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1855.

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Royal Geographical Society.

1855.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL,

READ AT THE ANNIVERSARY MEETING ON THE 28TH MAY.

THE duty of submitting to the Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society a yearly statement of its progress and financial position has never been more agreeable than on the present occasion, when, favoured by the liberality of Her Majesty's Government, the Council is at length enabled to hold the Anniversary Meeting of the members of the Society in their own house, and in apartments befitting the importance of their pursuits.

Members.—*Ordinary, Honorary and Corresponding.*—Since the last Anniversary 72 members have been added to the lists of the Society.

In the same period the Society has lost many valuable and distinguished associates. The Council has to report the decease of one honorary member—M. Beautemps-Beaupré, and of 21 ordinary members; also to record the resignation of one ordinary member.

The Society now consists of 57 honorary and corresponding members, and 804 ordinary members.

House and Finance.—At the last Meeting the President had the satisfaction of announcing that Her Majesty's Ministers had decided to recommend a yearly grant of 500*l.* in aid of the operations of the Society, and for the purpose of rendering its Maps and Charts available for public reference; also that the Council had taken steps for carrying out arrangements in accord-
L.A.P.

by Mr. Andersson, showing his Route in S. Africa; to some Specimens of the Gold Manufacture of Timbuctu, exhibited by Mr. Renshaw; and to several Maps by Mr. Arrowsmith, to accompany the forthcoming Volume of the Society's Journal.

The Papers read were—

1. On the Sources of the Purus, a great Tributary of the Amazon. By Clements R. Markham, Esq., F.R.G.S.
2. Report on the Arrival of the Chadda Expedition under Dr. Baikie, R.N. Communicated by the Earl of Clarendon, K.G., F.R.G.S.
3. Accounts from the Central African Expedition under Dr. Vogel. Communicated by the Earl of Clarendon, K.G., F.R.G.S.

Seventh Ordinary Meeting, February 26, 1855.

E. OSBORNE SMITH, Esq., in the Chair.

Charles Bovet, Esq.; the Rev. W. B. Clarke, M.A.; John Macnab, Esq.; A. John Otway, Esq., M.P.; William H. Smith, Esq.; Henry Stevens, Esq.; and W. William Emerson Tennent, Esq., were elected Fellows.

The Papers read were—

1. Letter from A. R. Wallace, Esq., F.R.G.S., the late explorer of the Rio Negro, to Dr. Shaw, dated Saráwak, Nov. 1854, giving an account of Singapore and Malacca, as far as Mount Ophir, on his way to Borneo.
2. Meteorological Observations made during a passage from London to Algoa Bay, by Dr. P. C. Sutherland, F.R.G.S.
3. Extracts of a Letter from the Rev. Dr. Rebmann to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, dated Kisuludini, in Rabbai, S.E. Africa.
4. On the Coast Survey of South Africa, by Thomas Maclear, Esq., H. M.'s Astronomer at the Cape of Good Hope. Communicated by the late Sir George Cathcart.
5. Notice on the Departure of Mr. Thomas Baines (the Artist) and Mr. J. S. Wilson (the Geologist) of the North Australian Expedition, in the Royal Mail Ship 'Blue Jacket.'

Eighth Ordinary Meeting, March 12, 1855.

Sir RODERICK I. MURCHISON, Vice-President, in the Chair.

J. James Galloway, Esq.; Sir John Login; Andrew Maclure, Esq.; and James Pilkington, Esq., M.P., were elected Fellows.

The Papers read were—

1. Journey from El-Medina to Mecca, down the "Darb-el-Sharki," on the Eastern Road (hitherto unvisited by Europeans), by Lieut. Richard F. Burton.
2. Memoranda on Abyssinia. Communicated by the Foreign Office.
3. Account of a Tour up the Gambia to Salum, by J. Smyth O'Connor, Esq., Governor. Communicated by the Colonial Office.

A D D R E S S
TO THE
ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
OF LONDON;

Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting on the 28th May, 1855,

BY THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ELLESMERE,
K.G., D.C.L., &c.,

PRESIDENT.

OBITUARY.

THE melancholy list of our losses for the last year commenced with the name of one who was an ornament to the military profession, Sir F. Adam. I have now, as I had then, to pay a tribute, as well of private affection and regard, as of public respect, to a distinguished officer of whom death has deprived us, General Sir A. Barnard. To recite his professional career would be to follow the British army from Lisbon to Waterloo. For the particulars of it I refer you to Napier and the 'Despatches.' I might appeal to their authority, I might appeal to that of Lord Raglan, to confirm me when I say, that among those who fought under the eye of Wellington, and who earned the glorious reward of his esteem and confidence, there was no better soldier—I am sure there was no kinder and better man—than the late Governor of Chelsea Hospital. As a proof of the confidence of the Duke, I may single out the fact, that when the chances of war had placed an English garrison at Paris, he was selected for the office of commandant. I have no doubt of the grounds of that selection. They were, that from his nature and his disposition he was, of all others, the man—in other respects competent for such command—the least likely to exercise it with any insolence of success, or any want of regard to the feelings of a gallant enemy. I knew him well, almost from the date of his retirement from active service. He retained to an advanced age singular

A communication was also read from Dr. Rebmann, dated Kisuludini in Rabbai, S.E. Africa, containing an account of the Great Lake N'yassi, and of the tribes on its banks, obtained from a native of those regions in his service. This large body of water, so long since inscribed on maps, continues to be one of the most inviting features of that preponderating part of African geography which is only derived as yet from indefinite and unauthenticated reports. A visit to this lake, and the determination of its position, extent, and drainage area, remains a prominent geographical desideratum.

Passing to the Asiatic Continent, we have had Lieut. Burton's account of his journey from Medina to Mecca;* a letter from Mr. Wallace, dated Sarawak, describing his observations at Singapore, and a journey into the Malay Peninsula as far as Mount Ophir; an account of Frontier Tribes near Kohat, W. of the Indus, by Lieut. Sykes; Geographical Notes of Journeys in Persia by Mr. Keith E. Abbott, Her Majesty's Consul at Tehrán; and an Account of the recent Earthquakes at Brussa.

From America we have received 'Commercial Notes on California' by G. Aikin, Esq., Her Majesty's Consul at San Francisco; a paper 'On the Sources of the Purus,' a great tributary of the Amazon, by our associate Mr. Clements Markham; and before the closing of the Session Mr. Bollaert will communicate his researches on the Geography, Mineralogy, and Antiquities of Chile and Peru, during his last visit, from which he has just returned.

The North Australian Expedition which the Society brought under notice of Her Majesty's Government and the public in 1853, and has since constantly urged forward, was undertaken by the Colonial Office in 1854, and immediately provided for by a Parliamentary grant. It has at length, after sundry changes and delays, been forwarded a step by the despatch of four members of the party, with the stores selected in England, in expectation of meeting the leader at Sydney, where he is directed to join them from Western Australia. The party from England consists of Mr. Wilson as geologist, Mr. Baines as artist, Mr. Elsey as surgeon and naturalist, and a young botanist from Kew. This party is intended to be placed under the command of Mr. Augustus Gregory, a colonial surveyor in Western Australia, whose explorations in the interior from that settlement are known to the readers of our Journal. The expedition is, I believe, to be fully organized at Moreton Bay, whence it will be conveyed to the north

* Since writing the above, two volumes out of three have been published by Longmans, under the title of 'Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah,' by Richard F. Burton.

at all, known in England. I confess that at that time I saw little prospect of relaxation in the Japanese code of rigid exclusion without the employment of actual force. Neither could I altogether blame the tenacity with which that Government adhered to a system which, whatever its merits, had procured for that singular country two centuries of complete exemption from foreign war and internal convulsion, civil or religious; and had co-existed with a high state of Oriental civilization, and a very successful cultivation of many of the arts of peace. I knew that the limits of Dutch intercourse were gradually being contracted; that the annual visit to Jeddo had been reduced to one every four years; and I did not expect that any mere demonstration of superior power would be sufficient to induce a departure from the rule adopted on the expulsion of the Portuguese and the suppression of Christianity. The scientific information obtained by Commodore Perry and the officers of his squadron in their two visits to Jeddo, in 1853 and 1854, has not yet reached me in any shape; and what I at present know of the expedition is confined to the report submitted to Congress, principally adverting to the diplomatic and political incidents of his dealings with the Japanese. In the outset of this I was pleased to find that a member of our Society had, with permission of the Admiralty, been able to assist Commodore Perry, by placing in his hands a large quantity of charts of the seas in question. Admiral Sir G. Seymour, then in command in the Pacific, was the channel of this international courtesy, cordially bestowed and handsomely acknowledged. During Commodore Perry's movements in the China seas other opportunities occurred, and were not neglected, of cultivating such honourable and friendly relations between these two distinguished services.

With regard to Commodore Perry's observations on the Bonin Islands, however, it is with some little satisfaction, as members of the Geographical Society, we observe, that the first European occupation was by our President-elect, Admiral Beechey, then in command of H.M.S. 'Blossom;' and that the islands were next visited by our honorary member, Admiral Lütke, of the Russian navy. Captain Coffin, who, according to Commodore Perry, had visited the islands four years before Admiral Beechey, was well known as an Englishman to Mr. Arrowsmith and other geographical friends.

Borneo.—Two illustrated volumes have issued in the course of the last two years from the press of Amsterdam, furnishing very detailed accounts of the rivers of South-eastern Borneo. They are from the pen of Dr. Schwaner, formerly a member of the Commission for Natural Science in Dutch India, who in that capacity had, between 1843 and 1847, performed several journeys of exploration in Borneo,

and more particularly one through the heart of the island, from Banjermassin to Pontianak. After a residence in Java, he was on the point of returning to Borneo, in 1851, when death carried him off at Batavia, at the age of thirty-eight. Dr. Schwaner was a native of Mannheim, but had early transferred his services to Holland, and the present work is in the Dutch language. I have not had time to look carefully through these volumes; but from cursory inspection I should imagine that no work has yet appeared containing so much sound information as to the interior of this vast and little-known island; to which the exploits of one of the greatest men of our own or any time, Sir James Brooke, have lately given additional interest.

It will be remembered that, on the recommendation of the Council, Mr. Wallace, upon his return from South America, was kindly provided by the Earl of Clarendon with a free passage to the East; and a communication has since arrived announcing his arrival at Singapore. From Singapore he went to Malacca, where he visited several parts of the interior, including Mount Ophir, which he ascended, and, by means of careful observations with Adie's sympiesometer, ascertained to be 3920 feet above the sea. The mountain is isolated; its summit is almost pure quartz, becoming more or less granitic below; while at the base are highly inclined stratified rocks of a crystalline sandstone.

Adjoining the coast the province of Malacca is flat and swampy, producing rice. Low undulating hills of laterite rise out of these flats, and give an elevated appearance to the country, but they are quite isolated. The general surface becomes more elevated some miles inland, the base of Mount Ophir being, however, only 200 feet above the sea. This central plateau is intersected by wide, flat valleys, gradually contracting towards the interior into narrow winding channels, which seem to connect the low grounds on both coasts of the Peninsula. The charts also indicate the same character in the submarine structure of Malacca Straits. The whole country is a dense jungle.

Returning to Singapore Mr. Wallace met our medallist, Sir James Brooke, who at once offered him every assistance in his power in exploring the territories under his rule. Mr. Wallace writes from Sarawak, that he was much pleased with the appearance of the country, which seemed to offer good facilities for mapping.

AFRICA.

Our meetings for the year have been rich in the results of African exploration.