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LEARNED AND LITERARY SOCIETIES.

THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

Mr. Lovell Reeve has published, in the form of a pamphlet, a letter addressed by him to the Earl of Derby, as President of the above Society; wherein he exposes the particulars of mismanagement which have brought it into its present condition of inaction, and proposes for previous consideration a series of resolutions which it is his purpose to submit at the next monthly meeting for General Business, with a view to the restoration of the scientific character and prosperity of that body. "Whilst the Zoological Society," observes Mr. Reeve, "holds the Charter for the promotion of Animal Physiology, no other can be instituted; by its inactivity the progress of Zoology is intercepted, and, upon the principle that 'he that gathereth not, scattereth,' it is passing into a state of impotence or retrogression."

There is no community in the world, as Mr. Reeve observes, possessing such manifold advantages, from the circumstances and diffusion of her empire, for the study and critical investigation of the animal kingdom as Great Britain; and an extremely favourable opportunity presented itself for the advancement of Zoology when the Society was first instituted. "The resources of the Linnean were not commensurate to meet the increasing study and acquisitions of both Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms. They were represented by two distinct classes of investigators, of which the botanical greatly predominated; and it was owing to the laudable zeal of a few individuals that a new Society was incorporated by Royal Charter 'for the advancement of Zoology and Animal Physiology, and the introduction of new and curious subjects of the Animal Kingdom.' * * The affairs of the Society during the first few years were characterized by a remarkable degree of prosperity; every succeeding year exhibited an increase in its resources, until, in 1836, the number of members exceeded 3,000, and the income for that year amounted to upwards of 19,000*l.*; the scientific meetings were numerous attended, and by the zealous activity of the Secretary, Mr. Bennett, an active correspondence was established with contributing members in all parts of the world. Every possible encouragement was given to zoologists at home by the publication of Papers; and two substantial volumes, of high credit to the Society, was the result. There was an abundance of zoological matter at this period of the Society's prosperity; and a considerable impetus was given to its finances by the exhibition of the Giraffes. This attraction could not, however, be prolonged beyond a season; the novelty became exhausted; and as the Society's interests were chiefly stimulated at this time by the caprice of fashion, a reverse of fortune naturally followed. In 1837, the year following, the Society's income diminished upwards of 5,000*l.*, causing a panic in the exchequer, from which I date its decline. In what manner did the Council meet this alarming deficiency? By suddenly contracting their expenditure several hundred pounds, even, beyond the amount of the deficit, for the sake of adding to the Reserved Fund. At the very moment when a few thousand pounds were wanted for building a spacious Museum, in accordance with the recommendation of a Special Committee, for the display of the Comingian Collection of Shells and Mollusca, far surpassing, both in value, preservation, and number of species, that of the British Museum, which the spirited owner had gratuitously offered on those conditions: at the very moment when a judicious appropriation of a portion of the Funded Capital

would have helped to re-establish the Society's financial prosperity, they entered upon a most injurious system of retrenchment. Instead of employing a tithe of the Reserve for the maintenance and stability of their resources, the superfluous retrenchment for that very year added nearly 1,000*l.* to the Funded Capital; and the Council blindly congratulated themselves, like the unprofitable servant in the Parable, upon laying up their talents in a napkin. This undermining policy was carried out with diametrical force until the year 1842; the annual income diminished to 10,000*l.*, the Funded Capital increased in an opposite ratio to 13,000*l.*; then followed the effects which the financial intelligence of the Council had not foreseen:—the receipts were not equal to the lowest expenditure that any system of retrenchment could enforce; the mercury in the financial thermometer of the treasury was rising rapidly to 'hot water'; and in the short space of two years no less than 5,500*l.* was taken out of the napkin to meet the exigencies of the revenue, now fallen to 8,600*l.*, to say nothing of a 1,200*l.* balance of liabilities. The Council had now reached their climacteric; * * nearly ten years' accumulation of capital was required to meet the current expenses of two; and I have no hesitation in saying, had that sum been judiciously appropriated at an earlier period, in the true spirit of the Charter, 'for the advancement of Zoology and Animal Physiology,' the Society's interests and scientific character would have been maintained with undiminished vigour."

Of the Society's management in the matter of publication, Mr. Reeve gives the following review. The publication of the first part of its Transactions was followed by a sale of 262 copies—an issue on which any London bookseller would have founded golden hopes for a work on zoology; and "the consequence of this encouraging circulation was, that during the first period of my averages, 1833 to 1837, five parts of the 'Transactions,' size royal quarto, containing many very beautifully illustrated Memoirs, of the highest zoological importance, were produced at a net cost to the Society of less than a hundred and sixtieth part of its income. Of 1,500*l.* expended in four years, 1,100*l.* was recovered by the sale, thus leaving the stock and copyright in the Society's possession, with a deficit of only 400*l.*; 100*l.* per annum being all that was required for distributing these important Memoirs into every civilized corner of the globe. * * * During the next tetrennial period, the Council did not expend one thousandth portion of its income. In the next four years, only 530*l.* was expended on the 'Transactions,' instead of 1,500*l.*; with an increasing ratio of returns! 490*l.* being the amount sold; thus showing that the 'Transactions' for that period were produced at a nominal annual expenditure of 10*l.* If volumes of 'Transactions' had increased in number as the stimulus for publication increased, any such infinitesimal balance of profit and expenditure would have indicated the successful issue of the undertaking; but the last period of four years exhibited the very reverse of this;—out of 169*l.* paid out, only 63*l.* was returned; showing that the 'Transactions' at this period cost the Society a larger sum than during the first period, with little more than one-third of the result."

A particular instance or two of the Society's slumber over the most important purposes of its institution may, also, be given. In the Report for 1844, "a Part of 'Transactions' was formally announced to be 'in a considerable state of forwardness'; in the Report for 1845, read at the last Anniversary Meeting, not one word was said about its progress; the Part that was in a considerable state of forwardness the year before, remains *in statu* to this day."

The next instance is one which, Mr. Reeve observes, involves a loss, probably irreparable, to the whole scientific world.—"In 1842-3, when occupied with the concluding part of my 'Conchologia Systematica,' Professor Owen made me the liberal offer of a Paper, on two extremely rare genera of Mollusks, for publication as an Appendix; it consisted of the Anatomy of *Lithedaphus* and *Pholadomya*, accompanied by coloured dissections, executed with a degree of elaboracy and beauty which I scarcely remember to have before seen; only the shells of these animals had been discovered hitherto, and these of such rare occurrence, that they are esteemed by collectors, to this day, at the value of 5*l.* and 10*l.*

each. The history of *Lithedaphus* (Conch. Syst. vol. ii. p. 31, pl. 144, f. 5 to 7) is one of considerable importance, because it involves an entirely new feature in the group of animals to which it belongs. The *Pholadomya* is a mollusk of still greater rarity, and derives additional interest from the circumstance of there being only one recent species, whilst several are known in a fossil state. Thus much in testimony of the value of the Paper in a zoological point of view; now for the fate which it met with in the hands of the Society. I was so much pleased with the condescension of the Hunterian Professor in allowing it to appear in my work, that not a moment was lost in putting it in type; when, however, the proof came in, I began to reflect upon the propriety of transferring a memoir of this abstruse and important character to the 'Transactions of the Zoological Society.' Professor Owen readily acceded to my suggestion; and the proof, of which only two or three impressions were taken, together with the drawings, were handed over to the Curator. The paper was read at the next Scientific Meeting, the drawings, to the best of my recollection, were exhibited, the matter came in due course before the Publication Committee, was entered in the Minute Book, and two referees were appointed in the usual form to report on its being eligible for publication in the 'Transactions.' Such is the history of this affair as far as I am enabled to trace it;—neither Paper nor Drawings have ever been heard of since. * * Nearly two years elapsed before the non-appearance of this Memoir excited my suspicion; and when an inquiry was instituted, not a member of the Establishment knew anything about it;—the Papers are lost, and the circumstances are altogether obliterated from their recollection."

As instances like these of the Society's wasteful inaction are likely to make a far more beneficial impression than any amount of general assertion, on those to whom the necessity of its re-animation has to be submitted, we digress from the pamphlet of Mr. Reeve to add another example which has been furnished to ourselves.—On the 22nd of February, 1842, the Hunterian Professor contributed a most important paper, 'On the Myology of the *Apteryx*,'—copiously illustrated with coloured anatomical drawings. For the information of those of our readers who may not be acquainted with the nature of this remarkable bird, we may briefly state, that, owing to the curious limitation of its powers of flight, it is confined to the Island of New Zealand. It has no analogue in any part of the globe; and is chiefly valued on account of its affinity to that extraordinary extinct species, 'The Dodo,'—also an ancient dweller in that insular region,—of which only a dried head and foot have been preserved. Although living probably at this moment, the *Apteryx* is a bird of extremely rare occurrence; and the specimen dissected by Professor Owen was only obtained after repeated instructions and perseverance. The only example known for a long time in Europe was one in the possession of the President, the Earl of Derby; the memoir was, therefore, one of peculiar interest to the Zoological Society. After passing the usual ordeal of the Publication Committee, the paper was ordered to be printed and published in the 'Transactions'; the plates were engraved, and proofs corrected for publication three years ago! From that period the matter has been utterly neglected; and this important paper remains as a sealed book in the Society's lumber-room. It is due only to the mere chance circumstance of a specimen of the *Apteryx* never having reached Paris, that Professor Owen's investigations have not been anticipated by M. de Blainville,—as in the case of *Pholadomya*.

We must refer the Members of the Zoological Society to Mr. Reeve's pamphlet for an exposition of the similar mismanagement which has been evinced in the matters of the Library and the Museum; and come at once to the measures of regeneration which he submits now to the consideration of the Council,—and on which he will hereafter call for a decision: these are:—1st. The centralization of the Collections, Library, Scientific Meetings, and Business Offices, in some convenient part of the metropolis, easy of access to members and to the public. 2nd. The appointment of a Vice-Secretary, who shall represent the interests of the Scientific Business in Council, and be responsible for its character and advancement.

3rd. The introduction of a Quarterly Illustrated Journal, in place of the 'Proceedings,' edited by the Vice-Secretary, and available to Members at twenty per cent. under the published price. 4th. The admission of Members to participate in the Scientific Business at an annual subscription of 14 ls., without entrance fee, exclusive of the privileges of the Gardens. The arguments by which Mr. Reeve supports these several propositions will also be found in the pamphlet by those whom they concern, and should be consulted before the meeting for General Business.

OUR WEEKLY GOSSIP.

It is beyond all question that the world is improving in its philosophy; and "the wisdom of our ancestors" has ceased to be a phrase of power for keeping summarily down the wisdom of to-day. The men are nearly all, for their own peace and the world's advancement, gone to their graves, who would have contended that the removal of the popular foulness involved the loss of something sterling in the popular character, and that a clean person was a refinement dangerously unsuited to the calculations of the poor. We trust the time is coming when "the Great Unwashed" will have lost its application as a descriptive name for the people. The principle of the Bath and Washhouse for the labouring poor is fairly received into the improving policy of the day; and the practice, wherever the means have been provided, has been gratefully adopted by the long neglected and calumniated people. From the first, we have supported the movement in its favour, by all the strong moral arguments which, to our apprehension, it involves; and we are satisfied that they need only bringing fairly, and keeping, before the public—fortified as they now are by the visible benefits which the partial experiment has conferred—to insure a provision for this great moral agent of cleanliness in all municipalities. With a view to this result, a petition was, last month, presented to the House of Commons by the City Committee appointed to take charge, in this important matter, of the interests of the poor,—based upon the reasons of the case and the success of the trial,—soliciting the assistance of the law for facilitating the establishment of public baths and washhouses, and their support for a limited period at the public expense. The prayer of the petition is—that the House will pass an Act "enabling such boroughs and parishes as may voluntarily resolve on adopting its provisions, to establish public baths and washhouses, for the use, at moderate charges, of their respective inhabitants; for that purpose to obtain loans, as for other public works; for the repayment of such loans, and the support of the establishments during such a period as may be necessary for bringing them into full work; to impose moderate rates, and to carry the income to be derived from such establishments (which, when they are in full work, may be reasonably expected to leave a yearly surplus over expenditure) to the credit of the rates." To this measure Government, we are informed, has given its assent; and a Bill to carry out the suggestion will be brought into parliament shortly after the present holidays.

The movement in favour of the early closing of shops in the metropolis, too—which is one demonstration of a widely spreading sentiment as to the necessity and humanity and wisdom of limiting the hours of toil, and affording to the laborious some chance for mental cultivation and wholesome recreation—is progressing. Lord Ashley presided at a meeting of the Metropolitan Drapers Association on the subject last week, at which a resolution was passed that the persons present pledged themselves "to abstain in future from making purchases after 7 o'clock in the evening, and to discountenance the practice on the part of others;" and expressed their "willingness to contribute towards the fund being now raised by the Association for the dissemination of sound and just views upon the subject."

We are able to state, on unquestionable authority, that a treaty for the international protection of copyright has just been signed, at Berlin, between Prussia and England; in which it is confidently expected that, before the ratification, Saxony will join. The consequence will be a reduction of the duty to 15s. per cwt. on at least half the German books imported into England.

The "Royal Property," as Vauxhall Gardens claim somewhat oddly to be called, opened on Monday last, under such "skye influences" as are a novel feature in its entertainments, and prove *Punch* to be no infallible prophet. When the opening was announced as forthcoming, that humourist informed its readers that the operatives in the umbrella trade instantly struck for an advance of wages. If this be true, they have made a miscalculation likely to recoil upon themselves—the prospects of that manufacture looking unusually blank, just now, in spite of the Vauxhall season.

The Paris papers announce the death of M. Barba, one of the oldest booksellers in that capital. M. Barba was an actor in his youth; and for thirty years past he has been the Providence of dramatic authors, in his later character of a publisher. The same papers speak of the death, too, of M. Gentil, a "man of letters" belonging to a past generation,—formerly reader to King Charles the Tenth.

In the same capital, the Academy of Sciences has elected M. Jacobi, the geometrician of Berlin, to fill up the vacancy occasioned in its list of foreign members by the death of the astronomer Bessel. The opening sitting of the Congress of the Institut Historique was held on Sunday, at the Hotel de Ville; and M. E. Deschamps delivered, on the occasion, what is described as an eloquent and philosophical discourse on the influence of the spirit of France upon Europe during the last two centuries. The Academy of Moral and Political Sciences held its annual public sitting last week—M. Dunoyer presiding. The prize on the *Théorie de la Certitude* was awarded to M. Javary, Regent of Philosophy at the College of Libourne; but the prize in Morals and that in Political Economy and Statistics were neither of them earned,—and both stand over till the year 1848. M. Mignet, the perpetual secretary, closed the proceedings of the day with an eulogium upon the life and works of M. Comte.

The following names may be added to the list of those, coming under the presentation of the Minister of Public Instruction, on whom the King has conferred promotion in the Legion of Honour. M. de Mirbel, Member of the Paris Academy of Sciences, and M. Serres, Member of the Academy of Rouen, have received the rank of Commanders; and that of Officer has been bestowed on MM. De Feletz, of the Académie Française; Brongniart and De Savigny, of the Academy of Sciences; Ampère and Amédée Thierry, of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres; Ramey, President of the Academy of the Fine Arts; De Lancy, Administrator of the Bibliothèque de Sainte-Geneviève; and Viguerie, Member of the Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres at Toulouse.

From Rome, it is stated that a society of private individuals has presented to the Government a plan, by which they undertake to render the Tiber navigable to large vessels as far as Ponte Felice. The proposal further contemplates the construction of a port at Fiumicino; and the establishment of a service of steam-boats, on the one side to Leghorn, and on the other to Naples, without touching at Civita Vecchia. The answer of the Government has not been given; but, if another piece of gossip be true which reaches us from the same head-quarters of exclusion, viz. that the Pope has consented to let a company light the city with gas, there certainly are hopes for the Company of the Tiber. The Government that has overcome its fear of light may be expected finally to conquer its objections to locomotion.

From Copenhagen it is stated that letters have been received in that city from Reikiavik, announcing that the eruption of Mount Hecla ceased on the 5th of April last—having been in uninterrupted action since the 2nd of September in the previous year—a period of seven months and three days.

A Swedish botanist, who assumes to himself the discovery of the means of preserving flowering trees and shrubs in all their beauty, lately sent to the Academy of Sciences at Stockholm a tea-rose, which he affirms that he embalmed in the year 1844,—and the flowers of which, as well as the leaves and stems, are in perfect preservation. If this discovery shall be confirmed, it will be of incalculable value; as, by it, the plants of all climates may be preserved, and transplanted to any distance, bearing all their natural appearances.

Mr. Fortune, of the Horticultural Society's Gardens at Chiswick, who was sent out to China about three years since, and has been, it is said, very successful in exploring the horticultural and botanical novelties of that country, has returned to London; bringing over with him a very large collection, in the finest condition, of horticultural and agricultural products,—which have been transmitted to the gardens of the Horticultural Society.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, TRAFALGAR SQUARE. The EXHIBITION of the ROYAL ACADEMY is NOW OPEN. Admission, (from Eight o'clock till Seven) 1s.; Catalogue, 1s. HENRY HOWARD, R.A., Sec.

SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS. The FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL EXHIBITION is NOW OPEN, at their Gallery, 6, Pall Mall East, each day from 9 till dusk. Admittance, 1s.; Catalogue, 6d. J. W. WRIGHT, Sec.

THE NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS. The TWELFTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION is NOW OPEN at their GALLERY, FIFTY-THREE, PALL MALL.—Admission, 1s.; Catalogue, 6d. JAMES FAHEY, Sec.

DIORAMA, REGENT'S PARK.—REDUCED PRICE of ADMITTANCE.—Now OPEN, with a highly interesting exhibition, representing the CASTLE and TOWN of HEIDELBERG (formerly the residence of the Electors Palatine of the Rhine) under the various aspects of Winter and Summer, Mid-day and Evening; and the exterior view of the CATHEDRAL of NOTRE DAME at Paris, as seen at Sunset and by Moonlight, and which has been so universally admired. Both pictures are painted by the late Chevalier Renoux. Open from 10 till 6. Admittance to view both Pictures—Saloon, 1s.; Stalls, 2s. as heretofore.

ROYAL POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION.—Dr. RYAN'S new and interesting LECTURE on the CHEMISTRY and PHILOSOPHY of DIVING, at Half-past Three daily, and on the Evenings of Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Prof. BACHHOFFNER'S LECTURES on NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, with brilliant experiments, daily. MACINTOSH'S REVOLVING ENGINE, COLEMAN'S PATENT LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE for ascending and descending Inclined Planes. FARRELL'S ARCHIMEDEAN RAILWAY, the ATMOSPHERIC RAILWAY, an ENVELOPE CUTTING MACHINE, all in action. Scenes in the OREGON TERRITORY are among the NEW DISSOLVING VIEWS. Portraits of distinguished Men in the GOVERNMENT and ARMY of LAHORE, magnified by the OPAQUE MICROSCOPE. The OXY-HYDROGEN MICROSCOPE exhibiting a fine collection of Living Objects, &c. &c.—Admission, 1s.; Schools, Half-price.

VICTORIES IN INDIA. BATTLES of ALI WAL and SOBRAON. In consequence of the deep interest of the subjects, these "monster" scenic views daily attract numerous visitors. They have been pronounced correct in scenery, costume, and action by distinguished military officers, and unanimously approved of by the press. Open Daily from 10 till 5, and in the Evening from 6 till 9.—Admission, 1s.—209, Regent-street.

SOCIETIES

ROYAL SOCIETY.—May 14.—The Marquis of Northampton, President, in the chair.—The following paper was read, 'Contributions to Terrestrial Magnetism, No. VII.' by Lieut.-Col. E. Sabine.—From the discovery which was made of the non-coincidence of the locality of the maximum magnetic intensity within the Arctic circle with that in which the magnetic direction is vertical, it followed that the generally prevailing opinions respecting the distribution of magnetic force at the surface of the earth were erroneous, and that even the broad outline of the picture of terrestrial magnetism required to be recast. For the purpose of obtaining sufficiently copious and accurate materials, by means of which so desirable an object could be accomplished, the British Association for the Advancement of Science requested, in the year 1835, a Report to be prepared; in which the state of our knowledge, collected from a great variety of sources, with regard to the variations of the magnetic force at different parts of the earth's surface should be reviewed and properly discussed, and suggestions offered as to the best means of extending the inquiry. In the Report so obtained, it was recommended that magnetic surveys of that portion of the North American continent which is comprised within certain isodynamic lines, should be procured. The present paper contains the results of an expedition towards the accomplishment of this object,—recommended, by the President and Council of the Royal Society, to be undertaken under the auspices and with the assistance of the Hudson's Bay Company. Lieutenant Lefroy, of the Royal Artillery, who had received an appointment to the Toronto Observatory, with a special view to this survey, was intrusted with the conduct of an expedition in conformity with that recommendation. The author gives a circumstantial narrative of the expedition,—together with minute details of the instruments employed and the methods of observation adopted; and extensive tables of the observations themselves, both as regards intensity and inclination, at the different stations where they were made,—occupying altogether about 120 folio pages of manuscript. It results from the calculations founded on the table furnished by these observations, that the geographical position of the point of maximum in-