

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

THE Fifty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Palestine Exploration Fund was held in the Library of the Society, 2, Hinde Street, Manchester Square, London, W., on the afternoon of Wednesday, 9th June, 1920.

On the motion of the Hon. Secretary (Dr. E. W. G. Masterman), seconded by Prof. G. Buchanan Gray, Dr. D. G. Hogarth was elected to preside over the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN.—I will call on the Hon. Secretary, as the first business ; there are some letters he has to read.

The HON. SECRETARY.—There are apologies for non-attendance. I have received the following apologies from Mr. Mond, Mr. Feilding, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, the Rev. Dr. Ewing, and Prof. Dickie.

The CHAIRMAN, after the minutes of the last meeting had been read and confirmed, said :—It is my duty as Chairman formally to move the adoption of the Report and the Accounts as in 1919. The Report is in type, and I presume has come into your hands ; so has the Treasurer's statement in the course of the Report. I might combine this with calling your attention, as I am afraid we always have to do every year, to the losses which this Society has sustained. The first and most serious of these is, of course, that of our late Chairman of the Executive Committee, Prof. Leonard King, Litt.D., the Assistant Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities in the British Museum. He, as you know, was taken rather suddenly and seriously ill in the summer of 1918, his illness continued without our knowing very much about it or about its character, and we continually entertained hopes that he would be able to return ; but it took a worse turn in the summer of last year, and he passed away. There is no greater loss we could have sustained ; there is no greater loss that Oriental studies in this country could have sustained ; Dr. King was our one

absolutely reliable cuneiformist, the one person who could deal with the extremely difficult subject of Babylonian and Assyrian documents. He had a reputation which was great, not only in this country but also on the continent of Europe and in America, and, what was perhaps of much more vital concern to ourselves, he was devotedly attached to the affairs of this Society. I am sure the meeting will join with me in deploring most deeply his untimely death. He was comparatively a young man. Mr. Crace, the Honorary Secretary, was very well known to all members of this Society; if Dr. King was devoted to this Society, still more so, if possible, was Mr. Crace. He died at a very considerable age, having done great service to this Society with which he had been closely associated for forty-seven years, during eighteen of which he had been Honorary Secretary. He maintained his interest in the Society up to the very last, and was actually present at a meeting of the Executive Committee within a week of his death. His gifts, as you probably know, to the Society during his life were many, and in his death he bequeathed to us a selection of his books. Next, Sir Henry Trotter, who was at one time Consul-General at Beirut, was a constant attendant at this Committee. Then there are four members of the General Committee whom we ought to mention. The first is Sir Edwin Pears, the well-known Constantinople barrister, who helped us in the old days and under the régime of the Turks, whenever we had any question of a firman to treat about in Constantinople. It was not only that he helped us, but practically everybody who had any scientific interest or concession in Turkey, and his loss is one that not only we but a great many other societies and people will feel. Sir William Ewart, of Belfast, an old member of the Society, has also passed away, and Mr. Joseph Offord. He was known to all readers of the *Quarterly Statement*, and his contributions were considered of great interest by the editor, Mr. Cook, who has every reason to deplore his death. Finally, Dr. Howard Bliss, the head of the American College in Beirut, whose death is very untimely and very unfortunate at this particular moment. I may speak of him, as I can of Dr. King and Mr. Crace, as a personal friend. I last saw him in Beirut in December, 1918, when I had a long conversation with him about the situation as it had developed during the three months that we were in possession of Beirut. He was a very firm adherent of the establishment of British power in Palestine; indeed, he hoped for

it in other parts of Syria ; and he took the trouble to come to Paris in the course of the Peace Conference and to state his views at length before those who were debating these subjects. He had a very great influence in Beirut, and was always able to keep the lamp of civilisation burning, so far as it could burn in Turkey at all. Not only the whole Armenian Christian community of North Syria will deplore his death, but also a very considerable part of the Moslem community. He had been singularly successful in attracting both the Moslems and the Christians to the American College, and in avoiding any friction between the two, or with their parents, or with public opinion. We must also mention the fact that Mr. Walter Morrison, who had held the position of Treasurer since the sixties', and who is the one surviving original member, I believe, of this Society, has found it necessary owing to failing health to resign the Treasurership. He was very unwell indeed some months ago, and thought he was nearing his end. I am very glad to hear, in the last few days, that he is considerably better, and is now about again ; but of course he is of a great age, and we cannot expect him to burden himself with attendance at this committee, or, still less, with the post of Treasurer. We should be very sorry not to see his name—in fact it would be a very great harm to us not to have his name—upon our Committee ; so we propose to retain it there. The Rev. Dr. Horton has resigned. He is very well known and has been a member of the Executive Committee for many years, but was unable to attend, or hardly ever able so to do, and, finally, he said he would rather his name was withdrawn. Well that, I think, is all I need say to you now before moving formally the adoption of the Report and Accounts for 1919. I beg to move it.

Mr. ORMSBY-GORE.—I beg to second the adoption of the Report and Accounts.

The CHAIRMAN put the resolution to the Meeting and it was carried.

The CHAIRMAN.—The next question is the election of new officers to replace these losses. The action of the Executive Committee has to be confirmed by this Meeting.

Prof. G. BUCHANAN GRAY.—I have very great pleasure in proposing the election of new officers to replace the losses which have been recorded this afternoon, that is to say, I shall propose

Commander D. G. Hogarth as Chairman of the Executive Committee, Sir Charles Close as Honorary Treasurer, and Dr. E. W. G. Masterman as Honorary Secretary. The Society has suffered very severely in the loss of those who held the offices before, but the new Secretary has already benefited by the experience of those gentlemen, and I have very great confidence in recommending them to the Meeting for election in the coming year.

Mr. PERCIVAL.—I have very great pleasure in seconding the election of those officers. I am sure we may safely trust the affairs of the Society in their hands.

The CHAIRMAN put the resolution to the Meeting and it was carried.

The CHAIRMAN.—We then have to elect certain members who are proposed for the General Committee, namely the Hon. W. A. Ormsby-Gore, M.P., the Hon. Everard Feilding, Prof. John Garstang, Robert Mond, Esq., the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel, the Rev. P. N. Waggett, Colonel Hope Biddulph, and G. K. Chesterton, Esq.

Sir CHARLES CLOSE.—I beg to move that the gentlemen whose names you have just heard read out be elected as members of the General Committee.

Mr. HERBERT BIRCH.—I have much pleasure in seconding that. I think I can claim that I am one of the older members—I have been a member forty-five years. It is forty-five years since I was in Palestine, and a great many things have happened since then. I enter quite into the feelings of the Chairman in what I may term the loss of the old members, the original members, the fathers of the Society. We have lost their trained study and advice, which cannot be given by men who have not made a long and careful study of the subject, and in getting new members it will be a great thing to get men whose advantages have given them opportunities to study such a question. As to the men who are coming back now—I am speaking from personal experience—who have been in the army and all through Palestine, I have been surprised at, I will not say their ignorance, but at noticing how lacking in real information they are of what they have seen. In my own parish there are two or three, and they feel the greatest interest in anything which explains to them anything in the Holy Land as bearing on the Bible story. That is a direction in which I think the Executive Committee might give a little thought. Perhaps they

have done so already. I am a member of the General Committee, but I have not the advantage of knowing what the line of development is that the Executive Committee are exactly thinking out. But I think that in that direction there is a very great opportunity, not only to interest a much wider circle in the progress of the Society as a Society, and in relation to its particular work, but also in the much greater and more important question of Bible History and Bible Knowledge; which, after all, is a stepping-stone to a higher thought and to a more religious life. It helps a man very much indeed to know what he reads. "Understandest thou what thou readeſt?" is as true to-day as it was in the time of the Apostles, and I think that the more the Society can direct its thought in that direction the more helpful it will be to a very large number. I have much pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN put the resolution to the Meeting and it was carried.

The CHAIRMAN.—We have now the election of an Executive Committee for the ensuing year, and I will ask Mr. Herbert Samuel to move it.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL.—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, you have just done me the honour, although one of the newest members of this Society, of electing me as a member of the General Committee, and in that capacity I take advantage of my new status to propose the election of the Executive Committee, namely, the following gentlemen: Dr. G. D. Hogarth (Chairman of the Executive Committee), Colonel Sir Charles Close (Hon. Treasurer), Dr. E. W. G. Masterman (Hon. Secretary), S. A. Cook, Esq., Prof. A. C. Dickie, the Rev. Canon Dalton, Sir Arthur Evans, the Hon. Everard Feilding, Prof. G. Buchanan Gray, Colonel Sir W. C. Hedley, Robert L. Mond, Esq., Walter Morrison, Esq., the Hon. W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, M.P., Brigadier-General E. M. Paul, F. W. Percival, Esq., Prof. Flinders Petrie, W. H. Rylands, Esq., Rev. Prof. Sayce, Rev. P. N. Waggett, and General Sir Charles Warren. I beg to move the election of those gentlemen as Members of the Executive Committee. Perhaps you will permit me to take this occasion of saying a few additional words, since I am about to have entrusted to me the very weighty responsibility, and at the same time the very honourable task of acting as His Majesty's High Commissioner in Palestine. The establishment of a British Administration in

Palestine will profoundly affect the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and I trust wholly for the better. (Hear, hear.) It will, of course, be the duty of an enlightened, progressive Western administration to give the utmost facilities to the prosecution of archaeological research and to the better investigation of the history of earlier periods, and, if I may venture to refer to myself as a student of history in my earlier days, you may be sure that I shall not be lacking in sympathy with the efforts and enterprise of your Fund. There will be a Department of Archaeology of the Administration, but for reasons—sordid reasons of pounds, shillings and pence—it will probably be a very small department; and will have but moderate funds at its disposal. However, this is a field in which private enterprise will not be lacking, and your Palestine Exploration Fund, so far from running the danger of being ousted and superseded by an arrogant Administration, will on the contrary find that it is looked to by that Administration to continue with even greater activity than before the enterprises in which it has been engaged. No doubt there will be other scientific bodies that will be interested in the matter, and may perhaps co-operate in the work. I imagine that there is room for more than one organisation in Palestine. A British School of Archaeology, I am glad to learn, is about to be started—about to be founded in Jerusalem; and that, of course, will receive every encouragement at the hands of the Administration. It is hoped in the future—I trust it may prove to be a near future—to establish a museum in Palestine for the information of students and of visitors to the country; and in that work also I trust that this Fund will contribute and participate. If your local representatives in Palestine have any difficulty in the prosecution of the work, and desire any assistance from the Administration, I trust that they will never fail to address themselves to me; and I can assure you that they will find one who will use his utmost efforts to encourage, to the greatest possible degree, the admirable work in which the Society has been engaged now for a period of more than half a century. I beg to move the election of the Executive Committee. (Applause.)

Colonel HOPE BIDDULPH, D.S.O.—I beg to second the proposal.

The CHAIRMAN put the resolution to the Meeting and it was carried.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am sure, ladies and gentleman, now that we are once more properly equipped with everything that we want in the way of officers, General Committee and Executive Committee, that we must feel very grateful to Mr. Herbert Samuel for having come here on the eve of his departure, and with such heavy responsibilities weighing upon him, and so much preliminary work to be done, as I feel sure he must have, before he leaves this country for Palestine. He has come here and assured us of his own sympathy and the future support of the Administration over which he is going to preside. It is very difficult to foresee, and he would agree that it is very difficult to foresee, how the mandate is going to work out in a great many ways, and particularly in that of Archaeology—whether the Administration will find itself able to take over more control than at present it contemplates or not—whether it will have to leave things, at any rate at first, very largely to private enterprise. The latter is, of course, the British way, I am not sure that it is a very satisfactory way; but of one thing I am perfectly certain—that, whatever course is adopted, things archaeological in Palestine will be very much better in the future than they have been in the past. There is no question of that. There was no real conservation of antiquities in the provinces—and least of all in the outlying provinces—of the Turkish Empire. I welcomed very much what Mr. Birch said about some possible extension of this Society's work in diffusing knowledge of Palestine. As I have no doubt he is aware, I was asked to write a letter to the *Times* some little time ago, to invite particularly those who had recent experience in Palestine and reason to take an interest in the country to become members of the Society. The response to that was quite gratifying; but that does not exhaust our responsibility or the possibilities of the case; and I think it is a case the Executive Committee may consider—and that before very long—whether we may not organise rather more lectures for example in different parts of the country than we do. I notice that this is becoming the policy of a great many societies—for example, the Egypt Exploration Fund and the Hellenic Society. They have found that by having their lectures in the evening, they tap a fresh stratum, particularly a stratum represented by the artisan class. A very large number of young men and women interested in the work of the Arts and Crafts Society come to these lectures, and are apparently extremely anxious to get at the publications, very largely from a professional point of

view, in order to see what *motifs* of art—motives used in antiquity—can be adapted for modern purposes. I think there is a lesson there for us. We are never too proud to learn in this Society, and we can take a leaf out of their book. But, of course, we are primarily an excavating society; and it has been the intermission of that function for the last five years which has weighed most heavily upon the Palestine Exploration Fund. I am glad to say that, as the members who are present probably know, we have secured a very good site for the future; and we have only this very day received from Prof. Garstang, in Jerusalem, a report upon a preliminary visit to the site of Ashkelon and certain preliminary investigations he has made. He holds out a clear prospect of being able to begin work at the beginning of the coming autumn. He does not regard the problems of labour or of supply and transport as at all prohibitive. With regard to labour, he thinks ten piastres a day will secure as much local labour as he wants, and he proposes to supplement that with a few trained men brought up from Egypt; men of his own acquaintance who have worked for him before. I have myself some doubts whether he will find ten piastres a day enough to secure good labour in Palestine; but we shall see. The problem of supply presents no difficulties; the neighbouring villages, being fairly rich, will supply necessaries. He is trying to get over certain difficulties of transport, and to persuade the local Board of Works to consider the question of laying down a light railway for about four miles from the station at Mejdal over the rise to Ashkelon. We have no idea how the central Government views such a proposal, but Ashkelon is a site of very great interest, ranging over a long period of the history of Palestine, and is one of the places a visitor to Palestine is most desirous of visiting in the earlier part of his tour in the south. As regards the site itself Prof. Garstang says certain things and has sent certain plans and photographs. The site was examined before the war by Dr. Duncan Mackenzie, who worked for us at Beth-Shemesh and had previously assisted Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos. He was particularly struck by the fact that at a certain point of the Acropolis, where there is a scarp cut down for a considerable distance, there was a stratification of the mound and in the lower levels of the earth could be seen Late Minoan sherds. The legendary connection between Crete and Palestine, and Ashkelon in particular, is well attested; Sir Arthur Evans was anxious that an excavation should be done in order that

we might test that. That is only one point of interest in Ashkelon. It was a famous city in Jewish history and its greatness lasted into the Crusading period; and we can hardly, I think, fail to get results of very great interest and importance out of Ashkelon, even if we do not get all the periods we expect. As a matter of fact, I myself believe we shall. I think it might interest the meeting, and it will not take long, if I read out of this letter what Prof. Garstang says of his own expectations:—

Prof. Garstang writes that he made an examination of Ashkelon in May, preparatory to the excavation campaign which it is proposed to undertake on the site in the early autumn. He had all possible support from the local authorities and satisfied himself that there would be no insuperable difficulty in obtaining both labour at a reasonable (though enhanced) rate and food supplies; but transport from the railway at Mejdol (four miles) will be slow and laborious owing to the nature of the soil, and he is trying to get the administration to consider the laying of a light railway. As for the site itself, he proposes to attack first the large mound or Acropolis in the north-west, on whose north and east faces there are scarps which will make access to the core of the mass and the lowest stratified levels comparatively easy. It will be remembered that Dr. D. Mackenzie picked potsherds of Late Minoan types out of the sea-face. The main work at the opening of the campaign is to be directed towards the south face of the Acropolis, where tiers of cultivation-terraces will have to be cut through, and the spoil dumped into the old Harbour area. Here Prof. Garstang proposes to drive two parallel headings into the mound from base to summit and then to clear away the intervening earth. In the course of this work an interesting Byzantine church will be cleared, before lower levels are tapped. It is hoped to reach Philistine strata at this point.

Also a trench will be run along the east face and pushed forward till it meets the area which is being explored on the south. At the same time two headings will be driven in from the north scarp with a view to the exploration of stratification.

It may be possible also to explore a small area lying east of and below the Acropolis. The surface remains there indicate the presence of a temple site, which Prof. Garstang

thinks may have been, in its later period, a Temple of Fortune of the City. But it is more than possible that what will be revealed in the Acropolis trenches may engross all the work possible in the first season. It is proposed to rent each season as much of the area as will be required for digging, and the local authorities will help Prof. Garstang about coming to terms with the owners. Owing to the rates which will have to be paid for land, the enhanced rates of labour, the hard stony nature of the soil, and the distance from the railway, the excavation is likely to be costly; and as soon as we know what we may expect on the site, a special appeal for funds will have to be made to the public.

I would remind you that he is a very experienced excavator, who has had to tackle very large mounds before, and in this same region—that is to say, in the northern part of Syria—and he is as well qualified as any man that I know to determine the character of a site, and the expediency of proceeding on the right hand or left from what he will observe in exploratory trenching. We shall do what we can here to provide him with funds to go on with immediately. We intend to put a certain sum of money to his credit at once, and also to send out, if possible, huts from here, so that he may not be delayed by having to put up any buildings. He has entered into negotiations through the Governor of Mejdél for the acquisition of as much ground as will be necessary to begin with, that is to say, to rent it—because the ground will be handed back to its owner afterwards—and also for a further arrangement by which he can continue to get more and more land as it is required. I am glad to say—he is always rather an optimistic person—that he thinks the Governor of Mejdél does not anticipate any particular difficulty with the local proprietors. On the whole then, ladies and gentlemen, I think we may look forward to once more resuming in the autumn of this year what is the primary and most important function of this Society, and with that support and encouragement which the High Commissioner for Palestine has promised us, I think we may anticipate even more success in the future than in the past of this Fund. (Applause.)

The Hon. SECRETARY.—I should like to propose a vote of thanks to our Chairman, who has read out parts of a letter of extraordinary interest. I feel, myself, in wishing to beat the big

drum as it were, and get all the people to come to help, that I regret we did not know that we were going to have such a letter and news so encouraging of the beginning of the work, as I feel sure a great many others would have been glad to come. But, of course, we did not know at that time that it was possible to have more than a purely business meeting. But we are on the eve of very great things, and, after the years in which we have had to mark time, we all of us, I think, are full of the greatest hopes now that the work is going to begin. It is a site that everybody who has been there—and I may say that I have been there too—realizes it is full of great possibilities. I think Prof. Garstang, in a previous communication, said he expected that five years at least would be needed to obtain anything adequate of the secrets of the site, and five years of excavation will need an enormous amount of support; so, although the number is small here, I hope all present will be able to influence their friends and make them understand that we are embarking on an expenditure in which our small reserve fund will flow out like water, and that it will be impossible to do justice to such a site or credit to a British Exploration Fund unless there is a great rally for support. I should just like to say how very pleased we all are at Mr. Herbert Samuel coming to see us this afternoon, and that we thank him for the very kind words he said about his promised support. I know that his interest in Palestine is not a new thing, and I feel—we all feel—that he has got a place of extraordinary interest and responsibility. I am sure we all wish him the utmost success in the difficult post he takes up, and it is very gratifying to know that he will not forget us out there. I would like to add, I am also pleased to see an old member like Mr. Birch. I do not think he need be afraid that the interests of those who are interested in the Society because of Biblical studies are going to be neglected. That has always been one of the great objects of the Society, and I am quite sure it will always remain so; I therefore propose the vote of thanks to the Chairman.

Mr. HERBERT BIRCH.—Perhaps I might be allowed to second it. I am very glad to hear you have mentioned Ashkelon. It happened that I came on Kitchener and Conder and a survey party at a short distance from Mejdol. They were then just reporting upon Ashkelon, and I remember the very keen interest of both those officers in the possibilities of Ashkelon. They felt that there was so much about the ground which they did not dare tap, but would love to break up.

I remember bathing with Kitchener at Ashkelon in the harbour. He was very fond of swimming, and swam out a long distance. Conder told me that a week before he had nearly lost his life there; he had got into difficulties, Conder had gone out, and they had come back all right. It was a case of a miss being as good as a mile, but it was a very near thing. I remember Kitchener's pathetic remark that "he was not born to be drowned." He made that playful remark just forty-one years before he lost his life by drowning in the country's service. I have much pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN.—Ladies and gentlemen, I am very much obliged to the proposer and seconder of this motion, and to you for your acceptance of it. I hope that I may for some time to come be able to be of such service as I can be to the Palestine Exploration Fund. There is only one other thing I would like to say about the choice of the site of Ashkelon. The choice was made with very careful deliberation; and one thing that guided us was that the exploration of this site would appeal to so many interests, and also that it was a new site which had not been previously tackled. I say this because one person, at any rate, whose views deserve all possible respect in regard to Palestine, Prof. Sayce, rather regrets that we are not going on with Lachish (Tel el-Hesi), which was excavated by Prof. Petrie and others. I daresay you know that at the very end of the last exploration there a cuneiform tablet came to light, and Prof. Sayce has always since believed that there is a large cuneiform library hidden there. I can only say that after five years' work at Carchemish we have found just one tablet; these things do not necessarily occur in libraries. We felt it was better to begin a fresh site from which we could expect really remarkable results of various kinds. I am very much obliged to you, ladies and gentlemen, for your attendance, and declare the meeting at an end.

---