

18 March

Ακαδημία Αθηνών / Academy of Athens

I was to have set off today for Argos with General Gordon with the intention of visiting some of the interesting localities of Peloponnesus which I had not yet seen, but for these ten days back there has been so constant an alternation of winter and of spring of the most "ethereal midnights" of the best of the seasons, such as we never see in Scotland, that my departure from Athens has been from day to day suspended. Now again snow has very generally folded its white mantle over the high grounds, and the peaks of the Parnassian hills are glittering like glaciers, from which the north-east wind sweeping down into the plain has spread aches and rheumatism from which few have altogether escaped, and assuredly all those, who tempted by the treacherous gleams of sun & shine had set aside any portion of their winter clothing. And although the barley is already in ear, and the fields and meadows blazing like a garden with the profusion of brilliant coloured wild flowers, that have shot up to greet the first tokens of approaching summer, among which the beautiful crimson anemone is particularly conspicuous, yet the many natives are still clad in their ample and ponderous brown capots, which being tastefully embroidered at the cape with red and yellow could have a very pretty effect. They also wear a short mantle of the same character slung over the shoulder gracefully like a huzar's cloak which contrasts beautifully with the pure white fustanel and red fez. The winter dress of the women consisting of a white woollen tunic also embroidered, broad loose antique looking gowns of brown silk, their long black braided wreathed round the head with a yellow & red handkerchief, spinning their cotton thread is remarkably picturesque.

