

# **The Great Round World and What Is Going On In It, Vol. 1, No. 25, April 29, 1897 eBook**

## **The Great Round World and What Is Going On In It, Vol. 1, No. 25, April 29, 1897**

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# Page 1

## LETTERS FROM OUR FRIENDS.

From Monterey, Cal., come the two following letters about books:

*Dear editor:*

I thought that I should take much pleasure in writing to *the great round world*.

I have been reading your magazines for several months, and I greatly enjoy them.

Among the books that I like to read are those of the Stories of the Ancient Greeks, but for current events I greatly prefer *the great round world*.

Ever your reader,  
Rosa B.

*Monterey, Cal.*

*Dear editor:*

I enjoy reading *the great round world* very much. I think it is very interesting, as well as instructive.

One of the books I like best is Kipling's "Jungle Book." I think all of the readers of *the great round world* would enjoy it also.

I will close now, wishing great success to *the great round world*. *Marion C.*

*Monterey, Cal., April 7th, 1897.*

We are very much obliged to our kind young readers.

Rudyard Kipling's "Jungle Book," of which there are two volumes—"The First Jungle Book" and "The Second Jungle Book"—is a very delightful series of stories of Indian life, and those of our readers who have not yet read them have a great treat in store.

"The First Jungle Book" is perhaps the better of the two, and the tale of the little Mongoose Rikki Tikki is so delightful that you can read it again and again with pleasure.

*Dear editor:*



I like *the great round world*. Mrs. Mills, my teacher, reads something out of it every morning that she has time. Will you please answer a few questions? Can the prisoners in Sing Sing prison talk together? If not, why not? Can they, after doing their day's work, do work for themselves and keep the money? Yours truly,

&nb

sp;

*Carl C.*

*Cheyenne, Wyo., April 5th, 1897.*

## MY DEAR CARL:

The prisoners in Sing Sing are not allowed to talk together. This is part of their punishment. Prisoners cannot do work for themselves and keep the money. They used to have certain tasks given to them every day, and when these were done they went back to their cells. Under the present law they stay in their cells all the time, except for a certain period of exercise, when they go round and round the prison yard. *Editor.*

## ANCIENT GREECE.

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I have already told you some things about the old Roman Empire, which ran its course long before modern Europe came into existence.

Now I am going to tell you about a civilization so much older than that, that it makes the Roman Empire seem like a thing of to-day!

The Greeks are the most ancient people in Europe. Their early history, before there were books or written records, has come down to us through legends and tradition; that is, fanciful stories, in which fact and fable are mingled, handed down from generation to generation. These legends tell us that the founders of their nation were not men but gods, who came down from heaven and peopled the land; that the massive architecture (of which there are remains to-day) was the work of these gods, who were the ancestors of the Greek people.

But you and I know more about the origin of this people than they themselves did. And the wonderful story has all been found out almost in our own day!

Their ancestors did not come from heaven, but from Central Asia. Countless ages ago an Asiatic race, called the Aryans, began to flow westward into Greece. When they came, or why, nobody knows. But come they did, and for centuries like a great sea spread farther and farther into Europe, until at last the continent was covered. And you and I and almost all the people now in Europe are Aryans, and belong to this great Asiatic race.

It was a long time after the occupation of Greece that the Aryan wave reached Italy.

Then after long ages another Aryan branch, called the Keltic, came into Western Europe, and overflowed what we now call France, Spain, and the British Isles. Long, long after that, still another, the Teutonic branch, flowed over Central Europe, and became Germany. Then, last of all, came the Slavonic, which occupied the eastern part (Russia); and then—the Asiatic Aryans had possessed themselves of the entire Continent of Europe.

It is a strange fact that knowledge and civilization have always, like the sun, arisen in the East, and moved steadily toward the West!

Probably the first spot in Europe touched by the rays of the coming day was the little island of Crete! Minos, who was King of Crete in this time of fable, was always worshipped as the deity who first established civilization and social order!

Theseus also, King of Athens at this time, was one of their great heroes. And you must read about his slaying the Minotaur in Crete, and about the beautiful Ariadne who fell in love with him, and gave him the clue to the labyrinth where her father, Minos, kept the

monster hid. These things about the classic little island have an especial interest for us now.

At this earliest period the people were called, not Greeks, but Pelasgians. In the course of time the Hellenes, a more powerful Aryan race, overpowered them, and after that their country was called Hellas, and its people Hellenes, until a much later period, when they were known as Greeks.

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The Hellenes, like the ancient Pelasgians, had a system of religion which we call mythology. They worshipped twelve principal deities and countless smaller ones, who, they believed, ruled the lives and fortunes of men. Jupiter was the chief of these, and his will and that of the other gods were communicated to the people by priestesses, in the form of "Oracles." These were mysterious utterances, the meaning of which had to be guessed like riddles. But for centuries no war was undertaken nor a single important thing done without first consulting the "Oracles."

The "Heroic Age" (as it is called) is all so vague and shadowy, we should know nothing about it were it not for the great poet Homer. But, strangely enough, about nine hundred years before Christ, Homer gathered all that was then known about the early life and habits of the Hellenes into two great poems, called the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey."

In describing an ancient war which took place between the Hellenes and the Trojans—a people in Asia Minor—he so minutely pictured the people engaged in the struggle, their habits of life, their thoughts and feelings, with the minutest details of the circumstances in which they lived, that it enables us to know what would otherwise be impossible.

This marvellous work, produced more than a thousand years before there was a Germany, or an England, and almost a thousand before there was a Roman Empire, is still the world's great masterpiece, and is to-day an indispensable part of education.

At the close of the "Heroic Age" something happened, which had the same effect upon Ancient Greece that many centuries later the descent of the Goths and Vandals had upon Southern Europe. Greece, too, had its northern barbarians. Some stronger and fiercer Aryan tribes poured down from Epirus, and for a time upset everything, just as the Goths did in Europe.

The Dorians, a stern, unrelenting tribe, took possession of the southern extremity of the peninsula, called the Peloponnesus; and the city of Sparta was the head of their State. There were other States, too, in Greece, and each had its king and separate government. But although jealous of each other and almost always at war, they worshipped the same deities, consulted the same Oracles, and all alike gloried in being descended from the same gods and in being Greeks.

The two most powerful States (or cities, which meant the same thing) were Athens and Sparta. But they were as widely separated in character and habits as if they did not belong to the same family. Athens was the brain, and Sparta the rough, strong arm of Greece.

Athens delighted in poetry, music, art, and eloquence. The Spartans despised all these things. They scorned to use three words where two would do, and aimed only to make their youth fearless and terrible defenders of Greece.



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When a child was born, if it did not give promise of being physically strong and perfect, it was cast into a ravine and then left to perish. When the boys who were permitted to live were seven years old, they were taken from their mothers and made to endure cold, hunger, and inhuman severities. They were beaten until the blood flowed, simply to teach them endurance, and a Spartan boy would die under the lash rather than endure the disgrace of uttering a cry of pain. There was never any family life, nor pleasure.

Every boy was trained to be a soldier; and until he was sixty years old the man belonged to the State absolutely. And all those years he ate his black broth at a public mess, seasoned only with fatigue and hunger. A witty Athenian said he did not wonder the Spartans were brave in battle, for death was preferable to their life.

The severe code of laws by which they were governed was established by Lycurgus, about 770 B.C. (before Christ).

Athens had her days of severity and cruelty, too, under Draco, who established her first laws. But the people rebelled, and in 594 B.C. Solon, a man of great sagacity, prepared a constitution, which was a model of wisdom, justice, and even of gentleness. The government established by Solon was an aristocratic Republic, in which the common people had no part. The Chief, or Archon, as he was called, was chosen by the nobles, and served for a stated time, like our Presidents.

But the supreme authority lay in the "Court of Areopagus," whose members had already served as Archons. The Areopagus really ruled the State, a Senate of four hundred members preparing the cases which were to be brought before it for decision.

Athens prospered under this rule. But an ambitious noble stirred the people to believe they were unjustly excluded from office and from power, and produced a new government, which, under the cloak of a democracy, was really a despotism, with the scheming Pisistratus at its head, or, as it was called, its "Tyrant" (meaning simply ruler).

But Lycurgus did something else besides placing an austere and merciless system upon Sparta. He helped to re-establish the famous and ancient Olympic Games (776 B.C.).

You know how we feel about our great baseball and football games; how excited we are, and how glad or how sorry if one team or the other is defeated. Well, suppose, instead of these, there was one great game every four years, in which all the country could compete. And suppose the victor in this great game was crowned and treated like a king forever afterward. That would be what the Olympic Games were in Greece.

Every four years the young Greeks from all parts of the country met at Olympia and contended for prizes in athletic games. There was running, jumping, wrestling, boxing, the throwing of javelins and quoits (the "discus"), and races of horses and chariots. For one month, during this great festival, wars were suspended throughout Greece.

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The only reward of the victor was a crown of wild-olive leaves; but this was regarded as the dearest prize in life and the greatest honor a Greek could attain.

The wearer of the olive crown was carried home like a king, with processions and songs of triumph, and all his life afterward he was a privileged and honored person. He had conferred everlasting distinction upon his family and his country, and his statue was erected in the Sacred Grove of Jupiter, in whose honor these festivals occurred.

Other festivals were established afterward in honor of Apollo, called the Pythian and Isthmian games, in which there were contests, not alone in gymnastics and in chariot races, but in music, poetry, and eloquence; and these prizes were also sought as the richest rewards life could bring. The Spartans took no part in them. But it was the Olympic games which brought together all of Greece every four years, cemented the states with a common sympathy, and kept alive the fraternal spirit.

This national festival was to them what the Christian era is to us. The interval of four years between the games was called an Olympiad. And time in Greece was measured from the First Olympiad, which occurred, according to our reckoning, B.C. 776-772.

With such a stimulus for effort, every young Greek was straining every nerve and every muscle to win the olive wreath. He was training his body to the finest perfection for the one prize, and his powers of intellect and his genius for the others. This goes far to account for the physical beauty and the supreme excellence which made this race like their own progenitors of the Heroic Age, more like a race of gods than of men.

But they were great in other things besides athletics and accomplishments. The shores of Asia Minor and of the Mediterranean were soon fringed with rich Greek colonies. Every place they touched blossomed into beauty, with temples and houses adorned with sculpture and painting. One of their cities on the coast of Italy was called Sybaris, and it has given us the word “sybarite,” which means a person who abandons himself to luxury.

We may form some idea of these Greek cities from Pompeii, which was still existing on the coast of Italy at the time of the Christian era, and which has been preserved in its bed of ashes as if to show to a later age refinements of luxury, so far exceeding its own.

While during five hundred years Greece had been thus developing, its separate and discordant states were held firmly together by just three things: They all had the same religion and sacred rites, they were all striving for the same prizes at the Olympic Games, and all alike revered their poet Homer. The “Iliad” and the “Odyssey” were, in fact, the Greek Bible. It was the final appeal in matters of religion, and it was the history of their divine origin and ancestry. Boys studied it in school, and men never ceased to study it—many Athenians being able to recite both poems from beginning to end.

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At the time the Greeks were thus becoming a great nation, there was in Asia an old and powerful empire called Persia. Some of the Greek colonies in Asia Minor were accused by the great King Darius of inciting his own people in Asia Minor to revolt. And he sent an army, which punished and subdued the offending Greeks. King Darius then decided that he would invade Greece itself. He thought he could easily master that little scrap of territory, and capture its straggling colonies along the Mediterranean coast, and thus extend his own dominion into Europe.

Athens and Sparta were, as usual, engaged in a small war; but at the news of a threatened Persian invasion, the Greek States sprang solidly together.

The armies met on the field of Marathon (490 B.C.), and the Asiatic host, after a desperate conflict, turned and fled. So confident had the Persians been of victory, that they had brought a mass of white marble with which to erect a monument on the plain of Marathon. This Phidias, the great Greek sculptor, carved into a gigantic figure of Nemesis, to represent Divine vengeance.

The proud and arrogant Persians were not used to defeat. For ten years they brooded over it and prepared to wipe it out by an overwhelming victory. Darius was dead; but his son Xerxes, in the year 480 B.C., appeared on the coast of Greece with a vast army, which he himself led.

The first incident in the war was the most renowned in the history of the world. If you do not know of it already, you will often hear how Leonidas, with his little Spartan band of three hundred, defended the narrow rocky pass at Thermopylae against the whole Persian army, and how they stood their ground until every man was killed.

The Persians pressed on into the heart of Greece. Athens was abandoned, and then burnt by the conquerors. What made the cause of Greece still more desperate was the dissensions between the Athenians and the Spartans, who insisted upon concentrating their forces to guard their own Peloponnesus. But finally all united in a great battle at Salamis.

The fate of Greece was now to be decided. Xerxes, seated on a jewelled throne that he might witness the victory of his arms, to his bitter dismay saw the terrible and overwhelming rout of his entire army, and returned to Persia with only a ragged remnant of his great host.

Now shall I tell you something more about this great King, and who it was who became his wife after he went back to Persia?

You all know the story. It is one of the most thrilling and dramatic that was ever written. You know about the lovely Jewish maiden who was chosen by the great King to be his wife in the place of Vashti, and how a wicked minister or adviser to the King plotted the

downfall of Mordecai, and was then after all compelled to lead him in triumph through the streets, crying, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honor!" And how the brave Queen, at the risk of her own life, saved her people from extermination. Well, this great King was Xerxes, and his wife was Queen Esther. And after the war with the Greeks was over, her uncle, Mordecai, was chief officer to the King, and wisely managed the affairs of his great kingdom.

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And shall I tell you what sort of place Europe was at the time of this Persian invasion of Greece, and while Queen Esther was pleading for the life of her people?

On the peninsula of Italy there had arisen a Roman Republic, where a great civilization was growing. All west of that was called Gaul. It was filled with Barbarians (excepting the few Greek colonies on the coast). To the north were the British Isles, filled with another race of Barbarians, calling themselves Britons; and in Central Europe still more Barbarians, of the great Teutonic or German race; and still beyond that, where dwelt the Slavonic or Russian people, all was silence and impenetrable darkness.

It made little difference to these Barbarians then whether Persians or Greeks occupied the shores of the Mediterranean. But the history of future Europe would have been strangely changed if the Greeks had not driven back this deluge of Asiatic people.

So Greece was now at the head of the world, and Athens was at the head of Greece. And there was a man in Athens who was going to make that city not alone the greatest of that time, but in a way the greatest of all time!

Her great citizen Pericles changed the government of Athens to a pure democracy. And then, by the magic of his influence, it sprang from its ashes in a form so beautiful, it was known as the "City of the Gods." The matchless temples and colonnades which arose on the Acropolis, adorned by the sculptures of Phidias, are still the wonder of the world.

But that was not all. No men have ever thought so profoundly, nor spoken so wisely, nor with such eloquence, as did the men in those temples and under those Greek arcades. Never have such tragedies been written as were recited there, and never has there been an entire people so fitted to comprehend and to enjoy thought so elevated, and art of such a supreme type.

The outpouring of genius in the "Age of Pericles" is one of the great mysteries in history. It sent a path of light down through centuries of darkness, and that light shines just as brightly to-day, uneclipsed and even undimmed by anything the world has done since.

Pericles drew all this radiant genius into Athens, and made it beautiful and great. But he did still more than that. Athens, which had first been a monarchy, then under the rule of a few wise men in the Areopagus, had then lost all her liberties under the "Tyrants." Pericles created a Democracy. He believed the true ideal was a government by the people. That if Athens governed Greece, then the Athenians should govern Athens. And that the power of a state should rest, not with one, nor a few, but with the many!

During a period of fifty years free Athens was the acknowledged head of the Greek states, and in those years Greece had reached the meridian of her glory. But Sparta was jealous of the dazzling splendor of her rival; and she hated this new democracy

which was spreading through all the states. She believed in the good old idea of one despotic king, and a people cowed into submission by his authority.

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Two parties were thus created in the Greek states, and in a dispute which occurred about 420 B.C., the friends of the Spartans or Aristocratic ideal ranged themselves on the one side, and those of the Athenian or Democratic on the other.

From this arose the long conflict known as the Peloponnesian War, which lasted for twenty-seven years, its real cause being that Sparta was determined to lead Greece.

It was in vain that the Athenians fought with the energy of despair. Their beautiful city—the City of the Gods—was at last surrendered, and the scoffing Spartans (404 B.C.) took possession of the treasures they scorned.

Athens had fallen, but her real kingdom was indestructible. She was to be forever Queen in the empire of ideas, of literature, and of art!

The coarse, harsh rule of Sparta lasted less than a century. Then Thebes, another powerful Greek state, arose to the leadership of discontented Greece. And so Hellas, the land in which they all gloried, had become a mass of quarrelling, struggling states, until it was seized by the rough hand of a master.

In the north of Greece was the State of Macedonia. It was not composed of a multitude of free cities like the rest of Greece, but its people were diffused throughout the state, and all governed by one king.

Compared with the Athenians, these unpolished, rude Macedonians were almost barbarians.

But in the year 359 B.C. a man came to the throne of this state, who was not going to be satisfied with being merely a Greek among Greeks. He was resolved to be the head of the Greeks. This was Philip of Macedon. He bent all the energies of his strong, crafty mind toward making himself master of Greece.

Demosthenes, the great Athenian orator, in a desperate effort to save his people from this man, delivered a set of orations denouncing Philip. These are the famous “Philippics,” of which you will often hear.

The Philippics were in vain. Greece yielded to this dominating King Philip, and was led into a war of conquest against the Persians. But the fates intended that a stronger hand than Philip’s should lead the expedition into Asia. Philip was assassinated on the eve of his departure, and his son Alexander, just twenty years old, succeeded to his father’s throne and projects.

There have been three men who have been called “Masters of the World.” Alexander of Macedon was the first of these (323 B.C.), Julius Caesar the second (30 B.C.), and Charlemagne the third (800 A.D.). Napoleon Bonaparte came very near making the fourth in this brief list, but failed.

Among the stories of Alexander's boyhood is that of the "Gordian knot," which it was said could only be untied by the person who was destined to conquer Asia. After striving in vain to loosen this famous knot, it is said Alexander impatiently drew his sword and cut it—thus prefiguring what that sword was to do.



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Alexander led the Greeks into Asia, and in ten years had conquered Egypt and all the Persian dominions, and decreed that Babylon should be the capital of this vast empire of his own creating. He founded Alexandria and other cities, which are still great centres of commerce. Not satisfied with this, he was pressing down into Arabia, when after a night's debauch he suddenly died (aged thirty-two years), and his vast scheme of empire perished with him.

The world is still feeling the results of those ten years of conquest. Every Greek province in the Sultan's dominions to-day is such because of Alexander of Macedon.

Four of Alexander's generals divided his empire among themselves—the kingdom of Macedonia, the kingdom of Egypt, and two Asiatic kingdoms. Egypt fell to the share of Ptolemy, who was the first of a line of kings which ended with the last Ptolemy, who married the famous and fated Cleopatra (30 B.C.).

The Greeks poured into the two Asiatic kingdoms, and Greek culture and civilization spread over the Orient (or East). But while Asia was thus Hellenized, Hellas, the source of this splendid civilizing power, was moving surely toward annihilation.

Another world-conquering power was coming into existence. Before the Christian era arrived, the Roman Republic had absorbed the four kingdoms left by Alexander, and when the Roman Empire came into being (31 B.C.) there were Greeks, but no longer any Greece, except as a geographical name.

The Roman Empire, after centuries of splendor, also expired. And in about the year 600 A.D. another great empire was being created by the Mahometan Saracens, who absorbed all the Greek provinces in the East. This empire also was to be superseded by another Asiatic race.

I have told you how the Ottoman Empire, starting from a grain of mustard-seed in the year 1250 A.D., spread with marvellous energy and rapidity. The Saracen dominions now became Turkish dominions, and the unhappy Greeks had changed masters for the last time. That proud and gifted race was doomed to spend years of servitude to the cruel Turk.

You have seen that the Turkish Empire went the way of other great empires. It reached a climax of power in 1500 A.D., and then swiftly and surely declined. But, although perishing, its fingers never relaxed their hold upon the Greek colonies, now no longer pagan, but Christian.

The old Greek love of freedom still burned in the breasts of this unhappy race. They still cherished the sacred memories of Hellas, still spoke her language, and gloried in her name.

In 1826 the spell of long captivity was broken, when the Greeks on the Peninsula—the very heart and shrine of the classic memories—freed themselves from Turkey and joined the kingdoms of Europe.

Seventy-three years have passed since then, and little has been accomplished toward the liberating of the race.

You are reading the last thrilling chapter in the history of Greece every day in the newspapers, while modern Greece, like a brave knight of old, is risking her very existence in defence of her kinsmen.

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Even the names in the despatches seem like a voice from antiquity; Macedonia, where the Turkish forces are gathering; and Larissa, where Prince Constantine is intrenched. Larissa is a name older than Rome, older than the Olympic games, or even than Homer. It is the Pelasgian name for a fortified city!

Now I hope you will remember that the sufferings of the Armenians and of the Cretans should deeply move us, not alone because they are Christians, but because they are Greeks. The world owes a debt to Greece which nothing can ever repay. She has given us our civilization.

Rome was barbarian until Greece civilized her. What Greek slaves taught to their Roman masters was then transmitted by Rome to Europe.

Then when this borrowed light burned low after the ages of darkness, Constantinople relighted the world by sending abroad her stored treasures of Greek culture. And we to-day are still living in that transcendent light, and drawing upon those inexhaustible riches.

You know that the college where a man has been educated is called his Alma Mater. Never forget that Greece is the beloved Alma Mater of the civilized world. And the sorrows of her oppressed children should move us in a way quite different from those of any other race.

*MaryPlatt Parmele.*

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Transcriber's note: Extra "to" removed from "he went back to Persia?"