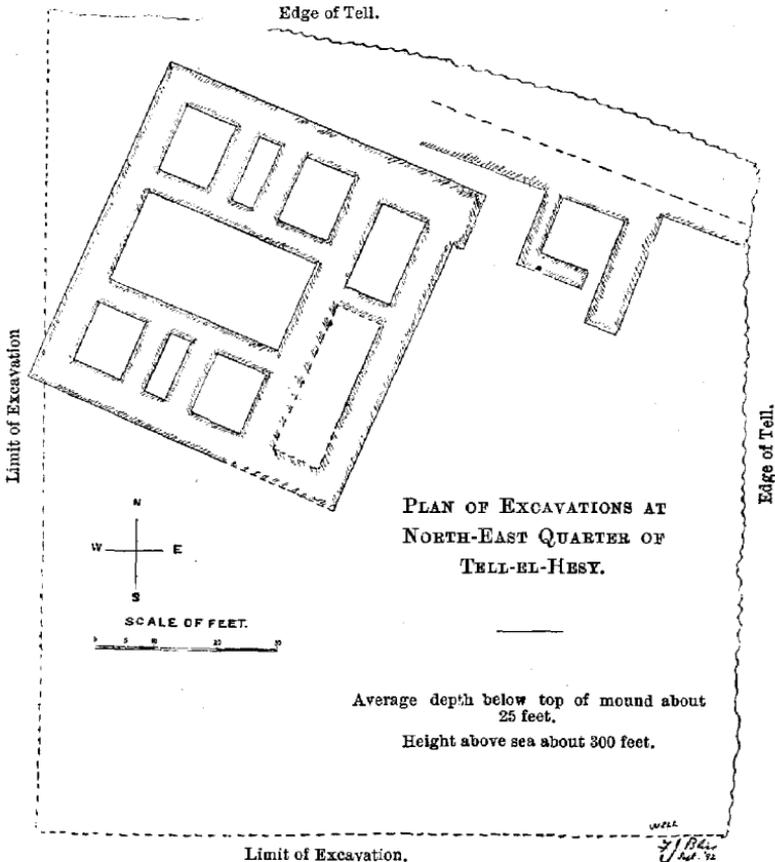


REPORT OF THE EXCAVATIONS AT TELL-EL-HESY, DURING THE SPRING SEASON OF THE YEAR 1892.

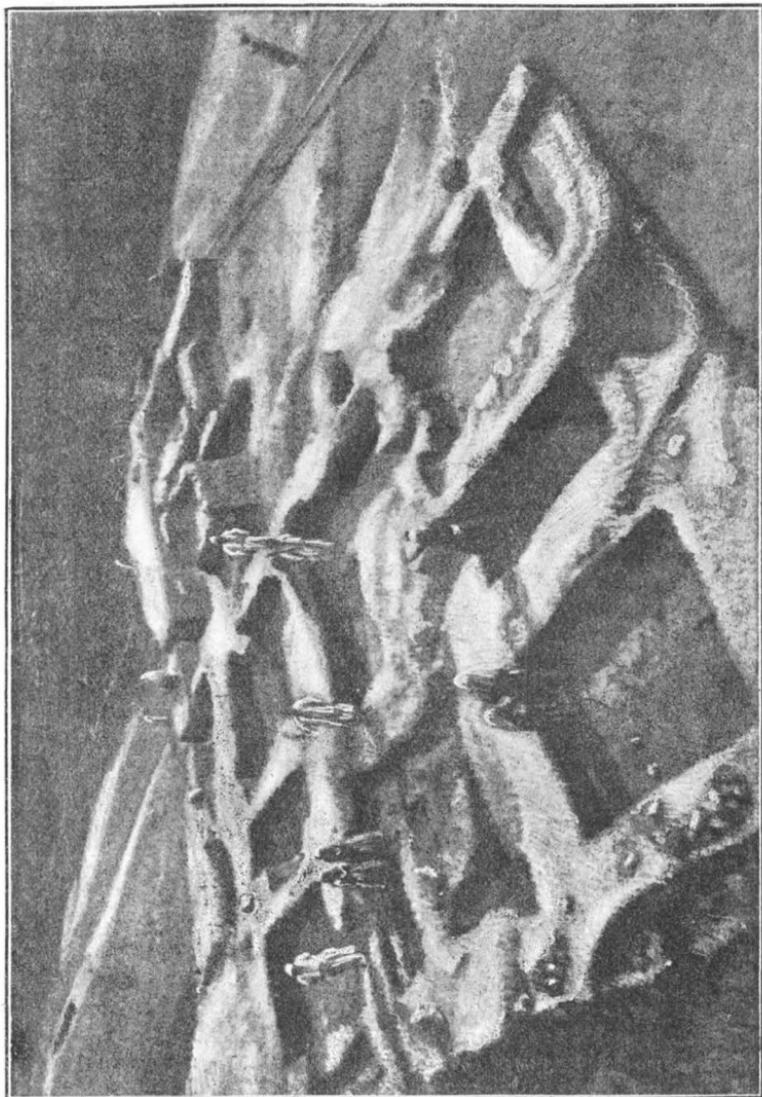
By FREDERICK JONES BLISS, B.A.

THE work of lowering the north-east section of Tell-el-Hesy was resumed March 28th, and suspended May 26th, when the wheat harvest set in, rendering it impossible to procure labourers, except at extravagant rates. As far as the weather was concerned, we might, with some inconvenience



from the heat, have continued a month longer. A large part of the work consisted in removing the bed of ashes, 5 feet deep, which, according to Professor Petrie, separates the Jewish kingdom from the periods below. This

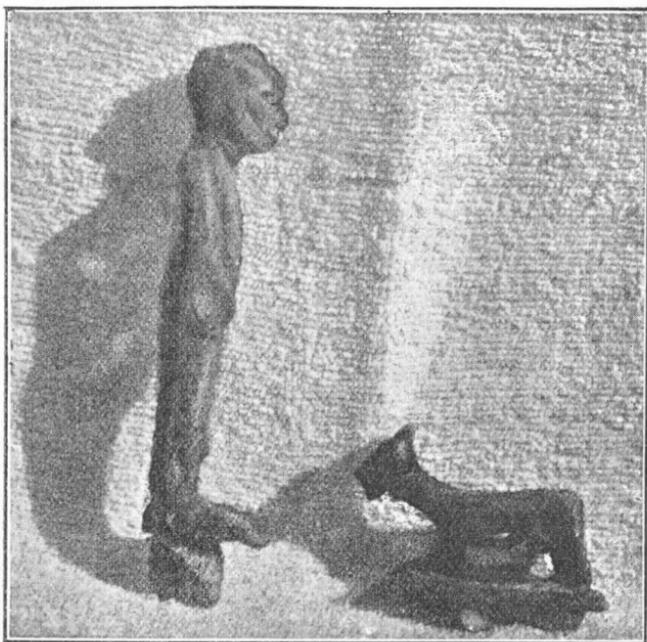
work was very tedious and expensive, but absolutely essential in order to uncover the Amorite towns. Before reaching the ashes, however, we uncovered the ruins of the large construction which I mark on the Plan as having the average level of 300 feet. The foundations are singularly irregular in level, and that estimate is too high, and should be lowered 5 feet. The first traces of this building were found in the southern rooms, which were easily cleared out, as they were filled with general *débris*. The walls were built on *débris*, but a bed of fine yellow sand, one-half an inch thick, intervened. Such sand Professor Petrie found under the door-sills of the pilaster building. I always listen to the suggestions of the workmen, believing that old traditions of building may have been handed down. They declared that the sand was to prevent the walls from settling. Without this clue of the yellow sand, it would have been very difficult to trace the walls, though not impossible, for without it we have cleared other rooms, which at first seemed one mass of indistinguishable brick, owing to the falling inward of the upper walls. As seen in the plan and photograph, the building is beautifully symmetrical, though we did not begin to guess this till the work of clearing had gone on some time. Our method is strictly inductive; we did not presuppose symmetry, and then infer connections here and there, but we followed the yellow sand clue until the building stood out as planned. Our only inferences were in the rooms to the east, where, as it happens, the symmetry is broken. It was fascinating to find the outer wall at every part measure from 5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 8 inches in thickness, usually 5 feet 6 inches. The variation was easily explained, for the walls visibly sagged, in some places inward, in some outward. How many centuries have they borne the weight of 30 feet of Tell above them? The builders of this edifice found the ground of very irregular surface, or of varying hardness, for the line of sand marking the foundations rises and falls in the same room in a zig-zag line. We found no doors, for the building was ruined down below the surface of the surrounding ground, the highest remaining walls being hardly 3 feet high, while in some cases there remained but a single course of brick above the sand foundation. From the symmetry of the rooms, we must understand some public structure. The largest room was of considerable size, being about 30 feet by 15 feet. The two small rooms were only 11 feet by 4 feet, actually less broad than their encompassing walls. That we made no mistake in clearing them out, is shown by their correspondence in position and size. It is difficult to imagine their use. I sent all the measurements of walls, interior and exterior, to Professor Petrie, who deduced that the cubit used was the foot of 13.3 inches, found in Asia Minor. Some of the cylinders which Professor Sayce has already described were found outside this building. I am inclined to place the date of the structure somewhere between the 11th and 12th centuries B.C. It was just within the northern walls of the inclosure which, during the majority of periods, was a fort rather than a town, as we find the best buildings to be symmetrically arranged against the outside walls, while the central space in the Tell seems usually to



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE RUINS EXCAVATED AT THE N. E. QUARTER OF TELL-EL-HESY.

have been an open space, with rougher, smaller buildings, corn-pits, &c. These rooms suggest the long line of rooms with thick walls which Petrie found to the east, above the pilaster building. They may all belong to the same chronological level.

Between this town and the ashes there were the remains of at least two other towns, in one of which there was found building in the usually unoccupied central part. Here we turned up the bronze Egyptian idol with gold collar, about 4 inches high, and the bronze statuette of a she-goat with two kids sucking, as shown in the photograph.



BRONZE IDOL WITH GOLD COLLAR AND BRONZE GOAT WITH KIDS.
(Reduced about one-half.)

The goat has ears, horns and tail, fairly well preserved. They probably belong to the 12th or 13th century B.C. Of the same period is the female figure in pottery, 6 inches long, shown in cut No. 40. We first found a headless figure; it was made very flat, with sharply-pointed breasts, small waist, and prominent hips. A duplicate turned up not long after, also headless. I put them aside, and happened to lay with them a small, rough head in pottery, found later, with a flattened head, probably representing a head-dress, though not distinguished at the back from the neck, so rude was the art. Its hook nose resembled the beak of a bird rather than a human face. One day, by pure chance, I placed this head upon

the shoulders of the decapitated figure, and it fitted exactly along the line of fracture. Moreover, the markings made by some instrument in modelling the clay corresponded exactly; certain lines could be traced from the head to the back. This shows the value of keeping everything from day to day, as a missing fragment may be found at quite another depth. As we found this figure in duplicate, it seems probable that it is a representation of some female deity, which may be identified. Perhaps we have here a specimen of the household gods which were so small that Rachel could hide them among the camel furniture and sit upon them.

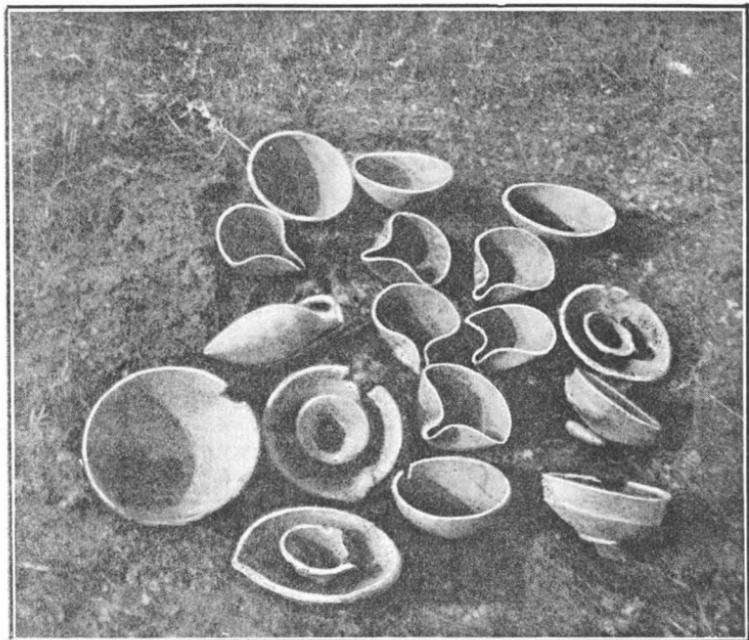


FEMALE FIGURE IN POTTERY.

(Reduced one-half.)

In these towns we found quantities of the Phœnician bowls and lamps figured on Plates VII and VIII in Petrie's "Tell-el-Hesy." I should accordingly date some of them as early as the 13th century B.C. In numerous cases we found that near walls a lamp had been placed, with a bowl covering it. Sometimes the lamp was enclosed by two bowls—that is, lying in one bowl, then filled with earth and covered by a second. As we so often found these near the foundations of walls, and in one case under a wall, it occurred to me that they represented some ceremony connected with building a new house. In my photograph of this Phœnician ware may be seen what looks like a lamp (though with the lip made much slighter), with a cup in the centre. Fragments of these bowls had been

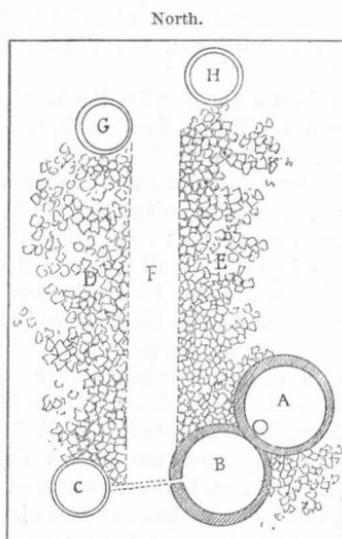
found both by Petrie and myself (*see* cut No. 50, page 106, *Quarterly Statement*, April, 1892). Petrie suggests a vessel for two kinds of food. The cup sometimes connects with the saucer by a small hole at the bottom. I suggest a third possibility: a stand for a juglet of the pointed-bottom order, the saucer to catch the water escaping from the porous jar through the hole, which could then be poured off at the lip. The pointed juglets must have had some stand.



PHENICIAN POTTERY FROM TELL-EL-HESY.

Just above the ashes we found a wine-press, or a place for making *dibs* (grape treacle), planned in the accompanying cut. First appeared the vat A, with a diameter of 63 inches; its walls were of mud, and it had a floor of cement somewhat sloping to a hollowed stone placed in the cement. Later appeared the vat B, about 3 feet lower than A. Its walls were of bricks, beautifully preserved, and its floor of cement sloping rapidly to an outlet to the west. I imagine there was a connection with the small pit C, about 3 feet lower, which was lined with rough stones, and in the side of which, towards B, was found a stone spout. The liquor, transferred from A to B, could run from B to C through a pipe, and be collected in some vessel at the bottom of C. The rough pavements, D and E, were connected with the press, and F was a rough way between them, a little lower. G and H were pits similar to C. The cement flooring of B was

made of pebbles embedded in lime, and was so hard that we could not break off a small piece with a hammer. As it had a diameter of over 5 feet and a thickness of 2 feet, it was a problem how to get it out of the way. We stood it up on edge, made a sloping trench, 2 feet wide, to the edge of the Tell, gave it a push, and down it rolled 80 feet to the stream-bed, where it lies to-day. Hollows in the pavements D and E suggested places for the huge cauldrons in which the juice should be boiled for the treacle after the grapes had been trodden in A and filtered from B to C. I have to confess that we destroyed A before we suspected the existence of B, which was at a lower level. Otherwise I should have been able to secure a photograph of this admirably-preserved wine and treacle press of the 13th century B.C. This suggests a principal difficulty of our



PLAN OF WINE PRESS, 1200 B.C.

work. Our task of carefully examining the north-east quarter of the Tell at all its levels is involving the removal of more than 850,000 cubic feet of earth. In order to accomplish this within the limits of our permit, the work must progress with a certain rapidity. On the one hand, there is the necessity of caution to destroy nothing until completely planned; on the other, the need of despatch. The plan of the wine-press, however, is correct.

In another part of the excavation, at the same chronological level, we found a somewhat similar treacle-press, though ruder. Here the place for the kettle was upon two great stones, placed parallel with a stone at the back. Many tannûrs, or pit-ovens occurred.

We now come to the bed of ashes, the removal of which was such an

ungrateful task. From the unbroken lines of ash in the strata, Professor Petrie has argued that they were wind-borne, and date from a period of desolation when the hill was used by alkali burners. A most happy guess, for we have come across the actual place where the process was carried on. As this discovery has just been made during our autumn season, I reserve the description for my next report. Rude constructions of stones and poor brick, much ruined; many bones, and much pottery, furnish traces of the alkali burners themselves. After these buildings fell into ruin, the mounds of ashes and burned vegetable stuff were distributed by the winds over the Tell, lying in the open places in regular stratification, and otherwise mingled with the ruined dwellings. The north walls of the earlier period must have existed in a ruined condition at the time of the burners, for the strata thin out and tilt up against ruined brick at the north, showing that a barrier to their progress existed. When the town was re-inhabited, the old walls were used as a foundation.

These few words suffice to describe the results obtained from the great ash-bed during a month's tedious work, and help to explain the shortness of my report.

The reward for the season's toil came when we were at work on the stratum under the ashes. On Monday, May 14th, ten days before we closed the work, I was in my tent at noon with Ibrahim Effendi, when my foreman Yusif came in with a small coffee-coloured stone in his hand. It seemed to be curiously notched on both sides and three edges, but was so filled in with earth that it was not till I carefully brushed it clean that the precious cuneiform letters were apparent.

Then I thought of a day, more than a year before, when I sat in Petrie's tent at the Pyramid of Meydüm, with Professor Sayce. He told me that I was to find cuneiform tablets in the Tell-el-Hesy, which as yet I had never seen; and gazing across the green valley of the slow, brown Nile, and across the yellow desert beyond, he seemed to pierce to the core, with the eye of faith, the far away Amorite mound. As for me, I saw no tablets, but I seemed to be seeing one who saw them!

To Professor Flinders Petrie, also, belongs a great share in the honour of the discovery. It was a triumphant vindication of his chronology—established, not by even a single dated object, but by pottery, mostly plain and unpainted. The tablet was found in the *debris* of decayed brick and stone, and burning, under the ash-bed, inside the north walls at the north-east corner of the Tell, at a level of 288 or 290, a part which he would assign to about 1,300 B.C.; and in another place in his book he says that, if anything, he has under estimated the age of the various strata of the Tell. Well, here we have a tablet which is plainly to be dated 1,400 B.C., found in the place Petrie dates 1,300 B.C., allowing that it may be older. I know that his estimate of the value of rough pottery for dating ruins has been much questioned, but it seems to me that the point is proved now beyond doubt. Henceforth, the sceptic, before he refuses the approximate dates furnished by the pottery clue, must prove a positive contrary.

The third sharer in the honours of the tablet is the actual discoverer, the lad Suleiman. He is one of the most intelligent, faithful, and honest of the workmen—a simple-hearted lad of about 19 years. He is the last one to be suspected of an imposture—and, indeed, the fresh earth clinging in the incised cuneiform letters was proof enough of its authenticity. In addition, as Yusif in his rounds approached Suleiman, he saw him bending over as if to pick up something, and when he came up to him, the lad was brushing the earth off the face of the tablet, and regarding it with the curiosity which anything new always awakens in these inquisitive fellahin.

As the impression has gone abroad that the tablet is of baked clay, I will add that it is a very hard, fine stone, of a blackish-brown or coffee-colour, about 3 inches by 2½ inches. The letters are beautifully incised.



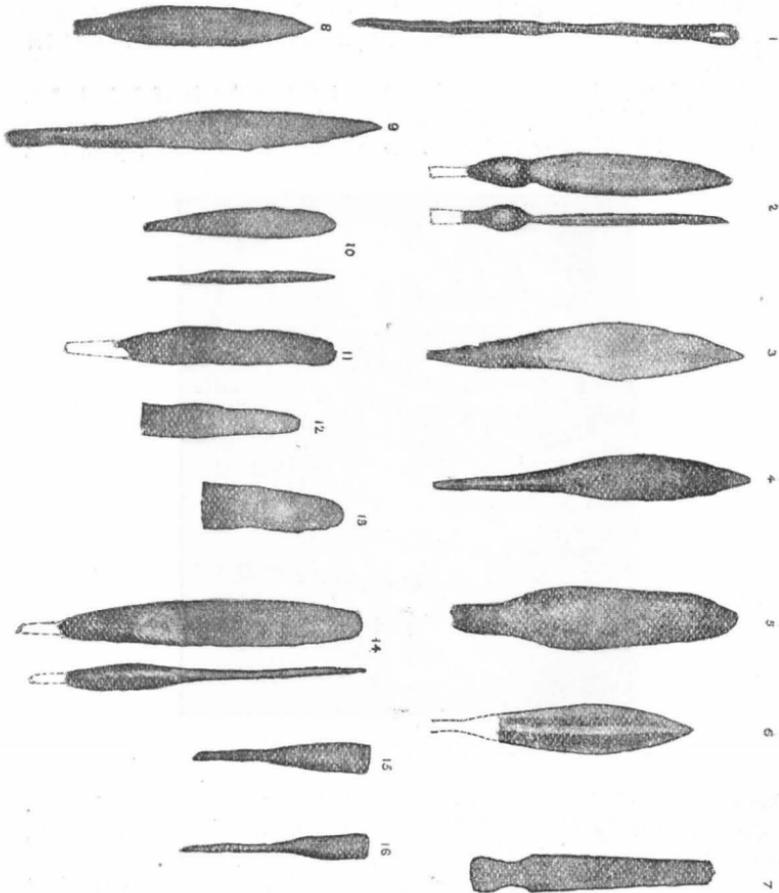
BACK OF INSCRIBED TABLET FOUND AT TELL-EL-HESY.

One corner is slightly broken off, probably by a tap of Suleiman's pick. I am informed by Ibrahim Effendi that it has gone to Constantinople, and is accordingly now in the excellent hands of Hamdi Bey.

As it was impossible to secure the stone, I cast about for the best means of obtaining correct impressions. Many paper squeezes were taken, beaten in with a tooth-brush. If in any given squeeze a certain line was indefinite, in the next I first secured a clear impression of that line. A Syrian dentist, Mr. Amin Haddad, made me a call at the time, and kindly took impressions for me in stent, from which he obtained casts in plaster of Paris.

As my report has been delayed by illness, the present date of writing

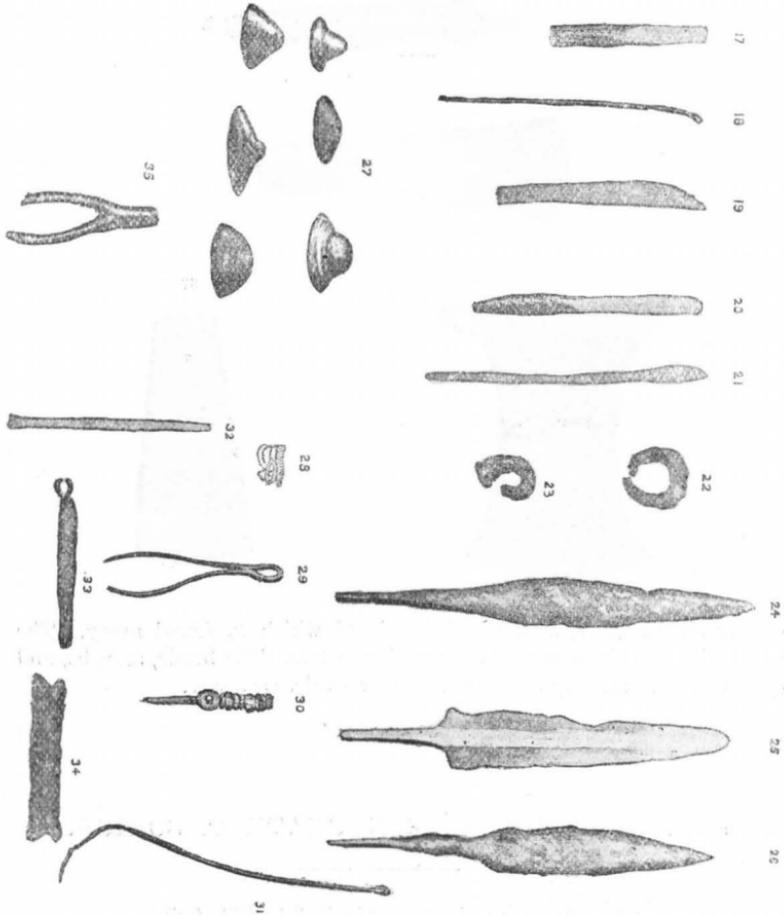
is November, in the sixth week of our autumn's season. The expectation of an immediate discovery of a number of tablets has not been fulfilled, and we have, in our section of the hill, uncovered the town to which this tablet should be assigned. As it was found in *débris*, it may possibly have been cast up from a lower level, and I shall not despair of others until I have examined every cubic foot of earth between the level we are



working upon to-day and the original soil. Should we find tablets lower, they will probably be older, and, of course, the older the better. At the level where the tablet occurred, the characteristic Amorite pottery had not yet appeared in the predominance it has at lower levels. I confess that the utterly ruined condition of every period we have uncovered forbids my hoping to find the archive chamber dear to the faith of Professor Sayce.

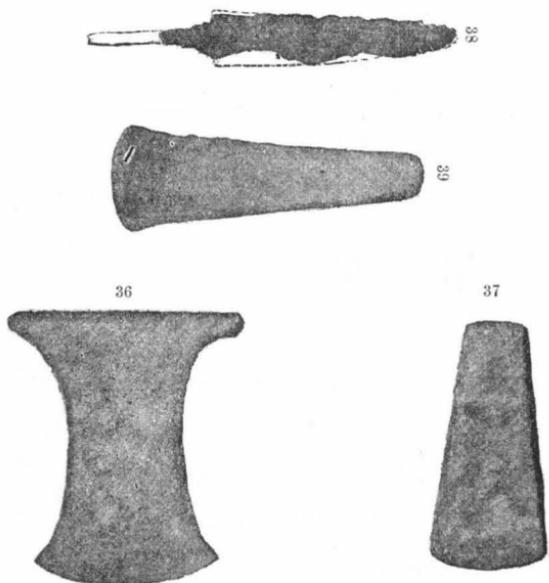
But in scattered tablets I believe. However, as Professor Sayce's prophecy has been fulfilled once, it may be again, and my first question to Yusif on riding up to the Tell is usually—"Have you found the Professor's library?"

The pottery was mostly of the Phœnician type. We also found various objects in bronze, of which I send drawings. No. 1 is a long



packing needle ; 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 14, 24, 25, 26 are all probably small spear-heads ; 12 and 13 are knives ; 15 and 16 are flat-headed—use not determined ; 18 and 31 are needles ; 21 seemed to be of silver ; 22 is a ring ; 27 represents objects in slate, pierced with a hole, which we have found in great numbers, and at all levels ; 28 is a charm of carnelian, in the shape of an eye, with eyebrows—it is pierced with a hole ; 29 is a

pair of tweezers ; 35 is similar, but thicker, more like pincers ; 30 is the top of an ornamental hair-pin ; 32, a scraper ; 37 and 39 are adzes, similar to those found last year, while 36 is a new shape five-twelfths of an inch thick ; 38 is a large spear-head. In the photograph of various objects in stone (dishes, pestles, &c.) may be seen long slabs, flat on one side and



convex on the other, with rounded ends, of which we found many. The stone with markings suggests Phœnician letters. The beads, scarabs, and cylinders have already been described by Professor Sayce.

LETTERS FROM HERR BAURATH C. SCHICK.

I.—THE RAILWAY FROM JAFFA TO JERUSALEM.

JERUSALEM, *October, 1892.*

AN exact tracing of the line I have already forwarded together with a few explanatory notes, and to this I wish to add some remarks.

The railway starts from Jaffa, north of the town, near the sea. It goes first north and north-eastward, and then bending eastwards, in order to go round outside the bulk of the gardens, crosses some winter watercourses