

## THE BOOK SHELF.

[Conducted by ALBERT LEE, '91.]

## Nansen's "Farthest North."

The man who has done something that nobody has ever done before, and writes about it, is pretty sure to have his book read, not only by those who may be especially interested in the particular thing that he has done, but by the great reading public which is continually looking for something new. And when this feat has been accomplished in spite of many obstacles and by the exertion of untiring energy, the story of it becomes so full of human interest that the tale takes on that peculiar fascination which clings to all adventure. When Dr. Nansen reached 86 degrees N., he had succeeded in surpassing the efforts of all his predecessors in that line of endeavor, and his story of how the deed was done reads almost like a novel. ("Farthest North," by Fritz Hof Nansen, 2 vols. Harper & Bros.) The book is not yet published, but I have had the opportunity of looking over the advance sheets, and judging from them, Dr. Nansen's work must surely prove a most important addition to the literature of Arctic exploration.

The thing that strikes one at the very first is that these thirteen fellows started off on their perilous journey so well equipped that they felt no fear of any of the dreadful things that usually happen to North Pole seekers. The "Fram" was so staunchly built that she could not be crushed; there were provisions enough on board for 10 years, and besides this there was such a variety that it was almost impossible for the men to be attacked by scurvy. A windmill was rigged on deck after the ship became frozen in, and the explorers spent the long Arctic night in reading and playing games in the cabin that was lighted by electric lights generated by the windmill. In Dr. Nansen's story there are no wails of misery and description of suffering. On the contrary there is page after page describing the luxury of exploration on the Norwegian plan, and plenty of pleasant chaff for the doctor of the expedition, who had nothing to do but physic the dogs!

Of course, when Nansen and Johansen started off on their sledge journey, they left all this comfort behind them and they had a hard fight of it for fifteen months, but none of that dreary torture we have read about in the books of other Arctic adventurers. The key to the whole business seems to be that Nansen went off properly equipped to combat the cold, and his victory was a direct result of his foresight. The book is a most interesting one, and gives a better idea of that region than any other I have seen. There are many colored plates and countless reproductions from photographs—and photographs tell the truth.

## Prof. Hoppin's "Greek Art on Greek Soil."

[By Miss Stella Skinner, Art Director of New Haven Public Schools.]

All who have felt the personal charm of Professor Hoppin's art lectures to the Yale University students, and especially those who were privileged to listen to his recent series upon "Greek Art on Greek Soil" will eagerly welcome his new volume, in which these lectures are embodied in permanent form.

Whether one reads or listens, Prof. Hoppin possesses the rare faculty of carrying his auditor with him. You turn but few pages in the opening chapters upon "The Land of Greece" before you, too, are on charmed soil under "the deep, blue heavens of Hellas" with the glistening waters about you, and the clear atmosphere bathing you in its radiance.

It is not simply the Greece of today, but Homeric Greece, the land and seas of Odysseus to which Professor Hoppin takes us—a land still inhabited by gods and heroes—and it is neither Baedeker nor Murray, but the Odysseus, which he recommends as a book to travel with in Greece, "a golden key to interpret its nature, poetry, art and life." Indeed, he goes so far as to tell us that "Homer was the book of religion, wisdom, law and life to the Greek," his inspiration and guide. At every turn, one is impressed with the writer's intimate knowledge of the masters of Greek literature and philosophy, as well as of art. A life-time

of study and culture has enriched the pages of this volume.

## THE MODERN GREEK.

In view of the present political situation in Greece, Professor Hoppin's comments upon the nature and character of the modern Greek, and the relations of Greece with other countries, notably England and Turkey, are most interesting and significant.

"The Greeks have ardent aspirations that no disappointments have been able to quench, and, 'their very vanity is towards intellectual progress.' The spark of Greek intelligence yet glows. 'They expect to be a nation and are preparing for it.'"

"Love of country inspires Greeks high and low, and I believe, it is a genuine feeling, though it shows itself in sentiment more than in action; but the great names of Botsares, Kanares, Miaoulis, Kolkatrous, Ipsilantes and others, live and burn in the people's hearts, more passionately than the names of Washington and our Revolutionary heroes live in American hearts.

"The modern Greek, as was said, has been over-praised and over-blamed, and this has worked to produce in him the opposite sentiments of vanity and despair, so that, at this time, under the pressure of national disgrace arising from enormous unpaid loans and a depreciated currency, he has lost a title of his natural vivaciousness and audaciousness; and what, indeed, has modern Greece realized from promises and pledges such as those of the Treaty of Berlin, and earlier treaties, that gave to her territory and power, and then dashed her down to poverty?"

## ENGLAND AND GREECE.

"England has been Greece's best friend, and is so still, but she has been a selfish, calculating, ungenerous and disappointing friend, failing signally in great crises. Yet we may hope that Greece, from native impulse, will, in spite of these heart-breaking disappointments, show herself self-reliant and energetic and that she will eventually wrest from her old foe the Doric Isle of Crete, Macedonia, Albania, Thrace, and all her ancient territory, which was larger than her present one, and may become a state and a civilization worthy of her name. Greece is the pivot of European politics. Her art, or what she owns within her borders and which points to perfection, is a power; her land, still there in mid-Mediterranean with its mountains and valleys, almost the loveliest land under heaven, is a power; and although our classical enthusiasm is put to a strain by modern Greeks, I, for one, \* \* \* believe that Greece has a bright future, that her light cannot be put out in the midst of the nations. This little book is a humble "envoi" of such a hope. In the vast changes which must soon occur in the East, her opportunity (the old Greeks had a divinity named "Opportunity" to which they sacrificed) may come.

"If the Ottoman Empire in Europe, sustained alone by outside pressure, were hard beset by one or all of the great Christian powers, and if the Turk were hurled out of Europe back to his native Tartar deserts, the Greeks \* \* \* as the natural inheritors of the Turks who robbed them, may gain possession of Constantinople, which belongs to Greece as a Hellenic foundation. Greek chants may then once more rise under the dome of the Hagia Sophia that was built by a Greek Emperor, out of materials plundered from temples of Athens at Athens, and Artemis at Ephesus: though this is a visionary picture, when, in reality, a colossal power like Russia, coldly antagonistic to Greece at heart, though of the same Orthodox Church, lies like a giant ogre in wait to seize upon Constantinople. As northern races inevitably gravitate south, a little country like Greece could not interpose to prevent it. If Greece had the spirit and hope of ancient Greece, she might raise a barrier against Russia, but for how long? Yet Greece, Greece in idea, must prevail. The world now, as in St. Paul's time, is "Greek and barbarian," and Greece has her last word in the contest of light and darkness, barbarism and culture, ever going on."

Peculiar interest attaches also to the "well-known prophecy that when a Constantine shall wed a Sophia, the Greeks shall possess Constantinople, and this concurrence of names has already occurred in the case of the present crown-prince and his wife."

## DUTY AND BEAUTY.

The writer well remembers sitting in the calm stillness of the lecture hall at the Yale Art School, after a morning of earnest endeavor out in the busy, bustling world, and listening—as to a benediction—to the strong convincing argument concerning Duty and Beauty, set down in the chapter upon "Del-

phi and Mount Parnassos," and yet recalls the sense of restfulness and peace which it invoked. "What is more beautiful than Duty? Every quality that enters into and makes beauty—truth, reason, order, right, perfection—enters into and makes duty. Duty and Beauty are one, not variant, and a broader generalization comprehends them both. Beauty, in Greek thought, was another word for perfection, material and mental. The Greek idea of beauty was predominantly intellectual. The line of beauty was a line of strength. The Greeks felt that the beautiful and the true were one, and this lies at the base of the best Greek philosophy. Socrates said that 'whatever is beautiful is for the same reason good, when suited to the purpose for which it was intended;' and Plato goes deeper and seeks the beautiful beyond visible objects, finding it in the soul.

"Beauty, as Plato saw it, was divine, and it was this divine beauty that his soul thirsted for. Love is the spring of duty. Duty is heroic, and the heroic both in morality and art, is beautiful. It is a question of perspective. A true analysis seeks not the contrast, but the identity, of duty and beauty; so that a deep-thinking Greek could say 'Beauty is the splendor of truth.'

"As a practical lesson, he who desires to obtain true culture must work on Greek lines; and if we catch the spirit in which the best Greek worked, we catch the spirit of true culture."

## ARCHAEOLOGY DEFINED.

One is constantly tempted to quote from the text, which in many instances rises to as perfect form and style as the art which it interprets. Could anything be finer than this discrimination:—"Archaeology is a noble growing science. \* \* \* It is a helpful and, in some respects, indispensable, handmaid, of the lovely queen art: but archaeology cannot, any more than science, take the queen's place, or walk in her celestial robes, shedding about her steps that sweetness, light and grace that bless the earth, like the spring-time. Archaeology treats of the old, but art is ever new and young. Archaeology is confined within its own severe limits of scholarly research, but art is free as the infinite imagination."

But, after all, it is as a text-book on Greek art that the volume is of greatest value. Many writers possess a charming style, but few combine with it such full and accurate technical knowledge of their subject. The chapter upon "The Acropolis" gives not only the form but the spirit of the master-piece of Greek art, the Parthenon, and fills one with a consuming desire to some day see with one's own eyes this "fairest gem in all earth's zone." Interesting in this connection is the comparison of the two greatest Greek sculptors.

"The Parthenon is the monument of Pheidias. Pheidias was sculptor of gods, as Praxiteles was sculptor of men beautiful as gods. There is ideal greatness in one and human loveliness in the other; but Pheidias stands at the head, —He was first to draw freely from nature, to grasp the deep principles of beauty in nature, to seek perfection."

In common with other lovers of Greece, Prof. Hoppin deprecates the action of "that raider of temples, Lord Elgin," in transferring the lovely frieze of the Parthenon to the British Museum, and doubtless shares the hope that some day the "white ghosts of the past seen in the fogs of London" may be restored to their native home on Greek soil.

To the art student, the chapters upon the museums at Athens are of great value, identifying and describing many choice art treasures, among the most interesting of which are the funerary monuments, an exquisite illustration of a stele being given. The writer feels a personal gratitude for these descriptions which identify some of the finest examples of Greek art. Only one who has spent hours in search for such material can fully appreciate its value. Mention should be made also of the appreciative study of the Greek vase, "the most lovely products of Greek genius, pure and delicate exhalations of art, blending the highest perfection of form with the subtlest feeling."

Reluctantly leaving Athens, we are taken first to Corinth where is the famous spring of Peirene. "It was so terribly hot that I gladly minded the injunction to drink deep of the Pierian spring, that may have made me ever since a lover of anything Greek."

After visiting the old temple at Corinth, Mycenae, with its well-known Lion Gate and rock-hewn tombs rich with treasure, is explored.

A most interesting and beautiful illustration is the "Hera head from Argolic Heraeon," attributed to Polykleitos. "It is of Parian marble, and the face has a straight onlook, as if it were a shrine-statue, earnest in character."

Full of charm is the description of Epidauros, "one of the loveliest hill-girt spots in Greece, the seat of the worship of the gentle Asklepios." One is tempted to quote the "cure of dyspepsia" recently found at Epidauros, but we must hasten on to Olympia, where stood the great temple of Zeus (thrown down by earthquakes in the sixth century A. D.), in which was Pheidias'

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master-piece, the famous ivory and gold statue of Olympian Zeus.

But it is not in the temple or its ornamentations that our interest centres, but in the peerless statue of Hermes, by Praxiteles, so recently brought to light from the debris which concealed it. "It is young manhood in its prime bloom. It is a son of Zeus, strong and swift messenger of the gods. A sweetness of expression lights up the face, and there is a contemplative look as into futurity. There is a living spirit in it, while it stands in breathing repose and immortal beauty.

## GREEK ATHLETICS.

Of peculiar interest to University students is Prof. Hoppin's thoughtful and appreciative analysis of the Greek games, and no less so to the art student, as showing the close relation between sculpture and the athletic games. Indeed, one might safely maintain that without the athletic contests, sculpture could not have reached the perfection which it attained in Greece.

"The Greeks regarded the public games in a peculiar light, for they were looked upon as an inheritance from the immortals, since a perfect human body was, in some sense, the most sacred of objects, enshrining the soul as in a temple, and associating it with the divine. To contend in the games was a religious aspiration, a lofty endeavor, a striving for the perfect, and we can probably have no conception of the earnestness thrown into these games when a nation was looking on, when it was sometimes the whole aim of a life to conquer, when it was a religious consecration."

One turns reluctantly from the closing chapters, as from some beautiful picture, back to the commonplace of life, yet, if he has caught the spirit of their message, Greek art is still a living, inspiring reality, whose "beauty goes forth to light the world forever."

## Divinity School Commencement.

A committee from the Senior class of the Yale Theological Seminary have, within the past week, presented to the Faculty of that Department an address, suggesting that in the graduating exercises, in the future, the short speeches by members of the graduating class be abolished, and that the literary feature of the occasion be a formal address upon some weighty subject of theology or religion, by a member of the Faculty or by some other distinguished theologian.

The address presented the result of a canvass of the alumni, which was made by means of letters, in which two thirds of those heard from were in favor of the change. The arguments brought forward, in favor of the change are: First, the artificial nature of the speeches made by the students; second, the great length to which it is necessary to prolong the exercises; third, the general tendency among higher institutions of learning to discard exhibitions by the students at their anniversaries, and, last, the superior attractiveness of such an address proposed.

As yet no decision has been reached, but it is expected that the matter will be brought up at the next meeting of the Faculty.

## To Meet Pennsylvania in Basket ball.

The University of Pennsylvania basketball team has accepted the invitation of the Yale team to play at the Gymnasium next Saturday evening, March 20. This invitation was given after consulting with the captains of the various University teams, all of whom expressed their willingness to have the contest take place. Pennsylvania has had for some time a well organized team, which has played with all the best teams of the country. Although the Yale players have had little experience, they have been fairly successful this season, and the game should be well contested.