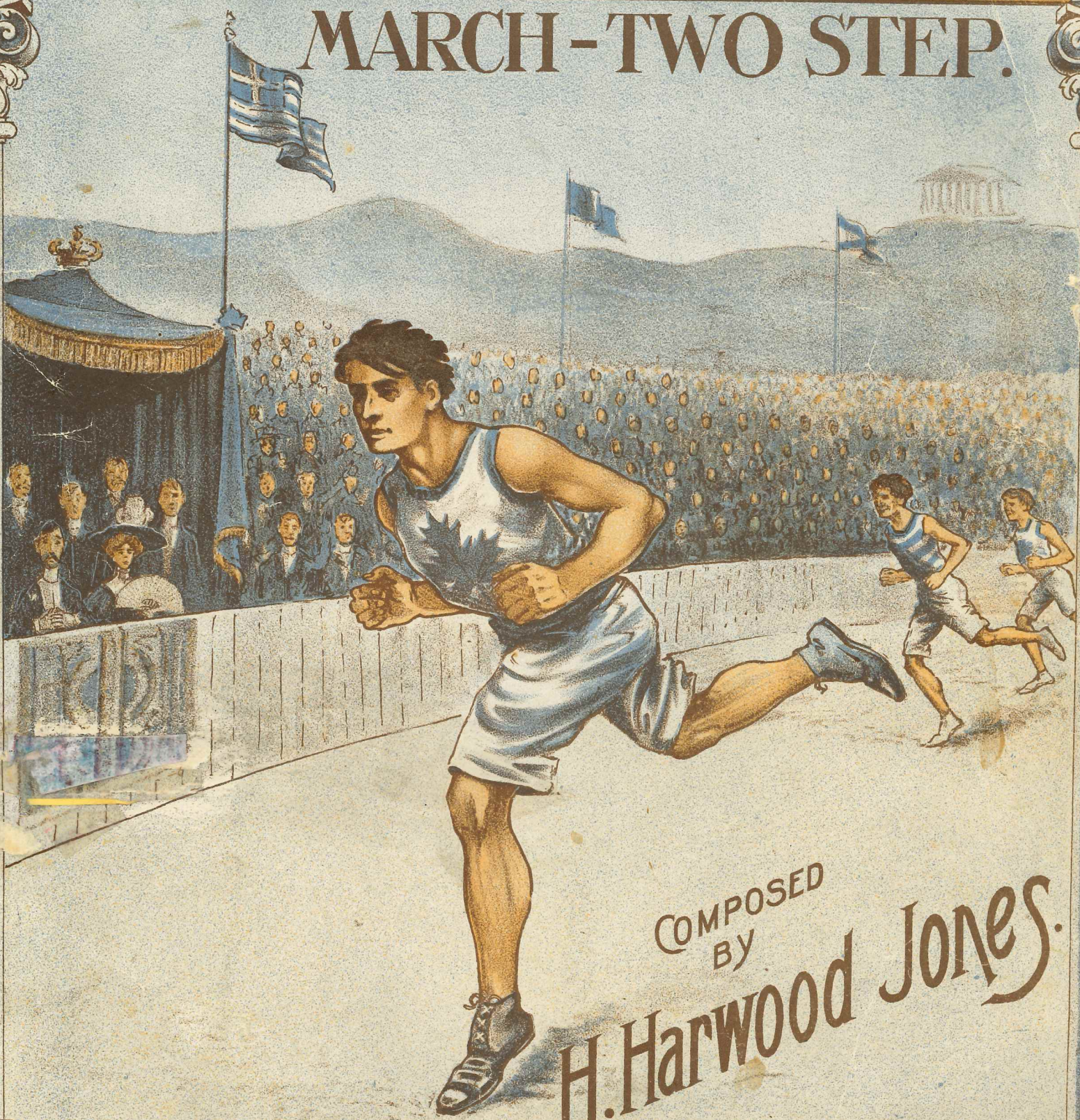


B.C.
490

A.D.
1909

THE ORIGINAL MARATHON

MARCH-TWO STEP.



COMPOSED
BY

H. Harwood Jones.



The origin of the " Marathon "

THE " Marathon " race was not, as is popularly supposed, an event included in the Olympic Games of the Ancient Greeks, but had its origin in the following incident:—

In 490 B.C., after the decisive defeat and rout of the 100,000 invading Persians by ten thousand Greeks on the Plains of Marathon, which lie some twenty odd miles North-east of Athens, Philiperdes, a Greek soldier, set out at full speed to carry the news to the citizens, and although still encumbered with his heavy armour, ran so swiftly as to accomplish the journey to Athens in four hours. As the people anxiously crowded around him to learn the tidings, he staggered and fell from sheer exhaustion, exclaiming with his dying voice " Rejoice ! Victory is ours ! "

The national enthusiasm was so intensely aroused over the decisive defeat of the Persians, which saved Greece from Persian rule and Europe from Asiatic dominion, that it demanded an extension of the Olympic games, and thenceforward the games lasted four days.

At the modern revival of the Olympic games first held at Athens in 1902, the " Marathon Race " was instituted to commemorate this great event in the history of Ancient Greece. The course being over the same route as taken by the soldier after the battle, and a Greek peasant from the hill country was the victor. At the second Marathon held at Athens in 1906, Wm. Sherring, of Hamilton, led the contestants in record time, and the event in London in 1908 is still fresh in the mind, when victory was snatched from Dorando Pietro by Hayes the American, who finished second, unassisted, but who has since had to lower his colors to the son of Italy.