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29. Note on the Palaeolithic Gravel of Savernake Forest, Wiltshire.

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bringing the Philistine tribes from the "Isles of the Sea." The southern tribe of Philistines, the Hebrew Cherethim, are translated "Cretans" in the Septuagint, and their chief city Gaza preserved the Minôan name and the cult of the Cretan Zeus to classical times. New Egyptian evidence makes it almost certain that the mysterious Kaphtor is really Crete, the Egyptian Keftô, and the Kefts, the highly civilised people who bore offerings to the Egyptian kings, have now reappeared in the wall paintings of the palace of Knossos. The most familiar Philistine name, that of Achish, moreover, is already found in the Ægean home of the race (witness an Egyptian record) long before we hear of it in Gath.

The occupation of a large part of the coast lands of Canaan by Cretan and other Ægean elements about the thirteenth century B.C. seems to have been the effect of disturbances about that date in the Ægean area. The Philistines derived from this side must be looked on as representatives of what was in many respects a higher intrusive culture from the West; and the Cretan evidence shows that they would have brought with them a highly-developed system of writing. The Cretan characters, linear as well as pictographic, seem still to have retained a double use, either as word signs or as syllables. Thus when, as very soon happened, the language of the intrusive Ægean element was Semitised by contact with the surrounding populations, these signs may have received translated values. At the same time the impossibility of explaining several of the Phœnician letter names from any Semitic source may point in some cases to actual adoption from the Cretan syllabary. That there were several local variants of the Cretan script appears from the evidence of finds in different parts of the island. It is not necessary to suppose that the characters introduced by the Ægean occupants of the coast of Canaan were in all respects identical with the Knossian forms. Much must still remain hypothetical, but in the absence of any other satisfactory source for the elements from which the Phœnician letters were selected, the identification of the Philistines with a highly-civilised Ægean race, far advanced in the art of writing, becomes an extremely suggestive fact. Nor is it without significance that during the same period another parallel wave of colonists from the Ægean imported the "Mycenæan" culture into Cyprus and introduced there a syllabary showing points of conformity with the linear script of Knossos.

Palæolithic Age.

Reid.

Note on the Palæolithic Gravel of Savernake Forest, Wiltshire.

By Clement Reid, F.G.S.

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At the suggestion of Mr. C. H. Read, of the British Museum, I was asked by Mr. Teall, Director of the Geological Survey, to visit Savernake Forest to examine into the geological relations of the palæolithic gravels recently discovered in the neighbourhood of Knowle Farm. The following notes give the result of this examination:—

Knowle gravel-pit, from which so many palæolithic implements have lately been obtained,* lies on the east side of Savernake Forest, three miles north-north-east of Savernake Station, and just above the Marlborough and Hungerford road. Its height is 450 feet above the sea, but only 40 feet above the bottom of the adjoining east and west valley, which is a coombe in the porous upper chalk, dry at all times of the year and apparently now never liable to floods. The water-level in the well at the cottage in the coombe bottom just below the pit is about 40 feet below the surface, and is said to vary only slightly according to the season. Small lateral valleys run from south to north and have almost isolated the ridge on which Knowle Farm stands.

The palæolithic gravel, however, does not occupy the highest part of the ridge, which a mile south of the farm rises to 550 feet and is capped by Eocene strata.

* See Dr. Edgar Willett, *On a Collection of Palæolithic Deposits from Savernake* (*Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, Vol. XXXI., p. 310, with two plates. 1901).

This higher land spreads westward, and separates the dry coombe from the valley in which the Great Western Railway and the canal now run. A still higher ridge (about 600 feet) separates the dry coombe from the Kennet valley on the north.

It seems clear, therefore, that the palæolithic gravel of Knowle is connected with the dry coombe now occupied by the Marlborough and Hungerford road. The gravel lies fully 100 feet below the divides on the north and south, and is only 40 feet above the bottom of this coombe; most of this 40 feet seems, however, to have been excavated since the gravel was deposited. The gravel does not occupy any well defined terrace, and its character does not suggest ordinary river action; it suggests rather intermittent floods washing angular material from the slopes above.

The deposit seen in Knowle pit consists of 12 or 15 feet of unstratified gravel of unworn or shattered flints, with 10 or 15 per cent. of Tertiary pebbles, rare greywethers, and numerous palæolithic implements, which occur at all levels, though most abundantly towards the base. There are no seams of clean washed sand or gravel. The stones are embedded in a loamy ferruginous matrix, which has been so thoroughly decalcified by percolating water that it seems hopeless to expect fossils, unless some massive specimen, such as a tooth of an elephant, may have resisted decay. The removal of the chalk rubble which once evidently formed a considerable proportion of the gravel, helps to account for the entire obliteration of any bedding that may have existed. Even now the irregular solution of the solid chalk below is tending still more to mix the material, for the workmen recently broke into a small cave, caused by the subsidence of the lower part of the gravel into a pipe in the chalk, the surface remaining undisturbed.

The exact limits of the palæolithic deposit are impossible to make out in so wooded a country, and in the absence of sections. It apparently occupies irregular shallow channels cut in a shelf which is roughly parallel with the coombe below and probably represents the old valley-bottom. At the same level as the Knowle Pit, in a gravelly field nearly half a mile to the east, I picked up another palæolithic implement.

The relation of this palæolithic gravel to the erosion of the valleys seems to show that it is contemporaneous with the well-known deposits of Southampton Water, Bournemouth, and the Avon Valley. There is nothing to suggest an earlier date, but at the same time the gravel seems more ancient than the erosion of the lower part of the dry chalk coombe below, and more ancient than such deposits as the Coombe Rock of Brighton or the lowest terrace gravels in the valleys of the south of England.

The reason for the occurrence of such large numbers of palæolithic implements at certain points is not quite clear. I would suggest, however, that the sites of the camping grounds in a waterless and bare region of chalk downs would be determined by the occurrence of water holes. In the case of the Knowle Farm locality, the proximity of an outlier of clayey Tertiary strata probably gave the water, shelter, and firewood so essential to a race of hunters.

At present little is known as to the climatic conditions under which palæolithic man existed in Britain, for though various slight indications suggest climatic extremes—with sharp alternations of cold, drought, and sudden floods—very few sedentary animals and plants have yet been collected in the same deposits. Pleistocene fossils have mostly been collected in other strata than those yielding the implements. To settle this question we need remains of plants or mollusca; for migrating mammals may leave a particular area for one half of the year, only to return when a long period of drought or cold is over. This same enforced migration would compel palæolithic man to follow the game, and would prevent permanent settlements except at favourable spots where water, shelter, and game could be found all the year round. In this connection it should not be forgotten that only as far away as Calais and Belgium the palæolithic implements occur

in true dust deposits, which graduate into the loess of the Rhine valley, and suggest desert conditions approximating to those of Central Asia. In Britain the climate seems to have been milder, but still we have indications of drought in some of the mollusca and small mammals, and perhaps also in the extreme poverty of the flora.

CLEMENT REID.

Tunis.

Myres.

A Tunisian Ghost-house. *By John L. Myres, M.A., F.S.A.*

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It is a commonplace of human science that the dwellings of the dead recapitulate the characters of those of the living ; but it is not very often that one has the good fortune to record so elaborate an example in the modern world as that which forms the subject of this note.

The photograph annexed (Fig. 1) was taken by me in Eastern Tunisia in the spring of 1897 by the side of the road which leads due west from Enfida Railway Station, and within a long stone's-throw of the last enclosures of the modern settlement. There were near it other rude interments of the miniature *koubbah* type described below ; but there was no regular graveyard. The black object which leans against the enclosure wall is my umbrella, and gives some idea of the scale. The structure represents a miniature courtyard, roughly rectangular, enclosed by a mud-plastered wall of small stones. The entrance to the northward is flanked by monolithic gate-posts, and on the south side, roughly opposite, is a miniature *koubbah* or domed chapel, of the same materials as the enclosure wall, with similar monolithic door-posts (so far as one could see through the thick whitewash), and a lintel of untrimmed branches.



FIG. 1.—GHOST-HOUSE AT ENFIDA, TUNIS.

In the centre of the enclosure lay the tomb itself, a long, narrow mound, with a cross section like that of the *koubbah*, and with a little funnel-shaped drain on top near the end nearest to the gate of the enclosure showing black in the photograph, and leading into the interior of the tomb. The tomb, like the *koubbah*, the ring-wall, and the whole area of the enclosure, was thickly whitewashed. On the ridge of the tomb were sundry small stones, potsherds, &c., which I took to be offerings such as I have seen on less elaborate tombs elsewhere in Tunis and Tripoli. The interest of the tomb is threefold. First, the enclosure exactly reproduces the features of the ordinary house enclosures of the living population of the North African littoral. Its combination of ashlar piers and rubble curtain-wall goes back to the characteristic masonry of the Roman period ; and its bough-built lintel and vaulted living room recall the structure of the subterranean beehive dwellings of the Tarhuni uplanders in Tripoli (Fig. 2). Here, then, we have a type of ghost-house belonging to a stage of culture which in North Africa is pre-Roman, but has adopted Roman methods of construction as time went on.

Secondly, the ghost-house has grown upwards, under Mohammedan influences probably, into a cupola-crowned chapel of a type which is common all through Arab Africa ; compare also the magnificent *koubbah* of Saracen work in the gardens south of