

THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND

NOTES AND NEWS.

An important change has been made in the executive branch of the Society. Mr. Walter Besant, who has for some time been practically an Honorary Secretary, has now formally resigned his post as Secretary and been elected by the Committee their Honorary Secretary. He finds that other work, which he cannot refuse or postpone, now so much presses upon him that he can no longer, as heretofore, give the time and attention necessary for the proper management of the affairs of the Fund. He proposes, however, for the present to continue his services as adviser, and can generally be found at the Society's offices in the afternoon by appointment.

Mr. George Armstrong, who has been connected with the Society almost continuously since the year 1871, has been appointed Assistant Secretary. Mr. Armstrong went out to Palestine in November, 1871, in order to commence the Survey. In 1875 he came home with Captain Conder, and remained at home drawing the maps and working out the observations while Col. Kitchener finished the Survey of Western Palestine. In 1881 he went out again with Captain Conder in order to survey the Eastern part of the country. Since his return he has been employed in the office as draughtsman. Most of the maps, drawings, and illustrations which have recently appeared are Mr. Armstrong's work. He will continue this part of his work. His appointment will give great satisfaction to the many friends of the Fund who have made his acquaintance.

The first practical effect of his appointment will be that all cheques and postal orders *should be now payable to his order*. They should also be crossed to Coutts and Co. A better plan, and one which is much more convenient for the Committee, as it ensures safety and saves clerical labour, is for every subscriber to fill up a form and give it to his banker, instructing him to pay on the 1st of January his annual subscription to the Society.

The year 1887 was marked by many important discoveries:—

- (1) First in importance, perhaps, must be placed Herr Schick's discovery of the Byzantine pavement (*see p. 17, infra*), which in the opinion of most cannot be anything other than the open space made and paved by Constantine in front of his group of churches. It is of less importance, but it is still interesting to ascertain that on this pavement stood the vaulted street, long lost, described in Crusading accounts. A fuller note on this discovery appears in this number.

Next must be mentioned the Sidon tombs. Professor Hayter Lewis has

given an account of these, which will be found in its place, together with Hamdi Bey's own paper on the subject, republished by permission of the Editor, from the *Revue Archeologique*. In this place we may only point out that no more valuable and interesting find of this kind has ever been made. For drawings and photographs of the tombs we must now wait until Hamdi Bey's promised work on the subject appears.

- (3) The district of Jaulan, the Golan of Manasseh, which has been surveyed, is 39 miles in length at its longest points and 18 in breadth. It comprises an area of 560 square miles. On the best map of Palestine there are found about 150 names. On Schumacher's there are 600, being the names of ruined towns, springs, ancient highways, remnants of oak forests, perennial streams, great fields of dolmens, with some remarkable volcanic features. The volcanic mountain, Tell Abu en Nida, rises to the height of 4,123 feet, and that called Tell Abu Yusef to the height of 3,375 feet. Herr Schumacher has drawn upwards of 152 plans and sketches of the country. He has collected a great variety of information on the manners and customs of the people. He has made special plans of the hot springs, &c., of Amatha, the Zaphon of Joshua xiii, 27, and of Kulat el Husn-Gamala, Susitha and Fyk.

The district of Northern Ajlun, also surveyed, contains 220 square miles, a population of 10,460, and shows on the map 334 names of places. There are in the Memoir detailed plans of 100 places—churches, theatres, vaults, mausoleums, temples, walls, columns, capitols, street pavements, sarcophagi, caves, cisterns, birkets, aqueducts, and ornamental work; there are collections of mason's marks, Greek inscriptions, drawings of dolmens and stone walls; and there are detailed plans of Umm Keis (Gadara) and Beit Ras (Capitolias).

The district contains about a thousand dolmens scattered over extensive fields; the fertility of the soil is inferior to that of the Hanan; the water supply is chiefly derived from cisterns; there are everywhere patches of forest, now chiefly oak, though the remains of oil presses show that there were previously olives. Herr Schumacher gives also an account of the inhabitants, who are chiefly Moslems.

- (4) A capital in white marble, found in the Temple area, and engraved for the January (1887) *Quarterly Statement*, has proved of the highest interest for architects. It is of Ionic-Byzantine style, and is said by Mr. P. Pullan, one of the best authorities on the subject, to be a work of the eighth or ninth century.
- (5) The Recovery of the ancient wall of Tiberias with its Acropolis. It is now proved that the Herodian city was no mean little Galilean village, but a noble city, with a great wall three miles in length, and a stately citadel.
- (6) The attempted reading of the Hittite Inscriptions by Captain Conder. There have been many attacks made upon his method, which is put forward by the Committee not as the true solution of the problem, but as Captain Conder's solution. He is himself confident that in the main his method will be adopted.
- (7) The publication by Mr. Guy le Strange of the catalogue of Arab writers who have spoken of the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. So many loose statements have been made as to what Arab historians have said upon this subject that it was most desirable to get

once for all an exact statement of what has been written. Had this been done before, a great deal of controversy might have been saved.

- (8) Herr Schick has discovered what he believes to be the remains of Herod's amphitheatre (*Quarterly Statement*, 1887, p. 161):
- (9) Herr Schumacher has sent home his Survey of Pella and the adjoining district. This will be printed in the same manner as the Survey of the Jaulan, and will be presented to subscribers. The memoir on this interesting place (where the Christians retreated on the outbreak of the troubles with the Romans) contains—(I.) a plan of the ruins, valley, &c., on the scale of six inches to the mile; (II.) about a dozen photographic views, with upwards of 40 plans and sketches; (III.) plans of the ruined tower Kh-Fahl, the Acropolis, two temples, the mausoleum, the cemetery covered with sarcophagi, certain curious caves, the great Basilica, a mound with other caves having stone doors, hot springs, and one Greek inscription. There are also 83 pages of description. We have also to thank Herr Schumacher for sending many notes of objects of interest observed by himself from time to time.

This is a very fair record of work for the year. As for 1888, it remains to be seen what will be done in the way of discovery. As regards publications, we have already announced that we intend to give to subscribers Schumacher's "Survey of the Jaulan" and his "Survey of Pella and Northern Ajlun," so printed that they may be bound up separately in volume form uniform with Conder's "Tent Work."

We have received, but must keep over for the present, Dr. Post's narrative of his scientific expedition in the Trans-Jordanic region in the spring of the year 1886, with an account of the flora in the region round Damascus. This will be published immediately. Many of the plants are new.

Subscribers will please note that publications announced as nearly ready are often delayed by some cause for which the Secretary is not responsible. There has been, for instance, a great deal of delay about the Catalogue of Photographs. This is now ready. And about the List of Old Testament Names. This is also now ready. And about the New Testament Names. This list is in the printer's hands. And about the Index of the "Survey." This now wants only the Hebrew portion, which is daily expected.

The same remarks apply to the Pilgrim's Text Society. Two works are in the press and almost ready. We hope to be more expeditious in our productions this year.

The "Memoirs of Twenty-One Years' Work" is now in its third thousand. Subscribers are earnestly requested to use this book as a means of showing what the work has been, and what remains to be done. Copies are given to every subscriber who wishes to have one, and additional copies can be procured at a great reduction in the price, *by subscribers only*, by writing to the central office.

Will all the subscribers to the Palestine Fund remember—(1) that it helps the Committee very much if subscriptions are paid early in the year? (2) Next, that it saves a great deal of trouble if they are paid to Coutts & Co. direct by a Banker's order? and (3) That whenever they are due it saves a great deal of labour if they are paid without waiting for a reminder? The clerical staff of

the Society is very small, and it is greatly desired not to increase the management expenses, and not to overburden the work of the office.

The following books are now published uniform in size and appearance:—Conder's "Tent Work;" Conder's "Heth and Moab;" Schumacher's "Across the Jordan;" "The Memoirs of Twenty-One Years' Work;" Conder's "Syrian Stone Lore." Subscribers can have the whole set, together with Hull's "Mount Seir," for 25s. carriage free.

Mr. Armstrong has prepared a list of the photographs belonging to the Society arranged alphabetically according to those Bible names which are illustrated by views. This list is now ready. Those who wish for a copy may send in their names.

The long-promised List of Old Testament Names, with their identifications, is now ready.

The income of the Society, from September 13th to December 22nd, 1887, inclusive, was—from subscriptions and donations, £461 10s. 0d.; from all sources, £498 5s. 11d. The expenditure during the same period was £415 4s. 4d. On December 22nd the balance in the Banks was £315 12s. 10d.

Subscribers who do not receive the *Quarterly Statement* regularly, are asked to send a note to the Secretary. Great care is taken to forward each number to all who are entitled to receive it, but changes of address and other causes give rise occasionally to omissions.

While desiring to give every publicity to proposed identifications and other theories advanced by officers of the Fund and contributors to the pages of the *Quarterly Statement*, the Committee wish it to be distinctly understood that by publishing them in the *Quarterly Statement* they neither sanction nor adopt them.

The only authorised lecturers for the Society are—

- (1) Mr. George St. Clair, F.G.S., who has lately returned from his Eastern tour, and is giving Lectures for the Society in all parts of Great Britain. His subjects are—

- (1) *The Buried City of Jerusalem*, and General Exploration of the Holy Land. Numerous diagrams.
- (2) *Buried Cities of the East*. Numerous diagrams.
- (3) *Sight-seeing in Palestine*. Lantern views, where local help can be obtained.

Address: G. St. Clair, Bristol Road, Birmingham; or at the Office of the Fund.

- (2) The Rev. Henry Geary, Vicar of St. Thomas's, Portman Square. His lectures are on the following subjects:—
The Survey of Western Palestine, as illustrating Bible History.
Palestine East of the Jordan.
The Jerusalem Excavations.
A Restoration of Ancient Jerusalem. Illustrated by original photographs shown as "dissolving views."
- (3) The Rev. James King, Vicar of St. Mary's, Berwick. His subjects are as follows:—
The Survey of Western Palestine.
Jerusalem.
The Hittites.
The Moabite Stone and other monuments.
- (4) The Rev. James Neil, formerly Incumbent of Christ Church, Jerusalem.