

SECTION II.

HISTORY OF GREECE.

INTRODUCTION.

1. The part played by Greece in the great drama of Universal History makes her a connecting link between East and West, the Asiatic and the European, the enslaved and the free. Grecian history is one of the greatest phases of the question between East and West, alive in the politics of the present day, when the recovery of Constantinople for Europe is a great matter for European diplomacy.

Transition
from Oriental
to Grecian
history.

2. A rapid review of the stream of Greek history from the earliest times, including a period legendary in detail, but having a basis of fact, will enable us to judge of the place of Greece in history, and the vital connection existing between the ancient and modern worlds. The story of the war of Troy, embellished by poetry with marvels, is a legendary version of some part of the contest between East and West. After this comes the colonial period, when the Greek makes inroads on the commercial dominion of Phœnicia and a part of Asia practically becomes Europe by the settling of Greek cities on the coasts of Asia Minor. Then the powers of the East, embattled by Persia, advance in their turn. Asiatic Greece is conquered, European Greece is threatened, and at last has to fight for life on her own soil. By sea and by land Greece is triumphant, and the future of civilization is settled. Whatever the fate of Europe is to be she is not to be handed over to the grasp of Oriental despotism, but is to be left to struggle forward in a career uninfluenced by Eastern control. Then Greece, after reaching the highest point of culture in art and literature, is weakened by internal dissensions, and loses ground both in East and West. Her old foe, Persia, regains some of her former power on the sea-board of Asia Minor; in the West, Greek dominion is lessened by the rising power of Carthage and Rome, and the last effort of Greece for political dominion there fails when the phalanx of Pyrrhus succumbs to the Roman legion. Then the Macedonian king, Alexander the Great, reconquers the East and spreads Greek culture and an artificial Greek nationality over a large part of the world. Into this new Greek world Rome forces her way, and at once secures

Course taken
by Grecian
history.