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Narrative of a Second Visit to Greece

Edward Blaquiére (1779–1832), an Irishman of Huguenot descent, joined the Royal Navy in 1794 and served, chiefly in the Mediterranean, throughout the Napoleonic wars. In 1820, influenced by Jeremy Bentham, he went on his behalf to Spain to observe the revolution there. On the fall of the liberal regime in Spain in 1823, Blaquiére and his friend John Bowring formed the London Greek Committee to raise money for the Greek war of independence and to lobby the British government for support. (It was under the auspices of the Committee, and recruited by Blaquiére, that Lord Byron made his famous, and fatal, journey to Greece.) After his second visit to Greece, in 1825 Blaquiére published this account of his own travels and of the last days of Lord Byron. His 1824 book on the progress of the Greek revolution is also reissued in this series.

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OF A

SECOND VISIT TO GREECE,

INCLUDING

Facts connected

WITH

THE LAST DAYS OF LORD BYRON,

EXTRACTS FROM

CORRESPONDENCE, OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS,

&c.

By EDWARD BLAQUIERE, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

"THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE GREEK REVOLUTION," &c.

"Publicity is the soul of justice."—BENTHAM.

LONDON:
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INTRODUCTION.

MY sudden departure from England, last year, having obliged me to leave a number of facts connected with Greece, and her Revolution, untouched, I have in the following pages, endeavoured to fill up the void; and I hope thus to redeem a pledge, without which I should not have considered the task proposed to myself, as by any means completed. In acknowledging the numerous imperfections of both my volumes, I may be permitted to say of this, as I did of the former, that the materials were collected on the spot, and from those who have either taken the lead in bringing about the struggle, or been prominent actors during its eventful progress.*

* Being desirous of conveying a correct idea of a place to which such frequent allusion is made in my Narrative, I am in-

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Having, in my humble efforts to promote the cause of freedom and humanity in the New World, as well as in Greece, felt that a great responsibility was incurred, it has been my earnest study to state such facts as I considered most conducive to the great object in view, without disguising truth, or misleading public opinion. In advocating the Greek cause, I was not ignorant of the difficulties by which it was environed. Convinced, however, from the peculiar circumstances connected with this unexampled struggle, as well as by the experience of history, that a nation is not regenerated without having to encounter innumerable obstacles, it would have been both imprudent and illiberal to check the generous ardour of the European public, in favour of a people who have such irresistible claims on its sympathy and co-operation:—such have been the motives for my not dwelling on those errors of judgment and defects of national character, inseparable from

debted to the kindness of my friend, Mr. Robert Greg, of Manchester, for the view of Athens, which forms the Frontispiece. This is, by far, the most correct and tasteful I have seen of that renowned spot. As no country on earth affords a finer field to artists than Greece, it is hoped my friend may be induced to give the remaining treasures of his portfolio to the public.

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every people who are long exposed to a despotic system of government. The course, which has been adopted by so many others, cannot be too much deprecated, for if the defects of a people are ever to be exposed, it is not surely when they are struggling for existence?

In consequence of some observations and letters, contained in Colonel Stanhope's interesting publication, and which could not fail to excite doubts with regard to the character of individuals, whose talents and virtues have impressed me with the highest respect, it has become a sacred duty on my part, to give publicity to statements and documents, which might, under any other circumstances, be devoid of public interest. In performing this duty, I am also bound to bear my humble testimony to the zeal and talent which the gallant Colonel has evinced, from the moment he espoused the Greek cause; his efforts in favour of freedom in other places, is too well known to the public to require any notice from me. As, however, the ultimate triumph of the Greeks, must depend in a great measure on the patriotism and purity of those in whose hands power is placed, I feel assured, that the gallant Colonel will not be dis-

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pleased with my having followed his example, in giving free utterance to my own sentiments. Though shades of difference in opinion, may have arisen between us, I am convinced no man can appreciate the advantages of candour and truth, in such matters, more justly than the enlightened author of Greece in 1823,—while he does not require to be told, that whatever we possess of freedom and public spirit, is due to that unshackled conflict of opinions, which has at all times been the precursor of public liberty and national independence.

From the fate which has befallen so many efforts in favour of freedom during the last thirty years, and the dangers which still surround every attempt at popular emancipation, it is of the utmost importance that every fact, tending to convey a thorough knowledge of the rise and progress of such efforts, should be made public; for without this, how is it possible to avoid the errors which have led to such disastrous consequences in other countries? In thus alluding to the importance of putting the European public in possession of all the facts necessary to its forming a correct judgment on the nature of the Greek contest, it is

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impossible to avoid noticing the disappointment and sorrow occasioned by the revival of those dissensions, which have arisen since my Narrative was written, and contrary to the hopes of all the friends of the cause throughout Europe. If I do so now, it is in order to urge more vehemently than ever, the necessity of the great powers coalescing, to rescue a whole people from the imminent danger with which they are threatened by the crimes and follies of a few individuals.

Having espoused this sacred cause on behalf of the million, and made every possible effort to ascertain the sentiments of the Greek people, I have no hesitation in repeating, that the most ignorant among them, would hail such an interference as should place Greece under a regular government, calculated to put an end to rival pretensions, as the happiest moment of their lives, and indeed the goal of all their hopes. In urging this truth on the notice of the cabinets, I also feel assured that I am expressing the sentiments of every man of virtue and patriotism in the confederation. Should the great powers defer some decided measure of policy with regard to Greece, and suffer another campaign to proceed, there will surely be no injustice in charging them with

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all the consequences which may arise from such unpardonable apathy ; while it cannot fail to infer, that the oft repeated insinuations of their conniving at the destruction of a whole nation of Christians, is not an unfounded assertion.

Although it is true, the jarring interests which embarrass the Greek question on every side, may render an arrangement difficult, yet I am convinced with the most enlightened men of Greece, that if the cabinets enter into the discussion, with sincerity, an understanding may be established much more easily than most persons, who have only viewed the matter superficially and at a distance, imagine. As a return to the Turkish yoke is impossible, let the grand question of independence be decided at once. This done, every thing else will follow as a matter of course ; and however bright the hopes of the friends of Greece were, when they first beheld the dawn of her regeneration, I feel satisfied they would rather see a monarchy established there, than witness the destruction of the people for whom their sympathy has been called forth.

From a variety of circumstances which have occurred, it is evident that our own ministers are

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not only actuated by a more liberal spirit towards Greece, but also feel the necessity of putting an end to a conflict, which tends to the mutual destruction both of Greece and Turkey, while it is opposed to every sentiment of religion and humanity. It is needless to add, that such is the tide of popular opinion in favour of an arrangement, if they insist, their efforts will be crowned with success. Without this, all the succours we could send will, it is feared, be insufficient to attain the grand object in view.

Having thus declared my firm conviction, on a subject which is so deeply interesting to civilization, some circumstances, which have taken place since my return from the Morea, render it necessary to say a few words with regard to the part I have taken in the affairs of the confederacy. By referring to the correspondence and official papers, which are offered to the public as the most important portion of the present volume, it will be seen with what anxiety I urged such measures as were most likely to enable the Provisional Government to prosecute the war with increased and becoming vigour; but more especially, to commence the fifth campaign before the season was

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too far advanced. I have stated the flattering manner in which all my propositions on this subject were received ; it remains for me to add, that by a letter of the Secretary-General, the executive body conferred on me the high honour of co-operating with its deputies in this country. Judging, from my previous connection with the friends of Greece, that the former would derive some little facilities from the assistance I might be enabled to give. Having, in consequence of this proof of confidence, felt it my duty to engage that the utmost expedition should be used in carrying the instructions of which I was the bearer into effect, my whole attention was directed to this object on reaching London.

A combination, which I could not possibly anticipate, having prevented me from fulfilling any one of those engagements, I feel it a sacred duty, due not only to the Government, but the people of Greece, to declare, that neither have had any share in the unforeseen obstacles that have been thrown in the way. My sole object being that of thus publicly justifying myself from what a people, to whom I am bound by the strongest ties of sympathy and affection, might

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justly conceive a betrayal of their interests, at a peculiar crisis, I shall abstain from a variety of minor details connected with this subject, and which would reflect but little credit on the parties more immediately concerned. I do not want to bring individuals unnecessarily before the public: what I wish, in common with every friend of Greece, is, that her cause, by far the most glorious that ever graced the page of history, should not be sacrificed at the unhallowed shrine of avarice, envy, or ingratitude!

A variety of additional circumstances which have occurred since the above observations were written, not only justifies, but renders the publication of the letter* alluded to in the preceding page,

* The following is a translation of the letter in question:—

“ PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF GREECE.

“ SECOND PERIOD, NO. 264.

“ Napoli di Romania, Aug. 12, 1824.

“ SIR,

“ MY Government having sent instructions to its Deputies in London, by which they are charged with various affairs concerning the well-being of the Greek people, it does not doubt but you will also do all that depends on yourself to be useful to Greece,

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necessary, in order to prevent the effects of those insinuations, if not direct calumnies, to which it would appear I have been exposed, in common with many others. Having proved, both in my account of the Revolution, and in the present volume, that the resources of Greece entitle her to a high credit on the London Stock Exchange, I may surely be permitted to deplore those arrangements, which have placed the loan recently contracted for, in a situation nearly similar to that into which the former fell during my visit to the Morea. In lamenting a circumstance which cannot fail to be materially injurious to the Greek

in conjunction with our Deputies, who are ordered to apply to you in all the affairs with which they are charged, as their counsellor and co-operator; you will, therefore, act in such a way as to ensure their prompt and happy termination. You will on this occasion afford new proofs of your ardent zeal and your philhellenic sentiments. Conceiving it needless to dwell on this subject any longer, I conclude by wishing you a fortunate voyage; and I take the liberty of subscribing myself,

“ Your very devoted Servant,

(Signed)

“ P. G. RODIUS.

“ Sec.-General, *ad interim*.

“ *To Mr. Edward Blaquiere, Napoli di Romania.*”

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cause, I owe it to myself, and those with whom I have acted, to state, that had our advice been followed, Greece would have obtained her second loan on much more advantageous terms, and at least two months before the second was negotiated. Nor, had those entreaties, written and verbal, which I addressed to the Deputies, not long after my return, been attended to, would four months have been wasted in negotiations that might have been concluded in as many weeks. If, therefore, the interests of Greece have either been sacrificed or neglected, the fault is not attributable to her early friends. It is said, that a party has been formed against the second loan; if this be the case, those whose conduct gave rise to its formation, and which they might have so easily prevented, are surely as much to blame as its opponents, if such there be?

London, March 25th, 1825.

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Part ii. page 27,—*for*, a soldier grave, *read*, a soldier's grave.