

Chapter 20

CLIMATE OF ASVESTOHORION

ASVESTOHORION has many natural benefits; a dry, healthy climate at a height of 350 meters above sea level with very little humidity in winter and summer.

The fog occasionally seen there is not heavy as it is in Salonica. This is the reason Asvestohorion was named "The lungs of Salonica" where each year, beginning in May, many families from Salonica, as well as from other areas, vacation for 2 to 3 months, enjoying the gifts of nature and the extraordinary climate.

Even with the many shortages and insufficient housing, as well as vacation centers, the numbers of vacationers increases each year because of the proximity of Asvestohorion to Salonica.

The government's Sanatorium, which has existed since 1920, is located at the northeastern section of Asvestohorion and has helped many people.

There is no endemic disease in Asvestohorion. Its inhabitants, are basically healthy and sound. However, some Asvestohorites were subjected to the extremely tiring and continuous work at the lime-producing plants and at the stone quarries. Others did heavy work abroad and existed in bad living conditions during their long stay far from their fam-

ilies. These conditions resulted in somewhat poor health among some people of Asvestohorion.

Some of the repatriates from Roumania even brought home many contagious, social diseases, even that of syphilis. Fortunately, this occurred in isolated cases.

The many cases of tuberculosis observed in the area had their origin from the contact of the inhabitants with vacationers during the summer months who had this disease.

The Community Doctor started compulsory examinations of vacationers and of all who wished to live in Asvestohorion for any length of time, a system which was strictly enforced without exception. This helped greatly in preventing and completely eradicating the last traces of tuberculosis, thereby eliminating all fear of contamination from vacationers who come to the much desired summer resort which Asvestohorion has become to enjoy the open spaces and the countryside.

Chapter 21

ACTIVITIES OF ASVESTOHorION—SOCIAL, NATIONAL AND CULTURAL

SCHOOLS

THE primary duty of the community of Asvestohorion, since its first day of its settlement, and with the help of all the inhabitants, especially the various leaders of the town, was the establishment of schools and their proper function-

ing, from which everyone expected the education and building of character in the children, so they would be able to contribute to society as useful and virtuous citizens.

Despite the economic difficulties and the poor means at the disposal of our community, it was able to build good schools. A two-story boys' school and a nursery school were accomplished by the patriotic endeavors of our townsmen and social leaders, noble children of well educated and prosperous members of society, and by other virtuous and progressive and philanthropic organizations.

The Girls' School which was built earlier was erected by the early inhabitants of Asvestohorion (the guards of the aqueduct and the postal service which passed through the town) on the site of the building, called Konaki, which was used as the guardhouse of the leader of the guards.

Later this building came into the jurisdiction of the Community, which purchased it for 900 Turkish piasters to be used as the Girls' School and renovated it accordingly.

With such noble gifts and help from many townspeople and other good citizens and social leaders, the Community prospered and saw her schools progress.

Thus, during 1906-1908, we had two nurseries with four teachers in which over 400 children studied, and a similar number of male and female students who attended the two schools.

There was a full sixth-grade Girls' School with 250 students, and a Boys' School with 300 students, with the required teachers.

The schools were enriched by the Marasleion Library and with the necessary tools for the study of Natural Science and Geometry, thus affording excellent educational facilities.

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SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS

THE annual examinations of our schools took place on June 29 and 30, on the feastday of the Holy Apostles, with much fanfare which added the aura of a national holiday.

On these two festive days, all of the inhabitants of Asvestohorion, full of enthusiasm and national pride, were dressed in their Sunday best crowding the streets as they walked to the schools, in order to observe the examinations of their children and to welcome all the dignitaries who had come to the affair. The examinations lasting for two days, took place each year in the presence of the Metropolitan of Salonica, the Consul General of Greece, educated men of Salonica, principals and teachers of high schools, and many other strangers and vacationers, especially Turks.

The presence of the above dignitaries gave an air of national splendor to this occasion, invigorating the national pride and faith of the inhabitants toward their country and increasing the enthusiasm of the students and attendees.

The halls were decorated with the photos of the Greek Royal Family, national hymns were sung, especially the National Anthem, upon the arrival of the dignitaries, with loud acclaim in the presence of Turkish representatives and many vacationing Beys, who watched such patriotic expressions passively and indifferently, satisfied perhaps because the students of the two higher grades were very well versed in the Turkish language which was taught and had priority position among the students examined.

Chapter 23

EDUCATED MEN OF ASVESTOHORION

MANY generations were educated and graduated from these schools. They continued into higher studies, in academics and sciences honoring the fatherland with very enviable positions in the community such as teachers, professors, doctors, pharmacists, industrialists, artists, gynecologists and mechanics, as well as both male and female nurses, filling the hospitals and clinics in Salonica. Some held positions as directors and officials in the Army, thereby contributing to the fatherland as well as centers for the Greek culture, the national direction and the virtuous upbringing of the society.

The educated townsmen of Asvestohorion number about 130 today, a number which is not duplicated in neighboring communities or in the provincial cities.

This movement of our educated townsmen was followed by our modest Greek townswomen, who were not taken into account by the males. Many of them, educated in the Higher Girls' School of Salonica taught with great zeal and passion for many years as nursery school teachers, grade school teachers, and as principals, thus fulfilling their national duty, and showing themselves equal to the task.

In later years many girls who graduated from the School of Philosophy and the School of Law at the University, have become professors in the various high schools of Salonica.

In addition, many other scientists and educated people, who were born in Salonica, are from parents of Asvestohorion. Because of their education, one sees a strong interest and unbounded love toward their parents' hometown.

Even today, many children of our townsmen are studying in schools of education and in universities, in Greece and abroad, thus increasing the number of formally educated people. With this faith and devotion, after completing their studies, and following the example of their hometown predecessors, they continue their efforts for the benefit of the fatherland.