

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

THE Annual Meeting of the General Committee was held in the great room of the Social Science Association, on July 26th. Chairman, Mr. JAMES GLAISHER.

After the SECRETARY had read letters from various gentlemen regretting their inability to attend the meeting, the Report of the Executive Committee for the year was read as follows :—

“MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—

“Your Committee at the last General Meeting of June 24th, 1885, have, on resigning office, to render an account of their administration during the past year.

“I. The Committee have held twenty-three meetings during the year.

“II. It has still been found impossible to carry on the survey of Eastern Palestine by means of Royal Engineers for want of the Sultan's Firman.

“III. The work of exploration, however, has been conducted for the Society during the last year by Herr Gottlieb Schumacher. On the last meeting of the General Committee the Executive Committee were able to report that they had received a large and important contribution to the survey of Eastern Palestine in the shape of a map of two hundred square miles, with memoirs giving a list of Arabic names, a general description of the country, with its perennial streams, cascades, forests, villages, roads, and people, and an account, with plans and drawings, of the villages and ruins in the district surveyed by Herr Schumacher.

“The work has since been printed and published in a separate volume, called ‘Across the Jordan,’ a copy of which has been presented to every subscriber who asked for it; the number of copies so distributed amounts to 1,100. This most valuable memoir is a contribution to our knowledge of the country of the greatest importance. We have now the pleasure of announcing that Herr Schumacher has successfully carried out another survey for the Society, this time in Northern Ajlûn. The portion surveyed is five hundred square miles in that piece of country bordered on the north by the Sharî'at el Menâdireh, on the west by the Ghor or Jordan Valley, on the south by Tibneh, and on the east by Irbid Beit Râs and the Wâdy Semar, which joins the Sharî'at el Menâdireh near Arâk el Heitaleieh. A greater number of ancient and modern sites was collected here than in the previous survey by the same explorer. Special plans have been made of M'keis (Gadara) and Beit Râs (believed by Herr Schumacher to be Capitolas). Another great field of dolmens was found near Irbid.

“Herr Schumacher has crossed the Jaulan and Hauran once more, and was able to add more names to the map. At Abdîn he found a Greek inscription.

“The maps and memoirs of this survey will arrive, it is expected, in

September. The Committee have not yet decided upon the form and method of publication.

“Little by little we are rescuing the unknown parts of the country from obscurity, and bringing them, with their ruins, under the surveyor's hands, if not by the rapid methods by which the survey of Western Palestine was accomplished, yet by safe and scientific methods, and at much less cost.

“Herr Schumacher has also visited the south of Palestine, and has made a discovery, which he considers important, at Ascalon. Its nature is not yet accurately known.

“As regards the long-promised map of the country showing both sides of the Jordan, this must still be deferred until Schumacher's work can be laid down upon it.

“We are indebted to Dr. Selah Merrill, the American Consul at Jerusalem, for keeping us acquainted with certain discoveries at the Holy City of the greatest interest. Recent excavations for building purposes laid bare the lower courses of a great wall which, to judge by the masonry—this presented the familiar marginal draft associated with Jewish work—and by a rock scarp on the outside, seem to be those of the second wall. We are now taking steps to follow up this discovery, and hope to report, before long, on the actual course of the wall. It is needless to point out that, should it prove to be the second wall, the authenticity of the so-called Holy Places will either be absolutely disproved or will be very greatly advanced if not placed quite beyond dispute.

“We are also indebted to Dr. Merrill for an account of other discoveries, consisting chiefly of rock-cut tombs near Jerusalem; to Professor Hayter Lewis for his notes on Jerusalem; to Herr Conrad Schick for papers on the newly discovered tombs and on the aqueduct of Siloam; to Mr. Laurence Oliphant for his papers on excavations at Carmel, and on the eastern coasts of the Sea of Galilee; to Captain Conder for his notes; to Mr. Greville Chester for his papers on Phœnician Gems; and to other writers who have made the *Quarterly Statement* interesting and valuable. We have also published during the year Mr. Chichester Hart's ‘Journey of a Naturalist in Sinai and South Palestine.’ This paper appeared in the *Quarterly Statement*. We have in hand his fuller memoir on the same subject, which we hope to bring out early next year. We have also published Professor Hull's Geological Memoir. This important work is issued uniform with the ‘Survey of Western Palestine,’ and will be included in the Index, which is now nearly ready. As regards the remaining copies of the ‘Survey of Western Palestine,’ they are in the hands of Mr. Alexander P. Watt, 34, Paternoster Row, who has been appointed the agent for their sale. Subscribers and those who already possess the work are requested to note that no reduction will be made, either now or at any other time, in the price of this great work. On the other hand the Committee reserve to themselves the right of raising the price of the last copies.

“IV. A Committee has been appointed for the purpose of making an inquiry into the manners and customs of the various peoples and tribes in

Syria and the East. We have now an opportunity of carrying this out by means of intelligent and educated agents over the whole of Syria, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Armenia, Egypt, and the country as far as the Euphrates. This most important investigation will be carried on during the next twelve months, and will perhaps last several years. The results, as they come home and can be classified, will be given to the world in the Society's Journal. The Committee now consists of Captain Conder, Rev. Dr. Ginsburg, Mr. James Glaisher, Professor Hayter Lewis, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. Simpson, Sir Charles Warren, Sir Charles Wilson, Dr. Aldis Wright, and the Rev. Dr. William Wright, all members of the General or Executive Committee.

“Mr. Francis Galton, the President of the Anthropological Institute, has also joined this Committee, and Mr. Lawrence Gomme, Secretary of the Folk-Lore Society. The Institute of Architects has promised assistance, and may be considered represented by Professor Hayter Lewis, while the Bible Society is represented by Dr. William Wright. The questions are nearly ready, and are now passing through the hands of the printer. They will be supplemented by a set of questions on Folk-Lore, which a Committee of the Folk-Lore Society has in preparation.

“V. The Society has this year arrived at the twenty-first year of its age. It was felt that the anniversary should be marked by a public meeting, and by a Summary or Memoir of the work accomplished during the twenty-one years of its existence. The meeting was held in the Theatre of the Royal Institution, on the 22nd day of June, under the same President, the Archbishop of York, who took the chair at the first meeting of June 22nd, 1865. It was addressed by Mr. Glaisher, Sir George Grove, Sir Charles Wilson, Captain Conder, Mr. MacGregor, Canon Tristram, and Professor Hayter Lewis, as well as by His Grace the Archbishop.

“A copy of the Memoir, written for the Committee by the Secretary, will be sent round to every subscriber who asks for it. It contains a brief account of all that the Society has done, and a statement of what it hopes to do.

“The expenses of exploration might be indefinitely increased, but in the present condition of the Society's finances, and the prospects of next year's income, the Committee regret that they are not justified in proposing to spend more than about £1,000 next year on research. About an equal sum should be expended in publishing the memoirs, &c., which are in the office awaiting publication. The expenses of management amount every year to the same sum, namely, about £600, including salaries, rent, and general expenses of the office.

“The Balance Sheet for the year 1885 was published in the April *Quarterly Statement*. The Society received during the year 1885 the sum of £2,904 from all sources, and has expended £2,822, viz.: in exploration, maps and memoirs, £1,560; in printing and books, £688; in management, £573. Since the beginning of the year the sum of £1,456 has been received; exploration has cost £410; maps and memoirs, £720; printers, £150; and management, £321.

"The debt on the maps and memoirs has been entirely paid off. The Society has no other debts than the current printers' bills, and the loan of £850, which it is hoped will be paid off before the next meeting of the General Committee.

"The Committee have to deplore the death, since their last meeting, of three of their oldest friends. These are—(1) Mr. James Fergusson, to whom, with Sir George Grove, belongs the honour of founding the Society. His views on the 'Topography of Jerusalem,' published in the year 1847, and stoutly defended by him to the last, have been the means of awakening and sustaining an unflagging interest in the sacred sites. (2) The Venerable Dean of Chester, Dr. Howson, who died in April last, was a member of the Committee from the beginning. (3) Mr. W. S. W. Vaux, F.R.S., formerly of the British Museum, Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society and of the Royal Society of Literature, was a member of the Executive Committee from the beginning.

"The Committee have to express their best thanks to the Local Hon. Secretaries, and to all who have helped to spread a knowledge of their work, which, as will be seen from the preceding Report, is actively going on, and will continue to do so, as long as any part of our original prospectus remains to be filled up."

The CHAIRMAN, on the Report having been read, invited any members present to speak upon it.

Captain CONDER called attention to the site of Kaukab found by Herr Schumacher as the capital of the Ebionite Christians in the second century, and suggested that the discovery might be followed up.

Professor LÖWY urged upon the Committee the necessity of studying the dialects of Palestine. Many of those dialects, he said, are now dying out. Of the Samaritans scarcely a hundred are left. Especially in the north there are tribes whose dialects have never yet been properly examined. He undertook to draw up a set of questions which might be used for this purpose.

Mr. HENRY MAUDSLAY strongly urged upon the Committee the work of excavation.

Dr. CHAPLIN spoke of the language, the proverbs, and the ordinary locutions used by the women in household talk as containing much that might be used for the illustration of the Bible. He mentioned one case. There is a phrase used once in the Bible applied to Jacob, "Lift up thy feet," meaning "Go quickly." He had heard the same phrase used by a woman of the present day.

It was proposed by Lord SIDMOUTH, and seconded by Dr. CHAPLIN, that the Report be adopted.

It was proposed by Mr. MAUDSLAY, and seconded by Dr. LÖWY, that the present members of Executive Committee be re-elected.

It was proposed by the CHAIRMAN, and seconded by Captain CONDER,

that the following be proposed as new members of the General Committee :—

The Bishop of Salisbury.

Rev. Dr. Cunningham Geikie (Author of "The Life of Christ," and "Home with the Bible," &c.).

Rev. William Allen.

Mr. Francis Galton, F.R.S. (President of the Anthropological Institute).

Mr. Lawrence Gomme (Hon. Sec. of the Folk-Lore Society).

Mr. J. W. Pease, M.P.

Mr. Arthur Pease, M.P.

Mr. Charles Kennion.

Mr. Guy le Strange.

It was proposed by Mr. MAUDSLAY, and seconded by Professor HAYTER LEWIS, that the thanks of the Committee be given to Mr. GLAISHER, the Chairman of Executive Committee.

It was proposed by Sir W. MCARTHUR, and seconded by Professor HUDLESTON, that the thanks of the Committee be given to Mr. WALTER BESANT, the Secretary.

The meeting then adjourned.
