

THE
PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

NOTES AND NEWS.

SINCE sending his report of the excavations at Gezer, Mr. Macalister writes that a second burial cave has been found which, if not so extensive or instructive as the first, is in some respects almost as interesting:—

“It is a bell-shaped excavation, about 14 feet in diameter at the bottom, with a round hole at the top. It belonged originally to one of the earlier settlements, but was adapted as a cistern by the inhabitants of the fourth (the latest) city, a masonry shaft having been driven through the intervening débris. A curious conduit of broken potsherds was made to lead water to its mouth. Concluding that it was simply a fourth-city cistern, I ordered it to be cleared out, in the hope of finding objects accidentally dropped by water-drawers: this has led to the discovery of its original purpose, made to-day (August 28). I write these preliminary paragraphs at the earliest opportunity, in order to catch a mail, hoping to be in time for the October *Quarterly Statement*.

“Six skeletons have been recovered. That they were not victims of drowning accidents, but were buried, is shown by the uniformity with which five of them had been laid in a contracted position (already shown to be characteristic by the first burial cave), with stones placed over them: large quantities of charcoal were mingled with the stones. Over these was a thick stratum of earth, solidified by the action of the water with which the cave was subsequently filled.

“The deposits found in the stratum containing the skeletons are few in number: they consist of a single blue paste bead; one food vessel empty and broken; a very fine stone fire-tray on

three feet, inverted over a few sheep-bones—no doubt the survival of a food deposit left for the benefit of the dead; and a magnificent bronze-socketed spearhead. There were many fragments of pottery found, probably the remains of broken pitchers dating from the eastern period, and in no way connected with the interments.

“The five skeletons above mentioned are all those of adult males. The sensational interest of the cave (if I may so describe it) centres in the sixth skeleton. This is that of a young girl, aged about 14. The upper half of the body alone was found, the lower half, from the end of the ribs downwards, being entirely missing: it is quite evident that the body was sawn asunder before being deposited. There is nothing in the remains to show whether we have the result of a *post-mortem* mutilation or of a ghastly murder, but the presumptive evidence of child-sacrifice already found in connexion with the first burial cave, and the fact that the skeleton thus dismembered is that of the only female and the only child found in this second cave, seem to indicate that the second is the true explanation. It is interesting to notice that near the mouth of this cave, in one of the lower strata, the decapitated heads of two girls of about the same age as this unfortunate victim were found.

“The excavation of the cave is not yet quite finished, and it is possible that further light may be forthcoming.”

In a letter dated September 10th, Mr. Macalister writes further that he has been excavating near the “standing stones” which are marked on Plate I which accompanies his report. The excavation has exposed a magnificent megalithic structure. Three imposing monoliths, about 14 feet high, standing on a platform of stones, have been uncovered, with smaller monoliths between. Underneath an adjoining pavement were jars containing infants’ bones (some charred), indicating that we have to do with a temple at which human sacrifices were practised. Mr. Macalister adds: “The whole makes one of the most imposing rude stone monuments I have ever seen The stones as exposed already are fully three times the size of the largest of the monoliths in the Tell es-Sâfi ‘high place.’” “This,” as a correspondent observes, “is a very interesting evidence of that early practice of human sacrifice which was so strongly denounced and held up to the abhorrence of the people by the prophets of Israel. It was this

horrible form of heathen worship which led Abraham to recognise that what he had been brought up to believe was a way to God's favour, was not and could not be according to the will of God. The questions of the innocent child, walking at his side to the place of sacrifice, awakened in Abraham's heart the natural conscience and the truer knowledge of the God whom he desired to serve. These jars contain the bones of little ones whose innocent voices appealed in vain to those whose hearts had become, through a terrible fanaticism, as stony as the monoliths themselves."

Since Mr. Macalister studied the rock-cut tombs in Wâdy er-Rabâbi several changes have taken place there. No. 10 has been cleared out by someone down to the rock-floor, and his theory that this was not a tomb, but a dwelling or guard-chamber, has been confirmed (*Quarterly Statement*, 1900, p. 244). One of the "entrances" shown in his plan (that to the south-west) is a door—the other two are certainly windows. No. 47 has been cleaned, and rendered more accessible than formerly. Just north of it another tomb has been opened. The frieze over No. 50 (*Quarterly Statement*, 1901, p. 154) has disappeared, and a pretentious ecclesiastical front built in its place: the frescoes inside this tomb have all been either repainted or whitewashed. A large system of chambers, of whose existence he had been unaware, have been broken into close to No. 56. He has come to the conclusion that Tobler's 27, which he could not identify, is really his No. 40, though the position Tobler gives for it, and his "scheme" of the chambers, are not quite correct.

Mr. Macalister hopes to send fuller accounts of these changes, with plans, when the Gezer excavation closes for the winter rains.

Dr. G. Schumacher writes from Haifa on August 6th:—
 "Professor Sellin's excavations at Taanach were closed on July 11th, after five months' work, during which interesting discoveries were made of Jewish and Canaanite fortresses to the east, north, and west of Tell Ta'annuk. On the last day (July 10th) a most interesting Canaanite altar was found, the corners of which are ornamented with winged animals having human heads. On the top of the altar, which is made of pottery, are the two biblical

(ram's) horns, and a cup for sacrifices. The altar is square in shape, 90 cm. high and 45 cm. square at the bottom. On the front is the tree of life with two animals (deer) feeding on it, and on one side, in *bas-relief*, the symbolic man endeavouring to strangle a snake. The work is well executed, and the altar, which has been sent to the Constantinople Museum, is unique."

In the *American Journal of Theology*, published in Chicago, will be found a criticism of Professor Mommert's last work, "Golgotha und das Heilige Grab zu Jerusalem," 1900, by Dr. Selah Merrill, U.S. Consul at Jerusalem. The writer's long residence in the Holy City, and knowledge of all that has been written on the subject, gives special value to his opinion, which is adverse to the authenticity of the traditional sites advocated by Professor Mommert.

On p. 302, line 5 from bottom (*Quarterly Statement*, 1902), the dimension 66 feet refers to a tower and not to the city wall. The passage should read, "the remains of a tower measuring 66 feet from external face to external face."

The Museum and Library of the Palestine Exploration Fund at Jerusalem have been removed from the room opposite to the Tower of David to the Bishop's Buildings, near the Tombs of the Kings, where the use of a room has been kindly permitted by the Rev. Dr. Blyth, Bishop in Jerusalem and the East. The Museum is open daily, except Sundays, and the Honorary Secretary, Dr. D'Erf Wheeler, will give all information necessary.

The "Flora of Syria, Palestine, and Sinai," by the Rev. George E. Post, M.D., Beirût, Syria, containing descriptions of all the Phaenogams and Acrogens of the region, and illustrated by 441 woodcuts, may be had at the office of the Fund, price 21s.

In order to make up complete sets of the "Quarterly Statement," the Committee will be very glad to receive any of the back numbers.

The income of the Society from June 24th to September 20th, 1902, was—from Annual Subscriptions and Donations, including

Local Societies, £203 14s. 4d.; from Lectures, nil; from sales of publications, &c., £58 17s. 2d.; an advance of £300; total £562 11s. 6d. The expenditure during the same period was £575 10s. 11d. On September 22nd the balance in the Bank was £279 3s. 8d.

Subscribers are informed that the Committee have decided henceforth to discontinue the publication of the Lists of Subscriptions at the end of each *Quarterly Statement*. Instead of the Quarterly Lists a complete List of Subscriptions and Donations will be published separately with the Annual Report and Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of each year.

Subscribers in U.S.A. to the work of the Fund will please note that they can procure copies of any of the publications from the Rev. Professor Theo. F. Wright, Honorary General Secretary to the Fund, 42 Quincy Street, Cambridge, Mass.

The Committee will be glad to communicate with ladies and gentlemen willing to help the Fund as Honorary Secretaries. Professor Lucien Gautier has kindly consented to act for Geneva, and Colonel E. H. Paske for Bournemouth and Parkstone.

The price of a complete set of the translations published by the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, in 13 volumes, with general index, bound in cloth, is £10 10s. A catalogue describing the contents of each volume can be had on application to the Secretary, 38 Conduit Street.

The Museum at the office of the Fund, 38 Conduit Street (a few doors from Bond Street), is open to visitors every week-day from 10 o'clock till 5, except Saturdays, when it is closed at 2 p.m.

It may be well to mention that plans and photographs alluded to in the reports from Jerusalem and elsewhere cannot all be published, but all are preserved in the office of the Fund, where they may be seen by subscribers.

Photographs of the late Dr. Schick's models (1) of the Temple of Solomon, (2) of the Herodian Temple, (3) of the Haram Area during the Christian occupation of Jerusalem, and (4) of the Haram Area as it is at present, have been received at the office of the Fund. Sets of these four photographs, with an explanation by Dr. Schick, can be purchased by applying to the Secretary, 38 Conduit Street, W.

Branch Associations of the Bible Society, all Sunday Schools within 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 Committee will be glad to receive donations of Books to the Library of the Fund, which already contains many works of great value relating to Palestine and other Bible Lands. A catalogue of Books in the Library will be found in the July *Quarterly Statement*, 1893.

For list of authorised lecturers and their subjects, write to the Secretary.

FORM OF BEQUEST TO THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

I give to the Palestine Exploration Fund, London, the sum of _____ to be applied towards the General Work of the Fund; and I direct that the said sum be paid, free of Legacy Duty, and that the Receipt of the Treasurer of the Palestine Exploration Fund shall be a sufficient discharge to my Executors.

Signature _____

Witnesses { _____

NOTE.—*Three Witnesses are necessary in the United States of America; Two suffice in Great Britain.*

Whilst desiring to give 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.