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REPORT,

PROSPECTUS, AND PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

ORIENTAL

TRANSLATION COMMITTEE;

5, NEW BURLINGTON STREET, LONDON.

1861.

LONDON

PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.



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REPORT AND PROSPECTUS
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THE Oriental Translation Fund was established in 1828 by several Oriental scholars and others interested in Eastern literature "for the translation and publication of such works on Eastern history, science, and belles lettres as are inaccessible to the European public in M.S. form and indigenous language."

The object thus proposed attracted considerable attention, and received very liberal support. The Royal Family honoured the proposal with their special approbation. Their Majesties George IV and William IV consented to become patrons and subscribers. Her present Majesty, as well as His Royal Highness the Prince Consort, have graciously continued the same beneficial encouragement.

A Committee composed of scholars well known for their attainments in Eastern literature, was appointed to carry out the design of the Institution. Although from the distinct field of operations contemplated by this body, it necessarily acted as a separate society, yet it was regarded as an important branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, and was encouraged and aided by its support.

The Committee thus formed was successively presided over by the Earl of Munster, Sir Gore Ouseley, the Earl of Clare, the Earl of Ellesmere, and Professor Wilson, Beriah Botfield, Esq., M.P., being the present Chairman.

The advantages and support enjoyed by the Committee enabled them to assist the labours of many Oriental scholars, and to promote the cultivation, in this country, of Oriental Literature, by the publication of translations into European languages of various original works, thus affording material assistance to students of ecclesiastical and civil history, philology, and other collateral branches of useful knowledge connected with the East.

The Committee, invited and obtained the assistance of many eminent scholars, and during a period of thirty-two years have published or aided in the publication of more than seventy translations. Of these many are highly valuable, all are curious or interesting, and several of them are of such a nature that without the aid afforded by the Society, they could scarcely have been undertaken.

The Sanscrit translations include those of the Sankhya Karika, Rig Veda, and Vishnu Purana. Amongst those from the Arabic, are found the travels of Ibn Batuta, and of the Patriarch Macarius, Al-Makkari's history of the Muhammadan Dynasties in Spain, and the extensive Lexicon of Hajji Khalfa. There are also on the list translations from the Persian, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, Chinese, and Japanese languages.

This is only a slight sketch of the results of the Committee's efforts, but its task is as yet incomplete. Not to speak of the offer of translations of important works, which a want of funds has obliged the Committee to refuse, some translations commenced are still unfinished, and others accepted are not yet commenced. A portion only of the translations of the history of the Mamlúk Sultáns, of Ibn Khallikán and of Tabari, &c., has yet been published, whilst the Committee has accepted the offer of a translation of the Mu'jeamu 'l Buldán by Sir Henry Rawlinson, and the history of Khafi Khan. They have, moreover, frequently had to decline various applications for the production of other translations of high importance.

As no work, however, is actually in the press, the Committee consider that the time has arrived for an endeavour to revive, invigorate, and extend the operations of this Society. They have, therefore, proposed some modifications in the Rules and arrangements, which they trust will be advantageous.

They have determined to fix the amount of subscription for large and small paper copies at five and three guineas respectively, instead of ten and five ; and desiring to extend more definitively

their sphere of usefulness, they have determined to place the available copies of works already distributed among their own Members within the means of Oriental students in general, by reducing the cost of their publications to a minimum ; and, as an experiment in this direction, the Committee have instructed their agents to offer their publications for sale at a price calculated upon this principle.

The Committee, under these circumstances, invite the support of all who feel an interest in the important subject of Oriental Literature, to enable them to complete the works still in progress, to take up many of the valuable unpublished works now at their disposal, and to continue their efforts in the course of usefulness so auspiciously commenced.

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