

BRITISH MUSEUM.

COPY of MEMORIAL to the First Lord of the
Treasury, respecting the Management of the
BRITISH MUSEUM.

(*Mr. Baine.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
13 April 1847.

RETURN to an ORDER of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 25 March 1847:—567.

A COPY "of a MEMORIAL to the First Lord of the Treasury, presented on the 10th day of March, by Members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and of other Scientific Societies, respecting the Management of the BRITISH MUSEUM, with the Names affixed."

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 13 April 1847.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD JOHN RUSSELL, M.P.,
FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, &c. &c.

WE, the undersigned, members of the British Society for the Advancement of Science, and of various scientific societies, respectfully submit to the consideration of your Lordship, that a strong feeling pervades the naturalists of our country, that the promotion of the science of Natural History is very inadequately provided for by the present constitution of the Board of Trustees of the British Museum.

So long as that institution consisted only of a library, with limited collections of antiquities and natural curiosities, it was easily managed by a body consisting of public functionaries, men of rank and general attainments, and the representatives of the chief donors of the Museum. When, however, the establishment was so enlarged as to become a national deposit of the productions of nature, both recent and fossil, together with vast additions to the books, manuscripts, prints, statues, &c., supplemental trustees were elected to aid in the direction. We rejoice that eminent men of letters were thus associated in the Trust; but even so amended, the Board, with the best intentions, we believe, has found it very difficult satisfactorily to perform the numerous and various duties devolving upon it; for although the "ex officio" Trustees, the Presidents of the Royal Society and of the College of Physicians, are necessarily persons of weight in science; and although we gratefully witnessed the election of the eminent astronomer, Sir John Herschel, we would earnestly represent to your Lordship, that the qualifications of these gifted individuals do not necessarily include an interest in, or the ability to judge of, many of those measures which may best promote Natural History; and, consequently, that there is no effective provision (in the absence of other men of science) for the proper guidance of the Natural History department, or for having at the Board, trustees who can explain to their associates the desiderata of naturalists, and estimate the value of new specimens, either offered to or purchased by the nation.

Fully acknowledging, that in their accomplishments and high characters the present Trustees offer the best securities for the satisfactory execution of any duties connected with their own pursuits, we still think that, with the best disposition (and they have already done much good service) these distinguished men are unable adequately to direct the vast and rapidly increasing Natural History departments of the Museum; and we can even well suppose that they would themselves be happy to be relieved from the heavy responsibility which must be attached to the application of the large sum annually voted by Parliament for the support of natural science.

Now, in the event of a knowledge of Natural History being in future recognized among the grounds for election to the Trusteeship of the British Museum, we should have reason to anticipate that the sum allotted to this subject would be applied so efficiently and regularly to its extension and improvement, as would

best secure the progress of science, and yield most interest and instruction to the public.

Deeply impressed with these sentiments, we beg to suggest, for the consideration of your Lordship, that steps should be taken to effect such an improvement in the constitution of the Trust, as shall render the management of the Natural History departments of the British Museum, as far as possible, independent of the other divisions; and on this point we would beg to refer your Lordship to the original plan of Sir Hans Sloane.

In offering this suggestion, we do not contemplate a separation of the Natural History collections from the other departments of the British Museum, as we well know that the cultivation of natural science cannot be efficiently carried on without reference to an extensive library.

What we chiefly desire to see is, the formation of such a responsible system of management as may satisfy the public and ourselves, that in this great national establishment, the interests of all branches of natural science will be thoroughly protected and advanced, and that the halls devoted to it shall be so enriched with well selected and well classified objects of contemplation and comparison, as shall not merely gratify the curiosity and excite the wonder of the multitude, but shall prove of real use to the researches of the student and the man of science.

- (signed) **Rob. J. Marchison**, Pres. Brit. Association for the Advancement of Science.
The Bishop of Norwich, President of Linnæan Society, Embsay-killen, F.R.S. F.G.S.
Wm. Buckland, Professor of Geology and Mineralogy, Oxford.
H. T. de la Beche, Pres. Geological Society.
P. Grey Egerton, F.R.S. V.F.G.S.
G. B. Greenough, F.R.S. F.G.S.
Richard Owen, F.R.S. V.F.G.S.
Edward Forbes, F.R.S. Prof. of Botany in King's College, London.
Henry Warburton, F.R.S. F.G.S. &c.
William J. Hamilton, Sec. G.S. V.F.R.G.S.
Leonard Horner, V.F.R.S. recently President of the Geological Society.
Charles Lyell, F.R.S. V.F.G.S.
Edward Forster, V.P.L.S.
W. J. Hooker, F.R.S. Director of Royal Gardens, Kew.
Edward Sabine, For. Sec. Royal Society, and Gen. Sec. British Association.
Thomas Horsfield, M.D. F.R.S. &c.
John Richardson, M.D. F.R.S. &c.
Richard Taylor, Fellow and U. Sec. of Linnæan Society.
Jos. D. Hooker, F.L.S. M.D.
W. J. Broderip, F.R.S. &c.
Thomas Bell, F.R.S. Prof. Zoology in King's College.
Wm. Yarrell, V.F.R.S. F.L.S.
Wm. Spence, F.R.S. Pres. of Entomological Soc.
Charles C. Babington, M.A. F.L.S. Sec. of Camb. Philo. Soc.
William Ogilby, M.A. F.R.S. &c. late Sec. Zoological Soc.
William Horton Lloyd, F.R.S. F.L.S. &c.
Gideon Algernon Mantell, LL.D. F.R.S.
William Hincks, F.L.S.
Francis Boott, M.D. F.L.S.
C. Darwin, F.R.S. F.G.S. &c.
M. Wallick, M.D. F.R.S. F.L.S.
John Phillips, F.R.S. G.S.
Jos. O. Westwood, F.L.S. Sec. of Entomological Soc.
John Curtis, F.L.S. Author of British Entomology.
Lovell Reeve, F.L.S. & Z.S. Author of Conchologia Iornica.
Edwin Lankester, M.D. F.R.S. L.S. Sec. Ray. Soc.
Daniel Sharpe, F.G.S.
George Newport, F.R.S. F.L.S.
A. Ingham, A.L.S. V.P. of the Entomological Society.
Sam. Rootsy, F.L.S.

W. T. Hiff, F.L.S.

G. Poulett Scrope, F.R.S.

Edward Hamilton, M.D. F.L.S.

Robert Heward, F.L.S.

Tho. B. Flower, F.L.S.

G. E. Dennis, F.L.S. Sec. Botanical Soc. London.

W. H. Sykes, V. P. of Royal Society.

H. Cuming, F.L.S.

Chas. M. Lemann, M.D. F.L.S.

S. B. Pratt, F.R.S.

J. S. Bowerbank, F.R.S. &c.

John Lindley, F.R.S. & L.S. Prof. of Botany, University College,
London.

Adam Sedgwick, Woodwardian Prof. Cambridge.

W. Hopkins, M.A. Cambridge.

P. B. Duncan, New College, Oxford.

Charles Daubeny, M.D. Prof. of Botany, Oxford.

H. E. Strickland, M.A. F.G.S. Oxford.

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