

A VISIT TO EPHEBUS.

BY REV. JAMES M. LUDLOW, D.D.

Had our visit taken place two thousand years earlier, we would have sailed into the magnificent harbor of Ephesus. But unfortunately for the fate of the city one of the ancient kings made so large an appropriation for the improvement of navigation that he succeeded by an ambitious mistake in engineering in closing up one of the finest ports in the Egean. So we went to Smyrna, 50 miles north, and came down by rail.

On the site of the famous city are now a few houses, just enough to have a name; but the name is a monumental one—Ayaslouk, or "the sacred Theologian," in which the memory of St. John is reverently embalmed. The streets of the city which once rattled with the royal chariots of Greeks and Seleucid and Romans, as the various empires drifted like shadows over them, the grand squares and temple areas where the worship of Diana was paraded, theatres and

temple are the rich treasure of the Mosque of St. Sophia in Constantinople. Nero stole some of the great structure, Constantine some, the Goths some, the Turk some; and Diana herself cannot tell to what parts of the world her jewels have been scattered by its spoilers.

The great temple was of white marble, and nearly five hundred feet long. One hundred columns surrounded it, each fifty-six feet high. It was adorned with sculptures by Phidias and paintings by Apelles. The altar was the handiwork of Praxiteles. Chersiphron, its architect, felt his brain reel under the flashing magnificence of his own conception of what he would build. Over two hundred and twenty years were occupied in its completion.

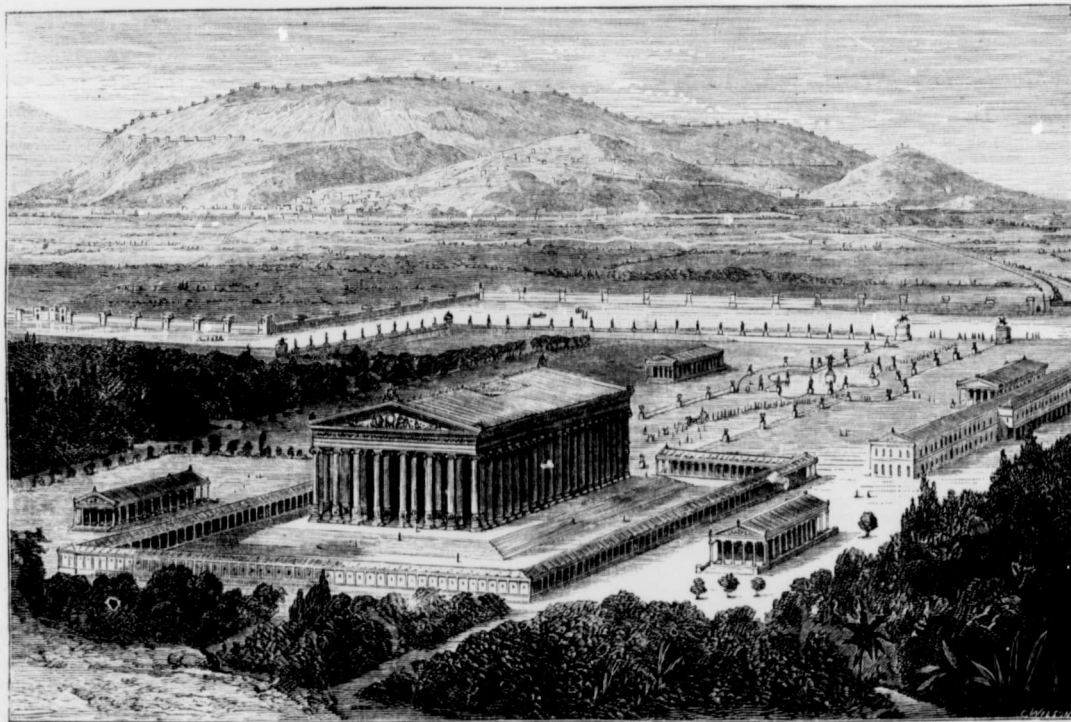
The central object within the structure was the statue of the goddess, which was believed to have fallen from heaven. For its erection contributions were levied upon the entire province. Ladies brought their jewellery. Foreign kings, in pious rivalry, sent columns and statuary exhibiting the art and wealth of their nations.

massive blocks of paving, then the tomb of Androclus (1000 B.C.), which an ancient writer says was on the way to the temple, until they finally struck upon a broken column which solved the enigma of centuries. The excavation brought to light the entire ground plan of the famous edifice together with a wealth of valuable historical knowledge.

The ramble over the plain of Ephesus was intensely interesting. Our steps seemed to measure the centuries. At one moment our bumps of propriety received fearful contusion as we watched a woman washing her filthy clothes in an elegant sarcophagus, in which, doubtless, had lain some prince of Lydia. At another moment our heads hung with a reverence over a beautiful burial case of marble, richly carved with human figures, fruits, and flowers, from which some miscreant has erased the name Polycarpus. If this tomb did not contain the sacred dust of the great Christian martyr—the tomb at Smyrna being generally accredited with that honor—this was an honorary tomb erected by the church at Ephesus, and

above the orchestra. The width of the auditorium is 495 feet. Over 24,000 persons were accommodated at a single exhibition. Much as we complain of the masses in our day being pleasure-seekers, we are a very sober-sided community. The theatres and hippodromes of the ancients were the largest structures of the world. The most magnificent temples were of earlier and more primitive ages of the race.

Can we imagine the scenes upon which the crowds were accustomed to gaze in this theatre? Now wild beasts rush in and tear each other to pieces, to the delight of the delicate ladies who at home can exist only with the most aesthetic culture. Now a man strips and fights a tiger, and another and another, until mangled he falls, and fair hands applaud the splendid valor of the beast as he rolls his wild eyes around as if two men with naked swords and naked bodies, now groups of men, fight until the majority are slain, and the little girls and their mammas curse the fallen. Again bands of slave girls dance and sing the songs



THE TEMPLE OF DIANA AND CITY OF EPHEBUS FROM AYASLOUK.

palaces whose description dazzles our imagination—glimpses of these can be seen at the bottom of great holes dug through twenty feet of accumulated refuse, or protruding in shapeless masses through the rank weeds of the marshy plain.

Stretching across the plain is the remnant of a massive aqueduct. The arches have fallen; the basements only are standing; and on the top of each the storks have built a nest. At our approach these custodians of desolation rose in a long line as far as the eye could reach, one family startling its neighbor. Flapping their wings, they came as a weird welcome to their waste, and then, each standing upon one leg, mournfully inspected us as we passed beneath. Modern undertakers could not arrange anything half so funeral as our reception in this burial place of the dead empire.

The upper work of these piers is of Roman brick; the lower blocks of marble were taken from the ruins of the Temple of Diana. Other parts of this temple we find in the old Mosque, built in the time of Tamerlane. Enormous columns from the

The sacredness of the building was such that it came to be a great "safety deposit" for the treasures of merchants and princes. When it was once destroyed by fire, Alexander the Great offered to rebuild it, on condition of being allowed to inscribe his name as dedicator on one of its stones. The religious pride and zeal of the Ephesians were offended at the proposition, and the new building arose from the contributions of the faithful.

Strange to relate, the site of this vast pile, one of the Seven Wonders of the world, was unknown to modern times until the year 1569, so completely had it been buried under the accumulation of ages. The English engineer, Mr. Wood, who was sent out by the British Museum, dug his test-holes over a space of four or five miles. After six years he was fortunate enough to find an inscription which told of a procession going from the city to the temple, which revealed the fact that it lay in a hitherto unsuspected direction. The gateway out of the city was soon discovered, then the road-bed with the ruts worn by the chariot-wheels in the

placed in the gateway where the thronging crowds of the living would be daily reminded of the faith of the holy dead.

A tomb bears the emblem of St. Luke, giving plausibility to the legend that the evangelist was buried here.

Among the art relics which have recently been uncovered are the altar of Jupiter Serapis, a baptismal font of the early Christians, the Stadium, or place of public games, the Forum where the Ephesians met for public business, the Bema on which the orators stood, the assumed cave of the Seven Sleepers, and the Odeum, or little theatre, whose solid marble seats and stage suggest that in comparison with its modern theatres are like pasteboard candy-boxes compared with an alabaster box for precious ointment.

The interest of our visit culminated at the Great Theatre, in which the uproar over the preaching of Paul occurred. The audience-room was dug out of the side of a hill. The highest seats, the miniature terracing of which is still visible, are fully a hundred feet in perpendicular elevation

of the hills they will never see again. What a comment the life of the classic Greek was upon the silly notion that artistic culture alone can do much for character and conscience! The most brutal ages were those whose culture is most copied by modern times.

But another scene rises as we linger in this old theatre. A dense multitude surges under the sway of some mighty passion. The people are forsaking the ancient religion of Diana. Exorcists and diviners have been burning their books in the public square. An orator declares to the crowd that "not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people." The cry rises and floats over the city, "Great is Diana!" But nothing can stay the new doctrine. Paul has spoken with the voice of fate. And after eighteen centuries the disciples of Paul's Master, representing the strongest nations on the globe, are digging in the plain of Ephesus for the ruins of the temple of Diana.—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

ND SOULS.

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