

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

THE Fifty-second Annual General Meeting of the Palestine Exploration Fund was held in the Library of the Society, 2, Hinde Street, Manchester Square, on Thursday, June 21st. The Meeting was held for business purposes only. There was a larger attendance on this occasion than at the Meeting last year; and amongst those present were Dr. L. W. King, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Mr. J. D. Crace, Hon. Secretary, Mr. Walter Morrison, Hon. Treasurer, Prof. A. C. Dickie, Rev. Canon Dalton, K.C.V.O., Prof. Edward Hull, Mr. James Melrose, Sir Edwin Pears, and Colonel Fellows. Letters of regret for non-attendance were received from Sir George Adam Smith, Principal of Aberdeen University, the Dean of Westminster, Sir Henry Trotter, K.C.M.G., Dr. Masterman, and others.

On the motion of Sir Edwin Pears, seconded by Canon Dalton, the chair was taken by Dr. King.

After the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting had been read and confirmed, the Chairman, in moving the adoption of the Report for 1916, expressed the great pleasure they all felt in seeing amongst them Mr. Crace, who had been prevented by illness from attending the Meeting last year. Since that time, however, he believed he was right in saying that Mr. Crace had not missed a single meeting of the Executive Committee; and his long connection with the Society, and his intimate knowledge of all its affairs, both past and present, were of the utmost value to the Committee, and to the Society in general. (Applause.) The main object of the foundation of the Society—an object which had been consistently pursued during the half-century of its existence—was the conducting of systematic and scientific research in Palestine itself. Naturally, the War had for the time put a complete stop to this side of their activities, and the cessation of archaeological work in the field had necessarily been reflected in the Society's scientific publications. For the years 1914–15 they had fortunately been able to publish a double Annual Volume, dealing with the survey of the "Desert of

the Wanderings," which had been completed shortly before the War. But the map that accompanied the survey, and also the new revised map of Western Palestine, which in happier times would have been already issued, were still withheld from publication for military reasons. The restriction on the sale of these and other maps was a very necessary one, though of course it entailed a financial loss to the Fund. There was, however, a brighter side to the picture. The Treasurer's Statement in the Annual Report for 1916 shewed a slight increase on the Society's income of the previous year—an increase which was doubly welcome as being a sign that Members had not lost faith in the future of the Palestine Exploration Fund. A reserve fund was being built up, with which to start work again in Palestine at the first opportunity; present expenses were kept down as rigidly as possible; and there were no debts against the Society. (Hear, hear.) Amongst the necessary expenses of the Fund, he was sure that they would all agree that one of the most necessary was the continued publication of the *Quarterly Statement*. The greatest credit was due to Mr. Cook for his able editorship of the journal in face of the present difficult conditions, and to him and Mr. Crace for the number of interesting papers they had got together during the past year, such as those contributed by Prof. Dickie, Prof. Macalister, Dr. Masterman, Mr. Offord, and others, which were referred to in greater detail in the Annual Report. The Committee had decided, after very careful consideration to make some reduction for the present in the size of the *Quarterly Statement*, with a view to answering, as far as they were able, the need for economy in paper which was urged upon the country by the Government. Mr. Crace had gone into the matter, and had been able to reduce the number of pages now occupied by advertisements and notices, which would lessen the size of the *Quarterly Statement* without taking too much from the substance of the journal itself.

In 1916, as they were all aware, Mr. Ovenden, the Assistant Secretary, had been called to the colours. During his absence they had secured the services of a lady who knew Palestine well, Miss Estelle Blyth. (Hear, hear.) She had filled, and was still filling, the post in a very able and efficient manner, and, he thought, had found the work very congenial.

The Society had sustained a great loss last year—a loss which was personal to them all—in the death of Colonel Sir Charles Watson, a few weeks before the last Annual Meeting. In his

account of their *Fifty Years' Work in the Holy Land*, Sir Charles Watson had said that the War marked the end of a chapter. That was true, not only of the Fund, but of other societies, and indeed of most institutions in this country. They had no thought then of the further great change in their own work that was so near. They might look forward, however, in a spirit of confidence to the time when they would be able to resume their work in Palestine. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN then moved that the Report and Accounts for the year 1916, already printed and in the hands of subscribers, be received and adopted.

Mr. MORRISON, the Hon. Treasurer (who was received with applause), seconded the Motion. He said that there was great satisfaction in the thought that their work would go on as before, after the War. There was still very much to be done, many Tells to be excavated, in Palestine. They all knew that there was a great deal of suffering in the land at present; it was impossible to tell what would be its future. He had visited Palestine many years ago, even before the "fifty years' work" had been begun. Jerusalem then had ended at its gates but now there was a larger city outside the walls than within. He had explored the neighbourhood of Jerusalem in company with M. de Lesseps, who was then at work on the Suez Canal. It was curious to look back to those days, and to see how little we knew then about Palestine in comparison with what we know to-day. (Hear, hear.) He had great pleasure in seconding the Resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. J. D. CRACE, the Hon. Secretary, made a brief statement about the Membership of the Society during the past year. They had lost by death a Member of the Executive Committee, the Rev. Arthur Carr, who had always taken a great interest in their work, and had testified to this by leaving the Society a legacy of £50. They had also lost four Members of the General Committee, Lord Ashcombe, Sir Richard Martin, Dr. Daniel Bliss, of Beyrout, and the Rev. F. W. Birch, for many years Hon. Secretary for Manchester. It was always with very great regret that, from time to time, they had to record the loss of old Members, who were moved by the enthusiasm of the work in its early days, and had known it, in many cases, from its beginning. He was glad to say, however, that new Members had come, so that the prospect for the

future was hopeful. Though the Society had lost some subscribers through the difficulties of War-time, there were new ones to take their place; and the present list was a very good one and most satisfactory at such a time. (Hear, hear.) He desired to confirm the Chairman's commendation of the services of Miss Blyth, whose intelligent work had been of indispensable assistance to him personally since the loss of his eyesight.

The CHAIRMAN, in moving that the Rev. Prof. C. F. Burney, D.Litt., Oriel Professor at Oxford and Canon of Rochester Cathedral, be invited to join the General Committee, referred to his eminent services to Hebrew scholarship. In 1907 he had travelled in Southern Palestine, and he had devoted much time to the study of Hebrew place-names and their modern Arabic equivalents. For a forthcoming work he had prepared a series of maps of ancient Palestine, and had carefully weighed and verified the evidence for the identifications adopted. That, of course, was a side of Palestinian research to which the Fund had given considerable attention.

The motion was seconded by Prof. A. C. DICKIE, and was carried unanimously.

Colonel FELLOWS proposed that the Executive Committee, as constituted, be re-elected. The names of those who composed the Executive Committee were a guarantee of its usefulness and capability, and he had great pleasure in moving this Resolution.

Mr. MELROSE, who expressed his feeling of hopefulness for the future of the Society, seconded the Resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Professor HULL, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Chairman for presiding, said that he would like to take the Meeting a small *excursus* from Palestine to Mesopotamia. For so extending the range of their investigations there was a precedent in the Expedition to Sinai of 1883-4, which Lord Kitchener accompanied, and of which he himself had the honour to be placed in command. While recently re-reading Layard's *Nineveh*, he had been struck by the description of the alabaster casings adorning the walls and forming material for works of art. The great plain of Mesopotamia is covered by a thick deposit of mud, from which the inhabitants fashioned their bricks, generally sun-dried. His inference from the *provenance* of the alabaster, if correct, seemed to suggest that the region was once an inland lake, which may have been drained as

far back as the Pleistocene period, when Lebanon was covered with perennial snow, and gave origin to glaciers. It was a period of great elevation in Europe and Asia.

Sir EDWIN PEARs, in seconding the vote of thanks, alluded to the fine collection of cuneiform inscriptions preserved in the Philadelphia University Museum, which had thrown so much light on the earliest historical periods. He had heard much upon the subject during his recent visit to America.

In replying to the vote of thanks, the CHAIRMAN said that their attention had been drawn that afternoon to the very sad condition of things prevailing in Palestine, and he gave some further details from a letter he had received from the Organising Secretary of the Relief Fund for Syria and Palestine, which described the work that had already begun in a large refugees' camp behind the British lines. A strong Administrative Committee had been formed in Cairo, and Colonel Phillott, a distinguished British Consul, had been recently appointed Managing Director, in an honorary capacity, of relief work in the country itself. While they had all known that there was a great deal of distress in Palestine, they were hardly prepared, perhaps, to realize the work that had still to be faced. They could only hope that the full work of relief might soon be carried on throughout Syria and Palestine. (Hear, hear.)

The proceedings then terminated.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON THE MODERN INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE.

By Dr. E. W. G. MASTERMAN and Prof. R. A. S. MACALISTER.

(Continued from *Q.S.*, 1917, p. 80.)

Story about those who do not die in the Faith.

THERE is a maḳām in Ramleh called Mabrak en-Naḳra (nākra ناكرا = "a female camel"). This is called after the camel of Saidna 'Ali ibn A'ala'im who used to fight against the infidels in Lydda and Ramleh. Close to this maḳām is a burial ground known as Naffāda