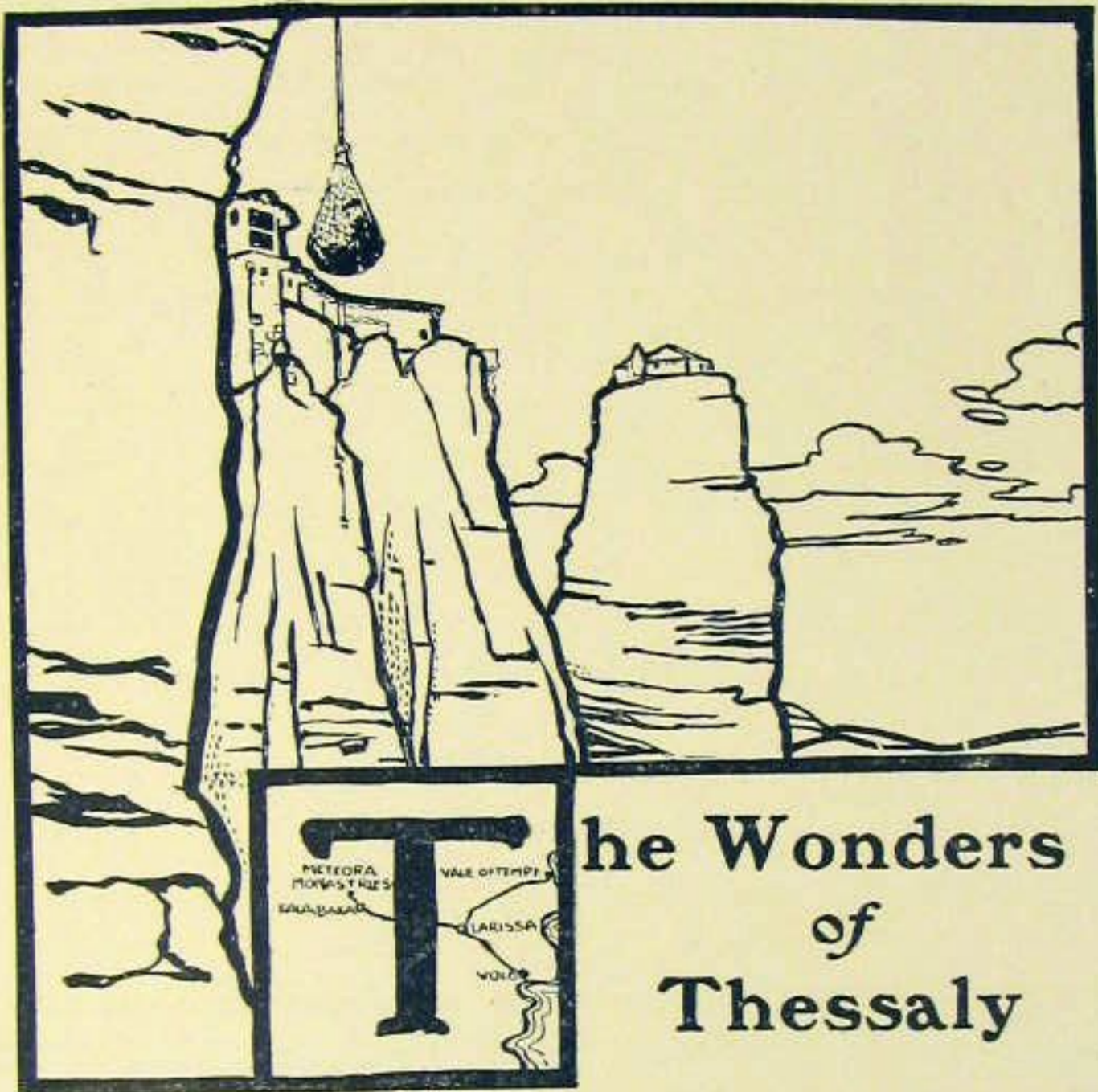




ONE OF THE METEORA MONASTERIES

THE WONDERS OF THESSALY



The Wonders of Thessaly

IN APRIL, 1896, Athens offered the world a grander spectacle than had been witnessed in the Levant for many years. It was not a military show, it was not an exposition, nor was it a jubilee. It was rather a celebration of the coming of age of a young nation. In 1896 the world was invited to see young Greece, the petted child of modern diplomacy, born into independence only three quarters of a century before, assume the garb of maturity, and formally accept the responsibilities of a nation that has arrived at its majority—a nation that not only can stand alone, but also is capable of wisely directing its own life-currents.

In honor of this coming of age of the youthful kingdom the immortal Olympian Games were worthily revived. The congratulations and compliments of an admiring and sympathetic world were lavished upon the Athens of 1896. Never were congratulations and compliments more justly bestowed. The Greeks had fulfilled the promises made for them by their sponsors—the European Powers. In the early twenties of the nineteenth century they had waged a just and successful war against the Turk and had gained their independence. They had for a time obeyed King Otho, the Bavarian king chosen for them by foreign diplomats. Under his successor, George the First, they had labored for thirty-three years to remove from their land the marks of Turkish occupation and to bring it forward out of dim medievalism into the broad light of modern civilization. Railways and roads and canals had been planned and executed, a navy and an army had been organized, Athens had been made once more the capital of Hellas, beautiful and prosperous. And these things being done, the world was invited to come, see, and admire the transformation so quickly and so brilliantly achieved.

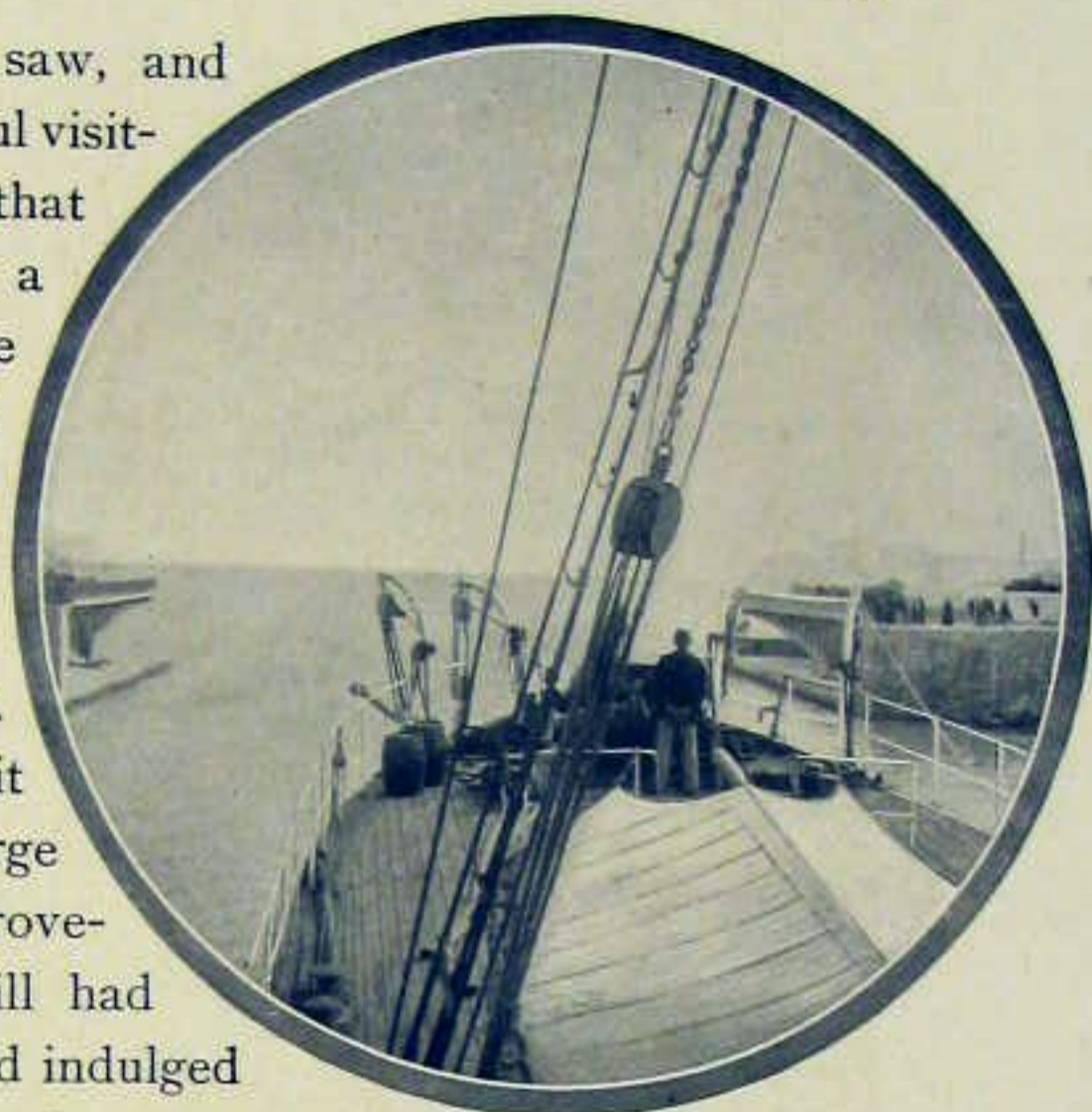


SUNIUM

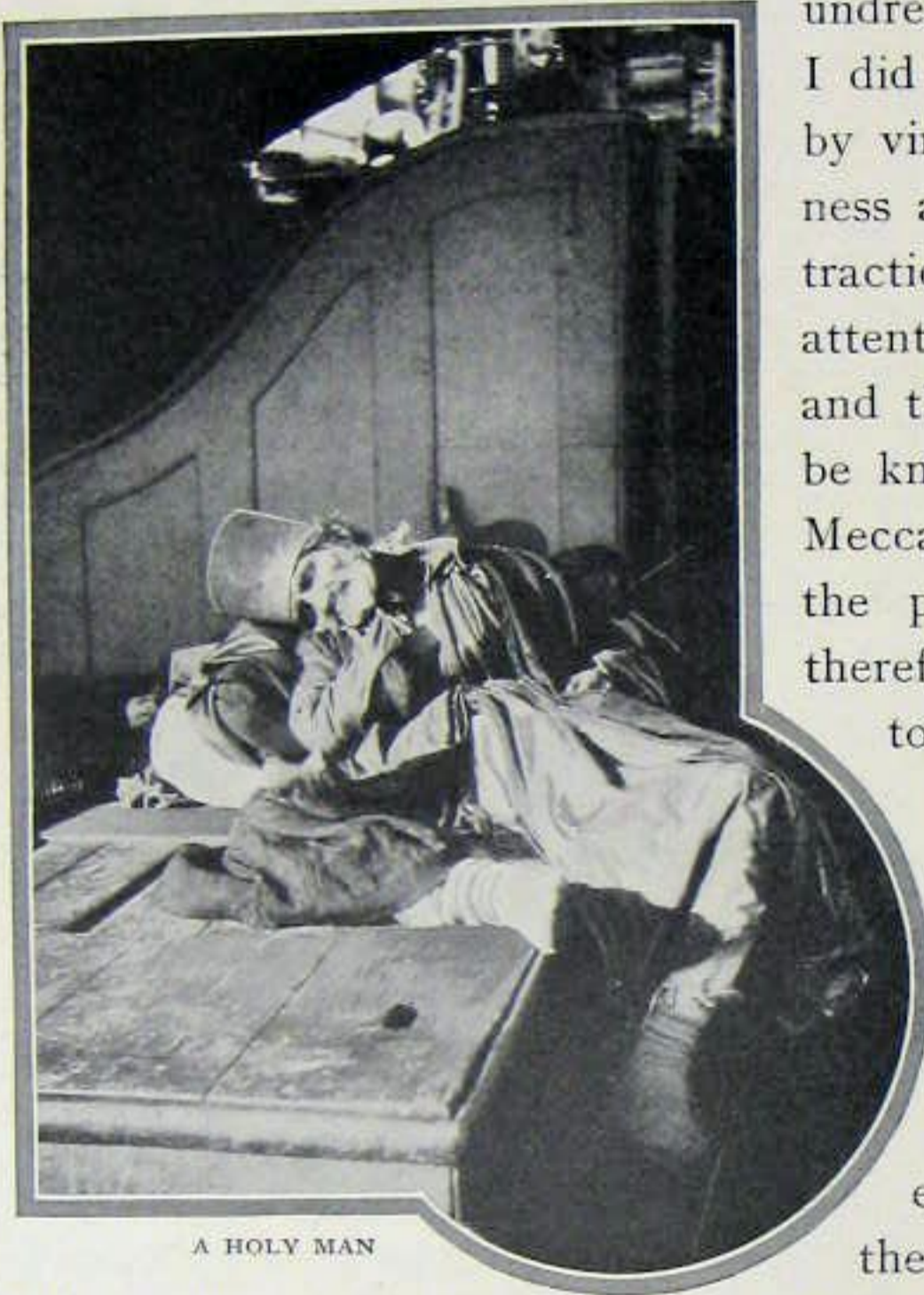
And the world came, saw, and admired. But thoughtful visitors did not fail to note that beneath the veneer of a forced civilization there were already traces of decay, and of these the most apparent were the black holes of the ever-deepening national debt.

Young Greece had, it is true, purchased a large stock of modern improvements, but alas, the bill had not been paid. She had indulged in speculation, discounting too early her promising future, and giving no thought to the laying of foundations for solid national credit. Hence, there resulted for the people heavy taxation and discontent ; for the government embarrassments and at last bankruptcy. "Something must be done," the nation cried ; and Greece proceeded to do the very thing that she could least afford to do. She picked a quarrel with her old enemy, the Turk, and, urged on by the encouragements of thoughtless friends, declared a war for which she was in no way prepared. The sad result is known—we need not dwell upon it, although we cannot refrain from sorrow at the thought that three quarters of a century of progress and sturdy striving after better things was swallowed up in five weeks of national misfortune. The land of Thessaly was the scene of that brief struggle: Thessaly proved the cemetery of the hopes of Greece.

When in the spring of 1896 I visited that faraway province of King George's realm, I little thought that it would ever occupy so prominent a place in the annals of a then-



CHALCIS



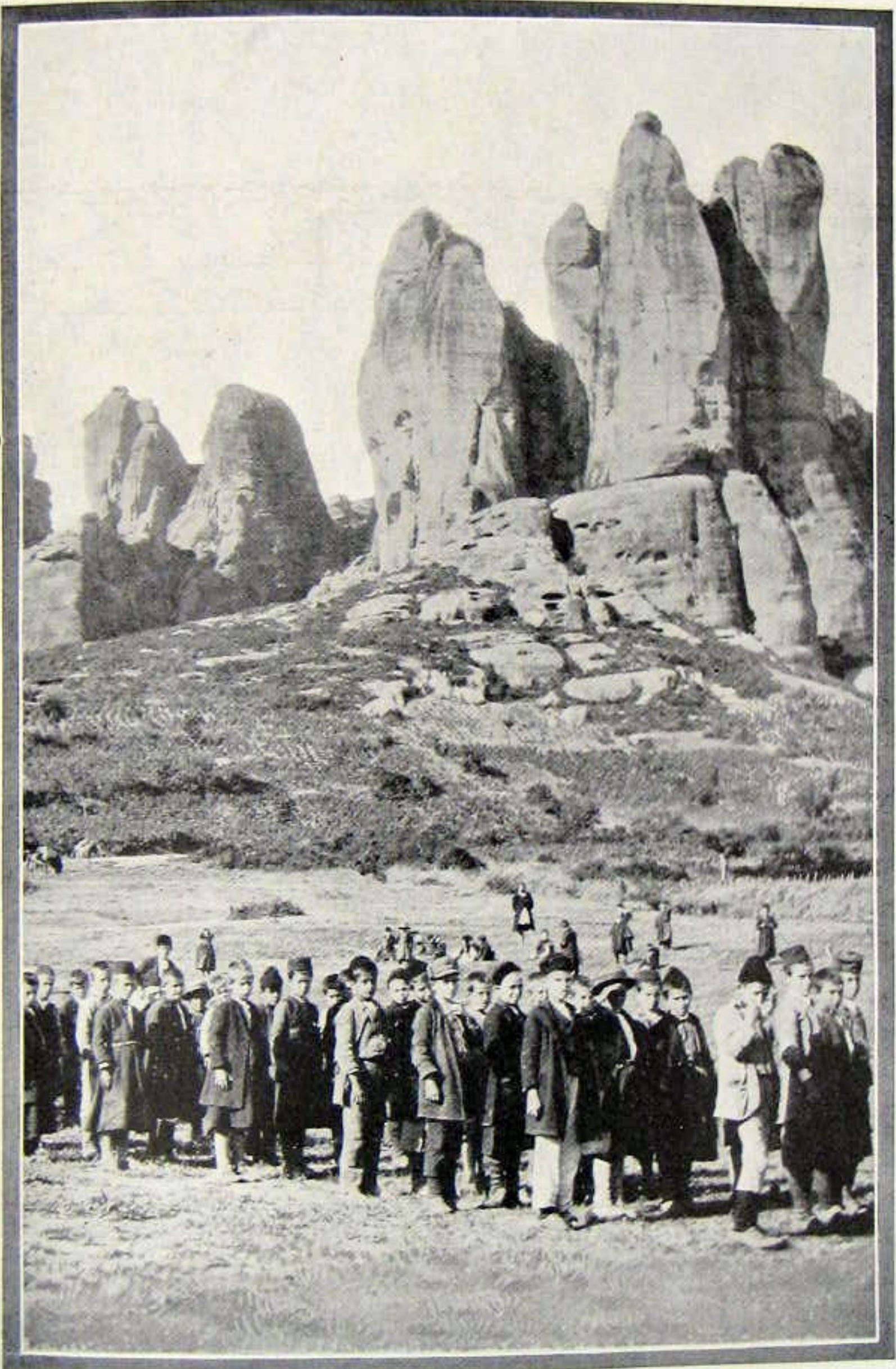
A HOLY MAN

undreamed-of war; but I did feel that Thessaly by virtue of its strangeness and its unique attractions deserved the attention of the traveler, and that it had only to be known to become the Mecca of those who seek the picturesque. It is

therefore rather as mere tourists than as historians or diplomats that we set sail from Athens and find ourselves passing by violet-shadowed Salamis, en route for Volo, the chief port of Thes-

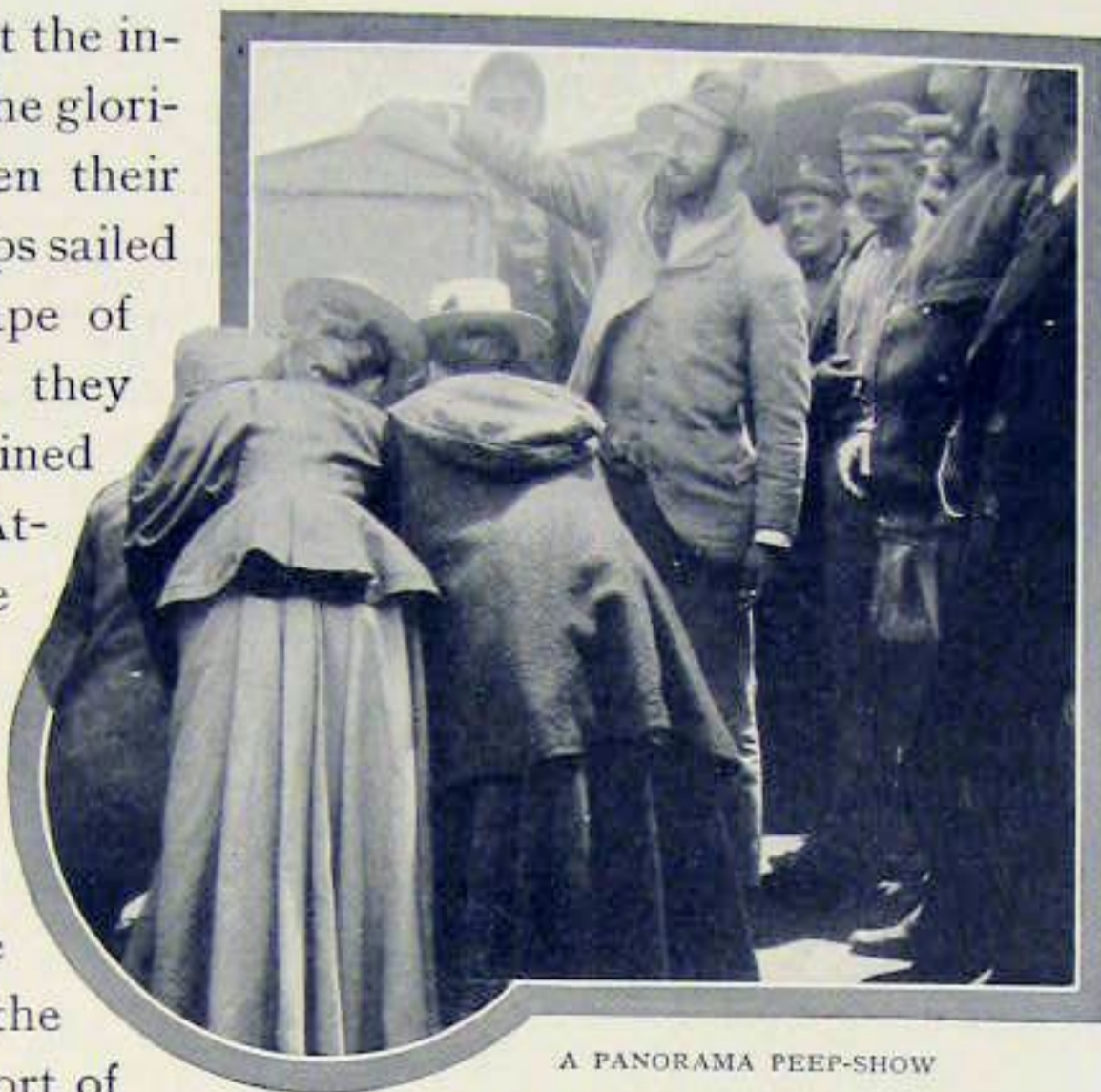
saly. True, we have before looked upon the Bay of Salamis, but it is well for us, before we set foot upon the territory of defeat, to glide for a few hours over these triumphant waves, that for more than two thousand years have been singing the hymn of victory—singing of the deeds of Themistocles and his gallant crews, and laughing quietly the while at the discomfiture of Xerxes and his barbarian host of Persians. A little breath from Salamis, where the old Greeks conquered, will help us to look more kindly on the shortcomings of their sons who in Thessaly failed to renew the glorious traditions of their race.

The sailors of Prince George's fleet as they traversed this bay must have felt themselves uplifted by the memory of their immortal forefathers; the soldiers of Prince Constantine



THE PINNACLES OF THE METEORA

must have felt the inspiration of the glorious past, when their transport-ships sailed round the cape of Sunium and they could see outlined against the Attic sky the temple of Athena, the protectress of the land. The complete voyage from the Piræus, the port of



A PANORAMA PEEP-SHOW

Athens, to Volo, the Thessalian port, is an inspiration. The traveler who sails through the Ægean Sea, the Strait of



SHIPBOARD DIVERSION

Negropont, the Malic and the Pegasean gulfs, must needs recite a large catalogue of glorious names. He sails from Athens, he sees the unconquered Salamis, looks on Ægina, passes Sunium. Then farther on he will see the immortal mountains that look

on Marathon and immortal Marathon itself, that looks upon the sea. By this time he is in the broad canal of Euripus; the Island of Eubœa, the Negropont, is upon his right, the mainland is upon his left,—slowly the two shores come together—Eubœa and Bœotia seem to push their coasts together as if to close the sea-path in the face of the barbarian, and at last the channel narrows to a seething whirlpool, where the tides rush furiously between Greece proper



VOLO

and the largest island of her archipelago. A splendid modern bridge swings aside to let us pass; and this bridge is only the latest successor to that long line of bridges, of which the first, a wooden span, was built four hundred and eleven years before the birth of Christ.

The town of Chalcis guards the strait; beyond it the channel once more widens, and the shores recede so far that we cease to look for ports and places made famous by the ancient Greeks, and turn our attention to the modern Greeks

on board our ship. Among the modern Greeks sailing upon these classic waters I found a brother-lecturer, whose illustrating paraphernalia were remarkably simple as his theme was vast. He was exploiting what he called the "Cosmopolitan Panorama." Three spectators at a time, paying two leptha, or about a penny, each, glue their eyes to little peep-holes in the front. They see within a crude, colored lithograph, a representation of a street scene in Vienna. The lecturer, in flowing periods of modern Greek, describes the view, then pulls a string. Vienna vanishes in the flies, and there is revealed a bird's-eye view of New York, with the Bartholdi Statue standing directly beneath and apparently supporting Brooklyn Bridge. New York is jerked away, and Paris is discovered, and so on until we have completed a chromolithographic pilgrimage through the great cities of the world. Eager to encourage a brother professional we, with the reckless generosity of traveling Americans, pay the



A "STATHMOS"

admission fees for the entire ship's company, amounting to a total of about eighty cents, and, for an hour, sailors and passengers succeed one another, three by three, delighted spectators at the little windows of the Cosmopolitan Panorama.

Toward evening we steam into the Malic Gulf where one more undying name rises to our lips, for in the distance we



FIRST-CLASS IN THESSALY

behold the outline of Thermopylæ. But as we are following the troops of Prince Constantine and not the heroic Spartans of Leonidas, we hasten on to Volo. Modern Volo, the Greek base of supplies during the recent war and the chief seaport of Thessaly, lies at the base of ancient Pelion. "But where is Ossa?" exclaims the traveler as he looks on



LAUNDRY LADIES

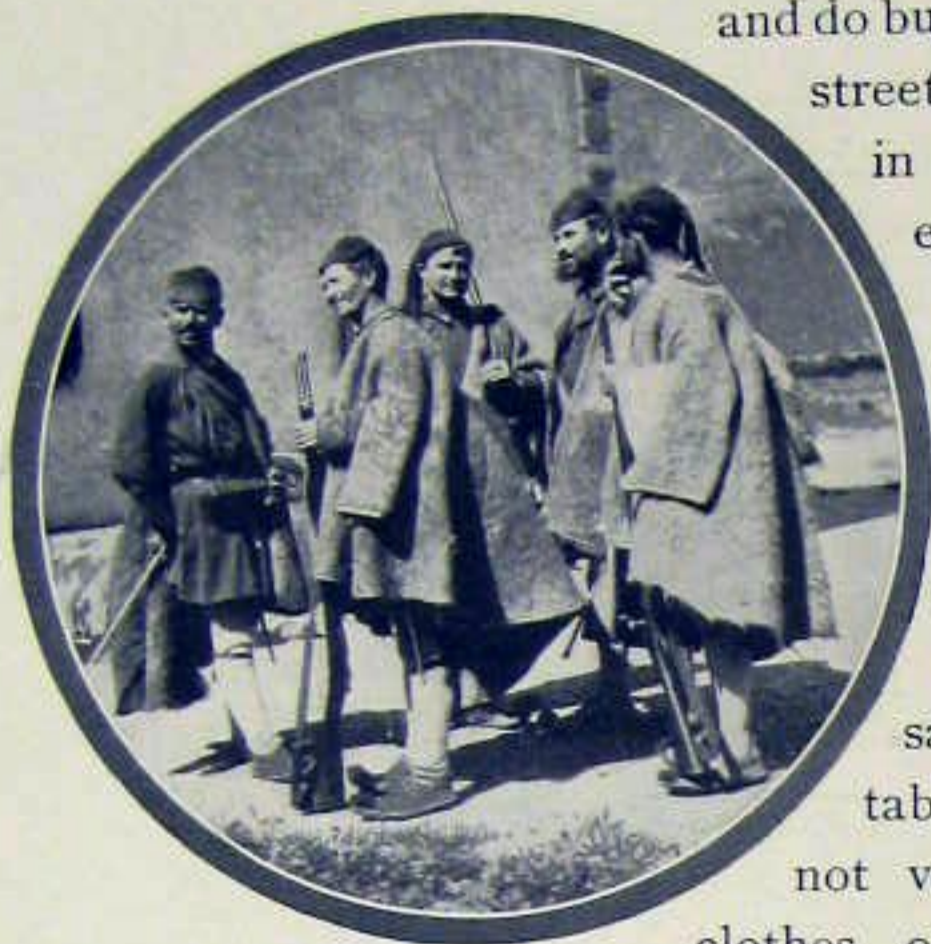
Pelion. Ossa and Pelion have been so often piled on one another in the pages of all literatures that he almost expects to see those world-famous heights performing, like titanic acrobats, some startling feat of equilibrium.

From the slopes of Pelion, mediæval villages and the ruins of several ancient towns look down contemptuously on the upstart Volo, a city created since Thessaly was annexed to the Greek kingdom in 1881.

Volo has the aspect of a city that has been planned upon too large, too grand a scale. Of the eighty thousand people expected to flock into the new city, occupy the pretty houses,



SCRAPING ACQUAINTANCE.



EVZONOI

and do business in the broad, handsome streets, only eleven thousand put in an appearance. Volo's present population fits very loosely into its too spacious modern shell, and the town offers little of interest to visitors.

Volo is the southern terminus of the new Thessalian railway. In describing Thessaly, the word "new" inevitably recurs; everything that is not very old is very new. The clothes of the inhabitants certainly belong to the first category, and the railways to the last. The existing lines were constructed, so they tell us, not for the convenience of travelers and the shipment of freight, but for the benefit of promoters and contractors. In modern Greek the railway is the "Sidirodromos," the station is the "Stathmos." To learn the hours of departure and arrival we consult the "dromologio." Having bought an "isitirio," we take our places in the first-class "wagoni." Then, being comfortably installed by our dragoman, Charolamos Papadopoulos, who stands sentry at the door of our compartment, we begin our journey northward, crossing on our way the plain of Thessaly.



SHOD WITH TUFTED "TSARUKIA"



GREEK WARRIORS OF TO-DAY

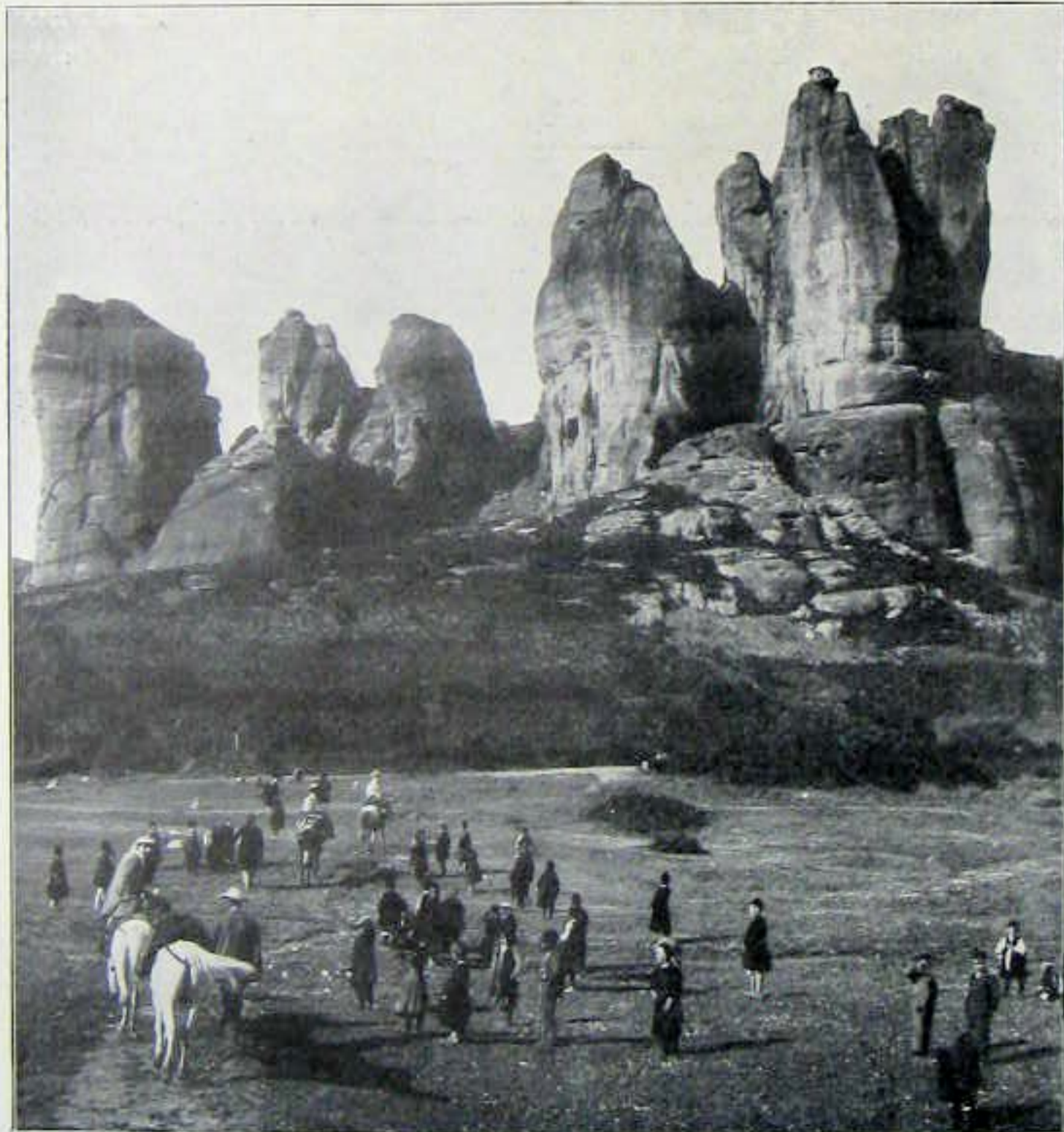
We of course are the objects of considerable curiosity, the news that four "Amerikis" are on board having been given from mouth to mouth and from compartment to compartment. Long stops at unimportant stations give us fine opportunities for studying the peo-

ple on the platforms and to become acquainted with our fellow-passengers, some of whom are no less picturesque than cordial. The list of station names in the time-table now reads like the report of a war-correspondent; "Volo," "Velestino," "Gherli," "Pharsala," recall panics, skirmishes, and battles; but when in 1896 we heard these names shouted by the guards, they were to us mere sounds and meaningless.

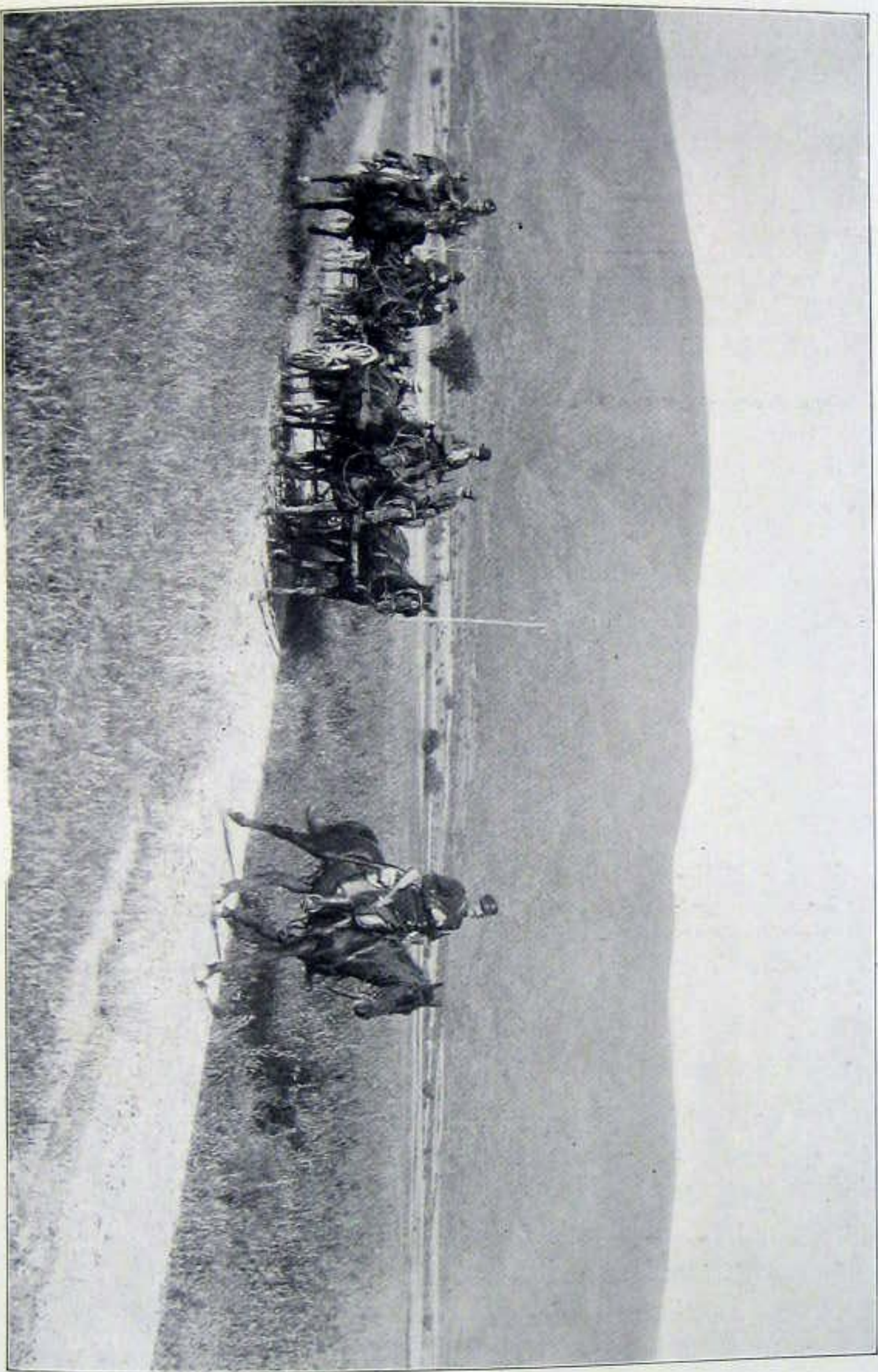
The departure of the train is always announced not by the familiar command, "All aboard!" nor by the French request, "*En voiture, s'il vous plait, Messieurs!*" but by the utterance of a dignified, almost Homeric phrase, "*Oriste, kirii, is tas thesis sas!*" "Pray, gentlemen, get you to your places!" and this is uttered by the guard who is in Greek nothing less than an "epistatis."

We note with interest the foot-gear of the natives. The Greek shoes, or "Tsarukia," are either of a bright yellow or of a gory red with fringy tufts, or pompons, of red wool upon the tips of the pointed turned-up toes. Even the

soldiery wear these gaudy, comfortable shoes. The soldiers seen at various stations belong to the corps of the Greek army that proved itself most effective in the recent war, the Evzonoï. They are for the most part sturdy peasants or mountaineers, and therefore able to endure fatigues and hardships to which the volunteers recruited from the towns and cities so unfortunately succumbed. They wear a uniform modeled after the old national costume, of which the most striking feature is the "fustanella," a skirt of stiff, starched, accordion-plaited linen — to our eyes the most ridiculous garment ever worn by a race of valiant men. —



ST. STEPHEN'S MONASTERY CROWNS THE TALLEST ROCK



ALONG THE TURKISH BORDER



THE BRIDGE AT LARISSA

The immaculate Evzonoï of the capital, seen in the streets of Athens, without their pale blue overcoats, looked very much like ballet-girls. We note, however, that as one goes farther and farther from the capital city, the uniform loses its elegance. It would appear as if the government retained the men in Athens, near the royal palace, as long as the embroidered vest, the jaunty fez, and the bright red shoes were fresh and new; then, when the kilts, or fustanellas, begin to lose their spotlessness, and the stiff plaits begin to wilt, the wearers are removed to the remoter quarters of the city—thence to the suburbs, thence to the province, until at last, with stained and torn coats, soiled linen, and unshaven faces, we find them concealing the drooping folds of unwashed fustanellas beneath ragged shepherd's cloaks at some forsaken post in far-off Thessaly.

As I have said, these Evzonoï are the men who bore the brunt of the Turkish onslaughts; whenever genuine fighting

occurred, they were certain to figure valiantly in the front rank. Had the Greek army been composed of men like these, it would have made a better showing, and the Turk, in spite of his overwhelming numbers, would not have found that an invasion of Thessaly meant little more than a military promenade behind a retreating enemy.

One by one the dreary railroad stations are reached, lingered at, and left behind. Thus leisurely we come to Larissa, our destination, distant from Volo only thirty-seven miles. Our first stroll through the streets of Larissa makes evident the fact that foreigners are seldom seen in the chief city of Thessaly. We are followed everywhere by a gaping crowd. When we pause before a shop or sit at a café, all traffic ceases; everybody stops to take a look at us, to comment upon our appearance, and to discuss the probable reason of our having come to town. I verily believe that during our brief sojourn in Larissa, every one of the fourteen thousand inhabitants enjoyed a prolonged stare at us. The ladies of



THE LEADING HOSTELRY



THE PEOPLE

our party were especially objects of public curiosity, for in Larissa the native women are seldom seen upon the streets.

Until 1881 Larissa was a Turkish city; the life of its Greek residents is still influenced by Moslem customs and traditions.

Although Larissa is the capital of Thessaly, it is extremely provincial. A sea of stupid, staring faces greets the stranger at every turn. The ragged, nondescript, unwashed and unwashable citizens are not even picturesque; they are repulsively miserable, ignorant, and dirty. The existence of a better class in Larissa is not even suggested to the traveler. Prosperity vanished on the day that Thessaly passed into the hands of the Greeks, in 1881, as a result of the treaty of Berlin. The well-to-do Turks departed bag and baggage from these streets. Of Larissa's twenty-seven mosques, all except four are falling to decay. Twenty-three deserted minarets lift their slender, graceful forms above the twenty-three abandoned mosques.

The occupation of Thessaly by a Christian power was the signal for a grand exodus of the Mohammedans. This

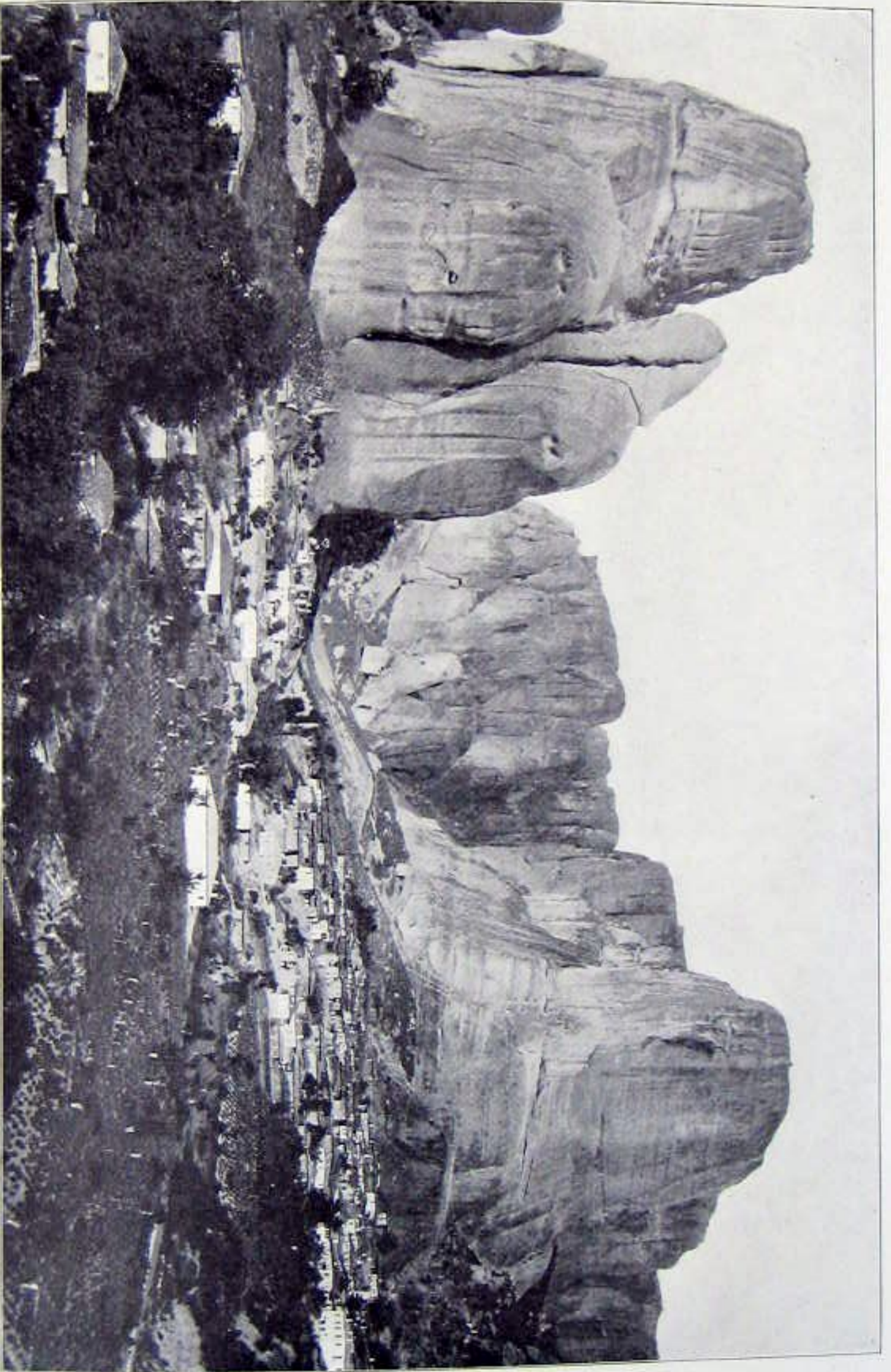


A REMINDER OF THE TURK

almost depopulated the country ; and for a time all development was arrested, since the Greeks were slow in coming to take the places left vacant by the Turks.

The government made every effort to induce the sober and enduring Turkish peasants to remain. Exemption from military service and many more advantages were offered, but in vain. The Moslem would not stay in a land of which their sultan had been dispossessed. They sold large portions of their goods, and, true to the spirit of their nomad ancestors, figuratively folding their tents, they silently stole away. In a night and a day they were gone, leaving the villages and cities nearly empty.

If those Thessalian Turks of 1881 nourished resentment against the Greeks, to whom the powers of Europe had made a present of their land, how completely that resentment must have been satisfied in 1897 ! We have all read the story of the Greco-Turkish war in the columns of the daily press, but a brief résumé of the events of that disastrous conflict may help us more clearly to understand just what happened during the five short weeks of hostilities. We remember that in February, 1897, the Greek fleet, commanded by Prince George, and a Greek land-force of four thousand men under Colonel Vassos, were sent to aid the Cretans in their struggle with the Turks. By March, the



"ICEBERGS OF ROCK"

Cretan question had ceased to be a local issue; it had become the concern of the great military powers of Europe. An international fleet then instituted a blockade of Crete, while the cabinets of Europe busied themselves sending notes at one time to the sultan and at another to King George, meantime quarreling with one another as to the policy to be adopted to preserve peace.

Meantime the Greeks, remembering their glorious expulsion of the Turk from Greece in 1822, began to burn with a desire to strike again at their old-time enemy, the power that had held them three centuries in bondage, and that still held in chains numberless lands and cities whose inhabitants are Greek in race, Greek in spirit, and, above all, Greek in religion. Not only Crete, but the islands of the Ægean, the shores of Asia Minor, and the provinces of Epirus and Macedonia, are peopled by Greeks under the domination of the sultan. The spirit of Pan-Hellenism, dormant for a time, was thoroughly awakened by the events in Crete.



THUS WE JOG ON FOR MANY HAPPY DAYS

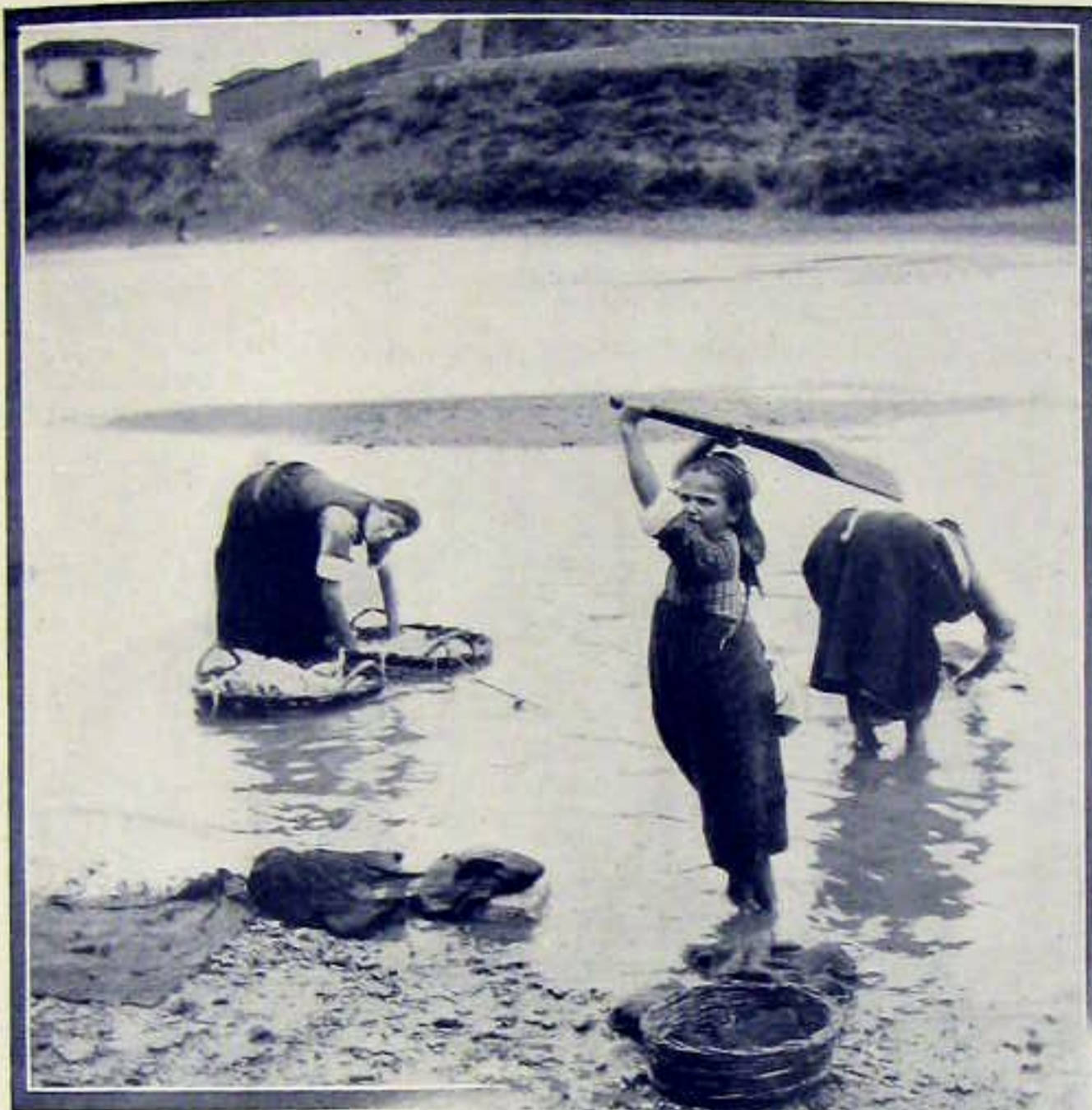
The Greeks of Greece believed their brothers, the so-called "Slave-Greeks" in all the lands just mentioned, ready for revolt. It was thought that King George had only to apply the torch and a great conflagration would break out, consume the flimsy structure of Turkish authority, and expand modern Hellas to the limits already reached by the Hellenic speech and the Hellenic faith. Accordingly King George's government was forced by public clamor to mobilize the army on the plain of Thessaly.

But in June, 1896, the summer before the war, we found on the future Thessalian battle-ground, only the Nomad Vlachs, shepherds of the region. An old chief bids us visit the encampment of his clan. The Vlachs are a Latin-speaking race—Vlach being a term applied in the old days to all people inhabiting the Roman Province at the time

of the decline of the last Empire. Even to-day they persist in calling themselves,



OUR
DEPARTURE
UNDER ESCORT



A VIGOROUS YOUNG
BLANCHISSEUSE

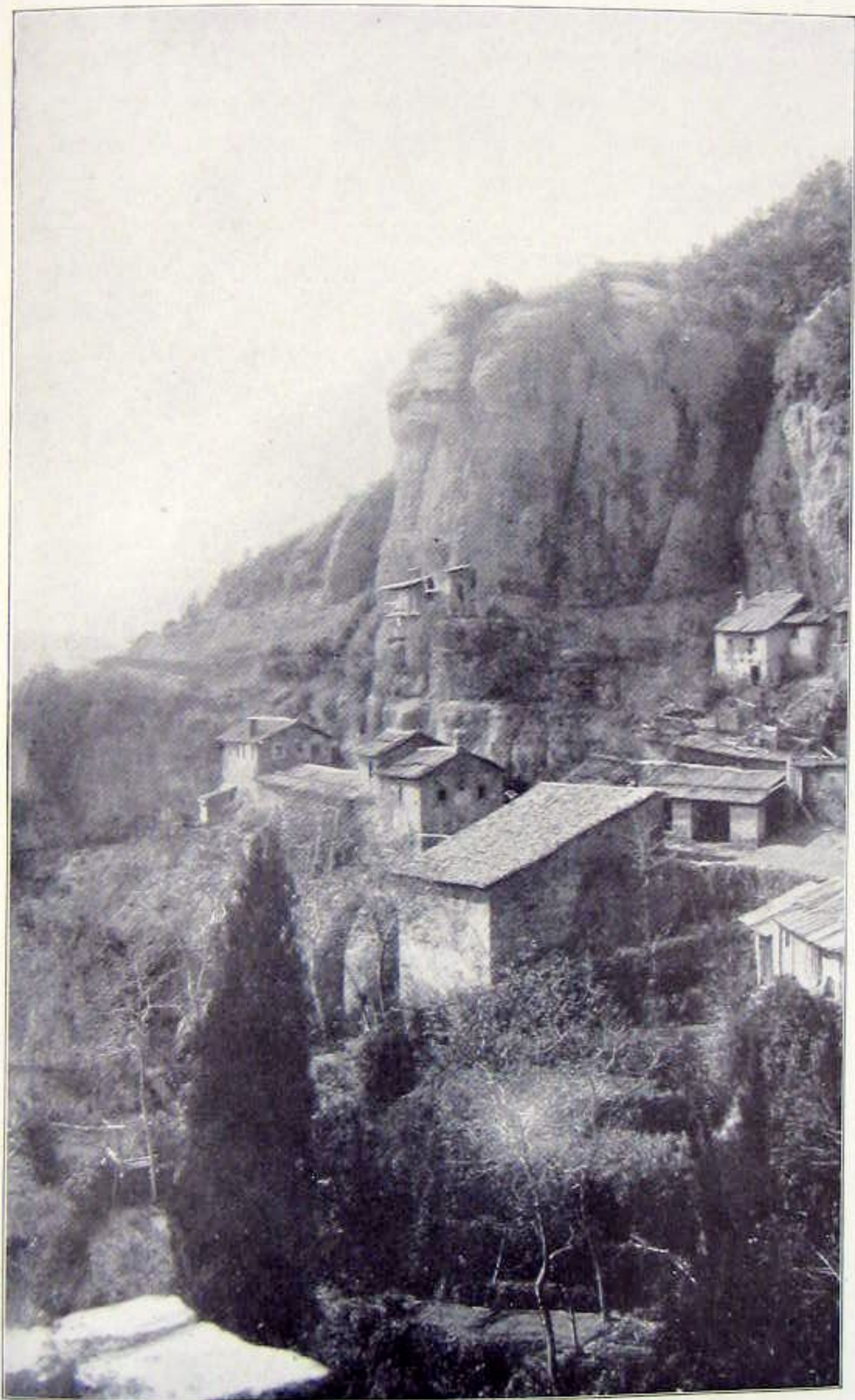
“Romani,” or Romans. Although these Vlachs of Thessaly are Christians, they are not enthusiastic supporters of the Greek régime because, as they say, while Thessaly was under Turkish rule, taxes were lighter than to-day. The peasantry then had only to satisfy the greed of local functionaries and were left in peace; but as we sit beneath the tent of our kind host, partaking of refreshing “ouso,” we learn that when the Greeks assumed control of Thessaly, the burden of taxation was increased alarmingly. The young kingdom of Greece had spent much

for roads and railways, for public buildings and improvements of all kinds, and this in spite of the fact that she was very poor. She was thus forced to levy extortionate assessments on the inhabitants of all her provinces, the new as well as the old. We can readily conceive the ambiguous position into which the Thessalians, whether of Vlach or Hellenic descent, were forced by the change in their nationality and their estate.



THE CAMP OF THE VLACH SHEPHERDS

While proud of becoming free Greeks, they were irritated because they were compelled to pay so dearly for the privilege. Naturally, their Hellenic brothers across the line in Macedonia, and in other Turkish provinces, began to count the cost of liberty and hesitate to take any decisive steps toward overthrowing Turkish domination and realizing that dream of freedom which as a reality might prove a most expensive luxury. In proof of the fact that the Macedonian



THE "SUBURB" OF A MONASTERY

and other Christian subjects of the sultan did *not* desire to exchange a comfortable bondage for a costly freedom, we have only to remember that in spite of the reverses of the Greeks they never stirred a finger to aid Greece in the war she was undertaking ostensibly on their account.

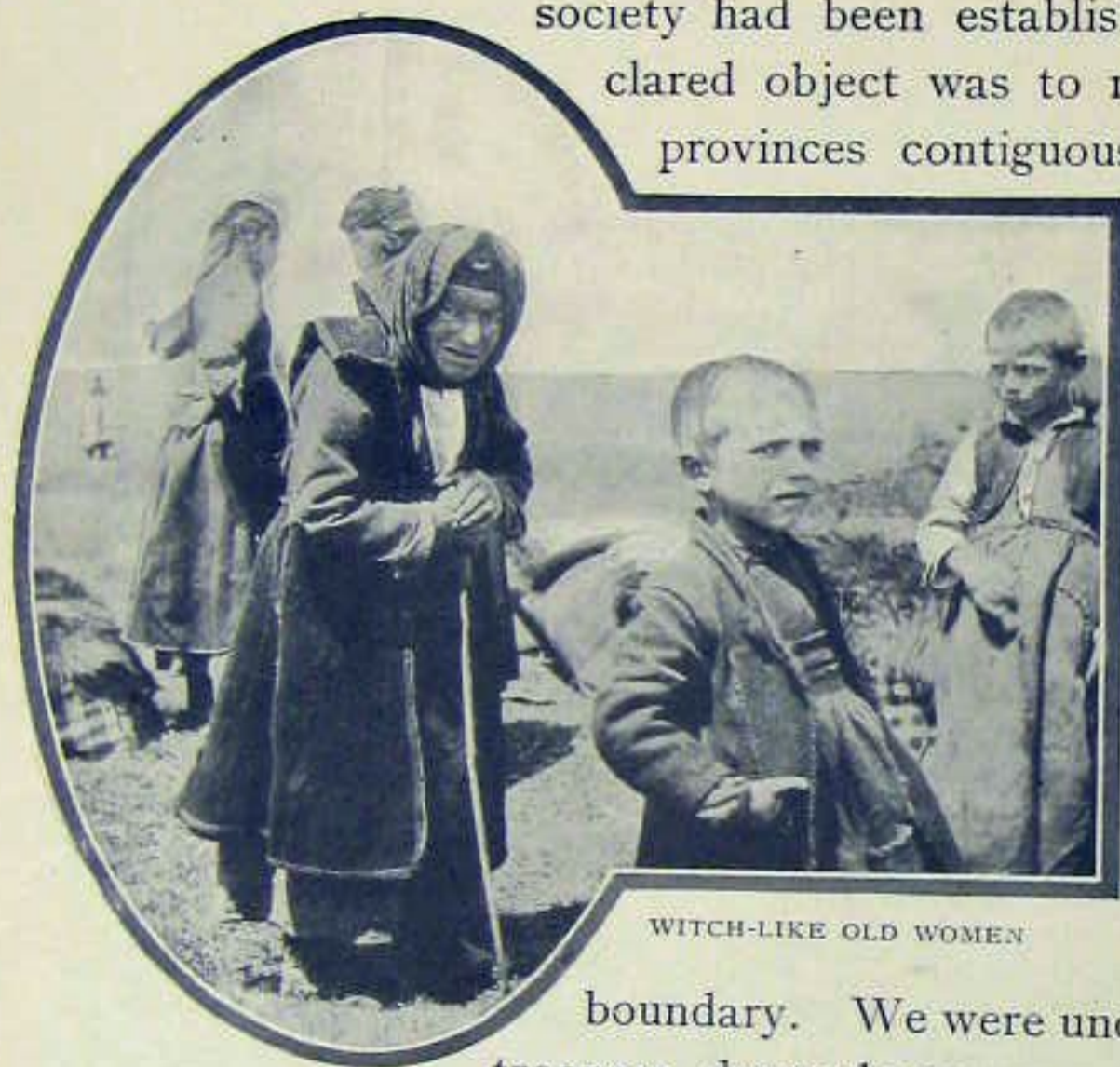
To resume the story of hostilities: While Greece was defying the powers in Crete and massing her troops in Thes-



PATRIARCHAL HOSPITALITY

saly, the press of Europe and America was publishing columns of sympathetic utterances and urging the king and his ministers to maintain their heroic pose. King George found himself powerless to combat the reckless desire for war manifested by his people. Nor must we forget a secret agency that was at work in every corner of King George's realm. This was the National Society—a secret society

composed largely of officers of the Greek army, but including also prominent diplomats and merchants, and many Greeks of note who lived in foreign lands. The National Society made every effort to precipitate the war. It piled the Ossa of Jingoism upon the Pelion of misrepresentation in its reckless endeavor to make for its members an opportunity to distinguish themselves and pose as liberators. This society had been established for two years—its declared object was to recover for Greece the two provinces contiguous to Thessaly—Macedonia and Epirus.



WITCH-LIKE OLD WOMEN

Meantime the Turks had not been idle. By the middle of March no fewer than fifty thousand Turkish soldiers were massed around Ellassona, near the frontier of Thessaly.

In the course of our journey we rode for many miles in sight of the range that marks the Turkish

boundary. We were under the escort of three Greek troopers, deemed necessary even in time of peace for protection against the Greek renegade brigands who plunder in their native land and then retire to their dens across the Turkish border. This frontier is more than two hundred miles in length; it follows the water-shed of a low range of mountains, but the passes being on the north side of the line they were held by the Turks. The fortifications were merely small blockhouses—Turkish and Greek blockhouses frequently standing face to face not more than a few hundred yards apart. It was in one of the passes of this frontier range that the first hostilities occurred.

But before we open the chapter of disasters that follows, let me lead you for a few moments into the reposeful solitudes of the beautiful Vale of Tempé.

It was to see this famous gorge that we undertook the long drive by carriage from Larissa, little dreaming that the pictures taken during the excursion would ever serve as illustrations for the story of a campaign in which the Turks should be the victors, and our friends the Greeks the vanquished.



MOTHERS AND BABIES

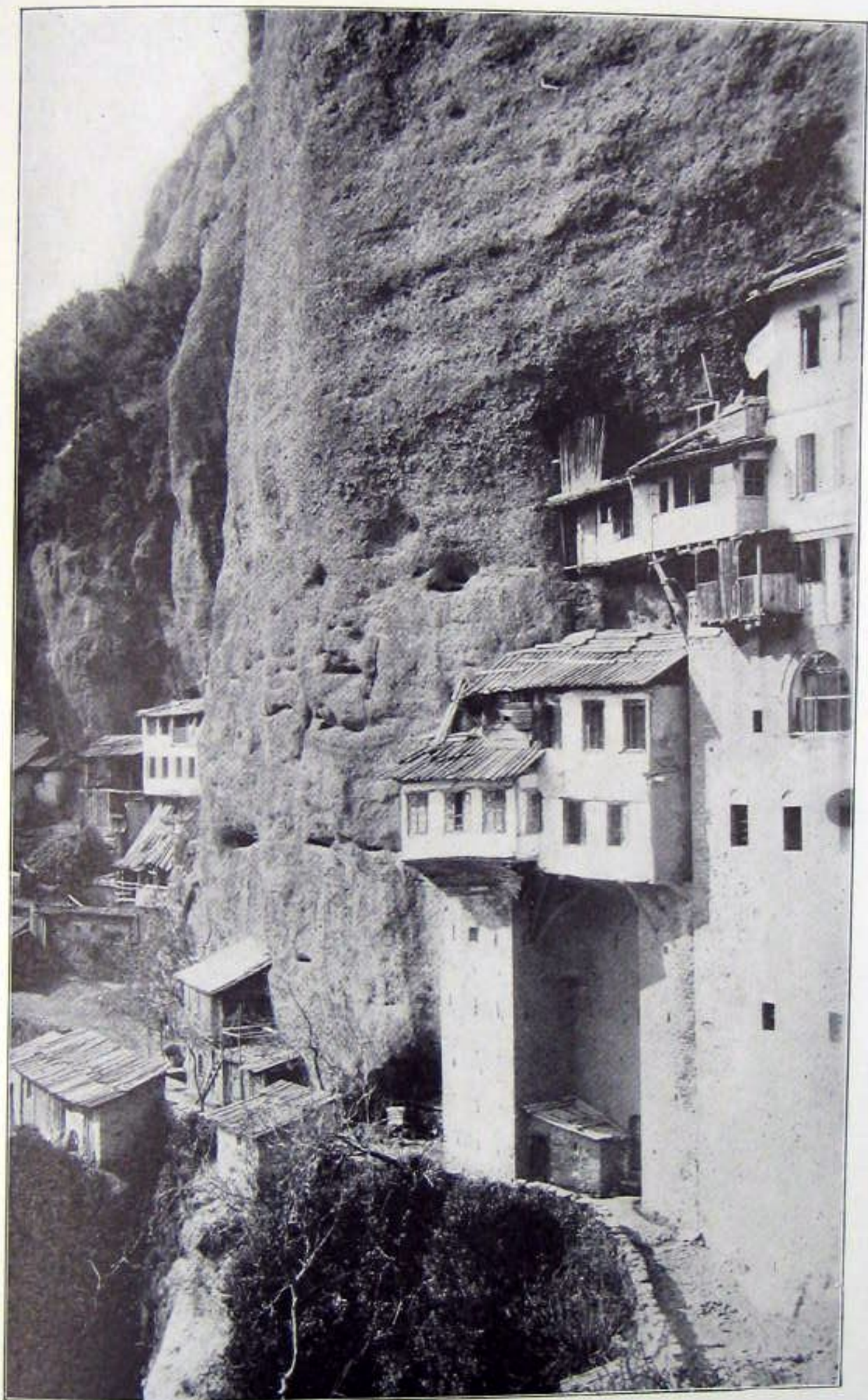
The Vale of Tempé lies between Mount Olympus, where the old gods lived, and Ossa, the mountain that was wont to be piled on Pelion. When the invading armies of antiquity rolled in a mighty tide toward Athens, the Vale of Tempé was the natural channel through which the barbarian flood advanced into Thessaly, which was then the granary of



NO CONFIDENCE IN STRANGERS

Greece. But this lovely vale, through which the river Peneus, after traversing the fertile plains, flows eastward to the sea, has witnessed not only invasions but retreats. When Julius Cæsar defeated Pompey and his great army on the field of Pharsalos, it was through the Vale of Tempé that Pompey and his legions fled. Thessaly has long been famous as a battleground. Thrice, in days of old, were the destinies of nations decided by great battles fought upon its level plain—or on the slopes of the mountains that form a rim around about it, like the sides of a great amphitheater.

And as we ride reluctantly away from Tempé, still escorted by our faithful cavalry-men, we will take up again the story of the war. As has been said, the hills on the frontier were the scene of the first encounters between Greeks and Turks. The early skirmishes were informal and unauthorized by either side. First a band of about fifteen hundred irregulars, organized by the secret society, crossed the international line. The Turkish lieutenant, in command



MONASTIC ABODES



of the small garrison at the Macedonian blockhouse, protested to the Greek frontier officer that armed men had no right to enter Turkish territory. The Greek replied that it was not his duty to interfere — that the men were not royal troops but an insurgent band composed of brigands, deserters, and foreigners. It is not certain which side fired the first shot. A fight began and lasted until morning; two Turkish blockhouses were burned, and the

small garrisons forced into a retreat.

The next day the raiders were repulsed with a grave loss of

GOOD-TV



TWO-THIRDS OF OUR TROOPS

sixty men, and driven back across the border. Two days later there was another raid at another point with similar results.

This, however, was not yet war. The government at Athens disclaimed responsibility; both governments professed a desire to maintain peace. But the tension was too great. Two hostile armies were face to face. Five days later the fighting recommenced. This time it was upon the slope of Mount Olympus, the abode of the Greek



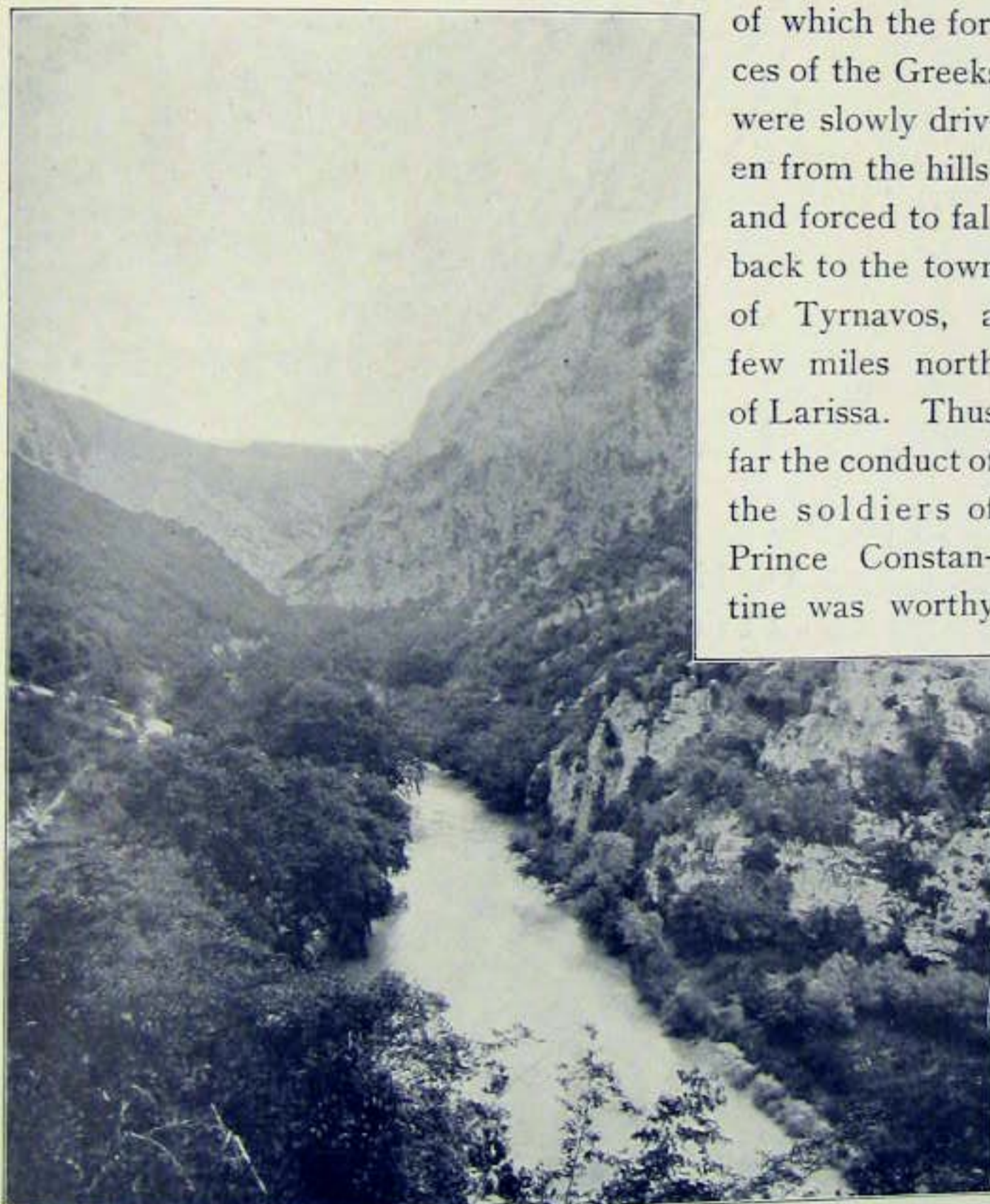
MOUNT OSSA

gods. From High Olympus the gods have looked down upon the hand-to-hand strife of armored ancients and upon the long-distance slaughter of cloth-clad sharpshooters; they have heard the clash of antique steel on steel, and they have listened to the modern music of the Mauser. The Greeks engaged in this skirmish were clad in the royal uniform, and commanded by officers for whose actions the government could not refuse to be responsible. It was all over with diplomacy. War was declared by Turkey at

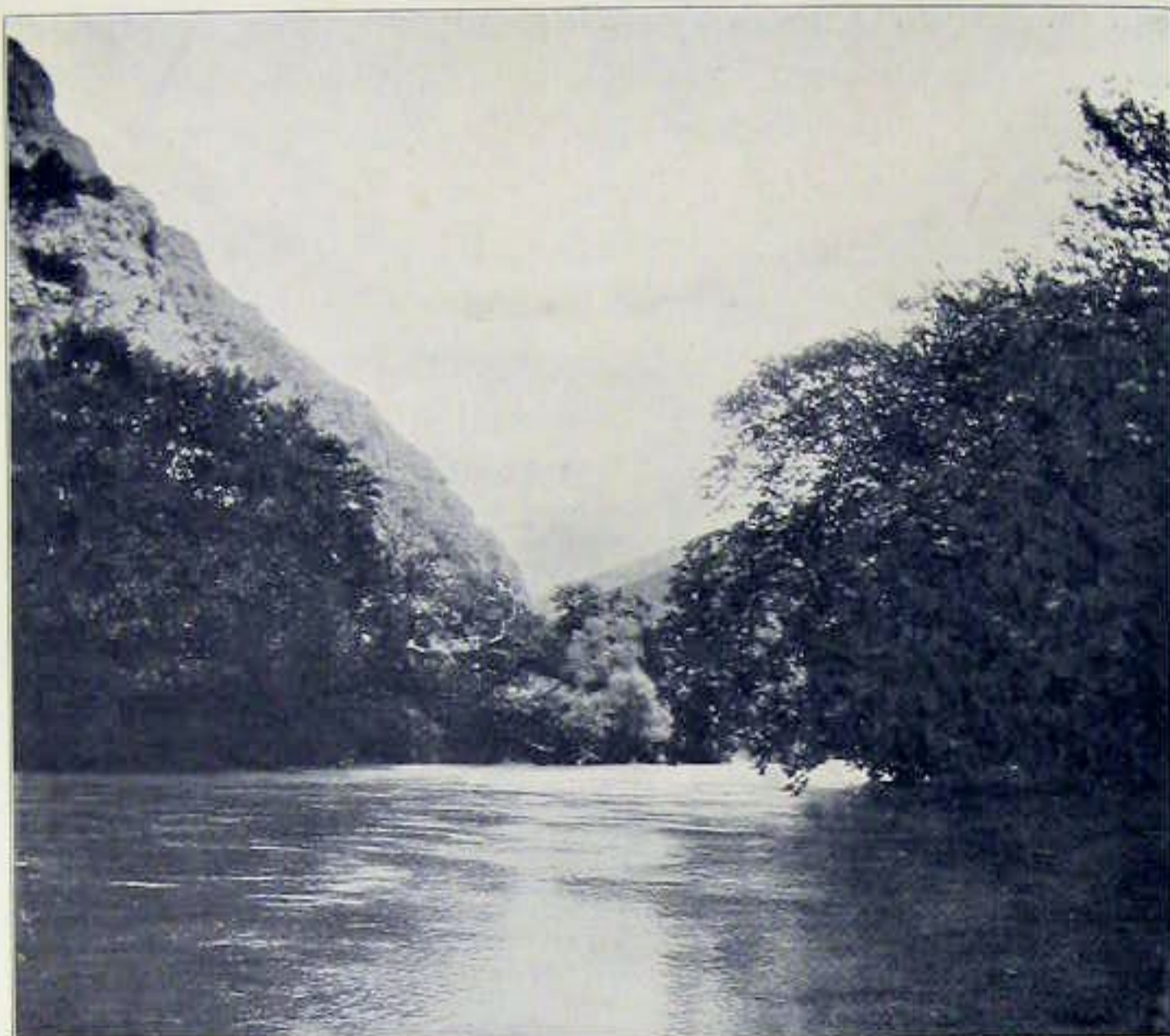
5 p. m. on the 17th of April. It was to be a war full of surprises and disappointments, and a war quickly fought, for it was to last only thirty-three days ; less than five weeks intervened between the declaration on April 17 and the signing of the armistice on the 20th of May.

During the days of April 17 and 18 battle raged in the passes ; the Greek troops fought with valor, but were driven back, and the Turkish forces were left in command of the passes and the crests. Several battles followed, as a result

of which the forces of the Greeks were slowly driven from the hills, and forced to fall back to the town of Tyrnavos, a few miles north of Larissa. Thus far the conduct of the soldiers of Prince Constantine was worthy



THE VALE OF TEMPE

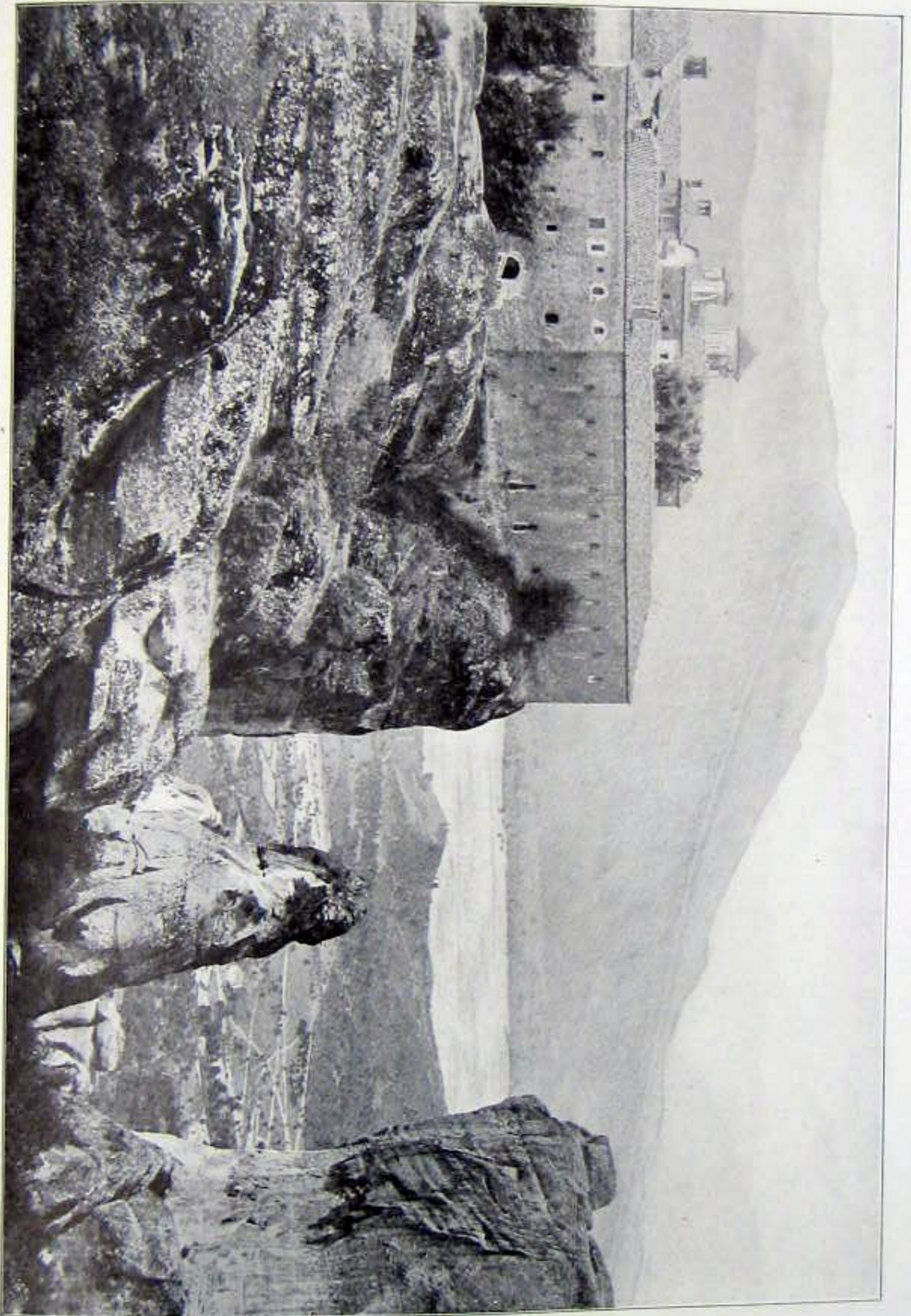


THE PENEUS

of all praise—the men proved themselves steady fighters in spite of youth and inexperience. And in judging their later actions it must be remembered that the Greeks were at no time as strong numerically as the Turks. Less than seventy thousand untrained Greek troops were pitted against more than one hundred and thirty thousand seasoned veterans or Turkish reserves, drilled by German officers. As yet, however, the Turks had not crossed the line in force, and the Greeks were still strongly intrenched at the entrance to the plain.

But a fatal mistake during the night of April 23 completely changed the situation. The advance posts of the Greeks were signaled to retire to the main line. The signals were wrongly interpreted in Tyrnavos, whence the rumor ran that the advance posts have been taken by the Turks. The inhabitants packed up goods and chattels, and began to

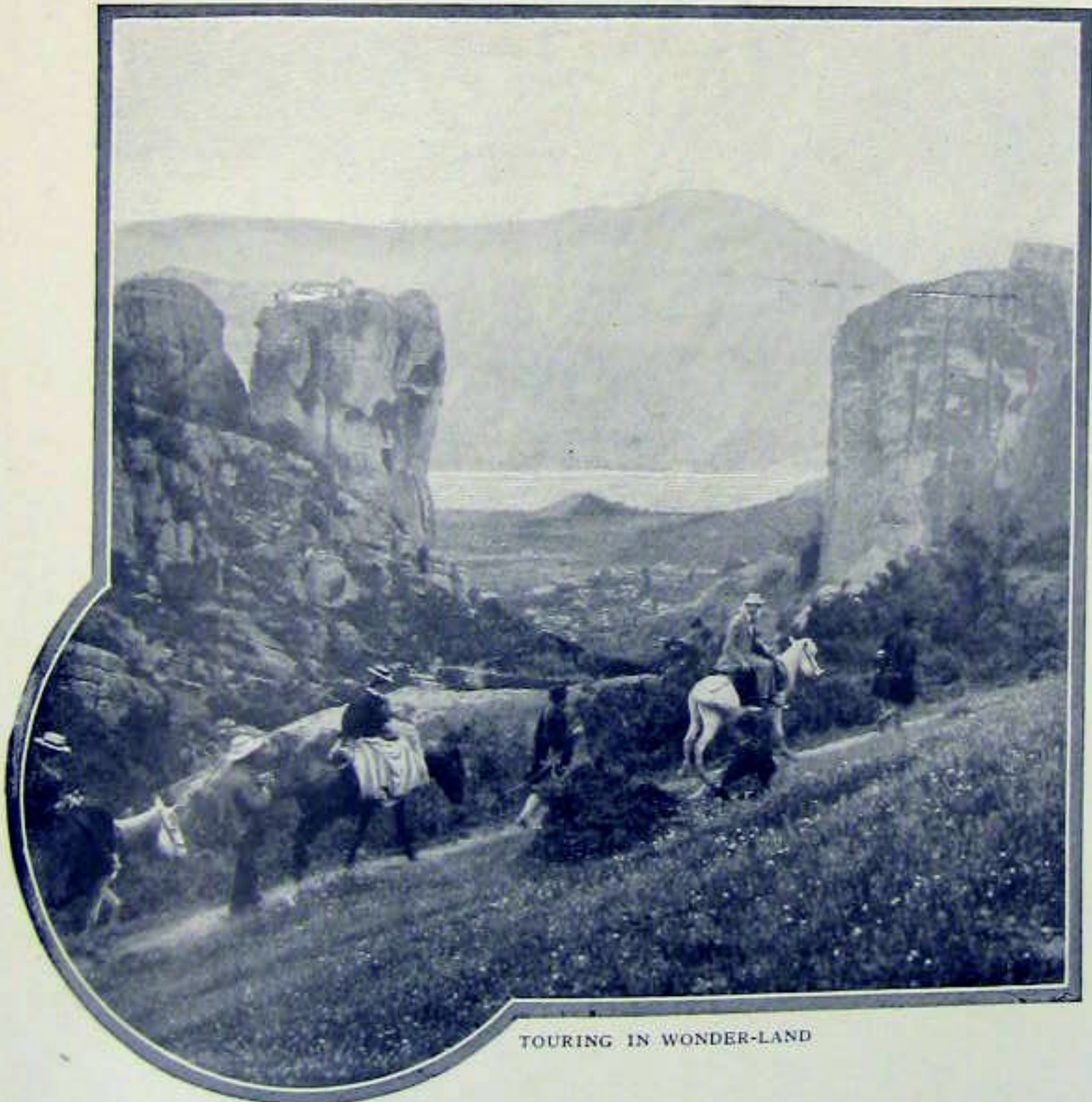
"AN ISLAND IN MID-AIR"



leave the town. Panic seized the troops and spread from Tyrnavos to Larissa and thence southward to the very bases of supplies, to Volo and the other seaport cities.

Larissa was abandoned by the Greek forces, and for three days was at the mercy of the released convicts and drunken insurgents, who pillaged the houses, committed all kinds of outrage, and then fought among themselves.

When the Turkish cavalry at last arrived, they came in the guise of deliverers, and were welcomed by the four hundred Moslem inhabitants, the Jews, and the few Greek residents remaining in the city. The Turkish commander, when complimented on his capture of the city, replied: "Mere



TOURING IN WONDER-LAND



A FLIGHT INTO GREECE

luck. We happened to be coming along and walked into town. There was no fighting; they ran away; we were in the right place,—that is all.”

The stampede of the Greeks was indeed inexplicable. The Turks followed in stolid bewilderment and found themselves almost without an effort in possession of the city that had been formerly the Turkish capital of Thessaly.

The Greek army under the orders of the much-criticized Crown Prince fell back to Pharsala in confusion. The new line of defense was about thirty miles farther south. The principal strong points were near the towns of Pharsala and Velestino. The Turks after a delay of several days leisurely

followed. At Velestino they met with a sharp check, which was, however, only an incident, proving that the Greeks were still capable of showing courage and that in spite of the caution of the Turkish commander occasional indiscretions were committed by his inferior officers. But the Turks continued to advance southward, seeming to have as little thought of danger as the children we saw playing near the villages we passed. Whenever the Turks advanced in force, the Greeks, although holding positions that could not have been taken without terrible loss of life, melted away. They abandoned splendid lines of defense, and fell back still farther toward the south to take up other positions which in time were to be relinquished after a feeble defense, or possibly, without a struggle. They did not even cripple the railway, and they almost invariably left telegraph-wires uncut. At Larissa, Pharsala, and Domokos they abandoned large supplies of rifles and ammunition instead of destroying them. At Velestino they dragged big cannon to the hill-tops, kept them there silent during a two-days' battle, and



VLACHS EN VOYAGE



BABIES AND BAGGAGE

then without firing a single charge they dragged them down again and sunk them in the Gulf of Volo. They never stopped to blow up bridges or to burn them or to spike their guns. Thus in disorder they retreated from the northern frontier, across the plain, to the southern border of Thessaly, and finally, the battle of Domokos having been disastrous for them, their forces embarked hastily at Volo and other ports or

retreated in disorder through the pass of Thermopylæ. The Turks immediately seized all the important towns, establishing patrols, preventing pillage, and protecting property. The Greek inhabitants of many towns have borne witness to the good behavior of the Turks. In several cases Turkish commanders were even begged to send troops to



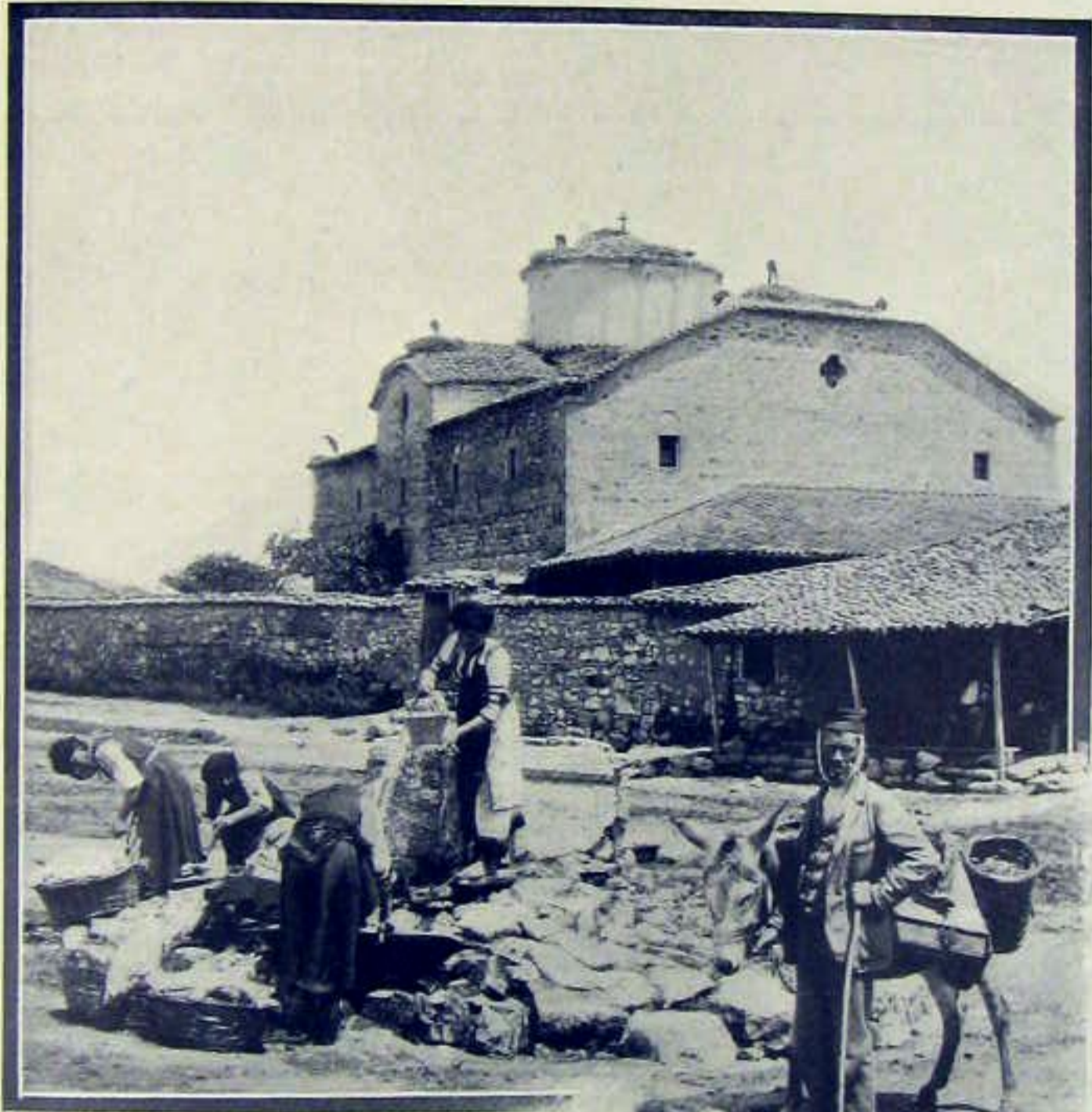
THESSALIAN TYPES



FINE OLD GENTLEMEN

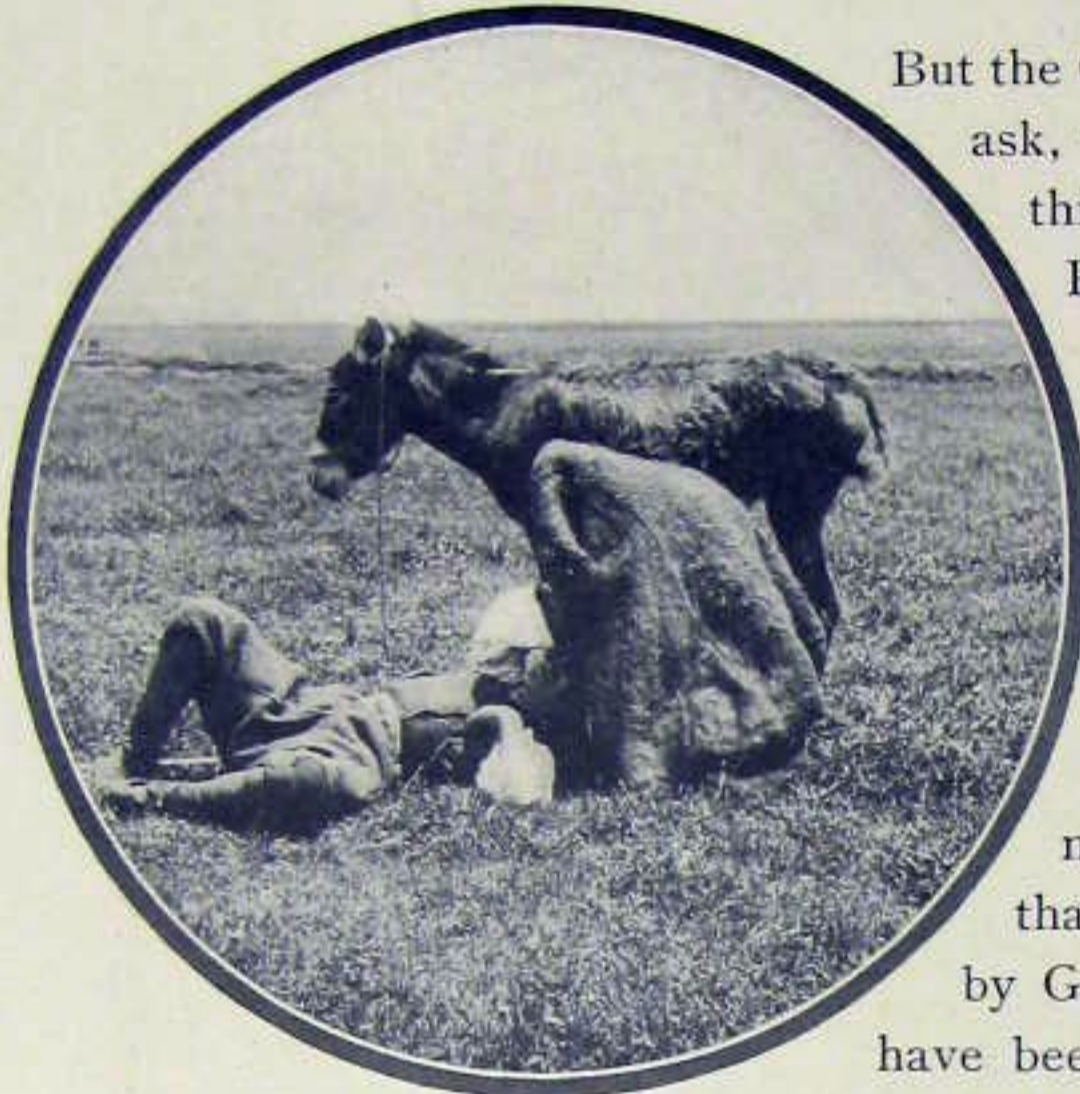
act as police and to protect the villages from the rapacity of Greek irregulars and deserters from the retreating army.

The triumph of Turkey was complete. One month from the day on which the Greek regulars opened hostilities near the Vale of Tempé, on the north border, the last Greek soldier crossed the Furka Pass on the southern frontier and



A FOUNTAIN

left Thessaly in the possession of the Ottoman troops. That night the battalions of the demoralized Greek army slept in the narrow defiles of Thermopylae. The next day the armistice was signed by the two governments, ending the short, inglorious war.



MIDDAY REPOSE

But the Greek navy, you may ask, what was it doing all this time? What of Prince George and his fleet of warships? He could do nothing. The Greek fleet was paralyzed by the fact that on the Turkish coasts it would have found no cities to attack that were not inhabited by Greeks; that it would have been forced to destroy a vast amount of property

belonging to Greek merchants and Greek residents before it could inflict a telling blow upon its enemy the Turks.

And what of the Athenian populace which had been so eager for the fray? It was content to sit in its cafés and openly criticize the conduct of the campaign. What also of the Greeks living in foreign lands? They at least did everything in their power to aid the



A HAPPY FAMILY

fatherland. Averoff, the Alexandrian millionaire, who restored the Stadium in which the Olympian Games had been celebrated, secured six million dollars for the Greek war-fund, and presented the army with forty thousand uniforms. Greeks from all lands came flocking to Athens to enlist, but they were unarmed, untrained, and unprepared for service ; and many of them arrived too late to be of use. The five hundred Greek volunteers from the



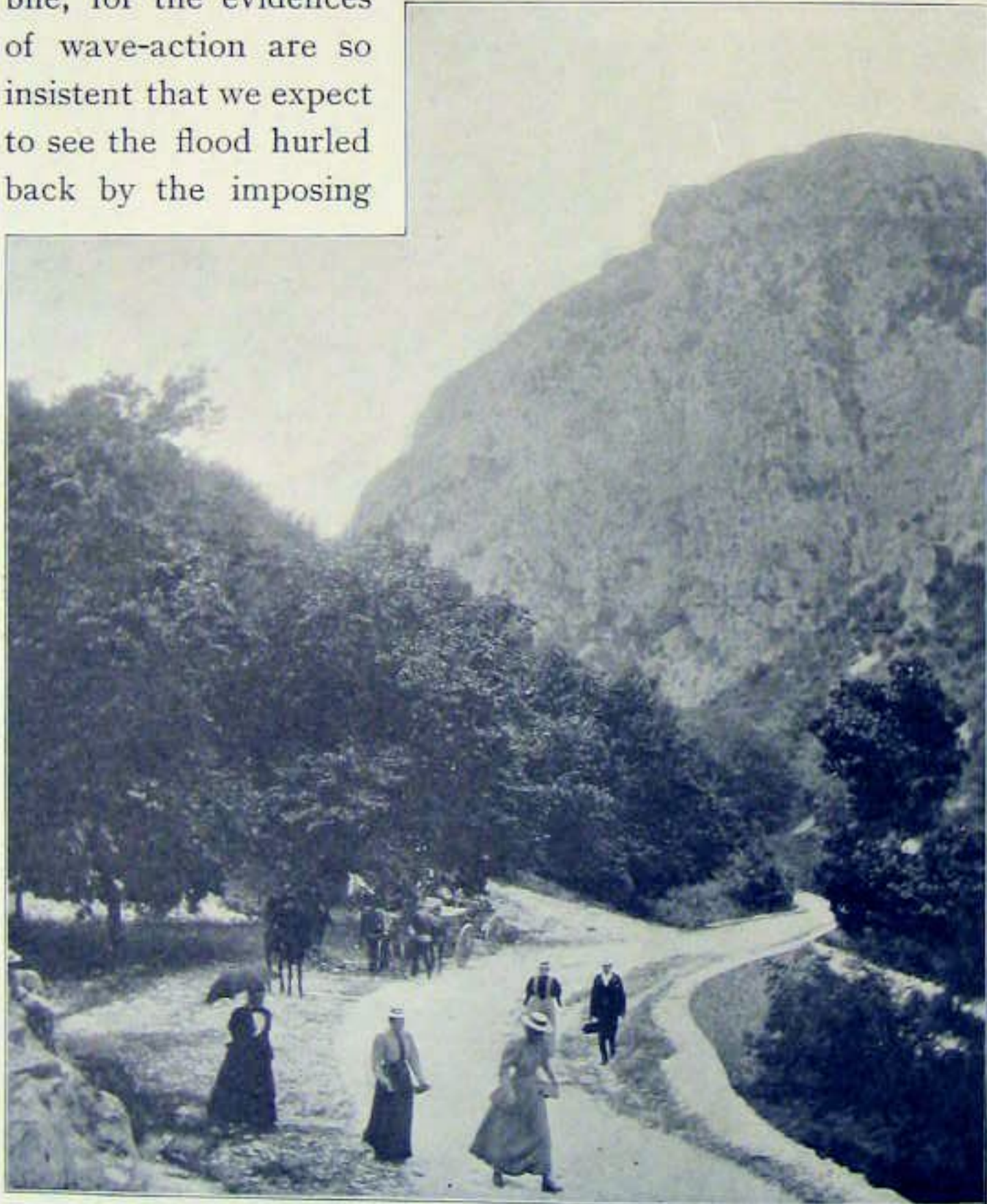
THE GATE OF THESSALY

United States arrived in their native country just twenty-four hours after the armistice had been signed.

Such were the events that in 1897 turned the attention of the world to Thessaly. We, however, were attracted to the land by the fame of its wonders, the "Metora" or the "Monasteries in the Air."

They are accessible from the village of Kalabaka, the northern terminus of the Thessalian Railway. The rocky heights that rise above the village may be likened to the extremity of a mighty glacier of gray conglomerate that has its source amid the snows of High Olympus, in the east, flows westward in a broadening flood until it breaks and

melts into the plain of Thessaly. Green, fertile waves caress the cold gray cliffs, or break against the walls of the rock glacier ; hamlets and villages, like fleets of little fishing-boats are lifted by the verdant tide and seem to pause a moment near the ragged coast, before the reflux draws them down again. Two or three daring little craft have ventured even into the yawning fissures or steep-walled inlets, hollowed by the beating sea. The wonder is that all is immobile, for the evidences of wave-action are so insistent that we expect to see the flood hurled back by the imposing



'TWEEN TEMPE'S WALLS



Photograph by John Wright

THE ABBOT OF HAGIA TRIADA

cliffs, or else that the cliffs will yield to repeated attacks, and like the gigantic icebergs to which Alaska glaciers give birth, separate themselves from the parent mass, wrench themselves free, and fall like broken mountains into the laughing waves of green. Fantastic imaginings you may say; a few moments later, as we draw nearer, the possibility of a reali-



IN THE VALE

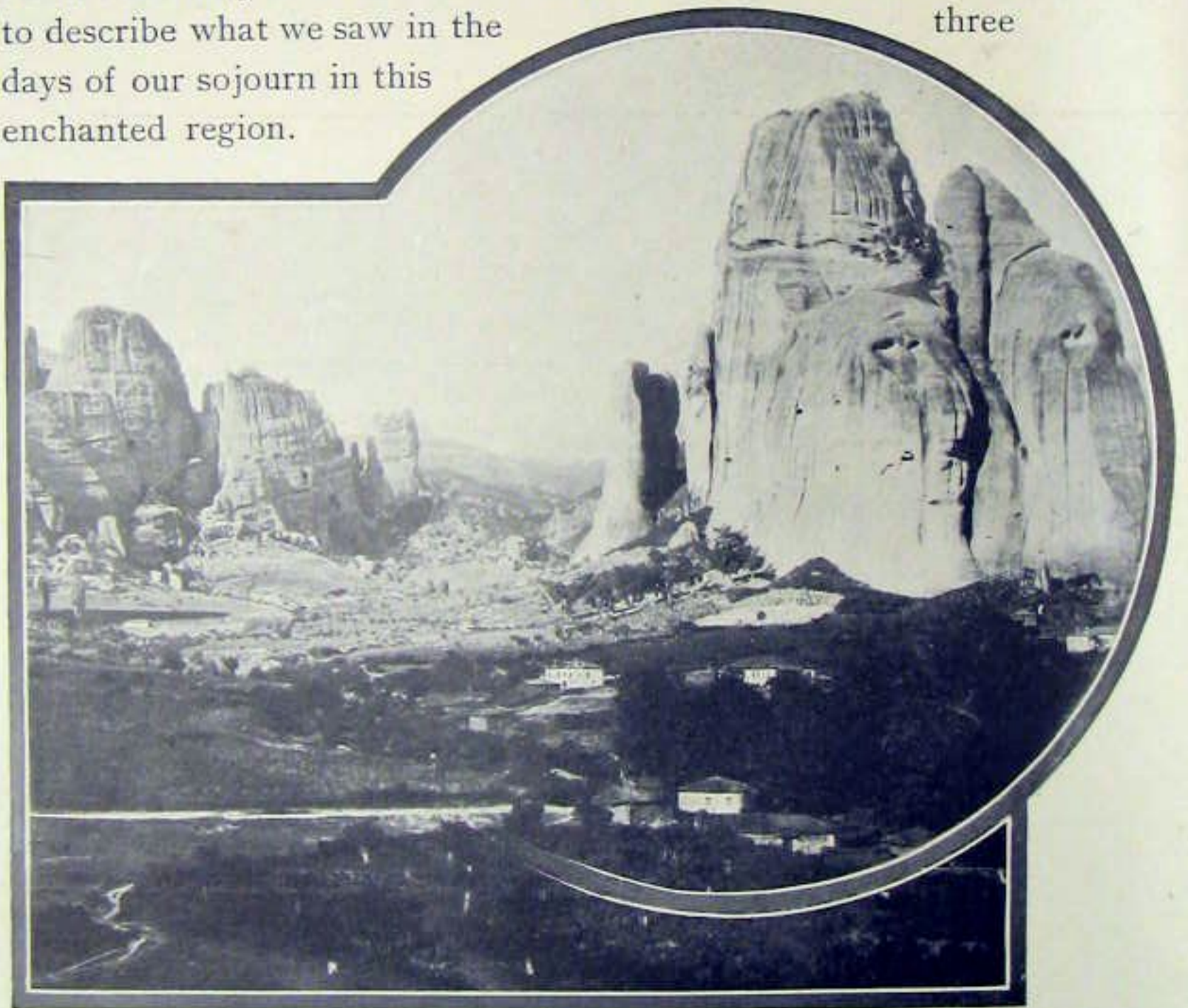
zation of this fantastic suggestion is revealed to us with such convincing force that we involuntarily shrink back in startled expectation that our dreams may come true.

The birth of the iceberg of solid rock seems imminent. The pillar-like masses appear as if about to topple over and crash down upon us.

The traveler who tells of the Meteora must ask for credulous ears, for his tale will test your confidence in his veracity. Who, gazing at these towering monoliths, would believe that almost every one is crowned by an extensive monastery, a

decaying stronghold of Orthodox monasticism? Yet we are to sleep three nights in the odor of sanctity on the summit of the tallest of the Meteora rocks up there in the right hand corner of the sky as framed by limits of the illustration. We choose St. Stephens as the most accessible of the four inhabited convents found on the skyward tips of those titanic arrow-heads. There are besides a score of deserted structures perched on other peaks, wedged in the fissures or clinging to the walls.

“Seeing is believing,” you may say, and I reply by pointing to the pictures of these impossible sites. Never am I more fully conscious of the debt I owe to that most faithful of recording secretaries, the camera, than when I attempt to describe what we saw in the three days of our sojourn in this enchanted region.



BROKEN MOUNTAINS



SCHOOLBOYS OF KALABAKA

St. Stephens stands, as it were, on an island in mid air, but the island lies close to the extremity of a long peninsula, and a narrow bridge, spanning a deep channel of space, links the island to the mountain mainland. Viewed from the heights behind the monastery, its spacious buildings, so securely seated on broad foundations, no longer appear to us like an eagle's nest on the apex of a slender pinnacle of rock. The aspect of the monasteries depends entirely upon the point of view. Most startling changes of outline result at almost every step. What seemed to tower high above us, is seen a moment later at our feet; a tapering minaret of rock, viewed from another standpoint, becomes a wide flat-topped cliff; pinnacles change to palisades, sheer walls to gentle slopes—as if this region were the creation of some scenic trickster, the stage-setting for some magical pantomime.

Crossing the little bridge, we shout lustily for entrance; the door is slowly opened, there is a brief parley, and a few

moments later, we find ourselves within the monastery court. The buildings seem almost deserted; two or three Greek monks make us welcome in the name of the Higoumenos, or abbot. Our dragoman, familiar with the place, thanks to earlier visits, then installs us in the best suite of rooms, while our cook assumes high-handed sway in the smoky kitchen.



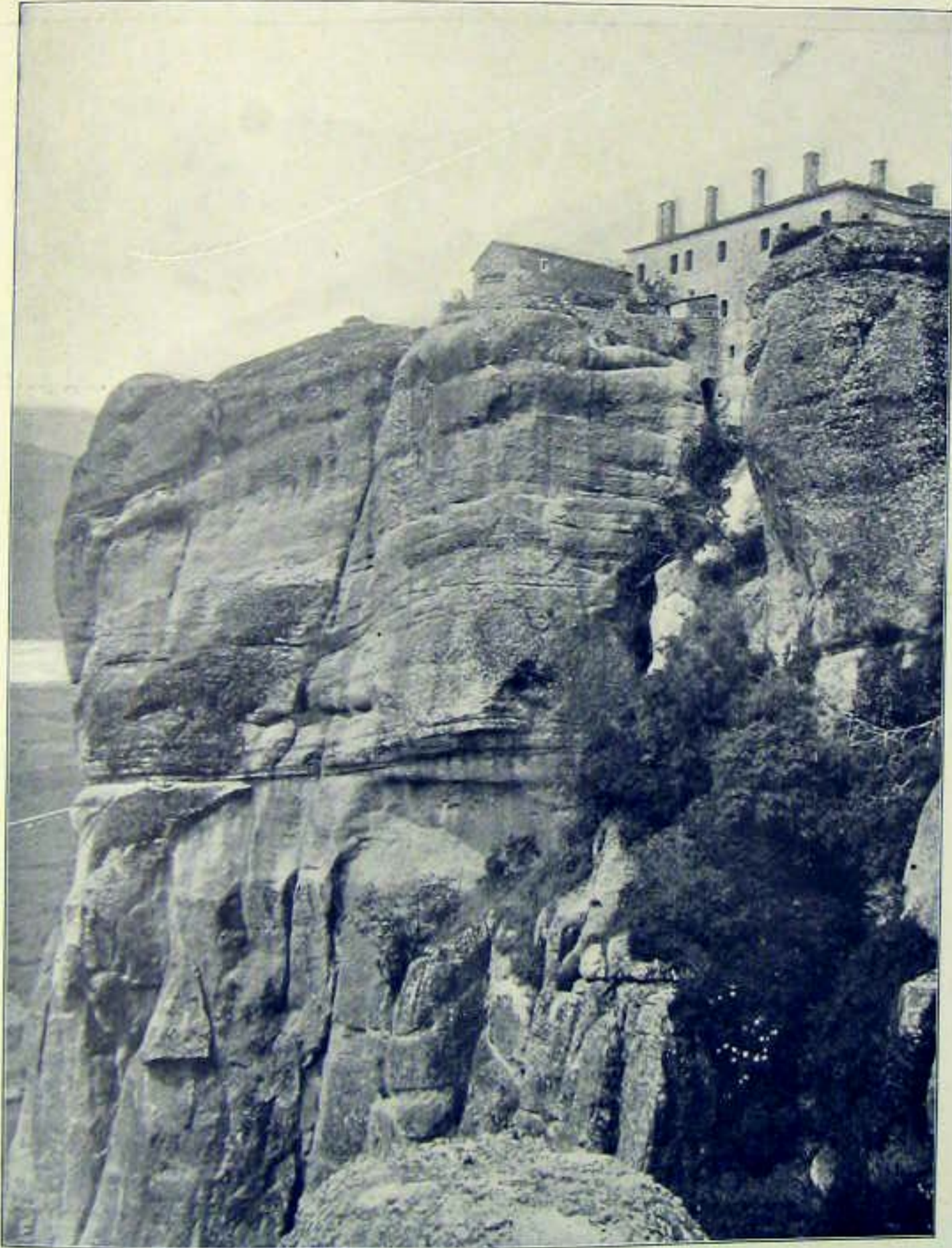
THE MONASTERY OF ST. STEPHEN

We find that of the many cells that line St. Stephen's corridors, only seven are occupied; the present occupants being probably the last, for when they shall have passed away, there is no hope that others will come in to take their places. The destiny of the Meteora monasteries is to become national curiosities, monuments preserved by the government as a temptation for the tourist. In fact, the monasteries to-day are little else, but so few have been the travelers who have discovered these high-perched haunts, that their medieval atmosphere has not yet been disturbed.

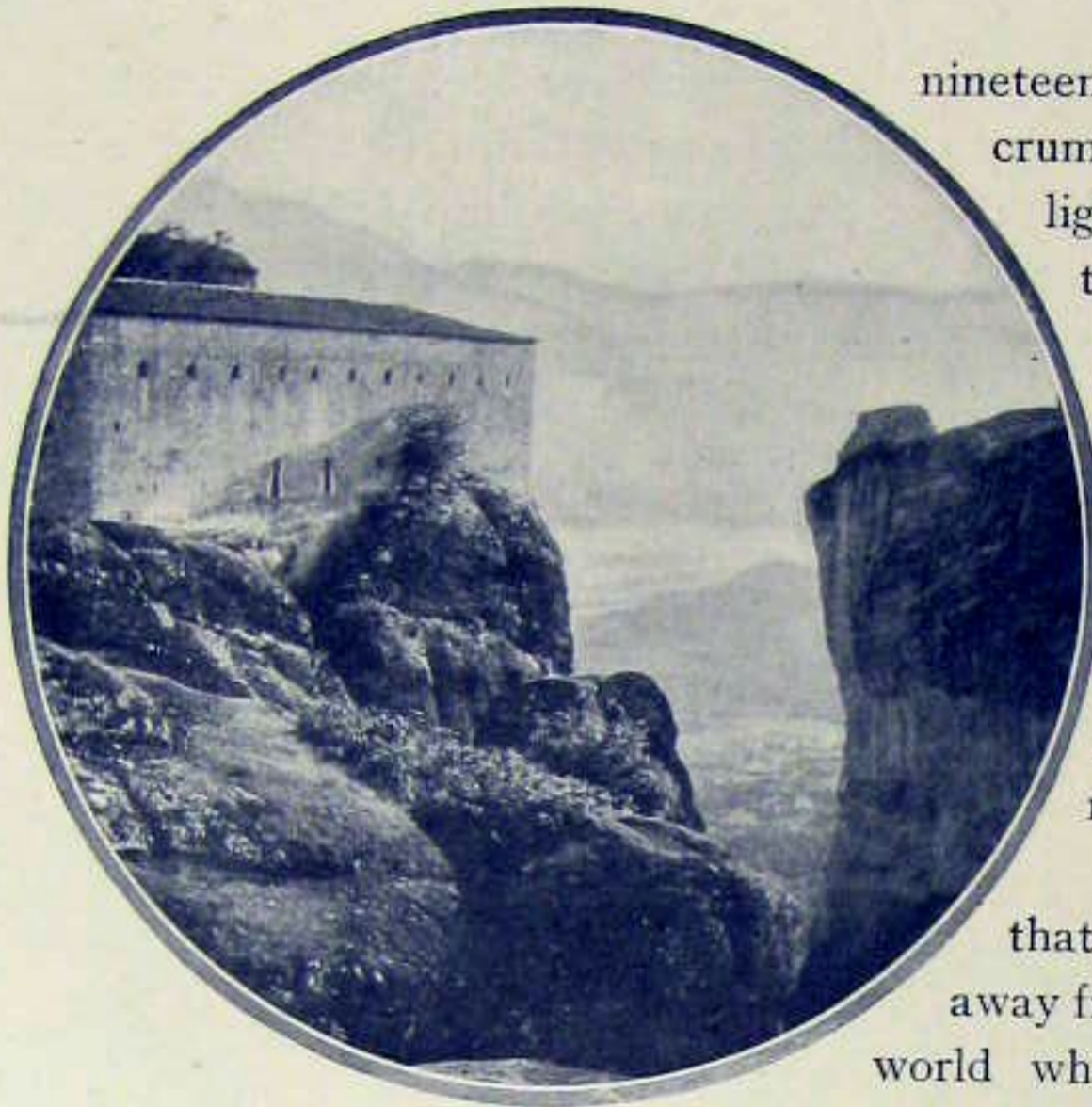


THE HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY

The monks, apparently, are very poor, too poor, at least, to afford the luxury of cleanliness. The Higoumenos, a man far more intelligent than the simple-minded brothers, seems to realize that the end is near, that this remnant of the Middle Ages which, thanks to its inaccessible refuge on the Meteora peaks, has persisted through the end of the



WHERE WE LODGED



A DEEP CHANNEL OF SPACE

nineteenth century, must crumble away as the light of the twentieth century falls upon it, just as the corpses of the Mycenæan kings crumble to dust when exposed to the gaze of modern men.

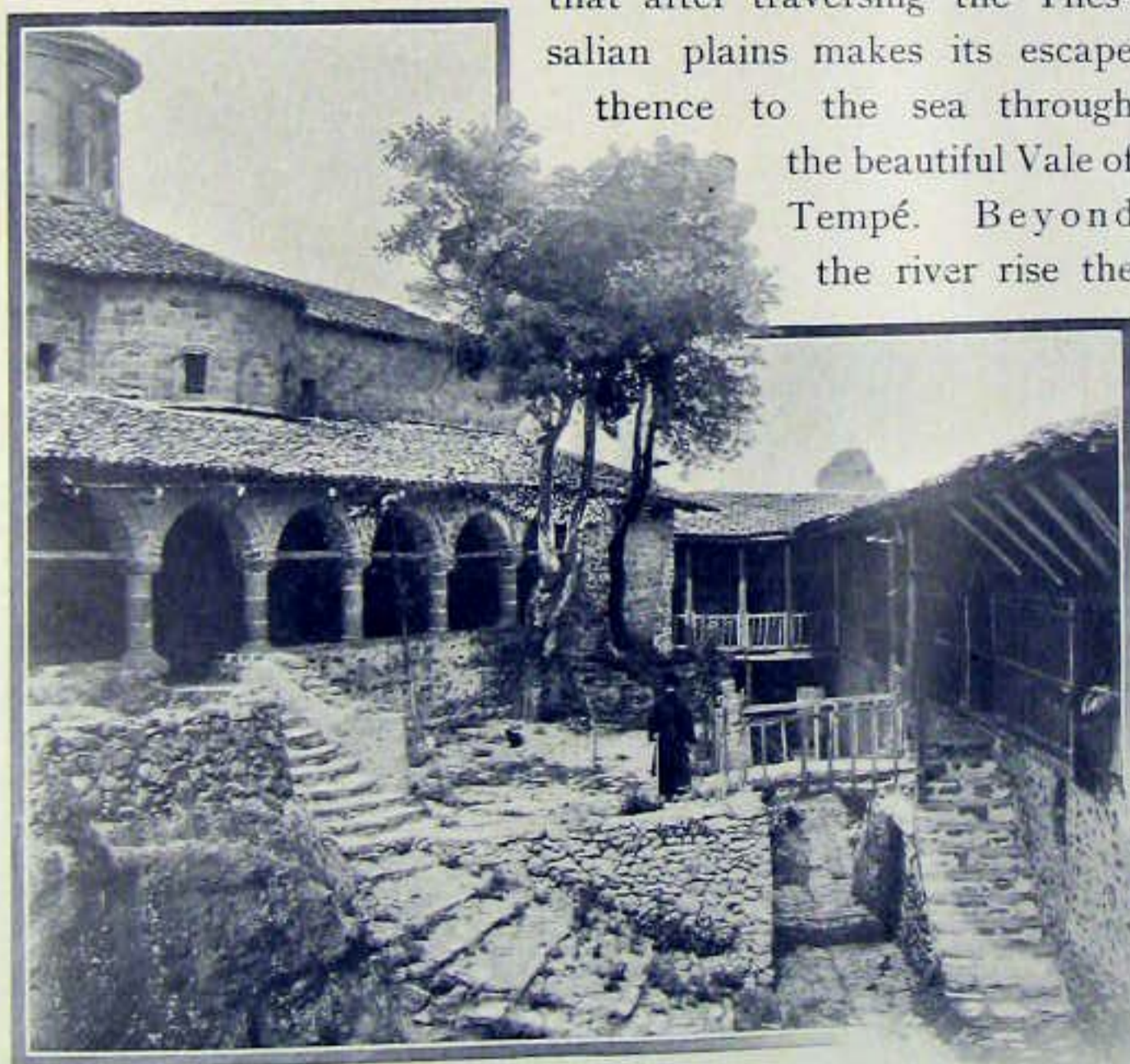
We felt indeed that we were far away from the modern world when, during the midnight services, we sat

in the dim corners of the little Byzantine chapel, about two thousand feet above the plains of Thessaly, and listened to the monotonous and meaningless chanting of the black-robed, bearded priests, and watched them make repeatedly that rapid gesture that outlines the cross, by touching the head, the body, the right breast, then the left—or falling to their knees, rising and dropping down again, as the Greek ritual demanded. The flickering candlelight, the faint glimmer of silver lamps hanging before the golden icons, the uncomprehended chant, the long black shadows that swayed mysteriously on roof or walls, where they were confounded with frescoed saints,—all these things conspire to remove us from to-day's world, and produce an impression of medievalism and of a remoteness that is both of time and of space.

Our home-life in the monastery was as delightful as our surroundings were unique and strange. We were served by the indispensable Papadopoulos, who by his ministrations

smoothed out the roughness of the accommodations as skillfully as Gregorio our cook shielded us from the horrors of the Greek cuisine. A little neophyte, the only one St. Stephens' now possesses, a boy too poor even to buy the garb of his class, is appointed by the Abbot to minister to us in the name of the church; but I fear that we were more impressed by the size of his red shoes than by the fact that he stood in them as the representative of the Orthodox faith. On the wall hung pictures of the King and Queen; the window commanded a view full of variety and wonder. Below is the village of Kalabaka, beyond it fields and vineyards, formerly belonging to the monks; then comes a band of silver, the river familiar to the readers of ancient history as the Peneus — to-day the Salamvrias. It is the same stream

that after traversing the Thessalian plains makes its escape thence to the sea through the beautiful Vale of Tempé. Beyond the river rise the



IN THE COURTYARD

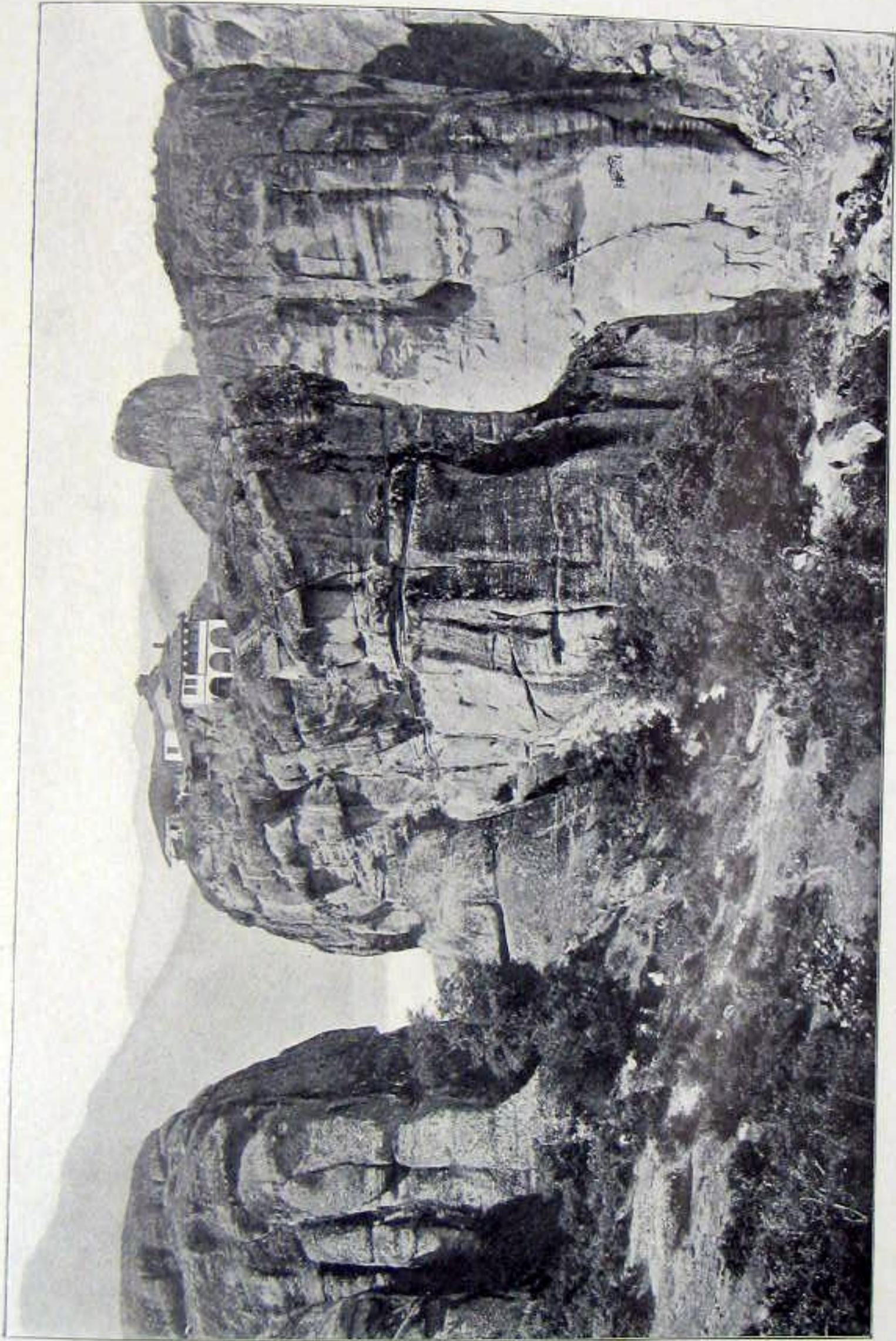
Pindus Mountains, the highest peak almost eight thousand feet above the sea. Beyond this range of mountains lies the province of Epirus, the inhabitants of which are Greeks but which is ruled by the Turkish sultan.

Nearer on our right are grouped the Meteora columns, crowned by the neighboring monasteries, in situations far more startling than that of the one that has so hospitably received us. To reach the nearest of them, the "Hagia Triada," or Holy Trinity, seems at first a very simple matter. A path apparently leads from the bridge of St. Stephens' directly to the other holy habitat. We can easily trace the route we are to follow—a simple promenade will bring us in three or four minutes to our destination. We forget the scenic surprises and deceptions of the day before. The conjurer who controls this wonderland is not asleep; he is preparing a more marvelous feat of magic than any he has yet performed; and he intends to enhance the effect of his illusion by adding to it that indispensable ingredient of the successful trick—surprise. He waits until we reach the point where we think that the path turns sharply to the right,

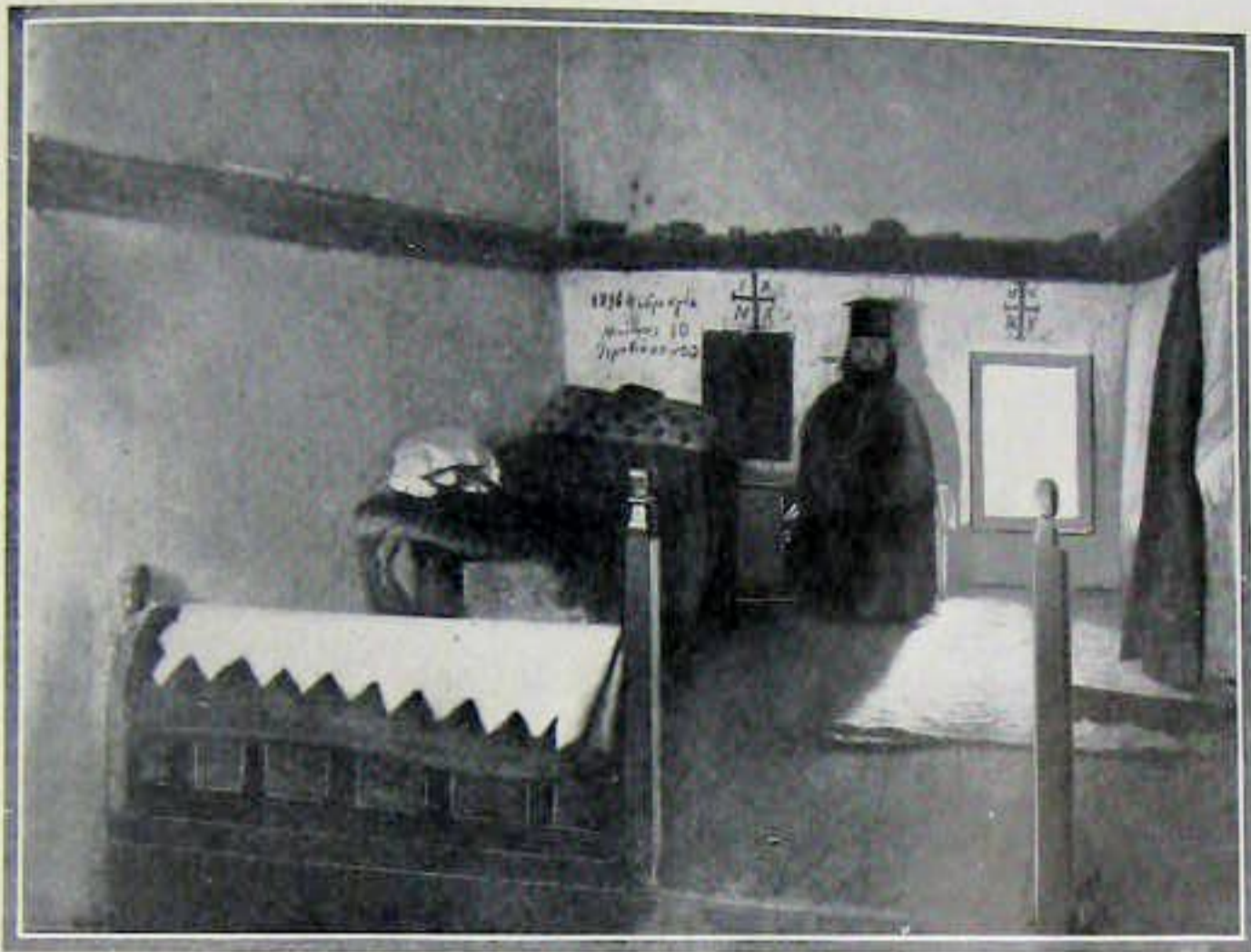


CHEERLESS CORRIDORS

then—presto! change! begone! Surely the scene is changed; there is no path; a gulf has opened at our feet, across which was the monastery of the



ANOTHER ASPECT OF HAGIA TRIADA

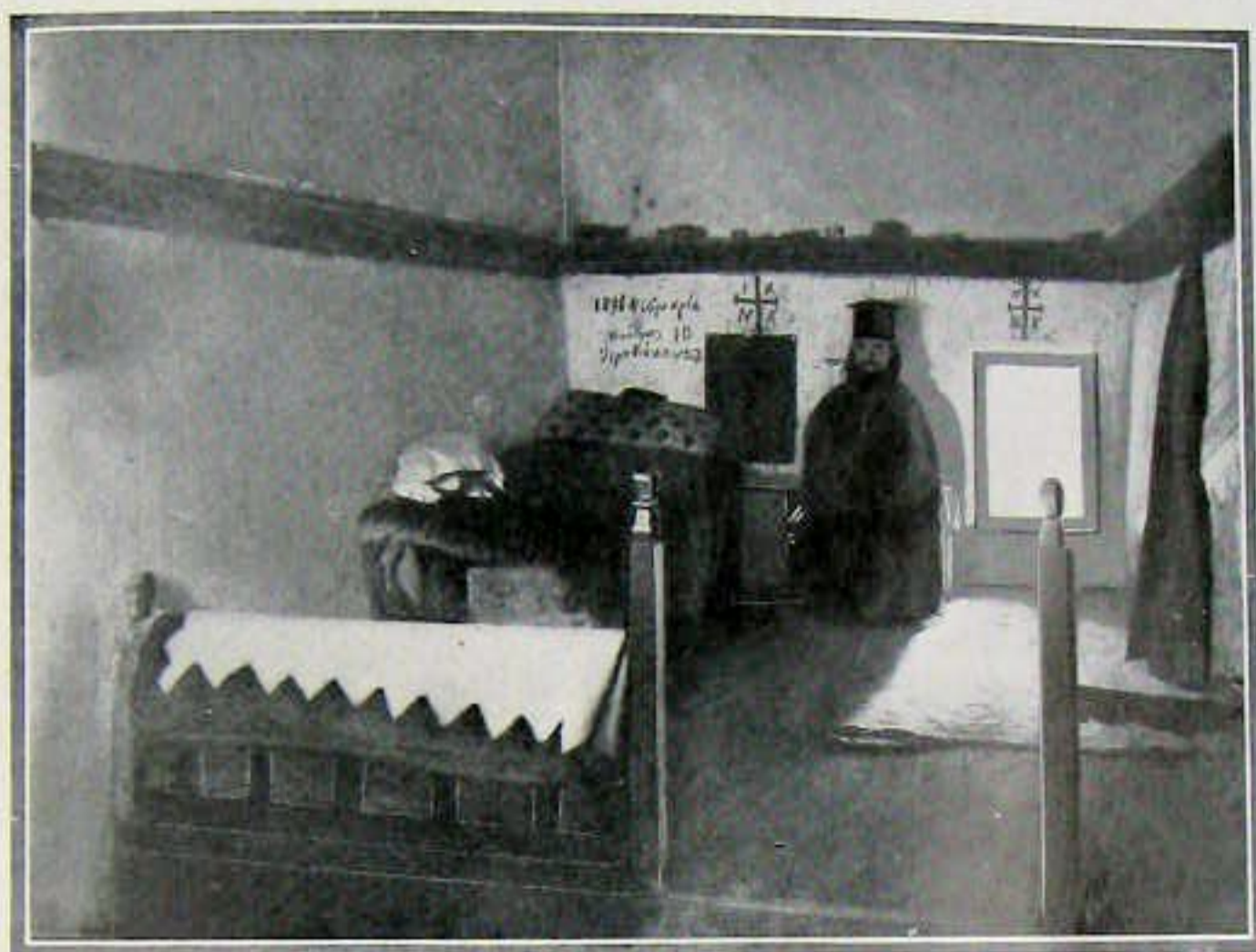


A CELL

Holy Trinity, and about two acres of its surrounding land drifting off into space. From the brink of an unsuspected abyss we gaze speechless with amazement at the unattainable monastery, throned on its pillar of rock, isolated, mysterious, impossible.

Then mounting our mules we wind down a steep, rough trail, halting several times to enjoy the striking views of Hagia Triada, as they are one by one revealed. We cannot explain to ourselves how we could ever have mistaken yonder sky-island for a part of the mainland. We are almost ready to believe that these rocks, like the cliffs in a spectacular stage production, are mounted on rollers and capable of being moved about at will.

At last we find ourselves at the base of a pyramid of rock that rises between the column of Hagia Triada and the cliff. Gazing up, we discover a projecting platform whence a rope is dangling,—a rope that we have come



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many miles to see; for it is the rope by means of which visitors are hoisted from the bottom of the cliff to the monastery "landing-stage" there on high. A moment later the rope tautens, and a huge bundle of firewood goes swinging aloft; for this Meteora "elevator" is used for freight as well as passengers. Impatiently we wait our turn, but alas! in answer to our shouts, the monks above toss down in harsh phrases the disappointing information that passenger traffic is for the present interrupted because of the age and insecurity of the famous rope. They firmly refuse to take the risk of lifting human weights, but cordially invite us to walk upstairs to their aerial sanctuary. Stairs there are; we had not noticed them at first,— a flight



ONE OF SEVEN MONKS

of rickety wooden steps, steep as a ladder, leading to a narrow ledge fifty feet above. The ledge runs upward to the right, then ends abruptly; above it rises to meet the sky a sheer smooth wall of solid rock.

We hesitate before we begin this steep ascent, but when Papadopoulos tells us



COMFORTLESS QUARTERS

that it is the only isolated monastery to which women will be admitted, the courageous ladies of our party resolve to reach the top at any cost, and we of course must needs follow. Accordingly we walk up-stairs and find ourselves upon the narrow ledge, where the overhanging rocks force us to advance sideways, bracing ourselves against a flimsy barrier without which, however, a promenade like this would not be possible for those whose heads grow dizzy. The Pindus Mountains and the River Peneus form the background of our view; the plain is far below, the villages too near the bases of the cliffs to be discernible from here.

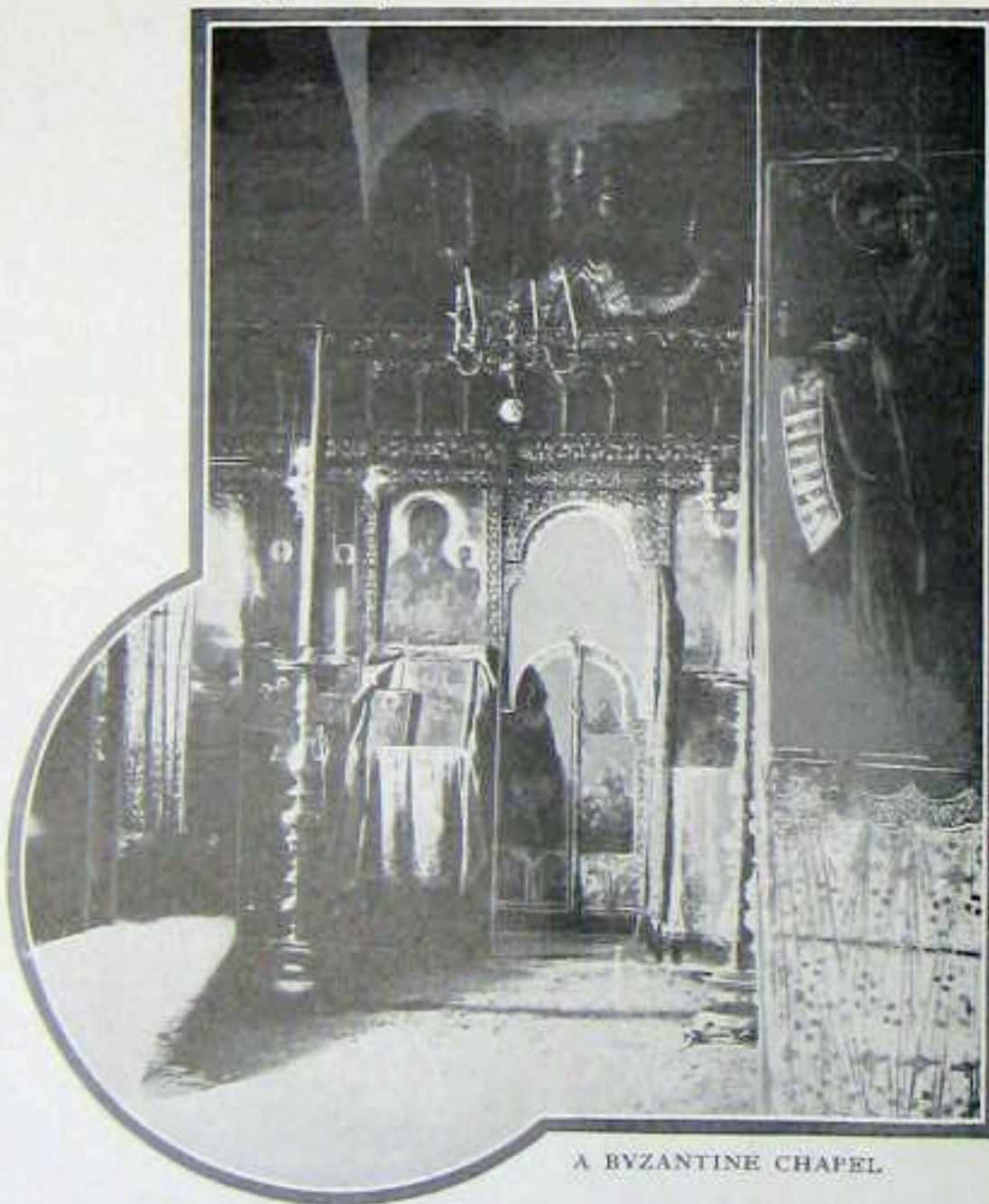
Advancing slowly, the barrier creaking with old age and weakness every time we put our hands upon it, we reach the upper end of the steeply ascending ledge. Here, as I have said, the path vanishes. But a little ladder leads to the left into a deep chimney-like fissure in the rock. The rest of the ascent is made in almost utter darkness, and

therefore the most difficult portion of the climb cannot be illustrated. Mounting that little ladder, one of the ladies disappears through an iron trap-door and finds herself at the bottom of a natural fissure, triangular, with two sides of rock, while the third is of boards, shutting out the light and concealing the vertiginous vistas, and thereby making the ascent less terrifying to the timid.

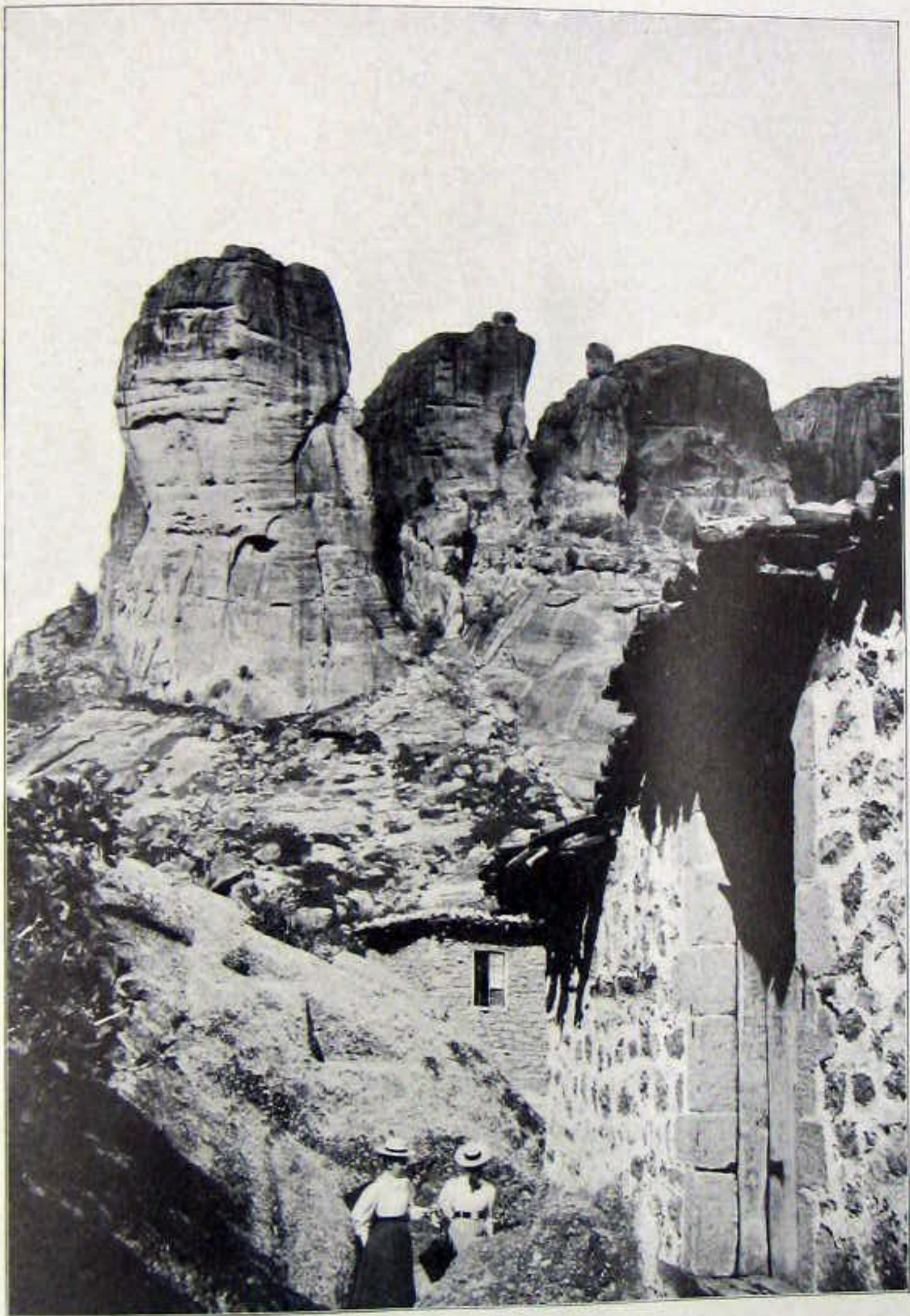
Through another trap-door at the top of this well-like hole, a monk peers down upon the would-be visitor and bids her climb to him, up a shaky, swaying ladder—not a rope-ladder, but a rough wooden ladder made up of numberless short sections, hinged together in a manner obviously insecure. So close is the ladder to the walls that a firm foothold is impossible, and the creaking and the swaying of it as the daring pilgrim climbs would disconcert a sailor accustomed to fighting storms in the rigging of a ship. But the words,

“Oh, I'm all right!” are dropped reassuringly, until at last the creaking ceases, and we know that she is safe and sound above. One by one we follow, not disdaining the rope, which, lowered to us by the thoughtful monks, we tie around the waist.

And thus it was that the American pilgrims arrived at the Convent of the Holy Trinity. A final short climb to the monas-



A BYZANTINE CHAPEL.



TOWERS OF REFUGE

tery proper now ensues, and soon we are being entertained by the Higoumenos, who regales us with preserved fruits, pure native wine, and the Thessalian substitute for the Athenian's favorite mastica, a very similar white distillation known as "ouso." We visit the chapel and make the customary and expected offerings. Then we inspect the crude hoisting-machinery in the "elevator" tower and congratulate ourselves that we are not compelled to trust to it for the descent. The Abbot then takes us for a stroll in his two-acre garden on the summit, where with a smile he tells us that the annual crop of rocks is the only certain one. Then in a tone of resignation he adds that his convent has but five



WHERE MIDNIGHT PRAYERS ARE SAID



OUR REFECTORY

inmates; although it once had ten times that number. Greek monks, like those of the Catholic faith, are pledged to celibacy, but this is not true of the Orthodox priests. Greek priests who are not monks or bishops may lawfully marry, but when one of them is raised to the rank of bishop, he must put away his wife, who usually enters a convent and becomes a nun. Our visit finished, the Higooumenos accompanies us down to the village, and as we pick our way around the base of the huge rock-column on which his monastery stands, he details some of the tenets of the Greek orthodox religion. First, the Greek church does not recognize the Pope of Rome as the supreme head of the spiritual

world. It will not admit the power of direct absolution. Confession is made only to elected elders, more in the form of confidential conversation. It rejects the doctrine of purgatory. It administers bread dipped in wine and water, instead of bread alone, and, the last and most apparent distinction, it prohibits the use of images or statues as religious symbols, lest in the minds of the ignorant they be received as idols. But this distinction does not prevent the icons or sacred pictures from becoming the objects of much devotion, the people kissing them with eager reverence and often with tearful passion. Still discussing Greek orthodoxy, we presently find ourselves in the village streets whence our party observes that the pinnacle of the Holy Trinity convent appears in still another and startlingly different aspect.

Before parting from the holy man we ask the three questions that must inevitably arise in the mind of every traveler, who sees the Meteora.

When were these monasteries founded? How did the first monks reach those summits? Why did they elect to dwell in the midst of this rocky desolation? Vaguely runs the story that in the fourteenth century, Greek hermits in seeking solitude came hither to dwell in the little



AN ICON

caves near the bases of the cliffs. Nature there provided habitations; the holy men, in some way, scrambled up, closed the cave entrances with wooden walls, and constructed crude-jointed ladders which gave access to their lofty retreats, or at will could be drawn up, to insure complete isolation.

But in those days hermit-hunting was a fashionable pursuit; the poor saints found that they were as much hated



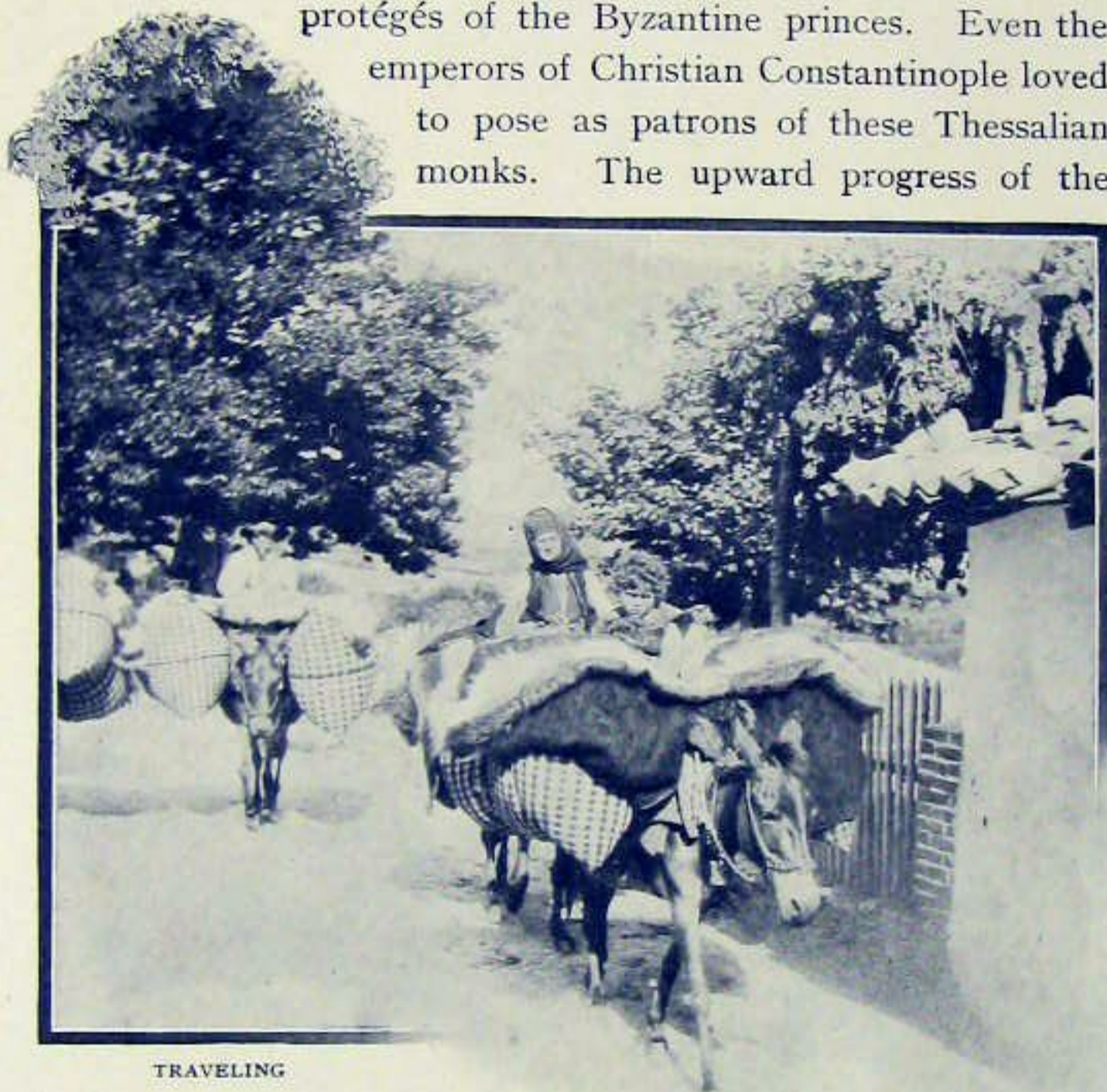
THE PENEUS AND PINDUS RANGE

and maltreated by the warlike lords of the province, as they were respected and kindly treated by the superstitious peasantry. Their caves were too well within the reach of their persecutors, among whom the Turks were to be numbered a few generations later. The pressing need of greater security drove them slowly skyward; from cave to cave they ascended, ever spreading the network of swinging wooden ladders. The



DESERTED DWELLINGS

sense of a common danger created a feeling of brotherhood. Gradually fraternities were formed. The hermits ceased to be hermits and became monks. Later the growing religious enthusiasm of the age transformed these hunted beings into protégés of the Byzantine princes. Even the emperors of Christian Constantinople loved to pose as patrons of these Thessalian monks. The upward progress of the



TRAVELING

brotherhoods in importance and power was coincident with that physical elevation of themselves and their romantic structures. The monks reached the zenith of their wealth and influence simultaneously with the arrival of their monasteries on the very highest altitudes attainable on the Meteora summits.

The primitive cliff-dwellings are now and long have been deserted; the ladders have decayed, sections of them have



A PEASANT AND HIS PET

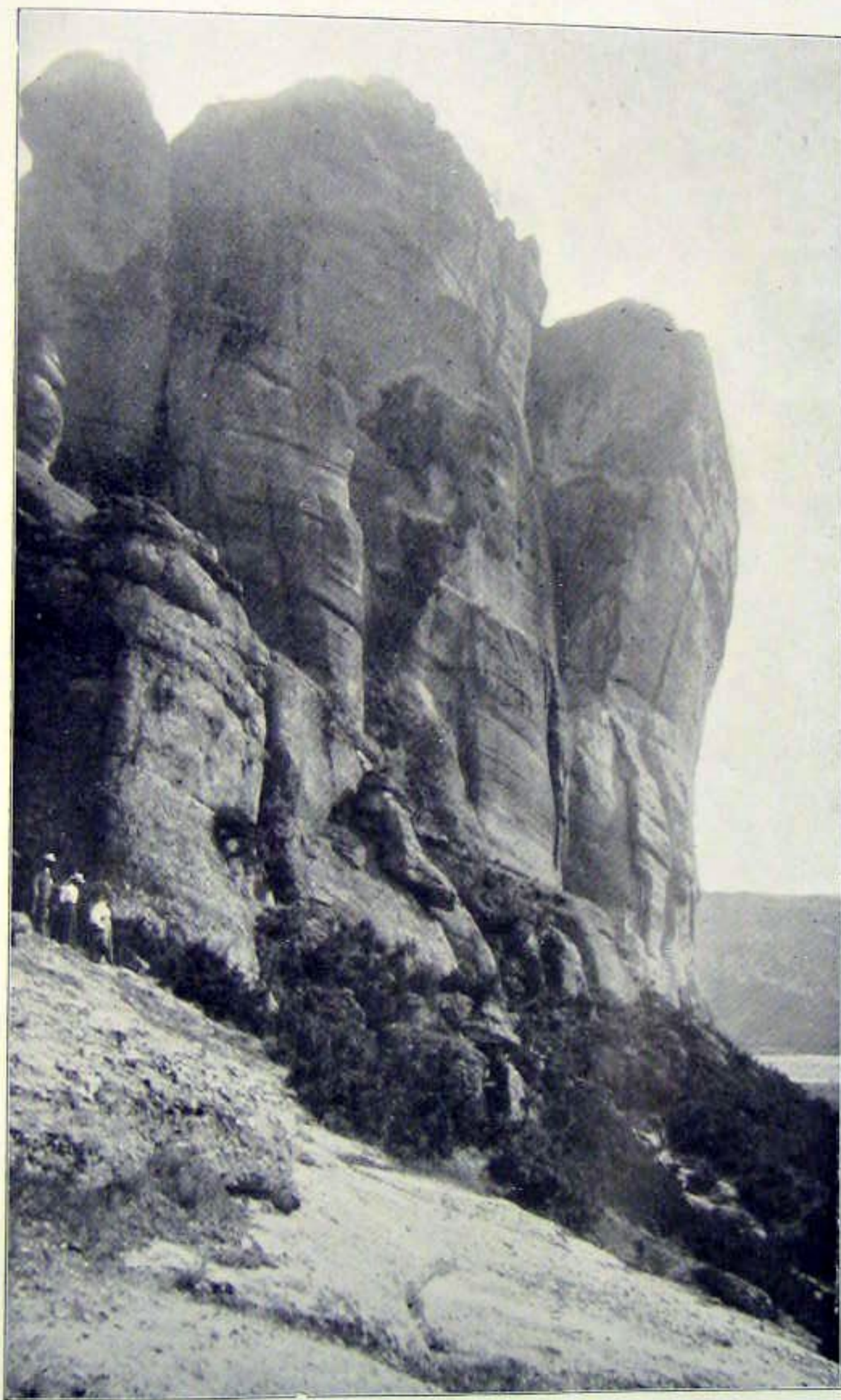
fallen, and the upper caves are inaccessible. Modest cave-dwellings were innumerable, and at one time there were as many as twenty-four monasteries, each one lavishly endowed and enthroned on an isolated crag.

The geological formation

tion favored the plans

of those early seekers after solitude. The cliffs are composed of gray and yellow conglomerate and of limestone. The ages have been silently at work carving this soft material into all sorts of fantastic forms and in hollowing recesses.

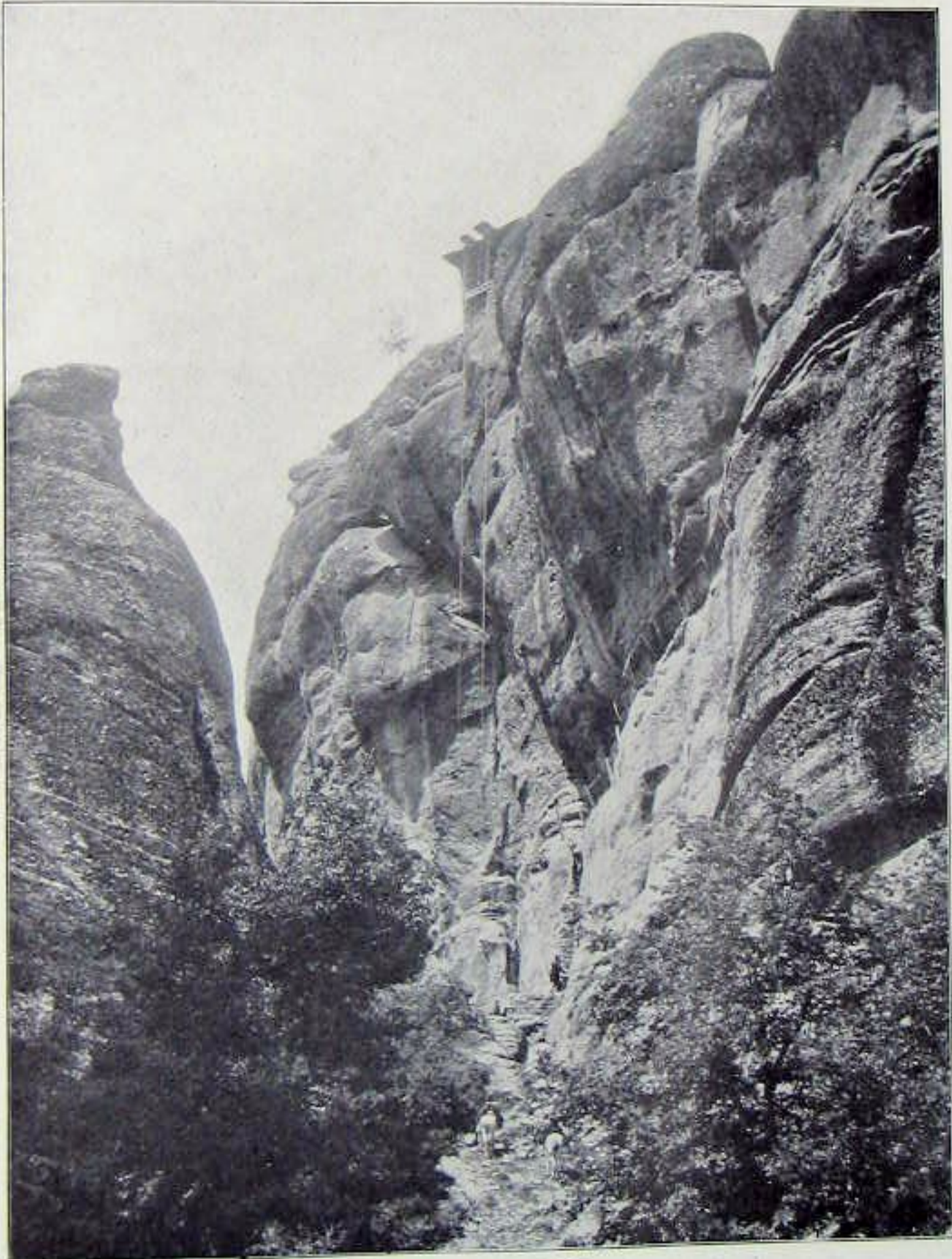
The waters of the great lake that once filled the basin that now is Thessaly, began the work; rivers constantly decreasing in volume continued it; the rains and torrents then achieved the delicate detail, and the winds have added to these sculptured mountains the polish of their passing, and as a result of all this erosion by water, wind, and weather, cliff has been separated from cliff, gulfs deep as mountains have been opened, pillars and columns and pinnacles have been formed until we are tempted to believe the



LEANING TOWERS OF THESSALY

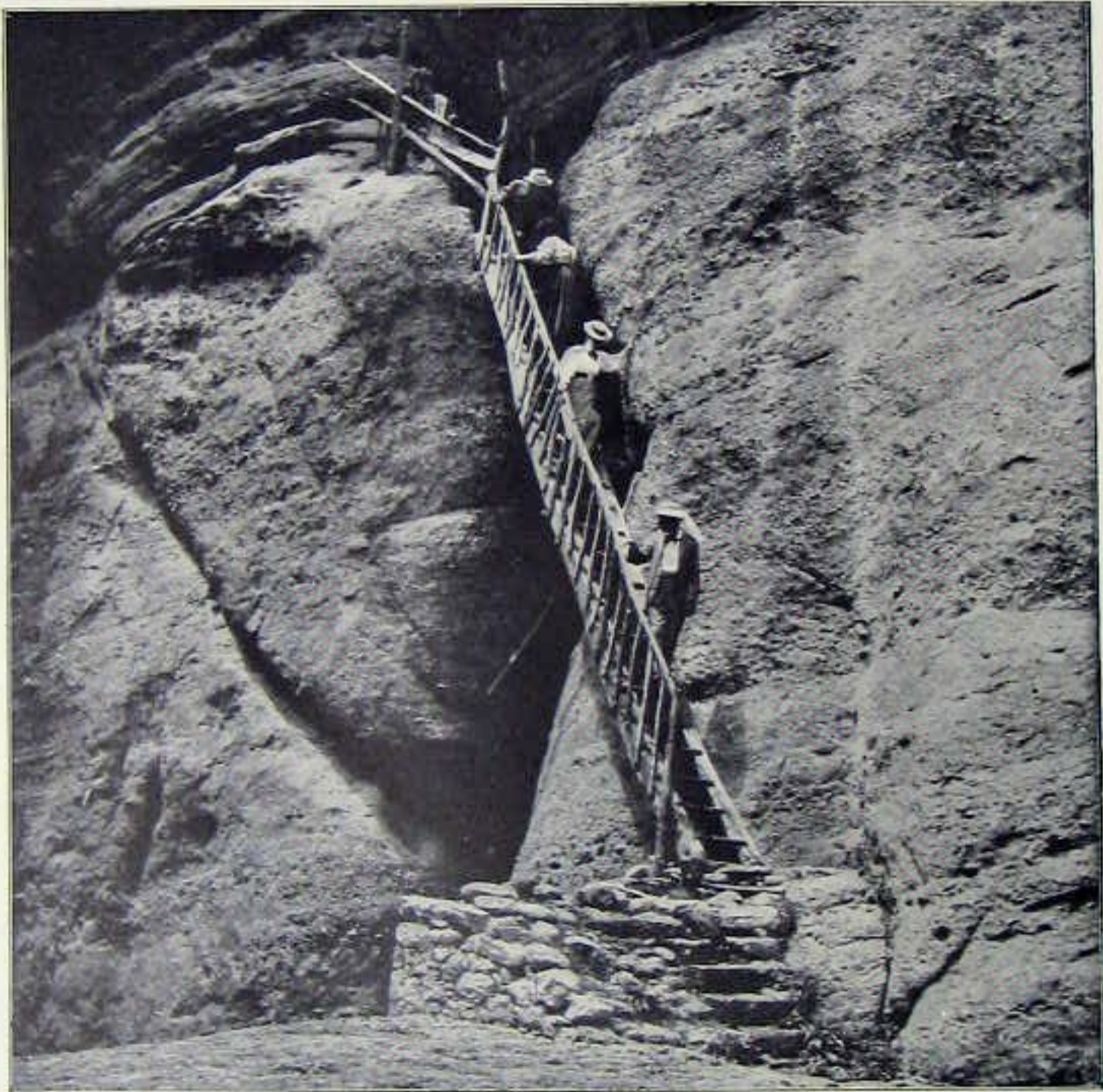
monkish legend, which tells that God in his mercy purposely created this unique and forbidding solitude as a refuge in the days of peril and persecution for the holy men whose only wish was to serve and worship Him in peace.

We halted in the course of our wandering through this sacred, half-forgotten realm, below one monastery, strangely



AT THE BOTTOM

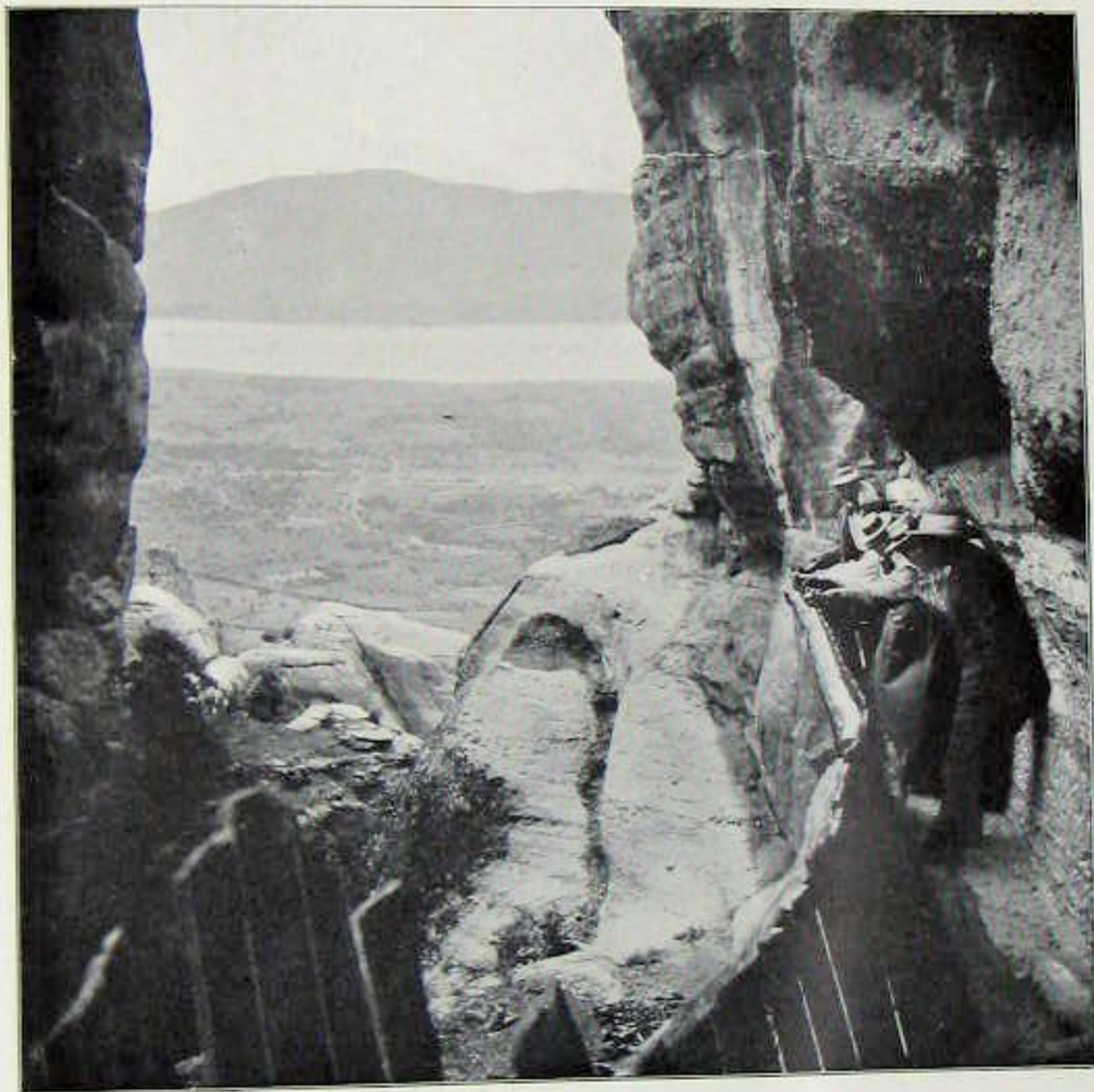
unlike the rest. It was half cave, half balcony, and utterly abandoned. No voice replied to our salute; no ladder was lowered in hospitable intent. We merely looked and mused and recommenced our pilgrimage. Another hour's journeying on muleback and on foot, brings us beneath the shadow of an awful mass of rock, roofed by the rambling buildings of



ON THE STAIRS

a larger monastery that takes its name from its patron saint, Hagios Barlaam. High to the left we see the tower from which the hoisting ropes descend; lower and more to the right is a little building, from the door of which another of those long ladders composed of shaky sections has been flung into space. Although it is high-noon, the depths

between the cliffs are shadowy and dim ; in a sort of midday twilight we approach the base of the cliff, and there our guide, aided by the mule-boys, prepares to serve a picnic luncheon. We have a well-filled basket, but no fresh water has been brought; accordingly Papadopoulos assembles the Keratzes, and orders them to shout in chorus, and thus make



ON THE LEDGE

known our wants to the monks on high. The gorge re-echoes to their thirsty yells. They shout the more lustily, because if we do not get water, they will have less wine to drink, and Thessalian mule-boys or Keratzes are very fond of the strong resined wines of Greece. Meantime we spread our feast on a white cloth on the ground. Presently we are

answered by some one in the sky. A voice comes down to us like the cry of a soaring bird, and a few moments later the voice is followed by the descent of a primitive dumb-waiter, the contents of which are more eloquent than words. In addition to a pail of fresh cool water, we find in that tin



ON THE LADDER

receptacle, so generously lowered, a bottle of old monastery wine and some substantial bread.

Our vocal battery is ordered to project our thanks on high, and a broadside of Greek gratitude thunders against the cliff, rebounds from wall to wall, until, more or less shattered by contact with the rocks, it strikes the ears of our kind hosts above. While we discuss cold viands, our dragoman assures



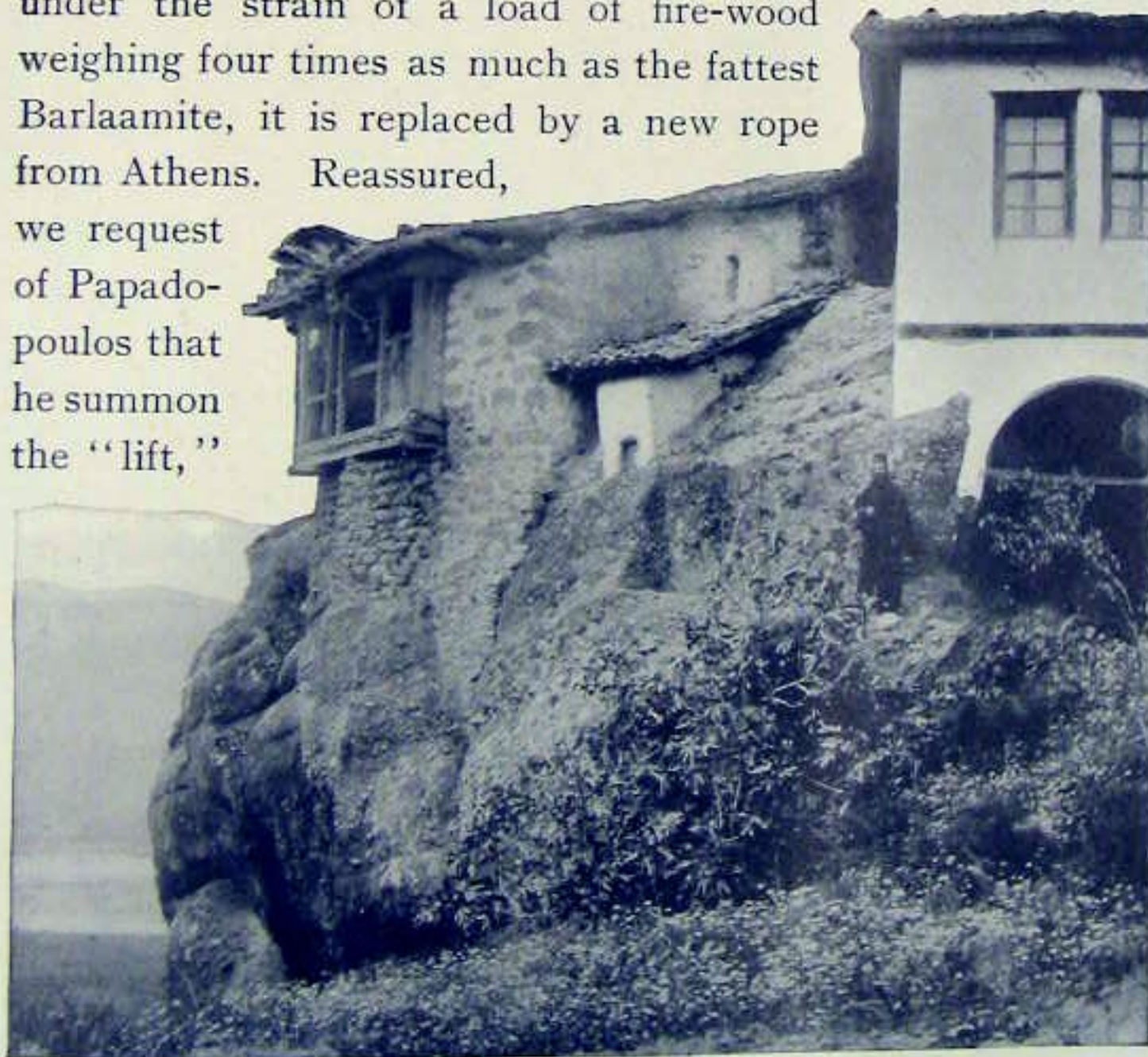
THE START



A SHEPHERD

us that the ascent to Hagios Barlaam may be made by the traditional rope; that here at last we may enjoy the hair-raising experience of being hoisted in a net up to a monkish eyrie. To climb the ladders, the skill and courage of a trapeze artist are required, but the ascent by rope is simple, safe, and feasible. The rope he assures us is tested frequently; if it breaks

under the strain of a load of fire-wood weighing four times as much as the fattest Barlaamite, it is replaced by a new rope from Athens. Reassured, we request of Papadopoulos that he summon the "lift,"

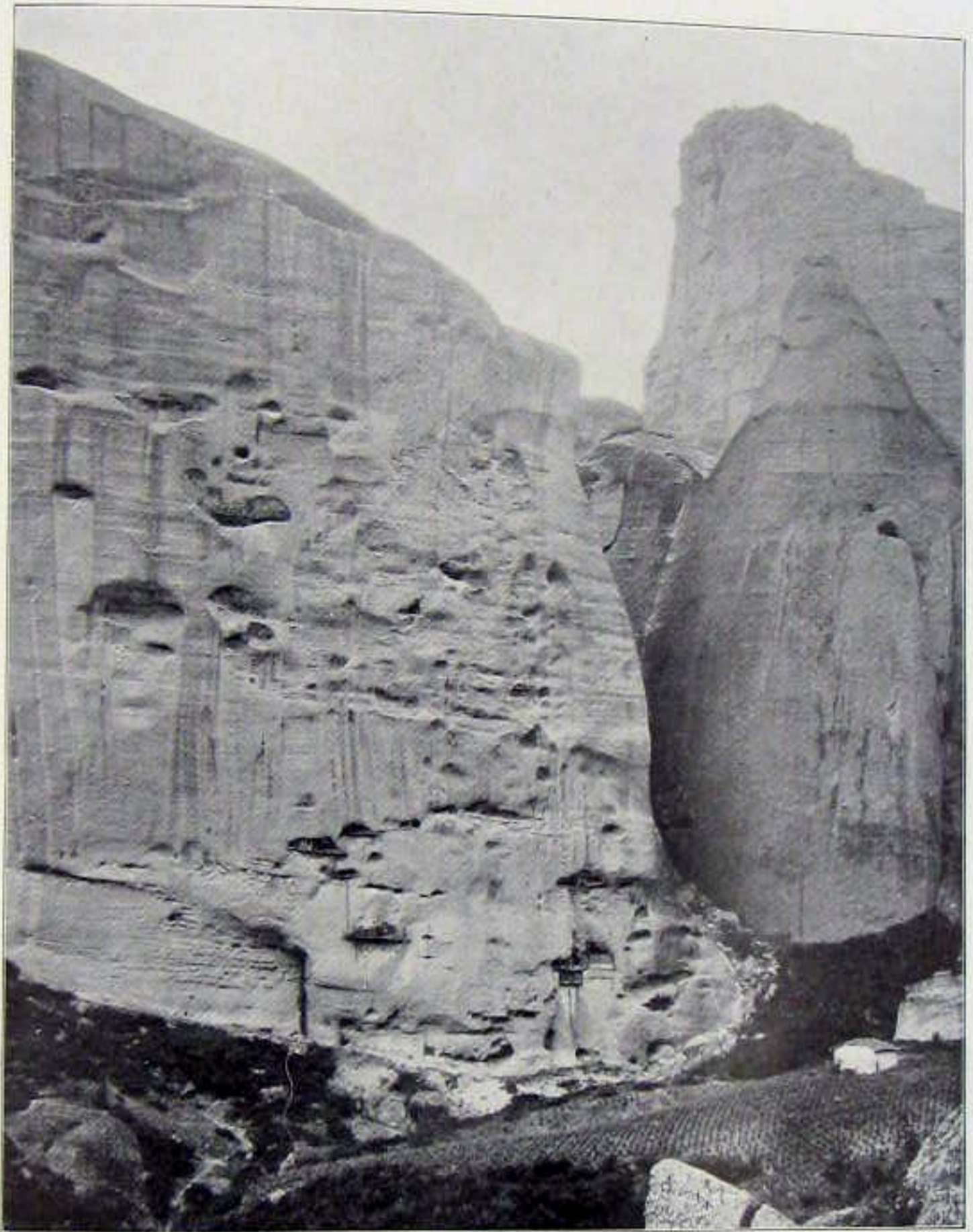


AT THE TOP

and again the lungs of our attendants wake the echoes; this time with a demand that the Meteora elevator be sent down. A moment later what appears to be a gigantic spider slowly lowers itself by a single filature; it is an empty net hooked to the end of a two-inch rope that is being paid out by the monks above. At last it dangles within reach. Our men, seizing the net, spread it on the ground, lay a small rug in the middle of it, and beg the two passengers to seat themselves upon the rug. Two disappointed women, barred from the trip, by a monastic rule, watch us with much envy as the guides gather up



LIKE A CAMEL KNEELING



THE CAVES IN THE CLIFF

the edges of the net, assemble them above our heads, and pass the loops over the big iron hook that dangles at the rope's end, like an inverted interrogation point, marking the all-absorbing question, "What if the rope should break?"

Oh, the creepy feeling of that moment of departure! First, the net about us tightens, our knees are pressed in and up, our elbows firmly pinned to our sides, then our two

heads are forced together with a crack, then our bodies begin to sag, and mine sags more than the other fellow's. The pressure of the earth has ceased; there comes a sense of lightness, of cramped airiness; then we begin to turn, round and round, slowly at first, then faster, then we sway to and fro. The earth drops gradually away; the voices of our



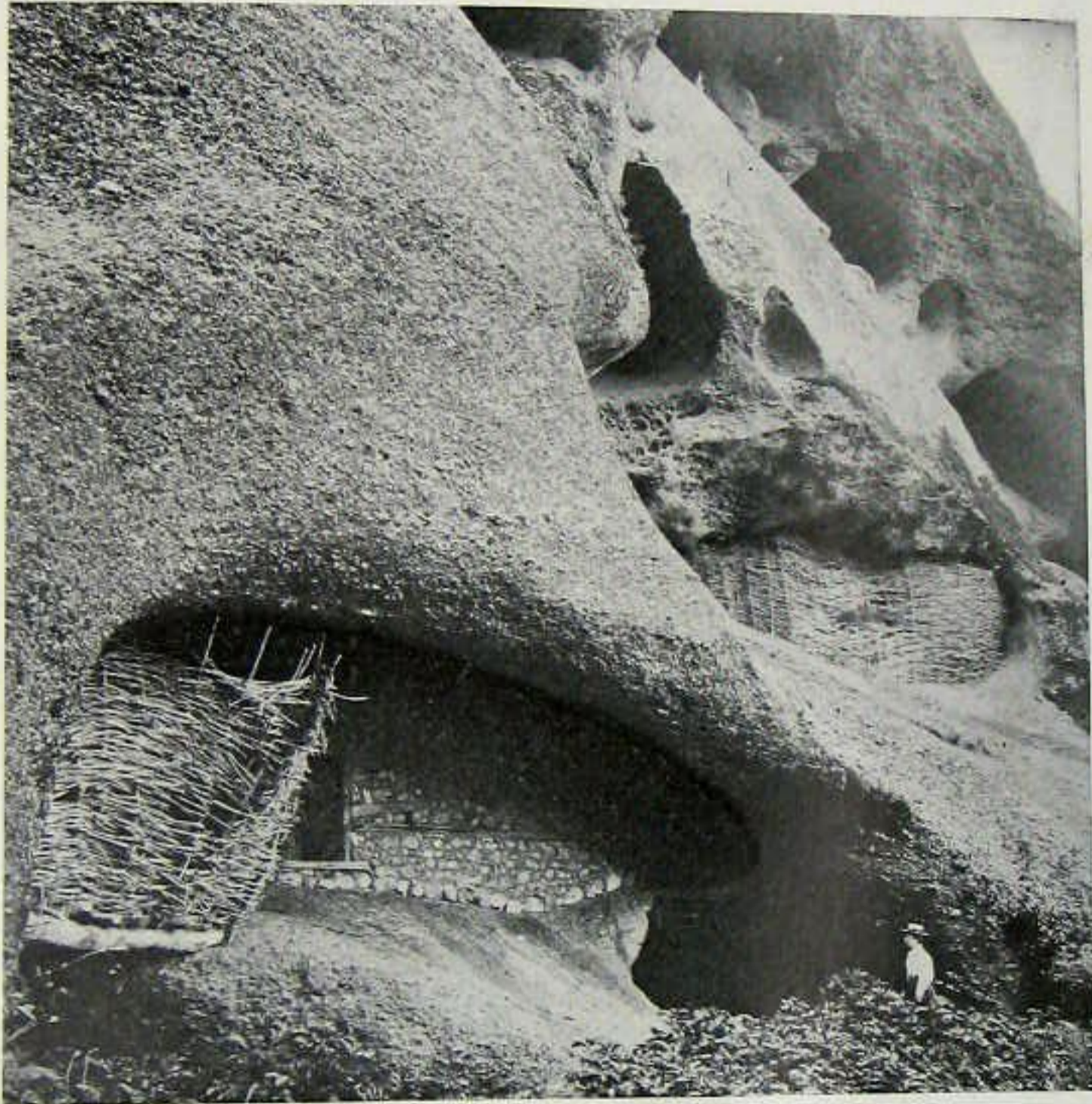
HOMES OF HERMITS

friends grow fainter; and at this point we close our eyes. When we re-open them, we experience a peculiar illusion. We are stationary; the rocky walls are sliding slowly downward, like a background in a transformation scene. Then the cliffs begin to sway. One mass of rock, fifty feet away, advances threateningly, until we can nearly touch its rough



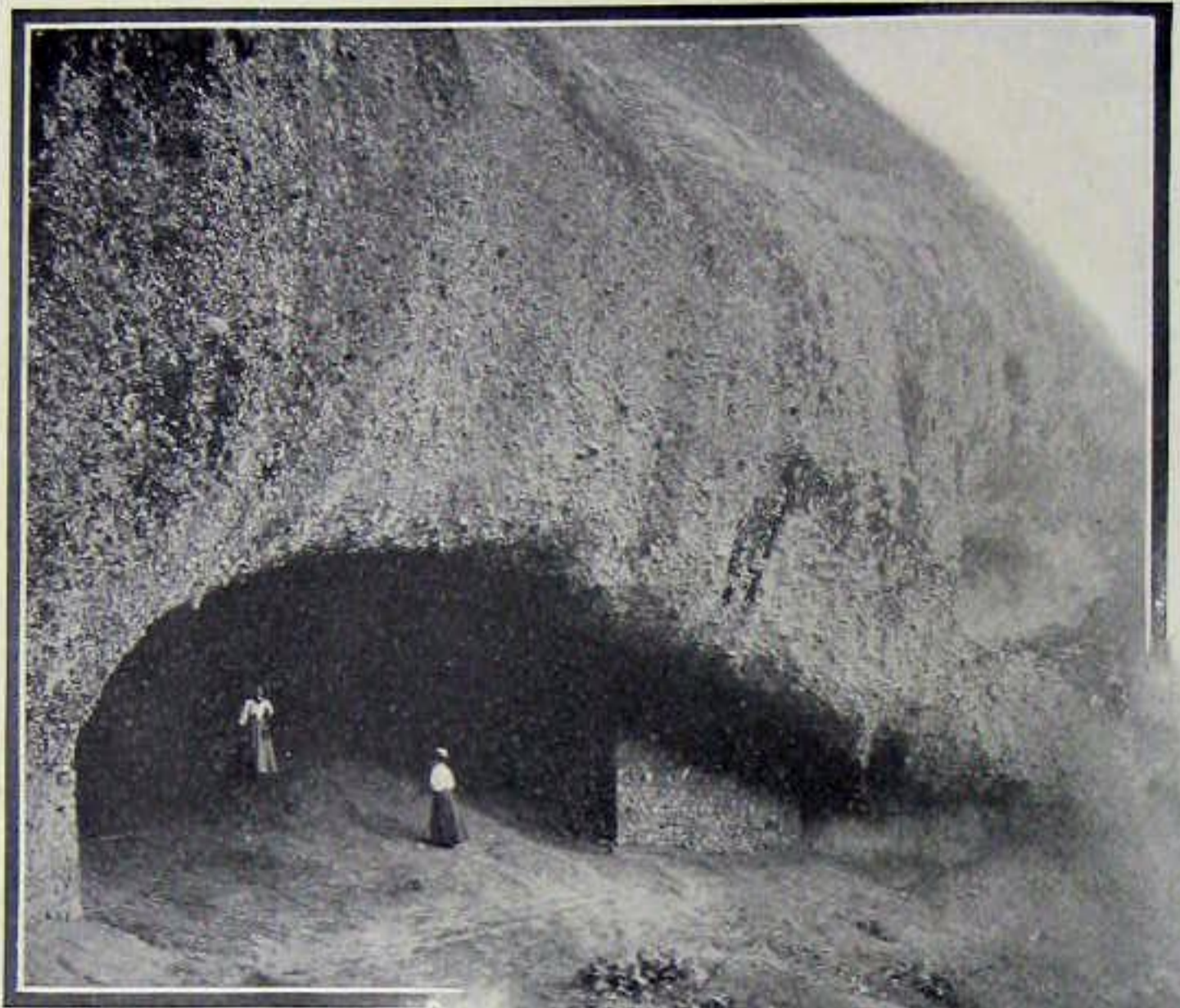
LOOKING DOWN AT THE ASCENDING NET

surface, then it falls back again. We cannot believe that we are going up; the world instead is going down and down and down, and the cliffs are dancing round about us like storm-clouds in the arms of the wind. The only movement of which we are conscious is a gentle elastic jerking, as we go bobbing, turning, swinging skyward. The rope above is



THE AGES HAVE BEEN AT WORK

undulating like a long yellow snake but looks no shorter than it did before we started. The ascent is interminably slow—minutes that seem like hours pass before we reach the level of the foundations of the tower. We can almost count the strata of masonry, as jerk by jerk, our net is lifted. We feel like miserable fish, and never have fish been farther out of



A YAWNING MOUNTAIN

water. It costs an effort to look up or down, so tightly are we pinioned by the meshes of the encircling net.

Below, to the right, we see the upper end of the chain of ladders disappearing through a little door. As we mount, the meshes of the net are drawn tighter and tighter at every revolution. Now and then, as the net adjusts itself to some new strain, the knots slip suddenly, and the slipping of every knot gives us a tremor of horrified expectancy. Finally we begin to hear the creaking of a windlass, and the unsteady tread of the old monks, who in the tower there above are resignedly circling round and round, pushing long poles fixed to a crude sort of winch, every revolution of which brings us

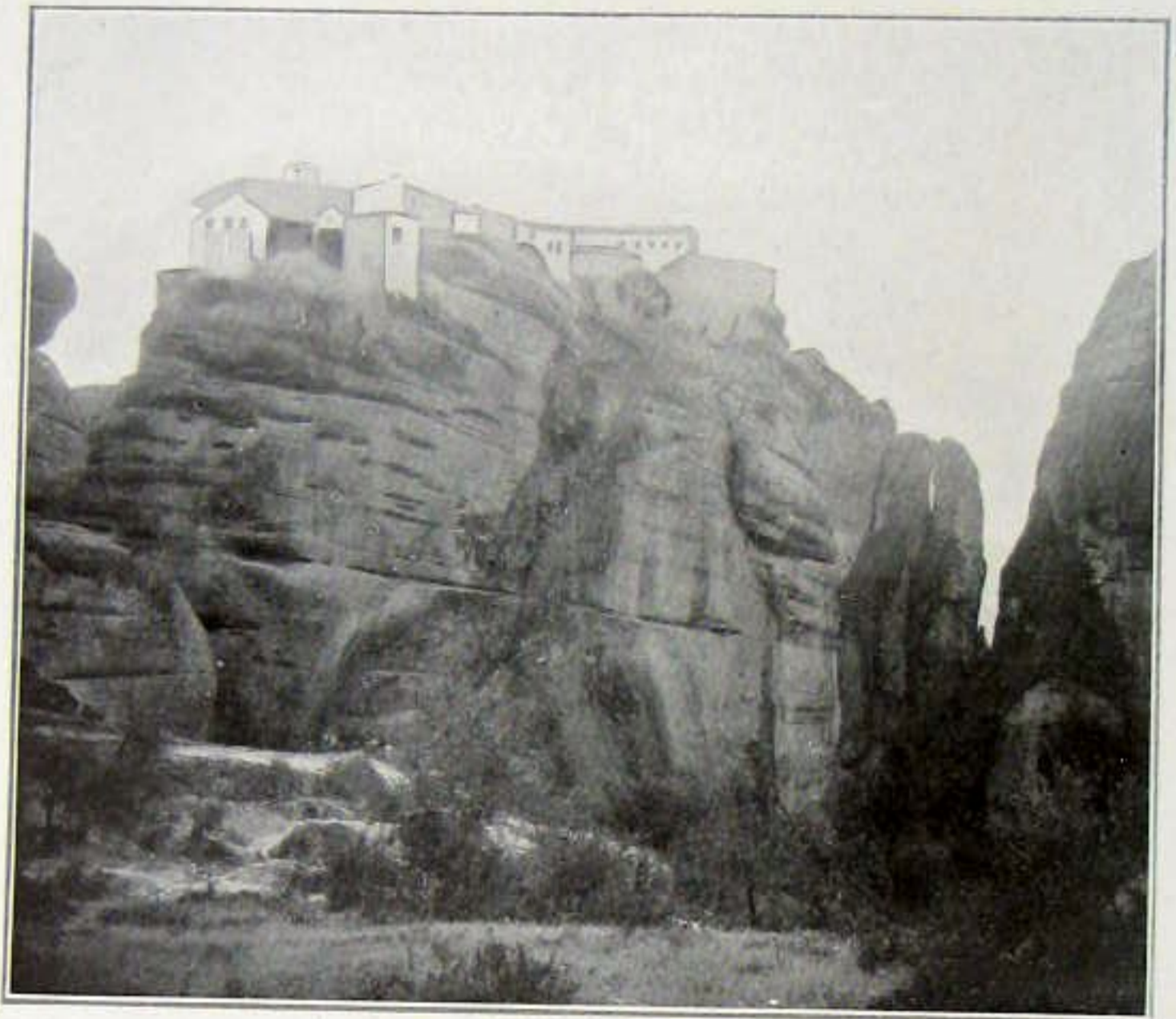
nearer to the landing-place. Let them but withdraw their poles, release the windlass—we can see it spin like a big top—a hundred of revolutions to the second, and we can imagine the downward flight of the net with its human contents. Verily we shall not neglect the admonition of our guide to drop a generous contribution into the coffers of the



GULFS DEEP AS MOUNTAINS ARE HIGH

church! The thought that these same monks are to control the machinery during our descent, predisposes us to make liberal donations.

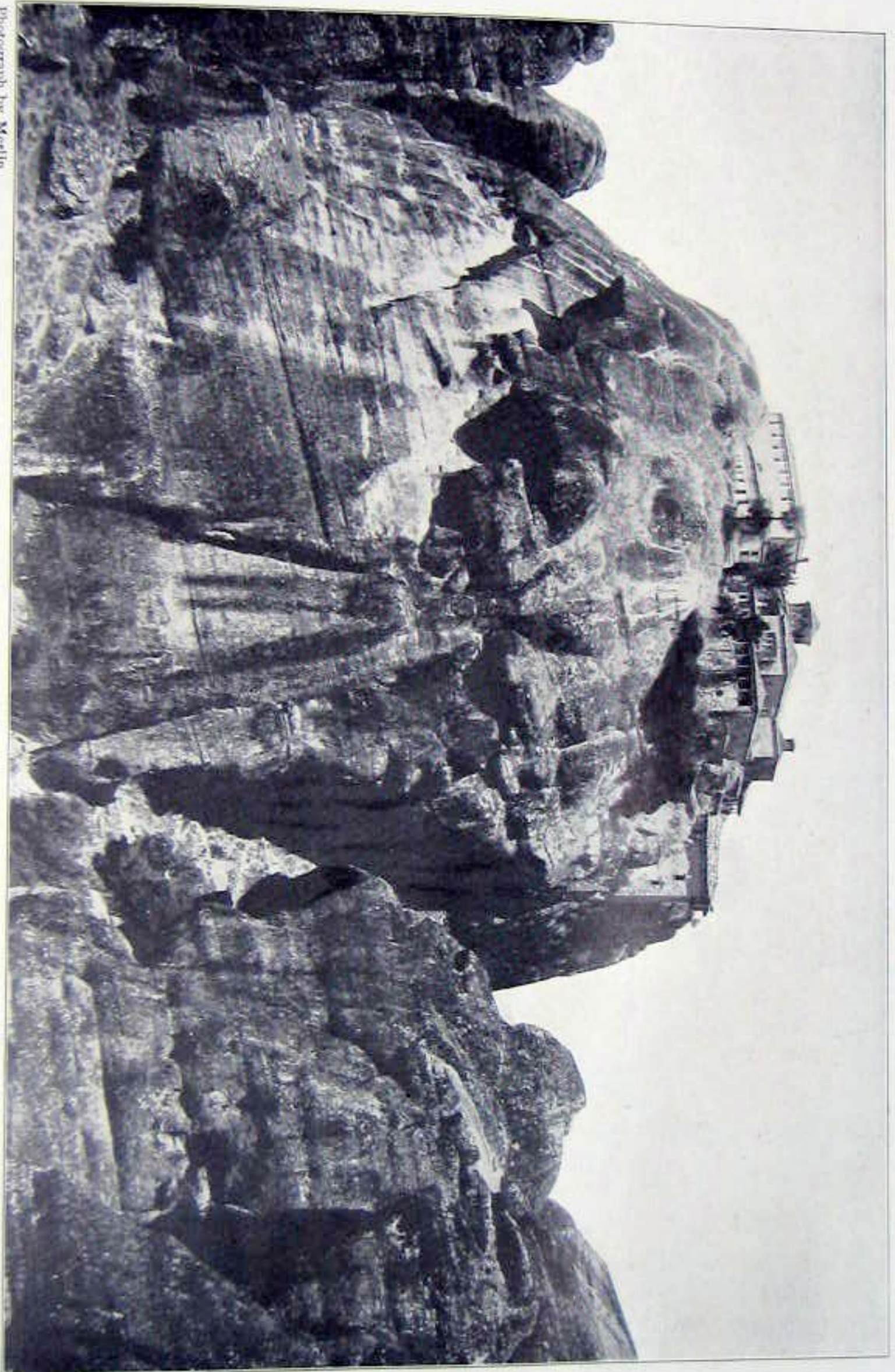
Safely arrived, our first thought is for our interpreter, who is to follow us as soon as the net is lowered for a second time. Let us advance to yonder railing, lean over it, and look



HAGIOS BARLAAM



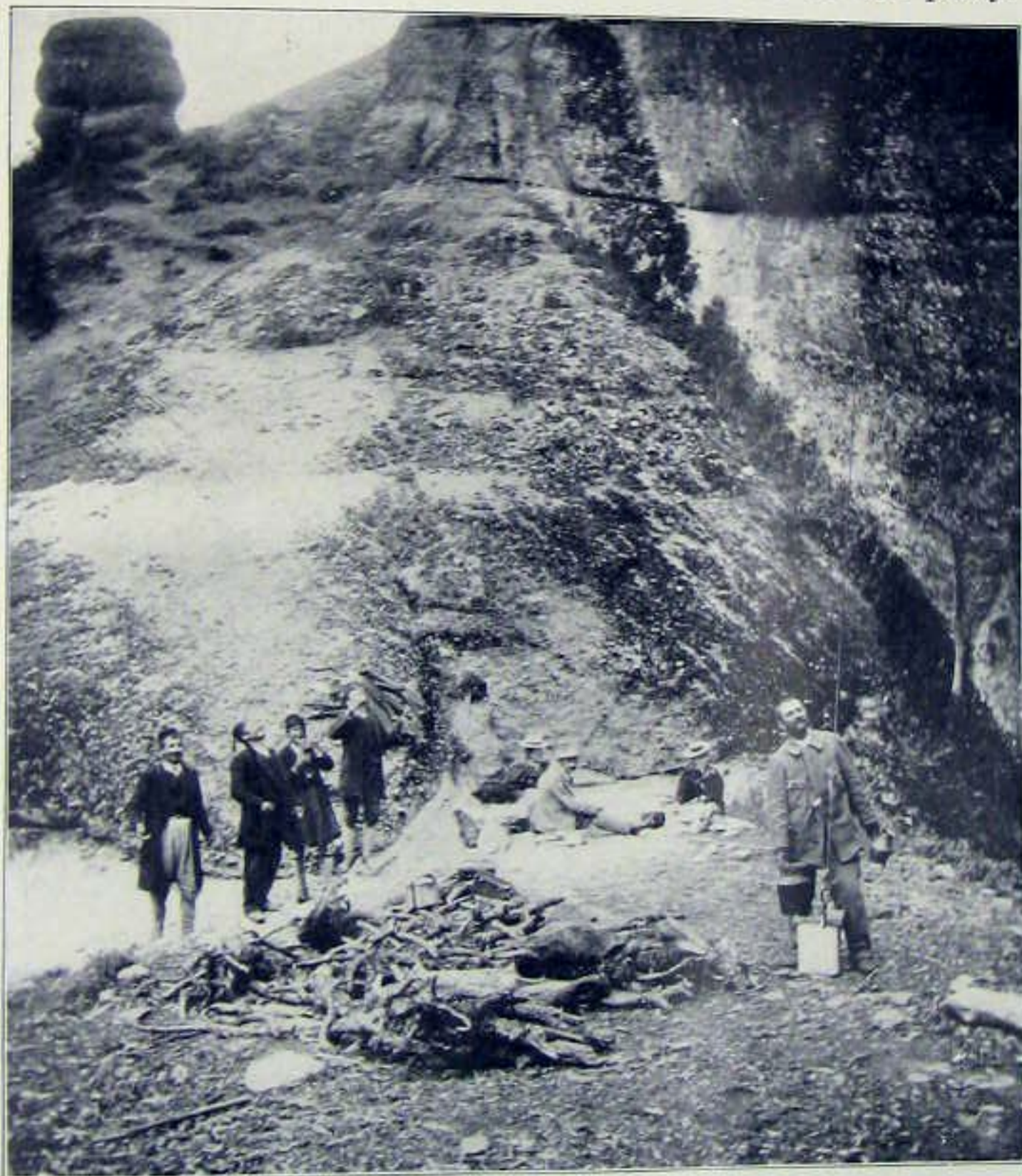
OUR VOCAL ANNUNCIATORS



Photograph by Meritt.

THE METEORON

directly down. If you can imagine yourselves doing so, you may be able to find some meaning in the apparently impossible illustration, made by holding the camera out over the rail, and pointing it directly toward the center of the earth. The straight line is the rope; at its end we see the net, in which our guide is being drawn up. Below, the ground is seen as if represented on a painted map or plan. The white rectangle is our tablecloth, on which our luncheon was spread. A round light spot above it is the top of a straw hat on the head of one of the ladies of our party.



DESCENT OF THE DUMB-WAITER

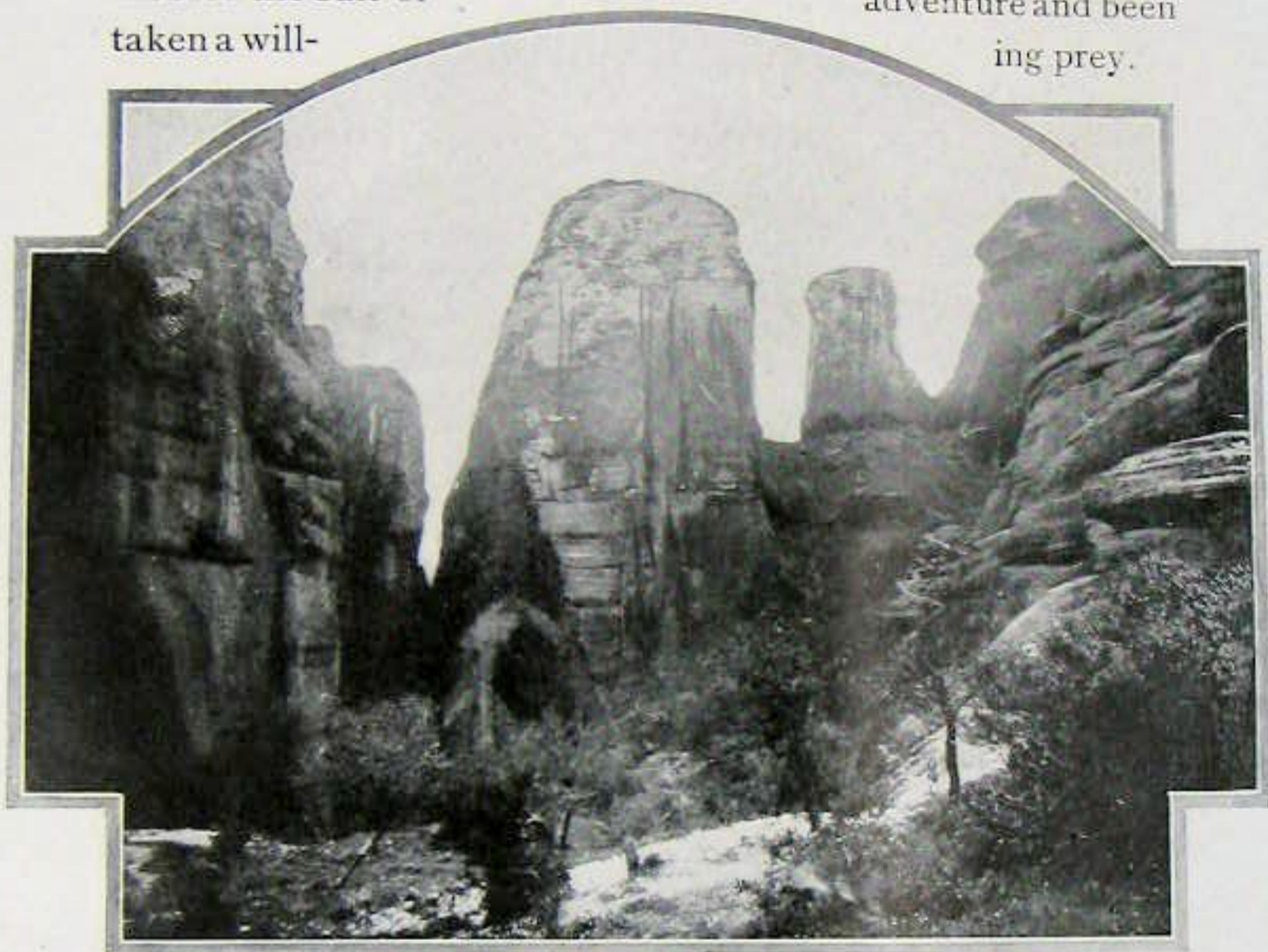


HALF-WAY UP



THE HOISTING "MACHINERY"

Meantime the windlass creaks and the old monks pant until the form of Mr. Papadopoulos is silhouetted at the landing window. Then bony hands reach out, grasp the meshes, haul in the net, and liberate the human fish which has nibbled the bait of adventure and been taken a will-
ing prey.



PILLARS, PINNACLES, AND PALISADES

To arrive thus oneself is sufficiently trying to the nerves. To witness the arrival of another is almost terrifying and the thought of the departure—the inevitable moment of dropping off—haunts us throughout the brief hour spent in the corridors and chapels of Hagios Barlaam. We find it difficult to disabuse our minds of vague convictions that the hour is come for us to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; we feel imperatively called to a higher life; we almost resolve to pass the remainder of our days there on that Meteora cliff top, thus escaping all future temptations and—avoiding the necessity of going down again in that net!

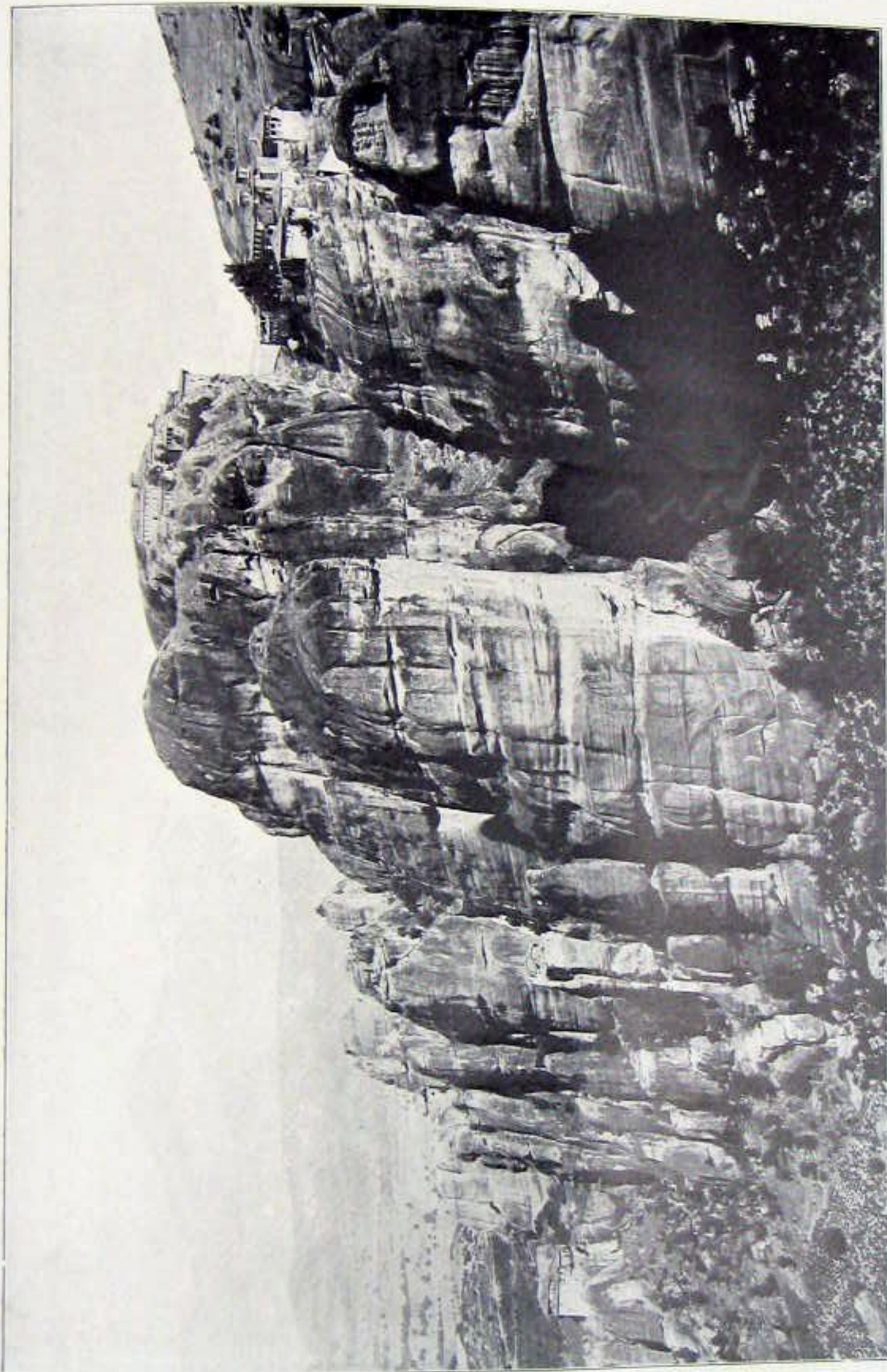


A BARLAAMITE

But down we go at last, two dizzy pilgrims in the revolving lift ; then Papadopoulos is let down in similar fashion by the deliberate monks.

Not content with this experience, we attempt to reach the monastery called the Meteoron ; but in answer to our summons, the cracked voice of an old man tosses to us from the tower, in plaintive sentences which seem to fall from the heavens, the astounding statement that there are only two monks left there in the huge buildings of the Meteoron, and that they have not strength between them to haul us to the high perched abode of desolation where they are awaiting eternity.

Greek monasticism, at least in Thessaly, is already a thing of the past. A few more visits from the Angel of



Photograph by Merlin

THE MONASTERIES IN THE AIR

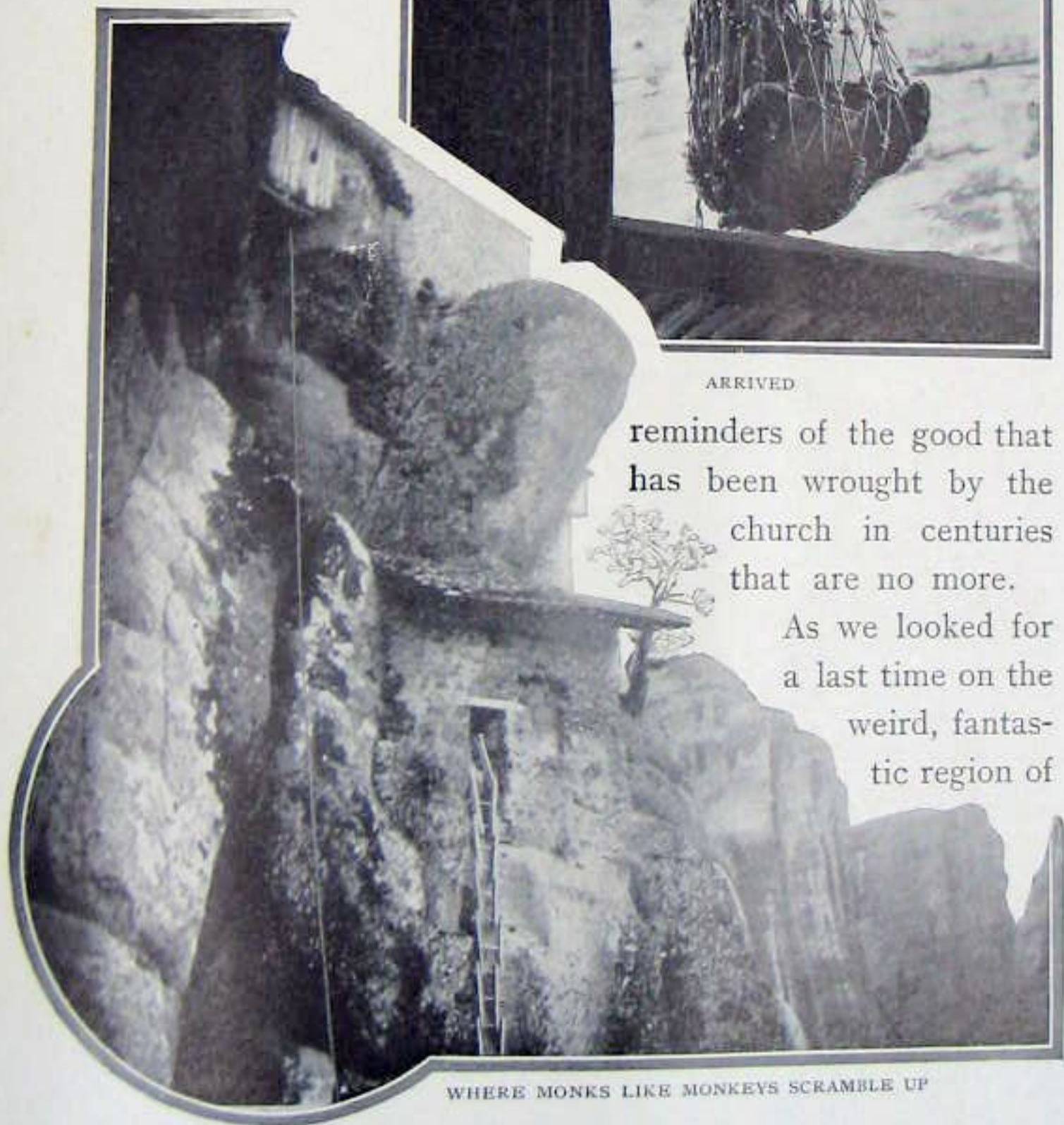
Death and these Meteora chapels will no more resound to chanted prayers. The sacred institutions having served the purpose for which they were built will pass away or will soon become mute and stately



ARRIVED

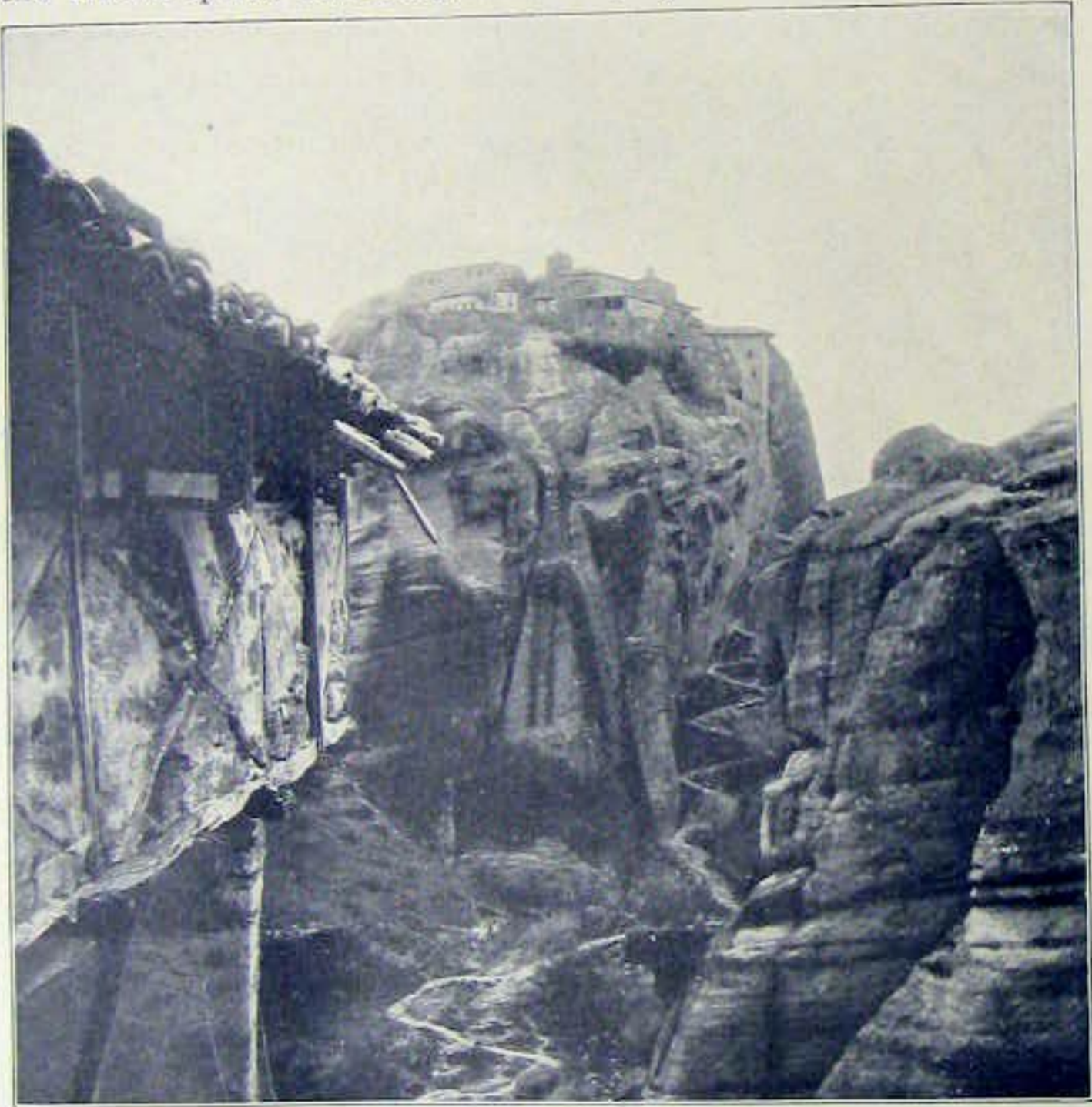
reminders of the good that has been wrought by the church in centuries that are no more.

As we looked for a last time on the weird, fantastic region of



WHERE MONKS LIKE MONKEYS SCRAMBLE UP

the Meteora, its titanic crags crowned by the crumbling fortresses of a faith destined long to survive the ruin of its mediæval strongholds, the thought came that just as the Greek faith can look with equanimity upon the loss of its lands and the slow disintegration of its temples, so can the Greek spirit, enduring as a mighty rock, look tranquilly



THE METEORON

upon the petty disasters of the present. The Greek religion is enshrined in the hearts of the Greek people; but the true Greek spirit survives not in the hearts of those who are Greek by birth, but in the hearts of all the world's great men of thought and action, men who are Greek by the divine right of mind. The real Greeks of to-day are the men who are



A WEIRD LANDSCAPE



ON THE ROOF OF THESSALY

doing the world's great work, governing our nations, building our cities, rearing our monuments, painting our pictures, writing our greatest poems and our greatest books. These are the true Greeks of the universe, animated by the true Greek spirit—the spirit that teaches men to think great thoughts and to create great things.



THE PENEUS

