

THE
PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

PREFACE.

IT is with great pleasure that we publish the first Reports received from M. Clermont-Ganneau. They are, as might have been expected, of the greatest interest. His labours began from the moment of his arrival at Jaffa, where he found the ancient Jewish Cemetery; and were followed up on his way to Jerusalem, when he visited the site of Gezer, and was able to trace out in part the plan of the old Canaanitish city. In Jerusalem he has made a careful study of the sarcophagi lately found on the Mount of Offence. Besides the other points of interest raised in his Report, it is startling to find in a tomb close to Bethany, of date certainly early Christian, and very likely of the 1st century, the names, *all together*, of Simon, Martha, and Lazarus. Whoever were the persons named, we have here certainly a tomb of Jewish Christians of a very early period, and belonging to a priestly family.

Of no less interest are the Reports of Lieut. Conder and Mr. C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake. The latest letters contain the gratifying intelligence that the Survey is going on very much faster. We have now done more than a third of the whole area of Western Palestine.

Now that the work of the Fund is divided into two parts, the Survey and the Researches at Jerusalem, it is needless to say that the expenses are proportionately heavier. We have to face the next year with a considerable debt, and with a promised annual income of a great deal less than the expenses which will be incurred. These expenses mean about £2,400 for the Survey, and perhaps £1,000 for the Jerusalem work, besides the expenses of printing and publishing, which cannot be avoided. We ask

for increased support in annual incomes or for the raising of a sum of money at once, to enable us to finish off the whole work. We estimate that some £10,000, in addition to what is promised, would cover all work at present contemplated. The *Quarterly Statement* is sent to 3,000 persons. It is suggested to those 3,000 subscribers that if each were to obtain only additional subscribers to the extent of £3, the anxieties and difficulties of the Committee would be removed. Papers showing the aims and objects of the Fund, for distribution, can be had of the Secretary. Further, as at the beginning of the year the claims on the Fund are pressing, we beg to remind our friends that they give twice who give quickly. We ask the wealthiest country in the world to help to an end a work which concerns the highest interests of all mankind.

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE two large fragments, together with the smaller pieces of the Moabite Stone which M. Clermont-Ganneau succeeded in rescuing, are now in the Louvre at Paris. Until the small pieces have been fitted into their places with as much certainty as a comparison with M. Ganneau's original squeeze will allow, the monument will not be open to the general public, nor will any casts of it be issued.

The Committee have received a letter from the curator of the *Département des Antiques*, inviting the Palestine Exploration Fund to cede to the Louvre the fragments which Captain Warren brought home with him. These, which contain in all fifty-six letters, have been already cast in fac-simile, and these casts have been presented to M. Clermont-Ganneau. The presentation, therefore, of the fragments themselves would not further advance the restoration of the inscription. On the other hand, it would be satisfactory to the French to have in their hands the whole existing remains of the monument. But to part with the property of the Fund is beyond the power of the Executive Committee, and it is therefore proposed to call a meeting of the General Committee early next year, at which the matter may be fully discussed. At this meeting, also, certain questions connected with the publication of papers on subjects of Biblical interest, not written by the Committee's exploring officers, will be also considered.

Subscribers are invited to forward to the secretary any opinions or suggestions they may have to offer, which will receive full consideration.