

THE
PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

THE YEAR 1889.

Although no expedition for exploring or excavating has been organised during the past year, a great deal of useful work has been accomplished, and a distinct advance has been made in our knowledge respecting several very interesting topics of enquiry.

1. The clearance work at the Pool of Bethesda having been proceeded with, Herr Schick has been able to supply further important information. The discovery of a fresco on the wall of the crypt of the church over the Pool, representing an angel troubling the water, is of great value as proving conclusively that in crusading times the spot was regarded as the site of Bethesda.

2. Further portions of the ancient wall of Jerusalem have been exposed on the northern side and at the north-western corner.

3. A very large cistern has been discovered near the church of the Holy Sepulchre, apparently under the spot where the mediæval church of Santa Maria Latina stood; and outside the Damascus Gate, between the city wall and the hill in which "Jeremiah's Grotto" is situated, two ancient cisterns, one of which is believed by Herr Schick to be of Canaanite origin, have been found.

4. The remains of a church have been discovered in the street of Sitti Maryam, opposite the barracks, and close to the chapel of the Flagellation.

5. An extremely interesting subterranean rock-hewn church has been found at the village of Silwân. From a Greek inscription in the apse it appears to have been dedicated to the memory of the prophet Isaiah. Indications of another rock-hewn church have been seen and described by Mr. Schumacher near Athlît.

6. Excavations on the Dominican property north of Damascus Gate have brought to light certain remains which are believed to indicate the former existence of a large church near that discovered in this locality a few years ago. Herr Schick suggests that it may be the original church of St. Stephen. It will be remembered that the church built by the Empress Eudocia in the years 439-60, was so large that in 518 A.D. St. Sabbas and his numerous disciples assembled in it, "the cathedral church of the Resurrection being incapable of receiving so vast a multitude." It is said to have been capable of holding 10,000 people. An account by Sir Charles Wilson of the various churches of St. Stephen will be found in an

Appendix to the Pilgrim's Text Society's translation of the Abbot Daniel. In the same neighbourhood tombs with *rolling stone doors* were found, also some Greek inscriptions.

7. Excavations on property belonging to a French gentleman on the eastern slope of Zion have revealed a number of rock-hewn chambers, which appear to have been used in ancient times partly as dwellings and partly as storehouses. In describing them Herr Schick remarks that nearly all the ground covered by the city of Jerusalem is found on examination to be honeycombed with these rock-hewn chambers. It is not improbable that the Jebusites were to some extent troglodytes. In the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles mention is made of a cave at Cyprus "where the race of the Jebusites formerly dwelt."

8. On the Mount of Olives very interesting discoveries have been made, including a Christian burial place, an extensive series of "catacombs," which had been made use of by Roman soldiers of the tenth legion, a number of Roman tiles, and other antiquities of various periods.

9. In a cave at Sarfs have been found human figures sculptured on the walls, resembling the "Proto-Phœnician" rock-sculptures near Tyre, and an inscription, believed by Professor Sayce to be evidently old Phœnician. An inscription which had escaped the observation of previous travellers has been noted by Mr. Hanauer at Beit el Khûlîl.

10. From Galilee Herr Schumacher has reported the discovery of a large cave at Nazareth; ancient and elaborate rock tombs at Haifa and Shefa 'Amr; exploration of the caves of Jessâs; discovery of various inscriptions, and of the rock-hewn apse of a church alluded to above.

11. The meteorological observations made under the auspices of the Fund which extend over many years are still being carried on, and the results are being published by Mr. Glaisher in successive numbers of the *Quarterly Statement*.

NOTES AND NEWS.

The Rev. J. Fallscher, of Nâblus, has forwarded drawings of several sculptured capitals and other stones found at Sebüstieh (Samaria) by M. Ali, the Government engineer there. One of these bears a bull's head with horns, and two others have human figures. They are apparently of Christian origin.

Herr Schick reports the discovery of an obelisk at Cæsarea and sends a drawing of it, which is given at p. 23. The top of the obelisk has not been found. It is believed that this is the first obelisk ever discovered in the Holy Land.

The present number contains an account of further observations of the rock levels of the city of Jerusalem confirming the supposition that east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre there is a rock terrace surrounded, or nearly surrounded, by scarps of considerable height.