

Source: Description of Greece by Pausanias (Translated by Arthur Richard Shilleto 1905)

BOOK II.—CORINTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE Corinthian territory, a part of Argolis, gets its name from Corinthus, and that he was the son of Zeus I know of none who seriously assert but most Corinthians, for Eumelus the son of Amphilytus of the race called Bacchidæ, who is also said to have been a poet, says in his History of Corinth (if indeed he is the author of it), that Ephyre the daughter of Oceanus, dwelt first in this land, and that afterwards Marathon the son of Epopeus, the son of Aloeus, the son of the Sun, fled from the lawless insolence of his father, and took a colony into the maritime isle of Attica, and when Epopeus was dead returned to the Peloponnese, and after dividing the kingdom among his sons went back into Attica, and from his son Sicyon Asopia got the name of Sicyonia, and Ephyrea got called Corinth from his son Corinthus.

Now Corinth is inhabited by none of the ancient Corinthians, but by colonists who were sent there by the Romans. And this is owing to the Achæan confederacy. For the Corinthians joined it, and took their part in the war with the Romans which Critolaus, who had been appointed commander in chief of the Achæans, brought about, having persuaded the Achæans and most of the Greeks outside the Peloponnese to revolt against Rome. And the Romans, after conquering all the other Greeks in battle, took away from them their arms, and razed the fortifications of all the fortified cities: but they destroyed Corinth under Mummius the General of the Roman army, and they say it was rebuilt by Julius Cæsar, who instituted the present form of government at Rome (the Imperial). Carthage also was rebuilt in his term of power.

Now the place called Crommyon in the Corinthian terri-

tory is so called from Cromus the son of Poseidon. Here they say was the haunt of the Phæan boar, and the scene of Theseus' legendary exploits against Pityocamptes (the *Pinebender*). As you go forward the famous pine was to be seen even in my time near the seashore; and there was an altar to Melicerta there, for it was here they say that he was conveyed by the dolphin: and Sisyphus, finding him lying dead on the shore, buried him at the Isthmus, and established the Isthmian games in honour of him. Now it is at the head of the Isthmus that the robber Sinis took two pinetrees and bent them down to the ground: and whoever he conquered in battle he tied to these pinetrees, and let the pines go up into the air again: and each of these pines dragged the poor fellow tied to it, and (neither yielding but pulling with equal vigour) the victim tied to them was torn asunder. In this way Sinis himself was killed by Theseus. For Theseus cleared all the road from Trœzen to Athens of evildoers, having killed those whom I mentioned before, and, at Epidaurus the Holy, Periphetes the putative son of Hephæstus, whose weapon in fighting was a brazen club. The Isthmus of Corinth extends in one direction to the sea near Cenchrææ, and in the other to the sea near Lechæum. This Isthmus makes the Peloponnese a Peninsula. And whoever attempted to make the Peloponnese an island died before the completion of a canal across the Isthmus. And where they began to dig is now plainly visible, but they didn't make much progress because of the rock. The Peloponnese remains therefore what it was by nature main land. And when Alexander, the son of Philip, wished to make a canal through Mimas, the work was all but completed. But the oracle at Delphi forbade the navvies to complete the work. So difficult is it for man to oppose the divine ordinances. And the Corinthians are not alone in their boasting about their country, but it seems to me that the Athenians even earlier used tall talk in regard to Attica. The Corinthians say that Poseidon had a controversy with the Sun about their land, and that Briareus was the Arbitrator, awarding the Isthmus and all in that direction to Poseidon, and giving the height above the city to the Sun. From this time they say the Isthmus belongs to Poseidon.

The great sights at Corinth are the Theatre, and the Stadium of white stone. And as you approach the temple of the god, there are statues of the Athletēs who have been conquerors in the Isthmian games on one side, and on the other pinetrees planted in a row, mostly in a straight line. And at the temple, which is not very large, there stand some Tritons in brass. And there are statues in the porch two of Poseidon, and one of Amphitrite, and a brazen Sea. And inside Herod an Athenian placed in our time 4 horses all gold except the hoofs, which are of ivory. And two golden Tritons are near the horses, ivory below the waist. And Amphitrite and Poseidon are standing in a chariot, and their son Palæmon is seated bolt upright on the dolphin's back: and these are made of ivory and gold. And on the middle of the base, on which the chariot rests, is the Sea supporting the child Aphrodite rising from it, and on each side are the so-called Nereids, who have I know altars in other parts of Greece, and some have temples dedicated to them as Shepherdesses, in places where Achilles is also honoured. And at Doto among the Gabali there is a holy temple, where the peplus is still kept, which the Greeks say Eriphyle took for her son Alcæmon. And on the base of Poseidon's statue are in bas-relief the sons of Tyndareus, because they are the patron saints of ships and sailors. And the other statues are Calm and Sea, and a horse like a sea-monster below the waist, and Ino and Bellerophon and Pegasus.

CHAPTER II.

AND inside the precincts there is on the left hand a temple of Palæmon, and some statues in it of Poseidon and Leucothea and Palæmon himself. And there is also a crypt, approached by an underground passage, where they say Palæmon is buried: whatever Corinthian or foreigner commits perjury here has no chance of escaping punishment. There is also an ancient temple called the altar of the Cyclopes, to whom they sacrifice upon it. But the tombs of Sisyphus and Neleus (for they say that Neleus

came to Corinth, and died there of some disease, and was buried near the Isthmus), no one could find from the account in the poems of Eumelus. As to Neleus they say that his tomb was not even shewn to Nestor by Sisyphus: for it was to be unknown to all alike. But that Sisyphus was buried at the Isthmus, and indeed the very site of his tomb, a few Corinthians who were his contemporaries know. And the Isthmian games did not fall into disuse when Corinth was taken by Mummius, but as long as the city lay desolate, these games took place at Sicyon, and when the city was rebuilt the old honour came back to Corinth.

The Corinthian seaports got their names from Leches and Cenchrias, who were reputed to be the sons of Poseidon by Pirene the daughter of Achelous: though in Hesiod's poem *the great Eœæ* Pirene is said to be the daughter of Cœbalus. And there is at Lechæum a temple and brazen statue of Poseidon, and as you go to Cenchreæ from the Isthmus a temple of Artemis, and old wooden statue of the goddess. And at Cenchreæ there is a shrine of Aphrodite and her statue in stone, and next it, on the breakwater near the sea, a brazen statue of Poseidon. And on the other side of the harbour are temples of Æsculapius and Isis. And opposite Cenchreæ is the bath of Helen: where much salt water flows into the sea from the rock, like water just with the chill off.

As you go up the hill to Corinth there are several tombs along the wayside, and at the gate is buried Diogenes of Sinope, whom the Greeks nickname the Cynic. And in front of the city is a grove of cypress trees called Craneum. Here is a temple of Bellerophon, and a shrine of Melænian Aphrodite, and the tomb of Lais, with a lioness carved on it with a ram in its front paws. And there is another monument of Lais said to exist in Thessaly: for she went to Thessaly when she was enamoured of Hippostratus. She is said to have come originally from Hyccara in Sicily, and to have been taken prisoner as a child by Nicias and the Athenians, and to have been sold at Corinth, and to have outstripped in beauty all the courtesans there, and so admired was she by the Corinthians that even now they claim her as a Corinthian.

The notable things in the city are partly the remains

of antiquity still to be seen there, partly works of art more recent, when Corinth was at the height of all her glory. In the market-place, for most of the temples are there, is Ephesian Artemis, and there are two wooden statues of Dionysus gilt except the faces, which are painted with red paint, one they call Lysian Dionysus, and the other Dionysus the Reveller. The tradition about these statues I will record. Pentheus they say, when he outraged Dionysus, among other acts of reckless daring actually at last went to Mount Cithæron to spy the women, and climbed up into a tree to see what they were doing: and when they detected him, they forthwith dragged him down, and tore him limb from limb. And afterwards, so they say at Corinth, the Pythian Priestess told them to discover that tree and pay it divine honours. And that is why these statues are made of that very wood. There is also a Temple of Fortune: her statue is in a standing posture, in Parian marble. And near it is a temple to all the gods. And near it is a conduit, and a brazen Poseidon on it, and a dolphin under Poseidon's feet passing the water. And there is a brazen statue of Apollo called the Clarian, and a statue of Aphrodite by Hermogenes of Cythera. And both the statues of Hermes are of brass and in a standing posture, and one of them has a shrine built for it. And there are three statues of Zeus in the open air, one has no special title, the second is called Zeus of the Nether World, and the third Zeus of Highest Heaven.

CHAPTER III.

AND in the middle of the market-place is a statue of Athene in brass: on the base are sculptured effigies of the Muses. And above the market-place is a temple of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, who was Emperor of the Romans after Cæsar, the founder of modern Corinth.

And as you go from the market-place towards Lechæum there are vestibules, on which are golden chariots, one with Phaethon in it (the son of the Sun), and the other with the Sun himself in it. And at a little distance from the vestibules on the right as you enter is a brazen statue

of Hercules. And next to it is the approach to the well of Pirene. They say that Pirene became a well from a woman through the tears she shed, bewailing the death of her son Cenchrias at the hands of Artemis. And the well is beautified with white stone, and there are cells like caves to match, from which the water trickles into that part of the well which is in the open air, and it has a sweet taste, and they say that Corinthian brass when hissing hot is dipped into this water. There is also a statue of Apollo near Pirene, and some precincts of the god. There is also a painting of Odysseus taking vengeance on the suitors.

And as you go straight on for Lechæum, you will see a brazen Hermes in a sitting posture, and by it a ram, for Hermes more than any of the gods is thought to watch over and increase flocks, as indeed Homer has represented him in the *Iliad* "The son of Phorbas rich in flocks and herds, whom Hermes loved most of the Trojans, and increased his substance."¹ But the tradition about Hermes and the ram in the rites of the Great Mother (though I know it) I purposely pass over. And next to the statue of Hermes are Poseidon and Lencothea, and Palæmon on the dolphin's back. And there are several baths in various parts of Corinth, some erected at the public expense, and others by the Emperor Adrian. And the most famous of them is near the statue of Poseidon. It was erected by Eurycles a Spartan, who beautified it with various stones, amongst others by the stone they dig at Crocæ in Laconia. On the left of the entrance is a statue of Poseidon, and next to him one of Artemis hunting. And many conduits have been built in various parts of the city, as there is abundance of water, as well as the water which the Emperor Adrian brought from Stymphelus: the handsomest is the conduit by the statue of Artemis, and on it is a figure of Bellerophon, and the water flows by the hoof of Pegasus.

As you go from the market-place towards Sicyon, there is visible on the right of the road a temple and brazen statue of Apollo, and at a little distance a well called the well of Glauce: for she threw herself into it, thinking the water would be an antidote against the poison of

¹ *Iliad* xvi. 490, 491, cf. also Hes. Th. 444.

Medea. Above this well is what is called the Odeum. And near it is the tomb of the sons of Medea, whose names were Mermerus and Pheres, who are said to have been stoned by the Corinthians because of the gifts which they took Glauce. But because their death was violent and unjust, the children of the Corinthians wasted away in consequence, until at the oracular response of the god yearly sacrifices were ordained for them, and a statue of Panic erected. This statue still remains to our day, the figure of a woman represented as feeling the greatest terror. But since the capture of Corinth by the Romans and the decay of the old Corinthians, the sacrifices are no longer continued by the new settlers, nor do their children continue to shear their hair, or wear black raiment. And Medea when she went to Athens, lived with Ægeus, but some time after (being detected plotting against Theseus) she had to fly from Athens also, and going to the country which was then called Aria, gave her name to its inhabitants, so that they were called Medes from her. And the son whom she carried off with her when she fled to the Arians was they say her son by Ægeus, and his name was Medus. But Hellenicus calls him Polyxenus, and says Jason was his father. And there are poems among the Greeks called Naupactian: in which Jason is represented as having migrated from Iolcus to Corcyra after the death of Pelias, and Mermerus (the elder of his sons) is said to have been torn to pieces by a lioness, as he was hunting on the mainland opposite: but about Pheres nothing is recorded. And Cinæthon the Lacedæmonian, who also wrote Genealogical Poems, said that Jason had by Medea a son Medeus and a daughter Eriopis: but of any children more he too has made no mention. But Eumælus' account is that the Sun gave Asopia to Aloeus, and Ephyræa to Æetes: and Æetes went to Colchis, and left the kingdom to Bunus the son of Hermes and Alcidamea, and after Bunus' death, Epepeus reigned over the Ephyræans. And when in after days Corinthus the son of Marathon died childless, the Corinthians sent for Medea from Iolcus to hand over the kingdom to her: and it was through her that Jason became king of Corinth, and Medea had children, by

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