

THE
PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

PREFACE.

It is with great pleasure that the Committee are able to inform Subscribers to the Fund that they have received from Palestine three completely filled in tracings, the first contribution to the new map of the Holy Land. The work has been shown to Captain Stewart, who first commenced the survey, to Captain Wilson, and to others experienced in survey work. All are unanimous in expressing their entire approval. It is a piece of work which reflects the highest credit on the non-commissioned officers, Sergeant Black and Corporal Armstrong, to whom it is mainly due. It must be understood that the work of reducing observations taken in the field is a long and laborious one, and that the three sheets already received represent but a very small amount of the actual portion of country surveyed. The amount now plotted, as Lieutenant Conder informs us, is 560 square miles. He calls attention to the fact that the work has been done by two men only, that what they have done would have been impossible had it not been for the care, assistance, and experience of Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, to whom our best thanks are due, and that more men are urgently needed.

Having once begun this work, which we are doing not for ourselves or our own generation only, but for all the world and future ages, it must be done thoroughly, and should be done expeditiously. The Committee are quite sure that they may depend upon the exertions of their friends to increase their funds and enable them to give Lieutenant Conder the additional men he asks for. It may be remembered that Captain Stewart was also urgent in his appeal for a larger staff.

The Hamath inscriptions have been attracting the attention

of scholars. The rough illustration accompanying this number shows a proposed reconstruction by the Rev. Dunbar Heath, from a comparison of Captain Burton's tracings and our own photographs, of the inscriptions on three stones. The plate is kindly presented to the Committee by Mr. Heath, and is here given as a possible help to students of these very curious inscriptions. Besides stones at Hamath, there are nine seals in the British Museum thus inscribed, and a half-defaced stone of Aleppo has been found by Mr. Drake inscribed in similar characters.

In the next *Quarterly Statement* the Committee hope to be able to bring before their Subscribers a definite plan with regard to their future work in Jerusalem itself.

The letters of Lieutenant Conder give some account of what is now known as "Shapira's collection." It is a collection of rough figures in pottery, with occasional fragments of inscriptions, masks, broken utensils, and other things. They are said to be brought from Moab. Unfortunately, it is impossible for experts to decide on their authenticity till they can be examined and handled. The sketches sent home by Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake and Lieutenant Conder are lying in the office of the Fund, where they can be seen. Undoubtedly, if they prove to be genuine, they will be very curious and valuable.
