



M. LE PROFESSEUR CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

## THE LATE M. CHARLES CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

It is with very great regret that the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund heard of the death of their faithful old friend and helper, M. Charles Clermont-Ganneau, Membre de l'Institut and Professor at the Collège de France.

Some account of this distinguished scholar has already been given in *The Times* of March 29th, and by Dr. Cowley in the April issue of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, of which he was an honorary member. To Dr. Cowley we are indebted for the photograph which we are able to reproduce.

A fuller notice by one of his students (Mme. D. le Lasseur) appeared in the *Journal des Débats* for March 14th. To readers of the *Q.S.*, a further account may be acceptable, as his association with the Fund dates from very shortly of the actual inauguration of our Society.

M. Clermont-Ganneau was born in 1846—the birth-year of three great Orientalists: one of whom we hope may long be spared yet—Prof. Sayce; the others being Robertson Smith and Driver. He early distinguished himself in Oriental Studies under Renan, and in 1867 entered the Consulate at Jerusalem. Almost at once he became famous for the part he played in recovering the stele of Mesha, or “Moabite Stone,” still the most valuable ancient monument bearing directly upon the Old Testament. His account of the circumstances, published in *The Times* of March 22nd, 1870 (afterwards reprinted in the *Q.S.*), was his first introduction to English readers.

In the following year he discovered one of the tablets set up in Herod's temple at Jerusalem, forbidding strangers to pass the sacred enclosure; it is still, to use his original words, the most ancient and the most interesting Greek inscription Jerusalem has yet produced.

In the *Q.S.*, 1871, p. 160, it was stated that steps were being taken by the Fund to obtain the assistance of M. Clermont-Ganneau. “M. Ganneau has already expressed his willingness to assist us in our work, and is a contributor to our *Q.S.* His assistance will be of the greatest value, since he has become intimately acquainted with the topography of Jerusalem by a long residence there, and has considerable knowledge of the mode of dealing with the people.”

Two years later a definite step was taken, and in the report of the Annual General Meeting of 1873 (*Q.S.*, July, p. 119 sq.), it was announced that: "A very important list of probable sites awaiting identification has been laid before the Committee by M. Clermont-Ganneau. M. Ganneau is most anxious to follow up his researches in Palestine, and the great importance of his suggestions has led the Committee to arrange with him to go out again in October in their service, provided that the necessary funds are forthcoming, and that the consent of his Government is obtained, which they trust may be the case."

Clermont-Ganneau's first letter and report (dated Ramleh, November 6th, 1873) was printed in the *Q.S.* of 1874, Jan. ; and in 1875 he was made a member of the General Committee. The *entente cordiale*, lasting practically half a century, was never broken, and a steady flow of reports, discoveries and critical notes formed one of the most distinctive features of the *Q.S.* One has only to glance at the index volumes to see his industry and versatility. Discovery after discovery stands to his credit.

Of special interest was the identification of the ancient city of Gezer, based upon a study of Arab accounts of Palestinian geography and history, sources which were then too much neglected. His conclusions were triumphantly confirmed a little later when he actually found a bilingual inscription in Hebrew and Greek marking the boundary. The discovery of Gezer (in 1873), then justly regarded as "an event in Biblical researches," led ultimately to the excavations conducted for the Palestine Exploration Fund by Prof. R. A. S. Macalister (1902-9), remarkable, as is universally recognised, for their many substantial contributions to Biblical and Palestinian studies.

When the Shaphira collection of what Clermont-Ganneau used to refer to as the "Moabite crockery" engaged the archaeological world, he was among the first to recognise them as forgeries. Nor did the Shaphira "Biblical Manuscripts" fare better at his hands, and his detailed letter in *The Times* of August 21st, 1883, was a characteristic illustration of his brilliant methods of testing archaeological "finds." He followed up his letter by a long article, also in *The Times*, on "Genuine and False Inscriptions in Palestine." Both are reprinted in the Fund's *Q.S.*, and are still extremely interesting and informing in view of the perennial activities of oriental forgers of antiquities.

But from time to time "some consoling genuine discovery" comes to hand, and in these words he reported to *The Times* (December 29th, 1883) the discovery by M. Pognon of two inscriptions of Nebuchadrezzar from the Lebanons. Later, he took advantage of a stay in this country to write a description of "Antiquities of Palestine in London"; it appeared in *The Times* (both also reprinted in the *Q.S.*), and drew attention to the valuable nucleus then already in existence.

He appeared at a time when Palestinian archaeology was in the making and needed a man with his *flair*. It is no exaggeration to say that he left his stamp upon the field which he made his own, and it is pleasing to reflect that at the next stage, the stage of scientific excavation, it is his own countrymen of the Dominican School at Jerusalem that gave new shape and direction to the intricate studies which he himself had so brilliantly stimulated.

In the *Q.S.*, in letters to *The Times*, *The Athenaeum*, etc., as also in his works published in France, Clermont-Ganneau was remarkable for facility and brilliance and range of learning. His knowledge of the literary sources bearing upon Palestine was probably unique, and there was hardly a subject in Palestinian antiquities which he could not illuminate. Again and again his apparently hazardous conclusions would prove to be correct, or at least put other scholars on the right track.

Sincerely admired by all who knew him, if only by correspondence, and putting others (the present writer included) in his debt by his kindness of heart, he died unexpectedly on Feb. 16th, one of the few survivors of the band of enthusiastic workers who helped to give the pioneer society of Palestine excavation that pre-eminence which it is the task of our contemporaries to maintain, for "there remaineth yet much land to be possessed."

S. A. C.