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It was not from want of perceiving the beauty of external nature but from the different way of perceiving it that the early Greeks did not turn their genius to portray, either in colour or in poetry, the outlines, the hues and contrasts of all fair valley, and hold cliffs, and golden moons, and rosy lawns which their beautiful country affords in lavish abundance.

Primitive people never, so far as I know, enjoy what is called the picturesque in nature, wild forests, beetling cliffs and the reaches of Alpine snow are with them great hindrances to human intercourse and difficulties in the way of agriculture. They are furthermore the homes of the enemies of mankind, of the eagle, the wolf, or the tiger, and are most dangerous in times of earthquake or tempest. Hence, the grand and striking features of nature are at first looked upon with fear and dislike.

I do not suppose that Greeks were different in this respect from other people, except that the frequent occurrence of mountains and forests made agriculture peculiarly difficult and intercourse scanty, thus increasing their dislike for the apparently reckless waste in nature. We have even in Homer a similar feeling as regards the sea — the sea that proved the source of all their wealth and the condition of most of their greatness. Before they had learned all this, they called it 'the Unvintagable Sea' and looked upon its shore as merely so much wasteland. We can, therefore, easily understand how in the first beginning of Greek art the representation of wild landscape would find no place, whereas, fruitful fields did not suggest themselves as more than the ordinary background. Art in those days was struggling with material nature to which it felt a certain antagonism.

There was nothing in the social circumstances of the Greeks to produce any revolution in this attitude during their greatest days. The Greek republics were small towns where the pressure of the city life was not felt. But as soon as the days of the Greek republics were over, the men began to congregate for imperial purposes into Antioch, or Alexandria, or lastly into Rome, that we see the effect of noise and dust and smoke and turmoil breaking out into the natural longing for rural rest and retirement; so that from Alexander's day we find all kinds of authors — epic poets, lyricist, novelists and preachers — agreeing in the praise of nature, its rich colours, and its varied sounds.

(415 words)

Title:

Greek's shift: disliking to praising nature

Greek had blessed with the natural beauty. Unfortunately, primitive people never got interested in capturing the mesmerising beauty of nature into painting. Further, people considered nature faulty. As they thought that high mountains and uneven land made agriculture, hard task for them. Some people called nature their enemy due to presence of wild life in it. Even, poets supported such notions and called "sea" a wasteland in poetry. With the passage of time, as Greek urbanized rural clamness and natural beauty reduced, smoke and dust became the fate of people. They started to miss old Greek. Additionally, the poets had played vital role to encourage and reserved natural scenery and made nature their subject of work. This bring positive change in people's behavior. Their interest shifted, they started to like nature instead disliking.