

An oration, delivered before the Medico-Botanical Society of London, at the commencement of their eighth session, Friday, 12th October, 1827 / by John Frost.

Contributors

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AN
ORATION,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
Medico-Botanical Society of London,

AT THE
COMMENCEMENT OF THEIR EIGHTH SESSION,
FRIDAY, 12th OCTOBER, 1827;

BY
JOHN FROST, F. A. S. F. L. S. F. H. S.

OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF GREAT BRITAIN, OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF GREAT
BRITAIN AND IRELAND, SECRETARY TO THE ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY, DIRECTOR OF THE
MEDICO-BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, HONORARY MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL
SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE, AND LECTURER ON BOTANY AT
ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION TO H. R. H. THE DUKE OF CLARENCE.

Medicus, notitiâ plantæ destitutus, de viribus ejusdem nunquam justè judicavit.

LINN. MAT. MED.

London :

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PRINTER TO THE SOCIETY.

1827.

ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON,

AT THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THEIR EIGHTH SESSION,

THURSDAY, 12th OCTOBER, 1857.

JOHN FROST, F.R.S. & F.L.S. F.R.S.

OF KEMBRIDGE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS,**William Henry,*****DUKE OF CLARENCE AND ST. ANDREWS,******K. G. K. T. G. C. B. G. C. H.***

&c. &c. &c.

LORD HIGH ADMIRAL OF GREAT BRITAIN.

SIR,

TRUSTING that the following pages, which Your **ROYAL HIGHNESS** has kindly condescended to permit me to place under Your protection, will demonstrate the especial advantages of the **Medico-Botanical Society** to the **Royal Navy**, by enabling the **Medical Officers** of that department to treat more successfully the diseases to which Seamen are

liable; and that the Institution may long enjoy
Your ROYAL HIGHNESS' Patronage, is the fervent
wish of,

SIR,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'

Most dutiful and devoted Servant,

JOHN FROST.

*Bridge-street, Blackfriars,
October, 1827.*

(COPY.)

“ *At a Meeting of the Medico-Botanical Society of London,*
“ *holden at the Society's Apartments, No. 32, Sackville*
“ *Street, Piccadilly, on Friday, 12th October, 1827,*

“ SIR JAMES M'GRIGOR, M. D. F. R. S. K. T. S. Director-
“ General of the Army Medical Board, *President,*
“ In the Chair.

“ On the Motion of COLONEL SIR JOHN SCOTT LILLIE, K. T. S.,
“ seconded by MATTHEW CURLING FRIEND, Esq. F. R. S. Lieut. R. N.

“ IT WAS RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

“ That the most sincere thanks of this Meeting be given to
“ JOHN FROST, Esq. *Director*, for his able Oration, and that he be re-
“ quested to furnish the Society with the MS. for publication ; and fur-
“ ther, that a copy of the same, when printed, be transmitted to every
“ Member of the Society.

(Signed,)

“ J. M'GRIGOR, *President.*”

(COPY.)

ORATION

"At a Meeting of the Medical-Botanical Society of London,
"Held at the Society's Apartments, No. 32, St. Paul's Church,
"Street, Piccadilly, on Friday, 12th October, 1837.

"Sir James McGRIGOR, M.D. F.R.S. K.T.S. Director
"General of the Army Medical Board, President.

"In the Chair.

"On the Motion of General Sir John Scott James, K.T.S.
"Seconded by Mr. George George, F.R.S. Lieut. R.N.

"It was Resolved unanimously, that the importance of the

"That the most sincere thanks of this Meeting be given to

"John Frost, Esq. Director, for his able Oration, and that he be re-

"quested to furnish the Society with the MS. for publication; and fur-

"ther, that a copy of the same, when printed, be transmitted to every

"Member of the Society.

"J. McGRIGOR, President.

ORATION.

MR. PRESIDENT and GENTLEMEN,

SEVEN years have now nearly elapsed since the foundation of the **MEDICO-BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON**; instituted in consequence of the almost total neglect of the study of **BOTANY** by the members of the medical profession, and which, as a branch of science, has claims of the first importance on their attention. It can scarcely be credited, that till January, 1821, there existed no Institution for the sole purpose of ascertaining the qualities and properties of plants as applicable to medicine: till then, it was considered, that if the systematic names of the plants, mentioned in the Catalogue of the **Materia Medica**, published by the **Royal College of Physicians**, were known to the student, he possessed a competent knowledge of Botany.

To show that this superficial kind of Botany, had, in fact, no pretension to the science, and that it is necessary for the student in medicine to examine plants by stated rules, and arrange them according to a distinct system, was *one* of the objects of the founders of this Institution.

To demonstate that the uses and effects of plants were imperfectly, and often erroneously described, and of course, incorrectly known, and to remedy these defects, was *another*.

To promulgate, from time to time, by publication, such discoveries as are made with regard to the application of plants to the curing of diseases, is the *principal* object of your Society; and when it is considered, that it comprehends the Medical Botany of *all* countries, and, therefore, will convey important information to *every* nation, you must allow with me, that it deserves the greatest encouragement. You are, in fact, Gentlemen, investigating an untrodden path, and one which is replete with new subjects, created for the glory of God and the service of the human race.

The medicinal virtues of the vegetables indigenous to this country, have never been studiously nor satisfactorily examined, and the properties of many are accidentally made known to individuals, who are incapable, by reason of their want of education and habits of life, to put forth their information to the world.

The traveller, in exploring new countries, finds herbs always resorted to by the natives as their medicines, and though living in the most uncivilized state, they employ them advantageously for the relief of those maladies to which they are subject. The brute creation are, by instinct, enabled to select certain plants as medicines, at particular seasons; and the innumerable variety of vegetables, which pervade every part of the world, excites the attention of the naturalist, and ought equally to attract the notice of the medical practitioner, who seems to think, that when he has obtained his diploma, he has then acquired sufficient knowledge, and needs no further accession to his stock, as in his youth he only attended to such studies, certificates of having diligently followed which are required, either by the College of Surgeons or the Company of Apothecaries, before he could be admitted to an examination, to qualify him to practise the healing art. Your most excellent President, Gentlemen, last year, as I then stated, enacted a most desirable regulation, respecting the candidates to serve in the medical department of the Army, which has made Botany a *sine qua non* for that service. On inquiry, I find, he has, as Lord Rector of Marischal College, instituted a similar wise rule there. It is to be hoped, that such a good example, set by Sir James M'Grigor, will be followed, both by

the College of Surgeons and Company of Apothecaries, because Medical Botany is equally important to the Surgeon and the Apothecary.* It may here be mentioned, that the Universities of the Continent and Edinburgh have long insisted on the study of Botany by graduates in medicine. Whatever charms or uses

* This assertion cannot be better illustrated than by the subjoined remarks, contained in a letter, addressed to me by that eminent Surgeon and able Philosopher, Sir Anthony Carlisle, F. R. S. Surgeon Extraordinary to the King, and Vice-President to the Royal College of Surgeons, who has kindly allowed me to make it public.

“ Langham-place, September 25, 1827.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I have stolen a short time from my multiplied duties and vocations, to offer you my passing thoughts upon Medical Botany, and which you are at liberty to use in any way that you may judge proper. Wishing you all due success,

“ I am,

“ Your's faithfully,

“ To JOHN FROST, Esq.

“ ANTHONY CARLISLE.”

“ Under the guidance of advancing science, Medical Botany promises to afford many additional remedies both in Physic and in Surgery. Whether we regard the endless diversity in the sensible properties of vegetable substances, or the recent discoveries in Chemistry, for extracting their different elements, we are equally encouraged to expect the revealing of new or specific medicinal virtues, under a continuance of those researches. When we reflect upon the indefinite variety in the smell and flavour of leaves, flowers, seeds, barks, gums, &c., we must infer, that each of these different impressions arises from a peculiar and distinct affection of our living materials, and yet the *modus operandi* of those substances upon our bodies has been little investigated, although it comprises the immediate cause of the efficacy of every remedy.

“ The several relations between the animal and the vegetable kingdoms, are established by the ordinations of the Creator, and their reciprocal services to each other are everywhere manifest. Even the pasturage of

the science may have, or claims on the attention of the student in physic, it will never be followed, until it is made *im-*

“cattle is, in some degree, medicated, for every meadow or wild contains plants of the most opposite kinds,
 “some to supply nutriment, some to act as condiments, and, perhaps, some as vermifuges. Hay comprises
 “an inseparable mixture of all; and the want of those additions to the proper materials for food may be often
 “seen, when animals indulge in a single species of plant, such as clover, green corn, or turnips.

“Vegetable drugs are of unlimited potency, extending to all the vital functions of animals, and also to
 “the mind itself; and I am convinced, by copious experience, and by inductions from meditation, that they
 “deserve to be esteemed as generally preferable to mineral substances, whether employed inwardly or outwardly.

“The known deleterious effects of Arsenic of Lead and of Mercury, do not, however, deter violent and
 “heedless practitioners, men who think themselves warranted to follow the orthodox routine, under a con-
 “tinuance of failures and of evil effects. Remarkable examples of professional obedience to ill-established
 “authority, are to be frequently met with in the streets, in persons, rendered hideous by the exhibition of Ni-
 “trate of Silver, for the professed purpose of curing Epilepsy, although its efficacy is not general, and when
 “beneficial, the cure is seldom durable, but the patient disfigured for life. Future scientific inquiries will
 “probably exhibit the vegetable creation, as the elaborator of some of the most remarkable substances which
 “encrust this globe. The metals and earths may be justly suspected to be of vegetable origin; and if the
 “nascent elements of those beginners of all organic compounds, embrace such potent materials, in a state to
 “be transferred with facility, we may reasonably expect, from Botany and Vegetable Chemistry, all the cor-
 “rectives and alteratives which our bodily errors require.

“Hypothetical and conjectural speculations have been the forerunners of important discoveries, and when
 “we find reasonings from analogies, and anticipations of probable results, to constitute much of the algebraic
 “prescience of Aristotle, of Lord Bacon, and Robert Hook, we cannot with propriety despise them.

“Contemplating the revived knowledge of the ancient reputed virtues of the Hermodactyl or Colchicum,
 “a specific for certain states of the Gout, the modern concentration of Peruvian Bark in the Sulphate of
 “Quinine, and its extraordinary efficacy in intermittent Fevers, or the topical effects of the Extract of Bella-
 “donna, in paralyzing the muscular fibres of the human iris, we become equally pleased and assured of the
 “admirable adaptation of vegetable drugs, to the cure or alleviation of human maladies. Dr. Frend, in his

perative, and then he will become acquainted with it as a matter of necessity, and, consequently, obtain a competent know-

“ History of Physic, very justly observes, that Nature is always simple and uniform, and Art, to succeed well
 “ in following her, must always tend to the same point; and, certainly, he adds, if this part of Surgery were
 “ set in a more distinct view, by those who are masters in that way, and the effects of outward applications
 “ better adjusted and explained, nothing could give us a greater light unto the virtues and operations of inter-
 “ nal medicines. It is unfortunate for the healing art, that few practical men have either leisure or inclination
 “ to devote themselves sufficiently to its sciences. Rapacious seekers of vulgar fame and wealth, are too much
 “ busied in worldly affairs, while closet philosophers and professional scholars are little regarded (while liv-
 “ ing) either by their brethren or the public. Hence, few men of popular notoriety and money-getting repute
 “ in the metropolis, have left any written proofs of their supposed talents, or added to the stock of general
 “ information: and were it not for the competition and publicity of hospital practice, Medicine and Surgery
 “ would soon become a mere gainful mystery, leaving few traces of professional improvement, and as few
 “ records of its rationality.

“ In every medical scramble for distinction, there is a strong temptation among the competitors to employ
 “ the most active means, in order to produce rapid and conspicuous effects: hence, violent medicines are gene-
 “ rally preferred, notwithstanding the repeated occurrence of untoward changes or fatal consequences. A self-
 “ sufficient or desperate practitioner is generally disposed to put the question of life or death to a speedy issue,
 “ without caring for the milder indications of Nature, or relying on her secret offices.

“ I have had frequent occasions to lament the excessive administration of Calomel, to persons labouring
 “ under obscure maladies, which, according to my judgment, would have proved destructive, if so given to the
 “ same parties in full health. Long-continued and copious experience also convinces me, that the recent disuse
 “ of herbaceous cerates and plaisters, and the heedless introduction of Lead and Mercury, have neither been
 “ improvements, nor harmless changes in Medical Surgery; but the English Pharmacopœia is altered without
 “ the concurrence of Surgeons, and I consider many of those changes are contrary to the latest evidences in
 “ Physiology and Pathology. The indefinite commixture of unsettled and imperfectly known elements, which
 “ abound in vegetable substances, so different from the settled and better known constituents of minerals,
 “ present an endless variety of medicinal agents, whose remedial influences far exceed the scope of our present
 “ therapeutical theories. Indeed, I am sanguine enough to believe, that the vegetable kingdom comprises

ledge of it: the Surgeon would be able to direct more desirable vegetable applications; and the Apothecary understand better the preparation of those plants which are enumerated in the List of the *Materia Medica*, besides having it in his power to instruct the Herbalist, as to the proper period for collecting herbs for medicinal purposes; and the medical practitioner would, in general, be able to command more suitable medicines than he can at present, because the field of *Medical Botany* has been so imperfectly explored. How little medical men and students know of this subject, may be discovered by conversing with them; and the errors they constantly commit with regard to vegetable substances, needs not any comment. It appeared desirable, to lay so important an object, as the education of the rising generation of medical students in Botany, and its application to physic, before you, in order that some means might be devised, to procure a legislative enactment respecting it, or rather to point out to the College of Surgeons

“ remedies for all our bodily disorders, short of those necessarily incurable alterations of structure in vital parts, which forbid all rational hope.

“ Vegetable drugs possess the remarkable, and, perhaps, the exclusive power of acting directly upon the brain and nerves, and hence it is probable, that specific remedies for Tetanus, or even for Hydrophobia, may be yet concealed in plants; and although their ultimate discovery may be accidental, the lately published *Materia Indica*, by Dr. Ainslie, brings to our view so much extensive research and varied learning, that we need not despair of success from professional inquiries.

“ ANTHONY CARLISLE.”

and Company of Apothecaries, the necessity of making a regulation, requiring certificates of attendance on *one* or more courses of Lectures on Botany. By such a salutary rule, not only would a knowledge of the science be gained by every student, but he would be able afterwards to benefit his fellow-creatures thereby, and become an ornament to his profession. It certainly is the bounden duty of those, whom the Legislature has entrusted with the education of the students in medicine, to see that they are acquainted with all those collateral branches of study which are connected with it. Your President, Gentlemen, did not *recommend* candidates for a qualification to practise in the Army, to make themselves acquainted with Botany, but he promulgated an *order* from the Board, of which he is the distinguished Director, that no person should be admitted to an examination without due attendance thereon, and producing certificates thereof. He was well aware, that the *only* plan to render his views *really* useful, was to enforce them, as what is left to choice, especially in matters of study and application, is generally totally neglected. A familiar example of the truth of this observation, is to be found with respect to a boy at school, who would not learn the Classics if he were not obliged, and who, in after life, does not regret it, as he then finds the value of them; so it will prove to those medical students, who have been *obliged* to qualify themselves so generally, as they will

become the better practitioners, and, of course, be more successful in the treatment of diseases, and, therefore, render greater advantages to mankind; then they will feel and acknowledge the real value of Sir James M'Grigor's regulations with respect to the service. Many of them, destined to visit distant parts, will have innumerable opportunities of calling their botanical knowledge into action, and become a credit to themselves and their country.

Here I would pause a moment, to offer a grateful tribute of respect to the memory of that illustrious member of the Royal Family, whose loss, this nation, and the Army in particular, deplore; I mean the excellent and ever-to-be lamented Duke of York, a Prince, whose virtues and good actions have been excelled by none, and equalled by few. His Royal Highness took a deep interest in the objects of this Society, from a conviction of their *real* advantages to mankind, which, through the medium of the medical department of the Army, were greatly to be advanced. Since our last annual commencement, Death has removed that amiable and noble Prince from us; that bereavement was especially severe to the Members of this Society, who felt that they had lost their august Patron, who had lent his protecting arm to support the objects of the Medico-Botanical Society, because he foresaw the ultimate good that

would result from the prosecution of them. The Society endeavoured to express their grief and deep sympathy in the universal feeling, by voting an Address* to our most sacred Sovereign, which His Majesty was graciously pleased to receive, as an humble tribute of the heartfelt sorrow of the Members of this Society. The memory of the Duke of York will long be cherished by every well-wisher to his country,

“ Si quæris monumentum circumspice.”

Having endeavoured to discharge the melancholy duty to departed worth, I shall proceed to notice such particular events, as have transpired during the past session, in the order in which they occurred. The readiness and condescending kindness with which His Royal Highness, William Henry, Duke of Clarence, now Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, was pleased to become a Patron, and, subsequently, to supply the place of his late brother, must be highly gratifying to every Member of this Society. His Royal Highness would not have given his valuable countenance and support to this Institution, had he not been satisfied, that its objects were of the first importance to the medical department of the Royal Navy, the officers of which, stationed at various parts of the coasts of the world,

* The Right Honourable Robert Peel, as Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, presented this Address to the King, which appeared in the London Gazette of 23d of March, 1827, No. 18,346.

ought to be conversant with Botany. The health of a crew, in many cases, would be materially preserved by the judicious employment of herbs: for the truth of this remark, in an extended sense, I would refer you to the introduction of that prepared vegetable called "*Sauerkraut*." All those important considerations, which are applicable to the medical department of the Army, are equally so to that of the Navy. What opportunities are not afforded to the officers of the latter service, to explore the native medicines of the places they may visit, and render them useful in the curing of diseases. How desirable it would be, that certificates of attendance on Botany, should be required from candidates to practise in the medical department of the Royal Navy; and the result of such an order, would, in a few years, prove its value, as the maladies incident to seamen would be more successfully treated. The benefit the Navy has already experienced, by the revival of the distinguished office of Lord High Admiral, in the person of the Duke of Clarence, even during the short period His Royal Highness has discharged its arduous duties, is felt and acknowledged. It must be very gratifying to you to find, that this distinguished Prince has taken your Society under his protection; and, I trust, Gentlemen, you will, on all occasions, testify to His Royal Highness the high sense you entertain of this especial mark of his favour.

It will be pleasing to you to hear, that your President, Sir James M'Grigor, has suggested a most valuable plan, for carrying into effect the noble object of collecting together the medicinal plants of every quarter of the globe, arranging them *geographically*, with their scientific and provincial names attached to them, together with their properties and doses; and of allowing the medical officers of the Navy and Army to have access to them at proper hours, gratuitously, and to make themselves acquainted with the medical plants of any place, to which they may be bound *before* their departure. Sir James has thus given you a hint, which, if followed up, will be productive of the utmost service to those departments, and it only remains for every Member to exert himself, to put into execution such a laudable design; and it will act as a farther stimulus, to acquaint you, that Sir James M'Grigor has commenced the work, by directing the officers, stationed in the different British Colonies, to transmit the plants, used by the natives as medicines, to the Society.

That justly-renowned Hero, who has led on the British Army so frequently to victory, and has rendered this country and the world such signal services, as must ever be gratefully remembered, and to whom His Majesty has confided the important office of Commander-in-Chief, convinced of the utility of the Medico-Botanical Society, added his name to your list; and the handsome terms in which the Duke of Wellington

expressed himself on that occasion, must be fresh in your recollection.

The benefits of your Institution, are not *confined* to any nation or clime, but are calculated to diffuse themselves over the habitable regions of the globe. Nothing can be a stronger proof of the estimation in which your Society is held, than the flattering manner in which His Majesty the King of Bavaria, His Majesty the King of Würtemberg, His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of Sussex, Cambridge, and Gloucester, and the Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, have severally added their illustrious names to your list. Such a splendid accession of noble personages, has rarely or never fallen to the lot of any Society, in the short period of one year; and it must afford the highest satisfaction to every Member, to hear of the countenance and support of such august Patrons of science, in furthering the welfare of the Medico-Botanical Society; besides whom, several noblemen have been elected Fellows, during the past session.

I have the heartfelt pleasure of informing you, that His Majesty's Secretaries of State for the Foreign and Colonial Departments, have signified their readiness to promote the objects of your Society, by affording you such assistance, as their several offices can furnish, in respect to the transmission of your foreign correspondence. The Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's

Treasury have promised to take into their consideration, the remission of the duties, otherwise payable on importations for your Library and Museum.

The Honourable Court of Directors of the East India Company have assured you, that they will “ instruct the local governments, to furnish a free conveyance to any packages of seeds “ and plants which they may receive addressed to the Society ;” and they will cause the Prospectus of your valuable purposes to be generally circulated throughout their vast territory.

That highly respectable body, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, have offered to forward your views in that country, for the exclusive study and exploration of which they are incorporated.

The Société de Géographie of France, and the Royal Academy of Sciences of Dijon, have, through the able exertions of Mr. Cæsar Moreau, one of your most active Members, commenced a correspondence with your Society, which, it is to be hoped, will prove reciprocally advantageous, particularly as the *former* has most handsomely undertaken to direct all those gentlemen, who may visit remote climates under its auspices, to embrace the objects of your Society in their researches.* Thé

* The following gentlemen, who have lately been deputed by the Société de Géographie to visit the interesting regions of South America, have been furnished with instructions, relative to the objects of the Medico-Botanical Society : Mr. Peyrounnenc, Mr. Tayllefer, Mr. Choris, who has often visited the American Continent, and Dr.

Columbian Minister, Señor Jose Manuel Hurtado, has promised to send you the medicinal plants of that state. The Viscount de Itabayana, the Envoy Extraordinary of His Majesty the Emperor of Brazils to the Court of London, has desired me to assure you, that he will be most happy to promote your designs, by procuring any seeds or plants you may desire from those parts.

The Governor of Demerary, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, one of your Vice-Presidents, has recently written to acquaint you, with his constant readiness "to obtain subjects from those in the colony who are able to furnish them;" and has evinced such tokens in favour of the cause of science in general, as show the deep interest he takes in whatever can tend to the welfare of the colony and the cause of humanity.

Sir Henry Willock, His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at the Court of Persia, a country abounding with interesting articles of Materia Medica, has kindly promised to exert himself in behalf of your Society, and has undertaken to make some inquiry respecting that gum resinous exudation, Myrrh; and in order to ascertain the plant which affords that substance, and which has not yet been correctly established, although Bruce, in his travels in Abissynia, after a laboured detail, pro-

Bertero, Member of the Royal Academy of Turin, who proposes passing several years in Chili, for the exclusive purpose of studying the vegetable productions of that country.

nounces the tree to be a species of *Mimosa* or *Acacia*; his opinion has never been corroborated, and he offers no decided proof as to the botanical characters of the tree.* The Royal College of Physicians of London have been at great pains to discover it, but without success, and it still remains *subjudice*. Your Council, at the suggestion of the Conservator of your Collection, very properly passed a Resolution, “ offering a reward of five and
 “ twenty pounds, or a gold medal of equal value, to any
 “ person who shall satisfactorily describe the tree which affords
 “ the Myrrh of Commerce. The essay to be accompanied by
 “ dried specimens of the plant, wood, &c., with its botanical
 “ and commercial history. Candidates to send in their essays
 “ without their names, on or before the first of January, 1829.
 “ Each essay is to have a motto or device prefixed, and is to
 “ be accompanied by a sealed paper, containing the name and
 “ address of the author, and superscribed with a motto or de-
 “ vice, corresponding with that attached to the essay.” The Council have recommended this plan to secure impartiality, and they have given sufficient time for this prize question to be circulated in those countries from which Myrrh is procured.

That anxious promoter of every branch of science, the late President of His Majesty's Supreme Council and Chief Judge of Ceylon, Sir Alexander Johnston, has politely promised to

* It has lately been supposed to be the produce of the “ *Amyris Kataf*.”

obtain for you the plants used by the Cingalese, and you must concede that Botany will ever be under great obligations to him, for the establishment of a botanical garden in that colony.

A prospectus of your objects has been transmitted by a distinguished member of the British senate, to General Bolivar, "that he may have the opportunity of affording the Medico-Botanical Society that aid, which the interest of humanity commands, and which the new world can so largely supply."

That indefatigable cultivator of science, Mr. Reeves, of Canton, is actively engaged in drawing up an account of the Materia Medica of the Chinese for you, which he will illustrate by dried specimens, and plates of the plants; and as an earnest of his intentions, he has already sent you a communication on the subject, and three volumes of engravings of the plants used in China as medicines, which are deposited in your Library.

Mr. Hartshorne, of the Royal Hospital of Chelsea, communicated a statement of a new styptic, termed "*Matica*," which is used externally, by the natives of Peru, to stop Hemorrhage from wounds. It appears to be a species of *Piper*, and from the experiments, detailed in the letter sent to the Society, it would seem, that the powdered foliage invariably proved successful. This is a new and interesting fact with regard to the Materia Medica of the Peruvians, and shows the necessity of having the *provincial* names attached to them.

Mr. Schenley, His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul at Guatemala, has sent you an account of the "*Huaco* or *Guaco*," which consists of two distinct species of *Mikania*, both of which are used as antidotes for the bites of venomous serpents.

The desirable assistance, which the use of Mr. Battley's extensive Chemico-Pharmaceutical Laboratory will afford you, is only to be equalled by the liberal and disinterested manner in which that acute and intelligent observer has proffered his valuable services, and through his persevering zeal, it is to be hoped, that important illustrations of the articles of the *Materia Medica*, will, from time to time, be laid before you.

Mr. Edward Huggins, of the Island of Nevis, has transmitted a considerable quantity of the seed of *Argemone Mexicana*, the expressed oil of which, is stated by him to act as a milder purgative than the oil of *Croton Tiglium*: the results of the experiments thereon, will, in due time, be brought under your notice.

Your Herbarium has received a valuable addition from the Island of St. Vincent's, through the instrumentality of your President. Lady Crichton, the amiable consort of your excellent and learned Vice-President, has presented a collection of dried specimens of plants, from the interior of South America; and there being amongst them many undescribed species, one of your most distinguished Honorary Members, that celebrated Botanist,

Mr. Robert Brown, has undertaken to arrange them, and will shortly lay the result of his researches before you.

The Reverend John Smirnov, the Chaplain to the Legation of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, has sent you a considerable quantity of the dried plant of the *Genista Tinctoria*, which he received from the Ukraine, where he states it is successfully used in relieving Hydrophobia. How far it may succeed in this country remains to be proved, and your Council have taken measures to have it tried, in order that it may be reported on. The Right Honourable Sir George Rose has communicated an interesting account of it, which you will presently hear read. The Reverend Mr. Smirnov has also sent about twenty pounds of the seed of *Genista Tinctoria*, which will grow in the open air in this country, and the Council have resolved to distribute it amongst such Members of the Society as may be desirous of sowing it. Mr. Smirnov deserves your best thanks for this present. It has long been *stated* to relieve Hydrophobia, and there will be an excellent opportunity of ascertaining its real merits.

Dr. George Williams, the Regius Professor of Botany in the University of Oxford, says, "if it prove to be in my power to add any thing to the Society's Herbarium, I shall have particular satisfaction. Your objects are of a great and national

“ importance: they are more immediately applicable to useful
 “ purposes than many others which have lately attracted so large
 “ a share of public favour. However, you have advanced rapidly
 “ and steadily, and I am glad to learn such decisive proofs of
 “ your flourishing condition.”

The Reverend John Stevens Henslow, M. A. F. L. S. Professor of Botany in the University of Cambridge, is actively engaged in collecting and arranging the plants indigenous to the county of Cambridge, and will thereby materially increase your Herbarium; and indeed he has often expressed his earnest desire to be in any way useful to your Society.

Your Library has, during the past session, been enriched by many valuable works, through the liberality of several of your Members; amongst which I would notice, *Grew's Anatomy of Plants*, a fine copy of *Gerard's Herbal*, *Linnæi Amœnitates Academicæ*, *Murray's Apparatus Medicaminum*, *Hortus Kewensis*, contributed by its learned author Mr. Aiton, Sir James Edward Smith's *Spiciligium Botanicum*, presented by Sir John Scott Lillie; a copy of Dr. Whitelaw Ainslie's inestimable *Materia Indica*, presented by the Honourable Court of Directors of the East India Company; the *Transactions of the Geographical Society of France*, presented by that body; and a collection of fifty-one Medico-Botanical, Pharmaceutical, and other Dissertations, presented by that renowned traveller and botanist,

Professor Thunberg, the successor to the Linnæan chair; the *Transactions of the Royal Academy of Dijon*, the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, with many others, too numerous to mention here; not to forget a copy of *Lord Bute's* splendid work on Botany, only twelve copies* of which were printed, and the plates then destroyed. With the exception of His Majesty's and the Banksian Libraries, I am not aware of any others possessing it.

The Council, ever anxious to extend the advantages and privileges of the Members, have it in contemplation to make

* The following authentic account of the distribution of the twelve copies of Lord Bute's Botany, extracted from the first volume of that in the Banksian Library, may prove interesting.

Number of copies of Lord Bute's Botanical works extant.

Copies.

Lord Bute 2 } one of the copies sold at Mr. Tighe's sale in March, 1798, for
£120, supposed to be bought for the Earl of Gainsborough.

The Queen 1

Empress of Russia .. 1

Sir Joseph Banks.... 1

M. De Buffon 1 now in the King of France's Library.

Lady B. Mackensie .. 1

Lady Ruthven 1

Lady Macartney 1

Duchess of Portland.. 1 now Lady Bath's copy.

Mrs. Barrington 1

Mr. Dutens 1

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arrangements for the delivery, annually, of two courses of Lectures on Botany and Toxicology, by their respective professors; which will be delivered independently of the monthly meetings, and on such days, and at such hours, as shall best suit the convenience of the Members at large, who will have free admission thereto, with the privilege of introducing a friend to each Lecture. In order more effectually to meliorate the medical departments of the Navy, Army, Ordnance, and of the Honourable East India Company, their officers will have gratuitous admission, on presenting a recommendation from the heads of their several departments. These arrangements will not be carried into effect till the spring of the next year, when the Library and Herbarium will be opened for the use of the Members.

In adverting to the subject of Toxicology, I must not omit to pay that tribute to the talents and assiduity in fulfilling the duties of his post, to which the present Professor of Toxicology, Dr. Sigmond, is entitled, though, I am sure, he, with the Society at large, will coincide with me, in regretting the severe and protracted illness of Dr. Gordon Smith, which precluded the possibility of that gentleman's retaining an office which he otherwise would have filled, with credit to himself and honour to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT and GENTLEMEN,

Nothing can be more grateful to my feelings than to have had such desirable intelligence to convey to you, and to assure you what pleasure I shall always derive in affording my feeble services in behalf of your Institution, the important purposes of which I have very imperfectly endeavoured to point out, and the increasing prosperity of which, must be a source of congratulation to every Member; and no occasion, since its foundation, has been so memorable as this commencement, which must act as an additional stimulus to you, collectively and individually, to promote the objects of a Society, equally important to medical science and the welfare of the community at large.

It only remains for me to renew my assurances of the wish I have to render you any services within my power, to thank you very sincerely for your kind attention to my observations, and to request your indulgence as to what I have urged in support of the Medico-Botanical Society.

“Vive, vale, si quid novisti rectius istis;

“Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.”

FINIS.

