

The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publishers for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.]

EXPLORATIONS AT SUSAN BY MADAME DIEULAFOY.*

Whatever be the cause, it was not until 1855 that the first serious effort was made on the mounds of Susa, the ancient Shushan, memorable in the Book of Esther. This attempt was made in 1855 by Sir W. F. Williams, and continued by Mr. Loftus, who laid bare the remains of a magnificent colonnade, with a frontage of 343 feet, and a depth of 244 feet, the three great mounds which represent the old city or palace of Shushan being more than three and a half miles in circuit. Numerous cuneiform inscriptions were also found, including a stately record of Artaxerxes Memnon, describing the completion of a palace dedicated to the goddess Anahis and Mithra by Darius the son of Hystaspes.

But these explorations, so happily begun, were brought to an abrupt termination by the fanaticism of the people of the neighborhood. Stricken by the cholera, then prevailing in Persia, the poor, ignorant natives attributed the visitation to the explorations by infidel ghouls near the tomb of Daniel. The camp was attacked, several men were killed, and the explorations came to end for a time at least.

Thirty years went by, and then European energy and intelligence, ever thirsting for new discoveries, renewed the attempt to wrest the secret of centuries from the buried palace of Susa. In 1881 M. Marcel Dieulafoy, who had studied architecture under Viollet-le-Duc, was commissioned by that eminent scholar in archeology to visit Persia and discover the link supposed to unite Oriental and Gothic art; in other words, to establish the paramount importance of Persian civilization in the development of the fine arts. Madame Dieulafoy—young, intelligent, full of energy and enthusiasm—accompanied her husband. The results of their journey from one end of Persia to the other were published in 1884 in a very handsome and important work. Another result of this journey was to suggest to these travelers the timeliness and very great value of a renewed exploration of the mounds of Susa. Altho wearied by the long, arduous journey, yet M. Dieulafoy was haunted by a desire to return to Persia. In the words of his wife:

"Six months later I dreamed of the nomads of Iran; the memory of Susa haunted my husband. He reconstructed in thought those palaces of the Achæmenians, to which Greece, Egypt and Western Asia had brought their homage and their treasures; the innumerable army of Xerxes, departing from Susa for the shores of Ionia, was assembled before him; he heard the lamentations of Atossa at the recital of the disaster of Salamis, and the glorious pean intoned by the Greeks over the smoking ruins of Persepolis."

Yielding to this uncontrollable impulse M. Marcel presented the subject to the Director of the National Museum. "The wisdom of the nations triumphed; springs of Persia, I was again to drink of your waters!" The Government advanced 41,000 francs, tents and other supplies for the exploring expedition and transportation to Alen; a modest sum indeed, if one considers the distances to be traversed, the number of assistants and laborers to be employed, and all the other incidental and unexpected expenses of such an enterprise. If the explorations at Susa were really accomplished with

only \$8,200 then that fact alone exhibits very high administrative ability on the part of M. Dieulafoy.

But before anything could be done at Susa the permission of the Shah was absolutely indispensable, and this was not an easy thing to obtain. Let us not be too severe in condemning Oriental potentates for their reluctance to yield their antiquities to the zeal of European archeologists. Even if they are not yet ready to exploit them themselves, the very fact that they are in such demand indicates a genuine value that may be of great importance at some future period of the empire; while the repeated bad faith of some European explorers in dividing the finds has naturally aroused the suspicion of Eastern rulers. Then again the fanaticism of the people living near the explorations, and their dislike to foreigners led to difficulties and complications in countries already sufficiently uneasy, and hard to keep in order. Instead of blaming the Sultan or the Shah for the objections they raise to such explorations in their territories, we think that we ought to be thankful and surprised that such investigations and the removal of the treasures discovered are permitted at all.

By the earnest interposition of Dr. Tholozan, a French physician who for many years has been influential at the Court of Nasr-e-Din Shah, and who, by the way, is father of Madame Lemaire the famous artist of Paris, the royal sanction was obtained to explore the mounds of Susa.

On the 17th of December, 1884, Monsieur and Madame Dieulafoy, with their French assistants, sailed from Toulon in a French transport bound to the Indian Ocean; it was desirable to start the explorations before the heats of summer. Thus began one of the most thrilling and romantic archeological expeditions of the century.

The obstacles overcome, the actual hardships and dangers encountered in this enterprise are most graphically described by Mme. Dieulafoy. Aside from the archeological value of the discoveries which form, of course, the pith of this volume, it possesses a rare interest because of the personal element which vivifies it. The pluck and perseverance displayed, the perils encountered from picarooning Arabs and fanatics, from rain and storms in a waste region or from pestilential miasmas, the exhausting annoyances and disappointments in dealing with ruffians and knaves in authority, and the final songs of triumph which ring over the discoveries achieved and the safe removal of the treasures won with such infinite heroism and toil render this work as captivating as a novel. It is, indeed, a remarkable book by a remarkable woman.

During all her Persian experiences Mme. Dieulafoy dressed invariably in male costume, went armed, and wielded a rifle with the skill of a practiced marksman. Among Orientals it is of the first importance not only to be better armed than they but that they should know that the wearer of fire-arms knows how to use them effectively. A wily Arab chieftain, who had some European guns, but not of the most recent invention, was on one occasion circumvented in his fell purposes by a display of marksmanship both by M. and Mme. Dieulafoy, which made it extremely hazardous for him to make an open attack on their camp.

On another occasion, which she considers the most perilous of her life, she happened to be left alone on one bank of a wide river with part of their effects, while the rafts went back to bring over her husband and the remainder of the luggage. At that moment a crowd of Arabs approached, armed, and eager to seize the goods, without regard to what became of the lonely woman standing there with no protection but her revolver and two carbines. What made the scene more ticklish, the party on the opposite bank were also aiming their rifles at the Arabs, who were so near to her that a volley fired at them might also strike her down. Pointing her revolver at the raging Arabs, Mme. Dieulafoy exclaimed:

"I have fourteen bullets at your disposal!" Thus she kept the ruffians at bay for nearly half an hour, or, as she says, "Thirty minutes, thirty centuries!" At last her husband and his assistant arrived with their attendants, and the Arabs retreated behind the willows. "Never in my life have I experienced such a feeling of isolation, never have I had such a clear consciousness of a great danger," is her observation on this remarkable adventure.

Two expeditions were made by the exploring party, in two successive rainy seasons, the wet weather, however uncomfortable, being preferable to the uncomfortable heats of summer. Two separate collections of "finds" were shipped from the ruins to Europe, but with enormous difficulty, not only as regards transportation, but also the obstacle raised at every step by the local authorities in Persia and in Turkey, from whose port, Bassora, they were finally placed on board the steamer. Repeatedly did it look as if they were about to lose all the results of their labor. Diplomatic aid and the timely arrival of a French man-of-war at last enabled M. Dieulafoy to overcome every obstacle and to enrich the museums of Paris with inestimable treasures of artistic and historic value. Among these is a massive colossal bull and fragments of bull-shaped capitals, similar to those of Persepolis. But more rare and valuable than these were the evidences discovered of the Ceramic art of Persia in the Achæmenid period.

The explorations, carried very extensively through the mounds, of which the loftiest is upward of an hundred feet high, developed the fact that after the destruction of the palaces of Darius and Artaxerxes Memnon, the Sassanian dynasty also erected fortresses and palaces on the remains of the older structures. M. and Mme. Dieulafoy—for both engaged equally in superintending the excavations—succeeded in distinctly tracing the constructions of both these periods, and displaying the fact that Ceramic art formed an important feature of each. A magnificent lion, probably of the Darius period, was found painted on bricks with enamel. The bricks were in fragments and greatly scattered. They were gathered and cleaned with the utmost patience, and one of the most superb monuments of Oriental art was thus rescued from oblivion. As the author says:

"The skillful modeling, the harmonious but fantastic coloring of the animal, reveal an art of indescribable strength and originality. The fur is white, the mane green, the lower part of the body adorned with blue hair; the hairs of the whiskers are blue and yellow, the muscles of the shoulders are indicated by blue lumps, those of the thigh by a yellow spot surrounded by blue. . . . The animal walks with calmness, resting on enormous paws whose feline suppleness is felt. . . . This remarkable picture, inclosed between two flowered bands, is surmounted by daisies and a denticulation."

Our limits forbid notice of all the valuable treasures discovered, but mention must be made of the extraordinary series of slabs found in the original palace of Darius, on which were wonderful paintings richly glazed representing processions of warriors belonging to the royal guard, called the Immortals because their number was never less nor more than exactly ten thousand. Nothing finer in majestic definition or beauty of coloring has been discovered in ancient art than this magnificent series of Achæmenid enameled paintings.

A point that has been proved by these discoveries is the fact that encaustic painting with heavy glasses or enamels is an original Persian art, suggested perhaps by the Ceramic art at Babylonia, but pursued in every period of Persia's art development, and not (as some have supposed) an art borrowed from the Chinese either in the Sassanid or the later Abbasidean period. It is distinctly and emphatically an art peculiar to the genius of Persia.

This work has been issued by the publisher in handsome form, with clear print and on excellent paper. The illustrations, reproduced from the original French edition leave nothing to be desired.

* AT SUSAN, THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF THE KINGS OF PERSIA. NARRATIVE OF TRAVEL THROUGH WESTERN PERSIA AND EXCAVATIONS MADE AT THE SITE OF THE LOST CITY OF THE LILIES, 1881-1886. BY MADAME JANE DIEULAFOY, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor; Laureate of the French Academy, etc. Translated from the French by FRANK LINTON WHITE. Illustrated with 121 engravings on wood and a map. Philadelphia: Gebble & Company 1890.