

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS.
Assistant Editor: T. J. McCORMACK.

Associates: { E. C. HEGELER.
MARY CARUS.

VOL. XVII. (NO. 4)

APRIL, 1903.

NO. 563

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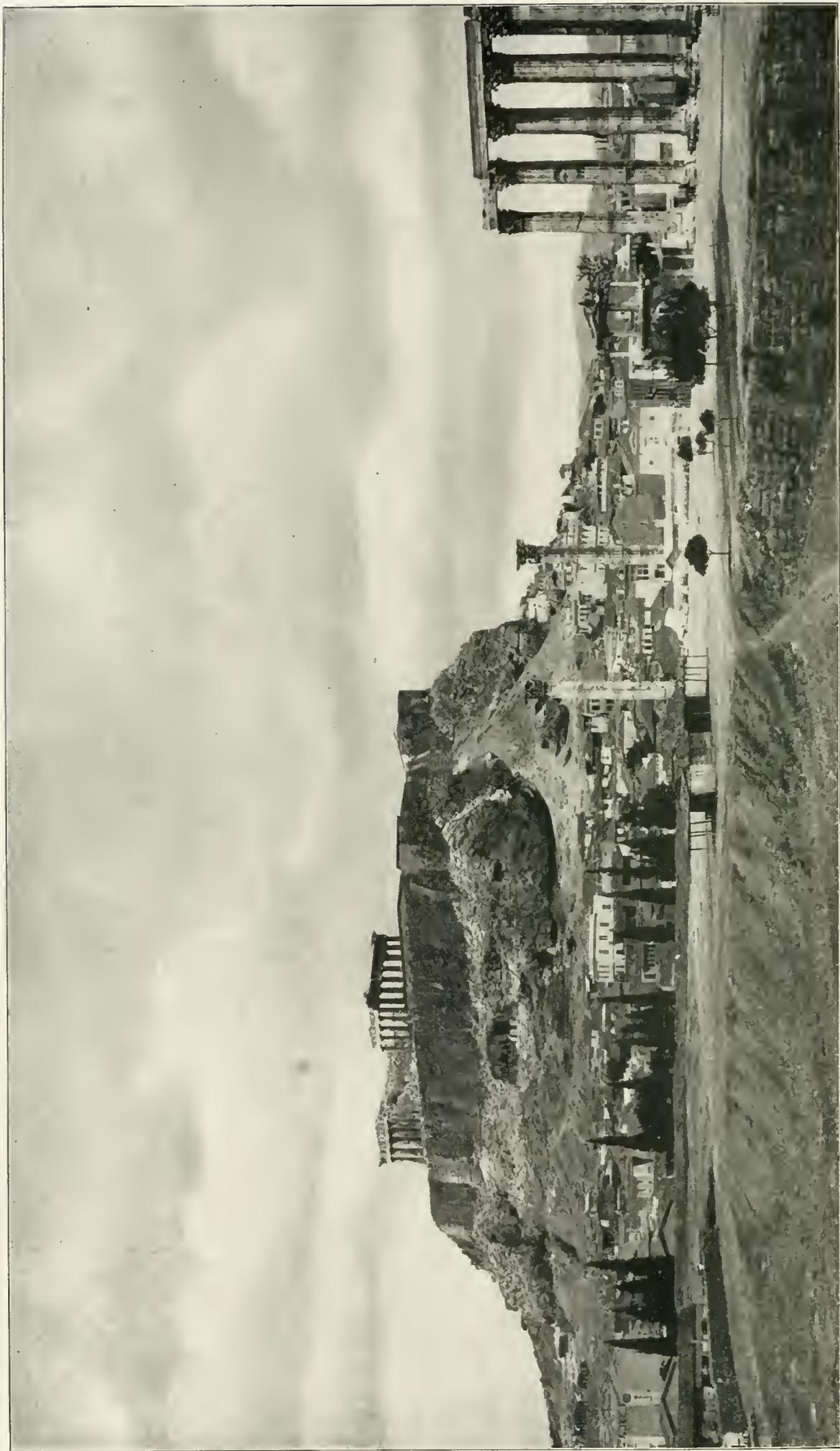
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THE ACROPOLIS FROM THE SOUTHEAST.

Frontispice to The Open Court.

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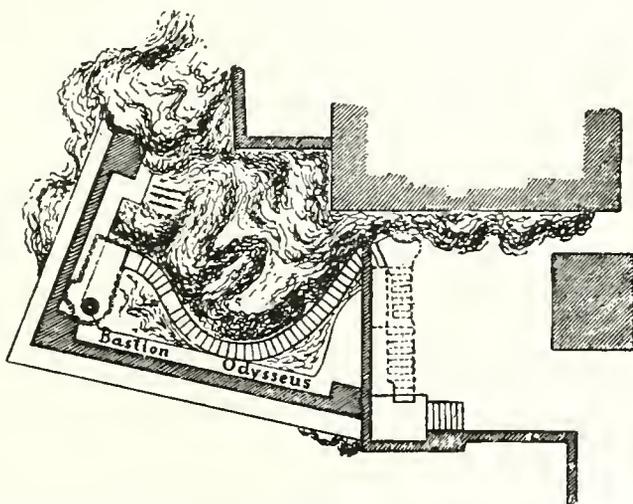
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THE ACROPOLIS.¹

BY THE EDITOR.

THE stronghold of Athens, or as the Athenians called it, the Acropolis, i. e., "the town on the mountain top," is an historical spot of most extraordinary significance. It is the site of the first settlement which was made in prehistoric times by the Pelasgian inhabitants of Attica. The steep hill could be easily defended, and a spring of good water (called Clepsydra) issued from its western slope, which (presumably at a very ancient date) had been made accessible from the plateau by a staircase hewn in the rock.

Apparently the Acropolis was very well fortified from the earliest days, and the enemy had to force three walls before its inhabitants would surrender. The base of the Acropolis was surrounded by the Pelargicon which is referred to as Enneapylon, i. e., as having nine gates. The second line of defence was the natural declivity of the rock which, however, had to be strengthened in several places by artificial means. It was fortified with special care in historical

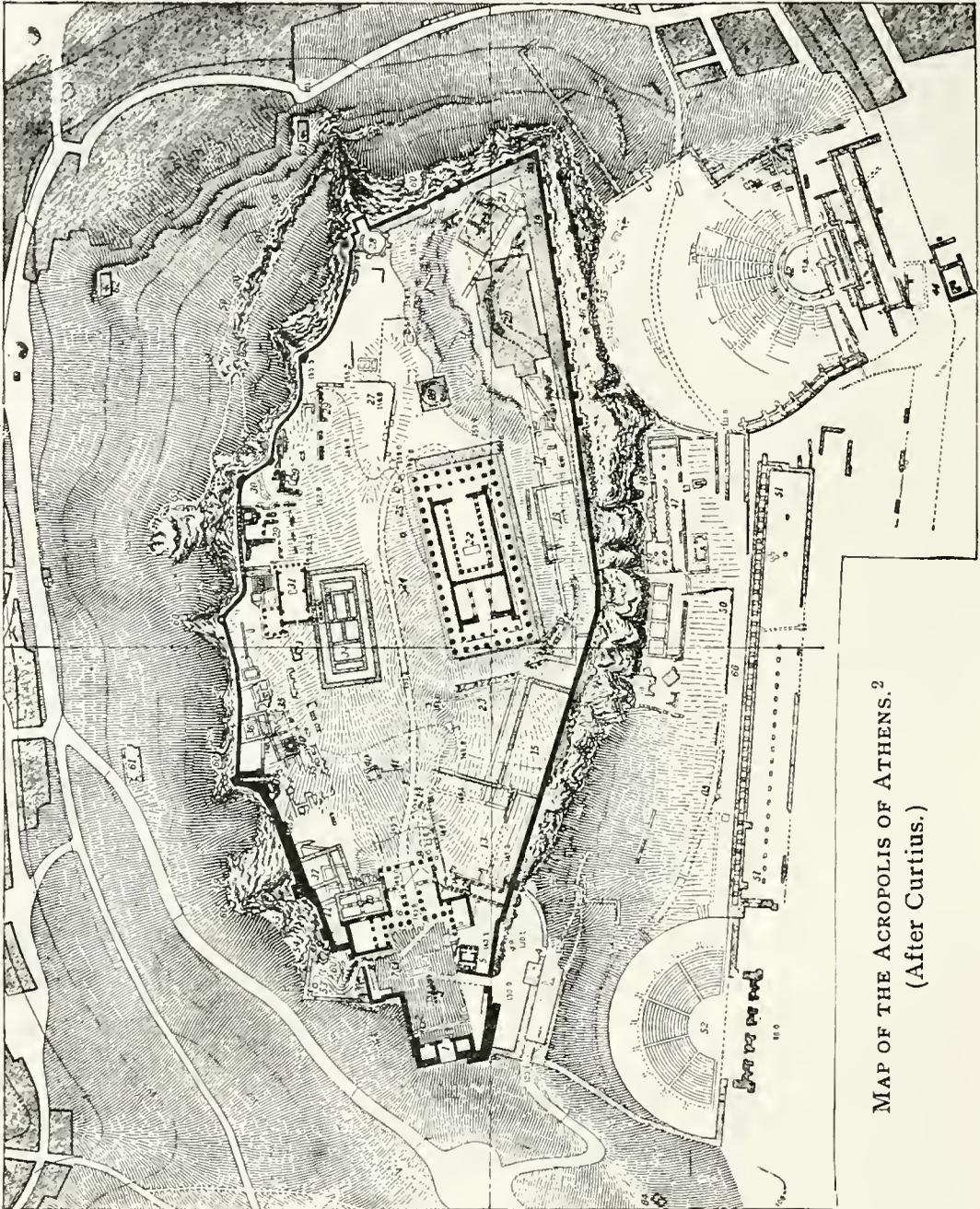


THE WINDING STAIRCASE IN THE BASTION OF
ODYSSEUS LEADING DOWN TO THE FORTI-
FIED SPRING CLEPSYDRA.²

¹ The numbers in brackets refer to the map of the Acropolis.

² The Bastion built by Odysseus Androustos during the war of independence has recently been removed.

times by Cimon; hence this wall is called after him "the Cimonian wall." The western slope shows remnants of the foundation



MAP OF THE ACROPOLIS OF ATHENS.²
(After Curtius.)

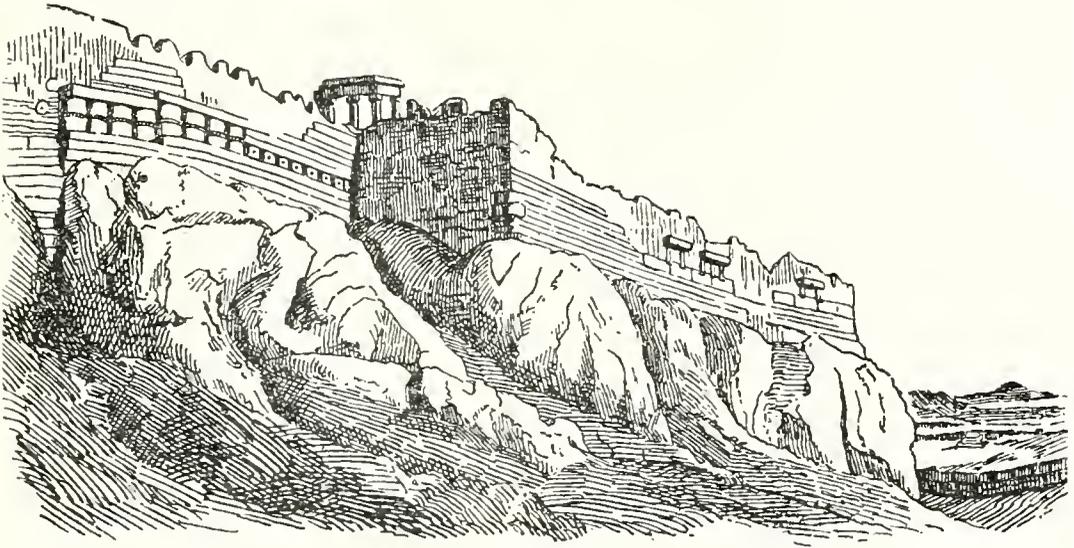
of Cyclopi¹ walls so called [3]. The highest part of the plateau

¹ Remnants of large Pelasgian works were frequently credited to the Cyclops.

² LEGEND OF THE MAP OF THE ACROPOLIS. 1. Gate with square towers, built by Christian emperors. 2. Ancient altar, recently excavated. 3. Fragments of a prehistoric wall, recently excavated. 4. Modern entrance. 4 α . Niche in the rock (sacred to Ge Kouroutrophos). 5. Fane of Athene Nike, as Goddess of Victory. 6. Propylæa, the main entrance, built by Phidias under Pericles. 7. Monument of Agrippa. 8. Passage to the well. 9. Fane of Athene Hygieia. 10. Cistern. 11. Water conduit. 12, 12, 12. Pelasgian walls. 13. Brauroneion. 14. Steps in the rock. 15. Armory. 16. Staircase in the Pelasgian wall. 17. Buttress of the Pelasgian wall. 18. An ancient building. 19. Votive monument of Attalos. 20. Modern museum. 21. Small museum, built

was again secured by a wall, the stones of which indicate a Pelasgian¹ origin [12].

This inner courtyard contained the habitations [35] of the prehistoric residents, especially the Basileion, or royal palace [29] of their chief, the King of Attica, an emergency well [39], and a meeting-place [32].



THE CIMONIAN WALL ON THE NORTHERN DECLIVITY OF THE ACROPOLIS.

Exterior view. Capitals of the columns of the Hecatompedon and other fragments are visible in several places. (Compare the illustration on page 204.)

The Acropolis is the nucleus of Athens; it was, even as late as the Persian Wars, the last refuge of the citizens, and formed the religious center of public worship. Here stood the shrines of

upon remnants of the Pelasgian wall. 22. Parthenon. 23. Broad steps leading to the western terrace of the Parthenon. 24. Statue of Ge Karpophoros (the Fruit-bearing Earth). 25. Cisterns. 26. Temple of Roma. 27. A terrace, forming the highest place of the Acropolis. 28. A modern structure. 29. Remnants of the Pelasgian palace. 30. An ancient staircase. 31. Erechtheion. 32. Pelasgian terrace. 33. Rock-formation. 34. Hecatompedon. 35. Foundation-stones of Pelasgian habitations. 36. A square building without any significance. 37. A hall, and within, a cistern. 38. Staircase at the Agraulion. 39. An ancient well. 40. Statue of Athene Promachos. 41. Postament. 42. Theater of Dionysos. 43. The orchestra of the theater. 44. Two temples of Dionysos, the smaller one is the older sanctuary and was the nucleus from which the theater with its stage-performances developed. 45. Monument of Thrasyllus, an agonistic victor; erected in the Hellenistic era simultaneously with the Nikias monument (latter part of the fourth century B. C.). 46. Columns with tripods, erected in honor of Dionysos. 47. Asclepieion, sacred to the god of Healing. 48. Grotto with spring. 49. Well. 50. Wall of terrace. 51, 51. Hall of Eumenes. 52. Music hall (Odeion). 53. The spring Clepsydra. 54. Grotto of Apollon. 55. Grotto of Pan. 56. Exit of a subterraneous passage which started from a place forty meters west of the Erechtheion and led into a rent in the rock [57] downward through a tunnel to the spot almost opposite the chapel of the Seraphim [61]. 57. A rent in the rock with staircase, presumably an ancient emergency passage. 58. Inscription of Peripatos. 59, 59, 59. Votive niches in the rock. 60, 60, 60. Caves in the northern and western slope of the rock. 61. Chapel of the Seraphim. 62. Chapel of St. Simeon. 63. Chapel of St. George. 64. Remnants of the Pelargicon in the southwest. 65. Remnants of the Pelargicon facing the ancient armory. 66. Ancient road.

¹ The oldest inhabitants of Greece are called the Pelasgians. i. e., the ancient ones, and they are frequently regarded as a special race in contrast to the Ionians, the Dorians, and other Greek tribes. The name Pelargicon may be a corruption of Pelasgicon.

the aborigines, the Erechtheion¹ [31], supposedly founded by Attica's mythical King, Erechtheus, and dedicated to Athene Polias, i. e., the patron of the city. Here rose the Parthenon [22], i. e., the virgin's temple, dedicated to Pallas Athene Parthenos, the virgin goddess. The latter, built in the days of Pericles, served as the state treasury of the Athenian confederacy, for many temples were then used as banking institutions. We know through Herodotos



THE CARYATIDS OF THE ERECHTHEION.²

that deposits were made in temples, and Delphi was probably the largest international bank of the age.

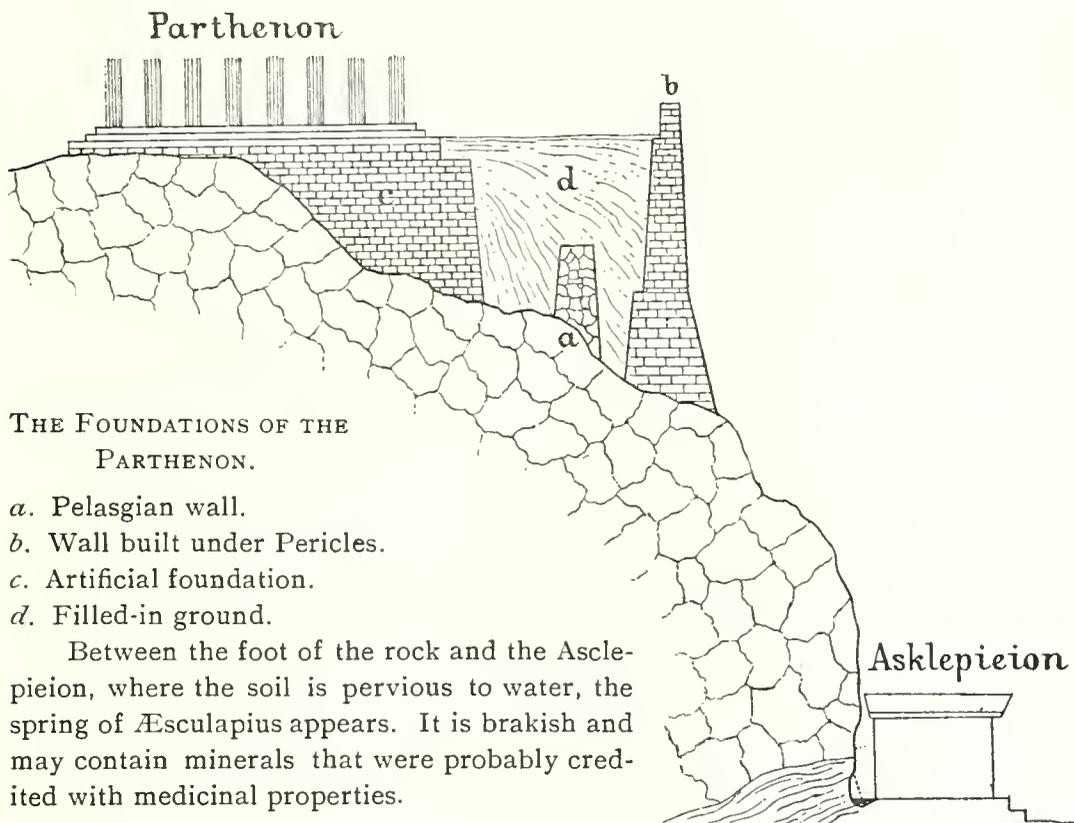
On the southern slope of the Acropolis are the great theater

¹In the transliteration of Greek names we prefer to adhere as closely as possible to their original forms. Thus, we say *Erechtheion*, not *Erechtheum*. The transcription of the Greek *k* to *c* has become so inveterate that we prefer to leave it whenever usage has sanctioned it.

²This beautiful balcony is called the Hall of Cora (i. e., the Virgin), viz., Proserpina, the daughter of Demeter. A step on the west side led down to a court, once walled round, in which was the Pandroseion, a shrine sacred to Pandrosos, i. e., the All-bedewer, a daughter of Cecrops and first priestess of Athene. Here stood also the sacred olive-tree of Athene and an altar of Zeus Herkeios.

sacred to Dionysos [42] and the music hall or Odeion [52]. Between them lies the Asclepieion [47], the physician's hall, sacred to the god of medicine and the art of healing.

Round this venerable rock grew up the city of Athens, the home of liberty and republican institutions, the seat of learning and a center of civilisation. Heroic deeds of patriotism at Marathon and Salamis laid the cornerstone of Athens's independence, and prosperity followed in the wake of trade and commerce. A noble ideal of statesmanship was actualised in Pericles. Art and oratory flourished. Wealth brought corruption, but philosophy offered correctives in the moral injunctions of Socrates and the

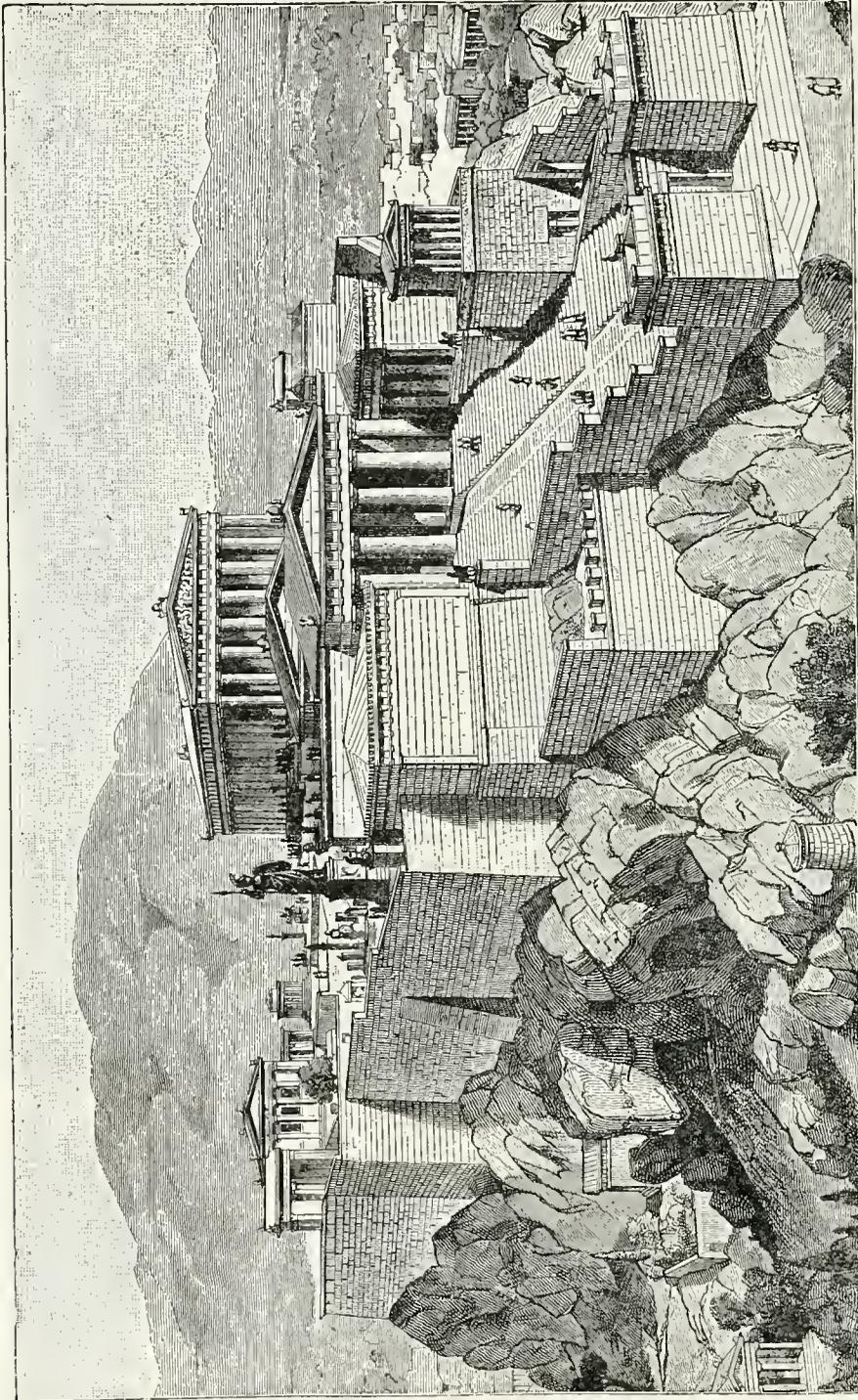


various schools that flourished after him. Here Apollonius of Tyana preached against the barbarism of bloody sacrifices and also of the circus with its brutal gladiatorial fights, admonishing the citizens to practice mercy, referring them to the altar of Eleos¹ on the Kerameikos, the potter's field, with the injunctions of which the cruel customs of the age were incompatible. Here finally Paul preached the Gospel of the Crucified, and he too, speaking of the Athenians as deeply religious, endeavored to connect the new religion with the old traditions of the city, claiming that he

¹ *Eleos* means "mercy."

had come to reveal to them the true God whom they unwittingly adored at the altar of the Unknown God.

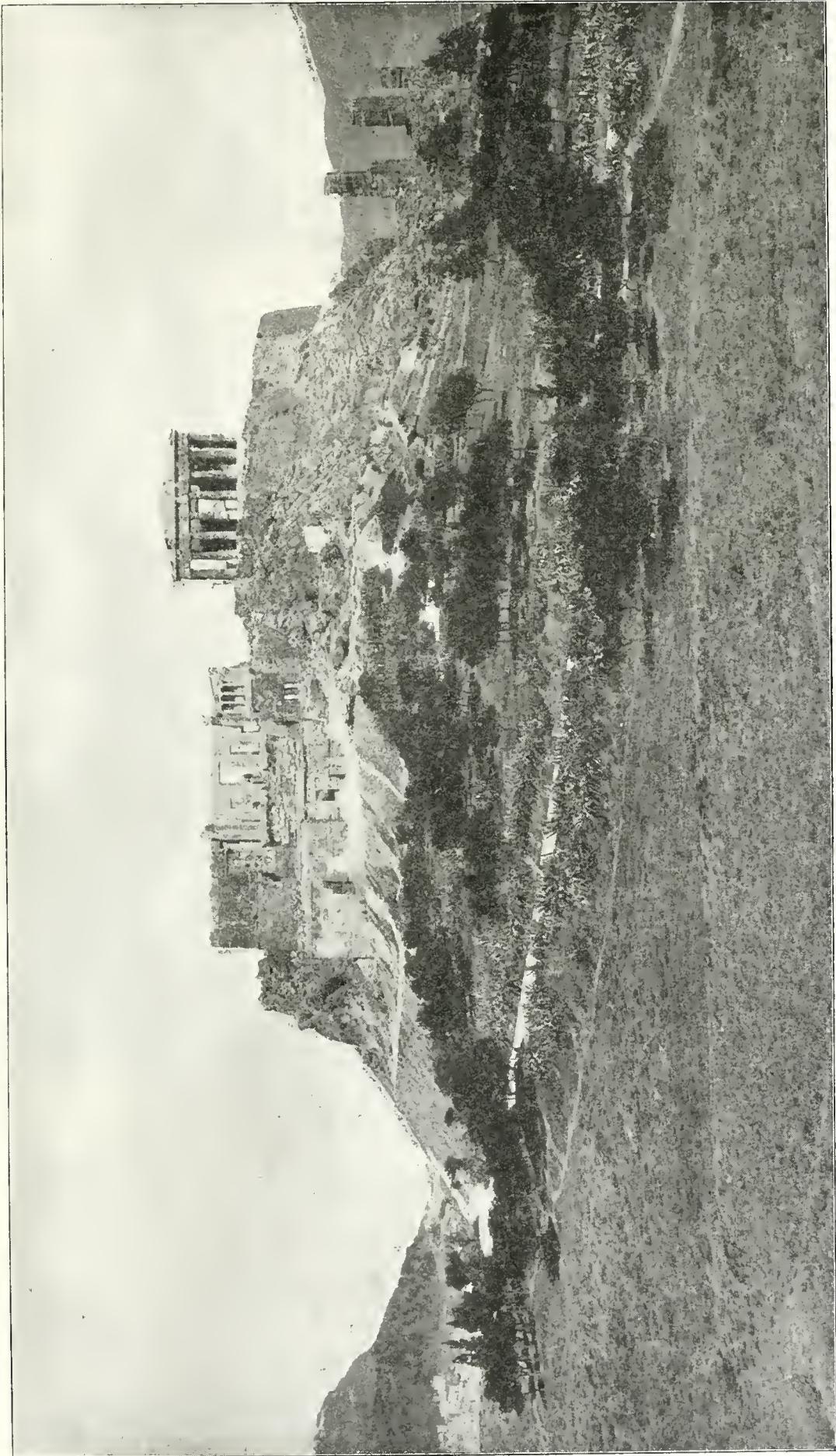
We propose now to walk over the ground and briefly describe the topography of the Acropolis.



THE ACROPOLIS RESTORED.

[The square towers at the foot of the staircase ought to have been omitted from this sketch.]

One side only of the Acropolis allows of easy access: it is its narrow western slope, at the foot of which lies a narrow gate [1] guarded by two ugly mediæval-looking square towers. It was



THE ACROPOLIS FROM THE AREOPAGOS.

built by East Roman emperors in the times when the last vestiges of paganism were suppressed and the authorities deemed it wise to stop the annual festivals, the Panathenæa, by military interference.

In our days the visitor enters through a small gate [4] north of the Odeion [52]. He passes through a small courtyard with a niche [4*a*] sacred to the all-nourishing goddess Demeter, Ge Kourotrophos, i. e., the Earth Feeder of her children,¹ and reaches the place where formerly the grand monumental staircases, described by Pausanias, led up to the main entrance called Propylæa [6].



THE TEMPLE OF NIKE APTERYX.²

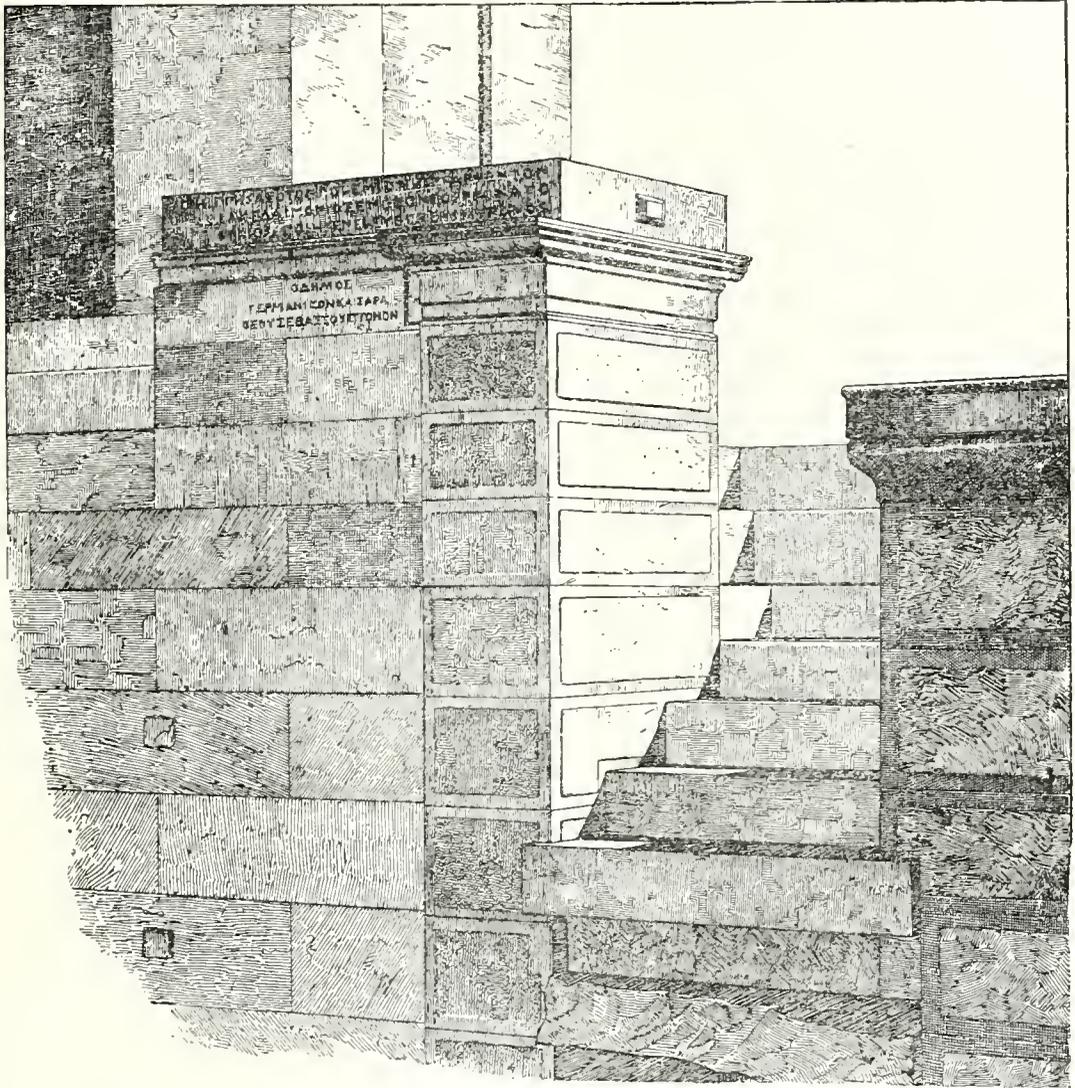
We notice here an ancient altar [2], and the Agrippa monument [7] erected by the grateful Athenians between 12 and 17 A. D. in honor of Agrippa for his love of Attic culture. Directly south of the Agrippeion a marble staircase leads up on the right hand to the little temple of Athene Nike, the unwinged goddess of victory [5], and here we find on the left-hand wall of the staircase an inscription commemorating the visit of Germanicus (the great and

¹This is on the authority of Curtius; Lolling believes the grotto was sacred to Ægeus.

²This temple was built for Athene as Nike Apteryx (i. e., the Wingless Victory) to indicate that here the goddess would take her abiding home.

noble grandson of Augustus) who visited Athens in reverent respect for its historical traditions.

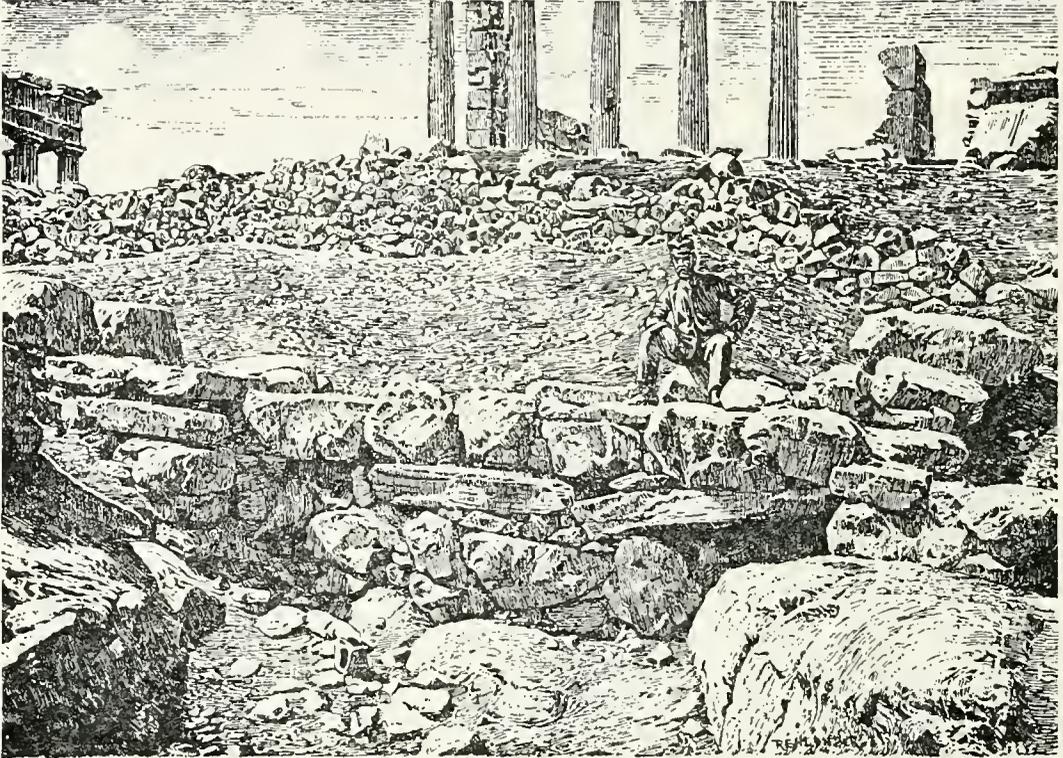
North of the Agrippeion we discover the gate which leads down over the memorable rude staircase to the well Clepsydra [53]. The water gathers in a hole which is situated in a chamber cut out of the rock. A niche [60] close by may have served as a votive shrine.



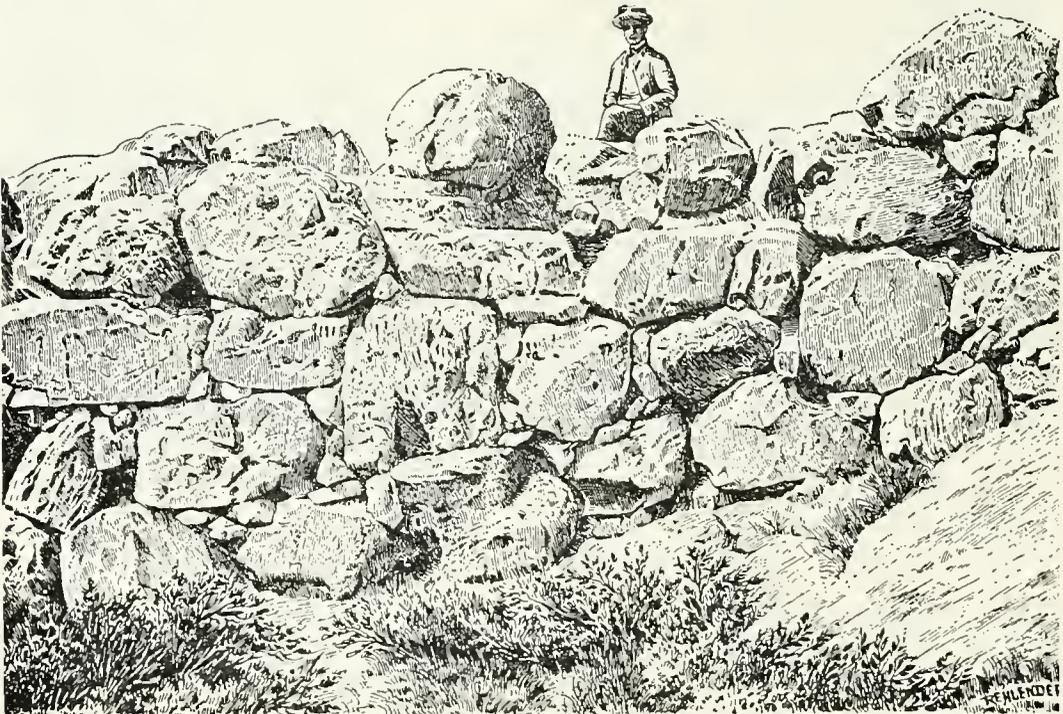
INSCRIPTION IN HONOR OF GERMANICUS ON THE STAIRCASE OPPOSITE THE
AGRIPPA MONUMENT.

The well is protected against enemies by a strong wall, and we may assume that even the primitive inhabitants employed all their skill in the fortification of this important spot.

Recent excavations have brought to light primitive stones that lay underneath the grand staircase, and we cannot doubt that they belong to the very oldest fortifications of the Acropolis. They be-



REMNANTS OF THE ANCIENT PELASGIAN DWELLINGS EAST OF THE ERECHTHEION.¹



PELASGIAN WALLS OF THE ANCIENT PALACE NORTHEAST OF THE PARTHENON.²

¹No. 35 of our map.

²This illustrates No. 29 of our map.

long to the same period in which the strongholds of Mycenæ and Tiryns (excavated by Schliemann) were built and served to defend the ascent to the ancient city, of which the foundations of the royal palace [29] and of the habitations of the people [35] are still extant. The structure of these walls is polygonal, consisting of blocks of one to one and a half meters in diameter.

Having entered through the Propylæa, we have to the right a small fane sacred to Athene Hygieia, i. e., the health-giver [9]. Here stood her bronze statue and also the bronze statue of a boy holding a holy water font. On the left lies a spacious cistern [10]



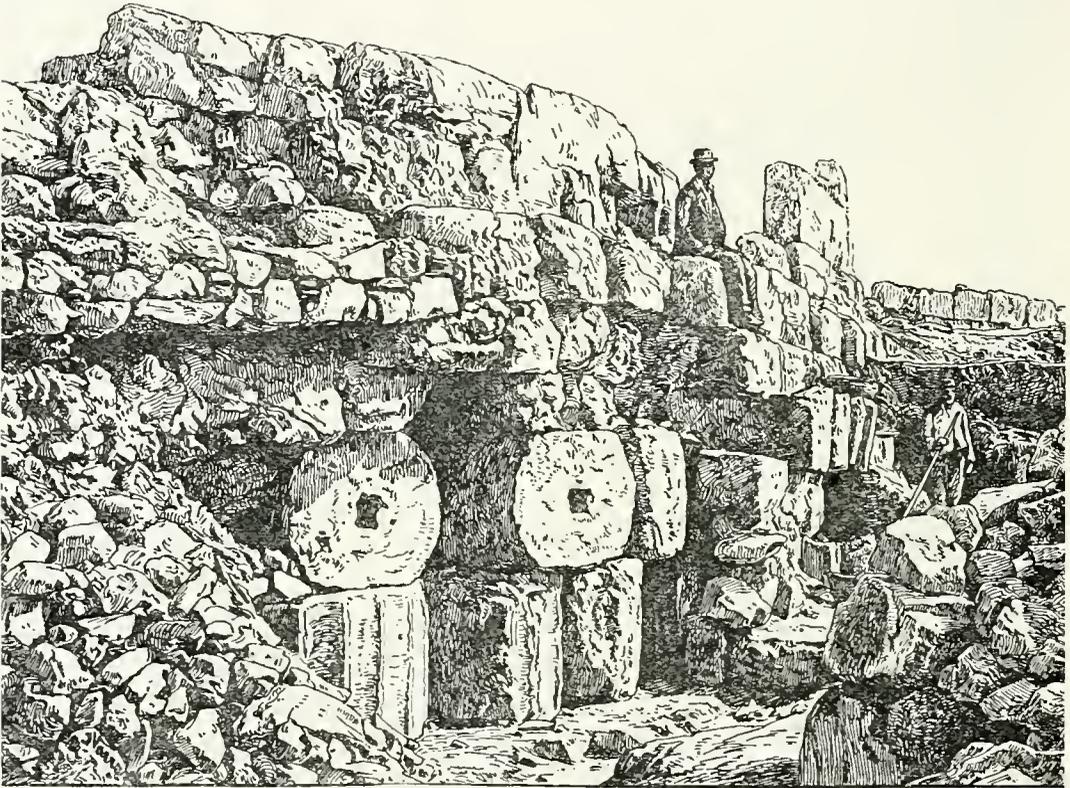
THE PROPYLÆA FROM THE WEST.

and a little farther north a water conduit [11]. Passing along the Cimonian wall of the northern slope, we walk over the ancient foundation stones of the primitive and prehistoric city. On a projecting ledge, where we can still find the remnants of an ancient staircase [38], we stand on the site of the Agraulion, sacred to the memory of Agraulos, the daughter of the mythical King Cekrops, who was here changed by Hermes to a stone, because she attempted to prevent Erichthonios, the earth-born harvest deity, to visit his sweetheart Herse, sister of Agraulos.

Another legend relates that during a war Agraulos threw her-

self down from the Acropolis, because an oracle had declared that the Athenians would conquer if some one would sacrifice himself for his country. The Athenians in gratitude dedicated to her a precinct on the Acropolis called the Agraulion, in which the young Athenians, on receiving their first suit of armour, took an oath that they would always defend their country to the last.

On the southern slope of the Acropolis lay the Brauroneion, a precinct sacred to Artemis of Brauron, one of the rural districts of Attica, where the cult of Dionysos and Artemis was held in special reverence.



THE CIMONIAN WALL.

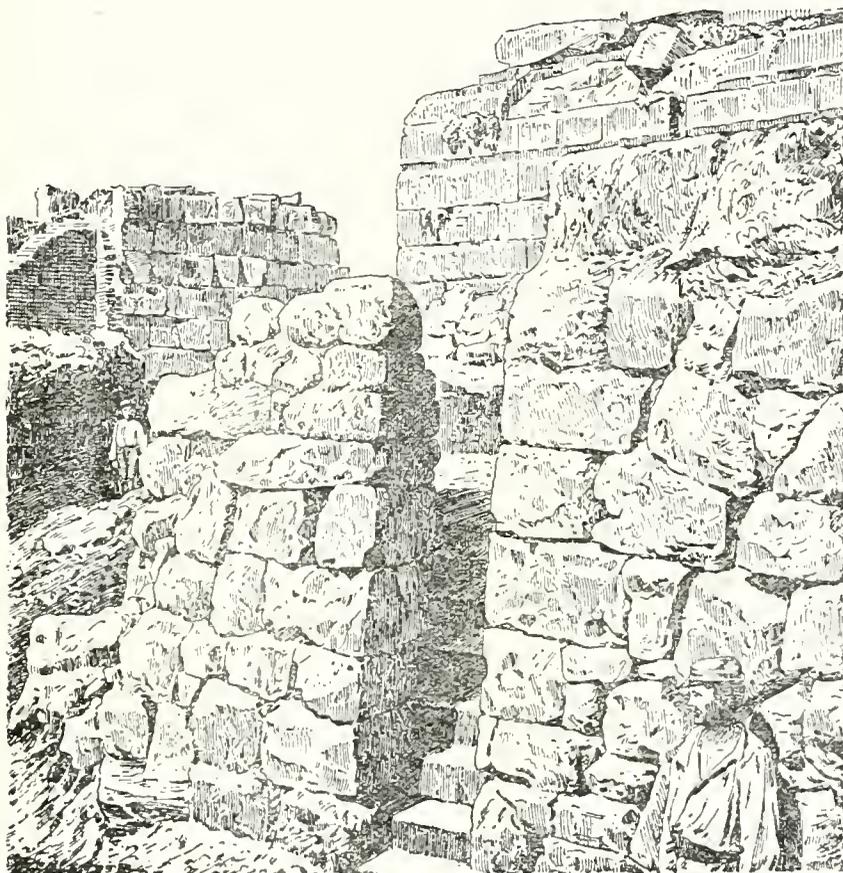
Interior view. Fragments of the mighty columns of the Hecatompedon form the foundation.

In Brauron Orestes and Iphigenia are related as having left the Taurian statue of Artemis, and the girls of Attica, dressed in crocus-colored garments, celebrated the Brauronian festivals every five years. Aside from the usual propitiatory rites, one striking feature of the Brauronian festival consisted in the imitation of bears playfully enacted by the girls, a custom which Suidas explains as follows :

“In the Attic town of Phanidæ a bear was kept, which was so tame that it was allowed to go about quite freely, and received its food from and among men. One day a girl ventured to play with it, and, on treating the animal rather harshly,

it turned round and tore her to pieces. Her brothers, enraged at this, went out and killed the bear. The Athenians thereupon were visited by a plague; and when they consulted the oracle, the answer was given that they would rid themselves of the evil which had befallen them if they would compel some of their citizens to make their daughters propitiate Artemis by a rite called ἀρκτέειν ("to play the bear") for the crime committed against the animal sacred to the goddess. The command was more than obeyed; for the Athenians decreed that from thenceforth all women, before they could marry, should have once taken part in this festival, and have been consecrated to the goddess."¹

The bear was probably the totem of the prehistoric Brauronians.



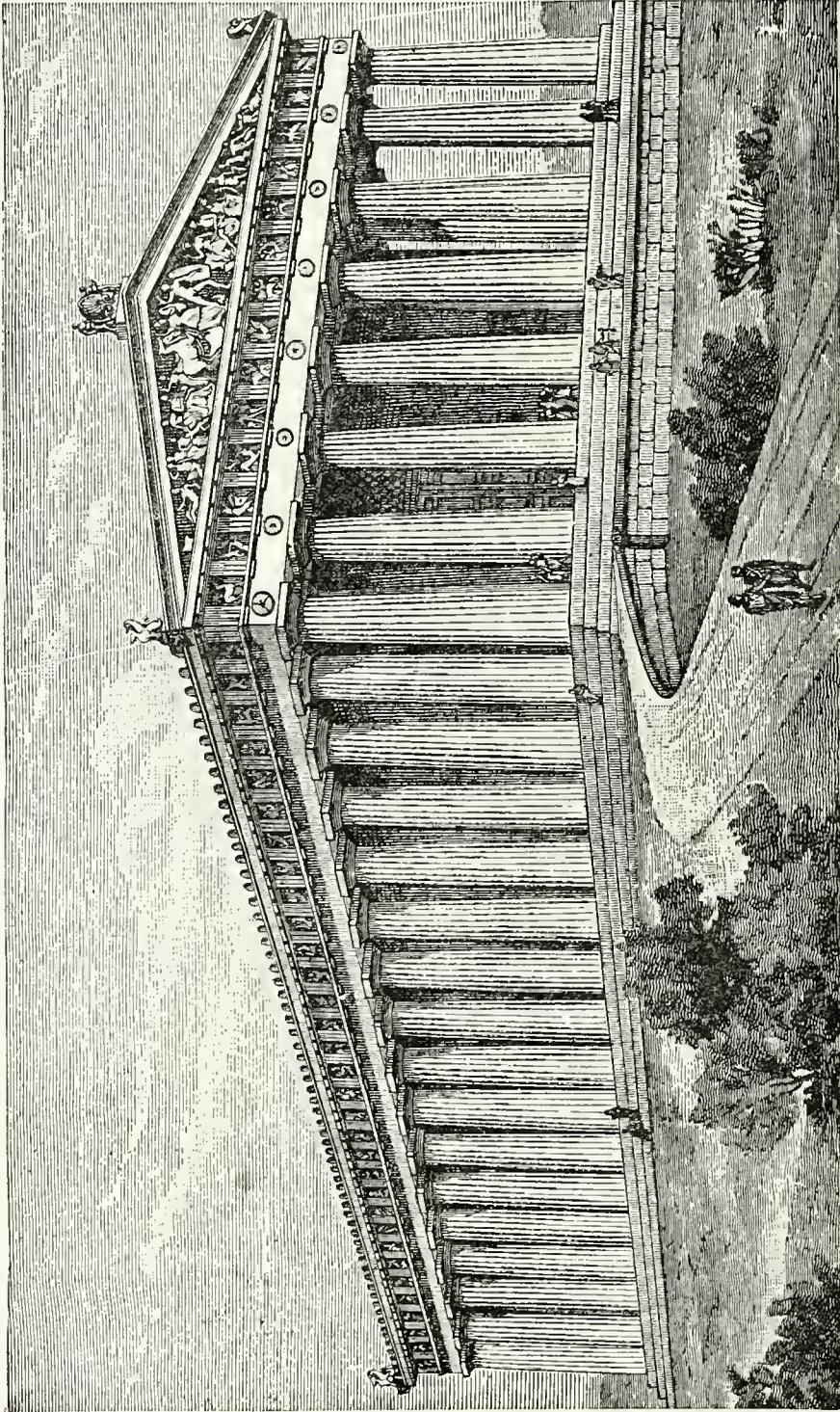
ANCIENT STAIRCASE INTERCONNECTING THE SEVERAL WALLS ON
THE TOP OF THE ACROPOLIS.

Farther east on the southern slope lies the armory or Chalkotheke [15], the existence of which is mentioned in the age of Pericles.

In the neighborhood of the armory the Pelasgian walls continue [12]. They are cut in one part by a well-preserved ancient stairway [16], which seems to have connected the higher portion of the plateau with its lower surroundings.

¹From *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities*, *sub voce*.

The path to the Parthenon leads over a few steps [14]. We pass the statue of Ge Karpophoros, i. e., the Fruit-Bearer Earth [24] and a cistern [25], and reach the eastern entrance of the tem-



THE PARTHENON, RESTORED. (After F. Thiersch)

ple [22]. In front lies the Roma temple [26], probably built under the rule of Emperor Augustus.

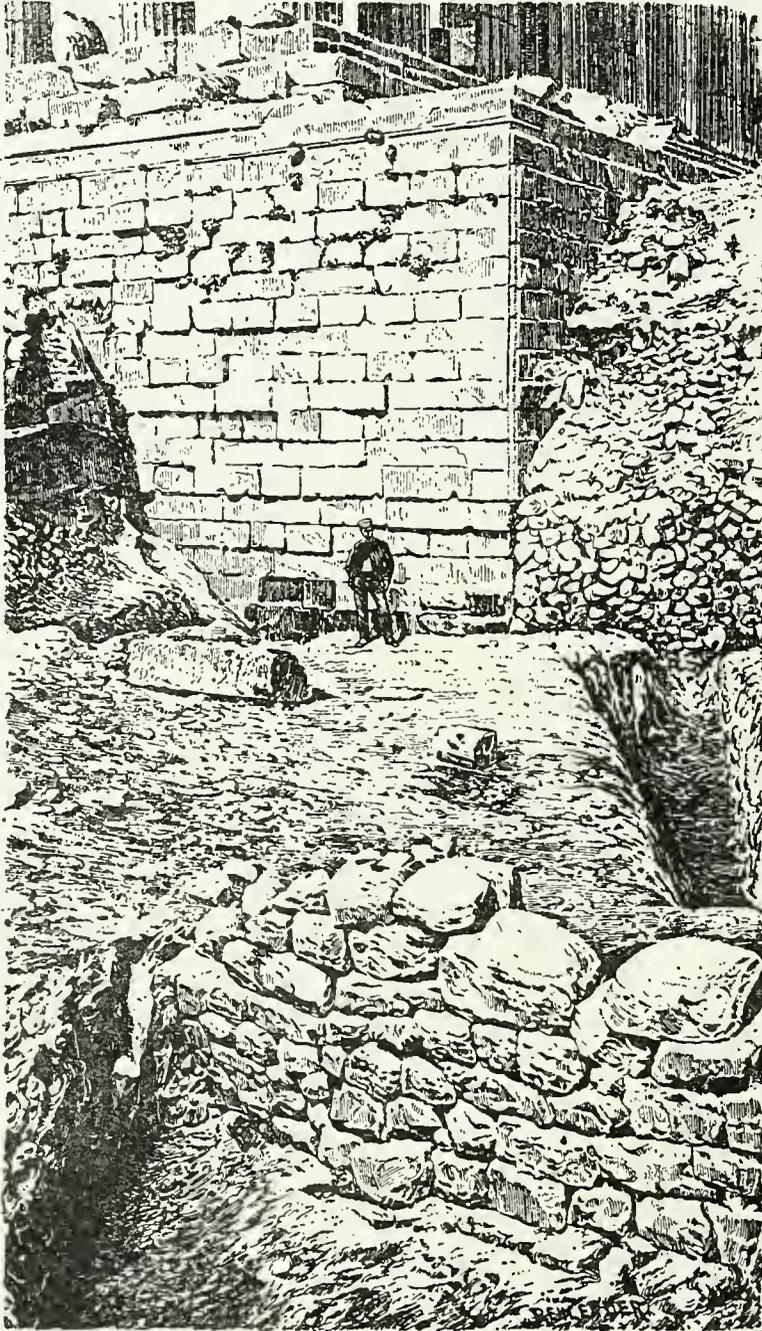
In the south-east corner of the Acropolis the government of Greece has erected two modern museums [20 and 21], and between



THE PARTHENON IN ITS PRESENT STATE.

them we find on the Cimonian wall the votive gift of Attalus, King of Pergamum (241-197 B. C.), on a spot from which the visitor has a good view of the Dionysos theater [42] below.

North of the Parthenon we behold the noble structure of the

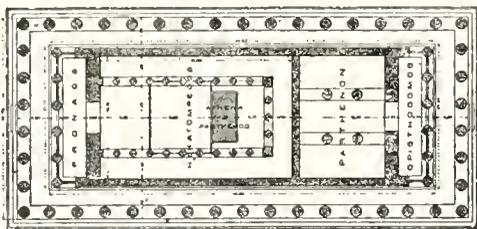


THE ARTIFICIAL FOUNDATION OF THE PARTHENON LAID BARE.
FURTHER DOWN THE PELASGIAN WALL.

Erechtheion [31], and the foundations of the old Hecatompedon, a temple erected in the time of Peisistratos, called "the hundred-footed" on account of the many columns on which its roof rested.

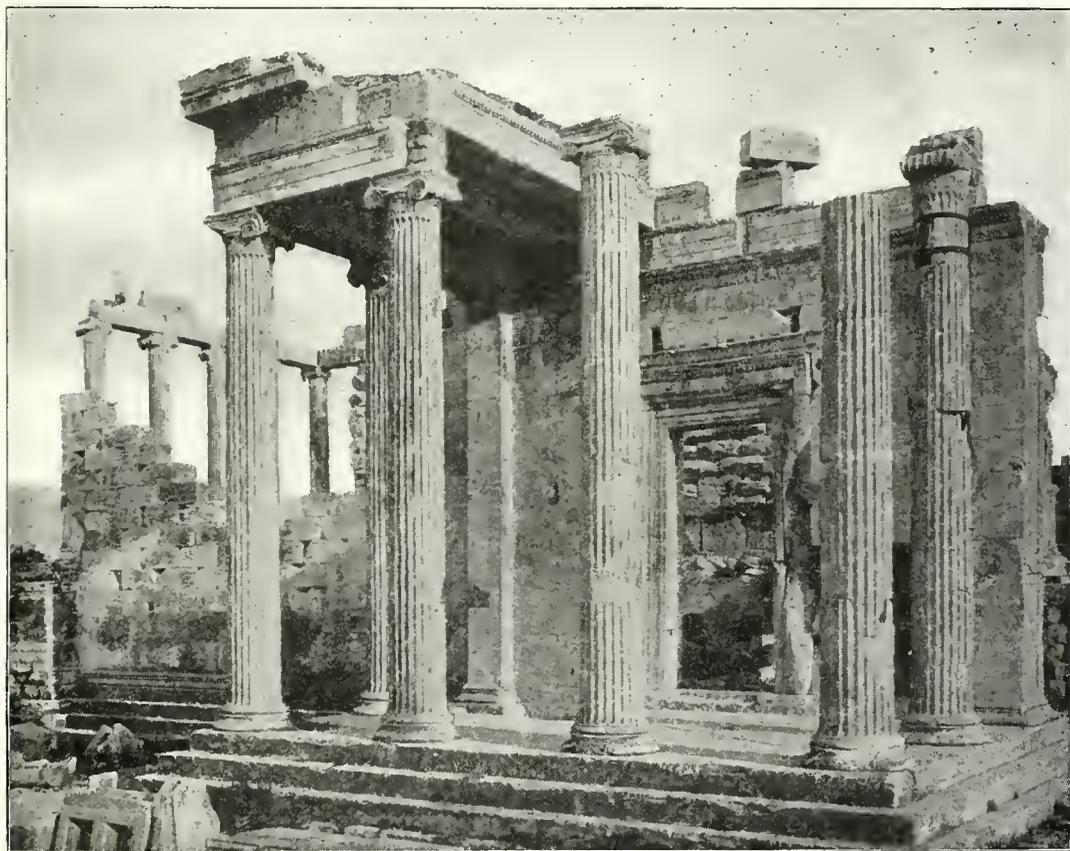
It is probable that the Hecatompedon superseded an older

temple of less magnificence, and we know that here the temple treasures were guarded and the Panathenaea, the greatest Athenian festivals, were celebrated by the Erechthids, the priests of the Erechtheion, under Peisistratos and his successors. It was de-



GROUND-PLAN OF THE PARTHENON.

stroyed in the Persian wars, and in the age of Pericles the Parthenon and the Erechtheion were erected in its stead.



EASTERN PORTICO OF THE ERECHTHEION.¹

The myth of Erichthonios (also called Erechtheus)² is obviously Pelasgian and indicates the peaceful institution of the wor-

¹ The eastern room of the Erechtheion contained the ancient statue of Athene Polias, the town-protector, before which stood a lamp that was always kept burning. The western division of the building which was the Erechtheion proper, had one altar devoted to Poseidon and Erechtheus, another to Hephæstus and a third one to Butes, the ancestor of the priestly family (the Butadæ).

² Later mythologists distinguish Erechtheus from Erichthonios, regarding the latter as the serpent-shaped god, and making of the former his grandson, and a king of Athens.

ship of the Ionian goddess Pallas Athene by the Erichtid family, the hereditary priests of the Acropolis. The birth of Erichthonios was celebrated in Athens with great rejoicing and formed a favorite subject of Athenian art.

"Erichthonios was the son of Earth by Hephaestus and was reared by Athena. Like that of Cecrops, half of his form was that of a snake,—a sign that he was one of the aborigines. Athene put the child in a chest, which she gave to the daughters of Cecrops—Agraulos, Herse, and Pandrosos—to take care of, forbidding them at the same time to open it (Hygin. *Poet. Astr.* ii. 13). The first two disobeyed, and in terror at the serpent-shaped child (or, according to another version, the snake that surrounded the child), they went mad and threw themselves from the rocks of



VIEW OF THE ACROPOLIS FROM THE OLYMPIEION.

the Acropolis. Another account made the serpent kill them. Erechtheus drove out Amphictyon, and got possession of the kingdom. He then established the worship of Athene, and built to her, as goddess of the city (*Πολιάς*), a temple, named after him the Erechtheum. Here he was afterwards himself worshipped with Athene and Poseidon. He was also the founder of the Panathenaic festival. He was said to have invented the four-wheeled chariot, and to have been taken up to heaven for this by Zeus, and set in the sky as the constellation of the Charioteer."¹

In Athens paganism held out longest, and while in other parts of the empire the temples were destroyed or desecrated and the

¹From *Harper's Dictionary*.

statues of the gods smashed to pieces, the sanctuaries on the Acropolis remained undisturbed. The celebration of the festivals was at last forbidden, and when the ancient gods had faded away from the memory of the Athenians the Parthenon was transformed into a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

When the Turks conquered the East Roman Empire, the Parthenon became a Mohammedan mosque, but remained in good preservation,—practically the only pagan temple that by good chance had escaped destruction in the period of transition. It remained in good preservation till 1687 when the Venetians tried to wrest the city from the Turks. A bomb thrown into the Parthenon exploded the powder magazine that had been stored in one of its vaults, and utterly destroyed the central portion of the building.

Worse havoc than the war between Turk and Christian was wrought on the glorious temple by the greed and carelessness of modern connoisseurs who appreciated the money value of antique art. The front and the rear of the temple with their beautiful friezes were still standing when Lord Elgin conceived the idea of selling these invaluable art treasures to the English government; but he had them handled so roughly by ignorant workmen that they suffered greatly in the transportation. A great part was lost at sea and the remainder found at last, after some bickering over the price, an asylum in the British Museum. There they are counted, even in their present dilapidated condition, among the most memorable treasures of that greatest of all collections of antiquities in the world.