

THE
PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

NOTES AND NEWS.

We have generally an announcement to make, but not often of so much importance as that of this day. It is the discovery of the Pool of Bethesda.

The modern identification of this Pool with the Birket Israil, north of the Haram, has never been accepted by any who have studied the question. The twin pool at the Convent of the Sisters of Sion has been of late years generally believed to have strong claims. The new discovery, however, removes the Pool to quite another place.

The Algerian Monks (French), *see* p. 115, digging on the north-west of St. Anne's Church, came upon a tank, about 100 feet distant. Crossing a courtyard and entering by a narrow passage, a building, measuring about 70 feet east and west, by 25 north and south, with an apse at the east end, was found. Its floor (about on the level 2,400) was some 7 feet below the general surface of the courtyard. Under this building are vaults about 10 feet deep, the floor level being that of the surface of the natural rock. Through the floor of these vaults a cistern is reached, cut in rock to a depth of 30 feet. It lies under the line of the building (apparently a church) with an apse, above-mentioned. Its measurement east and west from one rock wall to another is 55 feet; north and south it measures $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet, but the north wall is of masonry, with four piers standing on rock bases supporting arches; the spaces between the piers have been filled in with masonry after building, probably at a later period. A flight of twenty-four steps leads down into this pool from the east scarp.

The church or chapel was probably built at a later period, when the surface level was within 6 or 7 feet of its present height, after an accumulation of 10 feet of earth over the rock, which, as we shall see, seems to have been still visible in 1172 A.D. This is also indicated by the position of the walls, over the pool. The vaults from the rock surface were no doubt constructed to bear the floor of the new church.

What is, however, of still greater importance, Herr Schick has found a second pool to the west of this, forming what is called a twin pool. The

interest of this discovery lies in the fact that the Pool of Bethesda had five porticoes. Now the only possible way for a pool to have five porticoes (unless it is a pentagon) is to be a double or twin pool, so that there may be one portico along each side and one for the wall of separation. Sir Charles Wilson, in his new edition of the "Bordeaux Pilgrim" (Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society), has drawn up a list of the principal authorities on this subject. From this it will be seen that there is a continuous chain of evidence from the 4th to the 12th century, both inclusive.

We publish simultaneously with this number of the *Quarterly Statement* an account, with maps, plans, and illustrations, of Fahil, the ancient Pella, by Herr Schumacher.

Little is known of the history of Pella, except the one fact which makes it remarkable, namely, that the early Christians retired thither when the troubles of Jerusalem began.

The Basilica, which Herr Schumacher describes, presents many curious details, and the system of caves with passages deserves a much more complete examination than Herr Schumacher was able to give. Copies of this little volume, uniform in size with "The Jaulân," can be had by subscribers on application to the Central Office only.

There is in the Press, to be published in October, Dr. Post's "Journey to and round Damascus." The account we shall produce will be the popular narrative, accompanied, however, by the chief Botanical results.

The List of Old Testament names and identifications was issued last year. That of New Testament names, which contains the references in Josephus to the New Testament places, is now ready. Subscribers can have copies of the latter, separate, at 1s., and of the two together, in paper cover, for 3s., and bound for 3s. 6d., by application to the office only. To the general public the price of the book will be 6s. 6d.

As already announced, with the view of clearing off the MSS. which await publication, the Committee have resolved on issuing an edition, in form similar to, and uniform with, the "Survey of Western Palestine," of the following works:—

1. Conder's "Survey of Eastern Palestine," so far as completed. The MS. is very voluminous, containing as much as will make a volume equal in size to those of the "Memoirs" in the "Survey of Western Palestine." None of it has been published; the drawings are very numerous, and of the deepest interest to the student of prehistoric monuments, as well as for the illustration of the Bible.
2. The Archæological Mission of M. Clermont-Ganneau, with the drawings of M. le Comte.
These drawings are many hundreds in number, and executed in the finest style. They figure a vast number of monuments and ruins not in the "Memoirs."
3. The Flora and Fauna of the Wady Arabah, by J. Chichester Hart, Esq., accompanied by many drawings of plants, &c., in the best style.

The editions will be limited to 500. The first 250 subscribers will pay seven guineas for the three volumes; subscribers to the "Survey of Western Palestine" will be privileged to have the volumes for this sum. The price will be raised, after 250 names are received, to twelve guineas. The Committee are pledged never to let any copies be subscribed under the sum of seven guineas. Mr. A. P. Watt, 2, Paternoster Square, is the agent.

The Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society has now issued the following works:—

1. "The Holy Places visited by Antoninus, Martyr."
2. "The Pilgrimage of the Holy Paula."
3. "Procopius" (Buildings of Justinian).
4. "Mukaddasi" (Description of Syria).
5. "The Bordeaux Pilgrim."
6. "The Abbot Daniel."
7. "The Crusader's Letter from Acre to England."

There are in preparation, and will be issued before the end of the year:—

1. "The Norman-French Description of the City and the Country." Translated and annotated by Captain Conder, R.E.
2. "The Travels of Nasir-i-Khusrau." Translated by Guy Le Strange.
3. "Arculfus de Locis Sanctis." Translated by Rev. R. Macpherson, and annotated by Sir Charles Wilson.

Mr. A. P. Watt has now received a sufficient number of names to warrant the commencement of the publication of the Eastern Survey, the results of M. Clermont-Ganneau's Mission and Mr. Chichester Hart's Mission. Intending subscribers to these most important and valuable works are requested to send their names to Mr. Watt (2, Paternoster Square) without delay.

The friends of the Society are earnestly requested to use the "Memoirs of Twenty-one Years' Work" as a means of showing what the work has been, and what remains to be done.

Subscribers are very earnestly asked:—(1) To pay their subscriptions early in the year—say in January. (2) To pay them direct to Coutts and Co. by a banker's order. (3) If they would rather choose their own time, to send up their subscriptions without being reminded. The Clerical Staff of the Society is small; it is most desirable not to increase it; and if these simple requests are attended to a great saving of clerical labour, postage, and stationery is effected. For instance, there are, say, 3,000 subscribers. If every one of these waits to be reminded, and has to have a receipt sent to him, the Society has to spend £25 a year additional in postage, and to write 6,000 letters, merely to ask for and to acknowledge the receipt of the subscriptions.

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;" Conder's "Altaic Inscriptions;" and Schumacher's "Jaulan."

Subscribers can have the whole set, together with Hull's "Mount Seir," and Names and Places, for 32s., 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 income of the Society, from March 21st to June 21st, 1888, inclusive, was—from subscriptions and donations, £264 18s. 1d.; from all sources, £447 5s. 5d. The expenditure during the same period was £662 7s. 11d. On June 21st the balance in the Banks was £224 3s. 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., Member of the Anthropological Institute and of the Society of Biblical Archæology.

His subjects are:—

- (1) *The General Exploration of Palestine.*
- (2) *Jerusalem Buried and Recovered.*
- (3) *Buried Cities, Egypt and Palestine.*
- (4) *Buried Cities of Mesopotamia*, with some account of the Hittites.
- (5) *The Moabite Stone and the Pedigree of the English Alphabet.*

Address: Geo. 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. Thomas Harrison, Surbiton.