

Chapter 33

EPILOGUE

THIS small and insignificant community of Asvestohorion, was founded about 350 years ago by men from Mani, Thessaly and the Pindus, all mountaineers and experienced fighters, who were employed by the Turkish Government to guard the postal service route between Duratso, Albania and Constantinople, and the aqueducts which, even today, provide Salonica with mountain water.

First were those settlers who fled here looking for asylum and help as a result of the persecution and expulsion which they experienced from their overlord, the Turk.

Then came the settlers from Agrapha in 1812-1818, also pure and patriotic Greeks who were pursued by Ali-Pasha. They were responsible, in large measure, for the cultural development of the first settlers because of the morals and traditions which they brought with them; the professions which they taught them; and the change in dress from that which was common at that time in the hometown, resulting in simpler and better clothing.

The first settlers did not spend their time in agriculture because of a lack of good tillable soil. The cultivation of the land was restricted to a few families, as is the case today.

Most people turned to the production of lime, but this was restricted often to few workers, and its sale in Salonica in the beginning was not profitable, and the proceeds were not sufficient to employ all the inhabitants.

Very few lime merchants lived a comfortable life; most workers and shippers could only earn a mere living.

There was, unfortunately, much competition and a complete absence of a cooperative spirit.

Thus was born the tendency to emigrate, and we see these emigrants living abroad in other European countries for a year or more.

Abroad and wherever people of Asvestohorion are found, they work honorably and harmoniously, accommodating themselves with the living conditions and the laws of the country in which they live, being entirely law-abiding, and avoiding quarrels and strife.

The man of Asvestohorion who wanders about in other parts of the country and even abroad, never forgets his roots.

He returns to it in a better economic state and with pride so that those who knew him as a poor and insignificant person will marvel at him. He returns bringing with him, besides gold, which he amassed abroad with sweat and frugality, gaiety and joy to his family, and the habits and customs foreign to those of his hometown, which he tries to impose on his hometown in order to create a similar environment with the one he lived abroad. He founded and is still establishing Societies and organizations with broad purposes for the spiritual development of its members toward the progress of the hometown.

The activity which Asvestohorion developed is not to be seen in any of the neighboring communities.

The migration of the inhabitants, the vacationing families, the frequent outings here on the way to the neighboring forest (Kouri), and the various societies which have been founded exert their influence on the character and tradition of the inhabitants of Asvestohorion in whom they imbued nobility and hospitality, but also progress in education, notably mathematics, medicine and the sciences.

Asvestohorion did not lag in the area of the intellectualism. Many of its noble children attained, during various periods, either at their own expense, or through scholarships, higher

education at our own schools and colleges, and abroad, and donated their services willingly to the community.

In all these endeavors many of our noble women folk took part, serving our fatherland and society in many ways.

This is Asvestohorion, which still has many shortcomings in meeting the challenges of the new conditions of life.

However, all of the above contributors and producers and especially the various leaders and rulers who were aided by the various societies and organizations, should have as their objective the evolution of our fatherland, Asvestohorion, and its progress and social advancement.

With their noble acts, let them make Asvestohorion a great summer resort and a joyful and renowned vacation place for all seasons for all lovers of the outdoors and the countryside, and let them continue to provide assistance to the economic conditions of its inhabitants.

END OF BOOK ONE