

MEMOIR OF COLONEL C. R. CONDER, R.E., LL.D.

SUBSCRIBERS to the Palestine Exploration Fund will have heard with great regret of the death of Colonel Conder on February 16th; to all his name was a household word; to many he was a personal friend. There was no one who had done more by his work in Palestine, and by his writings on the history and geography of the country, to increase our knowledge of the Holy Land, and to make the Bible a living book to its readers.

The son of the late F. R. Conder, Esq., M.I.C.E., Claude Reignier Conder was born on December 29th, 1848, and was educated at home and at University College, London. After passing with credit through the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, he was gazetted as lieutenant in the Royal Engineers on January 8th, 1870, and then went through the usual two years' course of instruction for young officers at the School of Military Engineering, Chatham. At the conclusion of the course, under ordinary circumstances, he would have been sent to a station for corps duties; but Conder was not an ordinary man, and had already attracted attention by his skill in surveying and draughtsmanship and his knowledge of archaeology; qualifications which formed the basis of his future eminent career.

In 1871, the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund had commenced the Survey of Palestine, and had given the charge of the survey party to Captain Stewart, R.E., with Sergeants Black and Armstrong as his assistants. But, unfortunately, in December, 1871, Captain Stewart fell ill and was invalided home, and it became necessary to appoint another officer to succeed him. After careful consideration, the Committee decided to apply to the War Office for the services of Lieutenant Conder, although so young an officer, and, as some might have thought, without sufficient experience; but the result fully justified their selection.

In June, 1872, Conder embarked for Palestine, and, in the following month, took charge of the survey party at Nâblus, where he found that considerable progress had already been made by Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake and the non-commissioned officers.

In June, 1874, Mr. Drake was attacked by fever and died, and his place was taken by Lieutenant Kitchener, R.E. (now Viscount Kitchener of Khartum). The survey proceeded steadily until July, 1875, by which time the greater part of the work had been completed, when the party was attacked by the inhabitants of Safed, who endeavoured to murder them. Conder and Kitchener, with others of the party, were seriously injured, and the survey had to be temporarily stopped. Conder remained in Palestine until the criminals had been tried and punished by the Turkish authorities, and then returned to England, bringing the maps and the information respecting the country which had been collected, and which he immediately began to prepare for publication: a heavy task, which occupied him until April, 1878. In 1877, Lieutenant Kitchener completed the north part of the survey which had been left unfinished at the time of the Safed attack, and the whole of the results was published by the Palestine Exploration Fund, the map being printed by the Ordnance Survey on the scale of one inch to the mile.

The map and the volumes of memoirs which accompanied it afford to students of the Holy Land a mass of information respecting the history and geography of the country, such as was never produced before or since, and the work was well summed up by the late Sir Walter Besant in the following words:—

“It may be fairly claimed for the *Survey of Western Palestine* that nothing has ever been done for the illustration and right understanding of the historical portions of the Old and New Testament, since the translation into the vulgar tongue, which may be compared with this great work. The officer (*i.e.*, Colonel Conder) whose name is especially associated with these maps and memoirs has made himself a name which will last as long as there are found men and women to read and study the sacred books.”

After the completion of his work with the Palestine Exploration Fund, Conder returned to regimental duty, and was stationed in Scotland from 1878 to 1881, during which time he was employed in the construction of new fortifications on the Firth of Forth. But it was not long before Palestine called again for his services, as he was requested by the Committee of the Fund to take in hand the survey of the country east of the Jordan. On this occasion, Lieutenant Mantell, R.E., and the same non-commissioned officers as before were his assistants. It is somewhat strange that one of the latter, Sergeant Armstrong, who served the Society faithfully

for over thirty-eight years, and whose memoir appears in the present number, should have died so nearly at the same time as his former chief.

The survey of Eastern Palestine proved to be attended with greater difficulty than that of the country west of Jordan. Political relations between England and Turkey were strained on account of affairs in Egypt, and Conder found that the Turkish authorities refused to acknowledge the old permit as giving leave to map the eastern territory. But, notwithstanding this, Conder, who acted with great discretion, managed to survey about 500 square miles of country and to collect a quantity of valuable information before he was obliged to give up the attempt and return to Jerusalem.

Here an interesting duty awaited him. The Royal Princes, Albert Victor and George of Wales, accompanied by the Rev. Canon Dalton, were about to make a tour of the Holy Land, and Conder, who had been promoted captain in January, 1882, was requested to accompany the Royal party as cicerone. No better guide could have been chosen, as Conder was thoroughly acquainted with the country from Dan to Beersheba. The Princes first visited the Haram at Hebron, containing the burial-places of the Patriarchs, which, though usually closed to Europeans, was shown by special order of the Sultan; and then, after visiting Jericho and the Dead Sea, travelled northwards to Damascus and Beirut. An interesting account of their tour, written by Captain Conder, was published in the *Quarterly Statement* for October, 1882.

On the outbreak of the Egyptian war of 1882, Conder was selected for duty with the Intelligence Department of Lord Wolseley's force, and, embarking on August 5th, arrived at Ismailiya on August 21st, where his perfect knowledge of Arabic and of Eastern people proved most useful. The staff of the Department went on at once to Kassassin and were camped with the advance guard under Sir Gerald Graham. Conder was present at the battles of Kassassin and Tel el-Kebir, and took part in the pursuit of the Egyptians to Zagazig. Shortly after his arrival in Cairo he was taken ill with typhoid fever, and had to return to England. After six months' leave he resumed his work with the Palestine Exploration Fund, and prepared for publication the map of the country east of Jordan, and the volume of memoirs to accompany it.

These were completed by the end of 1883, and Conder was then ordered to Chatham for regimental duty, where he remained until

November, 1884, when he proceeded to South Africa with General Sir Charles Warren on the Bechuanaland expedition. There he had much work to do in connection with surveys of the country, and acted as Commissioner on the Transvaal border. His services were honourably mentioned in Sir Charles Warren's reports.

After the conclusion of this expedition, Conder returned to Chatham, and, in 1887, was appointed to the Ordnance Survey at Southampton where he remained until 1894, when he was sent to Ireland for employment on the fortifications of Berehaven, and, being promoted to lieutenant-colonel in the following year, was selected for the appointment of Commanding Royal Engineer at Weymouth. In 1899 he became brevet colonel, and, in 1900, was again employed on the Ordnance Survey in Ireland. He retired from the Royal Engineers in 1904.

Although his actual work in Palestine came to an end in 1882, Colonel Conder never ceased to study the geography, history, and archaeology of the country, and was the author of many books dealing with these subjects. Besides the Memoirs written in connection with the Surveys of Palestine, already alluded to, the following works by him were published by the Palestine Exploration Fund at the dates named, and, of some of them, new editions have since been issued:—*Tent Work in Palestine*, 1878; *Judas Maccabaeus*, 1879; *Heth and Moab*, 1883; *Syrian Stone Lore*, 1886; *The Tell Amarna Tablets*, 1893; *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 1897.

Books by Colonel Conder, printed and issued by other publishers, included: *Handbook to the Bible*, 1879; *Primer of Bible Geography*, 1883; *Altaic Hieroglyphs*, 1887; *Palestine*, 1891; *The Bible and the East*, 1896; *The Hittites and their Language*, 1898; *The Hebrew Tragedy*, 1900; *The First Bible*, 1902; *Critics and the Law*, 1907; *The Rise of Man*, 1908; *The City of Jerusalem*, 1909. Colonel Conder was a constant contributor to the *Quarterly Statement* of the Fund from 1872 up to January of the present year, and his reports and other papers published therein afford a fund of information to all students of the Holy Land and of the Bible, who owe him a debt of gratitude for the light that he has thrown on many important questions.

Colonel Conder was married in 1877 to Myra, daughter of the late Lieutenant-General E. A. Foord, Royal (Madras) Engineers, who survives him. He has left one son and one daughter.

C. M. W.