Centenary Review

OF THE

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL.

From 1784 to 1883.

Part I.

HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY.

Introduction — Foundation of the Society — Foundation Members — Name — Object — Rules — Ordinary Members — Honorary Members — Associate Members — Corresponding Members — Patrons — President — Vice-President — Secretary — Treasurer — Council — Special Committees — Meetings — House — Library — European books — Oriental Manuscripts — Summary of the Library — Inscriptions — Coins — Pictures and Busts — Museum — Publications — Asiatic Researches — Journal — Proceedings — Oriental Publications — Miscellaneous Publications — Conservation of Sanskrit Manuscripts — Funds — Bead-roll — Summary.

A HUNDRED years have elapsed—a century of arduous and unremitting labour, and the time has now arrived for a review of the progress made and of the services rendered to the cause of literature and science by the Asiatic Society of Bengal since its foundation. Such a review will be as useful in showing what has been accomplished, as in suggesting what has to be done in the vast field which remains yet unexplored. It will be to the Society what periodical stock-taking is to mercantile firms. It will also prove a source of profound satisfaction to those who now represent the Society for the eminent success with which they and their predecessors have worked for the advancement of knowledge.

For convenience of treatment, this Review will be divided into three parts—1*st*, giving a succinct history of the Society; 2*nd*, a *resumé* of the papers published on science generally; 3*rd*, a *précis* of all researches into archæology, history, literature, &c.

Foundation of the Society.

The idea of forming the Society was conceived by Sir William Jones, who came out to Calcutta in October 1783 as a Puisne Judge of the late Supreme Court at Fort William in Bengal. A distinguished scholar and linguist, who had already acquired considerable familiarity with some of the classics of India, and enthusiastically devoted to oriental researches, he soon noticed the want of an organized association in Calcutta as a drawback to progress. He felt, to quote his own language, "that, in the fluctuating, imperfect, and limited erudition of life, such enquiries and improvements could only be made by the united efforts of many, who are not easily brought, without some pressing inducement or strong impulse, to converge in a common point." Accordingly, while he engaged himself in the study of the Sanskrit language, which he had till then not acquired, he invited the co-operation of the leading men of the time in Calcutta for the formation of an insutution where united action could be taken to promote the study of oriental literature and science, and where, by the co-operation of the many, the talents and abstract studies of the few would prove most effectual, and derive the stimulus which emulation, publicity, and a common interest never fail to excite. His exertions were warmly seconded by his friends, and a meeting was held on Thursday, the 15th of January, 1784, to come to some definite resolution. Thirty gentlemen attended this meeting, and they represented the *élite* of the European community in Calcutta at the time. The chair

was taken by Sir Robert Chambers, and the proceedings were opened by Sir William Jones, who delivered a learned and very suggestive "Discourse on the Institution of a Society for enquiring into the History, civil and natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia." The address was enthusiastically received, and a resolution was come to establishing the Society under the name of the 'ASIATICK SOCIETY.'

Foundation Members.

The gentlemen who took part at this meeting and became the founders[1] of the Society were then, or subsequently became, the leading officers of the East India Company in this country, and included among them all the principal contributors to the pages of the Society's Transactions.

Name.

The name adopted for the Society at the inaugural meeting was borne on the records till the close of the fourth decade of this century. In 1829, soon after the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland in London, and the affiliation of the Literary Society of Bombay with that institution, a letter was received from the latter offering to the Calcutta Society the privilege of being affiliated, and in this letter it was for the first time

[1] These were: Sir Robert Chambers, Kt., Chief Justice, Supreme Court; Mr. Justice Hyde, Puisne Judge, Supreme Court; Sir William Jones, Kt., Puisne Judge, Supreme Court; General John Carnac; Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Watson; David Anderson, Esq.; Henry Vansittart, Esq.; Charles Croftes, Esq.; William Chambers, Esq.; Richard Johnson, Esq.; John Shore, Esq. (afterwards a Baronet, and then Lord Teignmouth); Francis Gladwin, Esq.; Charles Chapman, Esq.; Nathaniel Middleton, Esq.; Major William Davy; Charles Wilkins, Esq. (afterwards knighted); Jonathan Duncan, Esq.; John Bristow, Esq.; Thomas Graham, Esq.; Francis Fowke, Esq.; Thomas Law, Esq.; Captain Jonathan Scott; Francis Balfour, Esq.; J. David Paterson, Esq.; Ralph Broome, Esq.; Burrish Crisp, Esq.; Lieutenant James Anderson; Lieutenant Charles Hamilton; T. Reuben Burrow, Esq.; and George Hillarow Barlow, Esq. (afterwards made a Baronet).

designated as the "Asiatic Society of Bengal;" but the Society did not accept the change.[1] As the parent of all the Asiatic Societies extant, it fitly retained its original name of THE Asiatic Society. In March 1832, when Mr. James Prinsep sought the sanction of the Society to use its name for the Journal he was then about to start, the resolution adopted used the words 'Asiatic Society' only (Journal, Vol. I, p. i); but the editor deemed it convenient for his purposes to add a local designation, and the Society took no notice of it. In 1843, when this Journal became the property of the Society, the new name had already become familiar, and it was formally introduced in the Code of Bye-laws published in 1851.

Object of the Society.

In the terms of the original resolution, the object of the Society was "enquiry into the history and antiquities, arts, sciences, and literature of Asia." Dilating on this definition, Sir William Jones remarked: "You will investigate whatever is rare in the stupendous fabric of nature; will correct the geography of Asia by new observations and discoveries; will trace the annals and even traditions of those nations who, from time to time, have peopled or desolated it; and will bring to light their various forms of Government, with their institutions, civil and religious; you will examine their improvements and methods in arithmetic and geometry—in trigonometry, mensuration, mechanics, optics, astronomy and general physics; their systems of morality, grammar, rhetoric and dialectic; their skill in chirurgery and medicine, and their advancement, whatever it may be, in anatomy and chemistry. To this you will add researches into their agriculture, manufacture, and trade;

---

[1] Proceedings, January 1830.

and, whilst you enquire into their music, architecture, painting, and poetry, will not neglect those inferior arts, by which comforts, and even elegances of social life, are supplied or improved." To give emphasis to these details, Sir William Jones added: "If now it be asked, what are the intended objects of our enquiries within these spacious limits, we answer, MAN and NATURE; whatever is performed by the one, or produced by the other." These words have since been paraphrased into—"The bounds of its investigations will be the geographical limits of Asia, and within these limits its enquiries will be extended to whatever is performed by man, or produced by nature," and this sentence now serves as the motto of the Society. How far this resolution has been faithfully and diligently carried out will be shown in the following pages.

Rules.

In his inaugural address Sir William Jones expressed a strong feeling of disapprobation against an elaborate code of rules. He said: "It may be advisable at first, in order to prevent any difference of sentiment on particular points not immediately before us, to establish but one rule,—namely, to have no rules at all." He, however, qualified this by adding, "This only I mean, that, in the infancy of any society, there ought to be no confinement, no trouble, no expense, no unnecessary formality. Let us, if you please, for the present, have weekly evening meetings in this hall for the purpose of hearing original papers read on such subjects as fall within our enquiries. Let all curious and learned men be invited to send their tracts to our Secretary, for which they ought immediately to receive our thanks; and if, towards the end of each year, we should be supplied with a sufficiency of valuable materials to fill a volume, let us present our ASIATIC Miscellany to the literary

world, who have derived so much pleasure and information from the agreeable work of Kaempfer than which we can scarcely propose a better model, that they will accept with eagerness any fresh entertainment of the same kind. You will not perhaps be disposed to admit mere translations of considerable length, except of such unpublished essays or treatises as may be transmitted to us by native authors; but whether you will enrol as members any number of learned Natives you will hereafter decide, with many other questions as they happen to arise; and you will think, I presume, that all questions should be decided by ballot by a majority of two-thirds, and that nine members should be requisite to constitute a board for such decisions. * * * One thing only as essential to your dignity I recommend with earnestness—on no account to admit a new member who has not expressed a voluntary desire to become so; and in that case, you will not require, I suppose, any other qualification than a love of knowledge and a zeal for the promotion of it."[1] No formal resolution was adopted in regard to these suggestions, but they were unanimously accepted as the rules of the Society, and uniformly acted upon for several years. In August 1796, the necessity having been felt for devising "the best means of rendering the Institution permanent, and for determining whether a house should be provided for the future meetings of the Society,"[2] some new rules were framed, and the suggestions of the founder were reduced into the form of rules. Other rules were framed from time to time to meet special occasions, but nothing like a regular code was adopted until the beginning of the second half of this century. On the retirement of

[1] Jones's Works, Vol. I. p. 6.

[2] Researches, Vol. VI, p. 590.

Mr. Henry Torrens, the affairs of the Society were found to be in great disorder, and considerable differences of opinion existed on many important matters. A complete code of rules, providing for all contingencies, was, therefore, deemed urgently necessary, and a committee was appointed to prepare the same. After much deliberation and examination of the rules of European societies, the Committee submitted a new Code of Bye-laws, which was formally adopted on January 5, 1851.[1] One important clause in the Code required that every candidate for admission as an ordinary member shall address a letter, stating that "he is anxious to promote the progress of science and literature, and is desirous of becoming a member of the Society." This was done as much in accordance with the opinion of the founder, who had strongly urged in his inaugural address, "not to admit a new member who had not expressed a voluntary desire to become so," as with a view to prevent unseemly repudiation of membership which had occurred in some cases. In practice, however, this rule was found to be unworkable, and had soon to be rescinded. Other clauses were also found troublesome, and a general revision was called for in 1859. On the establishment of the Indian Museum, the altered circumstances of the Society requiring extensive changes in the rules, a new Code was adopted in 1869.[2] This had again to be recast in 1876,[3] and the last is the one now in force, with a few amendments since adopted.

Ordinary Members.

The founder's inaugural address did not suggest any rule for the selection of members, but at the second meeting of the Society (January 22, 1784) members were proposed, who were

[1] Proceedings. [2] *Ibid.*, January 1869, p. 10. [3] *Ibid.*, November 1876, p. 204.

balloted for and elected at the next meeting. At the third meeting such propositions were seconded, and ordered for ballot at the following meeting; and this plan has ever since been uniformly followed.

At first it was not expected that the Natives of this country would join the Society, and Sir William Jones said, "whether you will enrol as members any number of learned Natives you will hereafter decide;" and the question was not mooted for many years afterwards. On January 7, 1829, Dr. H. H. Wilson proposed some native names, and they were elected; similar propositions were subsequently made from time to time, and duly adopted. In the Code of Rules now in force, it is laid down, that "persons of all nations shall be eligible as members of the Society."

As the Society met at the Grand Jury Rooms of the Supreme Court, and no expense of any kind had to be incurred, the Members were not called upon to make any pecuniary contribution to the Society. In 1796, when the idea of providing a suitable house was first mooted, funds had to be raised by subscription, and it was ruled that Ordinary Members should pay a quarterly contribution of one gold mohur each for the support of the Society, old Members being required to make up for their previous membership by a payment of two gold mohurs each, in lieu of the entrance-fee which all new Members were called upon to contribute. The rule regarding the quarterly subscriptions was altered in 1859, when the amount was reduced to Rs. 12 a quarter for resident members, and Rs. 6 for non-residents. Looking to the numerical weakness of European society in India, and to the arduous character of the various occupations in which its members are engaged, it would be unreasonable to expect that many men would be found to devote their time to literary and scientific

pursuits. Such pursuits require leisure and ease of circumstances, early literary training, and an affluent retired life. Europeans coming to India have to fight the battle of existence, or to discharge onerous official duties, and when they have earned a competence and run through their allotted course of official career, they return to Europe to enjoy a life of ease. Natives, on the other hand, have, generally speaking, a defective education in early life, and cannot engage in researches, the fruits of which have to be recorded in a foreign language. The Asiatic Society has thus always laboured under a double disadvantage. But as Milton truly remarks, — "no man who hath tasted learning but will confess the many ways of profiting by those who, not contented with stale receipts, are able to manage and set forth new positions to the world," and the highly educated gentlemen, who came out in the civil, the medical, and the military services of the East India Company, fully bore out the truth of the observation. Notwithstanding the heavy duties they had to discharge in their respective spheres, many of them contributed largely to the efficiency, the stability, and the advancement of the Society by their literary labours and scientific researches. It is worthy of note, and not a little singular, that the members of the Civil Service took a much more prominent position in this respect than those of the more learned professions. As was to be expected, merchants, tradesmen, and other non-official Europeans took but a slender share in the work of the Society. The steady growth of the Society is best shewn in the statement given in Appendix A. It shows that, commencing with a total of 30 names, the number of members rose, at the close of 1788, to 89, and in 1876, when the subscription of resident members was brought down to Rs. 9 per quarter, to 285. It should be added,

however, that the various lists from which the statement has been compiled are misleading, as they do not discriminate under one uniform rule the efficient from non-efficient and absent members.

Honorary Members.

There is no record, in the first volume of the Proceedings, of any resolution having been adopted, laying down a principle for the election of Honorary Members. The first person elected as an Honorary Member was M. Carpentier de Cossigny. He was proposed by an Ordinary Member, seconded by another, and balloted for and elected in due course. Other elections followed from time to time, but without any definite rule. Exception was, however, taken to this course in 1828 ; and, in January 1829, it was resolved "that Honorary Members be in future proposed only by the Committee of Papers, members of the Society not in the Committee communicating their recommendation of an individual as an Honorary Member to the Committee, either directly or through the Secretary. The Committee not to be expected to assign any reasons, should they not see cause to make the nomination." When the resolutions and rules of the Society were codified in 1851, the qualifications for an Honorary Member were laid down to be "eminence for his knowledge of, or encouragement given to, science or literature, or for services rendered to the Society, to be testified by a written statement and supported by the votes of a majority of three-fourths of the members present at a meeting," limiting the elections at the same time to thirty in all. In 1876, the rule was further modified by omitting all reference to services to the Society. The roll of the Society shows that, on the whole, the selections have been judiciously made : it includes the names of all the European *savans* who distinguished themselves

most by their oriental scholarship, and a great number of eminent scientific men of the last hundred years, as also two renowned Indian scholars,—Sir Rádhákánta, Bahádur, and Professor Bápudeva Sástrí.

Associate Members.

Another class of members was established on May 6, 1835, to secure the co-operation of competent persons in India, who would not offer themselves as candidates for ordinary membership. This was called Associate Member, to whom was assigned all the privileges of Ordinary Members except that of voting at the meetings of the Society. Under the rules now in force, this class is reserved for "persons well-known for their literary or scientific attainments, but who are not likely to become Ordinary Members." Their number is limited to 15.

Corresponding Members.

A fourth class of members was established in 1851 to recognize the services of correspondents in foreign countries, but it was not much appreciated, and therefore abolished in 1869.

Patrons.

At the second meeting of the Society, Sir William Jones submitted draft of a letter to Warren Hastings, Esq., Governor-General and President, and Edward Wheeler, John Macpherson, and John Stables, Esqs., Members of the Council of Fort William in Bengal, requesting them to become patrons of the Society. The draft was approved, and the assent of the Governor-General and Council having been obtained, they were, at a subsequent meeting, duly elected. This election became a precedent, which was regularly followed until the time of Lord William Bentinck : on his election as patron, the Members of his Council were left out. Since then the practice has been to elect only the Governor-General as patron.

President.

Along with the letter above referred to, a second was addressed to Mr. Warren Hastings, requesting him to accept the office of President of the Society. The offer, however, was declined. While expressing his appreciation of the honor done him by the offer, Mr. Hastings said :—"From an early conviction of the utility of the institution, it was my anxious wish that I might be, by whatever means, instrumental in promoting the success of it ; but not in the mode which you have proposed, which, I fear, would rather prove, if of any effect, an incumbrance on it. I have not the leisure requisite to discharge the functions of such a station, nor, if I did possess it, would it be consistent with the pride, which every man may be allowed to avow in the pursuit or support of the objects of his personal credit, to accept the first station in a department in which the superior talents of my immediate followers in it would shine with a lustre, from which mine must suffer much in the comparison, and to stand in so conspicuous a point of view the only ineffective member of a body, which is yet in its infancy, and composed of members with whose abilities I am, and have long been, in the habits of intimate communication, and know them to be all eminently qualified to fill their respective parts in it.

"On these grounds I request your permission to decline the offer which you have done me the honor to make to me, and to yield my pretensions to the gentleman whose genius planned the institution, and is most capable of conducting it to the attainment of the great and splendid purposes of its formation.

"I at the same time earnestly solicit your acceptance of my services in any way in which they can be, and I hope that they may be, rendered useful to your researches."

In accordance with the suggestion contained in the above extract, Sir William Jones was elected President of the Society on February 5, 1784. He held the office till his demise on April 27, 1794. He was succeeded by Sir John Shore, who then held the office of Governor-General. In subsequent years, two other Governors-General, the Marquis of Hastings and Lord Hardinge, held the same office. It was found, however, that the reasons assigned by Mr. Warren Hastings were correct, and that the duties of so exalted an office as that of Governor-General of India did not admit of that close application on the part of the President to the duties of the Society, which was so desirable. The elections, therefore, have been confined to distinguished persons whose knowledge and zeal and opportunities were best calculated to promote the interests of the Society. The names of all the Presidents are shown in the Statement hereto annexed (Appendix B).

Vice-President.

In anticipation of the acceptance of the office of President by Mr. Warren Hastings, Sir William Jones was elected Vice-President at the second meeting of the Society. But on his election soon after to the Presidentship, the office became vacant, and none was appointed in his place. On his death, however, when the office of President was held by Sir John Shore, the then Governor-General of India, some inconvenience was felt owing to his inability to attend every meeting of the Society, and in 1796 a resolution was adopted to appoint two Vice-Presidents. The number was afterwards raised to 3, and subsequently to 4; but by the rules now in force it is limited to 3. The Statement given in Appendix B shows the names of all the Vice-Presidents.

Immediately after the establishment of the Society, Mr.

Secretary.

George Hillarow Barlow undertook the duties of Secretary; but, two months after, Mr. John Herbert Harington was appointed Secretary by formal resolution, and for fifty years afterwards, one Secretary, aided at times by a Deputy Secretary, sufficed for the despatch of the Society's ordinary business, the financial affairs being conducted by a Treasurer. On the retirement of Mr. James Prinsep, two Secretaries were deemed necessary, besides the Treasurer, and a third was added some time afterwards. Under the rules now in force, the number of Secretaries is not fixed, but four are generally appointed: one General Secretary, one Natural Science Secretary, one Philological Secretary, and one Treasurer.

Treasurer.

In 1796, when subscriptions first began to be collected, Mr. Trail, of the firm of Palmer and Co., Merchants, was appointed Treasurer, and his firm undertook to transact all banking business for the Society. In 1803, a native clerk was engaged to keep accounts, but all financial business continued to be conducted by Messrs. Palmer and Co. After a time, the duty of collecting subscriptions was made over to the clerk. On the failure of Palmer and Co. in 1828, the custody of the finances was made over to Messrs. Macintosh and Co., and, after their failure in 1833, to the Bank of Bengal. The clerk above referred to was the late Bábu Rámacomal Sen. He served the society for nearly forty years, latterly holding the office of what was called 'Native Secretary,' but really that of Treasurer. In 1840, Mr. Bolst, an uncovenanted assistant in the Bengal Secretariat, was appointed Treasurer, and he kept the records in the Bengal Office, or in his private dwelling. On his dismissal from the Bengal Office, the account-books of the Society could not be recovered.

In 1846, one of the Secretaries became the Treasurer, and that arrangement has continued since.

Council.

Soon after its establishment, the Society appointed a Committee of Papers, consisting of the President, the Secretary, and four other members, to conduct its affairs. In November 1796, this Committee was strengthened by the addition of two Vice-Presidents, and four other members, and in 1849, another addition was made, bringing up the total to fifteen, including the office-bearers. Under the rules now in force, the minimun is fixed at fifteen, and the maximum at twenty.

In 1846, several active Committees having been organized, it was deemed expedient, with a view to prevent misunderstanding and confusion, to change the name of the Committee of Papers and to designate it the Council, as the governing body of the Society.

Special Committees.

Although the Society was established with a view to hold weekly meetings for exchange of notes among members and reading of papers on subjects of interest, the necessity soon arose for appointing special Committees for the consideration of questions of importance. Such Committees were, however, generally temporary, and their functions ceased with the determination of the questions referred to them. On the completion of the Society's house, when the means and accommodation for steady, continuous, and combined action were easy of access, Dr. Hare, in June 1808, moved, seconded by Dr. Leyden, "that a Committee be appointed for the purpose of physical investigations, the collection of facts, specimens, and correspondence with individuals whose situations in this country may be favorable for such discussions and investigations." This the mover subsequently modified, and recommended two Com-

mittees, one for "Natural History, Philosophy, Medicine, Improvements of the Arts, and whatever is comprehended in the general term of Physics;" and another "for Literature, Philology, History, Antiquities, and whatever is comprehended under the general term of Literature." This recommendation was, after some consideration, formally adopted on September 7, 1808, and the following elections were made:—

Physical Committee.	*Literary Committee.*
J. Farquhar, Esq.	J. H. Harington, Esq.
Dr. J. Leyden.	Dr. J. Leyden.
Lieutenant A. Lockett.	Lieutenant A. Lockett.
George Davidson, Esq.	H. B. Bayley, Esq.
Rev. W. Carey.	H. P. Forbes, Esq.
W. Hunter, Esq.	Rev. W. Carey.
	W. Hunter, Esq.

It was at the same time resolved that other members of the Society should be invited to join the Committees and to frame rules for the conduct of their investigations. The Committees met several times, and prepared lists of desiderata and carried on some correspondence; but, after a time, they fell into disuetude, and no record is now extant of their proceedings. In 1818, the Physical Committee was revived, and it was in active work for several years; but its proceedings are not now forthcoming. At the annual meeting of the Society, on December 13, 1821, Dr. Wilson, then Secretary, proposed that "special Committees should be appointed to report upon the papers received by the Society and for other purposes, as also a House Committee, the President, one Vice-President, and the Secretary, being *ex officio* members of all the Committees." But its consideration was deferred, and never after taken up. In 1828, a Committee was appointed "to promote geological researches, working under the rules then in force for the Physical Com-

mittee, with such modifications as may be deemed expedient." Dr. Calder was appointed its Secretary. At the same time the Transactions of the Society were divided into two parts, one to be devoted to Physical, and the other to Literary, subjects. The Physical Committee was in active work for some time, and spent large sums of money in boring operations in Fort William and other researches. A Statistical and a Finance Committee were appointed soon after. No rules, however, were laid down for the annual election of the Committees, and thy fell again into abeyance. In 1847, the then Committee of Papers, adverting to the constitution of their body, which, though intended to represent the different objects of the Society, had at one time been almost exclusively composed of gentlemen who deemed Oriental Literature the paramount object of the Society, and at another period of those under whom researches in Oriental Philology were nearly abandoned in favor of Zoology and kindred sciences, recommended the appointment of Sections, or Standing Committees, for (1) Oriental Literature, (2) Zoology and Natural History, (3) Geology and Mineralogy, (4) Meteorology and Physics, (5) Geography and Indian Statistics, (6) Finances. The elections for these Committees took place at the annual meeting, and were followed up by fresh elections every year until the Bye-laws of 1851 placed the appointment of Committees at the disposal of the Council. An Historical Committee and a Coin Committee have since been added.

Meetings.

As already incidentally noticed, the original object of the Society was to hold weekly meetings in imitation of the hebdomadal gatherings of the Royal Society two centuries ago, but this could not be regularly carried out for any length of time. In England, the professors of colleges, ministers of

religion, and educated men of independent means and retired from business, have a great deal of leisure time, and a habitual liking for literary and scientific researches, for which they are regularly trained by their system of education. In Calcutta, on the other hand, at the close of the last century, these classes were entirely wanting. As stated in the Introduction to the first volume of the Researches, "a mere man of letters, retired from the world and allotting his whole time to philosophical or literary pursuits, is a character unknown among Europeans resident in India, where every individual is a man of business in the civil or military state, and constantly occupied either in the affairs of Government, in the administration of justice, in some department of revenue or commerce, or in one of the liberal professions; very few hours, therefore, in the day or night, can be reserved for any study that has no immediate connection with business, even by those who are most habituated to mental application, and it is impossible to preserve health in Bengal without regular exercise and reasonable relaxation of mind." And under the circumstances, notwithstanding the earnestness and devotion of the founders and a large body of very able men who placed themselves under the standard of the Society, papers could not be produced in such rapid succession as to keep up the interest of the weekly meetings. After the first few months, frequent interruptions followed, and during the close of the rains in the beginning of autumn, meetings had to be suspended for weeks. After the death of the founder, a resolution had to be adopted to hold monthly, instead of weekly, meetings.[1] In six months' time, even monthly meetings were found to

[1] Proceedings for December 5, 1799.

be too frequent, and a meeting once every three months was held sufficient.[1] The interval fixed by the last resolution, however, was found to be too long, and calculated to diminish the interest of the public in the Society, and after a short trial, the plan of monthly meetings was reverted to with occasional recess during the months of September and October. In 1818, some energetic members thought formal monthly meetings not sufficient for unrestrained friendly communications and conversation on literary and scientific subjects ; it was thereupon resolved (April 2, 1828) :—

I. That the apartments should be kept open for private meetings at 7-30 P.M. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month.

II. That the meetings shall be open to every member that chooses to attend and to every visitor whom he may wish to introduce.

III. That none of the official business of the Society shall be transacted at these meetings, and none of the officers of the Society shall attend, except in a private capacity.

IV. That the general attention of the Society at these meetings shall be confined to the promotion of those studies and enquiries which were originally contemplated in the institution of the Asiatic Society.

There is no record to show how these private meetings were attended, and when they were abandoned.

The day of the meeting was originally Thursday. When monthly meetings were resolved upon, the first Wednesday of every month was thought the most convenient, and it remains unchanged to this day. At the close of the last century, the time for dinner among Englishmen was early, and 7 P.M. was found a fit time for meetings, as

[1] Proceedings for July 2, 1800.

affording a means of recreation to men of literary habits after their meals ; but changes in the social rules of the European community early in this century rendered 8, and subsequently 9, P.M. as the most convenient hour for the meetings of the Society. Under the rules now in force a recess is observed during the months of September and October.

The business at the annual meeting in the time of Sir William Jones was limited to the reading of the annual address. After his death such addresses were not forthcoming, and no annual meeting was held; the office-bearers were elected, since 1796, at the ordinary December meeting. In 1828 it was resolved, that the anniversary of the Society should be celebrated by an annual dinner, but it was not acted up to in subsequent years. In 1833, Mr. James Prinsep introduced, for the first time, the practice of submitting a brief annual report in January ; Mr. Torrens discontinued it in 1841, but his successors revived the practice in 1847, and the rules of the Society now render it imperative. The Code of 1869 provided for an annual address from the Chair, and some very interesting addresses were delivered by Sir Joseph Fayrer, Sir John Phear, Mr. Oldham and Mr. Medlicott; but the practice of delivering such addresses has of late been dropped.

House.

During the presidency of Sir William Jones, no necessity was felt for a house for the Society. The Grand Jury Room of the late Supreme Court was always accessible for the meetings of the Society, and there being no office, no effects, and no establishment, no separate accommodation was wanted. On the demise of the founder, the case became different. The Court-house was not always so readily available ; books, papers, records, and specimens of various kinds had accumulated, and they required a store-room, and a natural desire

to secure permanency for these suggested the necessity of a local habitation. It was accordingly resolved[1] that an application should be made to Government for the grant of a free site for a house, and the members should pay a quarterly contribution of one gold mohur each and an entrance-fee of two gold mohurs, which, accumulating for a few years, would yield a sufficient sum to cover the expense of building a house. There is no record to show what reply was given by Government to this application. A second application was made, on July 4, 1804, for a spot of land at the corner of Park Street, which had before been in the possession of a Riding School, but had subsequently reverted to Government, and the Government granted it with the exception of a small portion on the western side, which was "required by the Magistrate of Calcutta for the establishment of a Police Thannah and a Fire Engine." On the remodelling of the Calcutta Police in 1849, the Police-station at this spot was abolished, and, on the application of the Society, the spot was also given to it, free of all rent, for so long as the Society would be in existence. By a subsequent release, dated March 3, 1876, the Government has given the land free of all conditions. The pottah for the land is dated April 7, 1852, and covers an area of a little over three bigahs and a half.

In 1805, when the order of Government granting the land was received, the Society had accumulated a sufficient sum to be in a position to undertake the building of a house. Captain Lock, of the Bengal Engineers, designed a plan, which, after some modifications, was made over to one Jean Jacques Pichon, a Frenchman, settled as a builder in Calcutta, to erect the building. The contract with

[1] Proceedings for December 1, 1796.

the builder bears date February 1, 1806, and the cost settled was Rs. 24,000. It appears from subsequent Proceedings (April 6, 1808), that the contract amount had to be raised to Rs. 30,000. Extensive additions and alterations have since been made at a heavy cost. The Society took possession of the house at the beginning of 1808.

Although built at the cost, and for the exclusive use, of the Society, the house has been always accessible to the public for literary and scientific lectures. In 1822, the use of the meeting-room was permitted to the Serampore Missionaries for a course of lectures on phrenology, and the Medical and Physical Society of Calcutta held their meetings and had their office and library in the house for upwards of thirty years.

Library: European books.

One of the objects for which the house was built was to provide accommodation for a Library and a Museum. From soon after the foundation of the Society, books, papers, manuscripts, drawings, copperplates and other articles were, from time to time, presented to the Society, and they had to be kept, owing to want of a better place for their preservation, in the private dwelling-house of the Secretary for the time being; and as the exigencies of European official life in this country led to frequent changes, the risk of loss was serious. The new house at once removed this difficulty. The books that had been received up to the time formed the nucleus of a Library, and funds were sanctioned every year, and also on special occasions, for the purchase of new books. Mr. H. T. Colebrooke was also appointed as agent in London to select and purchase books for the Society (October 1, 1817). Exchanges of publications were also made with leading European Societies, and of duplicates in the Library with private individuals, and members retiring from the

country sometimes presented selections from their private collections. A small but very valuable collection of works on art was given by Mr. Home, who was for several years a leading member of the Society, and a much larger one of historical and other works relating to India was got from Government on the abolition of the old College of Fort William as an educational institution, duplicates and works of general interest being given to the Calcutta Public Library. A very valuable collection of manuscripts, being diverse occasional papers and essays, and ten volumes of drawings of antiquarian and archæological subjects, belonging to Colonel Mackenzie, for a long time Surveyor-General of India, were received in December 1822. A set of abstract translations of the Puráṇas, prepared by native scholars under the superintendence of Dr. Wilson, and several translations from Persian works, have also come to the possession of the Society. A collection of some illustrated works on Botany was received from Dr. N. Wallich in June 1817, but it was subsequently sent to the Hon'ble East India Company's Botanical Gardens, at Sibpur, near Calcutta.

To facilitate the use of the Library by members a set of rules was framed in January 1820. A catalogue of the whole of the Society's library was published in 1833. It shows a total of about a thousand volumes. After the accession of the College of Fort William collection, a second catalogue of the European books was prepared by the late Dr. E. Roer, and that shows a total of 4,315 volumes. A third catalogue was prepared in 1856 by the writer of this Review, and that brought up the total to upwards of 7,000 volumes. Accessions to the Library have since been very numerous and valuable, comprising, besides sets, more or less complete, of the Transactions of all the leading European and American learned bodies, nearly all standard

works of reference in science and oriental literature. The total, it is estimated, will exceed 20,000 volumes. Much inconvenience is felt by members from want of a good catalogue of this extensive and valuable collection—perhaps the richest in India. This, however, it is expected, will soon be supplied. There is now in the press an alphabetical catalogue carefully prepared under the superintendence of H. B. Medlicott, Esq., F.R.S., and it is expected to be completed before the close of the current year.

Library: Oriental Department.

The early history of the Oriental Library is very much the same as that of the European one. The Society depended mainly on casual gifts from members, and they were not numerous. The first accession of any importance was a gift from the Seringapatam Prize Committee (February 3, 1808). It included a selection from the Library taken in *loot* from the palace of Tipu Sultan. There were among them many old and rare works, including a great number of beautifully illuminated manuscripts of the Quran, and of that part of it called *Pansurah*. An exceedingly well written old text of the *Gulistán*, said to be the first copy from the original manuscript of the author, and a codex of the *Pádsháhámáh* bearing an autograph of the Emperor Shah Jehan, were among them. Presentations were also received, on diverse occasions, from the late College of Fort William and the General Committee of Public Instruction, of books published under their superintendence and from other sources. The total, however, did not, in 1835, exceed a thousand volumes. On the abolition of the College of Fort William, the whole of its Sanskrit, Arabian, Persian, and Urdu works, mostly in manuscript, collected at great expense and trouble under the superintendence of Gladwin, Carey, Gilchrist, and other distinguished oriental scholars, were placed under the custody of the Society,

with a promise that they would, on the sanction of the Hon'ble Court of Directors being obtained, be given to the Society, subject only to two conditions, namely,—safe and careful preservation, and unrestricted accessibility to the public at all reasonable hours. Pending the receipt of the sanction, the Government defrayed the cost of the establishment, amounting to Rs. 78 per mensem. The sanction was obtained in 1846, when the monthly grant was stopped, and the books and manuscripts became the property of the Society, subject only to the two conditions aforesaid.

When the manuscripts came to the possession of the Society, it was all but certain that they would ultimately be its property, and in anticipation of the sanction of the Court of Directors, Mr. Prinsep, then Secretary, caused catalogues to be prepared and printed not only of the new accessions but of all the manuscripts owned by the Society. The Persian catalogue bears date 1837, and contains a total of 2,742 names, out of which 1,013 are Arabic, 1,418 Persian, and 311 Urdu,—a few of these being printed books. The Sanskrit catalogue was issued in 1838, and it includes, besides Sanskrit, a few Mágadhi, Bengali, Hindi, Carnáti, Tailinga and Mahratti names. The total is, in round numbers, 1,800. Annexed to this catalogue are lists of Sanskrit works then owned by the Sanskrit Colleges of Calcutta and Benares. These lists were very useful at the time, as shewing the extent of Sanskrit literature then known to exist. The catalogues were prepared by Maulvies and Pandits in the Indian style, and are not very convenient for reference now. They abound, too, in mistakes, and have become obsolete from the circumstance of the Library having been greatly extended since 1838. The accessions in the Persian Department have not been very numerous, in all 167, but several valuable codices

have been obtained. The losses in this department have, however, been greater than the accession. The Sanskrit Library has been nearly doubled ; while the losses, though serious, do not exceed 250 codices. The want of a revised catalogue has, therefore, been much felt, and an attempt was sometime ago made to compile a *catalogue raisonné* of the Sanskrit works. It was then expected that the then Librarian of the Society would be able, with the assistance of a Pandit, to get the needful done. But on his retirement from the Society soon after, the work fell into abeyance. The writer of this Review, thereupon, undertook to finish what was then in the press, and brought out, in 1877, a royal octavo volume of 228 pages, containing descriptive accounts of all the manuscripts on Sanskrit grammar that were available in the Library. It comprised also a tabular statement of all the works of that class which had been met with in India. Other occupations did not, however, permit the editor to carry on the undertaking, and taking into consideration the immense time and labour necessary for such an elaborate work, it had to be finally abandoned. Dr. Hoernle has now in the press a nominal catalogue, which, it is believed, will be completed in a short time.

Besides these there are now in the custody of the Society 2,507 Sanskrit manuscripts, mostly new to the collection aforenamed, belonging to the Government of India, and some of great age and value. The ultimate destination of these has not yet been determined upon, but it is expected that they will be so kept by Government as to be always available to Indian and Anglo-Indian scholars.

In addition to the above, the Society possesses a rare collection of Tibetan xylographs, including one complete, and another somewhat defective, set of the Khahgyur and the Stangyur texts of the Buddhist Scriptures. For

the complete set the Society is indebted to Mr. B. H. Hodgson, by whose liberality and earnest efforts, its Library and Museum have been so vastly enriched. The second copy was brought down by M. Csoma de Körös. Of these voluminous collections there exists no other copy in India, and only two in Europe, both sent by Mr. Hodgson. To that gentleman the Society also owes its thanks for a very large and exceedingly valuable collection of Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts, of which an analytical catalogue, prepared by the writer of this Review, has lately been published by the Society.

The Society has also, in its Library, upwards of 350 Chinese xylographs, of which there is, in manuscript, a descriptive catalogue prepared by Mr. Alabaster, the author of a Life of Buddha, published under the name of "The Wheel of the Law." There are, likewise, palm-leaf manuscripts of Burmese, Siamese, Javanese, and Cingalese works, to the extent of about 125 bundles, of which, however, there is no inventory of any kind.

Summary of the Library.

It has not been possible to count, for the purposes of this Review, all the books and manuscripts contained in the Library, but partly from certain recent accounts and partly from memoranda prepared four years ago, it appears that the Society now owns, or has in custody, of—

English Books and Manuscripts	19,842	Vols.
Arabic ditto	1,161	,,
Persian ditto	1,506	,,
Urdu ditto	300	,,
Sanskrit ditto	3,378	,,
Ditto Manuscripts (Govt. property)	2,507	,,
Tibetan Xylographs	256	,,
Chinese ditto	350	,,
Burmese, Siamese, &c., ditto, manuscripts on palm leaves	125	,,
Total	29,425	

For a colonial Library such a collection of nearly 30,000 volumes, of which upwards of 8,000 are in manuscript, is, it is believed, unrivalled, and the members may well congratulate themselves on their work, bearing in mind that the bulk of it has been got up by private enterprise without any pecuniary help from Government. The work done is highly creditable. Had the Society done nothing else in the course of its career of a hundred years, this collection would suffice to secure to it the thanks of future generations.

Inscriptions.

Inscriptions and coins are closely related to books; they differ only in the material in which they are preserved, but are fully as valuable as written history, and at times much more so, being far more authentic. Their decipherment has engaged the attention of the Society from a very early date, and some of the most brilliant discoveries in Indian history have been thereby effected. Records of this description are not plentiful; many exist on scarps of rocks and on ancient buildings or sculpture; others occur on stones not easily removable, while records on copperplates are title-deeds which their owners do not part with, and coins are intrinsically so valuable that they are not readily to be had. The members of the Society have, however, been assiduous in their endeavours to obtain them either in original or in facsimile, and a great number has been collected.

Of inscriptions the Society had at one time upwards of a hundred. On the removal, however, of the Society's collection of antiquities from its premises to the Indian Museum, it was deemed expedient to make over all inscribed stones to the Museum, leaving behind in the Library only the records—mostly land grants—on copperplates.

Coins.

Coins in gold and silver, when they cease to be current, are soon melted down, and in India, where the practice of wearing ornaments of precious metals is so universally prevalent, the cause of their destruction is constantly at work, while copper coins are not much cared for, and their material is subject to rapid deterioration by the influence of the climate. It is not remarkable, therefore, that the Society was never very rich in this description of relics. Many were exhibited at the meetings, and many more described in the Transactions of the Society, but few were given to it. Nevertheless, from time to time, a few coins were presented to it by various benefactors ; and after the death of Colonel Mackenzie, duplicates of such coins as existed in any number in his very large collection, were received through the liberality of the Government of Bengal. These made up the Society's collection of coins in 1832, when they were noticed by Professor H. H. Wilson in the Asiatic Researches.

"Subsequently a great many coins were received at different times; and an imperfect inventory of the collection was published by Dr. Roer in the Proceedings of 1843.

"The cabinet, as described by Roer, consisted at that time of 297 Roman coins, from Augustus down to the destruction of the Occidental Empire, mostly copper, and only a very few rare ones; of Greek coins there were 16; and of Bactrian, Indo-Scythian, Sassanian and Gupta coins only 116. There were at the time, however, two or three bags full of copper coins, which had not been described. A little later in the same year, it received a considerable addition of Norwegian coins.

"In the following year, 1844, it suffered a great loss, all the more intrinsically valuable specimens being stolen. A description of the Cabinet in this despoiled state, to

which, however, a few more coins had been added in the meanwhile, was given by Mr. Freeling in the Proceedings for 1857. In order to retrieve the loss, the Society determined to purchase the well-known and magnificent collection of Colonel Stacy, which had been offered to it for sale at the reduced sum of Rs. 4,000, in November 1856. A subscription was opened by the Council among the members, the Society itself contributing Rs 1,200 towards the purchase; and early in 1859, this valuable collection was successfully secured. A priced catalogue of it had already been published by Mr. E. Thomas in the Journal of the preceding year, 1858.

"Since then many additions have been made from year to year, some by presentations, but mostly by purchase. A catalogue of the Cabinet in its present state is in course of preparation. It is particularly rich in Delhi Patháns and Bengal Patháns, also in the later Bactrians, Indo-Scythians, Guptas, and the various sorts of ancient Hindu and Buddhist coins. It might be more complete in the Delhi Moghals; but it is most defective in the provincial Muhammadan coinages of Malwá, Guzarát, Jaunpur, &c., also in some of the more ancient classes, as the Saurâshtrian and Sassanian coins. A small collection of Roman coins in gold was obtained from General Cubbon some years ago. They are of peculiar interest as coming from a trove discovered in the Madras Presidency. Among the copper, lead, and inferior coins generally there are a very large number of duplicates. On the other hand, there are also in the Society's collection a few coins which are unique, and a not inconsiderable number which are more or less rare."

Pictures and Busts.

The Society has, moreover, a small but very valuable collection of oilpaintings and some busts, the latter memorials of the many great

men, whose labours contributed so largely to establish and sustain the renown of the Society. Many of the paintings are also memorials, which the members secured of their distinguished collaborateurs; the others are of a miscellaneous character, and most of them belonged at one time to the studio of Mr. Home. That gentleman was an artist, and at the beginning of this century lived for several years in Calcutta, and took an active interest in the affairs of the Society. Subsequently he went up to Lucknow and made a fortune in the service of Ghâziuddín Hyder, the then King of Oudh. During his tour in Europe he collected many rare pictures, and on his death his two sons, who were then in active service as officers in the Bengal army, deposited them with the Society on the condition that should they not be able to remove the collection within a reasonable time, it shall become the property of the Society, and remain as a memorial of their father. The sons died about forty years ago, and the pictures accordingly now belong to the Society. Among them there are originals by Rubens, Guido Rene, Domenichino, Reynolds, Canaletti, and Westmoreland. The Society has received from other sources originals by Chinery, Poe, and Daniel.[1] Looking to the satisfactory state of preservation of the old pictures, it is easy to infer that the idea about the Indian climate being prejudicial to pictures is untenable.

Museum.

In the inaugural address of the founder no reference was made to a Museum : but curiosities were sent in from time to time by mofussil members, and in 1796 the idea was started of having a suitable house for their reception and preservation. Nothing practical, however, could be done at the

[1] For a list of the Pictures and Busts, see the Society's printed Catalogue of Curiosities.

time, and it was not until some time after the completion of the house that measures were taken to carry out the object. On February 2, 1814, Dr. N. Wallich wrote a letter to the Society strongly advocating the formation of a Museum, and offering at the same time not only duplicates from his own rich collection to form a nucleus for it, but his own services to look after it, and in bringing the letter before the Society, the Committee of Papers submitted the following notes, which, though long, are worth quoting to show clearly what it was that the Society undertook:

"A collection of the substances which are the objects of science and of those reliques which illustrate ancient times and manners, has always been one of the first steps taken by Societies instituted for the dissemination of specific or universal knowledge. Such a collection was one of the first objects also of the Asiatic Society, and any person engaged in the study of the history and language of this country, or in the investigation of its natural productions, must have had frequent cause for regretting that such a purpose should have been hitherto so very incompletely carried into effect. No public repository yet exists to which the naturalist or scholar can refer, and the only sources of information, beyond verbal and often inaccurate description, have been found in the accidental accumulations of individuals, always of difficult access, indiscriminate selection, temporary duration, and little utility.

"The Asiatic Society is now called upon to adopt active measures for remedying this deficiency, and collecting, from the abundant matter which India offers, a Museum that shall be serviceable to history and science. In the former of these departments the Society is already in possession of several valuable articles, and there can be no doubt that enquiry and exertion, and the assurance of their being properly bestowed, would soon add considerably to the number. There are, however, many things of extremely easy attainment, that would afford much useful illustration, and the student of the original languages and compositions would be frequently extricated from perplexity and doubt by having it in his power to refer to specimens of various Eastern implements and instruments in daily and domestic use amongst the natives of these regions.

"It is, however, in the departments of science that a Museum in this country would be found most specially serviceable, and the facility of its accumulation is proportionable to the extent of its utility. In Natural History, Botany, Anatomy, Chemistry, Mineralogy and other branches, a collection would accumulate rapidly if once commenced; and from the first moment of its accumulation would furnish additional matter to the stock of knowledge. Many objects with which we are exceedingly familiar in this country are new or imperfectly known to general science, and a vast variety of articles may be derived from sources hourly acceptable, each of which would contribute some interesting supply to the extensive results of western enquiry.

"The importance of the measure is, however, so obvious, that it must be unnecessary to urge it further, and it only remains to consider the means by which it can be effected. The Society possesses accommodation fit for the purpose, and the expense of adapting these to the reception of contributions could not be any amount. The present establishment might perhaps be sufficient to take charge of it, at least for sometime, and at any rate no great addition could be requisite. The principal difficulty lies in the selection of a person willing and able to devote some time and trouble to procuring and arranging the materials of which such a Museum should consist, and the removal of this difficulty is the chief inducement at present for the Society to take the subject into serious consideration.

"Dr. Wallich offers, if the Society should determine to place the collection under his superintendence, to contribute to it the results of his own enquiries, to appropriate to it such further contributions as come within his reach, and to devote all the attention in his power to the arrangement and conservation of the whole."

After a careful consideration of the details submitted by the Committee of Papers, the Society came to the following resolutions :—

"Resolved accordingly that the Asiatic Society determine upon forming a Museum for the reception of all articles that may tend to illustrate oriental manners and history, or to elucidate the peculiarities of art or nature in the East.

"That this intention be made known to the public, and that contributions be solicited of the undermentioned nature :—

"Inscriptions on stone or brass.

"Ancient monuments, Muhummadan or Hindu.

"Figures of the Hindu deities.

"Ancient coins.

"Ancient manuscripts.

"Instruments of war peculiar to the East.

"Instruments of music.

"The vessels used in religious ceremonies.

"Implements of native art and manufacture, &c., &c.

"Animals peculiar to India, dried or preserved.

"Skeletons or particular bones of animals peculiar to India.

"Birds peculiar to India, stuffed or preserved.

"Dried plants, fruits, &c.

"Mineral or vegetable preparation peculiar to Eastern pharmacy.

"Ores of Metals.

"Native alloys of metals.

"Minerals of every description, &c., &c.

"That the names of persons contributing to the Museum or Library of the Society be hereafter published at the end of each volume of the Asiatic Researches.

"That the Hall on the groundfloor be fitted up for the reception of the articles that may be procured.

"That the plan and expense of so doing be regulated by the Committee of Papers and Secretary and the person under whose superintendence the Museum may be placed.

"That the expense which may be incurred in preparing materials that may be furnished in a state unfit for preservation be defrayed by the Society within a certain and fixed extent.

"That the thanks of the Society be given to Dr. Wallich for the tender of his services.

"That the services of Dr. Wallich be accepted, and that he be in consequence appointed Superintendent of the Oriental Museum of the Asiatic Society."

The Museum thus formed thrived rapidly. Contributions were received under all the heads noticed, and grants were made freely for their preservation. All coins, copperplates, sculptures, inscriptions on stone, implements and miscellaneous articles received were placed in charge of

the Librarian, while geological and zoological specimens were classified, arranged, and preserved under the superintendence of Dr. Wallich, who was appointed their curator, all donations being duly announced in the pages of the Society's Transactions.

The archæotectonic and miscellaneous collection was greatly enriched by contributions from Colonel Stuart, Dr. Tytler, General Mackenzie, Mr. B. H. Hodgson, Captain Dillon, Bábu Rámacomal Sen and others. A partial inventory of it was prepared by Dr. Roer in 1843, and a complete catalogue was compiled by the writer of this Review in 1847, and published in 1849.

The Natural History Museum remained in charge of Dr. Wallich for several years. On his resignation the Society found it necessary to employ one Mr. Gibbon as Superintendent on Rs. 50 per mensem.[1] The Museum, however, did not, and could not, under the circumstances, get on satisfactorily. What was wanted was a competent knowledge of Zoology and Geology, and that could not be secured for the remuneration offered. The Society had, therefore, to revert to gratuitous aid from amateurs in the ranks of the medical service of the East India Company. The new impulse given to the work of the Society by the appointment of the Physical Committee in 1828, led to the employment of a paid Superintendent on Rs. 150 per mensem, and one Mr. Hichins was selected for the post (June 17, 1828). His successor, three years after, was appointed on Rs. 200 per month.

The budget of 1836 showed that there were no means available for the payment of a Curator's salary. As it was, however, not desirable to dispense with the services of so

[1] Proceedings, August 1817.

experienced and useful an officer, a resolution was adopted to pay the amount from the vested fund. This was received with great disfavor by some of the leading members of the Society, and a formal dissent was placed by them on record. In the face of this, the plan of payment could not be continued in the following year. The Committee was thus driven to the alternative either of dispensing with the services of a Curator, or of reducing expenses in other departments. Neither, however, was deemed expedient; the latter course would seriously affect the progress of the Society, and the former was by no means desirable. "Viewing the maintenance of the Museum as a national object, and calculated to be of immense importance to science if placed upon a footing of efficiency, with a professional naturalist at the head, directing researches and systematizing information obtained from various sources, both public and private, in all the branches of Physical Science, but more particularly in regard to the Natural History of British India and Asia at large," it was felt that such a course would be highly reprehensible. It was accordingly resolved that "a full and urgent representation" should be submitted "to Government on the subject, and to solicit such support as is accorded in most other countries to similar institutions of national and scientific utility;" and "pending the result of the reference the Curator be retained."[1] The memorial submitted on the subject was written by Sir Edward Ryan, and its prayer was based on the high ground of public utility. After detailing the services rendered to the cause of literature and science by the Society, Sir Edward remarked: "It is not from a declining Society that an appeal is made,

[1] Journal, Vol. VI, pp. 399f.

to save it from impending ruin or to enable it to support its expenses on the same scale of efficiency as heretofore. On the contrary, the Society never had a more flourishing list of contributing members, nor was it ever more actively engaged on the multiplied objects of its attention. Indeed, it would be difficult to mention any department in which its duties have not materially increased within the last few years."[1] He then went on to say :—

"The Asiatic Society, or it may be allowable to say the Metropolis of British India, has had the germs of a national Museum as it were planted in its bosom. As at *Paris* a new era was opened in the history of its great museum, the Jardin des Plantes, through the discoveries of extinct and wondrous animal forms exhumed from the rocks on which the town was built, and which required all the adjuncts of comparative anatomy for their investigation even by the master hand of the great CUVIER; so in *Calcutta* through the munificence of a few individuals and development of fossil deposits in various parts of India hitherto unsuspected, we have become possessed of the basis of a grand collection, and we have been driven to seek recent specimens to elucidate them. Our desire has been warmly seconded by all who have enjoyed the opportunity of contributing; from *China*, from *New South Wales*, from the *Cape*, and from every quarter of the Honorable Company's possessions, specimens of natural history, of mineralogy and geology, have flowed in faster than they could be accommodated, and the too little attention they have received has alone prevented similar presentations from being much more numerous; for it is but reasonable to suppose that, of the stores continually despatched to England or the Continent, the Society would have received a larger share had it done proper honor to what it has received.

"In May 1835, the Society resolved to try the experiment of appointing salaried officers[2] to the charge of its Museum. For two years economy in other departments has enabled it to maintain this

[1] Journal, Vol. VI, p. 493. [2] Incorrect.

system, and the good effects of the measure are visible to all who visit the rooms. Yet, not being able to purchase more than a small portion of the time of a competent naturalist, the benefit has been comparatively limited, and now at the very commencement of the experiment, the state of the Society's funds will compel it to withhold further support from its incipient museum, unless some fresh source of income be provided.

"These then are the motives that have persuaded the Society of the propriety of an appeal to the Ruling Power:—not to contribute to the ordinary wants and engagements of the institution, but to convert that institution into a public and national concern by entrusting it with the foundation and superintendence of what has yet to be formed, for the instruction of our native fellow subjects, as much as for the furtherance of science,—a public depository of the products of nature in India and the surrounding countries properly preserved, properly arranged, and properly applied.

"To effect such an object it is indispensable that the services of a professional naturalist of high attainments should be engaged, and that he should have at his command the means of working effectually, and of devoting his whole time to the employment."[1]

The prayer of the memorial was limited to a grant of Rs. 200 per mensem. The Government admitted that the expense of establishing such a museum could not be met by voluntary subscriptions, nor could it "be maintained in the creditable and useful condition necessary for the attainment of the object desired, unless aided liberally by the Government, in like manner as similar institutions in Europe are supported from the public treasury;" but they were not prepared to accede to the request without a reference to the Court of Directors. They said:

"There are many circumstances which induce the Governor-General in Council to consider that the proposition submitted on this occasion is peculiarly one to be decided by the Home

[1] Journal, Vol. VI, pp. 494-5.

authorities, rather than by the Local Government. In the first place, the Honorable Court of Directors are themselves at considerable expense in keeping up a museum and library at the India House, and though his Lordship in Council concurs with you in thinking that such institutions in Europe, however perfect, do not supersede the necessity of providing similar in India likewise,—with reference especially to the spirit of literary inquiry and scientific research which it is desired to excite and encourage amongst the native youths of India; still the fact that the Honorable Court have a separate institution of their own, points to the propriety of making them the judges of its sufficiency or the contrary for Indian purposes. Moreover, were the Government of India to sanction a specific annual grant for a museum and library in Calcutta under the management of your Society, such a grant would reasonably be made a precedent for similar applications from learned Societies at other Presidencies, and his Lordship in Council is not prepared to decide without a reference to England upon the relative claims of such Societies with reference to the circumstances of the institutions themselves and of the Presidencies and places where they may be established." (June 1837.)

On the receipt of this, a second petition was submitted, from which the following is an extract :—

"The Society feel that they have every reason to be highly flattered with the condescension and consideration extended to their address by the members of Government; and although a reference to the Honorable the Court of Directors has been deemed indispensable before finally determining on the adoption of the Society's proposition for the formation of a national museum at the cost of the state, still they entertain the most sanguine assurance of a favorable issue under the encouragement and recommendation with which His Lordship in Council has been pleased to promise that the reference home shall be accompanied.

"On the strength of this confident expectation a very full meeting of the Society, held on the 5th instant, came to the resolution that it would be unadvisable at such a juncture to break up the establishment, and abandon the incipient Museum upon which

they had for two years devoted so considerable a portion of their income, and thus perhaps have to recommence their collection a year hence, should the Honorable Court acquiesce in the proposed measure.

"It was consequently resolved that a second respectful application should be submitted to the Right Honorable the Governor-General in Council in immediate connection with their former address to inquire:—

"Whether, in order to maintain the Society's Museum in its present state of efficiency, pending the reference on the subject of its extension and conversion into a public institution, the Government would be disposed to sanction a monthly grant of 200 rupees, the actual sum which is now obliged to be withdrawn from this object on account of other calls on the Society's funds."[1]

This prayer was at once granted, and Dr. Pearson was appointed Curator. He was succeeded by Dr. McLelland. The reply of the Court of Directors came in their Despatch No. 17, of September 18, 1839. The Court fully recognized the claims of the Society, and, adverting to the Society's immediate permanent want of a qualified person to preserve its collections, remarked, that they "would not object to the Government allowing the Society a monthly sum of 200 or 250 rupees a month as salary to a Curator, with a further sum of 50 rupees a month for the cost of preparing specimens and maintaining the collection in order." They went further, and said: "We shall not object to your granting to the Society funds for special purchases, as occasions arise, as far as may be compatible with a due regard to public economy. On all such occasions, you will forward to our Museum a selection from the articles which may have been so procured."[2] The only condition attached to this was, that "the articles to be purchased should not be of a perishable nature."

[1] Proceedings. July 1837.

[2] *Ibid.*, November 1839.

The question now arose as to whether a competent Curator should be brought out from Europe, or one appointed in India. Opinion was very much divided, particularly as the officer then in charge of the Museum, Dr. McLelland, was thoroughly well-qualified for the office. That gentleman, however, did not agree to the terms proposed of two hours' daily attendance at the Museum, and a monthly report of progress. It was resolved, therefore, to write to Dr. Wilson, then the London Agent of the Society, to select a fit person. The person selected was Mr. Edward Blyth, who took charge of his office in September, 1841.

It was generally expected that the Curator sent out from England would be able to take scientific charge of the whole of the Museum; but this could not be done. Thoroughly competent as Mr. Blyth was as a naturalist, he had not studied geology to such an extent as to be fit to be a scientific curator of that department. In his letter to the Secretary, dated September 22, 1841, he himself said: "It is in the Mineral department, unfortunately, that I am at present less qualified, by previous study, to devote my immediate and first labors advantageously for the Society; but with the opportunities for study which are now before me, and with the liberal encouragement and support I may reckon upon receiving, I do not fear but that I shall soon render myself competent to discharge that portion of my duty which relates to the efficient management of the Museum of Economic Geology; this being a subject in which I feel the liveliest interest, and with the high importance of which I am deeply and thoroughly impressed."[1] This difficulty was, however, soon overcome. The satisfactory working of the coal mines at Rániganj, and the reports

[1] Journal, Vol. XL, pp. 756.

of Dr. Helfer and other scientific officers had invited the attention of Government to the mineral resources of the country, and a resolution was adopted in 1835 to establish a Museum of Economic Geology, in order to make typical specimens readily accessible for reference to the public. An officer was deputed to England to obtain such specimens. Captain Trimenheere came out with them in May 1841, and for want of suitable accommodation elsewhere the Government deposited them in the rooms of the Society. Provision was also made by Government for the custody of these by a competent curator on a salary of Rs. 250 a month, with an allowance of Rs. 64 for contingent charges. The money was placed at the disposal, and under the control, of the Society, which appointed Mr. Piddington as Curator, and placed under his charge the collections of the Museum of Economic Geology as also its own Geological and Palæontological specimens. Fossil bones belong as strictly to Zoology as recent ones, but, for the sake of convenience, and on account of the peculiar qualifications of the two Curators, the unscientific course adopted was unavoidable. This arrangement lasted till 1856, and the two departments thrived most satisfactorily under the management of the officers appointed. The usefulness of the Zoological collections was greatly enhanced by the publication of valuable catalogues of the Mammals and Birds by Mr. Blyth, of the Reptiles and Fresh-water Shells by Mr. W. Theobald, and of the Fossils by Dr. Hugh Falconer and Mr. H. Walker. Full monthly reports were submitted by both the Curators, and they were very favourably received by the scientific public.

The Geological Museum was never a cause of heavy expense to the Society, and at first the relief afforded by the Government grant enabled the Society to carry on

the Zoological branch with but a small contribution from its general resources. But the collections increased rapidly under the energetic management of Mr. Blyth and the hearty co-operation of the mofussil members interested in Natural History, and the demands of the Museum soon outgrew the resources of the Society.

On the formation of a general Museum in connection with the then recently established department of Geological Survey of India, the Government desired the transfer there of the Museum of Economic Geology.[1] It proposed at the same time that the Society should deposit there its own collection of fossils and other geological specimens. The last proposal gave rise to much discussion. On the one hand it was obvious, that the collection would be better preserved, better laid out, and better taken care of by the very able officers under whom it would be placed than in the Society's premises. But on the other it was felt, that the dissociation of a part of the Museum, and that the least expensive but highly valuable, would prove injurious to the interests of the Society, if not to endanger its very existence, and at the same time postpone to an indefinite period the great object which the Society had cherished since 1837 of seeing a national museum worthy of the metropolis of British India established here. The offer of the Government was, therefore, declined.[2]

The removal of the Museum of Economic Geology enabled the Society to devote more space for the accommodation of its zoological collection, but it had already become an unmanageable burden which no private association could sustain. It required more room and more establish-

[1] Proceedings, July 11, 1856.

[2] *Ibid.*, November 5, 1856.

ment to preserve it than what the Society could provide. Taking these circumstances into mature consideration a resolution was adopted to the effect, that "the Council enter into a communication with the Government on the subject of the foundation at Calcutta of an Imperial Museum, to which the whole of the Society's collections, except the library, may be transferred, provided the locality, the general arrangement, and management be declared, on reference to the Society at large, to be perfectly satisfactory to its members."[1] The Mutiny of the native troops in the N. W. Provinces, however, soon after followed, and the matter was consequently left in abeyance. In October 1858, the question was revived, and a representation was submitted to Government, giving in detail the views of the Society on the subject of the proposed museum; but it failed in its object. The Government, while recognizing it as "its duty to establish in the metropolis an imperial museum for the collection and exposition of specimens of natural history in all its branches, and of other objects of interest—physical, economical and historical"—declined to entertain the project on financial grounds. At the same time it renewed its offer regarding the geological and palæontological collections. The Society, thereupon, submitted a memorial to the Secretary of State, and, while awaiting a reply to this, applied for an extra grant from the Government of Rs. 200 per mensem, which, though at the time declined,[2] was, on a renewal of the application two years after, sanctioned.

Adverting to previous correspondence, the Government, in May 1862, announced that, "in the opinion of the Governor-General in Council, the time had arrived when the

---

[1] Proceedings, May 6, 1837.

[2] *Ibid.*, April and June 1859.

foundation of a public museum in Calcutta, which had been generally accepted as a duty of the Government, may be taken into consideration with regard to its practical realization," and then gave a sketch of the terms on which the Society's collections may be transferred to it.[1] Negociations now followed, which were protracted till the middle of 1865, when the following conditions were finally settled, *viz.*:—

1. That, in consideration of the Society's making over its zoological, geological, and archæological collections to a public museum to be established and maintained by Government, and made over to a Board of Trustees, the Society shall be provided with suitable accommodation in the house which was to be built by Government for the museum, and to have exclusive possession, occupation, and control of the portion so alloted to it.

2. That the Society shall have the right of nominating from its own body one-third of the members of the said Board.

3. That it shall retain exclusive possession of its own house.

4. That it shall make over to the new museum all archæological and natural history specimens that it may, in future, receive from its members.

A law to this effect was passed in 1866 (Act XVII), and the collections were formally made over to an officer of the Board of Trustees appointed under it. An arrangement was also made to allow the collections to remain in the Society's premises until the proposed building could be completed.

The time occupied in building the new house was pro-

---

[1] Journal for 1862, p. 320.

tracted, and the inconvenience felt by the Society from want of room for the accommodation of its daily expanding Library was great ; and a special house-allowance was granted by Government at the rate of Rs. 400 per mensem from December 1, 1874.

A misunderstanding arose about this time as to the number of rooms the Society should be permitted to occupy in the new house. The officers in charge of the Museum and the Board of Trustees were of opinion that the whole of the accommodation available in the house then in course of erection would be ultimately required for the purposes of their charge, while the members of the Society were reluctant to enter into a house where accommodation was insufficient, and freedom of action cramped. It was felt, too, that the Society's position as an independent body would be injured by its office being huddled in the corner of a house occupied by two such large Government establishments as the Geological Survey and the Natural History Museum, and forming as it were a mere annexe to them. The Government, thereupon, referred the matter for settlement to a Committee consisting of Sir Ashley Eden and Dr. Oldham, and, at their recommendation, paid the Society the sum of Rs. 1,50,000 as compensation for its claim to accommodation in the Museum building.[1] This arrangement has proved highly beneficial both to the Society and to the Museum.

The exertions made for the establishment of the national museum, and the endowment of it with the richest collection of specimens available in India, are acts for which the Society deserves high credit. To quote the language of an elegant writer in the 'Calcutta Review:'

[1] Proceedings, July 1876.

"Had it done nothing else to promote science during the last ten years, it would have entitled itself to the gratitude of posterity for the vigor with which it has prosecuted to success a project fraught with so much public usefulness."

Publications of the Society: Asiatic Researches.

Although Sir William Jones contemplated the publication of a volume of 'Asiatick Miscellany' every year, no attempt was made to get out such a periodical during the first three years of the Society's career. Most of the papers received during the first year were short and unimportant, and it was not until the middle of the year 1787 that the Society was in a position to go to press with the first volume of its Transactions. The Society, however, had no funds of its own at the time, and there was no publisher in Calcutta who could undertake the work at his own responsibility. Ultimately one Mr. Manuel Cantopher, of the Hon'ble East India Company's Printing Office, undertook the job as a private speculation, on the understanding that every Member of the Society would take the book at Rs. 20 a copy. The name then approved for the periodical was "Asiatick Researches," instead of what the founder had originally suggested. The first volume appeared in 1788, and the second followed in 1790. The third, the fourth, and the fifth volumes appeared successively in 1793, 1795, and 1797, under the same conditions, the price being reduced to Rs. 16 per copy. The work created quite a sensation in the literary world, and the demand for it was so great, that a pirated edition was brought out in England in 1798. This also sold so rapidly that, within the next five or six years, two other editions were brought out in octavo. The demand for the work was also urgent on the Continent, and a French translation was brought out in

Paris under the title of "Recherches Asiatiques."[1] In introducing it to the public, the translator, M. A. Labaume, remarked: "cette collection a inspiré en Angleterre un intérét, qu'il est a-peu-prés impossible de se procurer aujourdhui un exemplaire de l'edition originale de Calcutta, et qu'il en été fait à Londres trois editions, qui sont presque entierement épuisées: cependant elles sont fort incorrectes et remplies de fautes importantes." The translation was a faithful one, and it was enriched by a series of valuable notes on the philological and historical papers by M. Langlès, and on the scientific papers by MM. Cuvier, Delambre, Lamarck and Olievier. The estimation in which the work was then held was thus indicated by the editor: "la plus riche collection de faits qui existe sur l' Inde, ce pays qui attire les premiers regards de ceux qui veulent études l'histoire des hommes."

The plan of quarterly contributions from Members had placed the Society in some funds in 1798, when the sixth volume was about to be sent to press; and, looking to the rapid and profitable sale which the first five volumes had met with, the idea was taken up of bringing out the next volume on account of the Society. The proposal was that the same printer should continue to print the work, but at the cost of the Society, which was to reimburse its outlay by charging the Members at Rs. 12 a copy. Volumes VI — XII were published under this arrange-

---

[1] The full title of the translation runs thus: "Recherches Asiatiques, ou Mémoires de la Société établie au Bengale pour faire des recherches sur l'histoire et les antiquités, les arts, les sciences, et la literature de l' Asie; traduits de l' Anglois, par M. A. Labaume. Revus et Augmentés de notes pour la partie Orientale, Philologique et Historique, par M. Langlès, et pour la partie des Sciences exactes et naturelles, par MM. Cuvier, Delambre, Lamarck, et Olievier. Paris, 1805, 4to. 2 vols.

ment.[1] This arrangement did not, however, prove advantageous. The cost of printing became heavy, and the sale-proceeds did not fully recoup the outlay. In 1819, it was therefore proposed that the copyright should be sold to a London publisher, and the work brought out at shorter intervals than heretofore. The project, however, fell through. Following the example of European Societies, it was besides resolved that the Researches should be given to members gratis. This increased the responsibility of the Society, and caused greater delay in the publication of its Transactions. In 1829, when the Physical Class was in active work, a resolution was adopted to divide the Researches into two parts, one to be devoted wholly to scientific papers, and the other to literary contributions. This plan was carried out in Vols. XVII, XVIII, XIX, and XX, but as the two parts were intended to be bound together, no appreciable advantage was gained by it. On the contrary, the scientific parts did not sell so readily as the literary ones, and many copies of the stock were accordingly made defective. In 1837, Mr. James Prinsep brought out a very carefully prepared analytical index of the first eighteen volumes of the Researches. This was a valuable acquisition, as it made the rich treasures of the Society's Transactions readily accessible to students. It did not suffice, however, to revive public interest in the valuable but tardily-issued publication ; and soon after the completion of the second part of the twentieth volume of the Researches in 1839, the work was finally abandoned.

The causes which contributed to the stoppage of this

[1] The dates in which Vols. VI to XX were issued, were :—Vol. VI, in 1799 ; Vol. VII, in 1801 ; Vol. VIII, in 1805 ; Vol. IX, in 1807 ; Vol. X, in 1808 ; Vol. XI, in 1810 ; Vol. XII, in 1816 ; Vol. XIII, in 1820 ; Vol. XIV, in 1822 ; Vol. XV, in 1825 ; Vol. XVI, in 1828 ; Vol. XVII, in 1832 ; Vol. XVIII, in 1833 ; Vol. XIX, in 1836 ; and Vol. XX, in 1839.

once popular and highly esteemed periodical were manifold. The first and foremost was tardy publication. From the foundation of the Society in 1784 to the close of 1839, within a period of fifty-five years, the Society published only twenty volumes, or one volume at an average in every two years and nine months. In many instances the interval was greater. In the early days of the Society this was not much felt, but latterly it became a source of frequent complaint. On January 8, 1820, Dr. Gordon moved that "the great delay in completing and publishing the volumes of the Society's Transactions being a source of general complaint and discouraging to the authors of papers for the Researches, some remedy should be adopted for publishing the volumes in parts," and it was resolved that "the Committee of Papers cause the several copies printed by the Society to be distributed to the members applying for the same, in such parts as, and at such periods and as often as, may, by the Committee, be found most convenient; 12 copies of each paper or of the part containing it to be sent to the authors." This did not, however, suffice to remove the cause of complaint. Another frequent complaint was the form of the 'Researches.' A heavy quarto volume necessarily suggested elaborate and finished essays, and in the selection of papers for it, short notes, describing new discoveries or new ideas, however interesting, were frequently rejected. They were read at meetings, and then pigeonholed for decay. The Transactions in their quarto form could not be adapted for them. An outlet for these was, therefore, very much needed. For a time these found a place in the 'Quarterly Oriental Journal,' which Dr. Wilson started in 1821, while short notes on scientific subjects were published in the 'Transactions of the Medical and Physical Society.' Both those

publications, however, were dropped in 1827. A substitute for these was provided in 1829 by Captain J. D. Herbert, Deputy Surveyor-General, in a monthly publication which he started under the name of 'Gleanings in Science.' His primary idea was to confine it to extracts and abstracts from European scientific publications, but original contributions poured in so rapidly that he had to abstain from extracts. The Society benefited by this publication so far that a *précis* of its monthly proceedings, which had heretofore been preserved in manuscript, was regularly published. Captain Herbert, however, was appointed Astronomer to His Majesty the King of Oudh in 1830, and Mr. James Prinsep, who had been associated with him in the undertaking, instead of dropping the work, proposed to change its name and call it 'The Journal of the Asiatic Society.' The sanction was given in March 1832. The 'Journal,' however, as it appeared in that month, bore the name of the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.' Its character, too, was entirely changed. Instead of being a scientific periodical, it became essentially literary. It came out also with the additional advantage of free postage, the Government having, in consideration of the Editor publishing Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton's 'Statistics of Bengal' as an appendix to it, conceded that privilege. For the first two years, moreover, it was given to the members free of charge. The frequency and regularity with which this Journal appeared recommended it strongly to the notice of authors, and many papers which would have been otherwise reserved for the pages of the 'Researches' found their way into the 'Journal.'

Journal.

The Journal, thus established and conducted, superceded the Researches. The privilege of franking allowed it was withdrawn

after two years.[1] But it had already established its name and fame as a standard periodical of European reputation, and the Asiatic Society made up for the loss by purchasing the necessary number of copies for presentation to its members. The Court of Directors also extended to it their patronage by subscribing for 40 copies.[2] It was devoted to the publication almost exclusively of papers received by the Society, and it thus became its organ, though not officially so recognized. Although many scientific papers were published in it, its literary character was generally maintained, for at the time there were two rivals—the 'India Journal of Science' of Dr. Corbyn, and the 'Calcutta Journal of Natural History' of Dr. McLelland, which diverted many scientific papers from its pages. On the other hand, the Government, at the request of the Society, allowed it access to all official records likely to be of general interest, and no want was ever felt of fit materials for publication.

Financially, nevertheless, it involved a small, but steadily recurring, loss to the editor. It injured also the Researches, by withdrawing valuable papers and by stinting the resources of the Society, which, after paying for the Journal for its members, had little means left to defray the cost of printing the Researches. The two volumes and the Index printed since the commencement of the Journal had to be paid for out of vested funds. On the retirement of Mr. Prinsep in 1838, his successor, Mr. Henry Torrens, took up the work and carried it on at his own risk. Matters, however, came to a crisis at the close of 1842, when Mr. Torrens resigned the secretaryship as well as the editorship of the Journal, and no one could be

[1] Proceedings, June 1834.

[2] *Ibid.*, February 1838.

found to take his place. The only course then left to the Society was to recognize the Journal as its official organ, and finally to abandon the Researches.

The changes above adverted to did not in the least affect the character of the Journal. For ten years it had been recognized by the public, though not by the Society itself, as the organ of the Society, and it so continued to be, though it became a source of greater responsibility to the Society, inasmuch as the loss which had hitherto been borne by the editor and proprietor had now to be met by it; and with a view to the exercise of due discretion in the selection of papers, the Committee of Papers had to be invested with the duty of editing. Since 1837 its bulk had become so heavy that the annual volume had to be divided into two parts, and it was so kept up till 1845. In the following year grave financial difficulties rendered it necessary to reduce its size to the bulk of one part only. From the next year the two parts were again regularly published till 1850. The Society's resources were, however, taking into consideration its other responsibilities, never equal to so large a publication, and the size of the Journal was, accordingly, again reduced to one part, or six fasciculi, a year.

Financially this arrangement was appropriate enough, but it gave rise to a new inconvenience.

Proceedings.

The précis of the Society's proceedings, which had been hitherto published regularly every month, could not be oftener issued than once in every two or three months, and it became a frequent matter of complaint. The obvious course in the case was to separate the Proceedings from the body of the Journal, and this was done in 1865. The value of the new series was also enhanced by inserting into it short notes, which were not deemed fit for introduction into the Journal, but which were, nevertheless,

*

of sufficient interest to be worthy of publication. Another change was also at the time suggested. The complaints which necessitated the division of the Researches into two parts in 1829 were now brought to bear upon the Journal, and a similar division had to be adopted. Care was at the same time taken to keep these Parts so distinct by separate pagination and separate indexes as to form two separate serials, so that the scientific scholar may have the scientific matter without the admixture of what to him appeared as literary lumber, and the orientalist may not have to pay for scientific matter, in which he did not feel himself interested. This arrangement necessitated the employment of three Secretaries, one to look after the general business of the Society and edit the Proceedings, one to edit the scientific part of the Journal, and a third to take charge of the literary portion.

The most frequent contributors to the Journal have been Mr. J. Prinsep, Mr. B. H. Hodgson, Col. P. T. Cautley, Mr. E. Blyth, Mr. H. Piddington, Dr. H. Falconer, Dr. G. G. Spilsbury, Dr. J. Campbell, M. Csoma de Körös, Capt. J. D. Cunningham, General A. Cunningham, Col. R. Everest, Major M. Kittoe, Capt. Hutton, Capt. J. W. Sherwill, Col. J. Abbott, Capt. J. Newbold, Mr. H. F. Blanford, Mr. W. T. Blanford, Dr. R. Mitra, Mr. Wood-Mason, and Mr. H. Blochmann.

A list of all the contributors with the titles of their contributions will be found in Appendix D.

Counting each part as a volume, the Society has published, either directly or indirectly, and including the index, eighty-four volumes of the Journal, and nineteen volumes of the Proceedings.

These 103 volumes represent, roughly speaking, a total of 50,000 pages of closely printed matter, replete with innumerable essays, papers, monographs, and notes of great

interest. Their bulk, however, has made their use a matter of great trouble. To obviate this the writer of this Review prepared, and published in 1856, an index to the last two volumes of the Asiatic Researches and the first 23 volumes of the Journal; but it was compiled, as stated in its preface, "to render the varied and valuable matter contained in the Transactions of the Society easy of reference to the compiler, and pretended to be nothing more than a resumé of the several-volume indexes to the Journal and Researches, giving, under the usual alphabetical arrangement, nothing more than the subjects, the names of authors, and the local connection of the articles as they appear in their titles." A carefully-arranged analytical index to the entire set is what is now much needed, and it is to be hoped that the beginning of the second century of the Society's career will be signalized by such a compilation.

The subject, nature, and value of the papers published in these volumes have been noticed at some length in the subsequent parts of this Review. Suffice it now to observe that they have contributed greatly to enhance the reputation of the Society.

Oriental Publications.

Though himself actively engaged in the translation of oriental works into the English language, Sir William Jones seems to have entertained no idea of the Asiatic Society immediately taking up the task of printing oriental texts, or of translating them; and it was not until several years afterwards that the subject was mooted. The first proposition came from the Brethren of the Baptist Mission at Serampore, who offered to undertake, under certain conditions, the publication of a series of Sanskrit works with translations,[1]

[1] Proceedings, May 15, 1806.

and the Society, on the recommendation of the Committee of Papers, agreed to give the Missionaries the aid required, the patronage being limited at the time to a single work to be selected by a Committee appointed for the purpose.[1] The work approved was the Rámáyana, and the Society agreed to pay a monthly contribution of Rs. 150, on the distinct understanding that the work would be completed in three years. On October 7, 1807, a second book was selected—the text of the Sánkhya,—and a resolution was come to to extend the monthly grant to a period of eighteen months after the expiration of the first three years. The plan, however, fell through, and the contribution was stopped after the publication of the first three volumes of the Rámáyana. While these negociations were proceeding, Sir James Mackintosh, then President of the 'Literary Society of Bombay,' submitted a scheme for the regular publication of Sanskrit texts; and on July 2, 1806, the Asiatic Society resolved to "publish, from time to time, as their funds will admit of it, in volumes distinct from the Asiatic Researches, translations of short works in the Sanskrit and other Asiatic languages, or extracts and descriptive accounts of books of greater length in those languages, which may be offered to the Society and appear deserving of publication," and "that, as this publication may be expected gradually to extend to all Asiatic books of which copies may be deposited in the Library of the Society, and even to all works extant in the learned languages of Asia, the series of volumes be entitled 'Bibliotheca Asiatica,' or a descriptive catalogue of Asiatic books, with extracts and translations." No action seems to have been taken in accordance with these resolutions, beyond a few casual grants in aid of oriental publications by private individuals.

[1] Proceedings, July 3, 1805.

On the arrival of M. Csoma de Körös at Almorah, after his long sojourn in Tibet, occasion arose for the Society to obtain from Government a grant for the publication of that distinguished scholar's Tibetan Grammar and Dictionary (1830). The Society at the same time sanctioned an allowance of Rs. 50 per mensem to that gentleman, who was then in very straitened circumstances. This allowance was continued to the day of his death in May 1843. Soon after, the Society undertook to print an Annamatican Dictionary, prepared by the Bishop of Isauropolis. Subsequently, grants were obtained for the publication of a Burmese and a Siamese Dictionary, as also for Mr. Macnaghten's edition of the *Sháhanámeh* and Mr. Brownlow's edition of the Macan manuscript of the *Alif Lailá*, the printing of which the Society undertook to superintend.

It was not, however, until 1835, that any systematic attempt was made for the publication of oriental works. The battle which had long raged between the Anglicists and the Orientalists, in regard to the language best adapted for the education of the people of this country, came to a close with the overthrow of the latter, and the Government adopted a resolution to put a stop to all oriental works which were then in the press on its account, directing the printed sheets 'to be sold' as 'waste paper.' The Society now intervened, and, after protracted discussions at two sittings, came to a resolution to undertake the completion of the abandoned works, and to arrange for the carrying on of similar works in future.[1] The last part of the resolution was referred to a Special Committee, consisting of Dr. Mill, Mr. Hay Macnaghten, Mr. Turton, Mr. William Grant, Mr. J. R. Colvin, and Mr. J. Prinsep, with a view

[1] Proceedings, April and June, 1835.

"to prepare a memorial from the Society to the Court of Directors and the Board of Control, stating that Government here have withdrawn the funds hitherto appropriated to the revival of oriental literature in this country,—and respectfully impressing upon the authorities at home the importance of having some public funds appropriated to this purpose, and requesting them to adopt such means as they think fit for providing a sufficient sum for this important subject."[1] A strong representation was got up, and forwarded under the signature of Sir Edward Ryan, then President of the Society, to the Court of Directors,[2] and an application submitted to Government for the gift of the printed sheets of the abandoned works.

The works abandoned were :—(1) The *Mahábhárata*, of which 1,400 pages had been printed, and 2,000 remained unfinished ; (2) the *Rájataranginí*, of which about 200, out of 620, pages had been printed ; (3) the *Naishadha*, of which 200, out of 600, had been printed ; (4) the *Sausruta*, of which about one half had been printed ; (5) the *Saíravidyá*, a Sanskrit translation of Hooper's *Vade Mecum*, of which a few pages only had been printed ; (6) the *Fatáwe Alamgiri*, in six volumes royal quarto, of which only two had been printed ; (7) the *Ináya*, in four volumes quarto, of which the last two had been printed ; (8) the *Kházánat ul Ilm*, a quarto volume of 620 pages, of which about one-fifth remained to be printed ; (9) the *Jawáme ul Ilm ul Riázi*, an Arabic translation of Hutton's 'Mathematics,' a quarto volume of 120 pages ; (10) the *Anis ul Musharrahín*, an Arabic translation of Hooper's *Vade Mecum* by Dr. Tytler ; and (11) a Treatise on Algebra in Arabic. The cost of finishing these works was estimated

[1] Journal, Vol. IV, 355.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, 472.

at Rs. 20,000, and in a Prospectus issued at the time, the patronage of the friends of oriental literature and of the public of India was solicited in aid and support of the important undertaking. The co-operation of European literary associations was also invited. The call was cordially responded to. The President of the Société Asiatique de Paris wrote a sympathizing letter, offering the co-operation of the Society he represented,[1] and the native public most warmly took up the cause. The Pandits and the Maulvies who had been employed by Government to edit the works volunteered their services free of charge, and one gentleman, Navváb Tauhar Jang, of Chitpur, undertook to defray the entire cost of printing the *Share ul Islám.*

The works, with two exceptions, were completed in four years. The exceptions were the *Saríravidyá* and the Treatise on Algebra. The former was, after protracted discussions, abandoned, because it was thought that it would be useless without a profusion of woodcut illustrations, which could not be procured in India at that time; and the latter, because there seemed to be no demand for it.

The petition of the Society to the Court of Directors was at first coldly received ; but through the exertions of Professor H. H. Wilson, then the London Agent of the Society, and of the President and other influential members of the Royal Asiatic Society, a grant of Rs. 500 per mensem was ultimately sanctioned. The correspondence on the subject appears in the Proceedings of June 1838. The following extract from the Court's Despatch will show the terms on which the grant was made. Writing to the Government of India, the Court said:—"Although the works formerly published may not always have been

[1] Proceedings, November 1836.

selected in the most judicious manner, we are still of opinion that the publication of works—and works on instruction in the Eastern languages—should not be abandoned; we therefore authorize you to devote a sum, not exceeding five hundred rupees a month, to the preparation and publication of such works, either through the medium of the Asiatic Society, or any equally appropriate channel, and we shall expect an annual return of the works published and ten copies of each book for distribution in this country."

The means thus placed at the disposal of the Society would have enabled Mr. James Prinsep to have done an immense deal of good, but his arduous and unremitting labours of several years in India had undermined his health, and he was obliged, immediately after the receipt of the Despatch, to retire from India for a change. It was hoped that the bracing air of his native land and abstinence from work would soon bring on a restoration; but he sank under his illness early in 1840. The estimate he had formed of the probable cost of completing the works was insufficient, and, at the time of his retirement, there was a heavy debt, for the payment of which his successors, Dr. O'Shaughnessy and Mr. Sutherland thought fit to confine their oriental works to the completion of the *Mahábhárata*. Mr. Henry Torrens was elected Secretary in May 1840. He was a distinguished scholar, an elegant writer, and a linguist, but he had neither the energy nor the aptitude to control financial details, and was withal unmindful of the restraints of rules, and under his management the grant was frittered away on works which did not come under the terms of the Court's Despatch. The annual account called for by the Court was not rendered during the whole time of his management to the close of 1846. The only new work published during

his secretaryship was an edition of the *Tárikh-i-Nádiri* in Persian. A contribution of Rs. 500 was also paid to cover the cost of printing a selection of small poems in Sanskrit, under the name *Kávya-sangraha*. When the accounts were cast in the last named year, it was found that no less than Rs. 25,000 had been devoted to purposes unconnected with oriental literature.

Bibliotheca Indica.

The immediate question before the Council of 1847 was, how to utilize the grant, and a Committee was appointed to devise means to carry out the Court's wishes regarding the publication of the Vedas. The plan approved by the Society was, as suggested in a judicious minute by Mr. Laidley (dated December 1847) to start a monthly serial under the name of 'Bibliotheca Indica' and the editorship of a competent scholar, aided by a staff of Pandits. The work was taken in hand at the beginning of 1848. Dr. Roer was appointed the chief editor on a salary of Rs. 100 per mensem, and his principal duty was to supply English translations of the works taken in hand. The first work selected was the Sanhitá of the Rig Veda, but before four fasciculi of it could be published, news arrived that the Court of Directors had made arrangements with Dr. Max Müller for the publication of that work, together with an English translation by Dr. H. H. Wilson, and the Society's project had, therefore, to be abandoned. Dr. Roer then took up the Upanishads and some other works.

At the close of 1850, the Council appointed a Sub-Committee to report on the publication, and at their suggestion the post of chief editor was abolished, and rules were framed for the remuneration of editors according to the nature of the work done. The Committee further suggested, "that, whilst it is of the highest importance for

translations to be made here in India with all Hindu assistance, it is not expedient to limit the publication of volumes in the 'Bibliotheca Indica' to works which the editors may be prepared at once to translate. It is evident that such a restriction would operate unfavorably, as in many cases, years must be spent before a perfectly satisfactory translation could be finished. At the same time the Committee recommend that no work should be printed without so much critical apparatus as is necessary for giving an account of the manuscripts made use of, their authority and age, &c., and a resumé of the contents of the volume."[1] These suggestions were unanimously approved, and they gave a new impulse to the publication. Distinguished scholars, such as Dr. Sprenger, Dr. Ballantyne, Pandit Isvarachandra Vidyáságara, tendered their services, and several very valuable works were taken in hand. The publications were carried on with great spirit and energy, soon outstripping the limit imposed by the amount of the grant, and in five years it became necessary to put a stop to the issue of the 'Bibliotheca' in order to pay off arrears.

About this time a letter was received from Professor Wilson, finding fault with some of the Arabic works then in course of publication, on the ground of their being unconnected with India, and therefore of little interest to local scholars, and not contemplated by the terms of the grant.[2] This was followed by a Despatch from the Court of Directors, in which the same arguments were repeated in an official form. Adverting to the excess of expenditure over income, the Court remarked:—

"This augmented activity and enhanced expense arise especially from the great impulse given to publications in Mahommedan litera-

[1] Journal, Vol. XIX, 629. [2] Proceedings, May 1856.

ture and the Arabic language. Of the 38 Nos. of the 'Bibliotheca Indica' issued in 1854, twenty-seven are Arabic, only ten are Sanskrit, and one English; the cost of the former is Rs. 6,752, of the ten latter less than half, *viz.*, Rs. 3,036. This is a disproportion which is inconsistent with the comparative claims of the two departments of literature, whether the ratios of the population or the value of the individual works be considered, for on referring to the Mahommedan works, we observe that they have no relation whatever to India, nor to any popular form even of the literature of the Indian Mahommedans; but they embrace to a very large extent abstruse Mahommedan theology and Sufyism, in works which none but a few of the most learned Moulvies can read, and which still fewer understand, works utterly worthless for the illustration of the past or present condition of India, and of little utility to European scholars. When we authorized the appropriation of a special grant to the encouragement of Indian literature, we had in view especially the literature of the Hindus, although, we did not purpose to exclude Mahommedan literature of local origin or interest, such as the historical works epitomized by Sir Henry Elliott; but we certainly did not contemplate a voluminous and costly publication of the theology and tradition and spiritual mysticism of the Mussulmans, which is the literature of Arabia and not at all that of India.

"We therefore direct that the encouragement of such works be hereafter withheld. The publications that have been commenced may be completed, but upon their completion we expect that the Asiatic Society, in applying part of the funds placed at its disposal to Arabic or Persian works, will have due regard to the light which they are calculated to throw, not upon the literature or theology of Arabia, but upon the literature and history of India."[1]

The principles here laid down have, since the date, been fully recognized and generally acted upon by the Society, though the varying ascendancy of Sanskrit and Semitic

[1] Proceedings, August 1856.

scholars in the Council of the Society have at times caused a slight preponderance on the one side or the other.

The practice now is to divide the grant into two parts, one of which is devoted to Sanskrit, and the other to works in Arabic, Persian and other languages. This apportionment was first brought to the notice of Government in 1868 by Mr. Whitley Stokes, then Legal Member of the Supreme Council, who, while accepting the propriety of it, remarked, that, in view of the vast extent and paramount importance of Sanskrit literature, and the little that has yet been done towards its preservation, the amount devoted to it was very small, and recommended it to be doubled. The Government approved of his suggestion, and the Society now receives an additional allowance of Rs. 250 per mensem exclusively for Sanskrit works.

The total number of Oriental works published by the Society up to date amounts to 140. Of these, one hundred and eleven have been published, or are in course of publication, in the 'Bibliotheca Indica.' The works may be noticed under two heads : 1st, Semitic ; 2nd, Sanskritic. The Semitic series includes, besides some standard law books in Arabic, all the standard works in Persian, on the general history of India, together with a critical edition and an English translation of the Ain-i-Akbari, the well-known Gazetteer of Akbar's extensive empire. An imperfect version of this work was published early in this century by Mr. Francis Gladwin, but it did not include the most important part of the work—its numerous tabular statements. The translation, moreover, had been long since out of print. The late Mr. Blochmann, therefore, undertook a new and faithful translation, and brought out the first volume in 1873, together with the whole of the text. For rigorous exactitude of rendering, for faithful repre-

sentation of the spirit of the original, and for the richness, variety and profusion of its illustrative and explanatory notes, the book is a model of its kind. No Persian work has as yet had the benefit of so able and so faithful an interpreter. It is deeply to be regretted that the lamented death of its learned and enthusiastic Secretary has deprived the Society not only of his invaluable services, but also of the opportunity of completing the work in the same style.

The Sanskrit series includes the leading works of almost all the departments of Brâhmanic literature. The Vedas are represented by twenty-five different works ; the Purânas, by three ; the philosophical schools, by the text-books of all the six leading systems and several commentaries ; the Yotishah, by three, two with translations. The law-books, the rituals of the Vedas, grammar, rhetoric, and other branches have also been represented by important works. Notices of these in some detail will appear in a subsequent part of this Review. It is doubtful if any Society in Europe has, within fifty years, done for any classic literature as much as the Asiatic Society of Bengal has done for Sanskrit literature since 1847. This work alone has given to it the highest claim to the consideration and respect of the people of this country and of oriental scholars in all parts of the world.

Up to date, the Bibliotheca series has come up to a total of 747 fasciculi ; of these 280 are Semitic, including English translations of four works in 28 fasciculi. The names of the translations are : 1, Ain-i-Akbari; 2 Tabakât-i-Nâsiri ; 3 History of the Khalifs ; 4 Shamshieh, or the Logic of the Arabians. The Sanskrit series takes up 467 fasciculi, including translations of twenty different works in 50 fasciculi. The works in the Semitic series have been edited by Dr. Aloys Sprenger, Captain Nassau

Lees, Hekekyan Bey, Mr. Henry Blochmann, Major Raverty, Captain Jarrett, and the Maulvies of the Calcutta Madrissa. The credit of the Sanskrit series is due to several scholars, of whom—

Dr. E. Roer	... edited	33	fasc.
„ Fitz-Edward Hall ...	... „	18	„
„ Ballantyne	... „	5	„
„ E. B. Cowell	... „	17	„
Professor Jayanáráyana Tarkapanchánan	... „	19	„
„ Bharatachandra Siromani	... „	16	„
„ Mahesachandra Nyáyaratna	... „	19	„
Pandit Satyavrata Sámasrami ...	... „	44	„
Dr. Rájendralála Mitra ...	... „	83	„
„ Hoernle	... „	12	„

Appendix C supplies a detailed list of all the works published.

Conservation of Sanskrit Manuscripts.

As a preliminary to the publication of Sanskrit works, it was, at the beginning of this century, deemed expedient to collect information regarding the nature, extent, and character of Sanskrit manuscripts extant in this country. Dr. Farquhar accordingly proposed, on October 5, 1803, that "the Society immediately adopt some effectual steps to procure a catalogue of all the most useful Indian works now in existence, with an abstract of their contents." No action, however, could be taken on it, owing to want of organization for carrying out so vast an undertaking, until July 1, 1807, when a petition was submitted to Government, praying an annual grant of five to six thousand rupees to carry out the object. Mr. Colebrooke, then President of the Society, urged the following arguments in support of this prayer:—

"The utility of such a catalogue is obvious. It would assist the researches of learned men, directing them to the books most

likely to afford the information which they may require; it would promote the studies of oriental scholars, guiding them to the selection of books most deserving of their notice; and, on many points, it would furnish to the literary world as much information as is needed in particular branches of Indian knowledge.

"A catalogue, prepared according to the views of the Asiatic Society, would not only indicate the subject and scope of every valuable book, but would contain extracts of the most curious or important passages in it, besides notices of various topics connected with the work itself, with the history of its author, or that of the sovereign in whose reign he lived, and with the manners and opinions prevalent at the period when he wrote.

"It can scarcely be hoped that a work of so great extent should be undertaken and executed solely at the charge of individuals. The labor will be cheerfully borne by members of the Society, so far as their part of the task reaches, but much preparatory labor must be performed by learned natives, for whom remuneration will be requisite. Private Libraries will, no doubt, be open; but, however extensive some of those libraries may be, and among others, my own collection of Sanskrit manuscripts, it will be still necessary that considerable expense should be incurred in providing books, which may not there be found. It is desirable, for other reasons also, that reliance should not be exclusively placed on the precarious aid of private collections. A library of oriental manuscripts, accessible to the public under proper regulations, would be otherwise greatly beneficial. Asiatic knowledge would be there preserved. The learned, whether Natives or Europeans, would easily supply themselves with transcripts of scarce books, and whenever occasion arose for consulting numerous authorities, the irksome task of reference would be alleviated.

"On every consideration, the Asiatic Society is desirous of forming a collection, as well as of obtaining detailed catalogue, of manuscripts. But the funds of the Society are too limited for the undertaking: and, without aid, either the design must be relinquished, or, if it be prosecuted, a progress answerable to the public expectations cannot be looked for. On the other hand, if the

Asiatic Society had at its disposal a moderate addition to those funds, in an annual sum of five to six thousand rupees, the execution of the scheme might be immediately commenced; and its accomplishment might be expected at a period not very remote."

The Government received the proposition very favorably, and strongly recommended it to the notice of the Court of Directors ; but the Board of Control declined to make the grant, and the project dropped. Mr. Prinsep, in 1837, revived the idea ; and, in the Sanskrit catalogue of the Society's Library, included, by way of a first instalment, the names of all the works contained in the libraries of the Calcutta and the Benares Sanskrit Colleges. This, however, did not meet the requirements of the case, and, in 1867, Pandit Rádhákissen, of Lahore, urged the adoption of a comprehensive scheme that should bring to light the treasures of Sanskrit lore buried in private libraries in India. The Government of Lord Lawrence took it up warmly, and, acting upon the recommendation of Mr. Whitley Stokes, ordered that each of the several subordinate Governments should organize a scheme not only for the preparation of inventories, on a uniform plan, of all manuscripts that may be met with in private collections, but also for the purchasing or the preparation of transcripts of all valuable or rare manuscripts, promising at the same time special grants for the purchase of rare collections, whenever opportunities would offer for so doing. The Government, at the same time, named Dr. Buhler of Bombay, Dr. Kielhorn of Púná, Mr. Burnell of Madras, and the writer of this Review, as persons who, in its opinion, were fit to be entrusted with the management of the undertaking. The amount sanctioned for Bengal was Rs. 3,000 per annum, and the Asiatic Society was asked to superintend its disbursement.

The form recommended by Government was a tabular one, which did not admit of the contents of the manuscripts being given at length. The writer of this Review, when requested to undertake the work, pointed out this defect,[1] and, taking into consideration the fact that a work of this kind could be done only once for all, suggested certain modifications, especially with reference to abstracts of contents. His suggestions were approved both by the Society and the Government, but unfortunately his minute was not circulated to other Governments, and the opportunity for securing uniformity was lost.

The inventories prepared for the Society have been named "Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts," and eighteen fasciculi of these have been published during the last twelve years. The descriptions given are full, and the contents of most of the works have been given in such a way as to obviate the necessity of a future more detailed analysis. In this respect it contrasts very favorably with the lists published in Madras, Bombay, and the N. W. Provinces. The model selected was the admirable catalogue of the Bodleian collection prepared by Dr. Aufrecht. A catalogue has also been prepared by the writer of the library of His Highness the Mahá.ájá Bikáner. It extends to 745 pages, and supplies more or less detailed notices of 1,794 manuscripts.

Although Sanskrit manuscripts are not marketable articles, and the sanctity attached to them by the people of this country render them extremely difficult of access, nevertheless, purchases have been made to the extent of 2,507 codices. These are now preserved in the library of the Asiatic Society.

---

[1] Proceedings, May 1869.

Miscellaneous Works.

It has been incidentally noticed (*ante*, p. 57), that the Society obtained from Government contributions in support of the publication of certain oriental works ; nor were its efforts in this respect limited to works of that description. Scientific works taken in hand in India always found ready support from the Society, both by subscriptions from its own funds as well as by intercession with the Government for special grants. In certain cases the Society, likewise, undertook the task of superintending the printing of literary and scientific works for others. As instances, it may not be amiss here to cite the names of Colonel Dalton's magnificent work on the Ethnology of Bengal, Colonel Mainwaring's Lepcha Grammar and Dictionary, Mr. Beal's Biographical Dictionary, and Mr. Grierson's Grammar of the Northern Behar dialect. Circumstances also arose from time to time to print works independently of the Journal of the Society. The most important and recent work of this class is Messrs. Moore and Hewettson's description of Mr. Atkinson's collection of Indian Lepidoptera, a profusely illustrated quarto volume, which was most welcome to students of Entomology. In 1837, the Society came into possession of the original journals, correspondence, and researches of Messrs. Moorcroft and Trebeck's travels beyond the Himalayas, and immediately placed them in the hands of Messrs. Allen & Co., the charge of editing being entrusted to Dr. Wilson, then its London agent. The whole edition of the work, however, sold off in a short time, and the Society incurred no expense on account of it. Mr. Hodgson's Essay on 'the Coch, Bodo and Dhimal Tribes,' Mr. Laidley's Travels of Fahían, and some other minor works were also published solely, or mainly, at the expense of the Society. A list of these will be found in Appendix C.

Funds.

It has been already stated that, during the first twelve years of its career, the Society possessed no income of any kind. Such small contingent expenses as were incurred in carrying on its affairs were defrayed by the President, or by the Secretary, or by both. When the rules regarding quarterly subscriptions were adopted in 1796, the great object was to accumulate a sufficient sum for the building of a house, and for sometime afterwards very little was spent for other purposes. It was not until the establishment of its museum and library that the ordinary expenses of the Society became heavy, and the periodical cost of the Researches, which subsequently began to be distributed gratis, swallowed up nearly the whole of its income. Moreover, whatever little savings it had, were lost by the failure of Messrs. Palmer and Co., who were the Society's agents till 1828. Difficulties, therefore, arose in 1829, when frequent grants had to be sanctioned for the researches of the Physical Class and for costly illustrations for the Transactions. The cost of the Museum was also steadily on the increase. A very timely relief was about this time received by a donation from the King of Oudh of Rs. 20,000, supplemented by another of Rs. 5,000 from his Prime Minister. This enabled the Society to pay off its debts, and still leave a considerable sum in the hands of its bankers. Unfortunately, however, the failure, in 1833, of Messrs. Mackintosh and Co., who had charge of the money, deprived it entirely of its cash balance. In 1834, one Mr. Bruce, who had been long a member of the Society, left a bequest of £2,000, and the amount was invested in Government Securities, from the interest of which it was expected that the cost of the Researches would be easily and regularly defrayed, and that publication would

be independent of the ordinary resources of the Society; but the monthly contributions for the Journal and heavy expenses on account of the oriental publications began soon to trench upon this vested fund. In 1836, its amount had been reduced to Rs. 17,500, and a resolution was adopted to pay out of it Rs. 200 a month for a Curator.[1] This called forth a vigorous protest,[2] and as it may be of use for reference in future, it may be well to copy it here:—

"It appears to us that in a Society constituted as the Asiatic Society of Bengal is, the existence of a fund vested in Government Securities is absolutely necessary for the permanence of the foundation.

"We consider that such funds are intended to be reserved for cases of extreme emergency, and that the interest only of *such funds* should be carried to the current expenses of the Society.

"We also consider that any infringement of a law upon which the Society's existence may be said to depend, is injurious not only to the Society itself as a body, but to the interests of the members individually; and may be drawn in as a precedent for further encroachments, leading to the ultimate dissolution of the Society.

"For these reasons, we dissent from the resolution passed at the meeting of the Society of the 4th May, 1836, continuing the services of a Curator at two hundred rupees per mensem, the account current shewing a deficiency of Rs. 571-0-1, and the payment of the Curator's salary being proposed to be made out of the vested funds of MR. BRUCE. Further, in adverting to the Secretary's remark, 'that M. BOUCHEZ, the assistant and working Curator, would be competent to set up all new specimens and preserve the present collection,' we see no necessity, under the

[1] Proceedings, May 1836.

[2] *Ibid.*, January 1837.

present difficulties of the Society, of retaining the higher appointment."

Northern Doab, 14*th Dec.* 1836;	P. F. CAUTLEY, *Capt., Arty.*
	H. FALCONER, M.D.
	W. M. DURAND, *Lieut., Engrs.*
	W. E. BAKER, *Lieut., Engrs.*
and, Calcutta, 26*th Jan.* 1837.	ALEXANDER COLVIN, *Lieut.-Col., Engrs.*
	JOHN COLVIN."

This led to the stoppage of the Curator's allowance on the following year. But the mischief had already been done, and the lax management of the finances for some years afterwards, and the unnecessarily large establishment entertained, greatly embarrassed the position of the Society, and accumulated a debt, which in 1846 entirely swamped the vested fund. Retrenchments also became urgently necessary. Instead of a European Assistant Secretary on Rs. 200, a Librarian on Rs. 100, an Assistant Librarian on Rs. 40, a Maulvie and a Pandit on Rs. 30 each, and an Accountant on Rs. 60, total Rs. 460, a single native officer as Assistant Secretary and Librarian on Rs. 100 a month was found ample for the requirements of the Society, and the financial affairs of the Society were managed with perfect smoothness for some time after this change. With greatly extended business, it was not possible, however, to establish a vested fund. From 1847 to 1876, the Society lived on its annual income, but saved nothing. In 1858 a resolution was adopted to the effect, that the composition fees received from Life Members should be vested in Government Securities, and only the interest thereof should be devoted to current expenditure. Compositions, however, were few, and the vested fund therefore remained insignificant. The compensation received from Government in 1875 in lieu of the claim the Society had for accommo-

dation in the Indian Museum building, enabled the Society to vest a large sum in Government Securities, and a portion of it is now held as a Permanent Reserve Fund under Rule 67, which runs thus : "Of the Funds of the Society now invested in Government Securities, Rs. 1,20,000 shall be considered as a *Permanent Reserve Fund* for the benefit of the Society, and it shall not be competent to the Council, or to any of the Society's officers, or to any Committee of the Society, to sell or otherwise alienate the said fund or any portion of it without first recommending the sale or alienation in question to the Society, and taking the votes of the general body of Members as provided in Rules 64 and 65, and, further, such sale or alienation shall only be lawful if carried by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the members who have voted. And should any portion of the Permanent Fund be sold or alienated by authority of the members of the Society, the remainder shall be preserved under this rule in the same manner as if the sum were intact." It is to be hoped that this rule will be scrupulously and most faithfully observed, and no occasion will arise in future for dissentients to record a protest similar to the one quoted above.

Beadroll.

In a brief history like the present it is not possible to give personal notices of all those whose labors have created and sustained the reputation of the Society. Were it otherwise, still sufficient information cannot now be collected regarding the earlier contributors. To make a selection would be an unpleasant and invidious task. Brief notices of most of the authors of papers have, besides, been given in subsequent parts of this Review. It is, nevertheless, desirable to refer here to a few of the most renowned scholars with whom the fame of the Society is intimately associated.

Their names stand on the beadroll of the Society, and as such are deserving of its highest respect.

1. The first and foremost name in this beadroll is that of Sir William Jones, born September 1746, died April 27, 1794. To him the Society owes its foundation and the distinction it attained in the earlier days of its career. No less than 29 papers were contributed by him in the first four volumes of the Asiatic Researches, and his translation of Manu has been a standard text-book of reference for lawyers for a hundred years. He, likewise, translated into English the *Sakuntalá* of Kálidása, and the *Gitagobinda* of Jayadeva. He was a scholar of world-wide renown, and his memory is dearly cherished by all oriental scholars.

2. Sir John Shore, Bart., afterwards Lord Teignmouth, succeeded Sir William Jones on May 26, 1794, and retired to England on May 2, 1797. He contributed only six papers to the Researches, but it was mainly through his exertions that the Society prospered in its infancy. His name is intimately associated with the foundation of the Society, but he is best remembered by the people of this country as the virtual author of the Permanent Settlement of the land-revenue in Bengal.

3. The name of Henry Thomas Colebrooke, born 1765, died March 18, 1837, comes next. He came to India as a writer in the service of the East India Company, and for a long time held the office of a Judge in the Sadar Dewáni Adálat. He was President of the Asiatic Society for ten years, from April 1806 to February 1, 1815, and contributed nineteen papers to the Transactions of the Society. On his retirement from India, he helped the Society as its London agent until the time of his demise. A great mathematician, zealous astronomer, and profound Sanskrit scholar,

he wrote nothing that did not at once command the highest attention from the public, and, notwithstanding the great advance that has been made in oriental researches of late years, his papers are still looked upon as models of their kind. He was the founder of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and contributed several valuable papers to its Transactions.

4. Sir Charles Wilkins, Kt., LL.D., born 1750, died 1833, came out to India as a writer in the East India Company's Civil Service, and devoted himself to the study of the Sanskrit language. He was the first Englishman who acquired a thorough mastery of it, and in 1779 published a grammar of that language. He, likewise, translated the *Bhagavadgítá*, which was published in 1785 under the auspices of Mr. Warren Hastings. He was the first also to bring his profound learning to bear upon Sanskrit palæography, and to decipher several inscriptions, which were unintelligible to the Pandits of his time. He was a scholar of unexampled perseverance, and his unremitting labors in the climate of Bengal forced him to retire from the Service at the close of the last century. In England he published a translation of the *Hitopadesa* and several extracts from the *Mahábhárata*. On the arrival in England of a large collection of oriental manuscripts, soon after the capture of Seringapatam, the Court of Directors appointed him the custodian of those treasures. He was thus the first Librarian of the India House Library. On the establishment of the College at Hailebury, in 1805, he was appointed a visitor of that Institution in the Oriental Department, and at about that time the University of Oxford conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor in Civil Law. At a later period King George IV bestowed on him, in recognition of his high literary merits, the honor of

Knighthood, accompanying that act of favor with the badge of the Guelphic Order.

5. Samuel Davis, Esq., F. R. S., came out to India as an officer of Engineers in the Bengal Presidency, and accompanied the Embassy to Tibet in 1783, but was soon after admitted to the Civil Service of the East India Company. He joined the Society two months after its foundation, and contributed three papers to its Transactions. He was a mathematician and astronomer, and to him is due the credit of having first identified, by actual observations in the company of Pandits at Benares, the asterisms and many of the stars noticed in Sanskrit works. While employed as District Judge and Governor-General's Agent at Benares, he was deeply engaged in astronomical researches in an observatory which he had erected on the top of his house. Vizier Ali, the deposed Naváb of Oudh, revolted at this time, and attacked him with a large following of rowdies at the top of the staircase to his observatory. He defended himself for a long time with a pike, which now forms the crest of his family coat-of-arms. He became Chairman of the Court of Directors, and in that capacity wrote the celebrated Fifth Report on the Permanent Settlement. He was subsequently elected a fellow of the Royal Society of London.

6. Colonel Francis Wilford. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the Society. He wrote ten elaborate essays on historical subjects, which created quite a sensation in his time. Unfortunately, however, the Pandits on whom he relied for his quotations from Sanskrit works betrayed him, and his speculations, therefore, were subsequently found to be not very valuable.

7. Reuben Burrow, Esq., writer in the service of the East India Company. He was a distinguished mathema-

tician and astronomer, and contributed eleven papers in connexion with the mathematics and astronomy of the Hindus.

8. John Bentley, Esq., a writer in the Civil Service, distinguished himself by his researches into Hindu astronomy, for which he deservedly acquired high distinction in Europe.

9. Dr. H. H. Wilson, born 1784, died May 1860. He arrived at Calcutta in 1808, in the Medical Service of the East India Company, became Deputy Secretary to the Society on April 2, 1811, and in two months was elected full Secretary, which office he held till 1833, with two short breaks in 1815 and 1819. He first attracted public notice by an elegant translation of the *Meghadúta*, which was published in 1813. It was followed in rapid succession by other works, among which his 'Theatre of the Hindus' and the Sanskrit-English Dictionary deserve special mention. He contributed also largely to the periodical literature of the day, and to the Asiatic and the Medical and Physical Societies. In 1816, he was appointed Assay Master of the Calcutta Mint, which office he held to the last day of his sojourn in Calcutta. As visitor of the Sanskrit College of Calcutta, he superintended the publication of a large number of Sanskrit books, and, with the assistance of a native staff, had the bulk of the eighteen Puránas translated into English, from cut of which he selected the *Vishnu Purána* for publication. The Chair of Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford was created in 1832, and he assumed it in the summer of the following year. His literary labors in England were incessant, and within a week before his death he completed his translation of the fourth volume of the Rig Veda and a critical review of Max Müller's Vedic Literature. His name stands conspicuous on the roll of those whose genius and labors have

contributed to enlighten the literary world on the early history and civilization of the Hindu race. His connexion with the Society extended over a quarter of a century, and during that period the stability and credit of the Society was thoroughly established.

10. James Prinsep, Esq., born August 20, 1799, died April 22, 1840. 'He was distinguished almost from his infancy for habits of minute attention to whatever fairly attracted his mind, and his ingenuity and skill in design pointed to the profession of an architect as especially appropriate.' But while studying under Pugin, his eyes suffered seriously, and he had to drop his study. This affection lasting long, all opportunity for entering into any learned profession was lost. On his recovery, he entered as an apprentice to Mr. Bingley, Assay Master of the Royal Mint, London, and in due course, receiving a certificate of proficiency, was sent out as assistant to the Assay Master of the Calcutta Mint, in 1819. After a few months' service he went up with Dr. Wilson, then Assay Master of Calcutta, to Benares, the Mint office where required special remodelling. Dr. Wilson returned after the completion of his mission, and Mr. Prinsep was left there as Assay Master for several years. In 1833, he succeeded Dr. Wilson at the Calcutta Mint. During his stay at Benares, he published a large illustrated work on the temples of that holy city. He, likewise, contributed to the pages of the 'Gleanings in Science,' of which he was for a time the editor. The Asiatic Society testified its respects for his services by voting a bust, which now graces its meeting-room; and the public of Calcutta, in recognition of his services, erected near Fort William a magnificent Ghat to his memory. His services to the Asiatic Society, from 1832 to 1838, have been frequently referred to in the preceding

pages, as also in the subsequent parts of this Review. Suffice it to say that his administration was the most brilliant and successful in the annals of the Society.

11. Rev. W. H. Mill, D.D., elected 1833, retired in 1842. He came out in the Ecclesiastical Service of the East India Company, and for a long time held the office of Principal of Bishop's College, Sibpur. His contributions to the Journal were not very numerous, but high encomium is due to his patience, perseverance, and learning in deciphering the inscriptions on the Allahabad column, in one of the oldest Indian characters. He was a profound Sanskrit scholar, and universally held in high esteem. To mark their sense of veneration for him, the members of the Society have set up a bust to his honor.

12. Brian Houghton Hodgson, Esq., Bengal Civil Service, born 1799, living. He came out to India in 1819, and spent the greater part of his time in the Himalayas, holding for several years the office of Resident at the Court of Khatmandu, Nepal. He utilized to the utmost the very favourable opportunities he had of carrying on his literary and scientific pursuits in a till then untrodden field, and the service he has done to the cause of science is immense. His contributions to the Society amount to a total of 112 papers, besides large donations in exceedingly valuable manuscripts and specimens of Natural History. On his retirement from the Civil Service in 1843, the Society voted him a bust, and his name is intimately associated with the progress of the Society. Those of his collaborateurs who are still living cherish for him the kindest affection and respect.

Summary.

The details given above, meagre as they are, show that the Asiatic Society has, during its career of a hundred years, fully carried

out the objects of its existence. To bring the record of its services to a focus :

1. It has provided for the use of scholars a commodious house, valued at Rs. 1,50,000.

2. It has got up a library, containing thirty thousand volumes, of which upwards of eight thousand are manuscripts.

3. It has a collection of ancient coins and medals, valued at ten thousand rupees.

4. It has a a small but valuable collection of pictures and memorial busts.

5. It got up an Archæological and Ethnological Museum of considerable extent, a Geological Museum rich in meteorites and Indian fossils, and a Zoological Museum, all but complete as regards the Avi-fauna of India.

6. It has published a total of 354 volumes, including 21 volumes of the Asiatic Researches and Index, 84 volumes of the Journal and Index, 19 volumes of Proceedings, 167 volumes of Oriental works of different kinds, 31 volumes of miscellaneous works relating to India, 14 volumes of catalogues of various kinds, and 18 volumes of 'Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts.'

These are deeds which, for extent, variety, and usefulness, may well claim the consideration of the public. They compare very favorably with the works of other and older Societies in other parts of the earth. To the student of science in India they have proved of incalculable service. And it is in view of these the Society this day celebrates its Centenary Jubilee.
