Ephesus and the Temple of Diana

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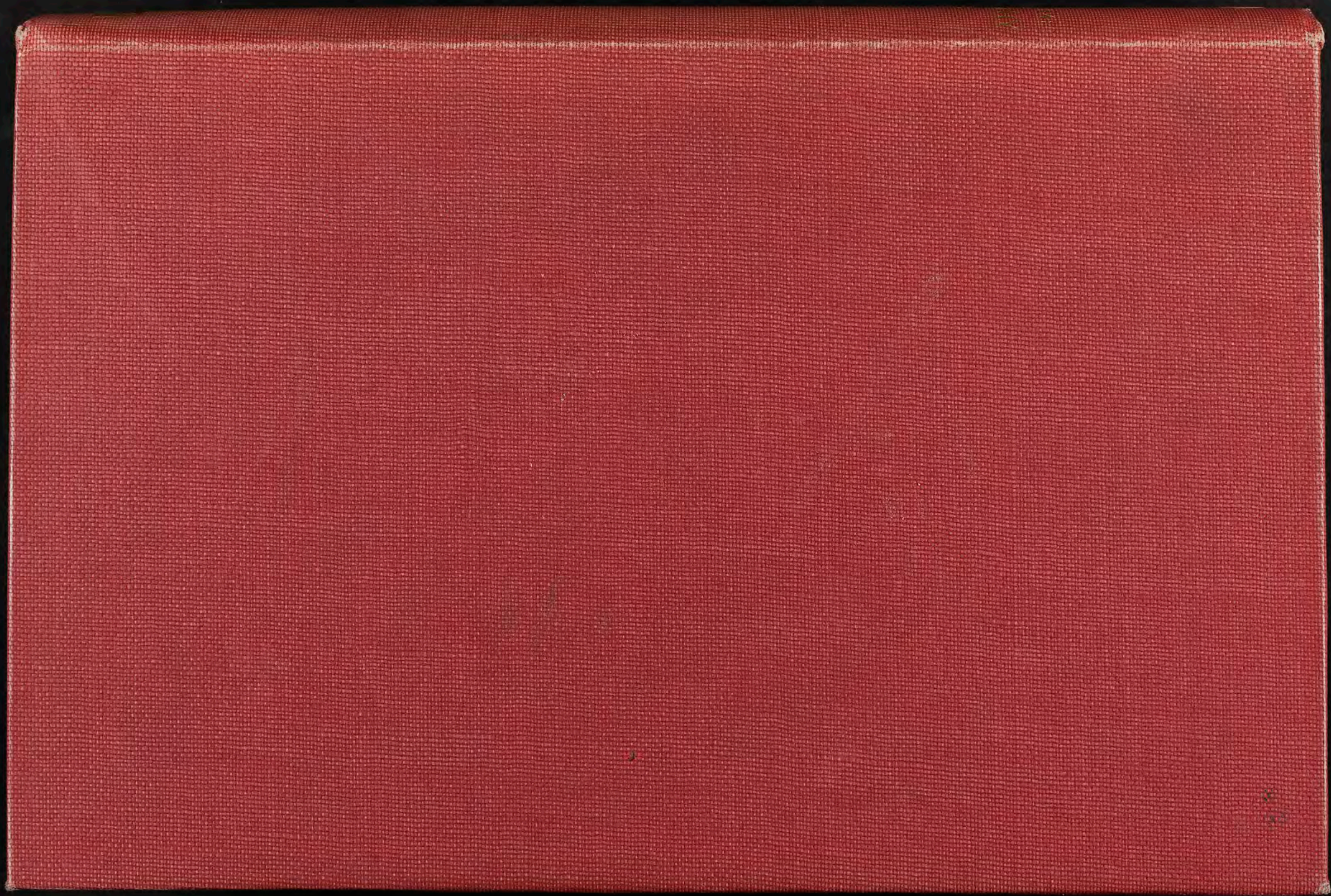

Greece
Temple Bar
March 1895

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Ephesus and the Temple of Diana.

If Athens be taken as the intellectual centre of Attica and Greece, another city stands forth pre-eminently as the representative of the greatness and culture of the Greek colonies in Asia Minor; that city is Ephesus. Fifty miles south of Smyrna—"infidel Smyrna," to which the Turk has linked it by a sleepy railway—four miles from the coast, the same distance that separates Athens from the Piræus, and nearly opposite Samos, are scattered the ruins of one of the most splendid cities of antiquity. Looking down from the modern village of Ayasalouk the eye ranges over a valley, considerable in itself but dwarfed by the high hills of limestone which form a rude semicircle about it; lower hills break this space in parts, running down as spurs from the higher range, but there is much flat ground, and through it may be traced the windings of a river, spreading out in several places into small lakes; beyond is the long, deep blue line of the sea. The outline of the hills is marked and fantastic; the air exquisitely clear, dry and exhilarating; the sun shines as it only can in the East, yet without the awful intensity of India; the entire scene is one of singular charm.

Limestone quarries catch the sun's rays; the vegetation is in parts luxuriant; in the spring the vivid yellow of the angelica literally covers one of the great hills from base to summit.

But whatever its beauty, its interest is not of the present. Climbing, wandering, threading his way amongst rock and shrub and tree, the traveller every here and there finds his way barred by masses of fallen masonry, often half buried in the soil—this was Ephesus! Ruin has fallen upon it, shapeless, and until very recently, unintelligible ruin.

The fallen marble is all that remains of the city; the winding stream half choked with weedy growths marks the channel of the Cayster; the little lakes shining in the sun were once the Panormus, the "All-Haven" or port of Ephesus, and the basin which stood before the Temple of Artemis, one of the reputed seven wonders of the world.

As one of the twelve cities of the Ionian Confederation, it might well be styled one of the "Eyes of Asia" by Pliny; Greece, Egypt, and Persia poured their wealth into it for centuries, and it continued in fame and importance until overwhelmed by the Goths of the Bosphorus late in the third century of our era.

The walls, built of rough hewn stone, cased with smoother work in parts, ran for about four miles literally over hill and dale; for purposes probably of military defence they followed an irregular line, and were even carried in viaduct fashion across a deep hollow; along the hill of Lepre and Mount Coressus; in one place beside the lake, at another set back for some cause now lost to us, and broken by openings with embattled towers like those of Troy—"high gated."

Ephesus is a land of ruins. Athens has hers indeed, but they are partial only, and save for Morosini's bombardment the Parthenon would be perfect, whilst the town is still a living city and a capital. But here the ruin is overwhelming; slowly the ground has risen in accordance with what would seem to be a law, and simply submerged the low-lying parts; grass and wild-flower and shrub growing thickly over a wondrous subsoil of marble columns, carved antæ and mosaic pavements.

The Parthenon was the grandest example of the Doric order, the first perfected achievement of the Greek mind in architecture: the Temple of Diana was the stateliest embodiment of the Ionic, the second great step forward in the long march of the art which, for the western nations at least, begins amongst the frowning columns of Karnak, and carried on by Greek and Roman, Frank and Goth, ends in the basilica and the cathedral.

Probably refounded and its walls rebuilt by Lysimachus, one of Alexander's generals, Ephesus was filled with splendid buildings; each century added its quota, until at last under the later Emperors its magnificence must have rivalled that of Rome whilst far surpassing it in beauty of situation. Its two ports were probably an inner and outer basin of the Panormus; its agoras; its five great gymnasia; its lyric theatre (odeum); all were celebrated and all on a scale of extraordinary vastness, but all were dwarfed by its gigantic racecourse (stadium); the mighty theatre open to the sky, as all ancient theatres were, with seats for twenty-four thousand people; above all the Temple of Diana, the pride and glory of Ephesus.

An overthrow so complete as that which fell upon her: the wilful devastation of Iconoclast Byzantine; the plundering of Saracen, Crusader, Genoese and Tartar, covered the hills with a long irregular line of broken masonry, ever diminishing so long as there

was aught to tempt the spoiler, and filled the low-lying valley from the harbour back to the hills with a countless sea of fragments. Such was its state when in the month of May 1863 an English architect stood amidst the ruins and commenced his search for the lost Temple of Diana of the Ephesians. Lost, the great Temple, lost to view, passed away from the sight of men, gone! Armed with a firman from the Ottoman Government, and provided with funds by the Trustees of the British Museum, Mr. J. T. Wood set about the work which will always be associated with his name. The task was no light one, for the Temple had literally disappeared, and the classical writers were by no means in unison; the very site was uncertain. "In my perplexity," he says, "I chose Strabo, Pausanias and Philostratus as my best guides, because they had been eye-witnesses of all the things they describe."

The outline of the walls could still be traced, running irregularly over the hills; walls over ten feet in thickness, broken at frequent intervals by towers with remains of stone steps to reach them, with here and there a sally-port. In parts houses could be distinguished covering the mountain slope with ruinous terraces. The harbour, the theatre, the stadium, were barely indicated though in ruins, but the Temple was invisible; not a particle of stonework remained to guide the explorer. In common with most ancient temples the fane was surrounded with a sanctuary whose limits were altered from time to time; this caused a difficulty in the search. The Temple had this right in Strabo's day. Alexander had extended its boundaries to a stadium (600 feet and nine inches, English measurement); Mithridates fixed it by shooting an arrow from the roof which fell a little beyond a stadium; Antony doubled the distance, thus including a part of the town, but the abuses to which it gave rise were so great that Augustus restricted its limits and caused a new wall to be built to mark them. To find this *peribolus*, which bounded it, would be some guide, but owing to these alterations all was confusion.

Another landmark, if it could be found, was the stoa or covered portico, in this case virtually a covered road joining the Temple to the city, built by Damianus, a wealthy Roman, partly for the use of the priests in wet weather, as some suppose, and partly to shelter the every-day crowd from the sun. From a comparison of all available authorities, Mr. Wood was at first led to search for the Temple at a spot considerably nearer to the town than where he eventually found it.

Baffled for a time as to the Temple, he proceeded with his excavations in other parts; much hindered by local opposition,

and realising by the experience of every day not only the enormous strength and size of ancient walling, but the wholesale destruction deliberately effected by all old builders, who destroyed and rebuilt as each wave of change passed over the art of architecture. The sentiment which causes us so carefully to preserve every fragment of an ancient building was to them utterly unknown; when the Ionic succeeded the Doric, and the Corinthian in its turn superseded the Ionic, and later when the arch, the vault, and the dome brought about a building revolution, they not only destroyed, they did more; they actually filled up entire chambers with masses of material taken from other parts of the same building, and *the whole being rammed down into a solid mass* served as a foundation for a new structure above; in this manner an enormous portion of the finest architectural work has perished, whilst incalculable confusion has been introduced into the history of many structures, explorers and archæologists being utterly baffled by finding capitals, carvings and other fragments at levels and in places wholly out of keeping with their style.

Mr. Wood persevered through endless difficulties. Innumerable remains of every kind were found. The first discovery was a further opening up of the great gymnasium—at one time wrongly believed to be itself the lost Temple, with vast subterranean passages running under it, mostly choked with sand. This was succeeded by another, which, if not architectural, at least gives us one little glimpse into ancient life; nothing less than an enormous mass of oyster shells, whose contents had once fed the good citizens of Ephesus. Thirdly, amongst the remains of a market-place (agora or forum) an immense baptismal font, the Christian remains of Ephesus being many and scattered throughout the city in its later period.

This font was evidently intended for the public baptism of converts in considerable parties or perhaps families at a time; it is so constructed that a man may climb over its edge and stand in nine inches of water whilst the baptiser stands dryshod on the raised centre.

At this stage of the explorations it was estimated by Mr. Wood that the whole plain of Ephesus had in the course of centuries silted up no less than twelve feet. Halls of brick, probably Roman, faced with marble; Christian tombs without number; a mighty foot "sandalled in white marble," then a smaller one; two torsos; an early Greek inscription relating to the art of divination by the flight of birds, and then the remains of the lyric theatre on the southern slope of Coressus were successively opened up.

Christian antiquities of the Apostolic age and of the deepest historic interest cluster round this spot. Walking home one evening after a long day's superintendence of the excavating parties, Mr. Wood relates that his "weary foot struck a block of marble." It was carved with the head of a Greek cross in a sunk panel; on investigation it proved to be a door jamb, the upper sunk panel having a large cross, the lower a bull or buffalo of the country, with a small cross cut over its back. On the inner side were the remains of a carved human figure evidently intended for a saint or martyr, for the head had been encircled by a nimbus, which owing to its being sunk in the marble had remained perfect. As the bull is the well-known symbol of St. Luke, it is not improbable that this was his tomb, and judging by other remains in its immediate neighbourhood must have been a domed circular building 50 feet in diameter with sixteen columns over a high basement, standing in the midst of a quadrangle 153 feet across and surrounded by a colonnade. The court was paved with white marble, and whenever a slab was removed a grave was seen immediately beneath it; the early Christians were so desirous of being buried near a saint or martyr that they were willing to pay considerable sums of money for the privilege.

The great theatre was the scene of the next stage of discovery, a vast horseshoe, when perfect, no less than 495 feet in diameter; then the remains of the stadium; then the Magnerisian and Coressian Gates, fortified by towers, with their triple openings, one for foot-passengers and two for chariots and waggons; many sarcophagi—in one of them a skeleton—and countless fragments of ancient art and architecture, including some sun-dials.

Six years of work had passed and almost every day had brought to light some relic of the city in marble, stone, brick or mosaic, but no temple! The most beautiful object in the most beautiful city of Asia seemed to recede ever further and further from the baffled investigators.

Matters were in this stage when a fragment of wall near some olive trees attracted the explorer's attention. An inscription upon it showed that it was built by the orders of Augustus Cæsar in the 12th year of his consulate and 18th of his tribunitian power (B.C. 6), and that it was to be paid for and maintained out of the revenues of the Artemisium (Temple of Diana) and the Augusteum; subsequent discoveries confirmed the idea that this was the new peribolus or boundary wall of the temenos or temple close, decreed by him when he restricted the limits of the sanctuary as above described.

The whole work of excavation was now concentrated upon this part of the valley, at some distance, that is to say, at a little less than a mile beyond the limits of the city, and on the 31st of December, 1869, the brilliant colours of the mosaic pavement of the Temple were revealed once more. The Temple was found. Below, as might have been expected, were considerable remains of the earlier temples—this of course being in strict conformity with the ancient custom of building again and again on the same site—their walls and pavement of exquisitely finished marble being utilised as part of the foundations for the later one, and then further thickened from six feet to thirteen with new blocks of limestone.

An immense variety of money was found here, in whose face might be read the changing fortunes and rulers of the Levant; coins of Naples, of Rhodes, of the Seljukian Sultans, of Genoa, of the Popes, and of Venice. No long time elapsed before the excavators lighted upon a greater relic, by far the most interesting and valuable result of all their labours. Columns are built up of "drums," successive cylinders placed one over another from the base to the capital. One of these was now discovered; it had actually formed part of a column of the great Temple. It was of great bulk, and from it some idea could be formed of the vastness of the mighty building. It was quite six feet in height and over six feet in diameter; deeply buried in sand and chips of marble, almost completely under water and upside down! How could such a mass be recovered, nay more, moved to the coast, placed on board ship and conveyed from Asia Minor to Bloomsbury?—the omnivorous British Museum all this while waiting for its prey.

Fortunately the services of a party of seamen from a British man-of-war, the *Caledonia*, were obtained; they were under the command of Lieutenant McQuhae and Lieutenant Gambier, and by their help the marble drum found its way, two months after its discovery, on board ship. One very important detail should be recorded of this fragment; it is sculptured with a band of human figures in high relief, slightly larger than life, an innovation of great beauty, but one in itself quite enough to make restorers and revivers of the antique stand aghast, such a contingency being nowhere provided for in any system of so-called "Five Orders of Architecture."

More striking and suggestive still were the superb capitals of some of the Ionic columns; these too were excavated and moved with infinite labour, and can be studied, nay, should be studied by all who wish to know what Greek architecture really is, together

with the rest of Mr. Wood's trophies in the Ephesus Room of the British Museum. An ornamental lake or basin stood in front of the building; the ground was marshy all about it, and was chosen, it is said, for that very reason, a singular one at first sight, but not unreasonable when followed by the explanation that the country was subject to earthquakes, and a structure whose foundations were sunk deep in a rather damp clay would resist at least minor shocks better than one raised on drier ground.

More curious and remarkable than this was the fact that the foundations rested upon masses of closely rammed charcoal and sheepskins, probably to preserve them from the wet.

Falkener suggests that seven earlier temples had stood upon this spot; it is certain that two had done so, the later of which was burnt by the "chaotic malevolence" of Herostratus on the very night that Alexander was born. From the designs of Dinocrates, a Macedonian architect—a phrase to be read with some suspicion, for it is doubtful if professional "architects" existed—a third structure arose to show that Ephesus was determined still to possess one of the wonders of the world.

The Temple of Diana of the Ephesians stood upon a platform 418 English feet in length by 239 wide; the building itself was 342 feet by 163; octastyle, that is with eight columns across the ends, dipteral, *i.e.*, the columns surrounding the walls in a double rank, a most important innovation and improvement upon the single peristyle of the Parthenon, and was the finest building ever raised of the Ionic order. The number of columns is variously stated at 100, 120, 127, and 128, but Mr. Wood's investigations seem fairly to warrant the restoration which he has effected on paper, and to confirm the traditional hundred columns, of which a certain number were sculptured, probably those at the ends where the great doors were; the beautiful fragment in the British Museum only shows one belt of figures, but a medal of Gordian's reign shows three such bands, thus carrying the carving more than twenty feet up the column. The arrangement of the columns was probably as follows: two lines of eight each with two inside these again on either side but slightly in front of the door; the same at the other end. This would account for thirty-six. Add two lines of sixteen each on each flank, total one hundred. Although the curling capital with its volutes in front and back and "balusters" at the sides is the popular symbol of the great change from the Doric to the Ionic, it is not the most important part of it; its significance is rather in the lightness and grace of the new order of which the voluted capital is simply one of the results. Although the mighty columns at

Ephesus are half an inch over six feet in diameter, delicacy rather than strength is the prevailing note of the Ionic system. In architecture all things yield in importance to proportion, and it is to this element far more than details, however beautiful, that ancient buildings owe their charm. The columns, though vast, are proportionately slender, no less indeed than eight and a half diameters high, making their height fifty-five feet eight and three-quarter inches, including the base.

Measuring from the centre of one column to the centre of its neighbour, the spacings or "intercolumns" are seventeen feet one inch each, except at the ends, where, with great quickness of æsthetic feeling, they are widened to nineteen feet to allow for the increased bulk given to the columns by the bands of sculptured figures which project about fifteen inches: it should be noted that these figures are not added to but cut out of the original width of the columns (or more accurately speaking, of the drums which compose them). It is an art education to stand by some of these splendid marble drums with the clear carving, crisply edged as if fresh from the chisel; the flutings running down their sides in bold channels eight and a quarter inches wide near the base, and separated, not as in the Doric columns of the Parthenon by sharp edges (arrises), but by fillets at least an inch wide; let us note too that the outer columns had each twenty-eight such flutes, the inner only twenty-four.

Much has been written about the origin of the Ionic capital. Almost everything in which a curl or a twist could be discovered has been pressed into the service: rams' horns, and some marine shells being perhaps the most reasonable, but Sir Henry Layard is probably nearer the truth than any in deriving the curving volutes from Assyria, a supposition greatly strengthened by the existence there of the powerful egg-and-tongue moulding so characteristic of this order, and of the beautiful palmette and honeysuckle which are its greatest ornament. The Erechtheum, the little Ionic temple which stands beside the Parthenon, has a band or necking of palmette round each column just under the capital, or—as some think—to be considered as forming part of it; an entire column from this building may be seen in the British Museum, and compared with the capitals and drums from Ephesus in the adjoining room. The contrast is remarkable, not only in regard to this detail, but in other respects: the Erechtheum column is very small and has turned to a deep brown colour, almost chocolate; the fragments from the Temple of Diana are gigantic, the "eggs" in the egg-and-tongue carving are larger than a man's head; the marble is

fresh and light, a delicate cream colour, and looks as if only yesterday hewn from the quarry. Here, as in the Parthenon, it is certain that the capitals and the entablature above were greatly enriched by colours; light orange red, crimson and blue; no building of antiquity was without it. The base which distinguishes this order from the Doric seems to balance the rich capital above, and to be in some way called for by the comparative slenderness of the shaft; for large as these columns are, they are essentially delicate in form, and at a little distance look in some instances almost too attenuated; it is a not unreasonable supposition that they were derived from a wooden architecture of earlier date, in which a shoe or socket would certainly be required for a wooden column. Its usual form—for the exceptions to the rule are many—is that of two broad tori (a torus is a bold convex moulding), with a deep scotia (concave) between. On one of these mouldings at Ephesus parts of a dedicatory inscription were found; it is probable that this column was a gift to the Temple; that many were so bestowed by individuals, communities, or sometimes by reigning sovereigns, is well known.

The frieze—though our teachers will have it that in the Ionic order this is generally quite plain—was finely sculptured; bold lions' heads, and antefixæ at intervals, broke the honeysuckle ornament which ran along the summit of the cornice, and the roof was covered with slabs of white marble about four feet wide, their joints covered with tiles; the usual custom of the ancients to leave a large opening in the roof was probably followed here. A covered road or extended portico—the true meaning of the word being preserved in Italy, where the covered pavements of streets are styled *portici*—connected the Temple with the town: four colonnaded courts—though the authorities are not quite clear upon this—stood about it, and the sheet of water in front must have immensely enhanced the architectural effect. There is no reason to think that the Temple was isolated; the courts and the covered road, and in all probability other buildings—for we read of a "banquetting hall" attached to it—were sufficiently near to group with it and to give it scale. Nothing is more remarkable in our modern buildings than their isolation; on approaching one of them the spectator is reminded of Sir Frederick Leighton's description of Cleopatra's Needle in its awkward perch upon the Embankment—"emphasising nothing, by nothing emphasised." Ancient buildings very rarely stood alone. The great Gothic churches rise like rocks out of a sea of roofs; the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge almost touch each other; Rome was literally crowded with buildings; even the Parthenon

does not stand alone on the Acropolis at Athens. The "opening out" or "disengaging" of Westminster Abbey has dwarfed the great church so utterly, and the eye is so gradually accustomed to the scale by the long unobstructed approach, that it is very difficult to realise its grandeur externally; the removal of St. Margaret's—clamoured for by some modern iconoclasts—is all that is wanted to reduce that noble building to the region of commonplace.

But after all, what are orders and styles, nay, even planning and proportion, but the skeleton of buildings? The great "wonder" of the place was not so much the Temple as the treasures of classic art which filled and—so it would seem—surrounded it. It is hard for us to realise the part played by statuary in the classical times; in Rome the statues were so numerous that it was said that the dead figures outnumbered the living.

Some of the sculptured columns are by Phocas, and by him possibly was the strange image which gave such importance to the Temple; Artemis—for so Diana was popularly called in Ephesus, and many of the inscriptions are in Greek *and* Latin—represented, as is generally believed, with a sort of embattled turret-like crown; the torso not human, and thence diminishing gradually (like the "terms" placed to mark boundaries) towards the feet; so formed as to resemble a figure enclosed in a long basket, through whose end projected the feet and some drapery; the forebodies of two stags appear from behind; the hands slightly raised and holding two long wands. Praxiteles has also been suggested as its artist; it is however quite uncertain; he will perhaps be remembered as the first sculptor to represent Aphrodite undraped. On the crown, girdle, and feet of Diana were curious characters, the so-called Ephesian letters; these, copied on scrolls of parchment, were sold and used as charms.

The interior was of great splendour, though beyond the beautiful pavement discovered by Mr. Wood, which showed traces of the effects of an earthquake, enough is not known for us to say much upon the system of ornament; but cedar and cypress, gold and jewels, figured in it, and some of the internal columns were of green jasper. One capital was found by Mr. Wood, and shows the ceaseless development and growth of architecture. The Temple is Ionic; this capital, now in the Museum, is Corinthian. At the Parthenon, which is Doric, Ionic details are found in the interior, and it would seem that both buildings were raised at a time when a change of taste was commencing. According to modern ideas a style, an order, even a period, are things whose

"correctness" can be measured by a particular standard to which all ancient examples must be taken, and to which all modern revivals must conform. Had such dogma been known to the ancients they would never have advanced beyond one type, and the human race would have been condemned to go on building Hypostyle Halls, or repeating the Parthenon down to the present day. Happily for mankind the ancients were trammelled by no such pedantry; each age had its architecture, which was simply the expression of its wants; no sharp line of division, no particular date marks the end of a style; no edict was ever issued that on a particular day the new order should be adopted. There were fashions in art as there were fashions in dress, but architecture, however beautiful, was always strictly subordinated to use, convenience, and the special purposes of the building.

Diana, to whom this stately Temple arose, was a goddess of numerous and contradictory attributes. She was associated with the moon, as Apollo, her brother, was with the sun; presided over the chase, and traversed the woods with her train of nymphs, clothed in the skin of a hind, a quiver hanging from her shoulder. She was the goddess of Arcadia, where temples arose to her in scores, and every spring and river supplied her with an epithet. She is Lucina, Luna, Bubastis, Hekate; although the assuager of pain, and author of abundant harvests, of peace and of health, yet she is in some places supposed to require human sacrifices, a relic of which tradition may be found in the scourging of Spartan youths before her wooden statue. Her attire varies in different countries: sometimes the hair is gathered in a knot behind the head; sometimes collected above it in the Dorian manner; the dress also undergoing a change to a Doric vest with Cretan shoes—a dead stag lying at her feet.

She was worshipped in all crossways (Trivia, three ways); she figured as the "overseer of harbours"; but perhaps her prettiest title was *Amnium Domina*, Lady of Streams.

She was pre-eminently the goddess of magic and enchantments, and the magicians of Thessaly pretended that by her aid they could cause eclipses and draw down the moon from the heavens.

The effect of this last supposed characteristic upon her greatest city—the Temple probably arising over her supposed birthplace—is well known, and Ephesus was the city of sorcery. A large trade was carried on in models of the shrine, and it was the alarm lest it should be interfered with by the growth of Christian converts and the preaching of St. Paul, that led to the great tumult recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, when the Ephesians, roused to frenzy, rushed into the vast theatre, filling its countless tiers of stone seats

with a living sea, bellowing for two whole hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

The Christian traditions of Ephesus are of great interest, but the ruins are not clearly distinguishable enough to speak positively of their site. Ayasalouk may itself be a corruption of Hagios Theologos, the Holy Divine, and it was probably in Ephesus that St. John wrote his Gospel and Epistles; his body and that of Timothy are said—and it is not improbable—to rest among the thickets and ruins of Mount Prion. The warning prophecy to "the angel of the church of Ephesus" in the second chapter of the Revelation will also recur to the reader, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

In the third century the Goths of the Bosphorus swept into the city and ravaged it. When Constantine adopted Christianity, the great Temple shared the fate of hundreds of similar buildings throughout the empire, and the town ceased to be of much commercial importance. A mistake was made in attempting to embank the river Cayster to increase the scour of the current; it not only failed, but had the contrary effect; the river silted up, and in time the Panormus was deserted.

The place fell into the hands of various adventurers, and at one time of a Greek pirate; this was in the eleventh century. In the thirteenth, the Ottoman Turks appeared upon the scene, and built a town on the hill of Ayasalouk. Then came the great order of Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who struck some coins here; a little later, the tremendous Tartar hordes of Tamerlane, and then the Turks once more. But Ayasalouk in its turn fell into decay, and its great mosque is now utterly roofless. The same cause it is said that produced the decay of the Campagna of Rome, was at work here; the streams, no longer confined within their banks, flooded the lands after rain, and produced malarial fever; the inhabitants of Ayasalouk moved to Kiskenjee on the neighbouring mountain, and a handful of provision dealers, attracted by the prospect of a little gold from the restless and picnicking Frankish visitors, remain to grow tobacco among the ruins of Ephesus.

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