

Exploration and Discovery.

THE RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT CORINTH.

When the announcement was made last winter that the authorities of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens had decided to undertake the excavation of ancient Corinth the project was probably greeted with some misgiving by many of those who have witnessed the utter desolation that now reigns over the extensive site of the once populous and splendid city, and called to mind the many visitations of war and earthquake which at last leveled the mistress of the seas to the earth. If fate had not dealt far more harshly with Corinth than with her sister cities doubtless one might reasonably have expected today that her ruins would yield a richer harvest to the excavator's spade and would furnish more valuable material to the student of Greek civilization than those of any Greek city after Athens. But Corinth alone of all Greek cities incurred the unrelenting wrath of Rome, who usually posed as the champion of Hellenic freedom, ostensibly on account of some violation on her part of diplomatic etiquette, but really because of her prosperity, and so she shared with that other unhappy commercial rival, Carthage, the doom of utter destruction. Cicero gives us to believe that the Romans did the work thoroughly. *Corinthi vestigium vix relictum est*, he says, adding that his countrymen razed her to the ground with the intention that she should not rise again. Her walls, her temples, and her homes were first looted and then destroyed. Rome and all Italy were filled with the spoils taken by Mummius from her temples. In after years even the graves of her dead were ransacked by the degenerate settlers to furnish merchandise to the traders who supplied Roman nobles with antiquities wherewith to adorn their homes. But Cæsar rebuilt the city and restored it to something of its ancient splendor. This was the city where St. Paul lived and preached—the city still of Aphrodite, as we clearly see from the first letter to the Corinthians. But the Turk, Venetian, and earthquake succeeding one another did for Paul's Corinth what Mummius had done for the Corinth of Arion and Periander. Today a little handful of wretched hovels occupies the site, and only the seven columns of the old temple and the potsherds which every footstep turns up in the loose soil reveal the fact of its ancient habitation.

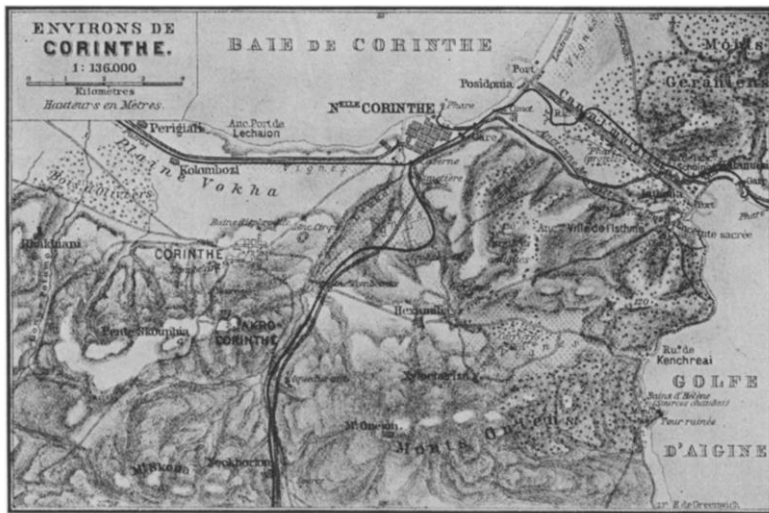
But the very fact of the existence today of the ruins of a temple which dates back to the sixth or seventh century gave the director of the American school, Professor Richardson, who is no timid explorer, some reason to hope

that the total destruction (Cicero's words are *funditus sustulerunt*) of Corinth was perhaps no more complete than was the destruction of the monuments on the Acropolis at Athens. Ancient Greek writers were very positive in their assertion that Xerxes left no stone standing on another when he captured the citadel, but the pre-Persian finds that have been made on the Acropolis are now reckoned among the most valuable treasures of the Athenian museums. The modern explorer is less fastidious than the ancient conqueror. He is content to possess the statues which Xerxes did not think worth his while to break to pieces and which the Roman general would have scorned to dedicate to his gods at home. Then Pausanias, who described Corinth some 217 years after Cæsar had rebuilt it, often has occasion to mention *ἀρχαία πράγματα*, some of which may still be lying beneath the soil. One has also fair reason to expect a large number of inscriptions, which alone would repay the cost of excavation for the light they would throw on the history of the city which played so large a part in the history of Greece.

But there were other practical difficulties to be taken into consideration by the one who proposed to lay old Corinth bare. The area covered by the ancient population of 300,000 souls was about five miles in its circumference. The position of none of the landmarks mentioned by Pausanias was known, except a few spots in the neighborhood of the Acrocorinth. Even the solitary temple has never been identified with certainty with any one of those given in the long list of the periegete. With no help, then, in topographical matters from Pausanias, who, in spite of his curious lapses and his puzzling itineraries, deserves the credit for a large part of the success of modern excavators, from Schliemann to Dörpfeld, one had to reckon with the grave possibility of having, at the end of the first season's work, only a number of scattered trenches, dug at great expense at points where the divination of the explorers saw the chance of a find or the likelihood of hitting upon the track of Pausanias—and nothing more. Trial trenches have a way of skirting, without disclosing, important objects, and are as likely as not to lead to disappointment, even on a promising site. At Corinth they were inevitable, and a fruitless campaign at the beginning, with no discovery of sufficient importance to attract attention to the work and thus to draw funds for the further prosecution of the undertaking, would in all probability have resulted in the mournful refilling of the trenches and the abandonment of the site to the richer schools of the French or the Germans, which are better able to weather an unprofitable season.

With such a possibility of failure staring him in the face, Professor Richardson turned his face away from smaller but more certain fields of labor toward Corinth. He is an enthusiastic explorer, and knows too well the importance for archæology and for history of a definite knowledge of what lies under the soil of the Isthmus to be deterred from even so problematical

a venture. Perhaps his success at Eretria, a field which offers the same practical problems to the excavator, and where no Pausanias is there to guide, gave him courage for the undertaking. He is, moreover, strongly drawn to problems of topography, no less than to the more exciting search for treasures of bronze and marble. And Corinth was sure to furnish fascinating topographical problems to solve if once a starting-point were found.



ENVIRONS OF CORINTH

From Baedeker's "Greece"

Professor Richardson, ably seconded by Professor Wheeler of Cornell, the associate director for the year, began the actual work of excavation in March. The right to dig was easy to obtain, because the site of ancient Corinth has attracted few settlers since the earthquake of 1858, which completed the destruction of the city of Cæsar, and the poor soil is only sparsely cultivated. Some twenty trial trenches were sunk here and there. The accumulated soil, most of it washed down from the Acrocorinth, was found to vary from fifteen to twenty feet in depth. A hundred men were employed, who had no better implements than the pick, shovel, and the small reed-woven basket or bag in which native laborers carry earth. To judge by the reports which have reached us through the newspapers, most of these trenches, dug so laboriously, led to no discovery of importance. But at the bottom of one of them was found the theater, the building of all others which the excavators had hoped to find. Yet one cannot but think of the anxious

two months of trench-digging in vain, crowned only at the very last by the decisive result.

To appreciate the importance of the discovery of the theater, we must turn to Pausanias. He says that most of the temples were grouped about the agora, and he makes the agora the central point to which the tourist is supposed to return after each sight-seeing excursion. The agora, of course, would be the best thing to find. But in order to discover its location it would be necessary to have uncovered the whole area over which it extended. Fortunately, however, Pausanias gives a clue to its discovery. As you pass out of the agora on the road to Sicyon, he says, you see on your right a temple to Apollo, and a little beyond is the spring Glaucé. Above the spring is the Odeion, and by this a monument to the children of the sorceress Medea. Not far from this monument is the temple of Athenê Chalinitis, which lies near the theater (*πρὸς τῆ θεάτρῳ*), while above the theater (*ὑπὲρ τὸ θέατρον*) is the temple of Capitoline Jupiter. It will be seen that, starting with an approximate knowledge of the location of the road to Sicyon, we are put definitely on the track of Pausanias by the finding of the theater, and it is now a comparatively easy task to work one's way back to the center of the city's life, the agora. A theater can be recognized at once by its peculiar structure, but one temple is like unto another. The excavators wisely decided to cling close to the ruins of the old temple as the one remaining landmark of old Corinth, and the theater was discovered about a quarter of a mile to the west of it. The temple is now identified provisionally with that of Apollo in the account of Pausanias. Thus, as the result of the first season's work, Professor Richardson can look forward with confidence to the final restoration of the ground plan of ancient Corinth and to the identification of its most important buildings.

To archæologists the theater itself, if in good preservation, will probably prove of greater interest at the present time than would any other single structure. On account of the weighty problems now under discussion in connection with the history of the drama, which can be settled only by the discovery of new theaters, it is to be hoped that the American School, which has hitherto taken the lead in the exploration of theater buildings, will speedily give to the world whatever contribution the theater at Corinth may supply in this direction. A "magnificent Greek stone" has been found to the east of the temple. This seems to point to the neighborhood of the agora. Several dwelling houses have been uncovered. Several pieces of statuary have come to light, but nothing of great consequence. The harvest of Greek inscriptions has been disappointingly small, but many interesting Roman inscriptions were found. The find of a considerable number of vases also deserves mention. Altogether the yield of minor objects from the trenches is by no means discouraging, and one may count on important results as soon as large spaces are cleared.

As has been said, the Corinth which we may hope thus to regain will be the Corinth of St. Paul. Possibly one of the houses which the future visitor to the uncovered city will see was the house of Chloe, messenger from which told Paul of the dissensions which prompted the first letter to the Corinthians, while another may be the home of Stephanas, the first-fruits of Achæa. The excavators have already dubbed one of the houses found "the house of Sosthenes the brother," though, to tell the truth, it does not appear that Sosthenes was a resident of Corinth. No single spot in Corinth, however, stands out in bold relief through its association with Paul, as does the Areopagus at Athens. In fact no distinctly topographical interest attaches to Corinth on account of the apostle. But the resurrection of the city which the great preacher and philosopher loved so well, where he lived and toiled for eighteen months, where he planted and Apollos watered the little church which had to struggle so bravely against wickedness from within and from without, and, above all, the city whose name will always be memorable, if for no other reason, through its association with Paul's two grand epistles, cannot fail to be a matter of moment to all students of the Bible, as well as to all students of Greek civilization.

EDWARD CAPPS.