

GREEK LIBERATION

4 Greece
The long night of oppression ended and the dawn of ~~LIBERTY~~ returned liberty suffused the bay of Athens. Scores of British men-o'-war escorted the ~~troop-ships~~ ^{Piraeus} and landing craft taking the British army to Greece. In 1941 the harassed Royal Navy evacuated a British expedition from Greece as the seemingly invincible German herds over-ran the Balkans. Now we were going back and for Greece the long horror of tyranny and hunger was over. The sun of liberty ^{again} shines with its wonted power upon the fair country where Liberty was born. As the port of Piraeus was not yet cleared of mines the army landed at a small harbour nearby. The enemy, almost trapped by the Russians in the rear, had already fled. The yoke of oppression was lifted from the people, and nowhere have the conquering British troops received ~~to~~ ^{so} ecstatic a welcome as was accorded them in Greece.

Athens itself, the most renowned city of antiquity, has proved itself in these last few years fully worthy of its illustrious past.

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(after Churchill) Mingling ^{with} among the over-joyed crowds British ~~soldiers~~ ^{troops} on sight-seeing tours were mobbed by the people. Prepared though they were for enthusiasm, some of them said afterwards that they were totally surprised by this overwhelmingly fervent ~~reception~~ ^{reception}.

High above the city the Acropolis, ancient citadel of Athens, was the centre of attraction for the tourists in arms. ~~Greek soldiers waxed eloquent over the beauties of the Parthenon,~~ ^{dating from 447 B.C., is} the perfect example of the classical Greek temple. ~~Dating from 447 B.C. the Parthenon was severely damaged in 1687.~~ Defending the Acropolis against a Venetian army ^{300 yrs ago}, the Turks used the Temple as a powder magazine, ~~which~~ ^{it} was exploded by a shell.

Now to Piraeus came the Greek Prime Minister, M. Papandreu. British troops and Greek garrison fighters lined up on the quay-side as a guard of honour. These valiant men have been fighting in the Greek mountains for three years. Of all ages they waged unceasing war on the enemy. George Papandreu brought the hope of stable Government, freedom and economic revival to his sorely tried country. Accompanying him on his triumphal progress through Athens was General Scobie, commanding the British forces in Greece. Papandreu was acclaimed ~~as~~^{as} Liberator throughout the capital.

The Greek Premier paused at the Memorial to the Unknown Soldier. It was erected to commemorate men who died for Greece in the last war; ⁶ for the people of Athens it stands now for the much greater number who gave their lives to destroy a more terrible Germany.

(wreath)

After this tribute to the dead Athens turned to the Acropolis in a ceremony symbolising the hopes of living Greece. Four girls in national costume bore a Greek flag to the Parthenon. Behind them the procession was headed by the Prime Minister. There was in this ceremony a touch of that imaginative genius from which sprang the imperishable arts of ancient Greece. It expressed, too, the indomitable spirit of freedom, on the same soil that nourished freedom at its birth.

(GV pan flag) Three years ago this little country was over-run by the ~~greatest~~ most barbaric power in modern times. The spirit which then proved unconquerable today emerges triumphantly over Greece re-born.