

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1876

DR. SCHLIEMANN'S DISCOVERIES AT MYCENÆ

OF all the archæological discoveries which this nineteenth century has witnessed, that which Dr. Schliemann has just reported from Mycenæ will certainly be regarded as among the most important. Indeed, as throwing a light on those early days of Greece, the glories of which are reflected in the Homeric poems, it will stand pre-eminent, and cast even the researches made by the same ardent explorer at Hissarlik into the shade. There was in that case always some degree of uncertainty, and even his most sincere admirers and sympathisers could not but feel that among the successively disinterred cities it was doubtful which, if indeed any, was the Troy of the Iliad, and whether "the treasure of Priam" was in reality that of the unburied father of Hector.

At Mycenæ, on the contrary, the claim of the ruins which bear that name to be regarded as the representatives of the ancient city founded by Perseus, the massive walls of which were built by the Cyclopes, appears to be indisputable. It is true that Strabo relates that not a vestige of the town had survived to his time, but the account of Pausanias fully identifies the spot where modern geographers place Mycenæ as having been in his days the traditional site of the city.

"In returning to Tretus, on the way to Argos, the ruins of Mycenæ are," he says, "seen on the left, nor is there anything recorded of greater antiquity in the whole of Argolis. When Inachus was king he called the river which flows by after his name, and consecrated it to Juno. In the ruins of Mycenæ is the fountain called Perseia. There are also the underground buildings of Atreus and his sons, in which were kept their treasures. There is, too, the tomb of Atreus and of all those whom Ægistheus slew at the banquet after their return with Agamemnon from Troy. As to the tomb of Cassandra, it is disputed by the Lacedæmonians who live about Amychi. But there is the tomb of Atreus himself and of the charioteer Eurymedon, and that in which Teledamus and Pelops lie together (who were the twin sons of Cassandra, and were slaughtered as infants by Ægistheus at their parents' tomb), and the grave of Electra. But Clytemnestra and Ægistheus were buried a little without the walls as they were not thought worthy to be interred within, where Agamemnon himself, and those who were slain with him, lie."

Such was the legend 1,700 years ago, and making all allowance for the reconstruction of history or legend to which local guides are so prone, there is enough to show that a strong tradition remained upon the spot of an early race of kings whose deeds were famous in the then remote days when the Iliad was composed.

Even now the gate with the lions still stands in the Cyclopean walls, the subterranean buildings and various sepulchres still exist, and the tradition of the treasures of Atreus and his sons appears not to have been without a good foundation. Who were the occupants of the tombs now rifled by Dr. Schliemann must of course be conjectured, but he seems to have brought to light more than

one of the kings of the golden city, more than one βασιλῆα πολύχρυσου Μυκῆνης.

Until we receive photographs of the various objects discovered in the tombs it is idle to speculate upon their forms, which are of course but vaguely described in a hurried account such as that furnished to the *Times* by Dr. Schliemann. Though many of them appear to be novel in character and the general contents of the graves rich beyond all comparison, yet the results of the excavations do not as yet appear to be at all out of harmony with what might have been predicated of the contents of a royal tomb belonging to what prehistoric archæologists would term the close of the Bronze period of Greece—a country where notoriously much allowance must be made for Egyptian influences. The bronze knife, the curious bronze dagger, the bronze swords and lances, the former having scabbards ornamented with gold, the gold-covered buttons, which from the description would seem to be not unlike those found by Sir R. Colt Home in some of our Wiltshire barrows, the long flakes or knives of obsidian, the style of ornamentation of the gold with impressed circles and spiral lines, are all in keeping with such a period. But though in general harmony with what might have been expected, there are, as already observed, also important and special features of novelty in the discovery.

The unprecedented abundance of the gold ornaments, the masks, the great diadems—which possibly may throw some light on the Scandinavian bronze ornaments which go by that name, and also on the Irish gold "minds" and the golden crosses in the form of laurel leaves—the silver sceptres with the crystal balls, the engraved gems, the vases, the great gold pin with the female figure crowned with flowers—possibly the Juno Antheia worshipped in the city of Argos—in fact the whole find will attract the attention of both classical and prehistoric antiquaries.

The pottery discovered appears also to be of peculiar fabric and material, and will no doubt contribute much to our knowledge of ancient fictile art. As all the originals will go to enrich the already important Museum of National Antiquities at Athens, it will be mainly from photographs and drawings that these wonderful objects will be known in this country. Let us in passing express a hope that the photographic and artistic representations of the Mycenæ treasure may be more satisfactory than those which constitute Dr. Schliemann's Hissarlik Album.

With regard to the antiquity to be assigned to these interments, it will be well to bear in mind that they lay at a considerable depth below the slabs first discovered by Dr. Schliemann, the ground beneath which he originally regarded as virgin and undisturbed; that above these slabs lay a great thickness of *débris*, probably accumulated at a time when the city was inhabited, and yet that Mycenæ was destroyed by the Dorians of Argos, about B.C. 468, at a period so early in Greek history that no authenticated coins of the city are known. It seems to have been from the depth at which the interment lay that they escaped the researches of former excavators, including Lord Elgin, upon the site. The reputed tomb of Theseus, which was rifled by Cimon the Athenian the year after the destruction of Mycenæ, must have lain nearer the surface, but the bronze spear and sword which were found in it, and which were brought with the

bones in triumph from Scyros to Athens, point to its having belonged to much the same period. The spear of Achilles in the temple of Minerva at Phaselis, and the sword of Memnon in the temple of Æsculapius at Miodia, were also of bronze, of which metal, as Pausanias observes, all the weapons of the heroic age were made. Had Augustus but known of the buried treasures of Mycenæ when he was collecting the *Arena Heroum* for his museum at Caprea, the researches of Dr. Schliemann might have been in vain.

As it is, he is to be congratulated not only on the extent and importance of his discoveries, but also on his investigation having brought to light those horned Juno idols which he anticipated finding. His theory of some of the owl-like figures from Hissarlik bearing reference to the name of *γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη* has met with more ridicule than it deserved, and if the discovery of these horned figures of *βοῶπις πρόνια Ἥρη* should be substantiated, Dr. Schliemann will be fairly entitled to claim the victory over his adversaries. Under any circumstances both he and his no less enterprising helpmeet deserve the most cordial thanks of all scholars and antiquaries.

J. E.

PESCHEL'S "RACES OF MAN"

The Races of Man and their Geographical Distribution.

From the German of Oscar Peschel. (London: Henry S. King and Co., 1876.)

THIS book appears from the preface to be founded on General A. von Roon's "Ethnology as an Introduction to Political Geography," though it is substantially a new work intended to form a complete manual of ethnology. The actual title is somewhat misleading, as no special prominence is given to problems of geographical distribution, while languages, myths, and mere tribal distinctions, are treated with great and somewhat bewildering detail. The perusal of a work like the present, which, with great labour attempts to bring together in a compact form, all the existing information as to the physical and mental characteristics of the various races of mankind, impresses one painfully with the still chaotic state of the infant science of anthropology. With an overwhelming mass of detail as to secondary and often unimportant characters, we find a frequent want of exact knowledge as to the chief physical and mental characteristics of the several races and sub-races.

Language, myths, habits, clothing, ornaments, weapons, are described in detail, while we are left without any sufficient information as to the stature, bodily proportions, features, and broad mental characteristics of many important groups of men. The reason is obvious. The former class of facts can be readily obtained by passing travellers; while the latter require the systematic observation of an intelligent resident and more or less skilled anthropologist, and can only be arrived at by means of careful measurements and long-continued observations. It is not sufficiently considered that in almost every part of the world there is more or less intermixture of races, brought about by various causes—as slavery, war, trade, and accidental migrations. Hence in many cases the passing traveller is altogether deceived as to the characters of the race, and any observations he may make

are of little value. It is only by a long residence among a people, by travelling through the whole district they inhabit, and by a more or less accurate knowledge of the surrounding tribes with whom they may be intermixed, that the observer is enabled to disentangle the complexities they present, and determine with some approach to accuracy the limits of variation of the pure or typical race. Unfortunately this has yet been done in comparatively few cases; but anthropologists are now becoming impressed with its importance, and we may soon hope to obtain a body of trustworthy materials, which may enable us to determine, with more confidence than is yet possible, the characters and the affinities of many of the best marked races of mankind.

We will now give a sketch of the mode in which the subject is dealt with in the present work, and point out some of the more striking merits and defects it possesses. The first and larger portion of the book treats of the various physical and mental characteristics of mankind, the latter portion being devoted to a systematic review of the races and tribal divisions. The introductory chapter treats of man's place in nature, origin, and antiquity; and while adopting the developmental theory as regards animals, argues with more or less force, against the Darwinian theory of the animal origin of man and especially against the influence of sexual selection. The hypothetical continent—Lemuria—is suggested as the most probable birthplace of the human race, and it is explained that this locality is "far more orthodox than it might at the first glance appear, for we here find ourselves in the neighbourhood of the four enigmatic rivers of the scriptural Eden—the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Indus." The unity of mankind as constituting a single *species*, is strongly urged, while the evidences of his antiquity are briefly but forcibly set forth. We are glad to see due weight given to Horner's borings in the Nile valley, which we have always thought have been unduly depreciated. It is well remarked that the suggestion of the piece of pottery found at a depth of 39 feet having fallen into an ancient well or tank, is altogether groundless, because this is only one out of a large number of fragments of bricks and pottery found at various depths over an extensive area, and there is certainly no reason why the one found at the greatest depth should have fallen into a well rather than any or all of the others. It seems not to have been considered, by those who have advanced this view, that a well at Memphis, close to the Nile, could not have been very deep, and that if it had been it would probably have been in use for many centuries, and would have become the receptacle, not of a solitary fragment of pottery, but of a whole collection of utensils, ornaments, and domestic implements, such as invariably fall into wells in the course of time. Moreover, a well 40 feet deep in the soft alluvium of the Nile must certainly have been lined with stone or brickwork, and have been protected at the top by some inclosure solid enough to have resisted the muddy inundation water, and it would almost certainly have been covered over to keep out sand and dust in the dry season. It would therefore be almost impossible to bore on the site of an ancient well without knowing it; so that no more hasty and unsound suggestion to avoid a supposed difficulty was ever made than this "well theory," and yet, strange to say, it has been almost uni-