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Evelyn S. Shuckburgh

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A SHORT HISTORY
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A SHORT
HISTORY OF THE GREEKS
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO B.C. 146

BY

EVELYN S. SHUCKBURGH, M.A.,

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P R E F A C E.

THE only excuse for adding another to the many histories of Greece is the hope that the writer has been able so to state the old story—modified by recent studies and discoveries—as to suit the needs or tastes of certain classes of readers and students. In a book of this size it is impossible not to curtail or omit much that is interesting and even important. The aim of the writer, in selecting the topics to be dwelt upon, has been to choose those which best illustrate the political life and intellectual activities of the Greeks wherever they lived, not only in Greece proper, but in the larger Greece of Italy, Sicily, and Asia. To do this at all adequately in so short a space it was often necessary to reduce details as to particular cities and districts to a very low standard. The writer has wished to treat Greek History in a wide Hellenic spirit, but in spite of good resolutions he has found it as impossible, as others seem to have done, to avoid giving Athens the lion's share in the story. The

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Preface.

Persian Wars and the Athenian Supremacy will always, it is probable, represent the real points of interest to most readers of Greek History. It is almost impossible to be very cheerful over the Spartan and Theban Supremacies: and though Demosthenes has lent a revived brilliancy to the story of the Macedonian period, and Alexander the Great has a unique place in the imagination of mankind, we feel that Greece as we knew and loved it is slipping away from us, and it requires an effort to recover our interest in the intellectual life of Alexandria or the political experiments in the Peloponnese. The new Hellenism in the post-Alexandrine kingdoms, and the gradual absorption of all in the Roman system, should furnish a story well worth our study. But Polybius—in spite of many brilliant episodes—will never rival Herodotus and Thucydides, or even Xenophon, in popular favour. People will continue to be fascinated by the older writers and to be repelled by the historian of the Achaean League. The writer has tried however to tell this part of the story as clearly as the rest, and as circumstantially as his space allowed. It has also been his aim, besides the brief sketch of Greek Literature in the last chapter, to draw attention throughout to the intellectual and artistic movements in Greece as they became prominent from time to time, for they constitute the chief service of the Greeks to the world.

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Finally, he has the pleasant duty of thanking Dr Jackson of Trinity College and Mr Whibley of Pembroke College for reading some of his proofs and giving him valuable suggestions. To the readers and other officials of the Cambridge University Press he is also under deep obligations.

E. S. SHUCKBURGH.

March, 1901.

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