



VIEW FROM SHÉJARET EL ITHLEH (PROBABLE SITE OF GILGAL), NORTH WEST.

Showing Site of Jericho of Joshua, and the traditional Mount of Temptation, to which the spies fled. The high hill is a prominent point on the watershed, used as a trigonometrical point by the survey party.

THE
PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

P R E F A C E.

THE voluminous reports with which we commence our account of the year's work will be found to tell their own story without prefatory explanation. From Lieut. Conder we have additions to our knowledge of Gezer, where he observed the surest proofs of the former existence of a town—in tombs, quarries, oil-presses, and fragments of pottery; of Ramleh, with its Church and its White Mosque; of El Medyeh, the probable site of the tombs of the Maccabees; of Gibeah, a site of extreme interest in connection with the history of Saul; and the site of Ai, on which Major Wilson has already given the Fund a valuable paper (*Quarterly Statement*, First Series, p. 123).

Lieut. Conder has sent also reports on the excursions and observations made during his last summer holidays about Bludan. But the point of greatest interest in his reports will probably be the passage in which he describes the site of Gilgal. It has been known for many years that a name of Jiljul, or Jiljilia, existed in the neighbourhood of Er Riha; but although a German traveller, Herr Zschokke, discovered the spot in 1866, and fixed it by compass angle, it was found impossible by Lieut. Conder to identify the place in his first attempt. He has now, however, succeeded in finding it. Although, with the few data in our possession, it is impossible to speak with certainty, it will be at least acknowledged that the spot described by Lieut. Conder comes nearer than any other to the requirements of the case. It is not the traditional site assigned by the early pilgrims, Arculphus and Willibald, which is at Kasr Hajlah, five miles from Jericho. Lieut. Conder has carefully examined the tract from the Jordan mouth to Ras Feshkah for traces of the Cities of the Plain, but finds none at all. There is, however, a curious artificial mound, called Tell el Rashidújeh, at the Jordan mouth; and it seems probable, as he

points out, that the gradual rise of the level of the plain, caused by the constant washing down of the soft marls from the western hills, would effectually cover over any such ruins, did they ever exist, below the surface. Lieut. Conder's paper on the Identification of Scopus may be read in conjunction with M. Clermont-Ganneau's remarks on the same subject. Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake's reports partly cover the same ground as those of Lieut. Conder. His remarks on the boundary line of Judah show that he does not agree with some of the opinions of M. Ganneau. But all the three reports must be taken together; each is independent of the other, and each represents opinions sometimes different, but always based on the same facts. The real importance of our explorers' reports will always lie, first, in the facts themselves; and secondly, in their indication of the direction in which the facts seem to point.

We have received from Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake an extremely valuable paper on "Modern Jerusalem: its Population, Religions, Trades, &c.," which has not been introduced here, because it seems to the Committee beyond the limits of their work to describe a modern city. No doubt Mr. Drake will publish it elsewhere.

The simultaneous exposure of the so-called "Moabite pottery" by M. Ganneau and Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake will be found on p. 113. The letter of M. Shapira himself to the Editor of the *Athenæum* is added, to show that the vendor of the pottery has not yet accepted the fact of their forgery.

The reports of M. Ganneau are those of a careful and minute archæologist: the illustrations given with them are from the pen of M. Lecomte. We have already received more than twenty sheets of plans, sketches, and drawings, of which these are a specimen.

FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE FUND.

It has been decided to publish every quarter a statement such as the following, in order that Subscribers may know the actual position of the Fund.

Received from Jan. 1st to Mar. 26th, 1873:—

By Subscriptions and Donations	...	...	£853	19	4
Profit from Collections at Lectures	...	...	88	4	5
*Sale of Publications	...	...	36	9	7
*Sale of Photographs	...	...	21	3	6
Balance in hand March 26...	...	...	469	7	10

* Including those sold at Lectures.