

THE
PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

NOTES AND NEWS.

With this number is issued an account of the Survey of Tell 'Âbil, the "Abila of the Decapolis," by Herr Schumacher; it is printed with large margins, and may be bound up with the Quarterly Statement, or with "Pella." The price of this number to the general public is 3s. 6d.

Herr Schick has forwarded an elaborate description of the Mount of Olives, together with a report of alterations and excavations recently made there. He mentions that on that part of the Mount called by the Arabs *Kurm es Saiad*, and by the Christians *Viri Galilæ*, which has for some years been in possession of the Greek Church, an ancient Christian cemetery has been discovered, containing three rows of well built masonry tombs. Not far from the same spot an extensive series of catacombs has been opened, which the Greek Bishop Epiphanius, thinks may be the "peristereon" mentioned by Josephus in describing the wall of circumvallation erected by the Romans during the siege. Some of these tombs were apparently of Jewish origin, afterwards altered and used by the Christians, who added greatly to their number. Herr Schick remarks the frequency with which the *loculi* are found in groups of three, and that there is no uniformity as to their direction. Many crosses were found cut in the rock, but if there were ever any inscriptions they have been defaced. He also notes several small pools or tanks in the midst of these tombs, which he regards as being intended to collect the water coming into the cavern during the rainy season, in order that the *loculi* and the pathway might be kept dry. Many objects of interest were found during the excavations, as a mosaic slab with Greek inscription, Jewish and Greek coins, more than forty Roman tiles bearing a stamp which Herr Schick thinks is that of the Tenth Legion, a number of jars and vases in glass and earthenware, and an iron spear head.

Her Schick also reports the discovery of an ancient church opposite the barracks in the Tarik Bab Sitti Maryam. West of the Chapel of the Flagellation there had for many years been a waste place, containing *débris* covering ruins, and walled up on the side next the street. The Franciscans have recently removed this accumulation of rubbish, and laid bare the walls of a small church and some buildings adjoining it erected round a small courtyard, having the rock for its flooring. The walls of the church are 5 feet or more high. At the eastern end are three apses, in the northern of which an altar is still preserved. The flooring consists of large hard polished stones. It is curious that the south-western corner of the building rests on the eastern of the twin pools, and that a cistern was erected there at a later period.

A report of further discoveries in Galilee has been received from Herr Schumacher. Some workmen were chasing a hare on the road between Haifa and Nazareth, when the animal disappeared into a small opening hidden by a bush. This opening was found to lead into a sepulchral chamber excavated in the rock, and having four *kokim*, containing four sarcophagi of pottery ware, resembling that found at 'Abellin, and described by the late Mr. Lawrence Oliphant in *Quarterly Statement*, 1886, page 80. Mr. Schumacher has examined the caves discovered some time ago at Shefa 'Amr, which are now converted into cisterns, and sends a drawing of the very curious ornamentation over the entrance and on each side of the rock-cut vestibule. He has also visited and examined the famous cave of Jessâs, which, after being nearly forgotten by the Bedawin and Fellahin of the district, was re-discovered last winter. He found in it a large number of human skulls and other bones. A second cave was also shown to him in which he found human skulls.

The "Answers" to the "Questions" are now beginning to yield results. On p. 120 will be found a report by Major Conder on the first batch received.

The present number contains an important report and plans of the large cistern recently discovered near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The cistern has 18 piers, and measures 102 feet long by 34 feet broad (*see* page 111). Some additional notes with sections will be published in the next number.

It is curious to note that the situation of this immense cistern is nearly the same as that of the church of St. Marie Latine, as shown on Plate VIII. of Count de Vogue's "Les Eglises de la Terre Sainte."

Mr. Guy le Strange's long-expected work on the descriptions of Palestine left us by the mediæval Arab geographers and travellers, will be published in the autumn. The book will be called "Palestine under the Moslems." Four

years have been spent in gathering together the materials, and translating (from the Arabic and Persian) the various Moslem accounts of Palestine, which, beginning in the middle of the ninth century, reach in unbroken succession down to the close of the fifteenth century of our era. It is expected that the work will prove one of lasting interest; and it should be noted that nothing of the kind has ever hitherto been attempted by any other Orientalist.

After a general description of the physical features of Syria and Palestine, as noted by the early Moslem writers, followed by an account of the products and commerce of the country in the middle ages, the next succeeding chapters will be devoted to Jerusalem. The many detailed descriptions of the great Aksá Mosque, and of the Dome of the Rock, prior to the first Crusade, will be given, translated, *in extenso*. The various points raised are next discussed, the descriptions being illustrated by plans of the various buildings, at the different epochs, expressly drawn for the present publication. Next, the history of the many other buildings in the Haram Area will be noticed, and the question of the ancient Gates as much as possible elucidated. Several plans of the Haram Area at the different epochs will help to render these descriptions clear to those who have not visited Jerusalem. In this section of the work a mass of evidence derived from contemporary authorities has now been brought together (nearly the whole of which is taken from texts that have never before been translated into any European language), proving conclusively that the Dome of the Rock was built by the Arabs, and was not a Christian edifice perverted by the Moslems from its original purpose. The late Mr. Fergusson's celebrated theory, therefore, that the Dome of the Rock is the original Church of the Holy Sepulchre, falls to the ground. In the later chapters on Jerusalem the Arab descriptions of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the accounts of the descent of the so-called Holy Fire, with notices of many of the other holy places of Jerusalem, found in the works of Moslem writers, will be brought together and discussed.

Damascus and the glories of the Great Mosque (before Timour burnt it to the ground) will form the subject of the succeeding chapter, which will contain the description of the city of the Omayyad Caliphs, given in the diaries of Arab and Persian pilgrims. Next will follow the descriptions of the other great provincial towns of Palestine and Syria, such as Ramleh, Hebron (with translations of the various accounts of visits to the Cave of Machpelah), Acre, Tyre, Sidon, Tiberias, Aleppo, Antioch, and other cities of Northern Syria. In a separate chapter there will be brought together certain curious legends and marvellous accounts of caves, "menhirs," temples and wondrous sights, including descriptions of the Seven Sleepers and their Cave, said to have been visited by many of the early Moslem travellers. The second part of the work will contain, arranged in alphabetical order, all the notices of the minor towns, villages, and places in Palestine and Syria mentioned by the Arab geographers and historians. A full index giving the Arabic transcription of all the names will be a necessary adjunct; the Arabic form of the place-names being often of great importance in the identification of Biblical (Hebrew) sites.

The delay in bringing out the work has been caused by the great quantity of translations from the original Arabic (and Persian) authorities needed in order to set before the reader the descriptions, various as to authors and epochs, left by the Moslem conquerors of the Holy Land. All the translations given have been made, at first hand, by Mr. le Strange, from the original Oriental texts. The work, it is hoped, will prove a mine of information rendered available to those who are unacquainted with Eastern Languages, while those whose knowledge allows them to refer to the originals may verify each statement and the words of the translations, for special care is taken in every case to give the reference to the original authority. The Bible and the Early Christian (Roman and Byzantine) writers give the history of the sites in the Holy Land down to the seventh century, A.D., when the Arabs conquered Syria. The present work completes the Biblical, Classical, and Early Christian accounts, and brings the history of the Holy Places down to the present day. Those who have visited Palestine, or know the country from the works of modern travellers, will be interested to compare their recollections with the descriptions left by the mediæval Arabs, and the reading of the Crusading Chronicles will gain, in many details, by a reference to the Moslem writers, who were the contemporaries of Saladin and Richard Cœur de Lion.

The first volume of the "Survey of Eastern Palestine," by Major Conder, is now ready and being issued to subscribers. It is accompanied by a map of the portion of country surveyed, special plans, and upwards of 350 drawings of ruins, tombs, dolmens, stone circles, inscriptions, &c. The edition is limited to 500. The first 250 subscribers pay seven guineas for the three volumes, with an index; subscribers to the "Survey of Western Palestine" are privileged to have the volumes for this sum. The price will be raised, after 250 names are received, to twelve guineas. The Committee *are pledged never to let any copies be subscribed under the sum of seven guineas.* Mr. A. P. Watt, 2, Paternoster Square, is the Sole Agent. The attention of intending subscribers is directed to the announcement on the inside of the cover of this number.

The books now contained in the Society's publications comprise an amount of information on Palestine, and on the researches conducted in the country, which can be found in no other publications. It must never be forgotten that no single traveller, however well equipped by previous knowledge, can compete with a scientific body of explorers, instructed in the periods required, and provided with all the instruments necessary for carrying out their work. The books are the following (*the whole set can be obtained by application to Mr. George Armstrong, for 37s. 6d., carriage paid*):—

By Major Conder, R.E.—

- (1) "Tent Work in Palestine."—A popular account of the survey of Western Palestine, freely illustrated by drawings made by the author himself. This is not a dry record of the sepulchres, or a descriptive catalogue of ruins, springs, and valleys, but a continuous narrative full of observations upon the manners and customs of the people, the Biblical associations of the sites, the Holy City and its memories, and is based upon a six years' experience in the country itself. No other modern traveller has enjoyed the same advantages as Major Conder, or has used his opportunities to better purpose.
- (2) "Heth and Moab."—Under this title Major Conder provides a narrative, as bright and as full of interest as "Tent Work," of the expedition for the *Survey of Eastern Palestine*. How the party began by a flying visit to North Syria, in order to discover the Holy City—Kadesh—of the children of Heth; how they fared across the Jordan, and what discoveries they made there, will be found in this volume.
- (3) Major Conder's "Syrian Stone Lore."—This volume, the least known of Major Conder's works, is, perhaps, the most valuable. It attempts a task never before approached—the reconstruction of Palestine from its monuments. It shows what we should know of Syria if there were no Bible, and it illustrates the Bible from the monuments.
- (4) Major Conder's "Altaic Inscriptions."—This book is an attempt to read the Hitite Inscriptions. The author has seen no reason to change his views since the publication of the work.
- (5) Professor Hull's "Mount Seir."—This is a popular account of the Geological Expedition conducted by Professor Hull for the Committee of the Palestine Fund. The part which deals with the Valley of Arabah will be found entirely new and interesting.
- (6) Herr Schumacher's "Across the Jordan."
- (7) Herr Schumacher's "Jaulân."—These two books must be taken in continuation of Major Conder's works issued as instalments of the unpublished "Survey of Eastern Palestine." They are full of drawings, sketches, and plans, and contain many valuable remarks upon manners and customs.
- (8) The Memoirs of Twenty-one Years' Work.—A copy of this book is presented to every subscriber to the Fund who applies for it. The work is a popular account of the researches conducted by the Society during the past twenty-one years of its existence. It will be found not only valuable in itself as an interesting work, but also as a book of reference, and especially useful in order to show what has been doing, and is still doing, by this Society.
- (9) Herr Schumacher's Kh. Fahil. The ancient Pella, the first retreat of the Christians; with map and illustrations.

- (10) Names and Places in the Old and New Testament and Apocrypha, with their modern identifications, with reference to Josephus, the Memoirs, and *Quarterly Statements*.
- (11) Besant and Palmer's "History of Jerusalem," already described.

The Committee have added to their list of publications the new edition of the "History of Jerusalem," by Walter Besant and E. H. Palmer (Bentley & Son). It can be obtained by subscribers, carriage paid, for 5s. 6d., by application to the Head Office only. The "History of Jerusalem," which was originally published in 1871, and has long been completely out of print, covers a period and is compiled from materials not included in any other work, though some of the contents have been plundered by later works on the same subject. It begins with the siege by Titus and continues to the fourteenth century, including the Early Christian period, the Moslem invasion, the Mediæval pilgrims, the Mohammedan pilgrims, the Crusades, the Latin Kingdom, the victorious career of Saladin, the Crusade of Children, and many other little-known episodes in the history of the city and the country.

The publications for the year 1889, besides those already mentioned, include Schumacher's "Abila" and his "Southern Ajlûn." The former is appended to the present number of the *Quarterly Statement*.

Mr. Harper's important work on the Illustrations of the Bible obtained from modern researches and observation, is also in the printer's hands, and will be out in the autumn. Its contents, &c., will be duly announced.

Branch Associations of the Bible Society, all Sunday Schools in union with the Sunday School Institute, the Sunday School Union, and the Wesleyan Sunday School Institute, will please observe that by a special Resolution of the Committee they will henceforth be treated as subscribers and be allowed to purchase the books and maps (by application only to the Secretary) at reduced price.

The friends of the Society are earnestly requested to use the "Memoirs of Twenty-one Years' Work" as a means of showing what the work has been, and what remains to be done.

The income of the Society, from March 21st to June 17th, inclusive, was— from subscriptions and donations, 299*l.* 0*s.* 11*d.* ; from all sources, 523*l.* 1*s.* 10*d.* The expenditure during the same period was 427*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.* On June 17th the balance in the Bank was 362*l.* 11*s.* 11*d.*

It does not seem generally known that cases for binding the *Quarterly Statement* can be had by subscribers on application to the office.

Subscribers are begged to note that the following :—

1. Index to the *Quarterly Statement*, 1869–1880 ;
2. Cases for Herr Schumacher's "Jaulân ;"
3. Cases for the *Quarterly Statement*, in green or chocolate—

Can be had by application to the office at 1*s.* each.

Early numbers of the *Quarterly Statement* are very rare. In order to make up complete sets the Committee will be very glad to receive any of the following numbers :—

No. II, 1869 ; No. VII, 1870 ; No. III (July) 1871 ; January and April, 1872 ; January, 1883, and January, 1886.

It has come to the knowledge of the Committee that certain book hawkers are representing themselves as agents of the Society. The Committee have to caution subscribers that they have no book hawkers in their employ, and that none of their works are sold by any itinerant agents.

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.

As many inquiries have been made about transparent slides, a selection will be made from the photographs of the Society for this purpose. Subscribers wishing to have any are requested to communicate with the Assistant Secretary.

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.

The only authorised lecturers for the Society are—

- (1) Mr. George St. Clair, F.G.S., Member of the Anthropological Institute and of the Society of Biblical Archæology.

His subjects are :—

- (1) *The General Exploration of Palestine.*
- (2) *Jerusalem Buried and Recovered.*
- (3) *Buried Cities, Egypt and Palestine.*
- (4) *Buried Cities of Mesopotamia*, with some account of the Hittites.
- (5) *The Moabite Stone and the Pedigree of the English Alphabet.*

Address : Geo. St. Clair, Bristol Road, Birmingham, or at the Office of the Fund.

- (2) The Rev. Henry Geary, Vicar of St. Thomas's, Portman Square. His lectures are on the following subjects, and all illustrated by original photographs shown as "dissolving views :"—

The Survey of Western Palestine, as illustrating Bible History.
Palestine East of the Jordan.
The Jerusalem Excavations.
A Restoration of Ancient Jerusalem.

- (3) 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.

- (4) The Rev. Thomas Harrison, F.R.G.S., Member of the Society of Biblical Archæology, 38, Melrose Gardens, West Kensington Park, W. His subjects are as follows :—

- (1) *Research and Discovery in the Holy Land.*
- (2) *In the Track of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan.*
- (3) *Bible Scenes in the Light of Modern Science.*