

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Annual Meeting of the General Committee was held at the office, 24, Hanover Square, W., on July 19th.

James Glaisher, Esq., F.R.S., in the chair.

Amongst those present were Sir Edmund A. H. Lechmere, Bart., M.P., Rev. C. D. Ginsburg, D.D., Rev. W. J. Stracey, Rev. A. Löwy, Rev. W. H. Rogers, D.D., Walter Besant, Esq., M.A., W. Aldis Wright, Esq., LL.D., Professor Edward Hull, F.R.S., LL.D., Professor Hayter Lewis, F.S.A., James Melrose, Esq., Basil Woodd Smith, Esq., William Simpson, Esq., &c.

The CHAIRMAN, having mentioned that letters of regret for inability to attend had been received from the Rev. Dr. Wright, Lord Rollo, D. McDonald, Esq., J. Sebag-Montefiore, Esq., F. D. Mocatta, Esq., Herbert Birch, Esq., Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, K.C.B., Professor Sayce, and others, called upon the Secretary to read the Report of the Executive Committee.

The HON. SECRETARY (Mr. Walter Besant) then read the following report:—

GENTLEMEN,

In resigning the office to which they were appointed at the last Annual Meeting of the Fund your Executive Committee have the honour to render the following account of their labours:—

The Committee have held twenty-one meetings for the transaction of business.

The chief exploring work of the year has been the continuance of the excavations at Tell el Hesi. These were resumed after the hot weather was nearly over, and carried on until December 14th, when the winter storms rendered it necessary to desist for a time.

In the early spring they were again resumed, and continued until the beginning of June.

Your Executive Committee regret to report that Mr. Bliss has been laid up with a severe attack of typhoid fever.

The results of this work have been most encouraging. In the October and April numbers of the *Quarterly Statement* the reports of Mr. Bliss were published, together with plans of the ground and drawings of pottery, and many bronze and iron weapons, flints and other implements of various kinds which had been found, as well as a plan of a "singular structure" of large size, covering about one-tenth of the area of the town.

Mr. Bliss has since reported the discovery of a "small fine stone, bearing a fine cuneiform inscription," and of several scarabs, beads and cylinders.

From the casts and squeezes sent home Professor Sayce has been able to decipher the inscription, respecting which he thus writes:—

"QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"The discovery which Mr. Bliss has just made at Tell el Hesi is by far the most important that has yet been made in Palestine. Dr. Flinders Petrie ought to be especially gratified, as it verifies, in the most striking manner, not only his theory that Tell el Hesi represents the site of Lachish, but also his conclusions as to the relative ages of the strata of which the Tell is composed.

"The cuneiform tablet discovered by Mr. Bliss is in the same handwriting as those in the Tell el Amarna collection, which were sent from the south of Palestine. The forms of the characters are the same, as are also the formulæ and the peculiarities of grammar. We have in it one of the letters which were written to the Egyptian Governor of the Amorite city of Lachish in the century before the Exodus.

"The casts and squeezes forwarded by Mr. Bliss are excellent, but until the original can be examined, several of the characters, more especially at the edges, must remain uncertain. So far as I can read the text it is as follows:—

"[To] the Governor [I] O my father, prostrate myself at thy feet. Verily thou knowest that Baya (?) and Zimrida have received thy orders (?), and Dan-Hadad says to Zimrida, "O, my father, the city of Yarami sends to me, it has given me 3 masar and 3 . . . and 3 faulchions." Let the country of the King know that I stay; and it has acted against me, but till my death I remain. As for thy commands (?) which I have received, I cease hostilities, and have despatched these [men] and Rabi-iluma. [Let the King (?)] send his [messenger (?)] to this country to [strengthen me (?)]."

"The meaning of some of the words is unfortunately doubtful, and I have marked lacunæ by brackets.

"The city of Yarami may be the Jarmuth of the Old Testament, Jarmuth being a plural, of which Yarami would be the singular. We learn from one of the letters sent by the King of Jerusalem to Egypt and discovered at Tell el Amarna, that Zimrida was the Governor of Lachish, where he was murdered by some of his own people. I have given a translation of the letter in the last volume of the new series of the "Records of the Past" (vol. v). It seems almost providential that the first cuneiform tablet discovered at Tell el Hesi should make mention of this very Zimrida.

"The smaller antiquities discovered by Mr. Bliss tell the same tale as the tablet. The Egyptian beads and scarabs belong to the age of the eighteenth dynasty, and among them is a bead bearing the name and title of "Teie, the royal wife." Teie was the wife of Amenophis III, and

the mother of Amenophis IV or Klu-n-Aten, the two kings to whom the Tell-el-Amarna correspondence was addressed

“Even more interesting to me are the Babylonian cylinders and their imitations. They testify to the long and deep influence and authority of Babylon in Western Asia, and throw light on the prehistoric art of Phœnicia and Cyprus. The cylinders of native Babylonian manufacture belong to the period B.C. 2000–1500 ; the rest are copies made in the west. One of these is of Egyptian porcelain, and must have been manufactured in Egypt, in spite of its close imitation of a Babylonian original ; others are identical with the cylinders found in the prehistoric tombs of Cyprus and Syria, and so fix the date of the latter. On one of them are two centaurs arranged heraldically, the human faces being shaped like those of birds. European archæologists will be interested in learning that among the minor objects are two amber beads.”

As it is evident that the excavations have now reached a level where important objects may be discovered, and perhaps the “library” of cuneiform writings predicted by Professor Sayce be brought to light, measures have been taken by your Committee to prevent any searching of the ruins by unauthorised persons during the period when the work is necessarily suspended. It is hoped that the excavations will be renewed in October.

Herr Schick has continued his useful labours in and around Jerusalem, examining and noting anything of importance brought to light in the various building operations which have been carried on, or which have been discovered through excavations made for the purpose.

One of the most interesting of these is a series of rock chambers, &c., in the hill now known as “Nicophorieh,” west of Jerusalem, which Mr. Schick is disposed to regard as the long-sought-for “Monuments of Herod.” Accurate plans and sections of the spot were published in the *Quarterly Statement* of April last, together with drawings of architectural ornamentations and photographs of two sarcophagi found in the Tomb Chambers.

Much attention having been drawn to a tomb, believed by the late General Gordon to be the tomb of our Lord, situate at the foot of the hill over Jeremiah’s Grotto, which has recently come to be called the “Skull Hill,” Mr. Schick was requested by your Committee to examine and report upon the same, and his account of it, with plans and section, were published in the April *Quarterly Statement*.

The ancient pool in the upper part of the Kidron Valley, which was partially examined many years ago by Sir Charles Wilson, has been more fully explored by Herr Schick, and several shafts sunk with a view to ascertaining its extent and boundaries, and whether any indications of its water having been conveyed into the city now remain.

Amongst the labours of Mr. Schick on behalf of the Fund may also be mentioned his examination of certain ancient remains at the north-west corner of the City of Jerusalem, which he thinks may show that in

remote times the city extended to that point; and a careful examination of the buildings outside the "Double Gate," which resulted in the discovery of some ancient masonry.

The meteorological observations are being carefully continued at Jerusalem and Tiberias, and Mr. Glaisher, our Chairman, has bestowed much time and care in preparing the results for publication, and drawing up a comparison between them and the results of similar observations in England.

Mr. G. Robinson Lees, of Jerusalem, has collected a considerable number of ancient pottery lamps, and one or two pottery masks, accounts of which he has kindly sent to the Fund.

Your Executive Committee are able to report that the arrangement of the Museum has been completed, and that the numerous objects of interest in possession of the Fund can now be seen at the office.

They have to lament the loss by death during the last twelve months of the following members of the General Committee:—His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, Sir John Coode, Oliver Heywood, Esq., John Murray, Esq., the Rev. Henry Allon, D.D., and of the Rev. Greville J. Chester, who was for many years a valued friend and supporter of the Fund, and who rendered important assistance in arranging the Museum.

The death is announced in the "Times" of to-day of Mr. John MacGregor—Rob Roy—who was one of the oldest members of the society. He joined the Executive Committee in June, 1866, exactly one year after the foundation of the Society, and continued on the Committee until about three years ago, when his failing health obliged him to retire. No one ever took a keener interest in the Society's work than John MacGregor.

His book, "The Rob Roy on the Jordan," has passed through many editions, and is still a popular work.

They have also to regret the loss by death of many of their old subscribers who helped on the work of the Fund from its commencement.

Since the date of the last Annual Meeting 148 new subscribers have been added to the list.

With the view of rendering the work of the Fund better known your Executive Committee resolved to arrange for the delivery of a series of lectures respecting it during the London season. The large room of the Royal Medical Society, a few doors from the office of the Fund, was hired for the purpose, and lectures were delivered, the first by Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, K.C.B., the President, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, presiding, the others by Major Conder, D.C.L., the Rev. Canon Tristram, LL.D., Walter Besant, Esq., M.A., the Rev. W. Wright, D.D., W. M. Flinders Petrie, Esq., D.C.L., and the Rev. Canon Dalton, C.M.G. Your Executive Committee desire to tender their cordial thanks to these gentlemen for the valuable service they have thus rendered to the Fund.

Amongst the papers published in the *Quarterly Statement* since the last Annual Meeting may be mentioned:—

By Dr. Flinders Petrie—

“Notes on Chisel Marks at Jerusalem”; “Tomb Cutters’ Cubits at Jerusalem”; “Note on the Results at Tell el Hesy.”

By Baurath Schick—

“Foundation of present City Wall”; “Remains of Old Wall inside City”; “Ancient Conduit from North-west of Jerusalem”; “Old Pool in Upper Kidron Valley”; “Remarkable Rock-cut Tomb in Wady-el-Jôz”; “Discoveries near the North-west Corner of the City”; “The Buildings South of the Double Gate”; “Chisel Marks at the Cotton Grotto”; “Recent Discoveries at Nicophorieh”; “Gordon’s Tomb”; &c.

By F. J. Bliss, B.A.—

Two “Reports of the Excavations at Tell el Hesy” (Lachish); “Excavating from its Picturesque Side”; “The Maronites”; &c.

By Professor T. Hayter Lewis—

“Additional Note on St. Stephen’s Church.”

By G. Robinson Lees—

“Notes on Potters’ Marks, &c.”; “On Lamps, &c.”

By Rev. J. E. Hanauer—

“Was there a Street of Columns in Jerusalem”; “On the Site of Calvary”; &c.

By Rev. G. E. Post, M.D., M.A.—

“Second Journey to Palmyra.”

By James Glaisher, Esq., F.R.S.—

“On the Monthly and Annual Mean Temperature of the Air in Palestine and England in the ten years ending 1889”; “On the Fall of Rain, the Amount of Cloud, and Frequency of Cloudless Skies at Sarona in the ten years ending 1889”; “On the Direction of the Wind at Sarona in the ten years 1880 to 1889.”

By Professor West, M.A.—

“Barometrical Determination of Heights in Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon, and on Hermon.”

By Professors Neubauer and Clermont-Ganneau—

“The Hebrew Phœnician Inscription from Tell el Hesy.”

By M. Lortet—

“Researches on the Pathogenic Microbes of the Mud of the Dead Sea.”

By Major Conder, D.C.L., LL.D., R.E.—

“The Lachish Text”; “The Lachish Ruins”; “The Sinaitic Inscriptions”; “Alosa Elishah, Translation of a Phœnician Inscription”; “Recent Hittite Discoveries”; &c.

By the Rev. H. G. Tomkins—

“Dinhabah; a New Identification.”

By the Rev. W. F. Birch—

“Sennacherib’s Catastrophe at Nob.”

Your Executive Committee desire again to record their special thanks to the Honorary Secretaries for their efforts so cheerfully and readily given on behalf of the Society’s work.

It is proposed that the following gentlemen be invited to become members of the General Committee :—

Lord Cranbrook.
Sir W. Q. Ewart, Bart.
John Pollard, Esq.

The following is the Balance Sheet for the year ending 1891, which was published in the April *Quarterly Statement* :—

TREASURER'S STATEMENT.

It will be seen that the total expenditure on exploration was £850 18s. 6d. The very heavy sums paid for printing, binding, maps, lithographs, illustrations, photographs, &c., for the most part represent books and maps published by and sold by the Fund, and the *Quarterly Statement* distributed among the subscribers gratuitously.

In the statement of assets and liabilities, it will be seen that a large amount of these publications, for nearly all of which there is a steady demand, remains on hand.

Special expenses were incurred during the year in consequence of the offices of the Fund being removed to 24, Hanover Square. During the quarter in which this took place rent had to be paid for both the old and present offices.

Outstanding liabilities to the amount of £418 were paid off during the year.

ASSETS.			LIABILITIES.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Balance in Bank.. ..	314	6 3	Printing, Lithographing,		
Stock of Books, Maps,			Rent, and Current Ex-		
Photos, &c., on hand..	1,500	0 0	penses	671	0 10
Surveying Instruments..	100	0 0	Excavations.		
Show Cases, Furniture					
and Fittings	100	0 0			
In addition to the above					
there is the valuable					
and unique collection of					
antiques, models, &c.					

W. MORRISON,
Treasurer.

The CHAIRMAN.—Gentlemen, I think I may remark that this report implies progress, decided progress. It indicates that most important find of the tablet, which holds out the hope of more important finds yet to come. The tablet is the most important discovery that we have made for a long time. I suppose the inscription on it is more ancient than the Moabite stone. I will ask whether any gentleman has any remark to make upon the report?

Professor LÖWY.—I beg to move that the report be received and adopted.

Professor HULL.—I have great pleasure, sir, in seconding the resolution that this exceedingly interesting report be received and adopted. I am sorry to say I have not had many opportunities of attending the meetings of the General Committee up to this time, I believe only one, in fact, since 1884, but I trust to be a better attendant in the future. I quite concur in what you said, that this report is of extreme interest, particularly from the finding of this very ancient tablet and inscription; and it shows that if anyone is bold enough to venture to suggest that

Palestine has already yielded up all its treasures to the antiquary and historian, he is very much mistaken indeed. I concur with you also in supposing that what we have found is a foretaste of what may be found by further excavation.

The CHAIRMAN.—I should like to remark with respect to Professor Hull's statement that we have not exhausted Palestine, that I think those who heard Mr. Besant speak of the 27 years' progress will rather think we are only upon the threshold of these discoveries. He, in his lecture, said none in that room would live long enough to see all the future discoveries; still, we hope some of us will live to know some of them.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

Professor LÖWY.—I have read many of the *Quarterly Statements*, as everyone else has who is interested in the Palestine Exploration Fund, and I have often regretted that there is no general index given to them. I do not speak in any spirit of fault finding. I believe we have all to be extremely grateful for the marvellous work which has been accomplished, but it would be of immense advantage to readers who are much occupied if an index were given to the series of *Statements* which have been published, either complete or devoted to the first ten volumes, and then another to the next ten, and so on. I am a great advocate of having in literary and historical works, and other works of research, a subject-index which guides me at once, without much loss of time, to what I am seeking, and it is not by a desire to facilitate laziness, but rather to help research that I beg leave on this occasion to propose for the consideration of the Executive Committee, whether it would not be possible to publish an index so as to help the students.

Mr. BESANT.—There is a general index to the *Quarterly Statements* up to 1881, and the desirability of bringing it up to the present date, has already been brought before the Executive Committee. Each number, however, has a table of contents, and an index is appended to each annual volume.

The CHAIRMAN.—No doubt the subject will be taken into consideration by the Executive Committee, and we thank Professor Löwy for bringing it forward.

And now, gentlemen, as to the series of lectures that we have had I think they have been unique. We hope to have them published about October. I am sure the lecturers deserve our thanks; the Executive Committee have mentioned this in the report which you have adopted, but I should like to move that the best thanks of this meeting be given to them for their kindness. Perhaps some gentleman who attended the lectures will second that.

Sir EDMUND LECHMERE.—I shall be very glad, having had the honour of presiding at one of the lectures, to second such a resolution as you have indicated. The one that I attended was of immense interest, by Dr. Tristram, and I am sure everybody must have been delighted. I

have great pleasure, therefore, in seconding a very hearty vote of thanks to those gentlemen.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN.—The next vote of thanks I should like to move is to our Honorary Secretary. No one but myself knows how deeply indebted we are to him. He is a busy man, and yet I do not think I have been more than once or twice at any of the meetings when he has been absent ; and when he is present, I feel I am on safer ground than when he is absent. I will say no more. If I were to speak ever so long it would only be in his praise, and to express my own indebtedness to him and yours also, and I hope and trust the interest that he has in Palestine will never cease (hear, hear). I beg to move that the best thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. Besant.

The resolution was submitted to the meeting, and carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN.—There is Herr Baurath Schick, more than 70 years of age, but age seems to exercise no bad influence on him ; he has given us valuable information, and that information is specially valuable because we can place confidence in him and everything that comes from him.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN.—Then, gentlemen, we are indebted to Mr. Bliss for continuing Dr. Petrie's work. As has been mentioned, he had been with Dr. Petrie for some time, and had learnt some of his ways. The native workmen work well with him. He seems to understand them, and they understand him. It is to his exertions that we are indebted for this tablet. Unfortunately, his sister had to write to us to say that he was laid up with a severe attack of fever, and we have been in great anxiety about him. But a letter from his brother received this morning says : "My dear brother desires me to send you a list of the stores he will require for next time. He is convalescent, although very unwell, and cannot write yet." Mr. Bliss is determined to go on with the work, and adds that he hopes to be on the spot about September 13th. If that be the case, we may look forward to some very interesting results. Everyone will have sympathy with him in his illness ; everyone will hope it may be of short duration, and that he will be able to go on in the autumn with energy in what he has begun. I ask your thanks for Mr. Bliss, for the labours he has bestowed on the work.

The vote was unanimously accorded.

The CHAIRMAN.—There are various correspondents from various localities. We cannot deal with each individually, but I should like a note upon the minutes that we are indebted to them, and thank them for the information sent to us from time to time.

Agreed to unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN.—And now I come to Mr. Armstrong, our Assistant-Secretary. Of course I know a great deal about his work and the manner in which that work is performed. It is faithfully performed (hear, hear), and having said that I will say no more, but merely ask you to give your thanks to Mr. Armstrong for the faithful and good manner in which he performs his duties.

This resolution was adopted unanimously.

Professor Löwy.—Mr. Chairman, will you permit me to put a question before you dissolve this meeting? You were kind enough to accept the hint which I gave last year with regard to the lectures, and I believe these lectures have been acceptable, not only to those who attended, but also to many who have heard of them, and I believe that the Society will profit by the efforts which have been made by the lecturers. May I respectfully inquire whether it is the intention of the Executive Committee to renew those lectures, or have lectures in the coming year. I put this merely as a question, not as a suggestion.

The CHAIRMAN.—The Committee have not yet taken that into consideration. Everything will depend upon circumstances. I can give no pledge with reference to the question, for unless we see that we can give lectures with advantage we shall not give them. I may say that the lectures just cleared themselves. We have a few pounds in hand after all the expenses, without counting many subscriptions and donations sent up in consequence of the lectures.

Now, gentlemen, I think we have got to the end of this meeting, and I cannot close it without the hope that we may find those tablets which have been referred to by Mr. Sayce, who, as also Major Conder, 15 years ago told us that Tell el Hesi would prove to be Lachish, and if we do, everybody will look back with pleasure upon the time and support they have given to the Palestine Exploration Fund. I am certain that good work will yet be done, and I do hope, in spite of our Honorary Secretary deferring many of the discoveries until we are all gone, that we shall have the pleasure of seeing many of them. I can say no more than to wish that you all will be with me again at our next Annual Meeting, and that it will be as pleasing to us as this is. Thank you for your attendance. (Cheers).

Dr. GINSBURG.—I wish to propose, before we separate, a vote of thanks to our Chairman. Whatever has been done by us as an Executive Committee has generally been inspired by him. His heartiness and his zeal in the work are really beyond description.

I move that a hearty vote of thanks be given to our Chairman.

The resolution was seconded by Dr. ALDIS WRIGHT and carried by acclamation.

The Executive Committee having been re-elected the meeting terminated.
