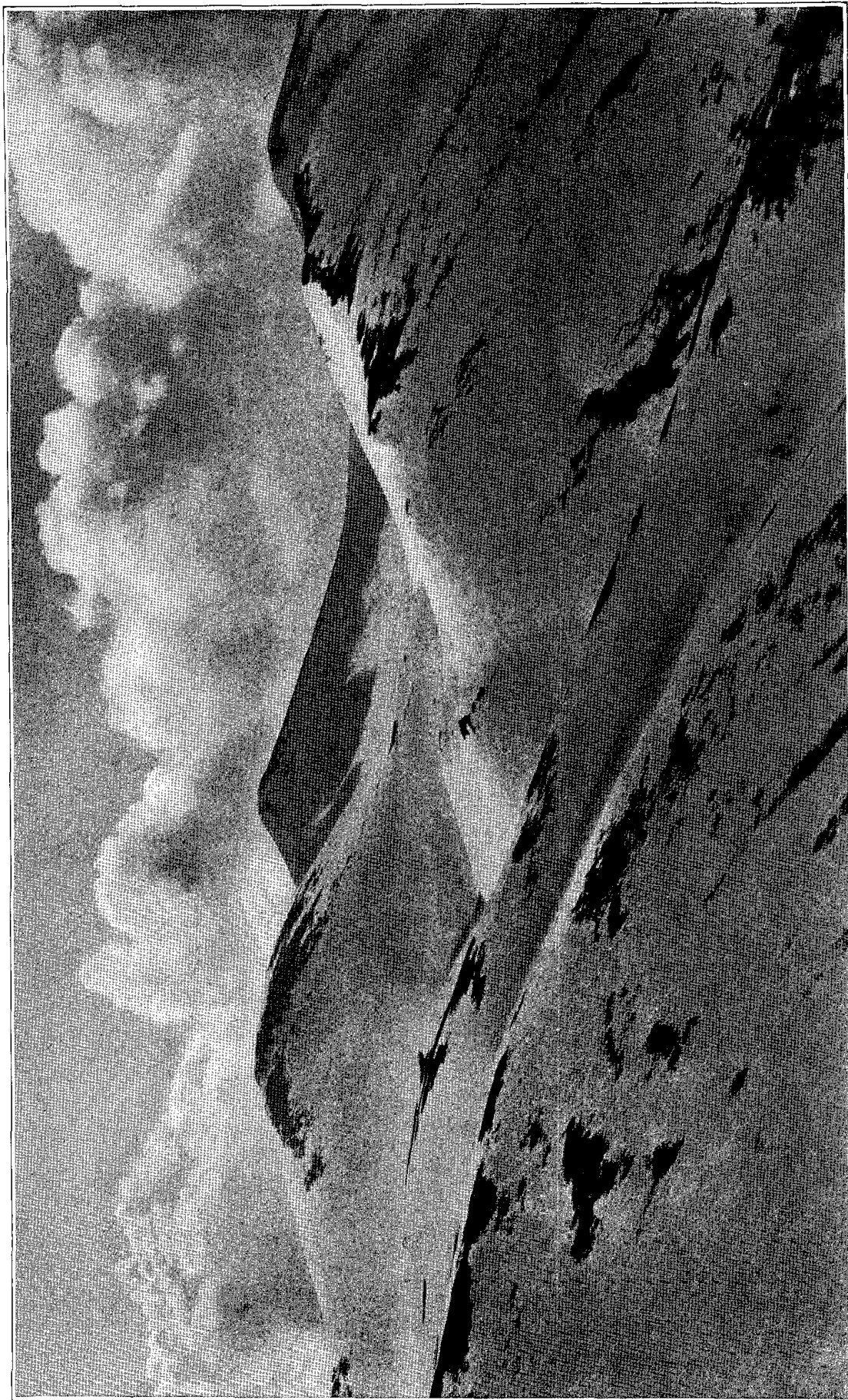
"I have lived here thirty years, my

the mountains. Often they would knock at the gate at night. What could we do? Refuse shelter? They had guns and cruel hearts, too. They might burn the monastery and burn us alive. So we gave them shelter. They drank and ate and went away. Then the Turks came to punish us. They bound me and my men; they flogged us and dragged us to prison, with bound hands like criminals. Flogged us! If I should bare my back you would still see the marks. There you have thirty years. Wouldn't your hair grow white, too?"

"But now, at last . . ."

"Now, glory be to God! It is good for those who will live after us. The Lord has heard our prayers. With all our sufferings we shall at least die happy."

A boy brought in two comforters and laid them on the straw mattresses that were stretched upon some wooden benches



*Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.*

The rounded southerly peaks of Olympus.—View to our right as we neared the top of our first peak. White mists gathered from every quarter, now gently drifting across the sky, now silently sweeping down upon the snow-fields.—Page 573.

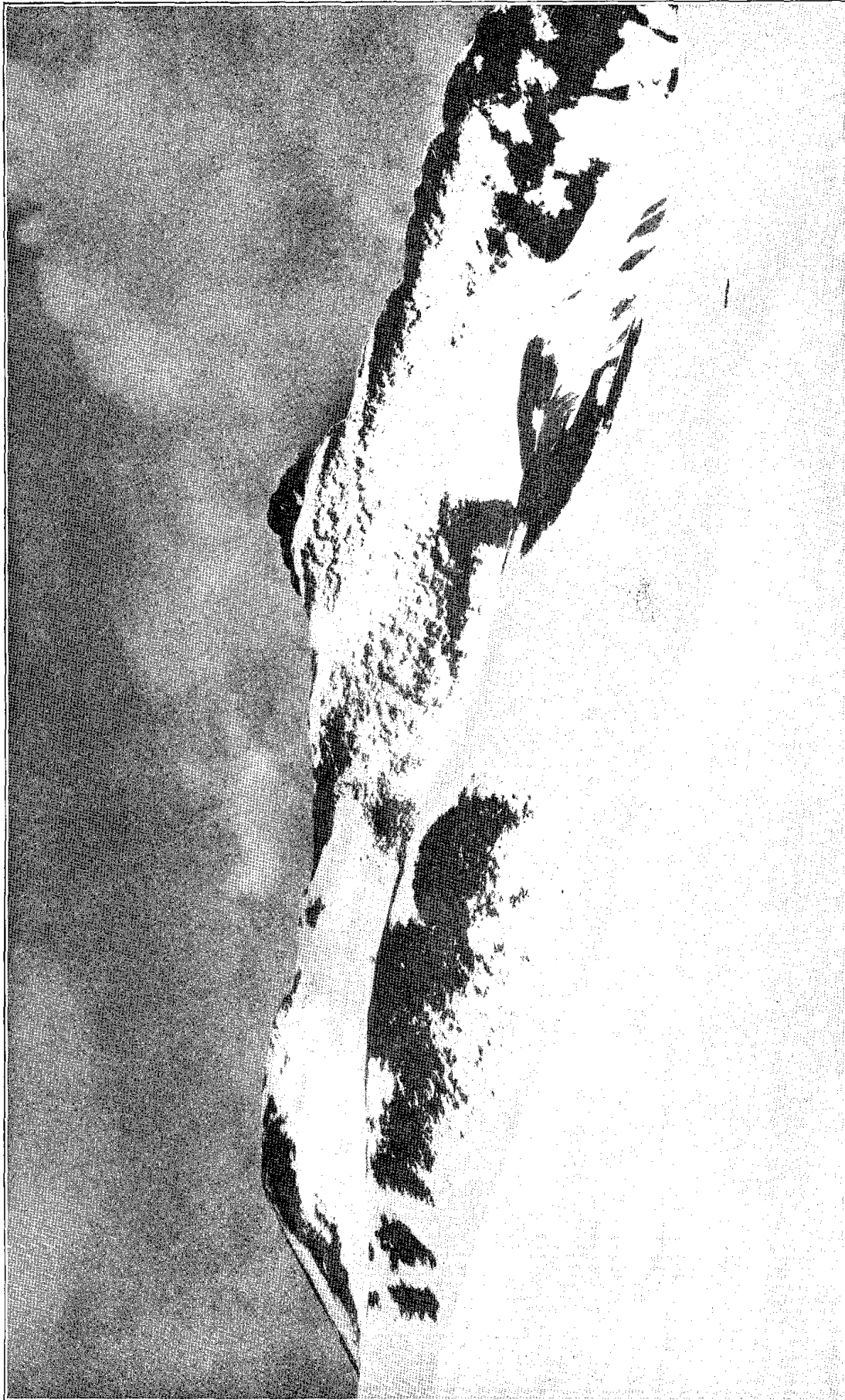




*Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.*

The southerly peaks from the summit of our first peak.

Some of the peaks glistening with snow, others thrusting up black crags of rock into the swirling clouds that on all sides threatened to overwhelm the mountain.—Page 573.



*Photograph by Francis P. Farynhair, 1914.*

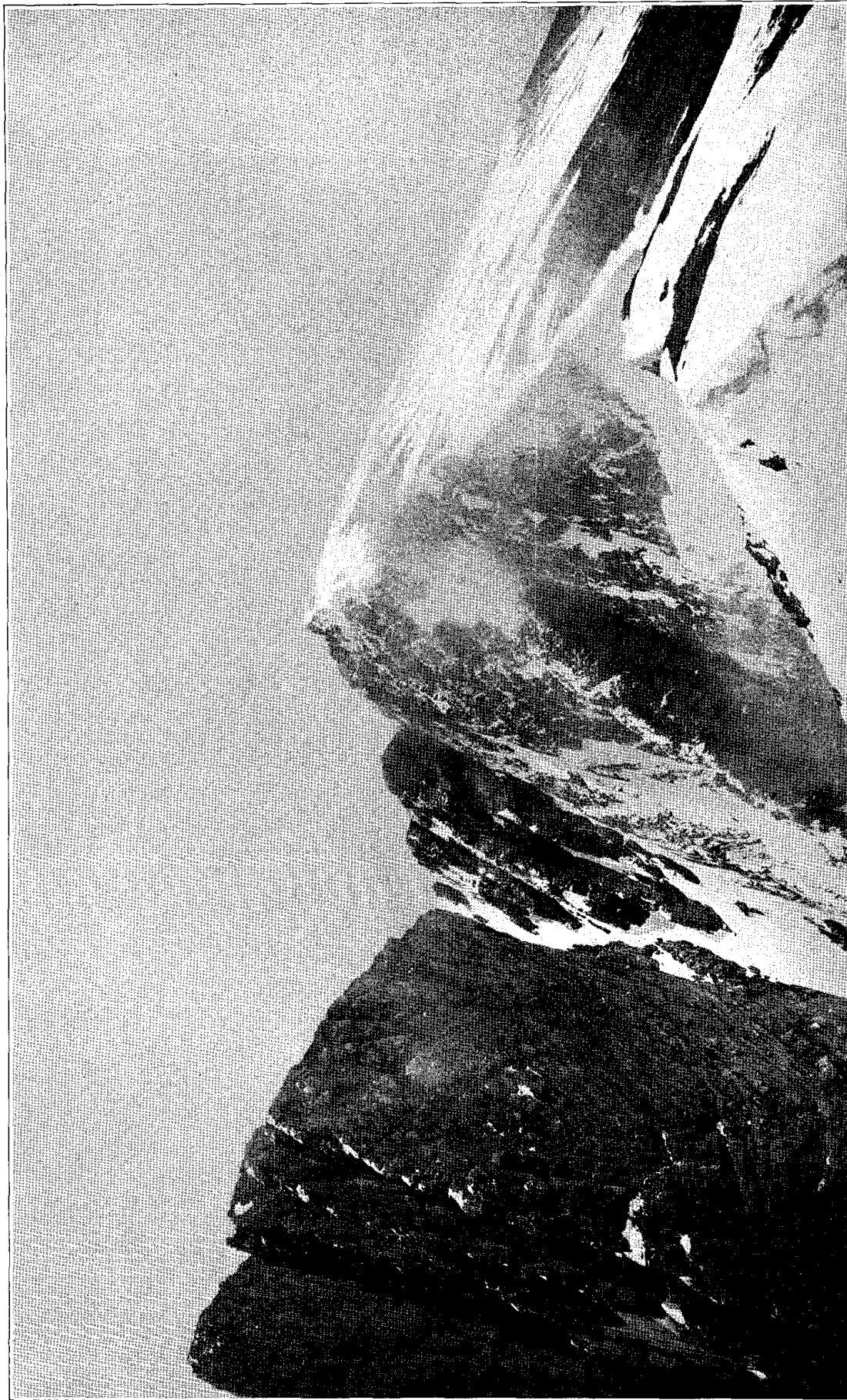
The northerly peaks of Olympus, as seen from our first observation peak.  
The more rugged and spectacular peaks to the north decided us. We climbed the peak to the left.—Page 574.



*Photograph by Francis P. Farguhar, 1914.*

These towers, the most spectacular of the peaks that we saw, we named the "Thrones of Zeus and Hera."

Two great towers of black rock closed the view to the east; while in the vast abyss between, misty clouds rose and fell like vapor from some huge caldron. Just behind them to the left is barely seen another peak which is probably the one known as Hagios Ilias and for a long time considered the highest summit.—Page 574.



*Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.*

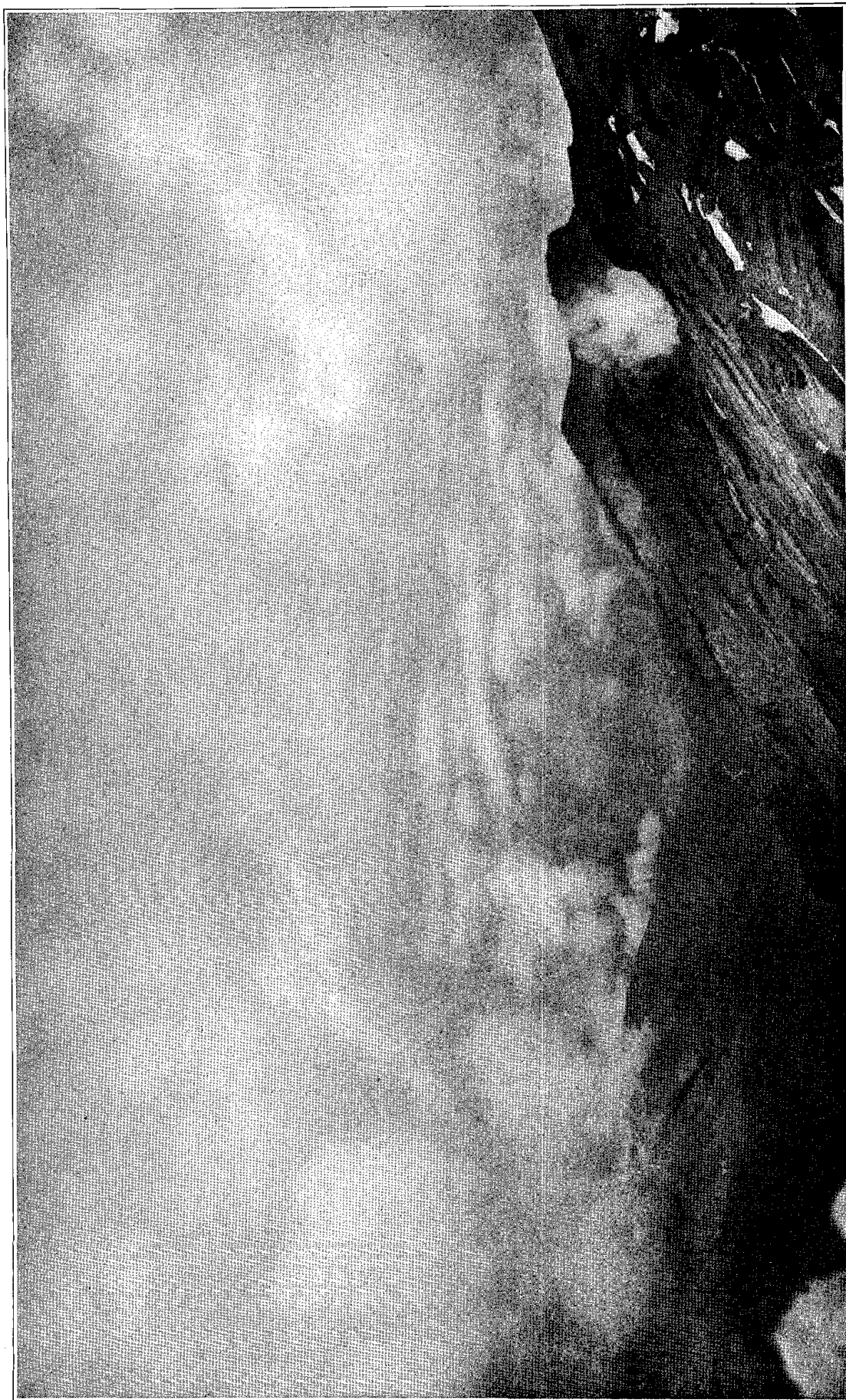
We were upon the very brink of a terrific precipice. For a thousand feet or more it fell.—Page 574.



*Photograph by Francis P. Farragher, 1914.*

Our highest peak, as seen from near the foot of the black towers looking west.

There is some doubt whether this peak, or one just behind it, or one just behind it, is the supreme summit of Olympus.—Where a short time before there had been great masses of cloud there now remained only a few torn shreds, clinging to the jagged ridges or hanging like pale ghosts in limbo.—Page 576.



*Photograph by Francis P. Farguhar, 1914.*

Northerly view from our highest peak.

Farther away, at a lower level, there floated over the region of ancient Pleria a flock of fluffy white cloudlets driving along before the breeze like sheep on the way to pasture.—Page 576.

beside the walls. The abbot rose and the others with him.

We lay down to sleep, and it might have been a fine sleep had not a whole company of ill-mannered rats chosen to carry on

slippery. As we neared the crest of the ridge we came upon a multitude of flowers that retarded us even more than the steepness, for it was impossible to pass by the most beautiful violets we had ever seen



*Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.*

In the courtyard of the monastery of Hagios Antonios at Demirades.

This monastery is in the village and is on the main highway from Thessaly into Macedonia. It has been badly treated through the centuries and is much run down. In this picture the monks are superintending the shearing of the sheep.

some active exercises behind the partitions. Such is the price of antiquity.

On the following day, April 30, 1914, we climbed Mount Olympus. We rose before daylight and nibbled a little bit of bread and cheese for our breakfast. We had no mountaineering equipment other than stout shoes and light hearts. One of us carried a small rucksack containing a camera and some bread, cheese, and dates.

It was four-thirty o'clock as we left the gate of the monastery and descended the paved path to the bed of the ravine. We stumbled along in the semidarkness, cautiously following a wood path leading northward toward the massive mountain. As the light gave sureness to our steps we advanced more rapidly, and after about an hour and a half came to a place where the ravine split in two. Taking the branch to our right, we followed it for a little way, and then began to climb out onto the ridge at our left. For some time now we had not been on the path, but we had no difficulty in making our way. The climb up the wall of the ravine was an arduous one, as the ground was very steep and

without pausing to delight in their color and fragrance.

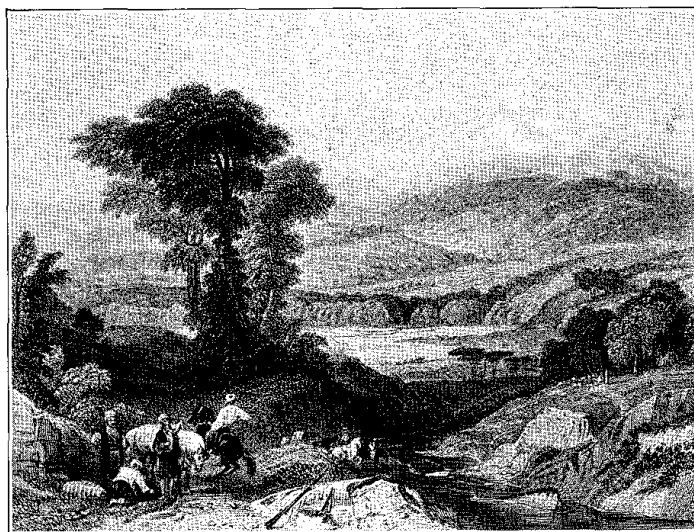
A morning breeze rolled down from the snowy summits above us; sunbeams glanced upon the heights and flooded the hills and plains below: the glories of the day had begun. We were now on the crest of a long ridge that mounted by easy grades toward the higher parts of the mountain. About half past seven we came to a fountain, where a stream of pure water gushed forth from a wall of masonry into a long trough. An inscription chiselled in the stone recorded the date of its erection, which, surprising enough in this land of antiquity, was no longer ago than the previous year. Near by were some circular walls, evidently sheepfolds, well protected against the winds—or possibly the wolves. Not long afterward we encountered a patch of snow, and soon were at the highest line of vegetation.

The way now became steeper and the rocks and snow made progress more difficult than it had been over the open pasture-lands below. As we pressed onward we eagerly watched the sky for signs of cloud. During the past few days the

summits had been cloud-capped for most of the day, clearing only toward evening. This morning, however, had begun with such a clear sky that we hoped that the weather might have changed. Yet even as we watched there suddenly developed out of the blue air a puff of white, floating like a downy feather over the heights to our right.

It was the beginning. During the next hour white mists gathered from every quarter, now gently drifting across the sky, now silently sweeping down upon the snow-fields. Steadily we plodded on and up, seldom resting, eager to gain the summit ere the threatening clouds became too dense. We could already see rounded peaks towering on either side of us, while directly ahead rose a cone-like crest that we believed must surely be one of the loftiest of the range. And now as we

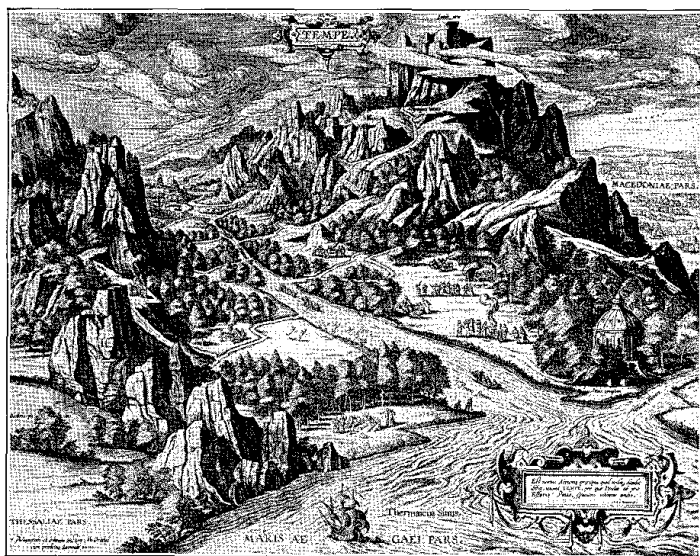
then summoned our strength for the last thousand feet of our climb. We had decided to ascend the peak immediate-



Mount Olympus. Drawn by W. Purser and engraved by E. Finden. Published, 1833, by J. Murray, London.

ly in front of us, as it seemed to occupy a central position and was apparently connected with the other parts of the range by high ridges, or

cols.



A sixteenth-century conception of the Vale of Tempe and Mount Olympus and Mount Ossa.

It is by the celebrated Flemish geographer, Abraham Ortelius, who was born and died in Antwerp, 1527 to 1598. It is dated 1590. The view is supposed to be from the Aegean Sea looking westward through the Vale of Tempe, with Ossa on the left and Olympus on the right.

mounted higher and higher other peaks began to come into view, springing from the ground full-grown, like the armed men of Cadmus.

yawned a tremendous gulf, splitting the range into two distinct parts. We now perceived that the peak upon which we stood was but a slightly more elevated portion of a broad ridge that connected

It was ten o'clock when, at last, with a shout of triumph, we stood upon the summit and looked off at the superb panorama before us. It was the first of the magnificent scenes that we were to behold that day. We were indeed at the very centre of the range. And now we knew why in the old folk-song Olympus boasts of two and forty peaks. There they were, rank on rank: some glistening with snow, others thrusting up black crags of rock into the swirling clouds that on all sides threatened to overwhelm the mountain.

In front of us, below a snowy amphitheatre, there





*Photograph by Francis P. Farquhar, 1914.*

Mount Olympus, as seen from the Pass of Sarantapouro—looking southeast.  
The highest snow-clad peaks are scarcely visible.

the two parts of the range, welding them into a great horseshoe. Moreover, it was apparent that we were not upon the very highest point; for near by, both to the right and left, stood peaks that were unquestionably higher—not much higher, to be sure, but enough to place the matter beyond doubt. We were eager to push on, but whither should we turn? Anxiously we watched the summits, snatching glimpses as the clouds rolled and shifted. At one time we felt sure that among the group to the south lay the supreme point, but as we were about to set out in that direction a clearer view of the more rugged and spectacular peaks to the north decided us, and without further hesitation we turned and hastened toward them. From our observation peak we glissaded down on the snow to the lower part of the col, and then began slowly to mount again over a series of rounded crests that led us in a semicircular course to the westerly or left-hand end of the ridge, shown in the illustration on page 567, which we reached in about an hour and a half.

As we toiled up the last hundred feet over the rough shale and softening snow, we little realized what a surprise was in store for us. So far this peak had seemed, like the others over which we had passed, a rounded crest with only slightly steeper sides. But when at the very last we put

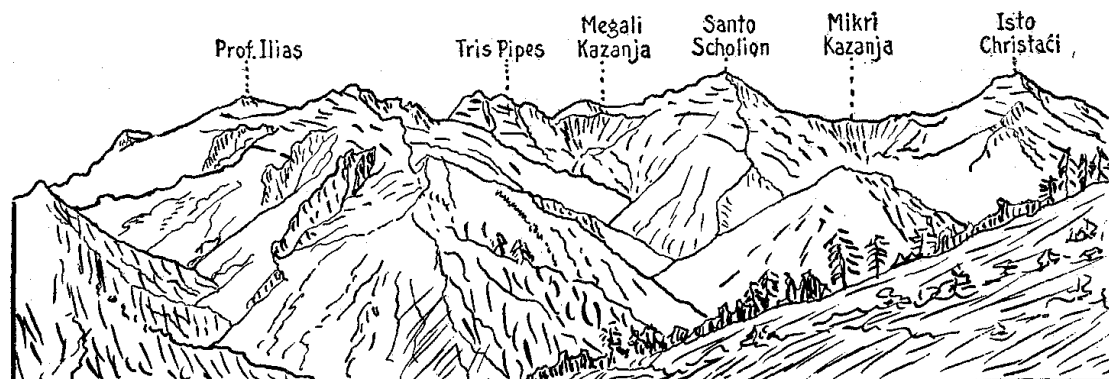
foot upon firm rock there burst upon us with the final step a scene that made us cry out in amazement. We were upon the very brink of a terrific precipice. For a thousand feet or more it fell; then dropped down, down, in steep terraces to the distant plain far below. To our right the ridge now appeared as a sharp knife-edge extending in a curve to two great towers of black rock that closed the view to the east; while in the vast abyss between, misty clouds rose and fell like vapor from some huge caldron.

For a while we watched this awesome scene, but we were still not satisfied that we were on the highest peak. Yet in the swirling clouds we could discern nothing higher, unless it might be the black towers before us. At all events they were the most spectacular points we had seen, and we resolved to have a closer look at them. Accordingly, we pushed on along the knife-edge to a point where it turned sharply to the right and began to descend. Here a narrower and slightly lower ridge ran over to the nearer of the two towers, ending abruptly at its base. We examined it minutely, estimating the difficulties of traversing it and climbing the rocks beyond. We felt sure that with care it could be accomplished; but for several reasons we hesitated. In the first place, it was getting late. The clouds were shutting in more and more, and already a con-

siderable portion of our return journey was shrouded in drifting mist. This meant a long and perhaps difficult task ahead of us ere we could reach shelter. Then, too, we were beginning to tire from our exertions; for we had been going almost constantly for eight hours, and in that time had ascended some eight thou-

preme crest. We are inclined to agree with Doctor Cvijić, although, as far as we know, the summits have never been accurately measured.

Subsequent investigation has also disclosed the fact that very few attempts at an ascent of Mount Olympus are on record. The first attempt of which we have been able to find any record was by the English diplomatist, David Urquhart, in 1830. He started from Hagia Trias, but evidently kept too far to the east, as he admits seeing higher peaks



The northerly side of Olympus.

From a tracing of a sketch in "Grundlinien der Geographie und Geologie von Mazedonien und Altserbien." Von Doctor J. Cvijić, Professor an der Universität Belgrad. Gotha, 1908.

sand feet, and this with but scant nourishment. It would require full strength and nerve to cross the narrow pass, which we could see was treacherous with loose rock and brittle snow-combings. But what finally determined us to abandon the attempt was the doubt in our minds whether these rocks were, after all, any higher than the peak we had just left. A doubtful summit was hardly worth the risk. So we looked wistfully across the few feet that intervened and at length reluctantly turned back.

[Two days later, as we looked back toward the mountain from the Pass of Sarantapouro, it seemed to us that this peak of ours was, after all, a trifle higher than either of the black towers. Doctor Cvijić, of the University of Belgrade, Serbia, with whose work on the geology of Macedonia we subsequently became familiar, had a nearer view of the northern side of the mountain from across the defile of Petra. From his point of view the two black towers appeared as three, which he calls the "Tris Pipes." The peak that we ascended is shown on his sketch as Santo Scholion, and apparently seemed higher to him than the "Tris Pipes." Farther to the southwest on this same sketch is shown another peak, "Isto Christači," named, says Doctor Cvijić, for a Klepht who was killed in battle. This peak he calls the highest summit of Olympus. We saw this peak and passed within a few hundred feet of the top of it on our way to "Santo Scholion," and could easily have reached its summit had we suspected that it was the su-

beyond, across a great chasm. In 1856 the French archæologist, Léon Heuzey, ascended the peak called Hagios Ilias from the eastern side of the mountain. He called this the highest point, and his error has persisted in a few guide-books and books of reference up to the present time. Heuzey made valuable contributions to the archæological knowledge of the region, but his inaccurate account of the summits of Olympus has been misleading to subsequent climbers. Doctor Heinrich Barth, the German explorer, attempted an ascent in 1862 from the village of Kokkinoplo. He proved that the peak of Hagios Ilias was not the highest, but was unable to reach the higher peaks. In 1856 the Reverend Henry Fanshawe Tozer, an Englishman, following Heuzey, ascended Hagios Ilias, and from there plainly saw several higher summits to the southwest. These were unquestionably the ones described by Doctor Cvijić. Doctor Cvijić himself did not ascend the mountain, nor have we been able to discover any record of an ascent since the time of Tozer, although it is not impossible that others may have made the attempt. A French guide-book mentions an ascent by a M. Gorceix in 1869, but we have not been able to find any further account of it. In 1911 Engineer Edward Richter, of Jena, Germany, was preparing to make the ascent from Kokkinoplo when he was captured by bandits. For over three months he was held in captivity, during which time the Turkish Government made strenuous efforts to effect his release. The bandits accepted several large sums of money in ransom, but each time craftily managed to retain their prisoner. The story reads more like a tale of a hundred years ago than an event of the present day, but its truth is fully attested.—See Urquhart, David, "The Spirit of the East." London,

1838; Heuzey, Léon, "Le Mont Olympe et l'Acaranie." Paris, 1860; Barth, Doctor Heinrich, "Reise durch das Innere der Europäischen Türkei." Berlin, 1864; Tozer, Reverend Henry Fanshawe, "Researches in the Highlands of Turkey." 2 volumes. London, 1869; Cvijić, Doctor J., "Grundlinien der Geographie und Geologie von Mazedonien und Altserbien." Gotha, 1908; Richter, Ingenieur Edward, "Meine Erlebnisse in der Gefangenschaft am Olymp." Leipzig, 1911.]

And now new glories began to unfold before us, as if in compensation for what we had foregone. A change was taking place all over the mountain top. The wind was beginning to tear apart the enveloping clouds and to lift them high in air. Already, toward the south, peaks were coming into clearer view that hitherto had been but dimly seen. And here for a moment we had a glimpse of Ossa, far away, just raising its pointed cap above the massive southern wall of Olympus. It was a welcome sight, for it gave us an unmistakable landmark and at the same time a standard of comparison by which we knew that we were well above the opposite part of the range and unquestionably on one of the very highest parts of the mountain. The greatest changes, however, were taking place close about us, and in the region to the north. Where a short time before there had been great masses of cloud, there now remained only a few torn shreds, clinging to the jagged ridges or hanging like pale ghosts in limbo. Farther away, at a lower level, there floated over the region of ancient Pieria a flock of fluffy white cloudlets, driving along before the breeze like sheep on the way to pasture. Now and then they would separate enough to disclose here and there the wooded hills and valleys beneath. Encouraged by these glimpses, we peered eagerly through the clouds farther to the east, hoping to see the waves of the blue Ægean. On a clear day we would have been able to see across the Gulf of Salonica to the trident-like Chalcidice, with Mount Athos tipping its easternmost prong. But for us the whole world in that direction was screened off by an unbroken sea of cloud far too dense to give any hope of vanishing. But toward the west the view was rapidly improving. We could now catch glimpses of far-away mountain ranges, extending

off into the north to the borders of Serbia and Albania. It was a wild, rugged scene, easily suggesting to the mind the scenes of blood and strife that were being enacted even at that very moment in the region just beyond, where Greeks and Albanians were striving for possession of the villages of northern Epirus.

For a long time we had been so absorbed in watching the ever-changing splendors of the cloud formations, and in the physical exertion of the ascent, that we had almost forgotten the significance of the noble mountain upon whose crest we stood. But there now occurred an event so strikingly appropriate, so perfectly symbolic, that we could scarcely believe our eyes. As we leaned over the brink of the precipice and gazed into the vast amphitheatre beneath, there suddenly flew out from the cliff two eagles. Off over the great void they sailed, then plunged into a bank of cloud and were lost to view. What else could it mean but that Zeus himself, with Hera, his regal consort, had come forth to see what mortals dared intrude upon their heavenly abode! And as we looked upon this sign all thoughts of highest peaks and precise locations vanished from our minds and all weariness and hunger left our bodies. We were in the very sanctuary of the immortal gods and we seemed to become immortal ourselves. Beautiful Hebe poured nectar even for us, and the drink was so sweet and so strong that the tears came to our eyes—tears of pure happiness; for it was given to us to behold sights that few if any among mortal men have ever beheld. Indeed, the only one who ever truly saw these glories was the blind poet of the ancient epics, a poet whose eyes were blind to all transitory shadows, but wide open to the radiance of all eternal things. With the aid of his undying words we tried now to conjure up before us the heroic episodes enacted on these broad summits. We beheld the banquets of the gods and attended their councils. Out of the clouds to the east we saw Thetis, mother of the mighty Achilles, rising from the Ægean Sea:

"Out from the deep . . . she came  
And climbed Olympus to wide heaven, and there  
Found wide-seeing Zeus, who from the others  
far

On many-ridged Olympus' topmost peak  
Was throned. . . ."

Before him she knelt and made her  
prayer to the son of Kronos, and

" . . . with his dark brows  
He nodded; down the locks ambrosial streamed  
From that undying head; while all the peaks  
Of high Olympus shook with awful sound. . . .  
Then Thetis sprang from the resplendent crest  
Olympian to the deep sea. . . ."

—*Iliad*, Book I (Lewis's translation).

Other scenes were then enacted. We saw the "ox-eyed" Hera, the radiant Aphrodite, Phœbus Apollo and his sister, the wise Athena, and Ares, god of war. We beheld them under many aspects: now quarrelling among themselves over the fates of men, now laughing with Olympian laughter. But at length there came the inevitable twilight of the gods. They lost their heroic character, and we seemed to see them more as pictured by Epicurus, living eternally among themselves a life of unceasing bliss and everlasting tranquillity far from all shadow of care and unconcerned with the surging waves of human woe.

Gladly would we have remained for many hours beholding these sights and dreaming these dreams, but we were mortal after all, and at length we were compelled to take thought for our descent. It was half past one, and we had far to go. Stern necessity prevailed upon us, and slowly and reluctantly we began our journey back to the world of mankind far below. It was half past five when at last we reached the monastery of Hagia Trias. The kind monks welcomed us back, and provided what refreshment they could. We talked for a little while, telling them of the wonders we had seen on their mountain—wonders so near them, yet which they had never thought to go and see for themselves. Then we rolled up in our comforters, and slept a sleep that not ten thousand rats could have disturbed.

In the morning we bade good-by to our hospitable hosts. They urged us to remain for a few days and rest, but we felt that we must be on our way. That night we spent at another monastery, called Hagios Antonios, at the little village of Demirades, close to the main road running north from Elassona into Macedonia; and on the following day we continued our journey over the mountainous Pass of

Sarantapouro. During the day we saw many signs of the battle of the preceding year: torn shreds of clothing and broken equipment, and on either side of the road long mounds of earth marked the fiercely contested passage of the "iron gates" that guard the entrance into Macedonia. It was evening as we wearily trudged into the half-wrecked village of Servia and sought out the xenodocheion, or inn. The next morning we secured horses and rode for thirteen hours over a wild mountain road that afforded superb views of the deep canyon of the Vistrizta, or Haliacmon, River. Many strange sights we saw that day: villages perched high on the tops of mountains and nestled far down in deep ravines; streams of water harnessed in sluices to turn a dozen mills; and a road-bed made of pure white marble for several miles. And late in the afternoon a long descent brought us to the town of Verria, at the edge of the great plain of southern Macedonia, a town perhaps better known by its ancient name of Berea, whither Saint Paul fled when the Jews drove him from Thessalonica (Acts 17: 10). At Verria we came again to a railroad, and on the following day took the train to this same Thessalonica, or Salonica, now as in ancient times a great centre of commerce.

And from the Gulf of Salonica a few days later we had a last view of the mighty Olympus as we steamed out into the Ægean on our way to Mount Athos and Constantinople. We beheld it from across the water, looming majestically against a cloudless sky, a mountain truly *ὀδδλαμπος*, or "all-resplendent," as the Greeks love to explain the origin of the name. For a long time we watched it, till at length the evening shadows crept into the deep ravines and the golden beams of the setting sun kindled the crystal summits. Then, indeed, did we behold it transfigured into that blissful place praised by the god-inspired Homer, "where, as they say, is the seat of the gods that standeth fast forever. Nor by winds is it shaken, nor ever wet with rain, nor doth the snow come nigh thereto, but most clear air is spread about it cloudless, and the white light floats over it. Therein the blessed gods are glad for all their days." —*Odyssey*, VI (Butcher & Lang).

# A PAIR OF LOVERS

By Elsie Singmaster

ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. B. FROST



THE first shadows from the western mountains fell upon the little farm at their foot. Often they seemed to chase James down the road. He had gone for the cows alone since he was six years old, but he had never grown accustomed to the queer shapes of the alder bushes in the evenings and to the dark masses which filled the fence corners. Even familiar Mooley and Daisy and Bess took on vast and unfamiliar proportions. James did not often run, and having safely crossed the bridge over the stream which made his mother's land such fine pasture he grew bold. He could see from there the kitchen light, darkened sometimes as his mother passed before it, or he could hear the great tin pails rattling on her arm as she swung open the barnyard gate.

This evening James could not see the kitchen light or hear the pleasant clink of his mother's pails. Already the loud "Gee, Mooley! Haw, Bess!" with which he expressed his return to confidence in himself and in the reasonable structure of the world, was on his lips. But the shout died soundlessly away.

The light of his mother's lamp was lost in a brilliant glare. At first James was certain that the dreaded fire was at last consuming their dwelling and he began to run, crying frantically, "Oh, mother! mother!"

Then he stood still. The light was not in the house, but in the road; it was not the leaping red flame with which fire devours wooden walls and roof. It was a round, still, white light, or, rather, two round, still, white lights which illuminated the road to the bridge. James could count every nail in the railing, every knot in the floor. He could see also, as he looked down to gauge the astonishing power of the fiery eyes, his own bare feet, released to-day from their winter bondage of shoes.

He could see the smooth, beautifully colored bodies of the Alderneys, moving placidly up the road in the face of the great light as though they were indifferent to the strange phenomenon.

James stopped so long in amazed contemplation that the cows were half-way to the barn. Then he ran at furious speed.

"It is one of *them!*" he cried, divided between fright and rapture.

At the gate of the house yard he stopped, breathless. The automobile lights were now behind him; he could see that the kitchen lamp was burning and that his mother stood in the doorway, her pails, one inside the other, in one hand, her lantern in the other. Facing her on the step was a stranger, a tall young man with an eager, commanding voice.

"The dairyman told me about you. He said that you loved animals and were kind to them. Robin should be on a farm while we are away. I wouldn't have bought him if I had known we were going so soon. He won't be any trouble, and I will pay you well."

Mrs. Schelling set the lantern on the sill beside her. She was a Pennsylvania German and spoke English with difficulty. She braced herself by putting her hand against the door.

"I could not say his name, to call him."

"Robin! Call him Bob, Bobby; anything you like!"

"I could not talk to him in English."

The young man laughed. "Then talk to him in German!"

Mrs. Schelling answered with a slow "Well." Two dollars a week would be a desirable addition to her income. Suddenly her face brightened. "The little one can talk to him!"

At this mention of himself, James withdrew to the shadows. But it was not at him that the stranger turned to look. The stranger gave a signal, a sharp stroke of middle finger against palm. In answer,