

FRASER'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1877.

MYCENÆ.¹

(FROM PERSONAL INVESTIGATION.)

Then divine, full-eyed Juno answered,
'Three cities are particularly dear to me—
Argos, and Sparta, and wide-wayed My-
cenæ.'—*Iliad* iv. 51.

THE plain of Argos, surrounded with bold and picturesque mountain ranges, would, for its beauty alone, be worthy of a visit; the remains of its very old cities give an additional attraction; and the late explorations and discoveries at Mycenæ have drawn the attention of all who take an interest in archæology or classic literature.

All Homer's phrases descriptive of the region indicate great fertility; he calls it 'steed-nourishing,' 'fruitful;' and the words 'udder of the land,' which he applies, may not only describe it as a country of ample food supplies, but the term may be also founded on that particular worship of the cow which as we know from books, and our knowledge has been added to from the recent excavations, was a leading trait of the religion of that part of the world. This fertility seems to have attracted many races, and invasion and conquest were the result. New races seem to have brought myths with them, and left more than one stratum of this kind in the literature which has come down to us. We have first the Pelasgians, whose early and little known period is connected with the name of Inachus, the first king of Argos. With his daughter, we obtain the first glimpse of

the primitive bovine cultus, which is supposed to have come from Egypt, and there is the authority of Diodorus Siculus that the story of Isis had been transferred to Argos. The fragments of traditional history seem to show that there had been in these far back times a considerable intercourse between the nations round the Mediterranean. Herodotus begins his History by telling how the Phœnicians went to Argos with Egyptian and Assyrian merchandise, and how they carried off the daughter of Inachus—a story that has very little in it which can be identified with the drama of Æschylus. As Herodotus gives it, and supplemented by his remarks on the Greek customs, it has much the appearance of being the first germ of the story of Helen and Troy. Later still comes the race of Pelops the Phrygian. How far the history of this king and his descendants is literal or mythical, has still to be settled; but accepting the tradition, it is evidence of some connection between Greece and Asia Minor at that particular period. Invasion is no doubt the most probable fact upon which to found the explanation. If an Ionian race colonised the coast of Asia Minor at one time, the contrary process may have taken place at another. If conquest or invasion brought a people from the north-west corner of Asia to the Argolic plain, they,

¹ [The writer visited Mycenæ in the month of March 1877.]

no doubt, brought some of their religion and myths, as well as their arts, along with them. Such an event could not have taken place without an influence having been produced among the invaded race.

The consideration of this Asiatic influence is of deep importance, as bearing on the sources of all Greek art, but it is of still higher moment when we have to consider the remains of that art which are still found in the locality associated with the first advent of a Lydian dynasty. Thucydides explains the circumstance that Pelops was able, although a foreigner, to give his name to the whole peninsula, that it was owing to his great wealth, and coming among a poorer population; but wealth implies cultivation of the arts, and if the historian has, in this case, given us a reliable statement of the matter, an importation of art influence from Asia about that early period may be freely enough accepted. Homer's own allusions to Sidonian art are too numerous to leave the point doubtful. This superiority which seems to have existed on the Asiatic coast of the Mediterranean was not confined to one department, for in addition to the cunning art of pouring gold around silver, the women of Sidon and Lesbos are mentioned as having been skilful in faultless works of embroidery. The sculpture on the triangular slab over the Lion Gate at Mycenæ is described by all as bearing a strong resemblance to the art of Assyria; this resemblance is no doubt owing to the Asiatic influence of a school of art which followed a style similar to that practised at the time on the banks of the Euphrates.

Even the Cyclopean construction of walls, of which such splendid specimens still remain at Tiryns and Mycenæ, came also, if we accept Strabo's statements, from Asia; he

says that the walls of Tiryns were built by the Cyclopes, and that they came from Lycia. Proetus seems to have sent for these people, implying that such builders did not exist about Argos at that time; they were called 'Gastrocheires' for the reason that they got their living by the practice of their art. The term would not sound well in the ear of modern society if it were literally translated and applied to architects or artists in our own day; still its real signification is in itself honourable, and not the less so for its antiquity. In a former article on Troy,² I pointed out from the fragments of Cyclopean walls yet to be seen at Gergis, in the Troad, that this mode of building had undergone in that region a similar process of change to that which we find it had passed through in the Argolic plain. One object called for this identification, and that was to indicate the significance of the circumstance that no structure of this kind had yet been discovered at Hissarlik. Strabo's account that these Gastrocheires came from that direction gives still further force to what was then said, and adds much to the high probability that the contemporaneous cities of Mycenæ, Tiryns, and Troy would not differ much in the masonry of their fortified walls. Although this Cyclopean masonry is found all the way from Asia to Etruria, as well as in the islands of the Archipelago, yet it may be worth noting that no such building is to be found in Egypt. Whatever might be the influence which carried it over the region just named, that influence produced no result on the architecture of the Nile Valley. Although the large stones in the walls of Jerusalem and Balbec are large enough to justify the use of the word Cyclopean, yet that term is never applied to them. The transi-

² 'The Schliemannic Ilium,' *Fraser*, July 1877.

tion from rude unhewn stones to the cut polygonal and then to the rectangular which can be traced on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, is missing on the south-east corner of the same sea. The old walls of the Temple inclosure at Jerusalem have been probed to the bottom, and there large squared blocks resting on the solid rock are found. This geographical distribution of a peculiar kind of masonry cannot be considered without calling to mind the affinities of race and religion which Mr. Fergusson has so ably insisted on as bearing upon the proper understanding of the history of architecture.

Mycenæ as well as its neighbouring city Tiryns are both mentioned by Homer in the catalogue of the ships. In both cases there are descriptive terms given with their mention, and these terms are valuable as bearing on their archæology. Tiryns is called 'the well-walled': its great rampart of massive but rude Cyclopean masonry yet standing in defiance of decay attest the truth of Homer's words. The walls are twenty-five feet thick: some of the blocks may have had a slight trimming, but most of them are untouched with a tool. Mycenæ again is called the 'well-built city.' As it was stronger from its position, it did not require such walls as we find at Tiryns; being, as is generally supposed, later than the last-mentioned city, its walls indicate a development in the art of construction, for at the Lion Gate, as well as at the smaller gate, the stones are partly squared, and might be described as 'rudely rectangular.' Here also it is satisfactory to discover the faithfulness of Homer's descriptive adjectives. From this we may be justified in supposing that there was equal truth in Juno's words when she called the city 'wide-wayed Mycenæ.' It might be difficult to define what were the notions in the days of Homer as to

what constituted a wide street; all we can conclude is that the thoroughfares of Mycenæ were wider than most other places of that time. Troy is also described by the poet under the same words, as well as having been 'well built.' We have found that Homer is accurate in his descriptive terms, and his applications of the same words to Mycenæ and Troy are strong evidence in themselves of what I insisted on in my former article, that should the walls of Ilium be discovered they ought at least to bear some resemblance to those of the contemporaneous capital of the Atreidæ. The absence of a single stone of 'well-built' or of Cyclopean masonry at Hissarlik need not now be dwelt on.

When it is added that Mycenæ was 'rich,' and had 'gold in plenty,' the statements respecting it to be found in Homer are about exhausted. Giving such limited information about this place, it would be hard to say whether it was probable that he had seen it or not. If the poet was an Achaian and not an Ionian Greek, as is strongly urged by at least one high authority at the present day, the details of such an important city could not have been unknown to him. On the other hand, supposing he had been an Ionian, the city of the great leader of the Trojan Expedition—'the king of men'—must have been talked of in Chios and Smyrna, and its chief features would have been heard of by the one author, or the many, whatever view may be taken of the Homeridæ. The scant allusions to Mycenæ are in perfect keeping with the other epithets to be found in the *Iliad* connected with geographical references; the probable explanation being, that whatever knowledge the author might have of particular places, all the details were kept subdued as a background for the main story of the piece.

Mycenæ is situated on the north-

east of the Argolic plain : its position is under the shelter of prominent mountains, and is partly concealed from below by the lower ridges. The position must have been good as a defence to the rich and tempting plain from incursions going southwards, and it must have been a very important stronghold strategically with reference to all invasions of the Peloponnesus coming by way of the Isthmus. In this circumstance we may perhaps have the explanation of its importance and repute at such an early period in the history of Greece. The place is usually understood to have been destroyed in 468 B.C.; according to some it has been deserted ever since; others again doubt this statement. Strabo gives it that Mycenæ was razed by the Argives, and that not a trace of the city was left; Pausanias, a century and a half later, describes the place, showing that Strabo either had not looked carefully or had not been lucky in his sources of information relating to it. The place yet agrees so very fairly with the description of Pausanias, that this continuation of identity might be given as evidence of the enduring character of the walls, which seem to have suffered so little during such a long period of years.

It may perhaps be as well to give the words of Pausanias. He says :

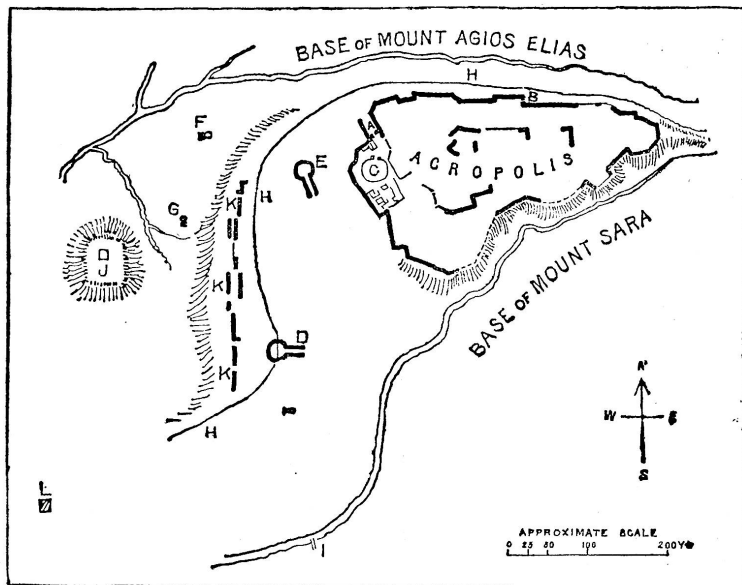
Among other parts, however, of the inclosure which still remain, a gate is perceived with lions standing on it; and they report that these were the work of the Cyclopes, who also made for Prætus the wall in Tirynthus. But among the ruins of Mycenæ there is a fountain called Persea, and subterraneous habitations of Atreus and his sons, in which they deposited their treasures. There is also a sepulchre of Atreus, and of all those who, returning from Troy with Agamemnon, were slain at a banquet by Ægisthus. For there is a dispute between the Lacedæmonians who inhabit Amyclæ and the Mycenæans concerning the sepulchre of Cassandra. There is also a tomb here of Agamemnon and of his charioteer Eurymedon, and one sepulchre in common of Teledamus and Pelops,

who, as they report, were twins and the offspring of Cassandra, and who, while they were infants, were slain by Ægisthus at the tomb of their parents. There is likewise a sepulchre of Electra; for she was given by Orestes in marriage to Pylades, from whom, according to Hellenicus, she bore to Pylades two sons, Medon and Strophius. But Clytemnestra and Ægisthus are buried at a little distance from the walls; for they were not thought worthy of burial within the walls, where Agamemnon and those that fell with him were interred. (*Taylor's Translation.*)

The traveller who now visits Mycenæ will find accommodation in the village of Charvati, from which it is nearly a mile up to the citadel. In walking up to it, the road ascends by the lower ridge; part of an old Cyclopean bridge can be seen below, where the ancient road is supposed to have crossed from Argos and Tiryns. Just as the Acropolis comes in sight, the so-called Treasury of Atreus is found under your feet. From this there extends a long rocky ridge, with fragments of stone, where lines of wall may be traced, which may perhaps be the remains of houses as old as 500 B.C. Below on the left are the Third and Fourth Treasuries; and on the right again, close under the walls of the Acropolis, is the Second Treasury, in which Madame Schliemann has done such good service by clearing out and exploring. Now it can be properly seen and examined, which is of importance, for although such structures are not uncommon in Greece, yet the two larger so-called treasuries at Mycenæ are the most perfect of this class of remains as yet known in that country. At this point the visitor is close to the Acropolis, and the most prominent feature which it now presents is the large mass of earth which Dr. Schliemann has thrown over the walls while making his excavations. The old Cyclopean wall is entirely covered for some distance by this process. To the right it emerges and turns up the rocky glen where

the bare cliffs are so high and perpendicular that they must have been a sufficient defence in themselves. Still there are remains of parts of the wall to be seen, which must have been of more use in time of peace as a shelter to those within, than as a defence in time of war against those without. On the left of the explorations is the Gate

of the Lions, and the natural scarp along the north side not being so strong originally, a more formidable wall had been constructed to supply the deficiency. About the middle of this side there is a second gate, but it is much smaller than the principal one. The size of the stones and the mode of construction would imply that they



SKETCH-PLAN OF MYCENÆ.

- A Gate of the Lions.
- B Smaller gateway in north wall.
- C Dr. Schliemann's excavations.
- D Treasury No. 1, the so-called Treasury of Atreus.
- E Treasury No. 2, explored by Madame Schliemann.
- F Treasury No. 3.
- G Treasury No. 4.
- H H H Aqueduct.
- I Remains of ancient bridge of Cyclopean masonry.
- J Isolated hill with structural remains.
- k k k Remains of the ancient city.
- L Modern village of Charvati.

both belonged to the same date. Within this surrounding fortification the rock rises towards the centre, and there are still remaining portions of retaining walls, which would indicate that the ground had been levelled for houses and streets.

It is at the north-west corner of the Acropolis, and just within the Gate of the Lions, that Dr. Schlie-

mann has lately made his very successful explorations; indeed, one of his first operations was to clear out the gate down to the old roadway, and this most interesting portal, one of the oldest, and most perfect for its age, can be seen now in its full proportions. One curious feature has been brought to light, and that is a small cell, very small indeed, on

the inside, and which was evidently intended for the accommodation of the door-keeper. While clearing out the gate, the excavations were also carried on within, and these resulted in the discovery of a series of most interesting tombs, full of valuable relics of a far-past period in the history of man, and which are of the highest importance to the science of archæology.

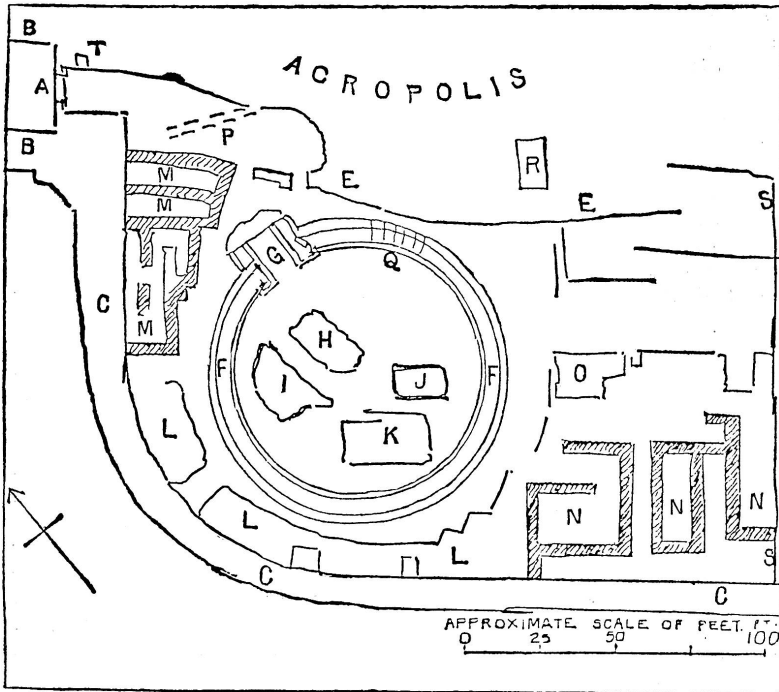
One of the structures laid bare at this place is so entirely new in all its details, more particularly to the student of classical architecture, that its original purpose presented a problem of some difficulty, although there is a certain agreement of opinion regarding it. Still, being so unique, there need be no surprise if newer light should demand a revision of the case, and a change in the verdict. It was described in Dr. Schliemann's letters to the *Times* when he first brought it to light as a 'circular double parallel row' of large slabs. The circle formed by these two rows of slabs is at least 100 feet in diameter; the space between the rows is about 3 feet 6 inches. 'The slabs are from 4 feet 2 inches to 8 feet 2 inches long, and 1 foot 8 inches to 4 feet broad.' They may be a little over 4 inches in thickness. The space between these two circles would seem to have been covered over with horizontal slabs of stone, for the upper edges, on the inside, have been mortised to receive tenons, and which no doubt kept the horizontal slabs secure in their places. A few of these covering slabs still remain *in situ* on one part of the circle, and, as the stones are all dressed and worked tolerably smooth, they seem to have fitted together pretty accurately; the whole, when complete, must have presented the appearance of a circular stone bench. There seems to have been an entrance to this inclosure from the north, which is the side of the circle nearest to the

Gate of the Lions, showing a relationship in the arrangement, for those entering the Acropolis would only have to turn to the right, and the entrance to the circle would be before them.

The question naturally arises as to the purpose of this structure. As it may be called a new antiquity, its use is not at first apparent. On uncovering the slabs, Dr. Schliemann thought that they might be tombstones; on abandoning this idea, his next guess was that the place might have been a garden in connection with the tombs beneath, and there are Scriptural and other historical references which might be given to countenance this notion. While I was sketching on the spot, and thinking over its probable intention, the Pnyx at Athens forced itself into my mind. I could not say that there was any resemblance between the architectural features of the structures, for the Pnyx is a wondrous specimen of excavation in the solid rock, as well as of massive building, while the circle of Mycenæ is constructed of very slight slabs of stone not much over four inches thick. The Pnyx, although thus massive, was still only an inclosure marked off, within which those privileged might enter and discuss public affairs, while those who were without could hear and see. In these last qualifications the two places are identical. In the notes which I sent from Athens with my sketches of the spot, and which appeared in the *Illustrated London News* on the 24th of March last, I suggested the identity, and at the same time in support of this theory referred to the sixth book of the *Odyssey*, where Nausicaa tells Ulysses the way to follow to her father's house, and she describes the forum, 'fitted with large stones dug out of the earth;' this would, no doubt, be Cyclopean masonry, but it is described as being 'round the fair

temple of Poseidon,' being evidently a stone circle; also a description in the Shield of Achilles, where there is an assembly, and a case of ransom money is being tried. The litigants had friends in the

crowd, for they were applauding both, and the heralds were keeping back the people, 'but the elders sat upon polished stones, in a sacred circle.' To this might be added an allusion in the *Iliad*, at the end of



SKETCH-PLAN OF DR. SCHLIEIMANN'S EXPLORATIONS IN THE ACROPOLIS OF MYCENÆ.

- A The Gate of the Lions.
- BB Ancient walls of the approach to gateway; large stones, rudely squared.
- CCC Ancient walls of the Acropolis, of rude polygonal Cyclopean masonry.
- EE Inner retaining wall, old Cyclopean masonry.
- FF Circular inclosure of two rows of slabs.
- G Supposed entrance to circle.
- H I J K Pits sunk by Dr. Schliemann in which the tombs were found.
- LLL Excavations sunk between the circle and outer walls of the Acropolis.
- MMM Walls described as Cyclopean houses.
- NNN Walls described as a 'vast Cyclopean house,' and supposed by Dr. Schliemann to be the Royal Palace.
- O Excavation in which treasure was found.
- P Old aqueduct or drain.
- Q Portion of circle where some of the covering slates are still *in situ*.
- R Temporary shed for the soldiers who guard the place.
- SS This line indicates the limit of the excavations as far as they have been yet carried out.
- T Door-keeper's cell within the Gate of the Lions.

the eleventh book, to the 'forum and seat of justice' which the Greeks had constructed among their ships, and where it states it was there that 'the altars of their gods also were erected.' Whether

this was circular or not, is not stated.

A few days after this was published, Mr. F. A. Paley, of University College, Kensington, called attention to it by a letter which appeared

in the *Times*, and he pointed out a passage in the *Orestes* of Euripides (v. 919), 'where we read of a countryman present at the trial of the son of Agamemnon, and described as one "seldom coming into close contact with the city and the circle of the Agora."' He also pointed out that the author of the Greek 'Argument' expressly says that the trial is supposed to be held in the Acropolis of Mycenæ, and Mr. Paley comes to the conclusion that the stone circle is the Agora of that city. The Rev. Sir George W. Cox also sent me a note, pointing out a passage in the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles (v. 161) describing a somewhat similar place: the words are, 'Artemis who sits on circular throne of Agora.' It may also be added that Mr. C. T. Newton, of the British Museum, in his paper on Mycenæ to the Society of Antiquaries, in May last, adopted this theory, that the circle was an Agora or public place.

It was within this circle that Dr. Schliemann discovered the tombs which produced such a rich harvest of archaic treasures. If I understand right, these tombs were partly excavated in the rock, and a wall surrounded them on what was originally the lower side of the sloping hill. Whether the circle was constructed as part of the tombs, or not, I have not information enough as yet to guide in forming a judgment, but it will be an important question to realise whether such was or was not the case. It is quite possible, as such circles were considered to be sacred, as described in the Shield of Achilles, and contained temples and shrines, and were places of justice as well as public assemblies, that the existence of the ashes beneath may have been understood as adding a sanctity to the spot. When Dr. Schliemann first announced to the King of the Hellenes, by telegraph, that he had discovered the tombs of Agamem-

non, Cassandra, Eurymedon, and their companions, he declared that 'these tombs are surrounded by a double parallel circle of tablets, which were undoubtedly erected in honour of these great personages.' After this high-sounding intelligence to the Court at Athens, we get a much less pretentious explanation; but like much that comes from the Doctor, it is somewhat difficult to understand, except that very likely the space had been converted into a garden, and the glorious acts of the king of kings—Agamemnon—and his companions, were chanted on the spot. Great merit is attached to those who will only listen to the story of the Ramayana in India, and I have seen a crowd in a bazaar eagerly listening to one who read the tale aloud. I can easily suppose if the circle were an Agora, where the public men were in the habit of congregating, that the 'Tale of Troy divine' would be most likely told in such a place, where there would be generally a crowd ready and eager with their ears; but if the place were thus frequented, I should doubt the possibility, from its size, of preserving for it the character of a garden.

The Forum of the Phæacians, described by Homer as being of *drawn* or *dug-out* stones, is supposed to have belonged to that somewhat indefinite style of building, so often alluded to, that is 'Cyclopean,' while the thin slabs at Mycenæ, only about four inches thick, with the remains of mortises yet visible on their upper edges, seem to point to a conclusion which would be not unfair, that a wooden model had been previously in existence. The slight and fragmentary allusions which have been quoted on this subject might be rendered somewhat as follows. At an early period the sacred circle of the Forum, or Agora, was made of large stones, understood to be Cyclopean. In the description of

the Shield of Achilles the elders sat on the stones, and they were polished. When the Children of Israel crossed the Jordan (Joshua iv.) they took up twelve stones, and placed them as a memorial, and the place was called Gilgal, which means a wheel or circle. Now these stones from the bed of the river would be rude and 'polished,' so far as water-worn stones generally are. There was one stone for each tribe, and the twelve very beautiful marble columns in the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, existing at this day, have the tradition associated with them that there is one for each of the sons of Jacob. Not only in this case is the typical number retained, but the circular form is also preserved. It might also be mentioned that the Dome of the Holy Sepulchre, with its supporting piers, although belonging to a different period of architecture, is also copied in form and number of parts from the Dome of the Rock, thus illustrating how primitive forms are handed down to us. The references from Homer, Æschylus, and Sophocles, make it clear that this round form was a common one in Greece for these public, yet sacred, places of meeting. It is also evident that while some were formed with stones of a large size, it may be safely predicated that such circles were also constructed with wood, otherwise it would be difficult to explain the mortise holes in the stone slabs of the example now brought to light at Mycenæ.

The sacred circle as described on the Shield of Achilles and also the one in the capital of Alcinoüs are of the earliest type, and might be classed as Druidical; the circle at Gilgal on the Jordan would be the same, identical with our own circles at home of the Rude Stone Monument period. The supposed wooden form of construction would, of course, be later in date, and the imitating of the wooden type in

stone—the same transition which Greek architecture underwent—would be later still. Thus far we have relative dates only.

Between the Gate of the Lions and the Stone Circle some walls were discovered, but there do not seem to have been any doors or windows, so it is rather difficult to make out what they could have been. At the south-east corner more walls were brought to light; there are no windows; but doors, or openings equivalent to them, exist. These walls Dr. Schliemann described as 'a vast Cyclopean house.' As mentioned in a former article ('The Schliemannic Ilium'), it was these words which first opened up to me the Doctor's enthusiastic and imaginative manner of describing his discoveries, of which his account of Priam's Palace at Hissarlik is a wondrous example. Here, again, I find that the mode by which the Royal Palace was identified was exactly the same as in the Troad. He selected the best of a lot of mud huts, and declared to the world that it was the very beautiful Palace of Priam; at Mycenæ he says, 'This seems to have been the Royal Palace, because no building in a better style of architecture has been found yet in the Acropolis.' (Letter to the *Times*, November 13, 1876.) That is, about a twentieth part only of the Acropolis has been explored, and the best out of two structures, which may or may not have been houses, is declared to be the dwelling of Pelops. As I have had the advantage of some instructions in the matter of Cyclopean walls from Dr. Schliemann himself, which he addressed to me through the columns of the *Times*, I thought of letting him understand that his teaching had not been thrown away, by making one or two inquiries as to the size of the stones in this Royal Palace of the Atreidæ, and also as to the mode in which they

have been joined together, but I will waive this exhibition of scholarship. Undoubtedly this is a very much superior palace to that of Priam at Hissarlik, for this one at Mycenæ has solid stone walls; still its vastness is limited to five chambers, the largest of which is only $18\frac{1}{2}$ feet in its longest dimensions, the others being much smaller; indeed, the Doctor himself admits that his Royal Majesty could not have been comfortably lodged. The truth is, if this palace and the one of Priam at Hissarlik have been correctly identified, we shall have the conclusion forced upon us that the monarchs of that period were in a condition of civilisation very similar to if not lower than that of the King of Ashantee in our own day. Atreus and his sons may have been in this condition, or they may not; but this will show how important even the identification of a piece of wall may be, on account of the questions it will involve, and that such identifications should not be made in the slipshod way we have just seen was the case at Mycenæ.

The question as to who had been interred in the graves within the Acropolis would no doubt present itself to the mind of any ordinary person as a very difficult one, and regarding which only surmises of the vaguest kind could be ventured upon. With Dr. Schliemann the case was different, and he seems to have had one of the easiest problems to solve. Where other archaeologists would be fettered by doubts and uncertainty, he can show himself to be above such trammels; where they would fear to tread, he rushes in, and utters no uncertain sound. The tombs and the treasures within them are no sooner brought to light than they are declared to be those 'of Agamemnon and his companions, who were all killed while feasting at a banquet by Clytemnestra and her lover Ægisthus.'

One might have thought that it would have required time to study the objects found, and compare them with other objects of a similar period in the museums of Europe before such an important judgment was pronounced. Where potent enthusiasm and imagination exist, such studious precautions, we may suppose, are unnecessary. In the *Athenæum* of August 8, 1874, there is a letter from Athens signed 'S. Comnos,' in which the writer explains that Dr. Schliemann having evaded the Turkish officials and carried off the share of objects which belonged to their Government, on being prosecuted in the Law Courts of Athens, 'he invited the Athenians to come to his house and see the Treasure of Priam, and he promised to build for it a museum, costing 200,000 francs, and solemnly assured the Athenians that on his death they should be the sole heirs of it. As a reward for so many sacrifices he did not demand statues from the Athenians, but contented himself with their friendship and the permission to make excavations at Mycenæ, where he was sure to discover the Treasure of Agamemnon.' Dr. Schliemann replied in a letter, published in the *Academy* of November 7, 1874, where he denies almost everything which Comnos states, but these pretensions that *he would discover the Treasure of Agamemnon*, curiously enough, are not contradicted. It will be noticed that the correspondence took place two years before the explorations at Mycenæ were begun. The conclusion to be deduced from this is too palpable to require further remarks.

The whole affair might be treated as a matter to laugh at if it were not that the topography of Mycenæ is all being arranged to fit into the theory that the buttons found were those of Agamemnon. Such names as those of Mure, Leake, Dodwell, Prokesch, Curtius, &c., in fact all the very best students of classic

archæology, have been declared by Dr. Schliemann, in type, and also before the Society of Antiquaries, to have completely misunderstood the monuments of Mycenæ. There is one very old structure there which is generally called the 'Treasury of Atreus,' but it has also been named the 'Tomb of Agamemnon.' This last name would of course endanger the reputation of the buttons. Dr. Schliemann claims that the tombs he has discovered are those of Agamemnon and his companions, and if this monument were admitted to be sepulchral in its character, the probability that it might be Agamemnon's resting place would be dangerous, and hence the reason that our most standard authorities have to be told that they do not understand the archæology of Mycenæ. In the passage from Pausanias it is stated that there are the 'subterranean habitations of Atreus and his sons, in which they deposited their treasures,' and it may be accepted that the large dome construction, which being underground is in keeping with the description, is the place alluded to.

As this old authority ascribes the character of a treasury to the monument, and as it suits the Doctor's conclusions about what he found in the Acropolis, he supports Pausanias, and declares to the world that he alone has properly interpreted that author. The answer is easy, and it may be broadly stated that whoever reads Pausanias right must, to reach this conclusion, read the monument wrong. The evidence in support of this is very clear and satisfactory. In the first place we may suppose that Pausanias only repeated the tradition about the building as he learned it at the time, and it will be evident that he did not give its character as an effort on his part of study and deduction. Now, all old and important tombs had the character attached to them of being 'treasure-houses.' The

pyramids of Egypt were so considered, and it was in hopes of finding this wealth that the great pyramid of Gizeh was penetrated at some very early date. The great mounds of the Bin Tepé, near Sardis, where Alyattes, the King of Lydia, is supposed to be buried, are believed to contain unheard-of treasure which has yet to be revealed. Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 15. 3) recounts as something wonderful the immense wealth which was buried with David in his tomb at Jerusalem. That old tombs of important personages did contain treasure, no better illustration could be given than Dr. Schliemann's own excavations in the Acropolis of Mycenæ. From this it will be seen that the circumstance of a place being called a treasure-house might in itself be used in favour of the idea that it was in reality a tomb. Another strong piece of evidence that the safe keeping of wealth was not the object of the monument under consideration, is derived from its position. If Atreus, or any other king of rich Mycenæ, had ever constructed a 'safe' for their valuables, it would have been placed within the walls of the Acropolis, being the position which would have guaranteed the greatest amount of security. Now, neither this so-called Treasury of Atreus nor any of the other so-called treasuries is so situated. The inference is evident.

On the other hand, the monument can be identified with the ancient tumulus or mound tomb, remains of which are to be found all over the wide geographical space between Ireland and China. This particular one has been excavated from the side of a rising ground, and it does not at a first glance strike a visitor as being a tumulus; but the earth has been heaped up on the top, and although the accumulation is slight, yet it is sufficient to indicate that those who formed it were aware that it was a

mound they were making. But if any doubt could exist on the matter it would vanish after an inspection of the two smaller treasuries, which before the domes fell, and the covering earth along with them, must, from their being constructed upon level ground, have presented the appearance of hemispherical mounds. From this we see that the so-called Treasury of Atreus was simply a chambered tumulus, differing in no essential principle, except in its having been a very large and fine specimen of dome construction, from chambered tumuli in other parts of the world. Its arrangement is the same as the tombs at Kertch, which I visited and made sketches of in 1855. They may be studied in the work published by order of the Emperor of Russia, called *Antiquités du Bosphore Cimmérien*, 1854. In these will be found domed chambers of various kinds, and, like those at Mycenæ, the stone courses of the domes are all horizontal, and not on the arch principle. The walled passage on each side of the entrance is another marked feature of identity; the decrease in the height of the wall, to follow the contour of the mound, is a point of detail so marked in these tumuli, that it is enough in itself to determine the character of the Mycenæ example. In the only one of the Bin Tepé at Sardis which I entered this distinctive feature belonged to it. The drawings of the Maeshow, a tumulus as far north as Orkney, indicate the same characteristic. The old Etruscan tombs also present many points of identity to those at Mycenæ.

If, again, anyone who endorses the theory that these structures are treasuries, should be asked to identify their arrangement and construction with other monuments in Greece whose character as treasure-houses has been established, the breakdown of the case here becomes complete, for no such treasuries have as yet been found with which to make the identification. Treasuries are known to have been connected with temples, and are supposed to have been within the temples themselves. In the Parthenon at Athens, the Opisthodomus, or inner cella of the temple, was used as a treasury. The place where General Cesnola found the objects at Curium, in Cyprus, is supposed to have been the treasury of a temple. It is the only example which has yet been found, but it bears no resemblance to the so-called Treasury of Atreus. Perhaps the Germans may bring to light the treasuries said to have existed at Olympia, and then there may be something on which to found a comparison; at present there is no case to come into court with. Should the Treasury of Minyas at Orchomenos be quoted, the answer is simple—its construction is exactly similar to the one at Mycenæ, hence it was a chambered tumulus.³

I think, from what has been said, that the assumption, let it come from Dr. Schliemann or from Pausanias, that these structures were solely for the safe keeping of wealth, and not tombs, must be rejected. I have the high authority of Mr. Newton on this matter,

³ The authority of Mr. Fergusson may be quoted here, as he identifies both the monuments referred to as tombs. Sir William Gell puts it as a tomb and an *ærarium*. As the character of this particular class of monument is of considerable interest, it would be an important question to inquire whether this traditional character of 'treasury' has originated solely from the articles of value which were buried with the body as part of the ritual, or if in some instances the tomb was not also used as a place for the safe keeping of wealth. David's tomb has already been referred to, and in Josephus it is stated that in a siege of Jerusalem by Simeon, Hyrcanus, who defended the city, 'opened the sepulchre of David, who was the richest of all kings, and took thence about three

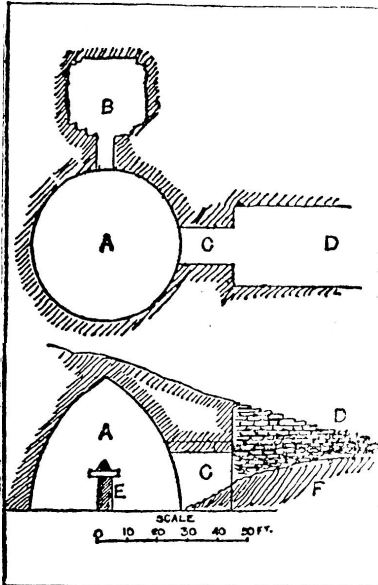
and he accepts this view of it. He devoted a considerable portion of his first lecture on Mycenæ, at the Royal Institution last summer, to this, as he considered, most important part of his subject. I cannot tell what are the ideas of every writer on this particular point, but I understand that Mure came to the conclusion that the sepulchral theory was the right one. A late German writer of the name of Pyl, who has devoted considerable attention to these so-called treasuries all over Greece, in a work called *Die Rundbauten der Hellenen*, has come to the conclusion that they served the double purpose of shrines, or sanctuaries and tombs. I may refer to a paper read by myself to the Royal Institute of British Architects, in December 1873, on the architecture of China, where a description of the Great Mound Tombs of the Ming dynasty will be found. As the temples and altars attached to these mounds are there given, and the ceremonies of the Chinese at the tombs of their ancestors are related, these sepulchral rites, performed at the present day by a race who have clung tenaciously to ancient ideas, may be cited as illustrating Pyl's conclusions. When a Chinaman offers food and burns incense at a mound where his father's or any of his ancestors' remains are interred, he converts the tomb into a temple. The chorus in the *Choephoræ* of Æschylus tell Electra that she must reverence the tomb of her sire as if it were an altar. She poured out a drink offering and offered a prayer along with it. We have, according to

Plutarch, authority for the statement that Alexander the Great, on his visit to the tomb of Achilles, repeated the rites which Achilles had celebrated at the death of Patroclus. Illustrations without number could be given from the poets that tombs were shrines at which ceremonies were performed; and this is important, as it may explain why the so-called Treasury of Atreus was so very elaborately embellished. Had it been a place of security, strength would have been the first object, and ornament would have been unnecessary. Safety, as has been explained, was not of primary importance, or it would not have been placed outside the walls of the Acropolis; but as the tomb of some very great person, where ceremonies were performed, its costly decoration becomes understood.

The plan and section on p. 688 will give an idea of this old monument; the great dome is about 48 feet in diameter, and 50 feet high. This large and well-built hall is supposed to have been originally covered with bronze plates, the holes for the nails or pins for fastening the plates still being visible. The courses of stone are horizontal, and not on the principle of the arch. There is, on the north side, an inner chamber, about 23 feet square, which may have been originally a cave; or if excavated, it has been very rudely done. This, no doubt, would be the Sepulchral Chamber, while the larger apartment would be used for the ceremonies usually performed in honour of the illustrious dead. The doorway of this

thousand talents in money' (*Wars* I. 2. 5; *Ant.* vii. 15. 3). This use of a tomb, if not apocryphal, I should fancy to be all but an exception, and that the reputation for treasure was a tradition founded on the gold buried with the dead; but if it really occurred in Jerusalem, it might have been the case in other parts as well, and the subject is worthy of consideration by archaeologists. The decision on this will not affect the case as applied to Dr. Schliemann's exclusive claims, that no other tombs have yet been found in Mycenæ but those he has lately brought to light. Tombs as well as other buildings are often changed from their original purpose, but such secondary uses do not belong to our subject.

building is covered with two stones in the form of lintels, the inner one being a very large mass. It is 27 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 3 feet 6 inches deep, and has been calculated to weigh 133 tons. The



PLAN AND SECTION OF THE SO-CALLED
TREASURY OF ATREUS, MYCENÆ.

- A Domed Chamber.
- B Inner Rock-cut Chamber.
- C Doorway.
- D Approach.
- E Entrance to inner Rock-cut Chamber.
- F Accumulation of earth in the approach.

outside of this doorway is supposed to have been faced with marbles, which were ornamented with circular discs, spirals, zigzags, and part of a pilaster. Four fragments of these are in the Elgin Room of the British Museum, almost the only relics this country ever received from Mycenæ. Professor Donaldson made a restoration of the entrance, and published it over forty years ago. On first looking at this

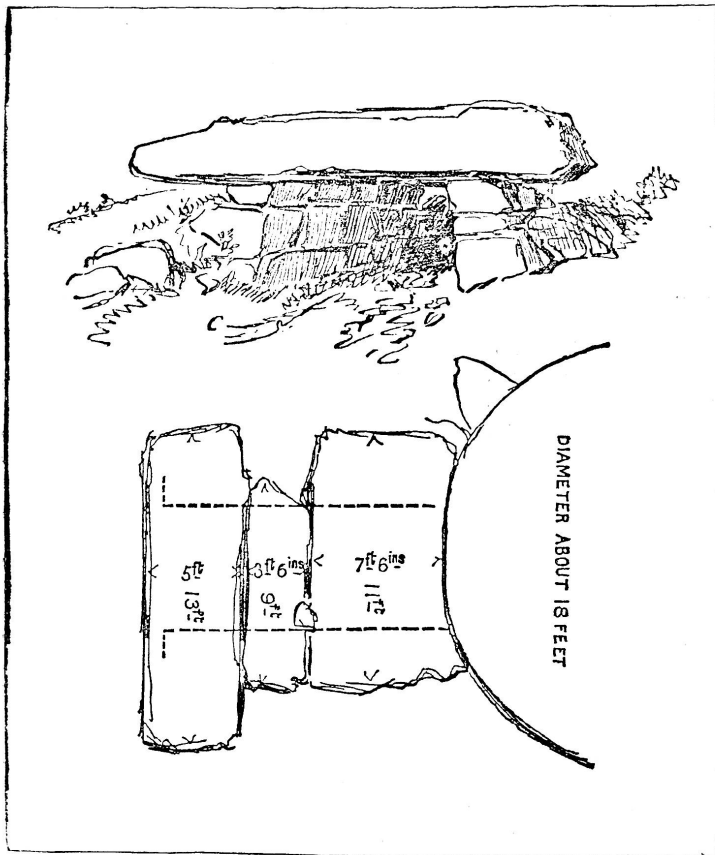
restoration I felt inclined to have doubts, but the fact that Professor Donaldson had made doors a special study, particularly those of the Greek styles, caused me to read carefully what he had to say, and take note of the grounds upon which he wrought out his idea of the place, and I feel bound to declare that, although one may hesitate as to some points of the details, yet a good case has been made out. I would advise anyone wishing to realise what this so-called treasury was like originally, to inspect these drawings.⁴ Such a gateway was not made to be covered up; and this confirms the theory that the splendid bronze-plated hall could be entered, and was used for the performance of sepulchral rites. On the occasion of my visit last March, one of the guides said that his father remembered some steps at the eastern extremity of the long passage, which led up to it from what was supposed to have been the principal street of Mycenæ, which passed at the end. These steps are in themselves strongly conclusive in favour of the idea that the place was intended to be approached.

The Second Treasury, excavated by Madame Schliemann, is only a foot or two smaller than the one associated with the name of Atreus. It is close to, but still outside, the walls of the Acropolis; hence its purpose did not require the protection of such an inclosure. Slabs of coloured marble were found ornamented with the usual spirals and circles; but Dr. Schliemann gives it as his opinion that the interior was not covered with metal. If I understand right, no second chamber was found. The great value of the Third and Fourth Trea-

⁴ *Antiquities of Athens and other Places in Greece, Sicily, &c., supplementary to the Antiquities of Athens by James Stuart, F.R.S. F.S.A., and Nicholas Revett. Delineated and Illustrated by C. R. Cockerell, A.R.A. F.S.A.; W. Kinnard, T. L. Donaldson, W. Jenkins, and W. Railton, Architects. 1830.*

suries is on account of their throwing light on the two larger ones. From their rude construction they are evidently the earlier productions, and give us the more primary type of these structures; and as they are not excavations into a hill side, they must have been visible tumuli. This is most important to bear in

mind, for the word 'subterranean,' as applied to the so-called Treasury of Atreus, is misleading. That these monuments are all of one intention is evidently conveyed by the name of 'treasury' which has been attached to them all; the villagers also acknowledge the identification by classifying them under



SKETCH AND SKETCH-PLAN OF THIRD TREASURY.

the word 'furni,' or 'ovens,' from their resemblance to those in use at the present day, and which may be seen in every village.

Anyone approaching these two smaller treasuries for the first time would most likely suppose that he had come upon a Druidical construction, and that they were dol-

mens. All that is now visible is the covered passage, which is composed of large flat stones, seemingly rough enough to be declared of the Rude Stone Monument class. In the Third Treasury, of which a rough sketch is given, as well as a sketch plan, there are three covering stones, or lintels, the largest of

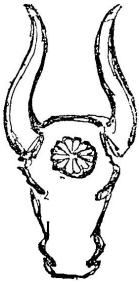
which are 13 feet and 11 feet in length. In the Fourth Treasury the largest stone is 12 feet. This last is a very rude piece of work, and none of the masonry of the dome is now to be seen; in the Third a few stones can yet be inspected by clearing away the weeds and grass. In the sketch-plan it will be noticed that the inner lintel stone has been shaped into the curve of the circle forming the dome. Another important point to notice is, that the walls of the passage slope inwards. The doors of the old Etruscan tombs have all more or less of this character. The door of the so-called Treasury of Atreus also presents this slope, whilst the Second Treasury is perpendicular, or nearly so. This peculiarity inclines me to the belief that it is the most modern of them all. It presents other details which I think tend to the same conclusion, but this particular deviation from what is evidently the primary form is the most palpable to my mind.

There is one most important fact revealed from the few remains at Mycenæ; and that is, that there existed in Greece a style of architecture which was entirely different from what we now know as the Greek. Classic architecture, as we understand it, is not only a different style, but the two must have sprung from totally distinct origins. Starting from different sources, they also kept separate in their history. No caste distinction presents us with such persistent determination not to intermarry as we find in these two styles of building. Greek architecture can be clearly traced back to a mode of construction where wood was the material; in the marble of the temples which have come down to us we can yet trace every detail of the original wooden forms. In the Pelasgic, as the supposed earlier style has been called, this influence does not appear—it commenced and has been continued with stone as the material. Most

probably it began with rude stones, and developed into what we now call Cyclopean. When a space, such as a door, had to be covered over, then large blocks had to be used, such as have been described at Mycenæ; and constructing the portals of tumuli was most probably the object which developed this style—for the Gate of the Lions is only a copy, differing but slightly in detail, from that of the Treasuries. In the Third and Fourth Treasuries we see an early condition of this Pelasgic style, and in Professor Donaldson's restoration of the so-called Treasury of Atreus we find what must be something like a fair representation of its highest development. It would bring the origin of Greek classic architecture too late to suppose that it only began when the other ceased. There is nothing against the idea that the two styles may have been both carried on at the same time. We have a perfectly analogous case in the pyramids and temples of Egypt, two totally different kinds of buildings, so different that unity of origin is an impossibility, and the sources of which still remain among the problems to be solved by Egyptology. In the ancient Buddhist architecture of India again a similar duality of style can be pointed out, but in this case something can be said by way of elucidation. In the Buddhist period we know that the Dagop and the Chaitya temple were synchronous. The Chaitya was originally a wooden building; and it is agreed among archæologists that the Dagopa is a development of the Cairn, and that the Cairn grew out of the Mound, and thus, so far, we get a principle of progression which may yet be applied in some way to the Pyramid and the Domed Tumuli of the Pelasgic race. The probability is that a religious and an ethnic influence underlie the whole of the illustrations which have just been given.

I can say little about the objects

found by Dr. Schliemann at Mycenæ. There were only a few of the more valuable articles exhibited in the Bank at Athens when I chanced to be there. The pottery is declared by Mr. Newton to belong to the oldest class which has been yet identified as Greek. Mr. Newton's classification of it with the early specimens from Ialysos in Rhodes is an important link, and an advance so far in positive knowledge. His identification, with the help of Professor Owen, of one of the ornaments, as having been derived from the octopus, is a most valuable addition to the history of ornamental art. I add a sketch although it is rough and only from



COW'S HEAD, SILVER,
WITH GOLDEN HORNS.

memory, of the silver cow or ox-head with golden horns, on which Dr. Schliemann bases his theory that the word *βοῶπις* should be read 'ox-headed' instead of 'ox-eyed,' just as he formerly proposed to read *γλαυκῶπις* 'owl-faced,' rather than 'blue-eyed' as Athene has generally been designated. The philological question is not one on which I can give an opinion, but I should not be inclined to reject the idea that on the stage the daughter of Inachus might have worn such a mask, particularly as she asks Prometheus if he 'hears the voice of the ox-horned maiden.' (*Prom.* v. 988.) Something might be said in favour of the golden cups belonging to Agamemnon, from the evidence in the *Iliad* that he certainly

was not a Good Templar. Achilles in a very straightforward manner called him a 'wine-bibber,' and the king of men himself says, in addressing Idomeneus, who commanded the Cretans, that the other Greeks drink by certain measures, but 'thy cup always stands before thee full, like mine, that you may drink when in your mind it is desirable.' Here a habit is indicated not unknown in our own days, and it might suggest an explanation as to how such a valiant man was so easily overcome by his murderers. The study of all the objects found at Mycenæ will be the labour of years. Whoever has heard Mr. Newton's lectures upon them, or read his long letter which appeared in the *Times* of April 20 last, will see how valuable and important they are to archaeology. In one sense it matters not to whom they belong. They are additions to our knowledge of the early condition of art, and of art amongst a people who developed a sense of the beautiful which stands out unrivalled in the history of the world.

Still the question of whose tomb, or tombs, has been discovered is no light one. It is of deep import to the historian, to the student of classic literature, and it is also of very great importance as bearing on questions of comparative mythology. Already Dr. Schliemann's discoveries have been used as authoritative on this subject; and when I ventured on a former occasion in the pages of this magazine to expose the baseless foundation on which the identity of the Homeric Ilium was founded, I considered that I was discharging a duty to those who were interested in that new and important science. In the present case, by showing that the so-called Treasuries at Mycenæ are tombs, and that the larger monuments must have been very important tombs, the distinctive character which Dr. Schliemann has attempted to give to those he dis-

covered in the Acropolis falls to the ground; and the evidence, even supposing it were conclusive, that he has found the bones and funeral objects of the great leader of the Argives, loses all its force, and the buttons, swords, sceptres &c. are thus left for the present without any recognised owner. To say that these objects did, or that they did not, belong to Agamemnon, requires the enthusiasm or the ecstasy of a Schliemann to declare.

As a very curious document, I propose to give the telegram which Dr. Schliemann sent to the King of the Hellenes announcing his discovery: it was dated

MYCENÆ: November 28, 1876.

With unbounded joy I announce to your Majesty that I have discovered the monuments which tradition, as related by Pausanias, points out as the tombs of Agamemnon, Cassandra, Eurymedon, and their companions, who were all killed whilst feasting at a banquet by Clytemnestra and her lover, Ægisthus. These tombs are surrounded by a double circle of tablets, which were undoubtedly erected in honour of those great personages. In these tombs I have found an immense archæological treasure of various articles of pure gold. This treasure is alone sufficient to fill a large museum, which will be the most splendid in the world, and which in all succeeding ages will attract to Greece thousands of strangers from every land. As I am labouring from a pure and simple love for science, I waive all claim to this treasure, which I offer with intense enthusiasm to Greece. Sire, may those treasures, with God's blessing, form the corner-stone of immense national wealth.

Dr. Schliemann's efforts to give away his Trojan collection will be a very remarkable history when once it is written out in all its details, and this giving away of the Mycenæ treasure has also got its remarkable characteristics. No one would suppose from the above telegram that the Greek Government had already got the treasure, and held it in virtue of an agreement. The right to excavate at Mycenæ was given, if I am rightly informed, to the Archæological Society of

Athens, and not to Dr. Schliemann; but as he had been applying for such a right, the Archæological Society engaged him to carry on the explorations under the inspection of M. Stamataki, one of their body, and who was to receive the objects as they were discovered during the excavations. A small detachment of soldiers was sent to keep guard over the whole operations, and when I went there in March last, these guards were still doing duty, and it was lucky that I had a letter from the Minister of the Interior, or I might have had trouble to get on with my sketching. According to a report published by the Archæological Society, they spent 4,000 drachmas, on their part, while Dr. Schliemann expended 30,000 drachmas. 3,300 objects were found, and 12,000 fragments of pottery.

I will only deal now with one of this vast collection of objects, and it is a good illustration of these mythical finds, namely, Agamemnon's sceptre. I have since seen the thing itself, and the theory that it was a sceptre, I must say, would be the most probable suggestion that could be made about it; yet to find out whose hand swayed it is not such an easy problem. In the second book of the *Iliad* its history will be found; according to Homer it was made by Vulcan. Now, if Dr. Schliemann has really found a bit of work done by that divine artist, it would be the most precious morsel of art in the world. According to Homer, Hephestos laboriously made the sceptre for Jove, Jove gave it to the 'Slayer of Argus,' or Hermes, from whom Pelops received it, and from him it came down through Atreus and Thyestes to Agamemnon. We get the continuation of the history in Pausanias, book ix. chap. 40:

This sceptre, too, they denominate *the spear*; and, indeed, that it contains something of a nature more divine than usual;

is evident from hence, that a certain splendour is seen proceeding from it. The Chæroneans say that this sceptre was found on the borders of the Panopeans, in Phocis, and together with it a quantity of gold; and that they cheerfully took the sceptre instead of the gold. I am persuaded that it was brought by Electra, the daughter of Agamemnon, to Phocis. There is not, however, any temple publicly raised for this sceptre; but every year the person to whose care this sacred sceptre is committed places it in a building destined to this purpose; and the people sacrifice to it every day, and place near it a table full of all kinds of flesh and sweetmeats.

The author, no doubt, here gives the tradition as it was current when he wrote; as Pausanias has to be called in evidence in relation to his statements about the Treasury of Atreus, it is rather awkward that he can be quoted also in favour of the theory that the sceptre was not buried along with Agamemnon, and that the Peloponnesus was not the region in which it was to be found. Tradition is Dr. Schliemann's strong evidence that he had found the tomb of Agamemnon. In my former article on the Troad I gave some illustrations of the value of such means of identification, and here again we find the same conditions. If tradition, when given by a Pausanias, is considered as proof,

then let anyone refer to book iii. chap. 19 of that author, and he will find that there was a traditional tomb of Agamemnon at Amyclæ, in Sparta. In adopting tradition as an authority—and it is the only evidence Dr. Schliemann has been able to give as to Agamemnon's tomb—it is clear that he did not consider the difficulties and even absurdities which such a line of argument might lead to. It is a long time now in history since traditional tombs have raised a smile at their mention. If our great explorer believes in such monuments of the past, let him go to Jeddah, on the Red Sea, and excavate the traditional tomb of Eve, which is 60 feet long; or to Abila, near Damascus, where he will find the tomb of her son Abel, which is 90 feet long. We may return to Greece, where, according to Herodotus (i. 68, also Pausan. iii. 3. 11), the coffin of Orestes was found at Tegea, seven cubits long, and 'the body was equal to the coffin in length.' Here is the traditional size of the son of Agamemnon. Has the Doctor found the bones of a father worthy of such a son?

WILLIAM SIMPSON.

