

PROFESSOR SOCIN ON THE SURVEY OF WESTERN PALESTINE.

IN the October number of the *Expositor*, Professor Socin, of Tübingen, contributes a paper called a "Critical Estimate of the Work of the Palestine Exploration Fund." It is not customary with us to reply to criticisms on our work, and in this case we should have refrained from comment on Professor Socin's remarks, except for the fact that certain observations of his, made in the most excellent spirit and with the best intentions, will, if not noted and answered, mislead his readers and our supporters. Professor Socin begins and ends his paper with a most courteous and friendly acknowledgment of the importance of the Society's work. "The Memoirs," he says, "by reason of the new material which they afford, will continue for decades to be the standard work from which Palestine research must set out."

Professor Socin's remarks deal first with the accuracy of the map; next with the Name Lists; thirdly, with Canon Tristram; fourthly, with Captain Conder; and lastly, with what he calls the Results of the Survey. He also touches on the discussions carried on in the *Quarterly Statement*.

(1.) As regards the accuracy of the map. It does not appear, when Professor Socin compares our map with that of M. Guérin, as if he exactly understands the main difference between our map and all other maps of Palestine. Ours is surveyed by triangulation; all others are constructed by some system of "dead reckoning." Now a triangulation is subject to an almost infallible test of accuracy. It is this. At the outset a base line is measured; at any part of the triangulation it is possible to measure by chain any of the lines the lengths of which have been obtained by calculation. The actual measured length should correspond with the calculated length. This has been done by our surveyors, and with most satisfactory results. As a matter of fact M. Guérin's book, which contains a few details not noted by our officers, does not contain one-half the number of names and places; while his map cannot pretend to scientific accuracy as to position, and as to watercourses, hills, and streams it is, and must be, practically useless. It is, in fact, impossible that one man working alone, and without scientific method, should produce a map in any way comparable to that surveyed by Royal Engineers.

(2.) Next as to the Name Lists. Professor Socin states that the "members of the Survey, who manifestly were not Arabic scholars, repeated the names which they had gathered to the scribe Kassatly, instead of his collecting them from the lips of the guides and natives." This is not by any means a correct way of describing the method followed, which was as follows:—The surveyors, in the course of their day's work, collected and wrote down in their own way—the guide being present—the names which they got from the natives. In the evening, on their return, each of them handed in to Captain Conder the day's list, which was gone through by Kassatly, *with the native guide*, and written down by him, or by Captain Conder at his dictation. The surveyors, therefore, had nothing to do

with the spelling of the names, for which Kassatly and the guides are responsible.

Next, as regards the list of the common place appellatives, which, according to Professor Socin, "must have been drawn up by one who had no knowledge of Arabic grammar." It was drawn up by Professor Palmer himself. It must, however, be understood that he set down, as was done in the map, not the literary Arabic at all, which was not wanted, but the fellahin Arabic. Thus, to take in order each one of the cases mentioned by Professor Socin. It is true that the plural of "Bâb" is not "buwâb;" it is "bawwâb." But the natives of Palestine, like the English, are not good at the double consonant. They do not say "bawwâb," but "buwâb." So also of the plural of *birkeh*: they do not say *burak*, but *burâk*, and the popular plural of *tell* is, as stated in the list, *tellâl*. The ending *eh* is also given on the map as it was pronounced, which accounts for an occasional variation. And as regards the word *Sh'atb*, it is written, as nearly as possible, as pronounced. The literary way would have been to write it *Shû'aib*, but in common speech the vowels at the beginning of a word are generally slurred over. The surveyors, in fact, set down the names as the people pronounce them. Thus, to take the last of Professor Socin's instances, *Khurbeh*, or *Khurbet*, the literary name would be, e.g., *Khurbetu Ainab*, which in the vulgar speech becomes *Khurbet Ainab*, and when the word is used by itself simply *Khurbeh*, and as a rough rule for travellers who are not Arabic scholars it is quite correct to say that *Khurbeh* in Palestine becomes *Khurbet* before a vowel.

A corresponding example has been suggested to me. On the Ordnance Survey of Oxfordshire will be found a place called *Shotover*. It is so set down because the people call it *Shotover*. Its original name is supposed to have been *Chateau vert*. Yet surely the surveyors were right in setting down the popular name. Again, on Dartmoor is a mountain called on the Survey maps *Hamilton Down*. The people call it *Hamildon*, or *Hamilton*, and so misled the surveyors, because its real name is *Hamil dun*, i.e., I believe, the *Black Down*.

As regards Professor Socin's strictures on the etymologies proposed by Professor Palmer, the identifications proposed by Captain Conder or M. Ganneau, the Hebrew and Arabic of Canon Tristram, or the Tribe boundaries laid down by Mr. Trelawney Saunders, we have nothing at all to say. These gentlemen are, with one exception, quite able to defend themselves against any attacks which may be made on them. As regards that one exception, Professor Palmer's etymologies are on record, as his opinion, and will stand or fall as they are right or wrong, and as the common speech of the Syrian natives becomes better known. In his lifetime there was no better authority on the modern Syrian dialects. Professor Socin, however, raises one other point which commands attention from us. It has been the custom of the Committee to open the pages of its Journal to the free discussion of all points connected with the topography of the Holy Land, routes, itineraries, &c., connected with its history. The Journal has become the recognised—almost the only—organ

for the discussion of these points. It therefore happens that a great many pages may be devoted to the site, say, of Emmaus. This practice, Professor Socin points out, may lead to the general adoption of a wrong theory, or at all events of sites and routes which do not commend themselves to many scholars and students. This may possibly happen. But the best way to prevent it from happening is for every opinion to be represented. The *Quarterly Statement* is read by Palestine students over the whole world. If this is borne in mind by Professor Socin, he may himself perhaps be minded to prevent the spread of what he considers error.

The *work* of the Society, properly so-called—all that the Committee are called upon to defend—is the mass of *facts* which it has been able to amass and is still amassing. A practically impregnable map, for instance; an immense Name List, which may be added to and even revised: great discoveries in Jerusalem and elsewhere: a Geological Survey, not yet published: thousands of ruins sketched and surveyed,—this constitutes the work that has been done. But theories, etymologies, illustrations, tribe boundaries, and speculation generally do not constitute the work of the Society, and must not be criticised under that name. W. B.

NEW DISCOVERIES IN JERUSALEM.

BY SELAH MERRILL, D.D., LL.D.

DURING the past two or three months some very interesting tombs have been discovered in the western slope of the hill above Jeremiah's Grotto. As these appear to have direct connection with the church in that vicinity described by Captain Conder and Lieutenant Mantell in the *Quarterly Statement* for April, 1882, pp. 116-120, and further described by myself in the *Quarterly Statement* for October, 1883, pp. 238-242, the reader is referred to those two articles for the previous history of excavations in this quarter.

On page 241 (as above) I stated that the ruins appeared to extend under ground to the south-east and east of the point where the Mosaic floor (see page 239) was found, and spoke of the desirableness of the work of excavation being extended in those directions. During the past year (1884) this work has been done to a certain degree, and my supposition has been confirmed by the new facts disclosed.

There was found a short distance south-east of the Mosaic floor, the threshold of a door. This was 8 feet long and 4 feet above the level of the Mosaic floor, and may have belonged to a later structure, unless it was a window in the older structure, which does not seem possible. Its size and the work upon it give the impression that it formed an important part of some large building.

The watercourse described on page 239 was found to extend much farther to the east, and in fact it disappears again in the mass of rubbish beyond the limit of the excavations in that direction. Before it disappears it turns by nearly a right angle to the south, and at the angle there is a large basin, or rather a small reservoir, still quite perfect.