

REPORT FOR 1854.

THE Council of the HAKLUYT SOCIETY have the pleasure of meeting its Members, at the expiration of this the seventh year of the Society's existence, with a very satisfactory report of its condition and prospects. As during the lapse of so many years, no special means have been resorted to for the purpose of increasing the Society's Members, it may be presumed that its character has now been fairly tested, both as regards its productions and management.

The Balance Sheet at the close of this report will show that the Society is in a healthy condition as regards its funds, while it is hoped there can be no doubt as to the general good opinion attaching to the works which have hitherto been produced. In one respect indeed the Hakluyt Society possesses a peculiar advantage over many of its contemporaries—viz. that the field of its labours, that of the early history of geographical discovery, is not only extensive in itself, but offers attractions to a wide range both of students and readers. It is for the former class, however, rather than the latter that it makes provision, for while the narration of early discoveries presents many stirring incidents and curious details, which have their special charm for those who merely seek amusement in what they read, they will more frequently be found to contain matter of weightier interest to the careful student, and occasionally the exposition of important facts in the several branches of science, which from a variety of causes had lain hitherto unknown or unappreciated. Had this not been the case, and had the objects of the Society been more essentially popular, it is probable that the number of the Society's Members might at the outset have been considerably larger, but would have been subject to the fluctuations which always prevail when amusement rather than information is the object sought.

The present list of the Members amounts to three hundred and twenty one; a number which might have been larger

but for an objection to which the attention of the Council has been more than once directed within the last two years. It has not unfrequently happened that Members wishing to have the entire set of the Society's publications have been deterred from subscribing for them by the largeness of the sum to which the guinea subscriptions for so many years amount. The Council have therefore recently resolved to allow Members to be supplied with the publications allotted to previous years at a reduction, sufficient it is believed to obviate the objection referred to, while care is taken that no loss whatever accrues to the Society from the calculation upon which that reduction is founded.

Since the last general meeting the "HISTORIE OF THE GREAT AND MIGHTIE KINGDOME OF CHINA," in two volumes, by Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza, the earliest detailed account of that country in English, translated by R. Parke, edited by Sir George T. Staunton, Baronet, with an introduction by the Secretary of the Society, has been distributed among the Members.

This will be immediately followed by "THE WORLD ENCOMPASSED BY SIR FRANCIS DRAKE," 1577-80, written by Francis Fletcher, Preacher, etc., collated with a previously unpublished MS. Mr. W. Sandys Vaux, the editor of this work, has by careful research been able to add appendices of various other elucidatory MSS. and printed documents, which together form a most interesting collection in illustration of the voyage in question. The volume is accompanied by a copy of a most interesting cotemporaneous and supposed unique map of the world in hemispheres by Hondius, indicating the track of Drake and Candish. This valuable map, which was purchased by the British Museum as unique, is especially remarkable for its extreme beauty, when the date at which it was constructed is taken into consideration.

Meanwhile, the following works are actually at press. "THE EAST INDIA VOYAGE OF SIR HENRY MIDDLETON" in 1604-5, from the rare edition of 1606. Mr. Bolton Corney's restoration to health having enabled him to resume his researches in connection with this work.

“HISTORY OF THE TARTAR CONQUERORS WHO SUBDUED CHINA,” from the French of the Père d’Orleans, 1688, now extremely scarce, describing the foundation of the present Tartar dynasty in China. Translated and edited by the Earl of Ellesmere.

“INDIA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.” A collection of documents, comprising, in the first place:—The travels of the Russian traveller, Athanasius Nikitin. Translated by Count Wielhorsky, late Secretary to the Russian Legation at the Court of St. James’, from the Russian MS. procured for the Society, by Sir Roderick Murchison, from the celebrated and wealthy monastery called the Laura of St. Sergius under the Invocation of the Blessed Trinity, near Moscow. And secondly:—The travels in India of the Venetians Niccolo di Conti, and Giorgio di San Stefano. Translated from the Latin and Italian by J. Winter Jones, Esq., of the British Museum. The former of these two documents will be translated from the original Latin first printed in Paris in 1723, by Dominicus Georgius, in the fourth book of his edition of Poggio Bracciolini’s *Historiæ de varietate fortunæ Libri quatuor*. Ramusio, in his “*Navigazione et Viaggi*,” states that he made great efforts to discover the original, but without success, and was obliged to content himself with a Portuguese translation full of inaccuracies, which he again translated into Italian for his great collection. The original Latin, apart from the important quality of being authentic, renders easy and intelligible many passages which are full of obscurity in the Italian of Ramusio.

“A COLLECTION OF EARLY DOCUMENTS ON SPITZBERGEN AND GREENLAND,” the principal of which is a translation from the German of F. Marten’s important work on Spitzbergen now very rare. To be edited with copious illustrative notes, by Adam White, Esq. of the British Museum.

Other works promised by Editors are:—

A COLLECTION OF EARLY DOCUMENTS, to form a supplement to the “*Narrative of Voyages towards the North West*,” by T. Rundall, Esq.

SOFALAH. The History of Eastern Ethiopia, by J. dos

Santos, 1607. To be translated and edited, with notes, by
W. Desborough Cooley, Esq.

The following six Members retire from the Council.

CAPTAIN BECHER.
CHARLES T. BEKE, Esq., PHIL.D.
J. HOLMES, Esq.
SIR JOHN RICHARDSON.
SIR GEORGE T. STAUNTON, BART.
EARL SOMERS.

Of this number—

SIR JOHN RICHARDSON.
SIR GEORGE T. STAUNTON, BART.
EARL SOMERS.

Are recommended for re-election, and the following are
proposed for election, viz. :

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COUNT DE LAVRADIO.
W. STIRLING, Esq., of Keir.
THE REV. W. WHEWELL, D.D.

Statement of the Accounts of the Society for the Year 1853.

Balance at last Audit—		Mr. Richards for Printing and	
At Bankers	£253 13 8	Binding	£292 18 7
In Petty Cash	8 3 6	Spalding and Hodge for Paper ..	51 5 0
Received by Bankers during the		Transcriptions	8 6 10
Year	329 18 6	Map to Drake's Voyage	13 13 0
		Facsimiles	1 11 0
		Translations	5 9 6
		Index to Mendoza's China	8 8 0
		Purchase of Books	1 10 0
		Advertisements	8 18 6
		Gratuity to Agent's Foreman	5 0 0
		Stationery, Parcels, Postages, and	
		Sundries	4 9 3
			396 4 8
		Present Balance—	
		At Bankers	£190 15 7
		In Petty Cash	4 15 5
			195 11 0
			£591 15 8
	£591 15 8		£591 15 8

Examined and approved. *March 29th, 1854.*

W. B. RYE,
CHAS. CANNON.