

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY,
AND
ITS EXISTING INSTITUTIONS,
IN THE YEAR
1831.

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ONE OF THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE R. D. SOC., M. R. IRISH ACAD.,
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1831.

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ON

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AND ITS

EXISTING INSTITUTIONS.

THE Society was founded in the year 1731 by some noblemen and gentlemen, who united for the patriotic purpose of promoting Husbandry and the Useful Arts in Ireland.* Their exertions soon excited attention and praise. In 1749 they were incorporated by a Royal Charter; the king became their immediate Patron, and a sum of £500 was granted from the Royal bounty, and continued until the Society became an object of Parliamentary protection. The early meetings of the Society were held in the Irish House of Lords; the Chief Governor of Ireland was nominated the first President by the Charter, and his successors have ever since been in-

* The illustrious Haller ascribed to the Dublin Society the merit of having been the first Society formed in Europe for the improvement of agriculture; and there can be no doubt that the Society led the way at home, and by its various and useful Institutions afforded an example which was followed by other Societies and Institutions which afterwards arose in Great Britain. Such, for instance, as the Society of Arts now held in the Adelphi, the Highland Society, the Royal Institution, Albemarle-street, &c. &c. But no one of these Societies or Institutions ever embraced the same extended field of operations.

variably elected to the same situation. Parliamentary support was granted, and increased according to the wants of the Society; and almost the last act of the Irish Legislature was to bestow upon it a sum of £15,500, affording a proof that the Society had fulfilled its duty, and that its services were considered to be important. The interests of the Society, at the period of the Union, were also specially recommended to the Imperial Parliament, and for seventeen years an annual sum of £10,000 Irish was granted to the Society; the allowance was then reduced to £7000; and now again, in the year 1831, it is further reduced to the sum of £5,500. As the funds of the Society have been invariably applied to the improvement of the country, and the extension of the sciences and of the useful arts; and as the Society may confidently challenge inquiry into the sound administration of the various branches of its Institutions, so it is impossible to avoid a comparison between the different feelings on the subject of the improvement of Ireland,—between its former native Parliament and the Imperial Legislature. Neither can the comparison appear less invidious, between the immense and increasing sums which are annually lavished on the British Museum, in the most wealthy metropolis of the world, and the decreased, and still decreasing allowances to the Royal Dublin Society, whose Institutions embrace every branch of Science and Art comprised within the British Museum, besides many others of a more extended nature, and far more general utility.

Although the difference which exists in the state and condition of Ireland between the period when the Society was formed, and that of the present time, may be ascribable to the gradual progress of civilization, yet, if rigorous and minute inquiries be instituted into the sub-

ject, it will appear beyond all doubt, that civilization and improvement have been accelerated by the efforts of the Royal Dublin Society; and that arts and sciences have, up to the present time, been diffused through channels opened to the public by the Society alone; and which, if now closed, will, as may be reasonably inferred, be attended with injurious results, since no other similar sources of information and improvement exist in the country.

To explain all that has been performed by the Society in the course of a century, is not the object of the present sketch, which only aims at showing what the Society now is; we may therefore pass on at once to a review of its existing institutions.

THE PUBLIC DRAWING SCHOOLS.

AMONGST the earliest of the institutions founded by the Society, and which flourish at present with increased vigour, are the public schools for teaching drawing, as conducive to the improvement of manufactures and various useful arts. It might be confidently averred that no manufactures, whether in reference to the construction and plans of machinery, or the correctness and elegance of the designs and patterns in which superiority consists, were ever brought to perfection unassisted by the skill of the draftsman; and it would be an endless task to enumerate the trades, occupations, and pursuits, towards the improvement of which, drawing, if not essentially necessary, contributes important aid; the workshops of England have felt the influence of the practical skill and good taste which have been diffused through

the means of the Dublin public drawing schools. Not only do students come up from various parts of Ireland purposely to attend them, but instances are fresh in the recollections of those acquainted with the schools, of English and Scotch lads having been sent over for instruction, who enjoyed no such advantages in their own country.*

The schools are four in number, and each one under a separate master.

1. For the study of the human figure.
2. For architecture and plan drawing.
3. For general ornament, landscape, &c.
4. For modelling in clay.

These schools are open for six hours in each day, two in each day alternately throughout the year, with the exception of the ordinary school holydays. Instruction is given gratuitously; and pupils are admitted without favour or partiality, or any distinction whatsoever, beyond the aptitude for drawing. The most fastidious, or the most malicious, have never been able to raise cavils

* Nothing is more contrary to fact, than an assertion made in the House of Commons, that these schools were instituted to form *painters*; thereby tempting young men to become artists, but virtually leaving them to starve. The object of their institution was far different; although it cannot be denied, that the system of instruction adopted in the schools, has developed talents which lay latent, and imperceptibly led youths to devote themselves to the fine arts, who entered the schools with other views; in fact, these schools have never failed, from the very outset, to furnish a considerable number of the eminent artists who have graced the British metropolis, and contributed to the celebrity of the British School, from the days of Barry down to our own times, in which the names may be cited of the President of the Royal Academy Mr. Behnes, sculptor, Mr. Rothwell, portrait painter, &c. &c., to say nothing of many distinguished engravers, chasers, &c. &c.

on this score ; if there be a fault, it consists in the too great liberality of the admissions. In a printed Report of the Society, in the year 1819, it appeared, that in the course of the seven preceding years, 1190 pupils had been admitted and instructed in the schools ; and in the petition of the Society to the House of Commons in 1831, it is stated that within the last two years, 550 pupils had been admitted, in addition to those already on the establishment ; so that if a judgment may be formed from the increased number of pupils in latter times, the Schools now stand higher in the estimation of the public than at any former period. The Schools are provided with drawings, engravings, and model patterns, from the best sources ; and a gallery of 90 feet is attached to them, well furnished with plaster casts from the antique, including those of the Elgin marbles, &c. &c.

THE BOTANIC GARDEN.

THE Botanic Garden may next be mentioned ; formed, not merely for the abstract study of the Science of Botany, but for the practical illustration of the application of Botany to the useful arts ; to manufactures, to medicine, and, above all, to agriculture. The Garden was expressly established, pursuant to an act of the Irish Parliament, the first grant of the public money for the purpose having been made about the year 1790. In the years 1798 and 1799, the specific grant in each year amounted to £1300, and in 1800 it was raised to £1500. The establishment of a Professorship of Botany for the superintendence of this branch of the Institution, and for the *delivery of full courses of public lectures*, was one of the expressed conditions attached to the grant, and

the salary was fixed by the legislature at £300 per annum.

This Botanic Garden is amongst the largest in Europe, containing no less than 27 English statute acres. It is situated at a moderate distance from the city, on the northern side, occupying a beautiful piece of ground, bounded by a river, from which the ponds and aquatic compartments of the Garden are supplied. Besides the usual arrangements for the illustration of the Linnæan system, there are various detached compartments distinguished by the names of the cattle, the esculent, the dyers', the medicinal gardens, &c. &c. The whole is surrounded by an arboretum, to demonstrate what trees will flourish in the climate of Ireland. The conservatories occupy a line of 416 feet, and present a surface of about 8000 square feet of glass. It is almost needless to observe, that such a garden cannot possibly be maintained, even in moderate order, without a considerable annual expense. The usual charge may be seen by reference to the account. Taking the amount of labour at £332 per annum, the cost of cultivation, per acre, will come to £12 5s. 11d., including attendance in the conservatories, &c. There are necessarily many casual and incidental expenses, which render the cost of the Garden more or less in different years.

It is presumed that much of the present excellence of the Medical Schools in the city of Dublin are attributable to the lectures, and to the facilities of study afforded at the Botanic Garden of the Society.

SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY.

As Chemistry is the science which gives life and improvement to all the useful arts, so it was amongst the first subjects, upon which public lectures were instituted by the Society. The theatre for the general lectures, capable of holding 500 people, is provided with a laboratory for the exhibition of practical experiments to the public classes, whilst another and a larger laboratory is set apart for more extended and more exact operations. The apparatus is of the most approved kind, and very extensive. When these lectures were originally instituted, Chemistry, as a science, was comparatively unknown in Dublin, and the means of information were entirely out of the reach of the manufacturing and operative classes. It was with the view of rendering its principles familiar, and improving the resources of the country, that the Society turned their attention to the subject, and they were eminently assisted in their enlightened policy by Parliament, which at once made an appropriation of money for the establishment of a public laboratory, and a distinct allowance for a professorship of Chemistry. That the science has been diffused by these means, and that much practical good has arisen, there can be no question. Many instances are on record of the improvements and savings which have been effected in manufacturing processes by the true principles which have been explained at these lectures; and the information received has been acknowledged with gratitude.

But the mere delivery of lectures was not the only duty of the Professor. He was at his post to answer inquiries; to aid in references; to investigate the value of new processes; and, in innumerable instances, frauds on

the public have been detected, and the delusions and impositions of quackery, particularly in reference to bleaching, exposed. Useful and interesting experiments were almost always going on, under the auspices of the Society; and means were afforded for prosecuting them, which were not attainable from any other source. Of the useful proceedings in the Dublin laboratory during latter times, the pages of the Royal Society of London give ample account, in the Papers furnished by Mr. Edmond Davy, the present Professor of the Society, whose abilities are too well known, and whose fame is too generally spread, to render it needful to say a single word upon such subjects in this place.*

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

THE School of Natural Philosophy was founded by the Society upon the general principle, sanctioned and inculcated by the Irish Parliament, of its being one of

* The Royal Society of London publish none but original communications to their body; upon which account the Society of Dublin consented to waive their own privileges, and permit Mr. Davy to make his communications to the public through a channel which it was notorious would afford them a far greater circulation, not only through the British isles, but on the continent. Neither are these philosophical Papers of Mr. Davy the only ones which have announced to the world, through a similar indirect channel, the results of valuable and important discoveries which have been made in the laboratory of the Royal Dublin Society, and at their expense. But if the diffusion of knowledge, and more particularly of discoveries in chemical science, be a paramount object, it is surely rather a matter of praise to the Royal Dublin Society, that they allow the successful discoverer to take the course which is considered by himself as the most advantageous for rendering his experiments known, than of reproach for not confining the accounts of the experiments carried on in their own laboratory to their own Transactions, which, even when they do appear, and at distant intervals, have avowedly but limited circulation.

the useful sciences. There is a distinct Professor of the science, whose duty it is to give lectures explanatory of the general principles of physics, and their application to the mechanical arts. To this Professor, it has been usual to refer the various new models of improvements in machinery, which are from time to time presented to the Society; and his experience and discrimination on such subjects, have been deemed of service to the public, and eminently instructive to many of the claimants of the Society's patronage.

SCHOOL OF MINERALOGY.

THE mineral wealth of Ireland lay hidden, and even at present is but imperfectly explored. To prepare the way for prosecuting researches on the subject, and extend the limits of science, the School of Mineralogy was instituted. The Irish Parliament, with their usual munificence and general readiness to promote the scientific institutions of the country, made a liberal grant of money on the occasion, for the purchase of the celebrated cabinet of minerals, formed by Leske, in Saxony; and about the year 1792, it was brought over and placed in the custody of the Royal Dublin Society; at the same time a Professorship of Mineralogy was specially created by an Act of Parliament, with a fixed salary, and public lectures on the science were directed to be delivered. These were illustrated by the exhibition of specimens; but persons who chose to enter more minutely upon the study, had the advantage of private instruction, and access to the cabinet itself.

The Leskean collection, which was at the period of

its having been purchased, one of the most extensive and the most scientifically arranged of any then in existence in Europe, consisted of five divisions: 1. The characteristic, illustrative of the external characters of minerals; 2. the systematic, embracing every variety of mineral then known, each in its exact order; 3. the geographical; 4. the geological; and 5. the economic, exhibiting the minerals useful in the arts, &c. &c. The whole series contained 7331 specimens, of which a descriptive Catalogue of two octavo volumes was printed by order of the Society. This book has become scarce; but copies of it remain in the cabinet, in the hands of the Professor, and in the Libraries not only of the Society, but of several private individuals; the minerals are all numbered and arranged *seriatim*, and by means of the Catalogue, any individual specimen may at once be referred to, and the description thereof found.*

Besides the Leskean collection of minerals, there are various other collections in the same apartments; amongst them a series of Irish minerals, arranged according to counties, and in numerical order, with a MS. catalogue, as also different distinct collections presented to the Society by liberal and patriotic individuals; and to crown all, the splendid collection presented to the Society by their present distinguished Professor, Sir Charles Giesecke, arranged according to the most approved system,

* And yet it was stated in the House of Commons, and I am sorry to add, by one who, having full opportunity of inquiry into the fact, had no excuse for the inaccuracy of his information, that this fine and valuable collection of minerals so purchased from Leske, at present lay without catalogue, without arrangement, jumbled together in a promiscuous heap, utterly lost to science and utility. The officers of the Society, as it is their duty to do, will at once enable any person who is disposed to examine into the actual condition of the cabinet, to decide upon the truth or falsehood of such an asseveration.

and of which the Catalogue, too long perhaps retained in MS., is now actually in the Press.

The united collections comprise upwards of 30,000 specimens.

These several collections of minerals, under the eye of a Professor, whose superlative attainments in the science are acknowledged from one end of Europe to the other, afford, if not the best, certainly one amongst the very best schools for the study of Mineralogy which exist within the British dominions. It is only to be lamented that the want of such a room as has been latterly erected, at the public expense, at the British Museum, for the display of their minerals, has made it expedient to arrange the specimens in lofty vertical, instead of horizontal cases; in consequence of which those on the top shelves cannot be viewed without inconvenience. Had the Imperial Parliament been proportionably liberal, and proportionably just to *the National Museum of Ireland*, for such the Museum of the Royal Dublin Society virtually is, these and many other deficiencies might, and would long since, have been satisfactorily remedied.

THE MUSEUM.

THE Cabinet of Leske, which, besides the minerals, contained various other objects illustrative of different branches of Natural History, may be said to have formed the nucleus of the present Museum, unless, indeed, the articles of Irish antiquities previously possessed by the Society, be considered as the primary basis. With each revolving year the Museum has been augmented, and it embraces almost every variety of object which can

be deemed suitable to such an establishment. Though certainly far less extensively furnished, yet there is not a single class in the British Museum to which a corresponding one may not be found here. Whenever favourable opportunities have occurred purchases have been made; and a year has never passed over without valuable presentations having been made to it by individuals. In fact it is regarded as *the National Museum of Ireland*; and, as such, presentations are made to it, not only from every part of Ireland, but illustrious and enlightened strangers have, in numerous instances, sent over from other countries valuable donations, adopting this gratifying method of acknowledging the satisfaction which their visit to the Irish Museum had afforded them.* In what estimation the Museum is held by the Irish

* It seems passing strange that Irish Members of the House of Commons, successors of those enlightened men who laid the foundation of the Scientific Institutions of the Society, should at present be the most vituperative against the establishment, and exactly in proportion to their ignorance of the subject; for those who have been the most violent in invective and sarcasm have admitted, in the same breath, that they never had been within the walls of the Society. Thus one who lays claim to the title of Patriot, *par excellence*, asserted, and there are persons consequently who will believe it, that the Society had *twenty stuffed dogs*; "and this," adds he, with a contemptuous sneer, "is what these gentlemen call their Museum." Certainly there are *two* stuffed dogs in the Museum, one of them supposed to be of the old St. Bernard breed; but in the very same apartment stands prominent the grandest indigenous specimen of Natural History which exists within these realms,—the complete and perfect skeleton of the Irish Fossil Deer, *Cervus Megaceros*, with horns of eleven feet ten inches from tip to tip; a subject which forms an exhibition in itself, and which would fill the purse of any speculator who could show it in the metropolis or in the provincial towns of the sister island, where curiosity and science go hand in hand. It is the only perfect specimen of this stupendous animal ever known to have been found; and was procured through the instrumentality of Archdeacon Maunsell, on whose invitation the Royal Dublin Society sent down a surgeon, distinguished for his knowledge of comparative anatomy, to collect the bones on the spot where they had been discovered.

public may be collected from the fact of 30,000 persons having visited it within the last year, according to the returns of admissions regularly registered at the doors in a book specially kept for the purpose.

The Museum occupies six consecutive apartments, containing in all a horizontal area of about 3,200 square feet. A seventh apartment lies detached, exclusively filled with anatomical preparations of the horse, for the use of the lectures on the veterinary art, which used annually to be delivered regularly in each year, until death deprived the Society and the public of the distinguished Professor, Dr. Peale.

The great defect of the Museum is the want of space, in consequence of which many of the objects are seen under great disadvantage, and it is utterly impracticable to have them all suitably arranged in their proper classification.

MODEL ROOMS.

ALTHOUGH the Model Rooms do not absolutely form a part of the Museum, yet being nearly connected therewith, they may be mentioned in this place. In these, models of machinery, and models of various other descriptions, as of buildings, monuments, bridges, &c., which have been either procured by the Society, or presented to them, are preserved, and prove sources of information and instruction, in many instances, to visitors, more particularly to mechanics and others who are immediately interested in such subjects. Some of those models are not only very curious, but are considered to be of great value.

THE LIBRARY.

THE Library consists of an extensive collection of works on the different subjects connected with the objects of the Institution. In the selection the Society has consulted the public advantage, rather than the convenience of its own Members. The classes of Agriculture, Natural History, Mechanics, the Fine Arts, Trade, Irish History and Antiquities, are well supplied. The collection of Botanical Works, and of the Transactions of other learned Societies, are considered to be peculiarly rich and complete; and many of them are not to be procured in any other Library in Ireland. The books, which at present consist of upwards of 10,000 volumes, and are annually on the increase, are all deposited in one lofty room, 66 feet in length, by 25 feet in breadth, surrounded by a gallery. A separate room is devoted to maps.

Connected with the Library there is a valuable *Nummarium*, under the care of the Librarian.

The Library is open throughout the year, and is accessible to all persons seeking for information, or desirous of making researches. The formality of introduction by a Member is scarcely adhered to, and a discretionary power remains with the Librarian, whose attention to strangers is universally acknowledged, as well as his exemplary discharge of the general duties of his office.

 AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENTS.

THE labours of the Society, as the Charter sufficiently explains, were, at the outset, principally directed to

agricultural subjects, nor have they ever been relinquished; although during the existence of the great Farming Society of Ireland, supported by a special grant of £5000 per annum from Parliament, and whose whole attention was directed to the one object, the efforts of the Royal Dublin Society became relaxed; the business in fact was in a great measure taken out of their hands; or in other words, given over to those who had more extensive practical experience. But during the last year, the Royal Dublin Society revived the shows of improved breeds of cattle, which had been originally instituted by them; and evidently much to the satisfaction of the public. Preparations have been made, by the building of sheds in the outer parts of their premises, for continuing these shows on a more extensive plan; and some of the outer offices have likewise been put in suitable order for the exhibition of the most approved agricultural implements, pursuant to the original institutions of the Society.

THE HOUSE AND PREMISES.

THE House occupied by the Society, formerly the residence of his Grace the Duke of Leinster, is a spacious insulated building of cut stone, separated from the street to the front by an extensive court, and from Merrion-square, at the rear, by a lawn of two acres or more. This beautiful edifice was purchased at the price of £20,000 Irish, payable by instalments—a price conceived to have been below its real value, and conceded chiefly on the consideration of the building being likely to remain entire when devoted to the purposes of a public Institution. Ostentation and extravagance have been im-

puted to the Society for having presumed to make this acquisition: but with what justice may be gathered from a few simple facts.

In the first place, then, it is notorious, that the former premises were ill-contrived and ill-built, and so damp, from the contiguity of the river, in a low situation, affected by back water, that the books, and many objects in the Museum were visibly suffering; they stood also in a crowded part of the city, where, prior to the opening of the quays, there was constant noise and bustle, from the trains of coal-drays passing close under the windows: moreover, these premises were subject to a ground-rent of £600 per annum; neither could they be adapted to the full purposes and objects of the Society without a considerable further expenditure on buildings. On the very score of economy, therefore, a removal to Leinster House was contemplated as a measure of prudence. As for the ostentation of the change, it will scarcely be denied, that an Institution, devoted to the cultivation of the arts and the sciences, ought, were it only for the example's sake, to be established in a building suitable to its character; but if the Society were guilty of error in preferring a handsome structure to a building of a very opposite description, the error is one which is shared in common with the directors of nearly every public Institution in the kingdom, since the taste for grand and embellished architecture is the order of the day. Leinster House is one of the finest edifices in the city, and deservedly a subject of pride to the inhabitants. The Royal Dublin Society saved it probably from dismemberment; and if the funds by which it is at present maintained are cut off, it will, in the ordinary course of events, be exposed to that fate,

which, fortunately for the credit of the city, has been hitherto happily averted.

Although a palace, and a grand one, yet, in size, it is not beyond the actual wants of the Society; so far from it indeed, that, in some respects, it is not even commensurate with them, as already explained, in the want of space for the satisfactory display of the varied and multiplied objects in the Museum. It should be observed also, that, contrary to the practice in many other Institutions, (and the British Museum might be mentioned amongst the number,) no private accommodation whatever is afforded to any officer of the Society, with the exception of the Housekeeper and a few servants, who, of necessity, must be lodged within the walls.

CONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIETY.

THE Royal Charter granted to the Society in the year 1749, recites the names of the persons, many of them of the highest ranks in the kingdom, of whom it then consisted; and it gives them the power of increasing their numbers by *election*, and of making laws for the government and regulation of their affairs. Amongst the first of these laws was one which ordained that the election of Members should be by *BALLOT*, in which *two-thirds* of the Members then present must concur to admit a candidate. Now, until the Committee of the House of Commons, in the sessions of 1829, impugned the principle of the ballot, it was never suspected that any injurious consequences had ensued from the practice, either in respect to the interests of the Society,

or the interests of the public, during the long period of fourscore years that it had been in operation. And upon referring to the registers of the Society, it was found, that out of 764 candidates for admission, during the course of thirty consecutive years, no more than *four* had been rejected; and within the last ten years *not one*. Yet without any reference to the documents of the Society, or affording any opportunity for the refutation of the charge, by personal examination, the Society has been publicly accused of applying this principle of the ballot, to the purposes of forming itself into an exclusive and political party club. The petition of the Society to the House of Commons in the late session, indignantly repels this accusation as one utterly devoid of foundation. In fact, there are persons, and in numbers, belonging to the Society, known to possess most different and opposite opinions, both on political and religious subjects; but as all such subjects are expressly excluded from the deliberations and discussions of the Society, the creed of a candidate has never become a question for inquiry. There are many Roman Catholics belonging to the Society, several of whom are placed on the Committees of Management, and who are regular attendants. The petition already alluded to also mentions the fact of a Roman Catholic Clergyman having exercised the office of Librarian and Corrector of the Press, during thirty years up to his death; and who, during a period of great political excitement, was nevertheless annually re-elected to his charge. To be compelled to admit, without the power of rejection, every candidate who was disposed to lay down a certain sum of money for his admission, would at once remove every guarantee for the respectability of the Society, and leave no defence against the possible indiscretion of persons, whose general character might yet threaten the most injurious

consequences by the pertinacious introduction within the walls of the Society of those very topics connected with party, political, and religious feelings, which it has been the constant study of the Society to avoid. As for the general principle of ballot, if it affords an opportunity to an illiberal person for rejecting a meritorious candidate, on the other hand, it relieves opponents, on just grounds, from the odium which might be attached to a *viva voce* vote. The general principle of the ballot, and the arguments for and against it, are familiar to every one; it is enough to state, that it has been considered as the mode of admission the least likely to give rise to, or to cherish a spirit of partisanship; and that the soundness of the principle has been recognized by its adoption in nearly every society of gentlemen in the empire, whether literary or otherwise.*

On the original formation of the Society, prior to their receiving a charter, or any share of the Royal bounty, the objects of the Society were promoted by private subscriptions, and this principle has never been abandoned, although modified by different regulations at different periods. A fee of five guineas on admission, and an annual subscription subsequently, has been the lowest rate, and the highest a fee of fifty guineas, which constituted a member for life. For several years past, the admission fee has been left at thirty guineas, constituting the person who paid it a member for life; and all annual subscriptions have been abandoned, in consequence of the difficulty and expense which attended the collection, and the disappointment and inconvenience

* Possibly, however, without detriment to the interests of the Society, the law of election might be so far modified as to leave admission dependant upon a mere majority of votes, instead of requiring a concurrence of two-thirds, as at present.

experienced in not receiving money which had been calculated upon, and brought to account in the assets of the Society.

The business of the Society is performed by Committees, and these have purposely been made rather more numerous perhaps than are absolutely necessary, in order to divide the management more generally amongst the Members, and open a fair field for exertion to those who might feel interested on particular subjects. There are separate and distinct standing Committees of Agriculture, Botany, Chemistry and Mineralogy, Natural Philosophy and Museum, Fine Arts, Library, House and Premises, and Economy, which last Committee regulates the expenditure of the Society, and keeps it within due bounds. There is also a Select Committee, formed on the principle of deputation from all the others. These several Committees meet frequently on appointed days and hours, and report, on occasion, to the General Board, and no one of them can make any expenditure without authority previously received from the Board, and the warranty of the Committee of Economy that the funds can admit of it. All the proceedings are registered in separate books kept for the purpose, which can be called for and inspected at pleasure by any Member, at the General Board. There are no secret doings whatsoever; and in the expenditure of money, except it be for mere ordinary articles of every day use, the prices of which are established, no purchases are made, nor any new works undertaken, without offering fair competition to the public. No appointments to office or salaries can be made except by open ballot of all the Members, in presence of a Vice-President in the chair, with the single exception of the house-servants, the selection of whom it has been found salutary to leave to the Housekeeper,

under whose immediate control they continue; and these latter appointments have been unexceptionable.

Here then is a Society, comprising amongst its Members some of the highest nobility of the land, dignitaries of the Church, country gentlemen of large fortune and extensive influence, as well as individuals of the various professions and occupations of ordinary private life; men, who, in uniting to promote the useful arts, the sciences, and the general improvement of the country, contribute each, on his admission, a distinct sum of money, to assist in the great and useful work; men, be it also observed, who in becoming active Members of the Society, give up their time and labour without fee or reward; whose museums, whose lectures, whose gardens, whose schools, have been freely thrown open, absolutely to every person who chooses to visit them; whose library, if not equally public, is never closed against the student in search of particular information; who, without favour or partiality, listen to all claimants for patronage; who are ready and willing, as their books can testify, to receive as associates those who are disposed to contribute to the important object of the improvement of Ireland—for the rejection of four persons merely, in thirty-one years, scarcely deserves to be considered as an exception. And yet this is the Society, stigmatized with the character of being an *exclusive and party club*,* and held up

* “The Royal Dublin Society,” says the author of the *Brief Notices*, “is the only central point of domestic assembly for common consultation and inquiry relative to the improvement of the country. From its first association in 1731, precisely 100 years ago, the uniform and sole object of the Society has been the improvement of Ireland in all her principal relations of domestic industry, agriculture, manufactures, and the arts; and during the whole of that period, the jar of political dissension, or of party discord, was never heard within its walls.

to further obloquy for disposing of the public money for private jobs and individual advantage.* Never was charge more unprovoked,—never charge more utterly without foundation. In fact, politics and religion are forbidden subjects at the meetings of the Society, and as for the application of the funds granted by Parliament, the annual accounts are open to the public.

* How busy some people have been with misrepresentations, may be judged of from the following paragraph in Whittaker's Monthly Magazine, for July last :—" If it be true that the Royal Dublin Society is fed by a regular staff of the old job work, which of old perverted and possessed every office and institution in Ireland, the matter ought to be inquired into. If the Society have a Secretary at the moderate sum of £500 a year, a pair of Librarians at £300 and £200 a year, with not as many books to watch as they have pounds to receive ; if they have trebly paid housekeepers, &c., and above all a palace * * * * * which they were fools enough to buy, and for the half of which they can find no use ; we say, let reform put itself into the next steam boat, &c. &c." Now the fact stands thus :—

There is One paid Secretary at a salary of	£276	18	4
One Librarian	184	12	4
One Housekeeper	105	0	0

The Library contains upwards of 10,000 volumes, and the house is too small for the purposes of the Institution ; for many of the articles which belong to the Museum, are of necessity placed on the stairs and lobbies for want of room.

The Editor of the Magazine, however, after giving the preceding passage, adds, in a liberal spirit, the following words :—" If the truth be otherwise ; if the Society be an active, intelligent, and impartial agent of the public bounty ; if it have no official locusts to swallow up its rents and salaries ; then we say, and cordially too, let it have £14,000 instead of seven." In the same spirit, during the debate or conversation relative to the Royal Dublin Society, on the introduction of the Irish estimates, Mr. Hume exclaims :—" Why if these gentlemen really are a scientific body, or if they have any thing which really deserves to be considered as a scientific Museum, let us be generous to them, let us build them a place suitable to it."

The misfortune of the Society is, that its enemies have been carried away by prejudice and hearsay evidence, and do not seem disposed to stop and inquire into the real state of the case.

A few words as to the newspaper room, the maintenance of which has been cried up as such an unpardonable abuse. The cost of all the papers has never exceeded £100, and seldom amount to more than £80 per annum; at the highest rate, the whole cost in thirty years would be £3000. Now the private subscriptions of members admitted since the period of the Union, appear to have amounted to £19,308 6s. 9d.; so that the abominable abuse comes simply to this, that less than a sixth part of these private subscriptions has been expended for newspapers, say for private gratification, whilst the remaining five-sixths have been thrown into a fund for the improvement of the country and general good of the public. If this be an evil, would to Heaven it could be multiplied to an extent one hundred times as great.

But surely when men give up their money and their time for the public good, it is not so very unreasonable a measure to have a few newspapers, which they themselves pay for.

Further, if it be an object to augment the funds of the Society by private subscriptions, there may be good policy in throwing out some lure beyond the mere dry details of business.

FINANCES OF THE SOCIETY.

THE income of the Society, as may be collected from the preceding pages, arises from two sources; the subscriptions of Members on their admission—and the annual Parliamentary grant. The former, since the period

of the Legislative Union, have produced a sum of £19,308 6s. 9d., each Member having paid from 20 to 50 guineas, according to the period of his admission, the terms of which have been varied at different times, for the sake of ascertaining by actual experiment, which rate was the most productive.

During the latter sessions of the Irish Parliament, the grants to the Society were liberal beyond all former precedent, an undeniable proof that the Society stood high in estimation, and had, up to that period, deserved well of the country: and upon the Union of the Legislatures, their interests were specially recommended to the care and protection of the Imperial Parliament, which, for 19 consecutive years from that period, regularly passed an annual grant in their favour to the amount of £10,000 former Irish currency. It was in the full and perfect confidence of the continuance of this grant that the Society purchased Leinster House; that a new Theatre for Lectures was built, with a contiguous Laboratory; and a superb Gallery for the reception of the plaster casts for the improvement of the Drawing and Modelling Schools. In the midst, however, of these improvements, the value of which was generally admitted, and without assigning any grounds of mismanagement or misapplication of the funds so placed at their disposal, the annual grant was unexpectedly reduced from £10,000 Irish to £7000 British, making a difference of £2230 15s. 5d. The general state of the public finances, and the expediency of reducing all establishments to the measure of the existing income of the country, were understood to have been the sole motives which influenced the Lords of the Treasury in cutting off so considerable a sum from the Society on this occasion. No imputations were cast either upon the utility of the establishment in general, or the good administra-

tion of any of its branches ; and the reductions having been made on the principle of a necessary economy, the Society of course bowed to the decision and yielded patiently to the exigencies of the times. The loss of income, however, was felt most seriously ; and the projects for the extension of the Museum, and for other improvements were of necessity abandoned. Heavy annual expenses, the unavoidable concomitants of the Institutions, which had been created by the Irish Parliament, and confided to their management, continued, which of necessity must be defrayed ; but in providing for the current expenditure, notwithstanding the utmost regard to economy, it was found impracticable to fulfil the engagements which had been contracted under a reliance of the continued liberality of Parliament ; so that at the present moment a sum of £4800 remains due to the Duke of Leinster, on the purchase of the house, for which his Grace has condescendingly assented to receive interest at the rate of six per cent., for the accommodation of the Society.

The embarrassments of the Society were not destined however to end here ; since in the present year, 1831, a further deduction of £1500 has been made from the annual grant, which threatens to be fatal to several branches of the Institution. The mortification from the loss of income has been further increased, by the imputations which have been cast upon the Society, of having constituted themselves into an exclusive political party club, and of having abused the funds which have been committed to their Society.

The first part of the charge is perhaps sufficiently answered by the statements already made, that out of 764 candidates during 30 years, no more than 4 have been rejected. Nevertheless, a Treasury Minute, founded

upon a report of a Committee of the House of Commons in 1829, enjoins, that the benefits of the Institution should be opened to all that choose to subscribe. By benefits must here be meant the privilege of becoming an actual member of the Chartered Society, for as to the benefits derivable from the various schools, and the various establishments intended for public instruction and information, these had been liberally thrown open to all classes of people, without fee or reward, until the Irish Government, pursuant to a Minute of the Treasury, desired that a price should be affixed to the admission to the lectures. But as for every person being permitted at his own pleasure to enroll himself a member of this Corporate Society, such a system, on the face of it, appears utterly inconsistent with the Charter, which distinctly states the mode by which additional Members are to be added to the Society, namely, by *election*: any other mode of admission might be interpreted into a violation of the Charter;—which violation might involve forfeiture; and, of course, endanger the title to the property acquired by the Society, under the authority of the Charter.

It is quite obvious, from these few details, that the affairs and circumstances of the Society have not been distinctly understood, either in the Imperial Parliament or at the Treasury; and they are now put forward in an humble expectation, that when known, a different measure of justice may be dealt out to the Society.

With regard to the charges which have been preferred against the Society, for having *impeded* instead of *promoted* the circulation of knowledge* and science,

* *Report of the Debate on the Irish Estimates, brought forward 29th August, 1831.*—TIMES NEWSPAPER.

Mr. Spring Rice (Secretary to the Treasury) said, "That Ministers would

little more is required to repel them than a reference to the existing state of their several Institutions, the Library, the Museum, the Cabinet of Minerals, the Chemical Laboratory, the Botanic Garden, the Public Drawing Schools, &c. These have been long under the inspection of the public, and a tolerably correct judgment may be readily formed on the subject. As for a Society consisting of so many hundred Members as those which

have been sorry to diminish the grant to *any* Society which fairly and liberally promoted the advancement of learning; but this Society did not. Perhaps the reduction of the vote might be a hint to the Society, to adopt the recommendation of the Committee on the Irish Miscellaneous Estimates, and sacrifice party spirit to the promotion of knowledge. His Majesty's Government could not approve of any Institution which was supported at the public expense on an exclusive system.

"Mr. Hume was sorry the reduction had not been carried farther: it had been his intention to reduce it by one-half. It appeared before the Finance Committee, that this Society had assumed the character of a complete political and party club. It took in a number of party newspapers;* and it had been proved, that it had been converted into a party and exclusive club.

"Sir J. Burke protested against the *exclusive* principle upon which this Society had been conducted, and contended that the *Lawn* attached to the Society's superb mansion, should be thrown open to the citizens of Dublin.†

"Mr. O'Connell said the Society had made the Institution a *party* Institution. They had black-balled him and *many*† others, and had, in fact, made the Society rather a *party* club, than a body whose object was the advancement of science."

* How difficult it would be to make a selection of Newspapers, which should be thought exempt from party spirit on one side or other, may be readily conceived. Of those hitherto taken in by the Society, there were certainly more on the free or liberal side than on the other. But it matters not at present, as the charges for them are not likely to appear again. As for their ever having appeared, it is attributable to the private subscriptions of Members having been blended with the grants from Parliament, in the account of Charge and Discharge. That a small proportion, not one-seventh, of the private subscription of the last thirty years, should have been devoted to the purchase of Newspapers, whilst the remainder was given up for public purposes, does not seem so very unreasonable. But it is absolutely a paradox to urge the Society to adopt every possible measure for the increase of private subscriptions, and at the same time prohibit Newspapers, one of the most productive sources.

† Of course, since of *right*, without distinction; to butchers' boys, sweeps, &c. &c.

‡ To wit; *four* out of 764 during 30 years.

constitute the Royal Dublin Society, and so freely and so indiscriminately admitted, laying claim to the distinction of being a learned and scientific body ; it is perfectly well known that no such claim ever has at any time been put forward. The Society, however, may lay claim to the merit of being composed of individuals who have had the interests of the country at heart, else why should each Member have paid down at his admission a sum of money to promote them ? yet that there are Members belonging to the Society of profound science and deep learning, is notorious. In providing for the promotion of science and the useful arts, to the Society as a body, no other course seems to lie open than to place over the respective branches of the Institution competent and able persons. Now, if these appointments had been filled up through mere favour, without regard to personal qualification, then indeed might the Society fairly come under the imputation of having abused their trust and retarded the advancement of the objects which it was their duty to have forwarded. But where is there a man of higher attainments in his profession than Sir Charles Gieseckè, who presides over the department of Mineralogy and the Museum ? Is not his name and his fame known in the scientific circles from one end of Europe to the other ? Is not the name of Davy linked with the science of Chemistry for ever, or as long, at least, as its history shall survive in the annals of mankind ? And did not the recommendations of the present Professor of the Society, Mr. Edmund Davy, depend upon his having laboured under the eye of his distinguished cousin, and assisted in bringing those experiments to a successful issue which have changed the whole face of science ?—Are not the profound acquirements of Dr. Litton, not only in his favourite science of Botany, but in the whole range of the sciences,

and in literature, both ancient and modern, known to all the learned in the city of Dublin?—It is not, it cannot be pretended that these departments are condemned on account of the mal-administration of the Society, or the incapacity of the Professors; nevertheless the funds for their support are reduced. If, therefore, the promotion of science and the useful arts be impeded, it clearly will be the work of the Treasury, and not of the Society.* The Society, by choosing men of ability and established reputation to preside over the several scientific branches of their Institution,—by furnishing them with all the necessary means for cultivating and extending these respective sciences, *and above all, by opening the lectures freely and gratuitously to the public*, have performed their part fairly and honestly, and may boldly challenge investigation on the subject.

But if, pursuant to the dictates of the Treasury, the Society were to abolish the Professorships, there must be an utter breaking up of their establishment; for what is to become of their valuable Museum, and the Cabinet of Minerals, if there be no Professor, no keeper, or by what-

* One of the grounds for discontinuing the public Lectures, was alleged to be the indifference of the public to these subjects generally.—In other words, the public were considered to be indifferent, because the produce of the admission price attached by order of Government to the Lectures, fell very far short of the amount which had been assigned as a measure of their utility: that is, £200 for each individual course, a sum which it is believed was never yet obtained by any Lectures on such subjects within the City of Dublin. But whilst the Lectures continued open gratuitously to the public, they have been fully and respectably attended;—the Lectures on Botany under such circumstances, were latterly crowded to overflowing. No one can foresee what consequences may result from a free public Lecture. It was the accidental attendance on such a Lecture at Oxford, which first inspired the celebrated Mr. Kirwan with the desire to study Chemistry; and his country felt the benefits of the science which he afterwards diffused.

ever other name the person may be designated, to have the charge thereof? What of the Botanic Garden—what of the Laboratory and the extensive Chemical and Philosophical apparatus, &c. all acquired at such a considerable expenditure of public money?

Here, then, a general inquiry will arise, whether Institutions like the Royal Dublin Society, are, or are not, worthy of being preserved? Whether they contribute in any important degree to national improvement and public utility, or whether they are utterly valueless and contemptible? There may be persons who know nothing about their influence that hold them cheap.* But that such Institutions are esteemed by the public, is sufficiently obvious, from the known circumstance of their rapid extension to various large towns in Great Britain; in France also, they are extending from Paris to the Departments;—in Great Britain, the rich country,—at the expense of individuals;—in France, at the public charge. The Royal Dublin Society comes between both; large sums since 1800 have been contributed towards the expense by private subscriptions, but the great cost of the Establishment has been defrayed at the public expense.

“There are those who think that a liberal access to such Institutions as those of the Royal Dublin Society, its Museums, its Gardens, its Schools, is calculated to produce a great moral effect, by softening down [and ameliorating the character, the dispositions, and habits of the people. If this be so (and who is so ignorant of human nature as to doubt it?) then the national

* “Were all learning banished from the earth,” saith Edden Sadi, in the *Persian Rosary*, “no one, notwithstanding, would think himself ignorant.”

value of the Royal Dublin Society should not be estimated by the amount of pounds, shillings, and pence, which it may annually produce. It is to the credit of France, that in the midst of all her revolutions and convulsions, and in the most distressed state of her finances, she preserved, maintained, and extended her scientific institutions. In 1793, instead of destroying the King's Garden, the establishment was re-organised under a new name, and twelve Professorships were appointed; the first six of which, together with the eleventh, apply to the sciences taught in the Schools of the Royal Dublin Society—Mineralogy—Geology—General Chemistry—Chemistry in connexion with the Arts—Botany—Rural Botany—Agriculture.”*

But pounds, shillings, and pence, appear to have exercised a paramount influence over the destinies of the sciences and the arts; unless, indeed, it be maintained, that the lavish expenditure on the British Museum, an expenditure, be it observed, towards which Ireland contributes her quota, sufficeth for the whole realm, and that Dublin is adequately provided for by an establishment in London.

In the midst of the severe measures which have been dealt out to the Society, it is consoling, however, to find the following passage in the last Minute of the Treasury. “My Lords are aware of the great utility of the objects for which Institutions like that under consideration (the Royal Dublin Society) were founded; and so far from wishing to limit or restrict them, are only desirous to render them of wider and more general utility.”

* “Brief Notices respecting the Royal Dublin Society,” June, 1831.

But how the Institution can possibly be rendered of greater utility by a reduction of the funds, and closing the public Lectures, it is not easy to divine.

Let it be hoped that the affairs of the Society may be re-considered with more candour, and that condemnation may not be finally passed without an impartial inquiry founded on valid testimony.

Annual Expenses of the Royal Dublin Society, taken from the audited Account of 1830.

Botanic Garden, labour included, - - -	£853 12 5
Rents, taxes, and insurance - - -	593 0 6
House repairs, &c. - - -	306 3 0
Firing, coals, and candles - - -	151 8 11
Salaries and Wages, including those of all the Professors,* } Officers, and Servants of the Establishment - - -	2691 11 4
Clothing for Servants - - -	44 12 3
Drawing Schools and Fine Arts, incidents - - -	228 7 9
Natural Philosophy and Museum do. - - -	212 19 0
Chemistry and Mineralogy do. - - -	391 18 10
Library and Books, &c. - - -	522 17 4
Printing and Stationery - - -	244 13 2
Surveys, Statistics, &c. - - -	120 0 0
	<hr/>
	£6361 4 6

Balance of receipts carried to liquidation of the debt due to the Duke of Leinster for the House.

* *Present Establishment.*—Assistant Secretary, £276 18 4; Housekeeper and Register, £184 12; Three Professors, each £276 18 4; One Ditto, £184 12; Librarian, £184 12; Four Masters, Drawing and Modelling Schools, each £92 6; Head and Second Gardeners, £347 13 8; Male Servants, £292 18 8; Female Ditto, £122 18 8.

Abstract of the Accounts of the British Museum.

Vide Parliamentary Papers, 1828.

Salaries of Officers on the Old Establishment - - -	£3199 18 2
Extra ditto - - -	1802 19 3
Wages, Board Wages, and extra pay of attendants and } Servants - - -	3647 10 0
	<hr/>
	8650 7 5
Librarian, King's Library - - -	440 0 0
Officers of Banksian Library, and Collection - - -	513 6 3
	<hr/>
	£9603 13 8

BRIEF NOTICES

RESPECTING THE

ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

OF

SOME OF THE DEPARTMENTS

OF

THE ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY,

REFERRING ALSO TO

A SCHEME

FOR IMPROVING BOGS AND OTHER WASTE LANDS IN IRELAND.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS
AND MANUFACTURES
OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND

NOTICE
OF THE
ELECTION OF
MEMBERS

FOR THE
YEAR 1841

AND OF THE
ELECTION OF
OFFICERS

FOR THE
YEAR 1841

AND OF THE
ELECTION OF
OFFICERS

FOR THE
YEAR 1841

AND OF THE
ELECTION OF
OFFICERS

FOR THE
YEAR 1841

AND OF THE
ELECTION OF
OFFICERS

BRIEF OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

THE Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the Irish estimates, in the year 1829, contains the following passage, with reference to the Royal Dublin Society :

“ The Committee are of opinion, that with respect to the various classes of the Professors, it is inexpedient that the admission to the Lectures should be gratuitous, and that unless there should be produced an annual sum of £200 at least, as subscriptions to the Lectures on Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Natural Philosophy, the estimate for any department not yielding such an income should be reduced.”

The experiment has been tried, agreeably to the wish of the Irish Government, and has entirely failed ; a result which was expected and anticipated by those who were sufficiently acquainted with the state and circumstances of the city of Dublin. It therefore now remains with Government to decide what is to be done.

The Dublin Society was incorporated in the reign of George II. The charter recites, “ that several of the nobility and gentry of Ireland, having observed vast tracts of land and bog in Ireland uncultivated, and a general want of skill and industry in the inhabitants to improve them, had formed themselves into a voluntary society for promoting *husbandry and other useful arts* ; that they had at their own expense made many experiments, and published useful observations and instructions for raising flax, draining bogs, and improving unprofitable lands, and distributed considerable sums of money in premiums to the most deserving, whereby a spirit of industry and emulation had been raised, and great hopes conceived that much greater effects might arise therefrom, tending farther to civilize the natives, and render them well affected to the King and the Royal Family, and more able to con-

tribute to the increase of the revenue and the support of the establishment of the kingdom."

With the view of accomplishing these objects, the present charter of the Society was granted; and to mark the high sense entertained of the national value and importance of the undertaking, and to make, as it were, the Government a party to it, the Sovereign placed the representative of his royal person and kingly authority in Ireland, the Earl of Harrington, then Lord Lieutenant and Chief Governor of the kingdom, at the head of the Corporation, followed by a long list of privy counsellors and public functionaries, lay and clerical, comprising the principal nobility and gentry of the country.

The Schools of Science which now form so conspicuous and so useful a branch of the Institution, were not then made a part of its establishment, neither did they afterwards originate with the Society; they were created and introduced for purposes of national instruction, and as essential aids and auxiliaries in advancing and promoting the practical objects of the charter, either expressly by act of parliament, or in pursuance of the general recommendation of the Irish legislature, which from the year 1785, down almost to the last moment of its political existence, was continually enforcing and urging upon the Society the cultivation and encouragement of the useful sciences.—(See 25 Geo. 3. ch. 27, and ch. 61, and subsequent Acts.)

BOTANY.

THE Botanic Garden at Glasnevin, and the Professorship of Botany, were expressly created, founded, and endowed by Acts of the Irish parliament.

The first grant for this purpose was made in 1790, which, with that of 1794, and those of the intervening years, amounting in the whole to £1700, was directed by parliament to be applied towards "providing and maintaining a Botanical Garden," declaring the same to be "*for the improvement of agriculture and planting.*"

In 1796 the Botanic Garden appears to have been then fixed at Glasnevin, and in the next year the Professorship was endowed; parliament directing the *Committee of Agriculture* to pay out of a sum of £700, then granted for the support of the Garden, "a salary not exceeding £300 per annum, to Doctor Walter Wade, as their Professor and Lecturer of Botany, and superintendent of the said Botanic Garden."

In 1798 and 1799 parliament appropriated a sum of £1300 each year to the same purposes, and in the next year (1800), out of its last grant to the Society, it assigned £1500 to the Committee

of Agriculture “ for maintaining the Botanic Garden at Glasnevin, and paying Doctor Wade a salary of £300 for superintending the said Institution, and giving a full course of Lectures on Botany, and the application of that science to *agriculture and manufactures*.”

The principle of public utility which had guided parliament in founding the Botanic Garden, and induced the appropriation of such large sums to its support, appears to have been strictly adhered to by the Committee of Agriculture, in framing its details and the plan of its administration.

In the year 1800, the plan of the garden was announced to the public, in a Prospectus which commences thus :

“ The Dublin Society have formed a Botanic Garden at Glasnevin, pursuant to *act of parliament*, for promoting a scientific knowledge in the various branches of agriculture, on the following plan, settled by their Committee of Agriculture.”—(Proceedings of Society, vol. 36.)

The Prospectus then proceeds to describe the different divisions of the Garden, and the purposes to which each was to be applied ; the Linnæan Garden for the scientific botanist, who studies the plants systematically, the Cattle Garden, the Hay Garden, the Esculent Garden, the Dyer’s Garden, the Medicinal Garden, the Irish Garden, &c. &c.

“ The Professor gives Lectures on Botany in general, and also separate lectures on the cattle and hay gardens for the instruction of the common farmers, their servants and labouring men, all of whom are admitted to the Lectures gratis, on the order of a Vice-President, &c. &c.

“ That like Lectures are to be given on the garden for the Dyer’s use, and that for the purpose of extending practical knowledge, particularly in husbandry, samples and seeds be allowed to be given, and even plants, when they can be spared, to all persons who may wish for them.

“ Regulations are under consideration for the admission of persons, in which it is proposed to make the admission as general as it can be with safety ; and to have persons properly instructed to attend those who may wish for information.”

According to existing regulations, the garden is open to students at all times, and to the public twice a week, and upon lecture days.

Further details are unnecessary, to shew that the Botanic Garden at Glasnevin, with its Professorship, is a NATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT, instituted for, and dedicated by the parliament of Ireland to the improvement and instruction of the Irish public. Its conception, plan, and execution, are due to the scientific and practical mind of the late Lord Oriel.

Not having been mentioned in the Report of the Committee of

the House of Commons, in 1829, it is reasonable to conclude that Parliament had no intention of applying the recommendation there given, to this memorial of the devotion and attachment of the local legislature of Ireland to the best interests of the country, and therefore the Botanical Lectures, which had been closed, were again opened by the Society to the gratuitous access of the public. These Lectures are now proceeding, and the assemblage is often so great, that sufficient accommodation cannot be found for numbers who attend.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

THE school of Natural Philosophy was founded by the Society upon the general principle, sanctioned and inculcated by Parliament, of its being one of the useful sciences.

MINERALOGY AND CHEMISTRY.

THIS School has the express sanction of the Irish Parliament, (see Acts from 1792 to 1800, both inclusive.) It directed the purchase of the Leskean cabinet, the erection of a repository to contain it, and the forming and completing a cabinet of Irish minerals; parliament likewise assigned a salary at first of £150, and subsequently of £300 per annum, "to Mr. William Higgins, or such other professor of those sciences as the Society may appoint, for his attendance on the laboratory, and giving a full course of lectures on these sciences."

The study of mineralogy ought to be encouraged and promoted by all possible means in Ireland, where a spirit for mining undertakings is in actual operation. There is not, it is believed, any school in this country, entirely devoted to the study of that science, except the one in question. The Museum contains nearly 30,000 specimens of minerals, the number of which are continually augmenting by valuable donations and the industry of the Professor, while the general collection of natural history is increasing to such an extent, that there is not sufficient room within the Society's House for containing or disposing of it to advantage.

It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the importance of exciting and promoting the study and cultivation of the sciences in a country circumstanced like Ireland. There are those who think that a liberal access to such institutions as the Dublin Society, its museums, gardens, and schools, is calculated to produce a great moral effect, by softening down and ameliorating the character, dispositions, and habits of the people; if this be so, (and who is so ignorant of human nature as to doubt it?) then the national

value of the Royal Dublin Society should not be estimated by the amount of pounds, shillings, and pence, which it may annually produce. The late Mr. Canning, on his last visit to Ireland, made special inquiry into the terms of admission to the Society's Lectures, and expressed his pleasure and approbation on being informed that they were open gratuitously to the public.

It is to the credit of France, that, in the midst of all her revolutions and convulsions, and in the most distressed state of her finances, she preserved, maintained, and extended her scientific institutions. In 1793, instead of destroying the *King's Garden*, the establishment was re-organized under a new name, (*the Museum of Natural History*,) and twelve professorships were created, the first six of which, with No. 11, apply to the sciences taught in the schools of the Dublin Society, viz.: 1st, Mineralogy; 2d, General Chemistry; 3d, Chemistry applied to the arts; 4th, Botany; 5th Rural Botany; 6th, Agriculture; 11th, Geology.

Should the funds of the Society admit of it, they intend forming a veterinary department, for instructing pupils in the anatomy and diseases of the horse and other domestic animals, and the best system of treatment and cure; the value and importance of such an establishment need not be commented upon.

The Committee of the House of Commons, in their Report before referred to, state, "that public advantage could not but have been derived from the pursuit, on the part of the Institution, of the objects, for the attainment of which it had been established."

Those who are desirous of tracing the proceedings of the Society, and the *gratuitous services* which it rendered the country, in executing the extensive functions confided to it from time to time by the Legislature, may refer to the history of its transactions, and the records of parliament; but whatever may have been their actual value and amount, it must be admitted, without imputing blame to the Association, that, there are still *waste* lands to cultivate, *bogs* to drain, *skill* to be acquired, *industry* to be excited, *emulation* to be roused, *civilization* to be extended; and in addition to all these, there is an increased and increasing population, a large portion of it without employment; in one quarter, starvation and peace, in another, not very remote, insubordination and plenty, while the fruitfulness of the soil and the general productive capabilities of the country, offer a vast and ample field to the operations of industrious labour.

There is an obvious want of community of mind and exertion, in probing and searching out the causes, and devising a remedy for this frightful and discordant state of things; no service more acceptable could be rendered to Government of whatever party it might be composed. The Royal Dublin Society presents the only central point of domestic assembly for such common consultation and inquiry; but Dublin is no longer the resort it once was

of the nobility and gentry of Ireland ; the Society should therefore open wider its doors for the reception of those who reside in distant and more remote districts, by lowering the price of admission in favour of such members. Some years since, a Society was formed for promoting national improvement, which was subsequently abandoned from the apprehension of its being converted to party purposes ; the uniform and sole object of the Dublin Society from its first association in 1731, precisely 100 years ago, has been the improvement of Ireland in all her principal relations of domestic industry, *agriculture, manufactures*, and the *arts*, and during the whole of that period, the jar of political discussion or of party discord was never heard within its walls.

These observations are not intended to embrace every department of the Society, but those only to which the report of the Committee of the House of Commons appeared to be directed.

DUBLIN, *June*, 1831.

THE printed TRANSACTIONS OF THE DUBLIN SOCIETY for the year 1800 contain the following "SCHEME FOR IMPROVEMENT OF BOGS AND OTHER WASTE LANDS IN IRELAND."

The principle of a joint stock company, within the limits mentioned in the scheme, that is, to the exclusion of farming speculations, seems to be in all respects peculiarly applicable to the proposed undertaking, and from the proprietorship of the lands being vested in the company, all the necessary operations of reclaiming them, down to and including their ultimate disposal, will be more simple, less complicated, and conducted with more vigour and energy than they could possibly be under any public board or commission.

Family settlements, incumbrances, want of money, and the jealousy of parliament in granting adequate powers, have often, it is understood, impeded the formation and execution of such plans ; but these difficulties, consistently with all that is due to private rights and interests, are not, it is considered, by any means insurmountable ; and when the object is the employment of a starving population, and the extended and permanent improvement of the country, no exertion should be spared to bring the measure into prompt and immediate operation.

Former disappointments and the uncertainty of the principal obstructions adverted to being removed, may have prevented the offer of such companies ; let then a bill be forthwith prepared and

passed, inviting and encouraging their formation, and containing all the powers and provisions requisite for effectually accomplishing the undertaking.

Good roads, and other modes of free communication, are the first steps towards the improvement of any country; "without them," Mr. Griffith (4th Bog Report, p. 182,) truly says, "no inducement is held out to the industrious man to cultivate more land than is absolutely necessary for his own immediate subsistence, as he possesses no means of bringing his produce to market." And Mr. Nimmo, in his Report on the Bogs in the Barony of Iveragh, in the County of Kerry, illustrates this same position in the following forcible terms, (p. 43):

"Roads must be made in any country which is advancing in agricultural improvement. The quantity of butter sold in Cork last year was 250,000 firkins, of which I suppose one-tenth came from Iveragh, or at least from that barony and Dunkerron, viz. 25,000 firkins. This must have been carried in horse-loads of two and three firkins, say two and a half on an average, with each horse and driver, which makes 10,000 journeys of horse and driver per annum.

"Now, suppose good roads to be made, and carts substituted; these carts might carry 20 cwt., but we shall suppose them loaded with only 18 firkins, which at present require $7\frac{1}{5}$ horses and drivers; say only 7; then each cart saves the labour of 6 horses and drivers the distance of a journey to Cork, which is at least 75 miles.

"The bog country of Iveragh is seldom more than six miles distant from good manuring sand, much of it within one mile, and it is never far from earth or gravel. Each of these horses and drivers could make from 12 to 50 journeys with sand or earth, during the time employed in making one journey to Cork. The six could therefore lay from 72 to 300 loads in that time, which would be sufficient for at least one acre, and its produce after that cannot be reckoned at less than £3 per annum; take this only at 10 years' purchase, or £30.

"Now the 10,000 journeys of horse and driver, are equivalent only to 1,430 journeys of horse and cart, leaving 8,570 journeys of horse and driver for the improvement of the country; and 1,430 acres thus improved every year, produce, at £30 each, a permanent benefit of £42,900, which may be repeated every year, so long as there is land to improve. This immense sum, which may be said to be lost or wasted by the present improper direction of labour, may surprise those who have not turned their attention to such calculations. Yet I insist, that if examined with care, it will be found greatly underrated; for the improvement must be supposed to be done with carts, which would increase the amount six

or seven fold, without a single additional horse or labourer being employed."

It would be too much to impose upon the undertakers the charge of forming leading and general lines of road. These ought to be made at the public expense; partly by issues from the Exchequer, as in the case of the Highland roads and bridges in Scotland, and partly by assessment upon the counties.

The scheme which has been referred to, is now given, as it stands in the Society's Transactions, with a view of exciting attention, and a detailed consideration of this important subject, with which colonization and providing settlements for the industrious poor on the reclaimed lands, might, or rather ought to be combined.

Upon these latter points reference may be had to Mr. Jacob's account of the "*Pauper Colonies*" of Holland, and to the more interesting project, and as it would seem, more practicable, because not compulsory, of a number of that most respectable class of people called *Friends*, printed by Bentham and Hardy, Eustace-street, in the year 1825. The principle of this plan is to create and raise up a class of small independent yeomen and proprietors, by securing the occupying tenants in the possession of their holdings, and in the sure and certain enjoyment of the fruits of their labour.

" SCHEME FOR IMPROVEMENT OF BOGS AND OTHER WASTE LANDS IN IRELAND.

" THAT a Company be formed, consisting of subscribers, of not less than £ each, to be incorporated by act of parliament, and called the Waste Land Company of Ireland. That they have power to purchase from tenants, in fee simple, red or black bogs, of not less than acres, lying together; or strands, or marshes, usually covered with the tides, or ground covered with loughs, upon such terms as may be agreed on; and also have power of taking leases of such bogs, sands, or marshes, for not more than years, from lay or ecclesiastical corporations, sole or aggregate; or from tenants for life, guardians of minors, committees of lunatics, or femme coverts, at such rent as should be agreed on.

" That in order to such improvements, and for the advancement of the Company, they should have power to purchase gravel, or limestone, on adjoining lands, and to make compensation to persons having a right of commonage upon such bogs or marshes under leases, or otherwise, and to purchase grounds for making canals from such improvements, to next navigable canal, or river, or the sea, or to next market town; or to purchase ground for drains, in order to carry off water, upon such terms, and in like

manner as Grand or Royal Canal Companies ; such canals or drains not to be made through any garden, orchard, lawn, or walled demesne, without previous consent of owner.

“ That they should have power also to cut canals to neighbouring towns, for the purpose of supplying them with turf and water, upon the majority of the inhabitants of the town, in vestry assembled, by writing signed by them, applying to such Company, to make such canal for such purpose ; and in such case they should have power to charge the inhabitants of houses above £5 annual value, with a sum not exceeding in the pound, by the year, for such water, upon a valuation to be taken of the houses ; no house to be valued at more than £60 a year, and while the water be supplied, to distrain in case of non-payment.

“ That they should be capable of suing and being sued, in their corporate capacity, of making by-laws for their own regulation, not repugnant to the laws of the land, and have a common seal.

“ That they should have power of levying tolls on their canals, not greater than the tolls of the grand or Royal canals, and have power to sell and convey, or make leases of such ground, so improved, for such terms, and at such rents, as agreed on.

“ By this scheme, it is supposed undertakers would make 20 per cent., with scarce any risk, and would have a quick return for the money advanced, which could be demanded gradually only. It is conceived the scheme would be considered beneficial to the public at large ; and it being known, that bogs, in the course of their improvement, are well suited to the growth of *hemp and rape*, it is believed this scheme would *at the present* be readily embraced, and the act pass without difficulty.

“ With respect to the mode of forming the Company, it might be by putting an advertisement in the newspapers, signifying, that several gentlemen had agreed upon forming such a Company ; that such persons, as wished to become members, should send their names to a place to be named in the advertisement, and that at a given time a meeting would be held, where the plan would be disclosed. After such meeting, advertisements to be put into the English papers, signifying that such a Company was formed, and that books would be open for a given time (a month) at a place named to receive subscribers. By this mode, it is conceived a subscription to the amount of £500,000 may be had.

“ It is conceived the reason why the bogs of Ireland have not been improved by individuals is, because they have neither property nor power, property to undertake a heavy work, or power to cut drains through neighbouring lands, or to get manures elsewhere than on the ground, and therefore that great bogs can never be improved but by a Company, under the powers of an act of parliament.

“ It is not intended by the scheme, that the Company should be-

come farmers of lands to be tilled by them, but, as soon as the improvement was made, to set or sell their interest immediately, so that the whole of their business, such as draining, gravelling, burning, or even ploughing, and sowing with hemp or rape, being capable of being done by measurement, (supposing the crop to be sold standing,) it is thought such a Company could carry on their works as well as any canal Company.

“The reason of giving the Company a power of cutting canals to neighbouring navigations, is to enable them to get manures, and to sell off their turf, to help to defray expenses of draining. And as to the power of supplying neighbouring towns with water, it might answer the purposes both of the Company and neighbourhood.”

W. V.

N. B. About fifteen years ago, a plan for draining and reclaiming the bogs of Ireland, appeared in our public papers. The author proposed, that it should be taken up by parliament, that an exact account of the expense of reclaiming should be kept, and it was to be at the option of the original proprietor to re-purchase his bog so reclaimed, and in case of refusal, the land was to be the property of the public. It is certain that without the interference of the legislature, our great bogs cannot be drained: there must be a command of the levels or falls, and one obstinate or refractory proprietor mars the whole plan.