

April 27. 1904

FRESH DISCOVERIES IN CRETE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I have to-day received the following telegram from Mr. Arthur Evans, which I think will be of interest to your readers :—

On headland north of Knossos, commanding land and sea [have] unearthed remains great stone mausoleum. Square chamber rising to lofty gable on Cyclopean plan with arched entrance passage, though ruined above and much quarried into. Unique monument of its kind. Has taken sixty men fortnight to clear debris. Cist grave found in one corner below floor. Nearly all metal objects removed in ancient times, but many scattered relics left. Repeated clay impressions [of] royal signet. Painted jars fine palace style. Carved stone lamp [?] with] crystal pommel; Egyptian basalt bowl; many alabaster; Egyptian necklace lapis lazuli with pendant figures. Grave probably of one of last Minoan Kings. Place for others never occupied. This great monument possibly represents traditional tomb of Idomeneus. New possibilities opened up, but funds much needed. Other work progressing. [Ends.]

Even the necessary condensation of a telegram makes it clear that Mr. Evans, with his usual good fortune, has made another startling discovery, which, if it can be followed up, may yield results of the highest importance. But everything depends upon the provision of adequate funds, and I am sorry to say that these are still to seek. You were good enough to print a letter from me some weeks ago, in which I stated that about £1,500 would probably be required for Knossos during the present season beyond the sum already in hand, and I mentioned also that the managers of the Cretan Exploration Fund were anxious to devote £500 this season to the very important excavation which is being conducted at Palaio-kastro, in Eastern Crete, by members of the British School at Athens. The response to this appeal has been very disappointing. Towards the general fund less than £200 has been received since the date of my letter (including £100 generously given by Mr. Charles Morrison), and £100 has been given specially for Palaio-kastro. Mr. Evans's telegram makes it clear how urgently funds are needed to carry on the work at Knossos, so rich in promise. There is a special reason, on the other hand, for doing all that is possible at Palaio-kastro during the present season, in the fact that three quite exceptionally competent students—two of them already familiar with the site—are now available for the work of superintendence, and this is hardly likely to be the case another year. Mr. Evans and Mr. Hogarth, who have recently visited it, both strongly confirm the view taken by Mr. Bosanquet, the director of the school, as to the importance of the site, and the probable results of its full excavation. So far, scarcely a third part of a large pre-Mycenaean town has been uncovered, and even so the evidences of a high state of civilization are abundant. To make the best use of the opportunities of the present season at Palaio-kastro it is estimated that at least £700 will be required. Towards this the school cannot, with all the other claims on its resources, provide more than £200, and £200 (including the £100 earmarked by a subscriber) has been granted from the Cretan Exploration Fund. Another £300, therefore, is required for this purpose, and not less than £1,300 for Knossos beyond the sum already expended or in hand.

All the arguments in favour of supporting British explorers in this fruitful and honourable field of research have been urged already, and I will not weary your readers by reiterating them. I can only hope that the facts I have briefly stated will speak for themselves.

Subscriptions may be paid into the account of the "Cretan Exploration Fund," at Messrs. Roberts, Lubbock, and Co., Lombard-street, London, E.C., or may be sent direct to me at St. Martin's-street, London, W.C.

I am yours faithfully,

GEORGE A. MACMILLAN, Hon. Treasurer,
Cretan Exploration Fund.

St. Martin's-street, W.C., April 25.