

THE JUNO OF ARGOS.

A RECENT DISCOVERY OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ATHENS.

BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL.

THE excavations of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in Attica, Bœotia, Eubœa, and other districts of Greece, which in the course of the last six or seven years have yielded such satisfactory results, during the past year reached the highest point of attainment.

Owing to the generous subvention of the Archæological Institute of America, we were enabled during the season to undertake work on a much larger scale, with a large corps of workmen (nearly two hundred men), which for the interest in the site chosen, and the importance of the discoveries made, may bear comparison to the work of the Germans at Olympia, and to Schliemann's excavations among the ruins of Troy, Mycenæ and Tiryns.¹

The site of the most important of our several excavations during the season of 1892 was that of the temple of Hera, or Juno, about three miles from the town of Argos at the slope of one of the mountains (Eubœa), running on the east of the Argive plain down to the promontory of Nauplia and the beautiful Nauplian Bay. It thus lies about half-way between the most ancient and important cities of the heroic age of Greece, Mycenæ and Tiryns, and was in the Homeric days the chief sanctuary of the district—in fact of the whole of the Peloponnesus. The Heraion, or Temple of Hera (Juno), at Argos was the cradle from which all service of Hera emanated for the whole of Greece. Even in Homer she is chiefly identified with Argos; for Zeus there

says to her, "Twain goddesses hath Menelaos for his helpers, even Hera of Argos and Alkomenean Athene." And Hera answers him, "Of a surety three cities are there that be dearest far to me, Argos, and Sparta, and wide-wayed Mycenæ."

It was here that, according to a later tradition, Agamemnon offered sacrifices before leaving for Troy. This ancient temple, perhaps the most ancient in Greece, though it had a stone substructure, was, as such early temples were,

built to a great extent of wood. In the year 423 B. C., through the negligence of the priestess, who fell asleep and did not attend to the light, the famous sanctuary was burned down. A few years later, from 420 to 416 B. C., the temple was rebuilt (as we have found) immediately below the site of the earlier one, by the architect Eupolemos. The great gold and ivory statue of Hera in this temple was the work of the famous sculptor (second only to Pheidias, his contemporary) Polykleitos of Argos. The renown of this statue was as great as that of the Athene of Pheidias in the



RIGHT PROFILE. (FROM A CAST.)

Parthenon, and nearly as great as that of the statue of Zeus by the same master at Olympia. In fact, the Heraion of Argos with its statue held the same position for the Peloponnesus in the ancient world that the Parthenon with its statue held for Attica and the rest of Greece above the Isthmus of Corinth.

In the year 1854, the late Mr. Rizo-Rhagabé, archæologist, statesman, poet, and historian, whose recent death we have had to

¹ The director was most ably assisted in this work by the annual director, Professor Poland of Brown

University, and the students of the school, Messrs. Brownson, Fox, De Cou, and Newhall.

deplorable, made tentative excavations on the site of the Heraion. But the very limited means which he had at his disposal, as well as the fact that the art of excavating was at that time in its infancy, did not enable him to do more than run trenches around two sides of one of the temples to a depth below which most of our finds were made. Of the earlier temple the supporting wall, built of huge unhewn blockspiled one upon the other, has ever been visible. This form of architecture is called cyclopean. We cut trenches above this supporting wall, and there found, besides the remains of a stone platform, thick layers of charred wood, together with some interesting fragments of the earliest kinds of pottery, bronze, and beads, which are the actual, tangible proof of the historical record concerning the burning of this temple. Of the second temple, built by Eupolemos, virtually nothing was visible at the time we began our excavations. We cleared away the earth that had accumulated upon the foundation walls of this temple, which proved to be 128.48 feet in length by 65.62 feet in width. On these walls the soil had accumulated to a height of between four and five feet. After clearing this away we also dug in the interior of the temple, laying the whole of the foundation bare, and one end, in front of the temple, we cut down to a depth of over thirty feet.

Besides the walls and the architectural ornaments belonging to the temple which were thus discovered, the harvest of objects of ancient art and craft dating from the earliest prehistoric periods to later Roman times was exceedingly rich and varied. It included large masses of early pottery, terra-cotta figurines and idols, statuettes and other objects in bronze, innumerable rings in bronze, lead, silver, and gold, as well as scarabs, Egyptian images, terra-cotta plaques, heads in glass, amber, bone, and stone, and many other objects in ivory, gold, silver, iron, and terra-cotta. Most of these objects go back to the remotest antiquity. They are far earlier than the building of this temple in the fifth century B. C., and were found in a layer

of black earth mixed up with decayed organic matter and bones of animals found about fifteen feet below the top soil at the deep cutting which we made at the west end of the temple. They thus ran below the foundation of the

temple, and either mark the site of an early altar below the earliest temple, or were thrown over the supporting wall of the earlier temple and accumulated here, or, finally, were used as what is called dry rubbish to fill up the uneven surface when the second temple was built.

The early terra-cotta images of Hera, of which I shall speak, were found here. Immediately outside and within the walls of the temple we were fortunate enough to come upon some well-frescoed works of marble sculpture of the period of the building of the temple itself, which manifest the

highest artistic qualities, and are of supreme archæological interest. Besides a well-preserved portion of a metope, representing a nude warrior in high relief, two marble heads in comparatively perfect preservation—probably from these metopes—were found; while the gem of the whole excavations of the year 1892 is the life-size marble head of Hera, which, being undoubtedly an original work of the time of Pheidias and Polykleitos, and manifesting the touch of a great master, is in itself a unique treasure, perhaps the finest head of the great period of Greek art in existence.

Thus on this site alone we have discovered the earliest and rudest types of the primitive representations of the goddess Hera, while, at the same time, we are presented with a representation of this goddess coming from the highest period of the development of Greek art. In the rudest form of image the face looks more like that of a bird than of a human being. Schliemann found similar images at Mycenæ and Tiryns, and representations of them on jars at Hissarlik (Troy). A second category of such figures, though still rude, shows indications of a head with some pretensions to humanity in form. A third group, still very rude, shows a marked advance, representing the human form



LEFT PROFILE. (FROM A CAST.)

and face, if not with beauty, still with distinctness of meaning.

We find that Hera, like most Greek gods, was at one time worshiped in an image, or rather a symbol, which had no likeness to a human figure. At Argos there was a pillar which was preserved and seen even in Roman times, and this pillar was meant to represent the goddess. It is highly probable that we have discovered this very pillar in our excavations. At Samos Hera's image in the earliest times was a simple board, and we are told that this board was superseded by an image having human shape which Prokles brought from Argolis. Through Prokles we get a fixed date, and we thus know that there existed at Argos an image of Hera in human form before the Dorian migration, certainly before the year 1000 B. C.

From these earliest and rudest types we pass onward through the periods in which Greek art emancipated itself from the trammels of archaic conventionality. The fifty years from 510 B. C. to 460 B. C. marked a change from the lifelessness of works not far removed from those we have just described to the masterpieces of a Pheidias. When once the Greek artist was relieved from the constraint which the symbolism of religious cults placed upon him, and when, on the other hand, through the custom of erecting statues to athletic victors, he was encouraged, and even forced, to strain his power in the perfect rendering of the human form, and finally, with the great impulse which the Greeks received from their victory over the Persian foe, and the consequent uplifting of their national spirit, their artistic genius was directed into channels of wide and lofty thought. In the well-known frieze from the Parthenon, in the portion containing the assembly of the gods, seated beside Zeus there is a matronly female figure holding with her one hand the veil which covers her head. The face of this figure in relief is sadly mutilated, but in the whole form we can divine that all elements of conventionality have been cast off, that with Pheidias an adequately lofty conception of the queen of the gods was attained. But the creation of the ideal of Hera in art was not the work of Pheidias or of the Attic school, but was achieved by Polykleitos and the Argive school. The statue of Hera which this great artist made for the temple near Argos which we have been excavating was one of the most famous in antiquity. The statue was of gold and ivory, colossal in dimensions (certainly over thirty feet in height), and represented the goddess seated on her throne. The face, the nude portions of the body (neck, arms, hands, and feet) were of ivory; while the richly decorated throne, as well as the drapery and

the crown on her head, were of gold profusely decorated with repoussé patterns, chased and enameled, so that to the beauty of form were added harmony and brilliancy of color. She had a crown or band of gold surmounting her head upon which the Hours and Graces were represented in relief. In her left hand she held the scepter surmounted not by the eagle, as is the case with Zeus, but by the cuckoo, a bird specially connected with her mythology. In her right hand she held a pomegranate, a symbol of vitality appropriate to this matronly protectress of married life. The nearest approach to the artistic quality of the great work is now afforded by the discovery of the marble head, which was found in front of the west side of the temple containing the gold and ivory statue.

This head of the Argive goddess, of which we present three views, is of Parian marble, and is of life-size. If we attempt to define the nature of the statue to which it belonged, we must first consider that the head was evidently placed straight between the shoulders at right angles to the chest. This absolute straightness of position of the head, and hence of the look of the eyes, gives to a statue a solemnity, simplicity, and severity which in the earlier works contribute to the impression of hardness and lifelessness. Throughout, in this head, in the symmetry maintained in each half, there is a repose which is saved from lifelessness by the delicate modeling of the eyes, cheeks, nose, and mouth, and by the graceful contour of the whole. This regularity is maintained in the oval outline of the face, in the arrangement of the waves of hair on each side of the central parting; but the intermediary modeling of the details of the face, and even of the ridges of the hair, gives a life and a play of light and shade, especially when seen from a distance, which enliven this almost mechanical symmetry to a graceful sense of repose and dignity. On the other hand, the graceful and delicate treatment of the lips, mouth, and chin, set, as it were, in the severer surroundings of this solemn simplicity of outline composition in the head as a whole, especially when placed straight upon the neck at right angles to the chest, does not tempt us to dwell solely upon this element of grace at the expense of the severer qualities. Still, in the modeling the work is far removed from the hard conventional treatment of the earlier works. It has all the qualities of breadth and grandeur which characterize the work of the fifth century B. C., more especially that associated with Pheidias and the Parthenon, and may be said to mark the highest point in the religious conceptions of the ancient Greeks.

Charles Waldstein.



FROM A CAST.

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