

**A letter to the Rt. Hon. Thomas Spring Rice, M.P. Chancellor of His Majesty's Exchequer ... containing a plan for the better management of the British Museum / [John Millard].**

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*From the Author*

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**LETTER**

TO THE

**RT. HON. THOMAS SPRING RICE, M.P.**

*Chancellor of His Majesty's Exchequer, &c. &c.*

CONTAINING

**A PLAN**

**FOR THE BETTER MANAGEMENT**

OF THE

**BRITISH MUSEUM**

BY

**JOHN MILLARD**

EMPLOYED FOR EIGHT YEARS IN PREPARING A NEW GENERAL INDEX TO ALL  
THE COLLECTIONS OF MSS. IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

QUORUM PARS MAJORA FUI.—VIRG.

PRIVATELY PRINTED

MDCCCXXXVI.





## A LETTER, &c.

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SIR,

THE public are so deeply indebted to you for the interest you have taken in the affairs of the British Museum, and the anxiety you have shown to extend its utility not only by your proposal for a "SCHOOL OF DESIGN," for the encouragement of the arts and manufactures, and for the increased facilities of access to the Museum, by giving your sanction to its being opened during the holidays, and the establishment of an evening reading room—but by the purchase, at your recommendation, of the valuable Egyptian antiquities of the late Mr. Salt,—of a magnificent collection of Dutch etchings,—of a considerable portion of the late Mr. Heber's valuable Manuscripts,—and of the matchless Durand collection of Etruscan vases, that I am induced to believe I cannot address myself to any one more competent to appreciate the plan for the better management of the British Museum, which I have now the honour to submit to your notice.

It has long been the reproach of this country, that, with advantages and means possessed by no other nation in the world, England continues to remain far inferior to the majority of continental states in its collections of works of science, art, and literature—of the natural productions of the earth, and the monuments of the genius of the great people of antiquity. Where, then,



are we to seek for the cause of this acknowledged inferiority? Not in the want of funds for the support of the British Museum, or other means for its continual aggrandizement; not in the freedom of our political constitution and the indifference or parsimony of the Government\*; not altogether in the incapacity of the different curators; not in the want of individual encouragement, by bequests and donations, many of them being of the most munificent description; not because “an Englishman is dull in his perceptions of the national fame as respects matters of literature, science, and art†”, the direct contrary being evinced by the extensive patronage of the Museum already alluded to, and the great increase of visiters to the institution‡;

\* The Rev. J. FORSHALL, Keeper of the MSS. and Secretary of the British Museum, speaking of the obstacles to the improvement of the institution, says, “We have an impediment in the very freedom of our political constitution; the necessity of perpetual reference to the House of Commons, the jealousy of that house in regard to the mode in which the public money is expended, the clamour more or less prevalent for economy, furnishing sometimes a reason with the Government for declining expense, and *always a convenient excuse*; these are obstacles, in a great measure, peculiar to this country; and they tend to prevent that course of dignified liberality which is best calculated to secure the respect and affection of the people, and to promote their wealth and happiness.”—*Evidence of 1835*, No. 623.

Upon reading these and other extraordinary observations by the Keeper of the MSS. will not some persons be ready to exclaim, with the Greek moralist, Ως οὐδὲν ἢ μάθησις, ἀν μὴ νοῦς παρεῖ.

† Rev. J. FORSHALL.—*Vide Evidence of 1835* (No. 623.)

‡ The number of persons who visited the Museum in the year 1810-11, when the access to it was just as free as it is at the present moment, was only 29,152; the number of the past year was 289,104, which, allowing for the increase of the population, affords a striking example of the growing interest in such matters on the part of the public.



not in any of these causes is its inferiority to other museums to be sought for; but in the existing CONSTITUTION of the establishment, composed, as it is, rather of an aristocracy of rank and wealth, than, as it ought to be, of an aristocracy of science and intellect.

Although the act of incorporation of the Museum (26 Geo. II) states that “all *arts and sciences* have a connexion with each other, and *discoveries in natural philosophy*, and other branches of speculative knowledge, *for the advancement and improvement whereof the said Museum or collection was intended*, do and may, in many instances, give help and success to the most useful *experiments and inventions*,” it does not appear that the real objects of the Museum have ever been properly understood by those appointed to conduct it.

In the year 1761, only two years after the opening of the establishment, a complaint was made as to the *limited extent of the objects* which it embraced,—an evil which still exists in full force, and which, it is to be hoped, will now be remedied. Mr. DODSLEY, in his Preface to the “Contents of the British Museum,” at that period, says, “It were to be wished, that the *plan of it were enlarged*, that the buildings were more extensive, and that a fund were established sufficient to answer the purpose of *encouraging ingenious men in every useful art, in every science*; and I can know of nothing that can be done that *will tend more to the honour of our country* than to have such a large fund appropriated for the encouragement of ingenuity and learning. When we read over the list of the names that compose the Royal Society, the Trustees of this Museum [then all men of high attainments] and that numerous train of Britons who wish so much to en-



courage every art, science, and *manufacture*, can we possibly be at a loss for Trustees to manage, with impartiality and propriety, *a more general establishment?* . . . . From the united labours of such a society, what might we not hope for? *Every manufacture would soon be brought to the greatest perfection, and the sciences more than flourish!*"

Such was the complaint of an enlightened author in the year 1761; and, strange as it may appear, no application seems to have been made to the Government by the different successions of Trustees, who have at various periods swayed the destinies of the Museum, for the purpose of accomplishing these national objects. But it was reserved for you, Sir, in the year 1836, to propose what had been so long neglected,—the encouragement of our “arts and manufactures,” by the establishment of a “SCHOOL OF DESIGN,” which should form, as in other countries, an integral part of the National Museum. It is quite clear that this establishment has not hitherto “answered the purpose of encouraging ingenious men in every useful art, in every science;” that “every manufacture is *not* brought to the greatest perfection;” and that the “sciences do *not* more than flourish.”

The chief cause of the neglect of these truly national objects is to be found in the DEFECTIVE CONSTITUTION of the Museum, which confers the power on thirty-three official and family Trustees of electing fifteen others, without any obligation on the part of the electors to choose individuals eminent for their literary and scientific qualifications; and as the practice appears to have been, for the last forty or fifty years, to select such persons as were chiefly distinguished for their



rank or wealth, it can no longer be a matter of surprise, that the conduct of the National Establishment has been so decidedly inferior to that of the continental museums, which are almost uniformly superintended by the most eminent professors in every branch of art, literature, and science. It is no reproach to the various noble and distinguished persons who have, for so long a period of time, superintended the affairs of the British Museum, or to the officers whom they have employed, that this institution should have failed in effecting the valuable objects it was intended to promote. The Trustees have doubtless exercised their best judgment upon the various subjects presented to their notice; but it would be unreasonable to expect that they should combine the talents of such as are deeply learned in manuscripts or numismatics; of experienced bibliographers; of classical antiquaries or cognoscenti; or of such as are eminently conversant with the multiform ramifications of natural science, and with the arts and manufactures.

The errors that have been committed are rather the fault of the *system* which has so long prevailed, than of the individuals who have acted under it; and yet, unaccountable as it may appear, while the absurdities and imperfections of this system are generally admitted, some persons are to be found still desirous to contend for its superiority; and, what is yet more remarkable, among the number are the two leading officers of the Museum, the principal Librarian and the Secretary.

Sir HENRY ELLIS, in his evidence given before the Committee of Inquiry last session, observes, that the Trustees have not been elected as "Professors, but



as amateurs of science and art" (No. 110); that "the science and literature of a well-educated English gentleman are sufficient for a Trustee" (No. 145); that "the Trustees do not sit as a Board to decide scientific questions, but call for advice when necessary" (No. 123); that "in the election of Trustees, the benefit of the Museum, not the benefit of science, is considered" (No. 146); and yet he admits that "the early Trustees were scientific men" (No. 163), and were "all men of high attainments" (No. 167). Of the present Trustees, he says, that they meet "to superintend the institution, and to see that no money be expended without their order" (No. 124). Sir Henry Ellis also states, "that there is no distinguished zoologist among the present Trustees" (No. 112), "nor any one capable of forming an opinion of the value of a zoological collection" (No. 114); "no distinguished mineralogist or geologist" (No. 115); "no poet or historian" (No. 116); and "no persons among the elected Trustees distinguished by their works on literature or science" (No. 163).

The Rev. Mr. FORSHALL does not consider pre-eminence in literature or science to be "the sole object for electing a Trustee," or "distinction in either an essential qualification" (No. 646, 652). He afterwards says, "The Committee will please to understand, that the ordinary management of the Museum is confided to its officers; *general superintendence* only is required from the Trustees. The object of the legislature in providing so many Trustees was not with a view so much to the management of the Museum, as to the *security of its collections*. For instance, in the very last act of parliament, you will find that a *female* might



become a Trustee of the British Museum ; but such a *female*, I conceive, would answer the chief purpose designed by the act ; for she would have the power of interfering in case the collections for which she was personally interested were in risk of injury." (No. 675).

From this reasoning it may be fairly inferred, that there would be no great impropriety in transferring the management of the British Museum to the chiefs of departments, their numbers being increased, or to a Board composed of the *elite* of the science and literature of the country, with which they might be associated. That such an alteration in the Council of the British Museum is a "pressing want," has been ably demonstrated by some of its officers, who differ with their colleagues on the subject.

Mr. CHILDREN, the Assistant-Keeper of the Natural History Department, and Secretary of the Royal Society, thinks "that the admission of the most eminent literary or scientific men to the Board of Trustees, with a view to the interests of the Museum, would be beneficial" (No. 3073) ; and "that it would be a very proper distinction, considering how few offices there are in this country which can be applied in the shape of a reward to scientific men, to confer so high an honour as that of a Trustee of the British Museum on men of science and literature" (No. 3074) ; that "it would hold out encouragement to men of science" (No. 3076, 3088). "He sees no reason why the choice of literary and scientific men should be limited to the presidents of learned societies" (No. 3091) ; "does not think that high rank should be the sole qualification for a Trustee" (No. 3107) ; considers "that the constitution of the Museum might be improved by the ap-



pointment of scientific and literary men as Trustees' (3110); and "is not aware of any elected Trustees having been chosen from the ranks of men of science, unconnected with the aristocracy" (No. 3115).

Mr. ROBERT BROWN, the Keeper of the Botanical Department, thinks "that scientific qualifications, as respects Natural History, should be expressly attended to in the appointment of Trustees, and that profound knowledge in any branch of physical science would be advantageous in regard to the Library" (No. 3723). Such are the opinions of two gentlemen well known to the scientific world; and I have reason to believe that they are not the only officers of the Museum who would approve of a board composed of scientific men, and the chiefs of the different departments.

Apart from considerations affecting the national character, and disregarding even the immense sums that have been expended in the unsuccessful attempt to render the British Museum worthy of the nation, the present advanced state of human knowledge imperiously demands that an entire change should take place in the *constitution* of the establishment; without which it is quite impossible that any beneficial improvement can be effected in its administration. The present Trustees are forty-eight in number; of whom twenty-three are official Trustees; viz. the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Lord President of the Council, the First Lord of the Treasury, the Lord Privy Seal, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, the three Secretaries of State, the Bishop of London, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord Chief Justices of the King's Bench and



Common Pleas, the Master of the Rolls, the Attorney and Solicitor General, the Presidents of the Royal Society, of the College of Physicians, of the Society of Antiquaries, and of the Royal Academy. And there are ten family Trustees, appointed by different acts of parliament to protect the property bequeathed, given, or sold to the Museum, of which they are the legal representatives; and fifteen elected Trustees, chosen by the above thirty-three.

Of the illustrious individuals who compose the great body of official Trustees, I cannot but speak in terms of the most profound respect; it is impossible, however, that the high and important functions which you, Sir, and the other official Trustees, are daily and hourly called upon to discharge will allow them to devote much of their time to the concerns of the Museum. It results, therefore, that the conduct of this magnificent establishment must necessarily devolve upon a comparatively small number of Trustees; and if I may draw an inference from the practice of 1832, 1833, and 1834, I shall be justified in stating, that the *principal* management of the establishment is confided to LORD FARNBOROUGH, the BISHOP OF LONDON, Mr. GEORGE BOOTH TYNDALE, and the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, who are occasionally assisted in their labours by some distinguished members of the aristocracy, and by the presidents of the learned societies.

The following list, corroborative of my statement, has been abstracted from a paper in the British Museum Evidence of 1835 (p. 390), which contains an account of the meetings held between the 14th of January 1832, and the 26th of December 1834, a period



of nearly three years; and also the names of the "standing committee" who attended them.

The general meetings, committees, and sub-committees, were sixty-three in number; of these

	Meetings.
(Elected) Lord Farnborough attended.....	55
(Official) Bishop of London.....	42
(Family) G. B. Tyndale, Esq.....	42
(Official) Archbishop of Canterbury.....	36
(Elected) Lord Ashburton.....	26
(Ditto....) Right Hon. T. Grenville.....	26
(Official) President of the College of Physicians (Sir Henry Halford)	24
(Elected) The late Henry Bankes, Esq.....	24
(Official) President of the Royal Academy (Sir Martin Archer Shee)	22
(Family) His late Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester.....	18
(Elected) Marquess Lansdowne.....	16
(Ditto...) Earl of Harrowby.....	16
(Official) President of the Royal Society (H.R.H. the D. of Sussex)	14
(Elected) Marquess Camden.....	13
(Family) T. P. E. Towneley, Esq.....	11
(Elected) The late Lord Dover.....	11
(Official) Speaker of the House of Commons.....	9
(Ditto...) Master of the Rolls.....	7
(Ditto...) Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas.....	7
(Family) Earl Cadogan.....	7
(Official) Attorney General.....	6
(Family) Earl Cawdor.....	6
(Elected) Duke of Rutland.....	6
(Ditto...) Duke of Hamilton.....	5
(Ditto...) Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel (elected in 1833?).....	5
(Ditto...) Lord St. Helens.....	4
(Official) Lord Chancellor.....	2
(Ditto...) President of the Society of Antiquaries (Lord Aberdeen)	2
(Family) T. A. Knight, Esq.....	2
(Official) Lord Chief Justice of King's Bench.....	1
(Ditto...) Solicitor General.....	0
(Family) Rev. A. Annesley.....	0
(Ditto...) Lord H. W. Bentinck.....	0
(Ditto...) Earl of Elgin.....	0
(Elected) Earl of Eldon.....	0



Having been employed for eight years in the service of the British Museum; being intimately acquainted with its history from its first establishment; possessing a collection of documents relating to it, which may be considered unique; and having, for the last three years, devoted the greater part of my time and attention to a comprehensive study of the subject, in connexion with the various foreign museums, many of which I have visited, I venture to lay before you a plan which has been for some time digested, and which will, I trust, more than any other that has yet appeared, tend to remedy the evils so loudly complained of. I would propose then, Sir, that an Act of Parliament should be passed which should first repeal all acts relating to the British Museum, and then appoint the present Official Trustees (with the exception of the Presidents of the Royal Academy, the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries, and the College of Physicians, who might form a part of the proposed new Council), nineteen in number, the responsible or *legal* Trustees of the whole property of the Museum, whose duty it should be to watch over and protect the various collections, but who should not have any share in the management. The *ten* family Trustees, with any others that it might be hereafter necessary to appoint, to be Trustees only of the particular property which they represent, their sole duty being to preserve the integrity of their respective trusts. I would also propose that, after the passing of this Act, the services of the elected Trustees be dispensed with, and that no similar body be created.

To supply the place of the present Board of Management, I beg to submit to your consideration the pro-



priety of appointing a COUNCIL, to consist of twenty persons, to be *named by the Government*, who should each of them be eminently distinguished in one of the following branches of science and learning: 1. Geology and Oryctology; 2. Mineralogy; 3. Conchology; 4. Botany; 5. Entomology; 6. Ornithology; 7. Ichthyology; 8. Amphibia and Reptilia; 9. Mammalia; 10. Comparative Anatomy and Physiology; 11. Egyptian and Indian Antiquities; 12. Grecian and Roman Sculpture; 13. Architecture\* and School of Design; 14. British Antiquities; 15. Coins, Gems, and Medals; 16. Pictures, Prints, Maps, and Charts; 17. Ethnography; 18. Arts and Manufactures of Great Britain; 19. Palæography; 20. Bibliography.

There would, I am persuaded, be no difficulty in selecting from the galaxy of talent which now adorns our country (despite the presumed "dulness" of the English), individuals eminently fitted to give their advice and assistance in the improvement of the National Museum. Among those who have devoted their energies to the successful cultivation of natural science may be mentioned Sir JOHN HERSCHELL, of whose scientific acquirements, and liberal and enlightened views, every Englishman may be justly proud; nor can I hesitate to add the names of Sir PHILIP EGER-TON, MESSRS. AIRY, DALTON, OLINTHUS GREGORY, SEDGWICK, GREENOUGH, MURCHISON, HENSLOW, MAC LEAY, GRANT, VIGORS, BELL, OWEN, and SOUTH; and many others might be readily enumerated. In art,

\* The attendance of an eminent architect at the council would be very desirable, not only during the progress of the new buildings, but in case of any alterations it may be necessary to make in the present plan, which, it is said, is not exactly suited to the wants of the Museum.



we have a CHANTREY, a BAILEY, the accomplished PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY, and Mr. SHEEPHANKS; and in architecture, a BARRY, whose magnificent and unique design for the New House of Commons, with other beautiful productions of this enlightened artist, deservedly place him at the head of his profession. The field of literature would offer an abundant choice of distinguished authors, and of gentlemen eminently skilled in books and manuscripts; suffice it to mention the names of Mr. PETRIE, the Keeper of the Records in the Tower, Sir HARRIS NICOLAS, and Mr. HALLAM. The study of Egyptian Antiquities has been ably illustrated, and the National Museum benefited, by the labours and researches of Mr. WILKINSON, and others; and no small praise is due to Mr. GAGE, the Director of the Society of Antiquaries, for his perfect acquaintance with the much neglected study of the Antiquities of Britain. It would, I fear, Sir, occupy too much of your valuable time to pursue this subject; but I cannot conclude the imperfect list I have hastily sketched without recording the names of Sir JOHN BARROW, whose geographical and ethnographical acquirements are so eminently displayed in his valuable publications; and of Mr. BABBAGE, whose knowledge of the arts and manufactures, and the best means for their successful improvement, are too well known to need any eulogium from my pen.

I would further propose, that the individuals forming the new Council should annually elect from among themselves a President, subject to the approval of the Government, and should possess the entire management of the Museum; but should, like the Record Commission, report from time to time to the Executive



Government, and be placed under the immediate control of one of the ministers of state, as is almost uniformly the case in foreign museums.

I would also submit to your consideration the propriety of dividing the Museum into twenty distinct departments, as before enumerated, and of appointing a Director to each of them, who should be *named by the Government*, at the recommendation of the Council. These Directors, together with a Principal Director, to be appointed by his Majesty, also at the recommendation of the Council, should be entitled to a seat at the board, but without a vote.

The benefits to be derived from such an association of the officers with the Council would be very great; the Council, being all men of high attainments in their respective branches of science and learning, would be competent judges of the deficiencies in the various collections, and would thus be enabled to determine on the expediency of complying with the requests of the Directors of the several departments. Another advantage would accrue; there would be an *equal* division of the money granted by Parliament for the support of the various objects of the Museum; and no one department would be favoured at the expense of another. If it were considered necessary, a BOARD of VISITERS, similar to that attached to the Board of Longitude, might be named by the Government—a measure recommended by Sir HANS SLOANE, the founder of the Museum—who might from time to time visit and examine the establishment, report to the Government on the proceedings of the Council, and make any useful suggestions that might occur to them.

The great defect of the existing constitution of the



Museum is, that the present Trustees are an *irresponsible body*,—being amenable only to Parliament for the management of the Institution ; and unless the tedious process of a Committee of Inquiry be resorted to, no complete information can be obtained as to the state and condition of the Museum, as to its retrograde or forward movements ; the annual account presented to Parliament of the receipt and expenditure, and of the number of *visits* and visitors to the Museum, affording no data by which the Executive can form a satisfactory opinion on these matters. It remains only then, Sir, to urge upon your consideration the plan which I have suggested for infusing new life and vigour into the national museum, being fully assured, that every improvement therein now so anxiously desired by the public would speedily follow the proposed change in its constitution ; but without such an alteration, I fear there is little probability of any permanent good being effected by the present or any other inquiry that may be instituted on the subject.

I will not, Sir, enter into any further details of the numerous evils that have arisen from the peculiar constitution of the British Museum ; the evidence of the officers themselves, given before the Committee of Inquiry last session, affording, in almost every page, sufficient proof that it never did, and never can, answer the purposes for which it was intended : but I will turn to the more agreeable task of submitting to your consideration such alterations and improvements in the national establishment as have received the sanction of those who are well qualified to deliver an opinion on the subject.



## P L A N

FOR

## THE BETTER MANAGEMENT OF THE MUSEUM.

## I.—GOVERNMENT AND PATRONAGE.

1. All acts of Parliament relating to the Museum to be repealed. A new act to be framed, appointing the present official Trustees (with the exception of the four presidents of learned societies) being nineteen in number, the *legal* Trustees of all the property of the Museum. The present ten family Trustees to be re-appointed to watch over the custody of the property they respectively represent. None of the above Trustees to have any share in the management of the Institution; but the first nineteen to be responsible to the Government for the safety of the property. The services of the fifteen elected Trustees to be dispensed with after the passing of the act, and no new election to take place.

2. A *Council* to be appointed by the Government, to consist of twenty persons, all distinguished in the different branches of science and learning. This Council to elect annually from among themselves a President, subject to the approval of the Government; and to have the entire management of the Museum; but to be under the immediate control of one of His Majesty's Ministers of State.

3. The *principal Director* to be appointed by His Majesty, under His Majesty's sign-manual, at the recommendation of the Council. All the other officers, without exception, to be named by the Government, at the recommendation of the Council\*.

\* The present patronage of the Museum is in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, or any two of them, with the exception of the Principal Librarian, who is appointed by His Majesty; two names being submitted to His Majesty by the three abovenamed Trustees.



4. The principal Director, and the chiefs of departments, to have a seat at the Council, but not to have any vote.

5. The Council to report, from time to time, to one of the Ministers of State respecting their proceedings, and to be in correspondence with him whenever it may be deemed necessary.

6. The Council to make an Annual Report to Parliament, not only of the receipt and expenditure of the Museum, but of its progress, condition, wants and prospects, and particularly of the state of the different collections, the deficiencies therein, and the money required to supply such deficiencies; also an account of the various bequests, donations, contributions, and purchases of the current year, above the value of £100, describing the nature of the collections, with extracts of so much of the wills as relate to any bequests made to the Museum, and how far the "Conditions" or "Directions" of the donors have been complied with.

## II.—ACCOMMODATION OF THE PUBLIC.

1. The Museum to be opened daily, throughout the year, from ten o'clock A.M. till half an hour before sunset; except on Good Friday, Christmas Day, and on Sundays. To be opened on Sundays from two o'clock P.M. till half an hour before sunset; proper notice being given of the time of opening and closing. The Gallery of Antiquities to be opened on every day, throughout the year, except on Sundays, &c. for the admission of artists and others at a very early hour in the morning, varying according to the season of the year.

2. A School of Design to be established for the encouragement of Arts and Manufactures.

3. The Reading Room to be opened every day, except on Sundays, &c. from nine o'clock A.M. till half an hour before sunset.

4. A distinct fire-proof Reading Room to be erected for evening readers, to be open from six to eleven P.M.



### III.—NEW DEPARTMENTS.

The Museum is at present divided into four departments:—  
 1. Printed Books; 2. MSS.; 3. Natural History; 4. Arts and Antiquities. But as these have been found inadequate, it is proposed to make the following new arrangement:—

1. Geology and Oryctology; 2. Mineralogy; 3. Conchology; 4. Botany; 5. Entomology; 6. Ornithology; 7. Ichthyology; 8. Amphibia and Reptilia; 9. Mammalia; 10. Comparative Anatomy and Physiology; 11. Egyptian and Indian Antiquities; 12. Grecian and Roman Sculpture; 13. Architecture and School of Design; 14. British Antiquities; 15. Coins, Gems, and Medals; 16. Pictures, Prints, Maps, and Charts; 17. Ethnography, including the dresses, implements, and manufactures of different nations, as illustrative of their arts, manners, and customs, at present assigned to the department of Antiquities; 18. Arts and Manufactures of Great Britain, comprising models of inventions, productions of the arts, modern sculpture, &c. &c.; 19. Manuscripts; 20. Printed Books.

### IV.—OFFICERS.

1. The *principal Director* to be responsible for the general correspondence; to maintain a regular intercourse with similar institutions, and learned persons abroad or at home; and to be considered the responsible organ of the Museum at all times. It should be his duty to receive all foreigners who may visit the Museum; and it would be desirable that he should be able, at least, to speak and to write the French and German languages.

2. A *Director* and *Assistant* to be appointed to each of the first eighteen departments; and a *Director* and four *Assistants* to the MS. department; and a *Director* and six *Assistants* to that of the Printed Books. The system of employing temporary Librarians, or "Clerks" as they are called, at a *daily* stipend, deducted during illness, to be abolished, and a sufficient number of persons to be engaged and placed at once upon the establishment, to be paid quarterly, as in all Government offices.



3. *Salaries.*—These should be sufficient to render the officers independent of any other occupation ; their whole energies should be devoted to the service of the Museum, which cannot ever be the case, while their minds are distracted in endeavouring to eke out by extra employment the present insufficient remuneration allowed to them : with this view it is proposed that the Principal Director should have a salary of £1000 a-year ; the Directors £500 ; and the assistant Directors £300.

4. *Pluralities.*—No officer to be allowed to hold more than one situation in the Museum at the same time ; nor to retain any appointment or preferment, ecclesiastical or civil, other than that which he holds in the Museum, either with or without emolument.

5. *Officers' Libraries.*—Each officer to be provided with a select Library of Reference for his especial use.

6. *Private Collections.*—No officer to be allowed to form a private collection of objects similar to those under his particular care, an exception being made for “ printed books.”

7. The *Secretary* should not, as at present, hold any other office in the Museum. He should keep the accounts, attend all the meetings of the Council, register their minutes, perform all the usual secretarial duties, and act as *Econome* or House Superintendent. If necessary, he should be provided with an assistant.

8. The *Attendants and Servants* should be fitted, by their previous habits and employments, for the respective departments to which they may be appointed ; and such as have been brought up to the printing, bookselling, and book-binding trades, or are familiar with objects of Natural History, should always have the preference, practical knowledge being very desirable. It is submitted, also, that they should wear a livery, and that the porter at the gate be able to speak the French and German languages. The manner in which this useful class of persons has hitherto been remunerated seems extremely objectionable ; one, after seven years' service, receiving £85 per annum ; another for the same period, £75 ; and another, after *twenty-three years*, no more than this last sum—although their qualifications, their



duties, and the efficient discharge of them, may be considered equal. Is this a just scale of reward? Some of the attendants receive only 5s. a-day for three days in the week; and can it be expected that a man who has a wife and family to maintain from this miserable pittance can support them, and afford to appear in a dress sufficiently respectable for an attendant at the National Museum?

9. *Elèves*.—A certain number of young men, as in foreign museums, to be employed in such departments as may require their services, particularly in the first nine, as supernumeraries, that they may be educated to become efficient officers of the establishment.

10. *Promotion*.—The system of promotion from an inferior to a superior office, except in cases of positive incapacity, to be a rule, and not an exception; and to be considered as “a matter of course,” a right, and not a favour.

11. *Pensions*.—If it be deemed advisable by the Government to secure efficient services, and to reward deserving officers and servants, it will be necessary to institute a scale of retiring pensions. At the Imperial Public Library at St. Petersburg, the superior officers are at liberty to retire on half pay after ten years' service, and after fifteen years their whole salary is continued to them. With respect to the attendants and servants, the same allowance is made after fifteen and twenty years' service, respectively. Should any similar regulations be adopted at the British Museum, it would only be an act of justice to some meritorious officers of that Establishment, that they should have a retrospective as well as prospective effect.

## V.—OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS.

1 to 10. *Natural History*.—Distinct *British Collections* should be formed in mineralogy, botany, and zoology; and distinct collections to illustrate the application of insects, vegetables, and minerals, to the arts and manufactures.



No object should be exhibited until it be first named; an established and well-known nomenclature to be used in preference to a perpetual alteration of names of genera and species.

Detailed *Classed Catalogues* of the contents of the several departments, and concise and cheap manuals, to be printed for sale.

A *Laboratory* to be attached to the Museum for the purposes of chemical analysis and experiment; with tests to examine shells, &c.

12. *Antiquities*.—Casts of statues, &c. in the Vatican, and other great foreign collections, should be procured; and a *formatore* or moulder should be attached to this department, by which means it is understood the public could be supplied with casts of the antiquities at two-thirds of the price usually charged for them. The improved taste that the free circulation of casts would be likely to create, and the consequent advantage to art, would afford a sufficient compensation for the expense incurred by the public.

15. *Coins*.—Greater facility of access to the Coins, Gems, and Medals, and an exhibition of part of them arranged in historical series in glass cases, as in foreign museums. Some of the more beautiful *intaglios* might be moulded, and the original and the cast exhibited together in glass-cases, as at Paris, because these objects cannot be examined without being handled and held up to the light. A most valuable and useful work might be produced, consisting of a series of engravings on steel, in the *relief* style of M. Collas, of the more valuable medals, coins, and gems, in the National Collection, which would form an excellent *pendant* to the splendid *Trésor de Numismatique*, so well known throughout Europe. The publication of the proposed work should be committed to individual enterprise, sanctioned and supported by the Government; the “Gallery of Antiquities” published by the British Museum, which has for so many years “dragged its slow length along,” offering a sufficient reason why no similar work should be allowed to emanate from the Museum.

16. *Pictures and Prints, &c.*—All the pictures at present in the



Museum to be transmitted to the National Gallery. A *Classed Catalogue of the Prints* to be made and printed in 8vo, for sale.

19. *MSS.*—The printing of all catalogues now in progress to be suspended; a *CLASSED CATALOGUE* of all the collections of *MSS.*, ordered to be commenced in the year 1807, should be now compiled, printed in octavo, published in parts, and sold at a reasonable price; an alphabetical index to accompany each volume; and one great general index or alphabetical table of contents to be made at the end of the work. As there are more than 20,000 volumes of *MSS.* in the Museum, it is absolutely necessary that a *CLASSED Catalogue* of them should be compiled and published as soon as possible. The numerous distinct Catalogues of the various collections, some printed and some in *MS.*, some with and some without indexes, afford but a very inefficient help to those who wish to consult the various important documents in the Museum, for the purpose of historical, topographical, or genealogical research. The expensive folio form, also, in which these, generally speaking, *unclassified* catalogues have been hitherto printed is not only inconvenient for reference, but places them beyond the reach of most students, who, if they were printed in octavo, and sold in parts, would be enabled to purchase them.

Many of the *MSS.* might be exhibited to the public, as in the *Bibliothèque Royale* at Paris, in glass cases; a regular series of *MSS.* with illuminations, from the earliest to the latest period, would convey a good idea of the progress of art during the dark ages; and the autographs of the Kings of France and England could not fail to interest the general visiter.

20. *Printed Books.*—These should be arranged in faculties or classes, according to subjects, as in the great public libraries of Lisbon, Dresden, &c.; each with a special Director, who should be perfectly acquainted with the bibliography of the particular class of books which he is appointed to superintend. Supposing the whole of the printed books in the Museum to be divided into six or seven distinct classes, it would not be difficult to provide as many rooms for their reception in the new building. The present saloon of the Royal Library, together



with the same floor in the north wing, which would give a length of about 600 feet, and a proportionate breadth, would be quite sufficient for the purpose. There does not appear to be any good reason why the Cracherode collection, and King George the Fourth's Library, should be preserved intact, while Sir Hans Sloane's books, and the Royal Library of the Kings of England, given by King George II, are mixed with the other books in the Museum. All these books are sufficiently distinguished to prevent their being sold, by *mistake*, as duplicates.

Instead of the present imperfect alphabetical catalogues of the books, a **CLASSED CATALOGUE** should be compiled, and published on the same plan as that of the MSS. There might also be an alphabetical catalogue, or inventory, for the use of the Librarians, and such other persons as may wish to consult it; but this should *not*, on any account, be *printed*. As it is understood that a very large portion of the **Classed Catalogue** commenced in 1824, but determined upon so early as 1807, has been prepared, this national work, for some time suspended by order of the Trustees, should be immediately resumed, completed, and printed for public use; the 240,000 volumes of printed books being comparatively useless without such an adjunct.

With respect to the *Classed Catalogues of the MSS. and the printed Books*, there is little doubt that some respectable booksellers would be found to undertake, conjointly, the printing and publishing of them at their own expense: by this method, *some thousands would be saved to the public*, and the Catalogues would, for obvious reasons, be more widely circulated, than if they were printed and sold by the Museum.

The *Addenda*, containing a list of all bequests, donations, and accessions to the Museum during the current year, a small number of which is now printed for *private distribution*, should be printed less expensively, and *sold* at a reasonable price.



## VI.—MEANS OF PROMOTING THE UTILITY OF THE MUSEUM, GENERALLY.

1. An exchange of books, antiquities, objects of natural history, &c. &c. with foreign governments, and provincial and foreign institutions, as in France and other countries.

2. The employment of travelling naturalists, persons versed in antiquities, &c. &c. in foreign countries, as is the case not only in the larger, but in the smaller states of Europe, and even in America.

3. Scientific persons to be appointed to accompany voyages of discovery, for a similar purpose.

4. Instructions to be given to naval and military officers, British ministers, consuls, and agents of Government abroad, by means of the Admiralty, the Foreign and Colonial Offices, to correspond with the Principal Director, and not only to secure every thing suited to the Museum, but to give immediate information of any collections that may be offered for sale, their nature, value, &c. Much may be done by keeping up a correspondence of this sort. Had such instructions been given by the Government thirty or forty years ago, the British Museum might have possessed the most superb collection of natural history and antiquities in the world. India alone would have furnished objects enough for fifty museums, and had any energy been displayed, most of the principal towns in England, like those in France, might have possessed a national museum\*.

5. A model of every new invention for which a patent may hereafter be obtained, to be deposited in the British Museum, with designs, descriptions, &c.

\* The *United Service Museum*, supported by contributions of 10s. from each of its members, has established local committees at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Edinburgh, Dublin, Chatham, Deal, Cheltenham, Quebec, Port Royal and Kingston, Jamaica, Madras, Malta, the Cape of Good Hope, St. Helena, Calcutta, Ceylon, Bombay, Penang, New South Wales, and Canada: and Government transports have received directions to convey contributions from abroad to the institution free of expense.



6. Such works of modern art as may be purchased by the Government, to be deposited in the Museum.

7. The plan of the new buildings to be reconsidered, with a view to the better adaptation of them to the wants of the Museum; and the chief officers of each department to be consulted as to the space required for the objects in their respective custodies, as well as the private rooms or studies necessary for their accommodation.

8. An improved plan of warming and ventilating the different rooms to be adopted, which may remedy the evils of the present system.

9. No bequests or donations, in future, under any circumstances, to be sold.

10. No duplicates of any books, prints, coins, or other objects to be sold, except such perishable articles in the Natural History Department as cannot be *exchanged* with other institutions or museums. As it is understood that there are many thousand volumes of duplicate printed books and other objects in the Museum; these, if the Government should think fit, might be presented to certain public and permanent provincial institutions, or prove serviceable in laying the foundation of *another public library* in the metropolis, which might be placed in Whitehall, or some other building. This branch library and museum would be continually enriched by the duplicates from the parent institution, and might be governed on a similar plan. In Paris there are seven public libraries; the metropolis has but one!

11. The printing of the Museum to be limited, in future, to the printing of the Synopsis or Guide (which should be sold at prime cost and at a reduced price) and to certain Catalogues; the continuation of the "Gallery of Antiquities," and other publications, to be left to *individual enterprise*, sanctioned and supported by the Government; a very large sum of money having been expended on these works without any adequate return. With respect to the printing of the Classed Catalogues of the MSS. and printed Books, see p. 25.

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Such, Sir, are a few of the improvements that have suggested themselves to my mind relative to the interesting subject of our National Museum. *Ce n'est que le premier pas que coute*—this first step is a change in the constitution: this once effected, the public will have no reason to complain of want of accommodation, or of any deficiency of attention to the great objects of an institution, which, if well-conducted, is calculated to have so powerful an influence upon the prosperity of our arts and manufactures, and the manners, the amusements, and the morals of the people.

I have the honour to remain,

SIR,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JOHN MILLARD.

34, Arlington Street, Camden Town,

18th June, 1836.