

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

THE Annual Meeting of the General Committee was held on Tuesday, July 16th, at 4 o'clock, at the Society's Offices, 1, Adam Street.

The Chair was taken by Mr. James Glaisher, F.R.S.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he held in his hand a number of letters from Members regretting inability to attend.

The Honorary Secretary then read the following Report of the Executive Committee for the past year —

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

Your Executive Committee elected at the last General Meeting, on July 3rd, 1888, have now, on resigning their office, to render an account of their administration during the past year.

Your Committee have held nineteen meetings during the year.

The work of excavation in Jerusalem, and surveying in various parts on the east of Jordan, goes on quietly from time to time as opportunity permits.

The Committee have hopes of a Firman being granted in the course of a few months, to enable them to begin excavations on new and hitherto unexplored grounds.

Our energetic agent, Herr Conrad Schick, loses no opportunity of reporting and sending plans of discoveries in Jerusalem, which are brought to light either by excavation or during improvements or alterations in various parts of the City. Some of the recent discoveries are as follows :—

1. In reconstructing the carriage road which runs along outside the northern wall of the City, there were found further traces of an ancient wall, and a portion of the walls of a tower, which are probably the remains of the Lepers' Gate, said to have been in the north wall of the City in the time of the Crusaders. *Quarterly Statement*, 1889, p. 63.
2. Whilst some workmen were clearing the ground in the Latin Patriarch's Garden near the north-west corner of the City, they struck the foundation of an ancient wall of massive masonry, some of the stones having the same Jewish draft as those in the Haram Wall. *Quarterly Statement*, 1889, p. 65.
3. In the Russian property near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and east of the Byzantine pavement, a very large cave was found. *Quarterly Statement*, 1889, p. 67.
4. Between the Cave and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre an enormous vaulted cistern was discovered, measuring 102 feet long by 34 feet broad, with 18 piers resting on the rock. Over this cistern or tank a new building has been erected. The situation of this

- immense tank 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." *Quarterly Statement*, 1889, p. 111.
5. At Jericho, capitals, pillars, lintels, iron weapons, pottery, jars and lamps, bronze or brass trays, candlesticks, rings, &c., have been found. *Quarterly Statement*, 1889, p. 171.
 6. The excavations recently conducted at the Pool of Bethesda by the French monks, which were reported on last year, have now been dropped for a while, but will be probably resumed again soon.
 7. We have just received further reports from Herr Schick, stating that the ruins of a small Byzantine Church were found opposite the barracks off the street leading to Bab Sitti Maryam. The walls, apses, and a small altar are still preserved; the south-western corner rests on one of the twin pools.
 8. On the Mount of Olives a series of catacombs has been opened; the loculi are in groups and all connected together.
A slab with Greek inscription, some Jewish and Greek coins, and some forty Roman tiles bearing a stamp which Mr. Schick thinks is that of the tenth legion, were found.

Herr Schumacher continues to send us reports on the various discoveries and changes in the north of Palestine. At Caesarea great changes have taken place since the Survey party measured the ruins.

A colony of immigrants from Bosnia have settled there, pulled down the old ruins, built houses and cleared and laid out the ground inside the walls in lots of one-third of an acre. Several other instances could be named where grand old ruins are being torn down for building material since the Survey was completed.

At Nazareth a large cave of several chambers was found under the convent yard of the Sisters of St. Joseph. A wide staircase leads down to the chambers in which are cisterns, troughs, and tombs. *Quarterly Statement*, 1889, p. 68.

A few days ago he sent us notes of another rock-cut tomb discovered at Shefa 'Amr, having some remarkable figures carved on the sides of the entrance.

For the convenience of subscribers in following out the position of recent discoveries in Jerusalem, a plan of the City, reduced from the Ordnance Survey Plan, was issued with the April *Quarterly Statement*, on which the recent discoveries are noted in red.

Dr. Post contributed a valuable report on the Fauna and Flora of Moab, Gilead, and the Hauran, the result of an expedition undertaken in the year 1886. The list of plants collected is a most valuable contribution to the botany of the country. *Quarterly Statement*, 1888, p. 175.

Of the three volumes we announced in our last report as preparing for the press, one is now ready and being issued to subscribers, viz., "The Survey of Eastern Palestine." This volume has been edited by Major Conder, R.E., and is accompanied by a map of the portion of country

surveyed ; there are upwards of 350 illustrations of ruins, tombs, cromlechs, stone circles, menhirs, inscriptions, &c.

Some progress has been made with the second volume, which consists of M. Lecomte's beautiful drawings, illustrating the Mission of M. Clermont-Ganneau in 1874. The illustrations for the third volume, Mr. Chichester Hart's "Flora and Fauna" of the Wády Arabah, are nearly ready.

The edition, as already announced by circular, is limited to 500 copies. The first 250 subscribers are entitled to the three volumes for £7 7s. On these being exhausted, the price of the second 250 will be raised to £12 12s.

Of the Memoirs of the Western Survey, the Committee are pleased to state that the number of sets remaining is now under 20. These sets have now been raised to 25 guineas.

The questions drawn up for the Committee by the Sub-Committee appointed by the Fund, for the purpose of enquiring into the manners and customs of the various peoples and tribes in Syria are now beginning to yield results. A report on the first series of answers¹ received will be found in the July *Statement*, in which Major Conder gives the following Biblical illustrations brought out by the replies, viz. :—

1. Worship of the calf and of trees.
2. Forbidden food.
3. Rubbing children with salt.
4. Weighing the hair when cut.
5. Riddles asked at weddings.
6. Hired mourners at funerals.
7. Rending the clothes.
8. Certain proverbs mentioned in the Bible.
9. The use of amulets.
10. Crowns worn by brides.
11. "The corner of the field" left unreaped.

Quarterly Statement, 1889, p. 120.

The Rev. George E. Post, M.A., M.D., of the American College, Beyrout, who is intrusted by your Committee with the distribution of the sets of questions and collection of replies, returned to Syria after an absence of 18 months in America, and is doing all in his power to promote the object of the Fund.

The Director of the South Kensington Museum having requested the removal of the objects of antiquity belonging to this Society, owing to the increasing want of space for the exhibits, your Committee have resolved upon taking a suite of rooms suitable for offices and museum, and to have the whole collection under their own direction.

Mr. Harper's new work, "The Bible and Modern Discoveries," is now

¹ The answers were translated from the Arabic by Capt. Mantell, R.E.

in the press. It will contain several illustrations. It gives a popular account of what the recent surveys and excavations of the Society have done in throwing light upon many passages of the Bible. This work will be issued early in the autumn.

Mr. Guy le Strange's important work, "Palestine under the Moslems," is now ready for the press. It is a description of Palestine by the mediæval Arab geographers.

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.

The following papers have appeared in the *Quarterly Statements*:—

On the Flora and Fauna of Moab, Gilead, and the Hauran. By the Rev. Dr. George E. Post.

On Meteorological Observations. By Mr. James Glaisher.

On the Discovery of an immense Vaulted Cistern near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; On Crusading Ruins on Mount Scopus; On the Excavations in the Muristan; On the Excavations north of Damascus Gate. By Herr Schick.

On the Discovery of a remarkable Cave at Nazareth, with chamber having cisterns, troughs, and tombs. On other Discoveries in Galilee. By Herr Schumacher.

On Altaic Cylinders; Chinese and Hittites; Speech of Lycaonia; Comparison of Hieroglyphics; Kirjath Jearim; The Alphabet; The Hebrew Months; Professor Sayce and the Hittites; The Hittite Monument at Keller; The Tell es Salahiyeh Monument; The Hittite Hat; The Stone Zohelath; The House of the Holy Ghost; Report on the Manners and Customs; The Peasant Language of Palestine; Phœnicians; South Wall of Jerusalem, &c. By Major Conder.

On the Conduit near the Pool of Bethesda; The Middle of the World in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; The Holy Sepulchre and Dome of the Rock. By Mr. William Simpson.

On the Site of Ebenezer. By Dr. Chaplin.

On Antioch in 1051 A.D.; The Muslim Legend on the Cave of the Seven Sleepers; Inscription in the Aksa Mosque. By Mr. Guy le Strange.

On Kirjath Sepher; Nehemiah's Wall and the Royal Sepulchres; The Broad Wall; Twin Sacred Mounts at Jerusalem. By Mr. George St. Clair.

On the Wâdy Arabah and the Dead Sea. By Professor Hull.

On the Waters of Shiloah, and the Valleys and Waters of Jerusalem. By Rev. W. F. Birch.

To all these gentlemen the Committee tender their best thanks.

The following is the Balance-Sheet of the year 1888, which was published in the April *Quarterly Statement*:—

“A Handbook for Syria;” “The Giant Cities of Bashan;” and many articles in Smith’s “Dictionary of the Bible,” &c.

Mr. William Dickson was also a steady supporter and old friend of the Society.

The death of Mr. Laurence Oliphant is a severe loss to the Society. Mr. Oliphant took a deep and practical interest in the Holy Land; purchased an estate there, upon which he resided for some years, and devoted his great abilities to the study of the complicated social system and customs of the country, and to antiquarian researches. Important papers by him on Mount Carmel, the Jaulán, &c., appeared in the *Quarterly Statement* and other publications of the Fund.

We have to propose that the following gentlemen be elected members of the General Committee:—

Sir James Douglass, F.R.S.
 Sir Wm. Mackinnon, Bart.
 General Warren Walker, R.E.
 E. T. Wilson, Esq., M.D.
 Captain A. M. Mantell, R.E.
 Herr B. Khitrovo.
 Rev. C. Lloyd Engström.
 T. B. Johnston, Esq., F.R.G.S.
 Henry Ormerod, Esq.
 Surgeon-General R. F. Hutchinson, M.D.

LORD EUSTACE CECIL.—Mr. Chairman, I have listened with very great pleasure to the Report of the work accomplished during the past year; though the rate of progress is slow, it is gradual and deserving of greater support. Not many societies command greater respect than this one, for the great and standard works it has done. I travelled in Palestine twenty years ago and saw sufficient evidence to convince any one that in those great mounds and ruined sites, which had remained undisturbed for centuries, something of great interest must be contained, and I quite concur in what Mr. Morrison says, that we should select a Jewish site for excavations. I had the pleasure of knowing the late Mr. Laurence Oliphant, who was so deeply interested in all that concerned the Holy Land and the welfare of its people.

I earnestly hope that the Committee will succeed in obtaining a Firman giving permission to excavate. Something may be done in that direction by getting influential people to take the matter up and give their moral support, if not money. I do hope the Society will not relinquish its work; it began, no doubt, with very little, and it now has branches all over the kingdom, and the sympathy with its objects is widely spread. We have a great subject in hand; we have a great responsibility. You who have sat in the chair and given so much of your time for so many years, are aware of that. I have great pleasure in moving the adoption of the Report.

MR. W. H. FREELAND.—Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, I have been

asked to second the adoption of the Report, and need hardly say that I concur in the noble Lord's remarks.

I am sure that we all deeply regret the death of the late Mr. Laurence Oliphant, and feel his great loss.

With regard to the Firman and selection of a spot for excavation, I think that we may safely leave the matter in the hands of the Executive Committee, who have hitherto directed the work of the Society so successfully, as shown by the growing list of publications, to which has been added very recently the volume on the Eastern Survey, full of illustrations. I have great pleasure in seconding the Report.

The Report was adopted unanimously.

A letter from the Rev. W. F. Birch was read suggesting that excavations be made on Ophel with the view of discovering the sepulchre of David.

The Rev. Dr. BULLINGER.—Mr. Chairman, I beg to propose the re-election of the Executive Committee; the burden of the work falls upon them. We have full confidence in them as in former years, and in their wisdom in choosing the place for excavations.

Mr. BASIL WOODD SMITH.—I have great pleasure in seconding the re-election of the Executive Committee. For economy, the great amount of work and publications for the small expenditure, we are very fortunate in having such a good working Committee. I think that we ought to encourage drawing room meetings a little more. They are particularly suited for the work of such a Society as ours.

The CHAIRMAN.—I have to thank the Committee for their attendance. I agree with his Lordship in the remarks that he has made, and I feel confident the money will come in. If we can but get a Firman, the income of the Society will surely increase. When we hear of the many buildings and relics which have been removed since the Survey of Palestine was made, how thankful we ought to be that we have them all faithfully recorded in our publications.

Professor HAYTER LEWIS.—I beg to propose a vote of thanks to our worthy Chairman for the great work he has done and his constant attention as Chairman. To him we owe a great deal for his continued support of the work, and for those valuable reports in the *Quarterly Statement* on the meteorological observations. At first sight these seem dry, but when examined carefully will be found to be of the deepest interest, and the information to be derived from them invaluable.

The Rev. Dr. GINSBURG.—I have much pleasure in seconding this vote of thanks. The Chairman inspires us all with youth, from the zeal and determination that he throws into the work in order to make it a success.

The CHAIRMAN.—My Lord and Gentlemen, as in the past, I will in the future do anything in my power to make the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund a success. I have to thank you all sincerely and individually for the manner you have responded to the vote of thanks so kindly proposed by Professor Lewis and seconded by Dr. Ginsburg.

The Committee then adjourned.