

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers*, Dec 20, 1890 to May 30, 1891)

## Henry Schliemann

Scarcely one hundred days have passed away from the present year of grace without the ball of the heavy hand of death upon some of the brightest lights of the whole century. Meissner is no more, he whose paintings have received such universal commendation that we sometimes through a natural error have put him in the list of the old masters, and forgotten that he has been our own contemporary. Dean Plumptre is now beyond the effect of any words which may be spoken of him though he has materially contributed to our English Literature by the gracefulness of his translations, and won the gratitude of thousands of hearts to whom literature is more than language. George Bancroft has himself past into completed history, whose own history of our country was incomplete though it was at the same time the meritorious object of our feeble praise, even when we were children. General Sherman, Admiral Porter, General Johnston have marched and sailed beyond the sea and are forever lost to our site, and with them has gone Schliemann, justly entitled to the honor of being saluted as one of the fathers of modern archaeology. Sir Henry Schliemann brought less of scholarship into his efforts which have contributed so vastly to certain lines of scholarship than of enthusiasm borne of an intuitive sense that something was bound to turn up, if he but set himself to the task of finding it. He was born with faith in himself and had found his ambition and that upon which to employ it even before he was scarcely in his teens.

The little town of Neubuckow in Mecklenburg-Schwerin has the distinction of being the home of the first eight years of his life; here he was born January 6th 1822; his father was a Protestant clergyman. In the rear of their garden was a little house, said to be haunted and near it a pond which bore the name Silver Schalchen out of which a maiden was believed to rise each midnight, holding a silver bowl. These two bits of romance about the pond & the haunted garden-house appealed to his strong love of the mysterious and the marvelous. A little hill in the same village, in which, as the story ran, and old robber baron had buried his child in a golden cradle, struck his fancy, and he often wondered why the mound had not been excavated and the Golden cradle with its treasures brought back to light.

When about 8 years old his father presented to him a Christmas gift Jerrer's Universal History in which was a wood cut representing Troy in flames; the huge walls and the Scean gate were there, with Aeneas escaping with his household towards the mountains. Such vast structures, he argued with his father, could never have been totally destroyed, though he was time and again assured that even the site of the old city was actually lost. Still he remained firm in his opinion and it was in joke agreed to that the boy should someday excavate Troy. The little children of the village laughed at him when they were told that their play fellow had so lofty ideas as to what he should do. But one small girl had great faith in him and did not laugh, but she encouraged him and told him she had a firm belief that he would yet someday do what he proposed. This little bond of sympathy

united these children together, and they came to be absorbed, even during the dancing lessons which they took in common, in their important archaeological investigations and great plans for the future. They agreed they should marry when they were growing up; and in common excavate in the pond and mysterious hill, and lastly search for Troy and its remains. Upon his mother's death he forever bade farewell to the roof where he had spent these years of his childhood, nor did he ever see the little maiden Minna afterwards; for a brief moment this year of a twofold separation brought more comparative unhappiness to Schliemann than all the other years of his life. The boy was put under the care of a private tutor in a neighboring town, then sent to a gymnasium, then withdrawn when his father's financial resources became too limited to assist the boy, then sent to a less pretentious real schule and as though he were to go from bad to worse at the age of 13 was apprenticed in a little grocer's shop in Fürster.

Here he toiled at humble duties of his position for 5 1/2 years, denied every educational advantage, and all for a salary which scarcely gave him a comfortable living. He tells us that his occupation consisted in retailing herrings, potatoes, whiskey, coffee, oil, and the like, in grinding potatoes for the still and sweeping the shop. He worked from five in the morning until 11 at night, without a moment's leisure for study yet never lost his love of study; tho the little he had learned as a child was slipping from him. One evening a drunken miller stumbled into the shop, he knew something of Homer for he had been in attendance at a gymnasium and had almost concluded his studies there. He sang about 100 lines of the poet to the young grocer and observed his cadences so well that Schliemann though he did not understand a word was struck by their beauty. He wept over his unhappy fate as a humble apprentice. Twice he inspired the Miller with whiskey and thrice did the Bard thus inspired repeat those divine verses. The Greek lines called back to the boy his old promise to excavate Troy, but there seemed no escape from his condition until one day lifting a cask too heavy for him he spat blood, and was no longer able to work. This was the beginning of the turning point in his life.

It brought him to Hamburg and thus kept him adrift; otherwise he might have spent his entire life as a common grocer in all probability. In Hamburg he went in despair; for \$45 a year he worked first in one grocery and then in another, only for a week and each. The trouble with his lungs had made him useless to his employers, what could he do? Too plucky to despair, but driven by necessity, he was willing to work at any employment, however humble. He became a cabin boy on the brig Dorothea, bound for South America. He had always been poor, but never yet so utterly destitute as at that time; he was forced to sell even the only coat he possessed to purchase a blanket for the voyage. But off Holland, the ship was wrecked; the crew of nine took to the lifeboats and were cast ashore in safety on an unknown land, no darker future ever faced a young man than did Schliemann as it faced him at that hour; yet on that bank a voice seemed to whisper to him that the tide in his earthly affairs had come, and that he had to take it at its flood, a few shillings which he was forced to beg for brought him to Amsterdam; winter was setting in, and with no coat upon his back, he suffered cruelly from the cold. He would gladly have enlisted as a soldier; but could not pass the examination. What was he to do; slowly but surely his few coins were slipping away; at last in despair he feigned sickness and was sent to the public hospital, a thing which he hoped and prayed for; but he was

not long in seeing that that was even a more terrible situation; his pluck came again to his rescue. He wrote a letter to a friend in Hamburg to save him; luckily it was delivered while that gentleman was dining with a number of wealthy friends; a purse was made up for his benefit, a purse of just \$100, with this he secured a clerk's position in a banking house – the duties were not burdensome – he found the time to look to his neglected education. First he learned to write legibly, then to improve his services as exchange clerk he applied himself to the study of modern languages. His annual salary was \$160; half of this he spent upon his studies, with the other half he kept soul and body together – miserably enough.

His lodging was but a garret hole in which he shivered with cold in winter and roasted with heat in summer. His breakfast consisted of rye meal porridge and a dinner never cost him more than five cents. Yet with all that suffering he could say to himself: I shall escape this only by the aid of increasing work, and brave perseverance. He had a keen realization of the value of learning English, and applied himself to it daily with the aid of a teacher. On Sundays he attended the English church muttering in a low tone each word of the clergymen's sermon as it was delivered.

The Vicar of Wickefield (*sic*) & Scott's *Ivanhoe* were his constant companions wherever he went, and on whatever duty. At night he recited them aloud, if he could not sleep. Thus in six months he had a speaking knowledge of the English language. Applying the same method to the acquisition of the French language, he was able to overcome its difficulties in another six months. His unremitting study had so strengthened his memory that the study of Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish seemed easy; within not more than six weeks he was able to speak and write each fluently. With the increased usefulness of his work as correspondence clerk came change of employers and rise of salary. But with the feeling that he might make himself still more useful by a knowledge of Russian, he set out to work to learn that language also. Although he could find for his purpose nothing better than an old grammar, a lexicon and a bad translation of the adventures of *Telemachus*, and absolutely no teacher to give him a lesson, yet with the aid of the books he had gathered together, he learned the Russian letters and their pronunciation; he then wrote Russian sentences of his own composition and committed them to memory reciting them aloud at the same time.

It occurred to him that he might screw himself to carrying out his determination faithfully, if he had an audience to listen to his narration in Russian of the adventures of *Telemachus*, so he hired a poor Jew for 80 cents a week, who came every evening to listen for two hours to his Russian recitations, though he understood not one syllable. Twice he was forced to change his lodgings owing to the vigor of his recitations and their disturbing effect upon his neighbors. His knowledge of Russian, by this method became so excellent that in 1846 he was sent by his employers on a mission to St. Petersburg. His negotiations there were conducted with such great success that he was inscribed in the guild of Amsterdam as a wholesale merchant. His dealings were almost exclusively in indigo, and within one year he made a profit of \$40,000. The year 1850 he visited California in search of his brother who had emigrated to that state in the previous year.

Happening to be there on the 4th of July of 1850 when California became a State and all

those then residing there by that very fact became naturalized Americans he gladly availed himself of the opportunity to become a citizen of the United States. Meanwhile his business enterprises in Russia were continued and yielded him large profits. By the end of 1854 he could estimate himself to be worth \$125,000; but his prosperity still continued and even during the eight months of 1857 he made some profits. Yet while Schliemann loved business and the money it brought him, the opportunities for further self-improvement, and for travel and the excavating of Troy lay uppermost in his heart. From 1848 to 1863 he seems to have the magician's wand whose touch turned all things to gold; it was an enthusiasm, self-confidence, pluck, which brought him all this success; these were ordinary qualities, but united in him in an extraordinary degree. In business his judgment seems to have been profoundly wise; I have found no account of any failure in any business plan he undertook. In 1858 during the period of his largest mercantile success he renewed the study of the Latin language which had been interrupted for 25 years; two years before then he had begun modern Greek under native teachers, and then added to that classical Greek, reading the Iliad and the Odyssey several times, and general Greek literature in a cursory way.

But laying aside his studies for a season he began a tour of travel in 1858 through Denmark and Sweden having previously learned the languages of those countries, then through Germany and Italy, then through Egypt sailing up the Nile to the 2nd cataract thence he crossed through the desert to Syria. He visited Athens, but was prevented by illness from seeing the scenes of the Homeric story. "At the close of 1863 he withdrew from business and in the following year was upon the point of going to Troy and Ithaca, but changed his plans and made two years trip around the world, visiting China, and Japan, on which countries he afterward published a book; he made a short stay in the United States, and returned to Europe in 1866, taking up his residence in Paris, with the determination of giving up the rest of his life to the study of archaeology. In the summer of 1868, bearing the passport of an American citizen, he visited Greece, and soon after published a book on Ithaca, Peloponnesus and Troy, interesting as giving his first impressions of the places which he was afterwards to examine more thoroughly than anyone had done before. But as can be seen from the sketch of his life just given, his training had not been of a character to fit him for the work of a critic. He is charmingly naïve in this book, which hovers between the tone of a guidebook and that of the popular book on travels. Upon arriving in Ithaca he counts himself fortunate in falling in with another Miller who serves him as his guide and repeats the tale of Odysseus with an enthusiasm even greater than his own. Schliemann congratulates the Greek upon his acquaintance with the Homeric poems, but is amazed to find that he cannot even read modern Greek, but has received all of his knowledge of Odysseus by special family tradition. It is hard to believe that he accepted this story seriously, but he regards this as a curious case of survival, and agrees with another authority in the view that no where else is the memory of antiquity so perfectly and purely presented as at Ithaca. Again he finds a large letter Delta which the islanders called grammata Odysseus and he says the letter seems old and may possibly have been made by Odysseus himself. The great enthusiastic nature of the author is evident everywhere.

He seats himself in the fields Laertes, who bemoaned his son's long absence, and here he

reads aloud and translates to the villagers who gather about him parts of the last book of the Odyssey. When the little audience hears of the sorrow of the aged Laertes & how, after an absence of 20 years, Odysseus returned to him on the very spot where they were standing every eye swam with tears. On another day he reads to them the story of the recognition of Odysseus and Penelope and both reader and listeners all weep together; nor can he tear himself from them until he has kissed them all. On this little island of Ithaca he begins his first excavations with only 4 workmen; from here he went to Mycenae and Tirgus, and then to the Troad spending 10 days there, with a description of this visit, the book closes; he hired five men to work for him in the Troad, and satisfied himself that no remains of any important settlement could be found on the hill of Bunarbashi, which since the close of the last century has been viewed by all scholars as the site of Priam's Troy. He was satisfied too that Achilles could not have chased Hector about that hill, as he chased him around Troy according to Homer. He then transferred his workmen to Hissarlik, but was so completely convinced that this was the real site of Troy that he did not dig at all, but left it for a more seasonable occasion.

The year 1869 Schliemann spent in the United States, being occupied by business interests which demanded his personal attention, and after returning to Europe he was obliged to wait many weeks before securing permission to begin operations at Hissarlik. By April 1870 however he had dug enough there to lay walls base at the depth of 16 feet. He seemed to be guided wisely; broad cuts were extended from north to south and from east to west, and in June 1873 he brought to light the so-called treasure of Priam. Discontinuing his operations for a season he published his work *Trojanriche* with an illustration of 218 photographs of his discoveries. This has appeared in English under the title *Troy & its Remains*. Upon completing this work he begins excavations at Mycenae; Troy the seat of Priam's suggesting Micenae, the seat of Agamemnon. For nearly 2 years he dug experimentally but in 1876 the real work began. Schliemann was convinced from the start that the tombs of Agamemnon and his companions could surely be found by digging for them, and before the close of the season's work he had the pleasure of reporting to the King of Greece his remarkable discoveries of tombs and treasure; about 100 pounds of gold, Troy weight, were found. The firman permitting his excavations at Troy having expired, his work there was delayed, and, owing to disputes with the Turkish government, not began again until the autumn of 1878, the necessary firman having been secured through the instrumentality of the British minister as it had in the first case been secured at the instance of the American minister Hon. Wayne McHugh. The result of his labors in this second series of excavations at Hissarlik appears in his work called *Ilios*. Schliemann had profited by experience and sharp criticism, and undertook his labors here with greater scientific care; he had the constant companionship of his friend D. Rudolph Virchoff of Berlin, and of a learned French archaeologist, Bourneuf. His unscientific ardor was giving place to judgment. He accepted every Homeric verse as inspired; been eager to discover in every relic some trace of the Trojan hero; and in unearthing the gate of a city or a citadel at Hissarlik had rejoiced in the discovery of the Scaen gate; near this he had found a rude dwelling and called it the palace of Priam, not heeding the fact that it almost blocked up the entrance to the Scaean gate. He moralized over a living toad found 50 feet below the surface of the earth, as a possible contemporary of Paris and Hector; he had found bodies entombed on the Acropolis of Mycenae and was confident he

discovered the remains of Agamemnon and Cassandra. But now in his second series of excavations at Troy there is a marked exercise of care and judgment. Yet the results of even this work were not accepted without great and hostile criticism. A third time therefore he secured a firman and commenced excavations in 1882. This time he had the services of an eminent German architect and archaeologist Dr. Dörpfeld under whose direction for 4 years the excavations at Olympia had been managed undertaken by the German Government, he engaged also 3 skilled overseers. The results of this work are given in Schliemann's Troja, in some respects only a supplement to the Ilias, yet the style is clearer and the treatment more systematic, the readers reminded on every page how much has been learned about prehistoric archaeology in Greece since the first spades were driven at Hissarlik.

The question of the site of Troy is greatly simplified, though from the poets own allusions it had always been kept within narrow limits. The Burabashi site has now been pretty definitely abandoned; though Mr. W. J. Sidleman, as you may have noted in an article in one of the earlier copies of the N. Y. Nation for this year, still holds onto that site. Prof. R. C. Jebb another of the most hostile critics of Schliemann admits if there had been any real Troy it was most probably at Hissarlik. He says Hissarlik has one definite and unique claim – the presence of sufficiently old remains – to be regarded as the site of a town the capture of which gave rise to the learned of the siege of Troy. The result of his last campaign in Troy Schliemann thus sums up for himself, having abandoned his old view of the Scean gate and recognizing it merely as one of the gates of the Acropolis. I have proved that in a remote antiquity there was in the plain of Troy a large city, destroyed of old by a fearful catastrophe, which had on the hill of Hissarlik only its acropolis, with its temples and a few other large edifices, whilst its lower city extended in an easterly, westerly, and southerly direction, on the site of the later Ilium; and that consequently this city answers perfectly to the site of sacred Ilias. Other labors have been undertaken by Schliemann at Tirgus, Orchsmemo in Boetia, & at Marathon at sandy Pylos only two years ago; but the great battle between the enthusiast Schliemann and those who Dr. Wohoffy calls the pedants has been waged about Troy principally. Whatever reviews of the life and work of Dr. Schliemann may be called forth by his death and they are so far fewer than those which appeared while he lived and toiled at the vexing problem of Troy, it is true that he has won a genuine triumph. The Germans are proud of the achievements of their fellow countrymen, while Americans rejoice that it was largely through business interests in this country that he found the means for carrying on his work. His enthusiasm and energy rarely flagged, he was discouraged by no repulses, but carried out his plans in spite of ignorant ridicule, adverse criticism and hampering annoyances from petty officials. “It was of course impossible (Dr. Mahaffy) that such a discoverer as a Schliemann should not make conjectures which have not been verified or assumed as true statements based on mere traditional acquiescence. This last work, shows how readily he accepts the correction of new evidence; years ago when Dr. Mahaffy pointed out to him the error in certain classical authors upon which Schliemann had relied, errors brought to light & capable of correction by the very work of Schliemann he at once bowed to the evidence. It is by this honesty and simplicity of purpose that he has lived down the attacks of severe assailants. I cannot forbear here to quote a choleric conclusion in his estimate of Schliemann made by Prof. Mahaffy “No man is more jealous of his assured

property than the scholastic pedant, and no one resents more in invasion in to Philology self-taught and unceremonious inquiries. But if Dr. Schliemann could harbor in his great heart the feelings of an ancient Levite, he might well reflect that his enemies, the pedants, have been discomfited and brought to confusion, the ablest and most learned of them Dr. Brentaud lately (1883) committed suicide, and if his English disciple has not gone so far as to copy him literally in this, he has at least gone as far as charitable adversaries could desire in committing archaeological suicide, by maintaining theories which block him out from the number even of incipient students of that science. In the latter years since the work of excavating has been for Schliemann completed, he has been living the useful life of a Greek resident, traveling occasionally but usually acting the role of the genial host to all foreigners who have been attracted to Greece. The various German, French, British and American schools in Athens for the pursuit of archaeological work over there inception largely to him; and as if in recognition of his responsibility he used ever to hold his house open hospitably to directors and students alike. He was always an exceedingly affable man, and in this particular his life, a Greek woman was fully his equal.

Gentlemen who have met Dr. Schliemann and his wife contrast them as one must contrast a German in the Greek, but when they become guests at the doctor's house they know not whose amiability they prize more highly, a visit to Athens would have been incomplete without calling at Schliemann's house, meeting his charming wife his Penelope and Telemachus Agamemnon & Andromache and touching and examining many of the costly treasures which he has exhumed. The Greeks themselves were no less fond of him because he was not a Greek; and he counted the royal household among his friends. To our own Professors whom we have sent abroad to take charge of the American school, he has shown the cordiality of a fellow American. When therefore he suddenly passed away at Naples on the 26th of December last, having almost reached his 70th year, a sense of sorrow and regret shot through hearts upon almost every part of the globe. The remains have been laid away in that beautiful part of Attica called Colonus, where also lie the remains of another Philhellene Karl Otfraad Muller. It is the spot which Sophocles celebrated in song in the drama which portrays the death of the Theban king Oedipus – a song which tradition says he composed and sang when his sons felt that he was too old to manage his property, somewhere near that stranger now lies the stranger Schliemann, stranger to this wistful clime.

Long for swiftest steeds renowned  
Furthest of regions round  
Where beneath the Ivy Shade,  
In the dew besprinkled glade  
Many a love-lorn nightingale  
Warbles suite her plaintive tale,  
Where the flying in clusters [ ]  
Her sweets secured from wintry showers  
Nor scorching Sun, nor raging storm  
The beauties of the year deform.

In any attempt to estimate properly the value of Schliemann's work, “we must admit the

fact that at his own expense and with very great personal effort and discomfort, he has opened a new world to archaeological research, that he was frank to acknowledge errors, and learned a more scholarly interpretation of classical authors by degrees. This unparalleled success has been due to his unbounded enthusiasm, lasting through 20 years of work, to his so-called magnetic influence over men, to unusual vigor of body, for he needed only four hours of sleep, to aptness in acquiring new languages, which enabled him to converse directly with his workmen, and to the trained assistance which he secured. By paying his own expenses he was able to work very independently; he had no divining rod which points to hidden treasures; he therefore made mistakes. Once he had given orders to stop the digging at Mycenae, yet one of the great tombs buried there was found afterwards by one of his engineers. The richness of the fields at Troy, Mycenae, Tirgus, Orchomos has thrown a mass of material before the student of archaeology which makes it scarcely desirable that for the present any other great finds should be made. Yet it is hardly to be feared that the next ten or twenty years will witness such wonderful discoveries as the past twenty. On the other hand an impetus has been given to the zeal of schools at Athens to excavate, that we find ourselves still called upon to marvel over some fresh curious finds. It was only a fortnight ago that the New York Independent published a cable gram from the U. S. Consul at Athens setting forth some wonderful work done by the students of the American school in bringing to life an inscription which established some points in the history of Aristotle. The world at all times needs such men as Schliemann was.

They crowd it so with fresh facts, they give us new sources, they destroy the unwholesome excess of conventionality and pedantry. Sleep at Colonus, sleep as to the home of Homer's chanting with the golden beam.

Of crocus on my grave, lie down and dream;  
And made the sweet gray Nightingale be dumb,  
No cry from widely roving [ ] come.  
Cephissus tumble not in winter stream.  
That unto thee the Muse, her mighty theme  
Again unfolding, may rehearse the same,  
Of great Achilles wrongs, to the recall  
That woven hymn of which a lovely fall  
Caught on a comrade's voice so thrilled thine ears  
One day in youth, then hadst no power to speak,  
Except to pray to God with bitter tears  
That by his grace thou sometime shouldst learn Greek.

W. E. Waters

He needs no ships to cross the tide  
Who in the lives about him sees  
There window prospects opening wide  
O'er History's fields on every side  
To Ind and Egypt, Rome and Greece

Lowell