

the visitor must on occasions regard the fancies of Ruskin as something quite apart from the intentions of Turner. However this may be, the 'Notes' are full of fine ideas both true and false, and are more rhetorical than critical—in fact, exactly what Rossetti declared Ruskin's writings to be, "poetic rhapsodies, not criticisms at all."

Of the drawings not shown here in 1878 we commend to the visitor's notice *Kilgarren Castle* (No. 4), which was lately at Guildhall; *St. Agatha's Abbey* (6); and the superb *Scarborough* (23). The finest pieces are *Bonneville* (9), "a quite stupendous study," which differs from and greatly excels the better-known instance in the 'Liber Studiorum'; *Florence, from Fiesole* (14); *The Bridge of Narni* (15); *The Falls of Terni* (16); *Rome, from Monte Mario* (17); *Vesuvius Angry* (20); *Scarborough* (23); *Richmond, Yorkshire* (24), which has slightly faded; *Play, Richmond, Surrey* (29); *Bolton Abbey* (37); *Leicester Abbey* (38), of which the engraving is at least an equal wonder, while it proves how much the original has deteriorated; and *Roven, from St. Catherine's Hill* (46). The names of at least a score more drawings would not suggest to devotees of Turner more than these names must needs do.

THE PALACE ARCHIVES OF MYCENÆAN CNOSSUS.
Cnossus, near Candia, Crete, April 23, 1900.

It is now six years since I was able to announce in the columns of the *Athenæum* the existence in Crete of a system of writing long anterior to that of historic Greece, and at the same time distinct alike from the Phœnician, and from the "Hittite" script of Anatolia. The materials upon which this conclusion was based were chiefly supplied by a series of seal-stones, presenting groups of characters of both the pictographic and the linear class. Subsequent researches in the island, continued from 1894 onwards, greatly added to the data previously collected, and culminated in the discovery in the Dictæan Cave of Zeus of part of a steatite libation table of Mycænæan date containing an inscription consisting of nine similar characters cut in the monumental style.

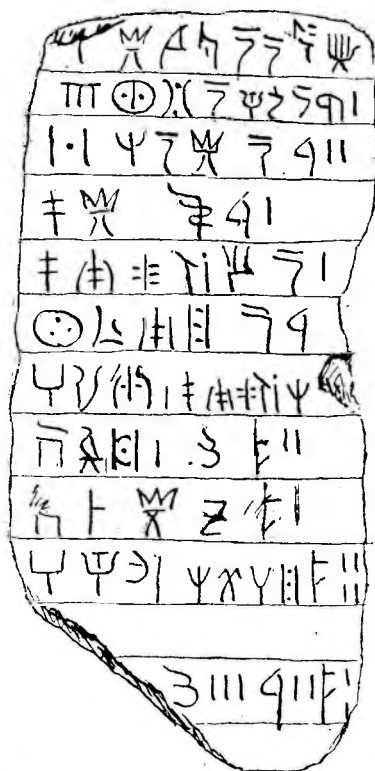
But it was to Cnossus, the city of Minos and Dædalus, the traditional centre of the early Cretan civilization, that one's thoughts naturally turned as the spot where the fullest evidence of the existence of this ancient system of writing would most naturally be forthcoming. Already in 1894 I had been able to copy a three-sided seal-stone with linear characters from this site, and subsequently I obtained there further indications pointing the same way. Certain blocks, moreover, were visible on the hill of Kephala here with curious signs upon them, already noted by Mr. E. J. Stillman in 1880, and which, if not actually taken from a current alphabet or syllabary, at least appeared to be the work of men acquainted with a form of script.

Mycænæan pottery had been known to occur on this site, and various abortive attempts had been made by Mr. Stillman himself, by Dr. Schliemann, and others to secure it for excavation; but these had all failed, owing to the impossibility of coming to terms with the proprietors of the soil. In 1896 I obtained possession of part of the ground, which was in joint occupation; and after encountering difficulties of every kind I at last succeeded, only a few weeks since, in securing the remaining part of the site, and, aided by the Cretan Exploration Fund, and with the concurrence of Prince George's Government, at once proceeded to set about its excavation.

The results already obtained have more than confirmed my most sanguine hopes. Of the more general results it is impossible here to say more than a few words. The building itself is certainly a palace of Mycænæan kings; indeed, it may be confidently said that on the whole site, so far as it has been excavated, hardly a scrap of anything later than the great days of

Mycænæ—or, to give an approximate chronology, the fourteenth century B.C.—has yet come to light. For the fresco painting and stone carving of that period the remains excel anything of the time yet found on the mainland of Greece. The royal bath-room, with its central throne, preserved like a piece of Pompeii, shows a luxury unknown to Mycænæ itself. But of even greater interest than these artistic relics is the discovery, in several of the chambers of the palace, of clay tablets, generally more elongated in form, but otherwise the perfect analogues of the cuneiform tablets of Babylonia, only in this case engraved with records in the Mycænæan script.

The tablets themselves are oblong slips of hand-moulded clay, flat on the engraved side, with almost adze-like ends, but thickening towards the centre of the back. They vary in length from about two to nearly seven inches, and in breadth from a half to three inches. As in the case of the Chaldæan tablets, lines are ruled at intervals for the convenience of the scribes, and one of the largest examples shows eighteen of these, a certain proportion of them left blank. The most usual type consists of two lines, or even a single line of inscription, written from left to right lengthwise along the tablet, but some of the broader tablets have the lines arranged across their narrower diameter. The subjoined copy reproduces a good specimen of this latter class.



Owing to the great conflagration, of which there are everywhere traces within the palace walls, and subsequent disturbance, the majority of the tablets are found in a broken condition; but in addition to those that, in spite of these causes, have remained intact, it will no doubt be ultimately possible to put together many of the pieces. The deposits have now occurred in several chambers and corridors. In one case the tablets had been placed in a clay chest in the form of a bath. In another room they seem to have been preserved in wooden coffers, burnt fragments of which have come to light, together with their bronze hinges, and even the clay seals with which they were secured, still bearing the impressions of engraved Mycænæan gems.

It would be premature, while the discovery is so new and while fresh material is daily accumulating, to express any detailed views as to the character and affinities of this Mycænæan script.

Several signs are clearly identical with the linear forms already sporadically found on Cretan seals and vases of the same period. Numerous comparisons, also, at once suggest themselves with forms of the Cypriote syllabary, as well as with Lycian and Carian characters. It is evident from their mere pictorial aspect that a certain proportion of the signs are ideographic in character, while others are unquestionably numerals. Many formulas are constantly repeating themselves, and these, moreover, vary according to the chamber in which they are discovered. From the repetition of numeral forms and certain pictographic signs that occur in association with them, it seems probable that many of the tablets refer to stores and palace accounts. Thus, in one chamber occurred a whole series of tablets with figures of Mycænæan war-chariots, horses' heads, shields, and, apparently, cuirasses, which had evident reference to the arsenal. Others show metal vases—doubtless of gold and silver—presenting various forms, and some a long-stamened flower, perhaps productive of a dye or perfume. Ships, houses, several kinds of animals, and many other objects appear in the same manner. A certain number of the tablets have endorsements and additional inscriptions on the back. Those with headings and intervals between these and the bulk of the inscription give the appearance of correspondence, containing, it may be, the titles of Minoan princes and officers.

These palace archives of Mycænæan Cnossus not only prove to demonstration that a system of writing existed on the soil of Greece at least six centuries before the introduction there of the Phœnician alphabet, but they show that already at that remote date this indigenous system had attained a most elaborate development. These inscriptions are the work of practised scribes, following conventional methods and arrangements which point to long traditional usage. Yet this development has been arrived at on independent lines; it is neither Babylonian nor Egyptian, neither Hittite nor Phœnician: it is the work on Cretan soil of an Ægean people. It is the fitting product of a country to which all later Greek tradition looked back as having supplied the earliest model of civilized legislation. There is, indeed, an atmosphere of legal nicety about these documents themselves, the effect of which is enhanced by an interesting particular as to the method by which they were originally secured. It was not thought sufficient for the official concerned with their safe keeping simply to impress with his signet gem the clay seals that made sure the coffers containing the tablets. While the clay was still moist both the impression of the intaglio itself and the back of the seal were in several cases signed and countersigned with incised characters in the same Mycænæan script.

ARTHUR J. EVANS.

SALES.

MESSRS. CHRISTIE, MANSON & WOODS sold on the 9th inst. the following engravings: *Mrs. Bouverie, after Cosway, by J. Condé, 28l.* A Visit to the Child at Nurse, after G. Morland, by W. Ward, 35l. Lady Elizabeth Foster, after Reynolds, by F. Bartolozzi, 82l. British Plenty and Scarcity in India, after Singleton, by C. Knight, a pair, 28l. The Rocking-Horse, by and after J. Ward, 25l. Almeria (Mrs. Meymot), after Opie, and Mrs. Mills, after Engleheart, both by J. R. Smith, a pair, 165l. Domestic Happiness (the Lambton Family), after J. Hoppner, by J. Young, 30l. Summer and Winter, after J. Ward, by W. Ward, a pair, 126l. A Party Angling and the Anglers' Repast, after Morland, by G. Keating and W. Ward, 133l.

The same firm sold on the 12th inst. the following works, from the collection of the late Mr. J. Reiss. Drawing: T. S. Cooper, *The Watering-place, Summer, 105l.* Pictures: D. Cox, *Going to the Mill, 2,100l.* P. Delaroche