

CHAPTER XV.

LIFE AT THE MONASTERY OF TROODITISSA.

THE life at our quiet camp at Trooditissa was a complete calm: there could not be a more secluded spot, as no human habitation was near, except the invisible village of Phyni two miles deep beneath, at the mountain's base. The good old monk Néophitos knitted, and taught his boys always in the same daily spot: the swallows built their nests under the eaves of the monastery roof and beneath the arch which covered in the spring, and sat in domestic flocks upon the over-hanging boughs within a few feet of our breakfast-table, when their young could fly. Nightingales sang before sunset, and birds of many varieties occupied the great walnut-tree above our camp, and made the early morning cheerful with a chorus of different songs. There was no change from day to day, except in the progress of the gardens; the plums grew large: the mulberries ripened in the last week of July, and the shepherd's pretty children and the monastery boys were covered with red stains, as though from a battlefield, as they descended from the attractive boughs. It was a very peaceful existence, and I shall often look back with pleasure to our hermitage by the walls of the old