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MALARIA AND GREEK HISTORY**

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W. H. S. JONES

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HISTORICAL SERIES

No. VIII.

Malaria and Greek History

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Malaria and Greek History

BY

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TO WHICH IS ADDED

The History of Greek Therapeutics and the Malaria Theory

BY

E. T. WITHINGTON, M.A., M.B.

Balliol College, Oxford

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AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
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TO
MAJOR RONALD ROSS, F.R.S., C.B.
PROFESSOR OF TROPICAL MEDICINE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL
AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS LABOURS
FOR THE WELFARE OF MANKIND
I DEDICATE
"QUIDQUID HOC LIBELLI QUALECUMQUE"

809748

PREFACE.

THIS book is an attempt to correct and develop the theory proposed tentatively in the little work *Malaria*. Put briefly, this theory is as follows. In the struggle for existence man has competed, not only with his fellow-men, but also with wild animals and disease-parasites. The fight against beasts was decided long before the historic period, but parasites have always been, and still are, formidable opponents. Whole tribes have been wiped out by plague, kala-azar and measles; and even when the disease-parasite does not win such a decisive victory, it often weakens a nation so much that the latter falls an easy victim to its healthier neighbours. Accordingly I have tried to show how malaria played a part in the decline of the ancient Greeks.

Dr. E. T. Withington tells me that the "malaria theory" explains a great difficulty in the history of Greek medicine, and upon this point he has written a short essay which appears at the end of the volume.

It may be that some readers will think that my theory cannot be true unless it be proved that malaria did not exist in early Greece. But the evil consequences of malaria are, to a certain extent, independent of the date of its introduction, although they are most severe and most obvious when a district is attacked which hitherto has been free from infection. Moreover, it is at least doubtful whether Greece was malarious in early times, and even if it was, the number of cases may not have been very great. In this connexion I should like to quote a few sentences