

CORRESPONDENCE

MALARIA IN ANCIENT GREECE.

The recent investigation into the prevalence of malaria in Greece raises the question whether the disease was one factor in the change which came over the national character after 400 B.C. Without definitely formulating any theory, we should like to call attention to the following facts.

(1) The Hippocratic writings show that enlargement of the spleen was very common during the fourth century B.C. Although a symptom of other diseases, enlargement of the spleen would scarcely have been so prominent a feature in these writings unless it occurred in the marked form characteristic of malarial diseases. In one case it is definitely associated with marshy places (*περὶ ἀέρων κ.τ.λ.* pp. 532, 533, Kühn).

(2) The Hippocratic writings afford no evidence that malaria existed in Attica. But

(a) Attica is subject to malaria at the present time (Hirsch, *Handbook of Geographical and Historical Pathology*, p. 213); (b) the Decelean War, by causing the land to lie waste for several years, produced a condition of the soil most favourable for malaria (Hirsch, *op. cit.* pp. 273, 274). Cf. the state of Italy after Hannibal's invasion.

(3) Malaria causes degeneracy—physical, moral, and mental. The most marked symptom is dissatisfaction, or even despair. Greek thought during the fourth and third centuries B.C. shows this characteristic.

We ask readers of the *Classical Review*, who know of evidence affecting this interesting question, to bring it forward.

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TRANSLATION

VERSES BY STATIUS (*SILVAE* ii. 7) TO COMMEMORATE LUCAN'S BIRTHDAY, ADDRESSED TO HIS WIDOW, POLLA.

Lucan's birthday let him keep,
who on Dione's Isthmian steep
hath drunken at the hoofstruck rill,
and felt the bard's ecstatic thrill.

And ye, the patrons of our quire,
Arcadian finder of the lyre,
Euan, with all thy frenzied train,
and thou, whose music stills our pain,
Paeon, and ye, Hyantian maids,
for joy do on fresh crimson braids,
your tresses prank, and robes of white
with freshest sprays of ivy dight!

Ye streams of Poesy, o'erflow;
Aonian woods, make braver show;
and where the garish gaps invade,
hang lissom wreaths to eke the shade.
Let hundred fragrant altars stand
amid the groves of Thespian land:

what victim every altar craves,
Cithaeron feeds and Dirce laves.
Lucan we sing: ye Muses, say
naught of ill omen; yours the day!
Who doubly served you—lo! 'tis he!—
in measure-fettered words and free,
high-priest of Latin minstrelsy.

Thou blessed shore—blest, ah! too well—
that on the high Atlantic swell,
where Hyperion westering steals,
dost hear the hiss of plunging wheels—
thy Baetic olives those may brave
Tritonis erst to Athens gave!
Thou, when thou gavest Lucan birth,
didst lay a heavier debt on earth
than e'en for Seneca we owe
or for the gentle Gallio.
Rear, Baetis, rear thy waters high,