

**THE FIRST EPISTLE
TO THE
CORINTHIANS**

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The first epistle to the Corinthians by J. J. Lias

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J. J. LIAS

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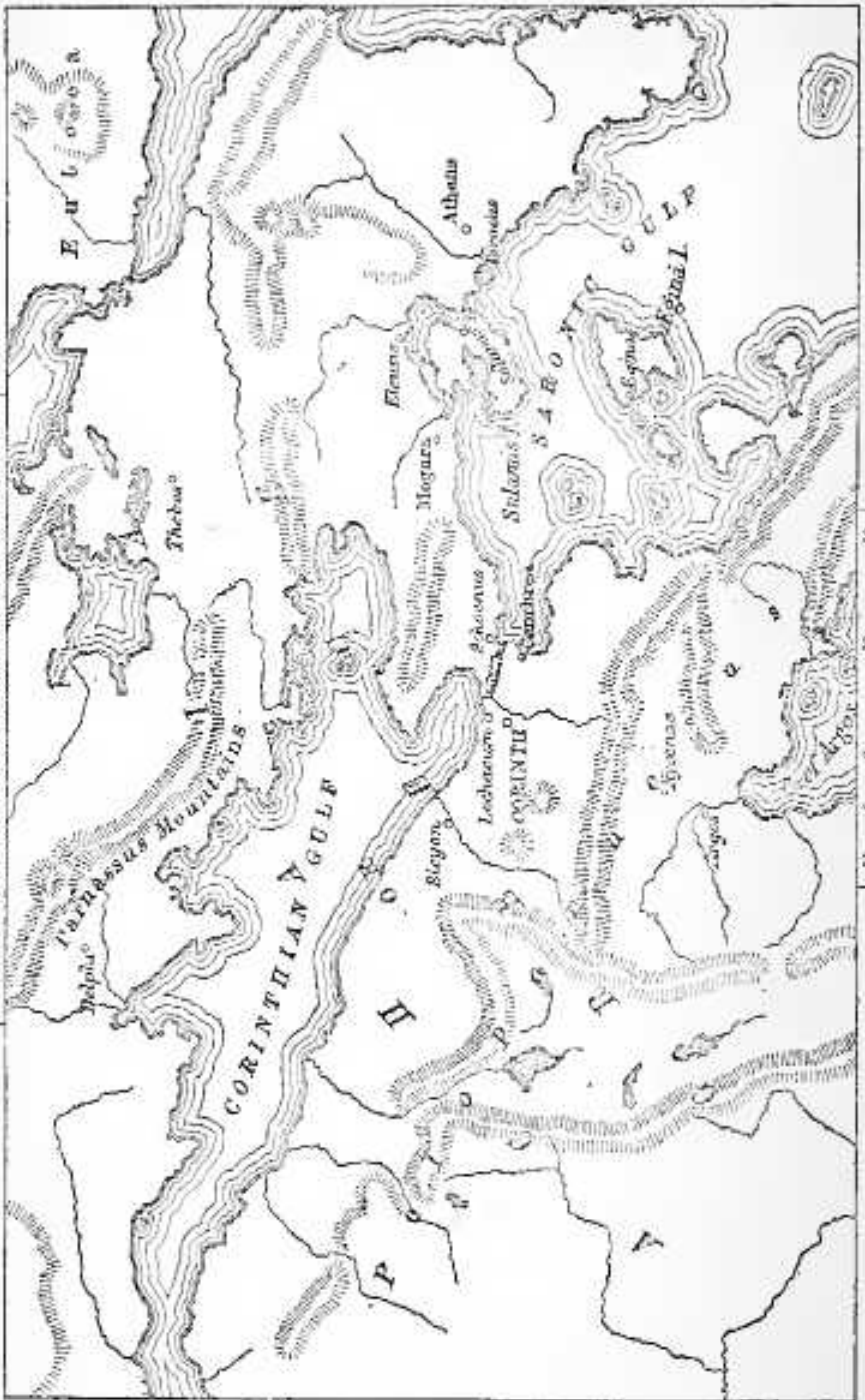
The Cambridge Bible for Schools.

THE FIRST EPISTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

CORINTH AND THE ADJACENT COUNTRY



The Cambridge Bible for Schools.

GENERAL EDITOR:—J. J. S. PEROWNE, D.D.
DEAN OF PETERBOROUGH.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS,

WITH NOTES, MAP AND INTRODUCTION

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

CORINTH. ITS SITUATION AND HISTORY.

AT the time of the Apostle's visit, Corinth was the most considerable city in Greece. Its commercial importance had always been great. Situated on a narrow neck of land between two seas¹—the far-famed Isthmus—the temptations to prefer commerce to war, even in times when war was almost the business of mankind, proved irresistible to its inhabitants. The command of the Isthmus was no doubt important in a military point of view; but at a time when navigation was difficult and dangerous², the commercial advantages of the position were enormous. Merchants arriving either from the East or from the West, from Italy or Asia Minor, could save themselves the risk of a hazardous voyage round the Peloponnesus, and found at Corinth both a ready market for their wares, and a convenient means of transport. Corinth, therefore, had always held a high position among the cities of Greece³, though the military genius of Sparta and the intellectual and political eminence of Athens secured to those two states the pre-eminence in the best periods of Greek history. But in the decline of Greece, when she had laid her independence at the feet of Alexander the Great, the facilities for trade enjoyed by Corinth gave it the first place. Always devoted to the arts of peace, in such a degree as to incur the contempt of the Lacedæ-

¹ Ovid (*Mét.* v. 407) and Horace (*Ode.* i. 7. 2) call it *bimaris Corinthus*.

² Cape Malea, now St Angelo, was "to the voyages of ancient times, what the Cape of Good Hope is to our own." Conybeare and Howson. Vol. i. ch. xii.

³ Corinth early founded colonies, of which the most famous were Syracuse in Sicily, and Corcyra, known to the Italians as Corfu, but still retaining in Greek its ancient name *Κέρκυρα*.

monians¹, it was free, in the later times of the Greek republics, to devote itself undisturbed to those arts, under the protection, for the most part, of the Macedonian monarchs. During that period its rise in prosperity was remarkable. It had always been famous for luxury, but now it possessed the most sumptuous theatres, palaces, temples, in all Greece. The most ornate of the styles of Greek architecture is known as the *Corinthian*. The city excelled in the manufacture of a peculiarly fine kind of bronze known as Corinthian brass². Destitute of the higher intellectual graces (it seems never, since the mythic ages, to have produced a single man of genius) it possessed in a high degree the refinements of civilization and the elegancies of life. It was regarded as the "eye³," the "capital and grace⁴" of Greece. And when (B. C. 146) it was sacked by Mummius during the last expiring struggle of Greece for independence, though it was devoted to the gods, and not allowed to be rebuilt for a century, its ruins became the "quarry from which the proud patricians who dwelt on the Esquiline or at Baiae, adorned their villas with marbles, paintings, and statues⁵."

The colony (Julia Corinthus) founded here by Julius Caesar in B. C. 46 soon restored the city to its former greatness. The site had lost none of its aptitude for commerce. The city rose rapidly from its ruins. The Roman proconsul of Achaia fixed his seat there (Acts xviii. 12). Merchants once more, as of old, found the convenience of the spot for the transport or disposal

¹ Plat. *Apophth. Lac.* Agis son of Archidamus, vi.

² Some writers have supposed this *aes Corinthiacum* to have been the gold, silver and brass melted down in the conflagration which followed the taking of the city by Mummius. But this, which seems intrinsically improbable, is refuted by the fact that the Corinthian brass was well known *before* the destruction of Corinth. See note in Valpy's Edition on the passage quoted below from Florus, and Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*.

³ Cicero *pro Man.* 5.

⁴ Florus II. 16. 1.

⁵ Stanley, *Introduction to 1st Corinthians*, p. 2. Rome, says Strabo (VIII. 6. 23), was filled with the spoils of the sepulchres of Greece, and especially with the terra cotta vases which were found there. Every tomb, he adds, was ransacked to obtain them.