

THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND

NOTES AND NEWS.

The Geological Expedition has been, with the exception of one detail, the section across North Palestine, successfully accomplished. Professor Hull returned to London on February 12th, bringing with him the materials for constructing a geological map of the Holy Land very much in advance of anything which could hitherto be attempted. He is now engaged in drawing up a detailed report, which will not, however, be ready for some time yet. Meanwhile, however, we shall be able to publish a popular account of his journey, the first instalment of which appears in this number of the *Quarterly Statement*.

The leading features of his report may be briefly stated as follows:—Professor Hull has traced the ancient margin of the Gulfs of Suez and Akabah to the height of 200 feet above their present level, so that the whole country has been submerged to that extent, and has been gradually rising. As one most interesting result of this rise, the Professor is of opinion that at the time of the Exodus there may have been a continuous connection of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. If his fact is established, it will place all the questions connected with the narrative on an entirely new footing. As regards the Dead Sea, he has discovered that it formerly stood at an elevation of 1,400 feet above its present level; that is to say, 150 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. The history of this gradually lowering of the waters will form a special feature in Professor Hull's forthcoming report. He has also found evidences of a chain of ancient lakes in the Sinaitic district, and of another chain in the centre of the Wâdy Arabah, not far from the watershed. The great line of feature of the Wâdy Arabah and the Jordan Valley has been traced to a distance of more than a hundred miles. The materials for working out a complete theory of the origin of this remarkable depression are now available. They are found to differ in many details from the one furnished by Lartet. The terraces of the Jordan have been examined, the most important one being 600 feet above the present surface of the Dead Sea. The relation of the terraces to the surrounding hills and valleys shows that these features had already been formed before the waters had reached their former level. Sections have been carried east and west across the Arabah and the Jordan Valley. Two traverses of Palestine have also been made from the Mediterranean to the Jordan.

Meantime, Dr. Gordon Hull has taken more than a hundred photographs, chiefly of places never before figured. These are now being printed, and a list of them will be ready for the next *Quarterly Statement*. As regards Mr. Henry Hart and Mr. Reginald Lawrence, the two "volunteers," the former has made

valuable botanical and other collections, which, however, were not made for the Committee, who allowed these gentlemen to join Professor Hull on the condition of their paying their own expenses, and have therefore no claim upon them for their discoveries.

On the arrival of the party at Gaza, as will be seen by the letters of Professor Hull, Captain Kitchener left them and returned to Egypt alone, and by a new route. Mr. Armstrong went on with Professor Hull as far as Jerusalem, where he remained for some weeks working up the map from the observations, plans, and sketches taken by Captain Kitchener and himself in the Wādy Arabah. This done, he proceeded to Cairo and received from Captain Kitchener his reports—(1) on the topographical work of the Expedition; (2) of his own ride across the Desert from Gaza to Ismailiyeh, and the map of the route. He arrived in England on Wednesday, March 12th.

It is too late to publish the maps and reports with this number of the *Quarterly Statement*. It will, however, be interesting to select one or two of the most striking points. Captain Kitchener received from an Arab a version of the story of Palmer's murder, which may or may not be true, but which differs materially from the accounts already published; he found the natives profoundly impressed by the vigour with which Sir Charles Warren hunted down the murderers, of whom the most guilty is still, however, at large; he visited the Temple at Sabul el Khadeim; he has advanced a new theory as to the origin and purposes of the *nawamis* concerning which Palmer's "Desert of the Exodus" gives a good account. On the way from Akabah to the Dead Sea he found traces of an old city, about a mile north-east of the Bay of Akabah; he made a triangulation of the whole valley, and in his report describes the conformation of the ground; he visited Petra with the rest of the party; he describes the distribution of the tribes over the ancient Edom, and he corrects and fixes the shape and positions of the southern shores of the Dead Sea.

One passage may be quoted at length:—

"Mr. Armstrong explored the country towards the east, and found, six miles north of Feidan, the ruins of a small town in a valley surrounded by bold and precipitous cliffs. The ruined walls are from a foot to 3 feet high; the stones are roughly squared, and of no great size; there are some black heaps which resemble clay heaps, and show that very probably ancient mines may be found in the neighbourhood." No name could be obtained from this ruin; indeed the difficulty of getting names at all in the Wādy Arabah is very great, because there are no natives to ask them of. Other remains and indications of former buildings were observed on the eastern side; as in the Sinai peninsula, there were formerly terraces on the valley slopes irrigated by the streams which now run to waste. Also, Captain Kitchener heard many stories and reports concerning the ruins which lie east of the hills of which Petra is one. It must be remembered that Laborde is the only traveller who has yet been in this district. His ride through it was too hasty to allow of exploration, yet Captain Kitchener speaks highly of the accuracy of his plan of Petra.

Another interesting find was made by Mr. Hart, in his botanical rambles, at a place called Khurbet Lubrush. "These remains consist of a large number of *nawamis*; some of which are in a wonderfully perfect state of preservation. They are dotted about thickly over the site, without any plan, and the openings in them having no special direction. A few loose stone walls near some of them have the appearance of having been thrown up recently round tents. Enclosing the greater number of these *nawamis* is an ancient wall, following the contour of the hill for a quarter of a mile; only the foundations now remain, but they were of massive undressed masonry of apparently very remote antiquity. Inside the wall there are the ruins of an oblong building of similar masonry, very probably an ancient temple. Unfortunately, the remains are so ruined that it is impossible, without considerable labour, to thoroughly explore or measure the monument. Only one corner could be determined, the remainder being covered by heaps of massive stone blocks,"

The cost of the Expedition has been about £2,000. The publication of the results must, however, be added. A large part of the bill remains to be paid. The subscribers of the Society will perhaps make a note of this fact.

The small piece of the Survey of Eastern Palestine, consisting of 550 square miles, has been reduced and engraved on the same scale as the modern Map of Western Palestine. Subscribers to the Society who wish to have it in order to add it to their map, can do so by application to the Secretary, post free, for eighteenpence.

The two volumes to complete the "Survey of Western Palestine" are very nearly ready. As soon as the work is completed, the Committee will take steps to have the few copies which remain subscribed. They would greatly prefer to see them in public libraries, where their contents would be generally accessible, and would therefore be much obliged if their friends would place them in correspondence with librarians in any part of the world.

The only authorised lecturers for the Society are—

- (1) The Rev. Henry Geary, Vicar of St. Thomas's, Portman Square. His lectures are on the following subjects:—

The Survey of Western Palestine, as illustrating Bible History.
Palestine East of the Jordan.

The Jerusalem Excavations.

A Restoration of Ancient Jerusalem.

- (2) The Rev. James King, Vicar of St. Mary's, Berwick. His subjects are as follows:—

The Survey of Western Palestine.
Jerusalem.

The Hittites.

The Moabite Stone and other monuments.

The liabilities of the Society on January 1st were as follows:—

			£	s.	d.
1. Office and Printing account	..	..	652	17	9
2. Memoirs	..	..	about	500	0 0
3. Maps	..	..	..	750	0 0
4. Exploration	..	..	..	1,500	0 0

As regards the second account, it includes part, but not all, of the books, engravings, lithographs, &c., now being prepared. This amount is already reduced by £388. Up to the present moment the amount spent on "Maps and Memoirs" is more than equalled by the receipts, so that, although we do not expect the small maps to pay the expense of production, which was very heavy, the general fund will not bear any part of that expense. The third account has now been reduced by £300, and the fourth by £885.

The assets of the Society are—(1) a balance in hand on March 20th of £816; (2) the amount due for the "Survey of Western Palestine," about £1,000, which will be called in on the completion of the work in April; (3) the copies of the "Survey" still unsubscribed for, which will then be offered to libraries and the public; (4) copyrights of books, photographs, collections, &c. The subscribers will understand that the liabilities on the Maps and Memoirs have nothing to do with the general fund.

The printing account is large, but this will be greatly reduced during the present quarter.

Speaking roughly, without special effort the Committee can reckon on a body of subscribers whose guineas and half guineas amount to about £2,000 a year: their management expenses are very nearly a fixed quantity, viz., about £600 a year. The printing of the *Quarterly Statement*, given to subscribers, requires about £400, while the postage of the Journal comes to about £70 a year.

The following is the classified division of the year's expenditure:—

Exploration	..	..	22·78	per cent.
Maps and Memoirs	..	..	47·43	"
Management	..	..	18·04	"
Printing	..	..	8·19	"
Postage	..	..	3·56	"
			100·00	

March 20th, 1884.

WALTER MORRISON,
Hon. Treasurer.

The income of the Society, from December 12th to March 21st inclusive, amounted in all, including subscriptions, lectures, and payment for maps, memoirs, and publications, to £2,612 8s. 10d. On March 21st the balance in the Banks was £816.

It is suggested to subscribers that the safest and most convenient manner of paying subscriptions is through a Bank. Many subscribers have adopted this method, which removes the danger of loss or miscarriage, and renders unnecessary the acknowledgment by official receipt and letter.

Subscribers who do not receive the *Quarterly Statement* regularly, are asked to send a note to the Secretary. Great care is taken to forward each number to all who are entitled to receive it, but changes of address and other causes give rise occasionally to omissions.

While desiring to give every publicity to proposed identifications and other theories advanced by officers of the Fund and contributors to the pages of the *Quarterly Statement*, the Committee wish it to be distinctly understood that by publishing them in the *Quarterly Statement* they neither sanction nor adopt them.

THE PALESTINE PILGRIMS' TEXT SOCIETY.

Enclosed with this number of the *Quarterly Statement* will be found a prospectus of the objects of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, newly established under the Directorate of Sir Charles Wilson. The Society proposes to issue, as funds permit:—

- (1) The whole series of early pilgrims' travels in the Holy Land, translated and annotated.
- (2) The passages from the early Fathers which relate to the topography and geography of the Holy Land.
- (3) Those passages from the Talmud which bear upon these questions.
- (4) The early Arabic and Persian descriptions of the country in translation.
- (5) Such portions of Procopius and the Byzantine historians which are concerned with Palestine.

As regards the first of these objects, the Council of the Society will be able to make use of the labours of the late Dr. Titus Tobler, in his collection of texts, published first in Germany, and next, with the collaboration of M. Aug. Molinier, in the Geographical series of the *Société de l'Orient Latin*, a society whose excellent work is too little known in this country. An account of its publications, by Miss L. Toulmin Smith, appeared in the *Academy* of February 16th, 1884. The texts published by Tobler, and by the French Society, are not translated, and it is felt that in order to make them generally useful in this country they must be published in English. Each pilgrim's narrative will be issued with separate introduction and notes, and a map showing his route in Syria. The early Fathers, the Byzantine historians, and the Persian and Arabic historians, have never been translated, or even consulted for their topography; while as for the Talmud, it would be difficult to find a dozen scholars in this country who have even read it. The Society is entirely separate from the Palestine Exploration Fund, but the Committee have granted the use of their Offices, and the Secretary of the Fund is the Honorary Secretary of the Society.