

MISCELLANEOUS.

A NEW BOOK ON ANCIENT ATHENS.

Prof. Ernest Arthur Gardner of London is one of the foremost living authorities on classical archæology, and, having studied the topography of Athens on the spot, has condensed his own results as well as those of his predecessors—Curtius, Wachsmuth, Michaelis, Milchhöfer, F. C. Penrose, etc.—in a stately volume of 579 pages (Macmillan). The book is a pleasure to the eye. The cover shows a restoration of the Propylæa and the Parthenon in gilt outlines, and wherever we open the book we find instructive pictures. The frontispiece is a most artistic photogravure of a view of the Acropolis, and many other full-page illustrations are not less well executed. With the assistance of maps and diagrams we can study the several sites of interest almost as easily as if we were transported to the spot.

Professor Gardner reviews in the introductory chapter the geography of Athens, its climate, and other advantages, which must be regarded as a part of the characteristic features of the city. The bulk of the book (Chapters II.—VIII.) is devoted to the Acropolis, the construction of its walls, its status before the Persian wars, and to the buildings erected during the Periclean age. The Parthenon and Erechtheum, as might be expected, receive special attention. The remaining six chapters unroll before our eyes a picture of Athens during the fifth and fourth centuries (Chap. IX.). Then we have a survey of the most important buildings scattered over the town, the Theseum, Asclepium, and the theater (Chap. X.), the potter's field or Ceramicus (Chap. XI.), which is the famous burial-place of Athens, with its many monuments and tombs of famous men, compared by our author to England's Westminster Abbey (p. 457); further, a description of the city in Hellenistic and Roman times (Chap. XII.), a review of Pausanias's visit to Athens, elucidated by a good map on tissue paper superimposed upon a map of modern Athens, and finally a chapter on the Piræus, which concludes the work.

The book is obviously written for the general public, and will be serviceable to the student of Athenian history and art. All controversial matter is therefore wisely excluded from the main text. Mooted points are either entirely omitted or, wherever this procedure did not seem advisable, relegated to notes. In consideration of the author's unmistakable intention, it would not be fair for a reviewer to enter into details and turn critic, especially as all moot points are of minor interest, and moreover as the author, besides being an authority on the subject, proves remarkably careful not to venture on the slippery ground of new-fangled theories or hypotheses. His views are upon the whole based upon the traditional and well-founded interpretation of the facts. But we may be permitted to state our divergence from his opinion in one case, viz., in his explanation of

the adjective "enneapylon," i. e., the nine-gated, which is used by Greek authors with reference to the prehistoric wall, the Pelargicon, that surrounded the ancient city. Here, we venture to think, Professor Gardner is too conservative when he follows those former archæologists who studied the topography of Athens in their own homes from descriptions in Pausanias and other classical authors. He says "the most probable conjecture is that they were set one within another in a series of bastions or terraces." So far as we remember, Curtius was the first to suggest that the Pelargicon surrounded the foot of the Acropolis, not the crest of the plateau, and thus it is probable that the nine gates are distributed over its entire circumference. There must have been two fortified gates, one in the Pelargicon, another on top, and there is not room enough for nine successive gates between these two points. Moreover, a series of nine gates could by the complexity of this unusual mode of fortification only have added to the difficulties of the defence. We might further add that Professor Gardner speaks up for the honor of his countryman Lord Elgin, commonly censured for the barbarous spoliation of the Parthenon sculptures, claiming that he only transferred them to a place of safety. But these points are of minor importance, and assuming Professor Gardner now and then to be misguided, his incidental mistakes do not detract from the many excellencies of the book.

As a specimen of Professor Gardner's treatment of this subject, we reproduce some extracts from his chapter on the Ceramicus. Upon the whole there is among artistic monuments a striking absence of symbols giving us information concerning the beliefs of the Athenians as to the fate of the soul after death. Having discussed some of the numerous representations on the tombs which allude to the departure of the deceased or to events or habits of his life, he distinguishes on the oil decanters (on the *lecythi*) three different kinds of pictures: first, actual or ideal representations of the funeral; secondly, subsequent visits to the tomb with food and drink offerings; and thirdly, scenes of the journey to Hades. He continues:

"From the funeral two scenes are commonly selected: the lying in state of the deceased on a bed or bier, among mourning relatives, who do not always show in their grief the restraint which we see on the reliefs; and the deposition in the grave,—sometimes represented as it actually happened, but more often in an ideal scene, where two winged genii, Sleep and Death, lay in the grave a figure of the deceased with none of the stiffness of death, but seated or recumbent as if asleep. The tomb itself often appears in the background. The representation of the visit to the tomb is again, in some respects, like what actually happened: the relatives of the deceased, especially women, bring sashes and wreaths and other offerings in broad, flat baskets to decorate the tomb; but often the deceased himself appears, a figure quite like the rest, seated or standing on the steps of the tomb to receive what is brought, or to welcome the visit of his friends. In this case we may perhaps recognise an allusion to the representation of the deceased that existed upon his stela; but the vase painter, rather than copy another work of art, prefers to give his own direct version of the presence of the deceased. Sometimes, however, the deceased is represented as actually painted or sculptured upon the tomb. Yet another form in which he may appear in these scenes on the vases is that of an *εἰδωλον*, a little butterfly-like figure of human form with wings. In the journey to Hades, Charon and his boat are constant features, and he is evidently a realistic study in many cases from a rustic ferryman; sometimes the marshy bank of the Styx is represented by a group of rushes; and often Hermes appears as the guide and herald of the dead. The deceased often carries with him some of his funeral

gifts to the ferry-boat ; and sometimes, by a curious confusion of place, Charon and his skiff actually approach the tomb itself to fetch its occupant.

“ From the lecythi and the sculptured tombs together, we may gather some notion of how the Greeks thought of death and of the life beyond it. It is evident that there was some confusion, both in belief and in ritual, between various inconsistent views. The most prevalent notion seems to be of the continued existence of the dead in the neighborhood of the place where his body lies, of his presence to receive the visits of his relatives and their offerings, of his appearing to them as he had been in life, or sometimes hovering as a diminutive ghost about them and their gifts. It is impossible not to recall in this connection the description of Plato in the *Phædo*, how those souls that had allowed themselves to be too much mixed up and contaminated with the body in their earthly life, found it impossible to free themselves from it entirely at death, but still hovered about the cemeteries. Side by side with this conception of the actual presence of the deceased at his tomb, and sometimes inextricably confused with it, we find some allusions to the myth of Charon, but not to any other incidents of the life beyond the grave. The myths of Hades, of judgment and punishment or reward, that we read of in poets and philosophers, find no reflection in the popular feeling, so far as it is recorded for us by these monuments. In fact, it is not only for the beliefs of the people about death, but also for the representation of their life, that the sculptured tombs of the Athenians are valuable to us ; for they supplement and correct in a remarkable way the impressions given by literature. Especially notable are the prominence of women on the tombs and the constant representations of husband and wife, of parents and children, in the intimacy of family life. This is a side of the Greeks that we might well overlook but for these monuments ; yet we can hardly believe that what they turned to in moments of sorrow and therefore of the deepest feeling had not also, though not superficially conspicuous, a real influence on their life and character.”

P. C.

EXPLORATIONS IN BIBLE LANDS DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Prof. H. V. Hilprecht, of the University of Pennsylvania, commonly considered the leading Assyriologist of America, presents in his latest work, *Explorations in Bible Lands During the 19th Century*,¹ the results of the excavations which have been made in Babylonia, Assyria, Palestine, Egypt, Arabia, and the country of the Hittites, so called, during the century just passed. Professor Hilprecht is the editor of, and the main contributor to, this stately volume, his department being Assyria and Babylonia. For a statement of the results of excavations in Palestine, he has engaged Dr. J. Benzinger ; in Egypt, Prof. Georg Steindorff ; for Arabia, Prof. Fritz Hommel ; and for the Hittite inscriptions, Prof. P. Jensen. The territory on the Euphrates near Babylon having yielded so much interesting and valuable material, it is but natural that the department of Assyria and Babylonia is the bulkiest in the book, consisting alone of 622 pages. Professor Hilprecht narrates here the long story of the rediscovery of Nineveh and Babylon, beginning with the earliest explorers, without forgetting to summarise the reports which Mediæval travellers brought home of the sites of the lost cities. We become acquainted with all the important details of the excavations made by Claudius

¹ With nearly two hundred illustrations and four maps. Philadelphia : A. J. Holman and Company. 1903. Pages, xxiv, 809.