

The Excavations of Pompeii

The first excavations of Pompeii (says a writer in the Philadelphia 'Catholic Standard and Times') commenced in 1748, under Charles III. of Naples. These, however, did not assume extensive proportions. Under the French domination the work was carried out on a much grander scale. After the death knell of French influence in South Italy, Pompeii was again left to its fate. But in 1863 the excavating of the entire city in a thorough fashion was decided upon, and has continued with little intermission ever since.

The preservation of paintings, furniture, and articles of food which have been discovered by the excavators is really marvellous. Many of the frescoes have been removed bodily to Naples, and give visitors to the National Museum there a good idea of the facility with which those artists of the first century used the brush.

The furniture recovered in the little city shows to what a refined pitch had the civilisation of the Pompeians come. Beautifully carved chests, tables inlaid with ivory, seats and luxurious couches were found in the dwellings of the upper classes. In the ladies' boudoirs we found that the world, with all its boasted civilisation in this age of progress, has not advanced so much as it fancies. Rouge pots for the fading beauties of the citia, face powders in profusion, superbly-

mounted mirrors made of polished metal, hair combs of ivory and mother-of-pearl, gold rings set with precious stones, large necklaces—all these were found just as they were left down that fatal evening so long ago.

In the kitchens interesting and pathetic finds were made. Pots, pans, and stoves were in every house. Roasted meat, stewed rabbit, and baked bread were discovered in ovens. Nuts, tomatoes, grapes, apricots, eggs, and sweets were in abundance in the pantries, thus giving another indication how little modern Italians have deviated in many respects from the modes of life and customs of their far-off ancestors.

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