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Psichari was the author; and between that and the last—from the pen of Mr. Ephtalotis—many novels, stories, and plays have been published. At present the Church and the Minister of Education are the chief hindrances to a reversion to common-sense and to what is, indeed, a far purer Greek than the polyglot hotch-potch of the newspapers; and even their obstinacy must in the end yield to the deadly ridicule of Psichari and his comrades.

In the numerous ranks of Liverpool authors one of the cleverest and most engaging is almost quite unknown to Liverpool readers. The fault is not his, nor are the public to be accused of want of appreciation, for the writer in question, Mr. Ephtalotis is a Greek gentleman who writes his books in the modern Greek language, and publishes them in Athens. Mr. Ephtalotis has written many songs and stories, and a few of the latter done into English by Mr. Rouse, of Rugby, under the title, "Tales from the Isles of Greece," were discussed in these columns some years ago. There has just issued from the press in Athens the first volume of a more ambitious work by this author, entitled "Historia tes Romiosunes," a history of the Romanic people. The work should be welcomed by the countrymen of Mr. Ephtalotis, as modern Greek, we believe, is not particularly rich in native historical literature. The present volume covers the period from 87 B.C. to 600 A.D., a period about which ordinary English readers owe most of their knowledge to Gibbon. In several respects Mr. Ephtalotis's book offers striking contrasts to Gibbon's. The English writer treats the subject as a period of Roman history, the Greek very naturally, and, we think, with more scientific accuracy, handles it as a period in the history of the Greek people. From Sylla to Constantine Roman and Greek affairs were closely intertwined, but after the establishment of the Eastern capital, according to Mr. Ephtalotis, purely Greek history begins again. It was a Greek speaking people over which the Eastern Emperors ruled; Greek speedily became the official language, and the Emperor Julian even boasted that he could not speak Latin. Gibbon, a Greek critic shrewdly observes, makes the same mistake as would an English historian who, discussing the period from William the Conqueror to Charles I., should regard it as an episode in the history of the Normans. Little more than three hundred octavo pages of Greek type is a small space into which to crowd the incidents of a period so eventful, and students of Gibbon may find this new history somewhat sketchy; but Mr. Ephtalotis has selected his materials with artistic skill, and presents them with really remarkable vividness. The book has an extraneous interest which will secure for it a place in the remembrance of all who care about Hellenic affairs. It is perhaps known to few English readers that a curious literary battle is raging at the present moment in Greece. For the past two thousand years Greece, like the Rome of Augustus, has had two languages, the popular or natural spoken tongue, and the literary or artificial written dialect. English scholars, who as a rule know nothing about the one, and very little about the other—your thorough-going classic will fight shy of the Greek Testament lest it should corrupt his Attic ear—dismiss both as barbarous jargons. Of late years powerful ecclesiastical, official, and academic classes in Greece appear to have come to the same conclusion, and there has been a great reversion towards the classic idiom. Books, magazines, and newspapers are written, and public speeches are made in a dialect which the writers suppose, and sometimes claim to be more Attic than the Greek of the New Testament. Modern Greek, however, like English and French, is an analytical language, and not even the zeal of the purists has been able to restore the ancient syntactical forms. Consequently the purifying process has been chiefly a matter of vocabulary. It is as though Englishmen were to resolve always in common speech to call a horse a horse, and always in writing to call it a steed. This duplication of terms has been carried out so completely that two separate and distinct languages now exist, and the inconveniences and absurdities of such a state of affairs are manifold. A mother, speaking to her child, uses the demotic dialect; writing to him she must use the purified language. A Deputy in the Chamber is obliged to read his speeches, lest by accident the natural words of his every-day talk should escape from his lips. There is a touch of almost Gilbertian irony in the fact that the interruptions are always in demotic words. When the deputies grow excited they have no time to remember literary words. During recent years a band of Greek men of letters, headed by a learned professor of Greek in Paris, the son-in-law of Renan, Mr. Psichari, have devoted their lives to ridiculing the follies and denouncing the mischievousness of the purists. To this body of earnest and sensible men Mr. Ephtalotis belongs. His history is dedicated to M. Psichari, and in his dedicatory chapter he states that his principal object in publishing the book is to demonstrate that the Greek vernacular is capable of expressing every kind of thought. The experiment was a bold one, but the perfect ease, lucidity, and vividness of the author's style fully justify it. Mr. Ephtalotis, like his wise associates, is proud of his beautiful mother tongue, and believes that the principal cause of the dryness of the fount of literature in Greece for nearly two thousand years has been the neglect of the vulgar language during that period. The first branch of literature to free itself from the fetters of spurious classicism was poetry. The most affected purist could not deny the haunting beauty of the folk songs and ballads which the Greek people sang on the sea and on the summits of Olympus. These, through collections and translations, are becoming known in France and Germany, and even in England, where medieval methods of education still flourish, a few selected translations have been published. The late Professor Blackie, one of the few men in this country who have learned the language, confessed that the ballads of neither Scotland nor Germany surpassed in beauty those of Greece. And since even the purists have admitted the impossibility of writing poetry in their artificial dialect, a succession of fine poets has appeared in Greece. Among these, Salomos is prominent, his "Ode to Liberty" being regarded by good critics as one of the finest lyrics in any language. Psichari and his friends are anxious to do for prose what has already been done for poetry. The first book written in vulgar prose appeared so recently as 1833, and

I.B.M.

Εφταλιώτης