

PREFACE.

IN presenting this account of the Botany of the Island of Socotra to the Fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, some explanation is necessary of how it came about that an expedition for the scientific exploration of Socotra was sent from England, and how it happened that I was connected with it.

In the volume of Reports of the British Association for the Advancement of Science for 1878, page lx, this resolution occurs—

“That Mr Sclater, Dr G. Hartlaub, Sir Joseph Hooker, Captain J. W. Hunter, and Professor Flower be a committee for the purpose of taking steps for the investigation of the Natural History of Socotra; that Mr Sclater be the Secretary, and that the sum of £100 be placed at their disposal for the purpose.”

In the Report of the same Association for 1879, page 210, is to be found this—

“Report of the Committee, consisting of Mr Sclater, Dr G. Hartlaub, Sir Joseph Hooker, Capt. F. M. Hunter, and Professor Flower appointed to take steps for the investigation of the Natural History of Socotra.

“The Committee have not held any formal meetings, but have been in frequent communication with each other on the subject. The best time for the exploration of Socotra being from November to March, the Committee were not able to make the necessary arrangements last autumn. Next winter, however, they believe that Colonel H. H. Godwin-Austen, than whom no more competent naturalist could be found, will be able to undertake an expedition to Socotra, and to make a thorough investigation of its Natural History. Colonel Godwin-Austen has applied to the Surveyor-General of India for the use of some of the assistants on his staff, and proposes to make a complete topographical survey of the island during the expedition.

“It is estimated that the total cost of the expedition will be about £300. Of this £100, granted by the Association last year, has been received by the Committee, and deposited in the London and County Bank at interest. The sum of £175 having been devoted to this same purpose out of the Government Fund of £4000 administered by the Royal Society, has been paid to Colonel Godwin-Austen, and has been added to the account at the London and County Bank.

"There remains, therefore, only £25 requisite to complete the sum of £300 which the Committee consider will be required for the expedition.

"The Committee request that the Committee for the investigation of the Natural History of Socotra may be reappointed, with the additional name of Colonel H. H. Godwin-Austen, and that the balance of £25 necessary to complete the estimate of expenditure may be placed at their disposal."

On the 20th December 1879, Sir Joseph Hooker wrote to me that Colonel Godwin-Austen had not been able to go to Socotra as he had intended, and asked me to undertake the exploration. I had at that time just taken up the work of the Professorship of Botany in the University of Glasgow, and could not enter upon an enterprise which would involve my being away from Glasgow after the middle of April, and it was hardly possible to be at Socotra before the beginning of February. I could not, therefore, hope to have more than two months at the most for exploration. Sir Joseph Hooker was, however, satisfied that the time would allow of my obtaining sufficient insight into the natural history of the island to make such a raid justifiable, and accordingly, nothing loath to be the first to unravel some of the mystery which for so long had clung around Socotra, I agreed to start upon a rapid pioneer expedition. There was little time to make any great preparations for the exploration, and many things which under more leisurely conditions would have been done had to be left undone, but having made such arrangements as were possible, I left London on the 9th of January 1880.

How Socotra was reached and the narrative of our movements there will be learned from the subjoined Report, which is taken from that published in the volume of British Association Reports for 1880.

"Report of the Committee, consisting of Mr Selater, Dr G. Hartlaub, Sir Joseph Hooker, Captain F. M. Hunter, and Lieut.-Col. H. H. Godwin-Austen, appointed to take steps for the Investigation of the Natural History of Socotra.

"Colonel Godwin-Austen having been unable to carry out his intention of going to Socotra, the Committee were fortunate enough to obtain the services of Dr I. B. Balfour, Professor of Botany in the University of Glasgow, for this purpose. Prof. Balfour left this country on January 9, for Aden, and returned home on April 21. As his report of proceedings, &c. (appended), will show, he has, considering the short time (only six weeks) that could be devoted to the investigation of the island, and the inevitable delays and difficulties always attending the first exploration of an unknown country, not only achieved a remarkable amount of success, but has proved how much more rich the island is than was anticipated, and how much is left for future explorers.

"The total expenditure of Prof. Balfour on his expedition amounted to about £420. The Committee having received £100 from this Association, and £300 from the Government Grant Fund of the Royal Society, there remains a debt of about £20 due to Prof. Balfour.

"The Committee request that a grant of £50 may be made to them to enable them to discharge this debt. The balance they propose to devote in aid of the publication of the results obtained by the expedition.

"The Committee consider that the best thanks of the Association are due to Prof. Balfour for having undertaken this expedition, and for the zeal and industry with which he has carried it through.

"The Committee consider that the best thanks of the Association are also due to Brigadier-General Loch, C.B., Resident at Aden, Major Goodfellow, Assistant Political Agent, and Captain Heron, of H.M.S. 'Seagull,' for the great assistance they have rendered to Prof. Balfour on this occasion. The success of the expedition is, as Prof. Balfour informs us, mainly due to the cordial co-operation of these gentlemen.

"Referring to the report of Prof. Balfour, the Committee feel no doubt that in every branch of science considerable results are yet to be obtained by further investigations in Socotra, and are of opinion that a second expedition should be sent out as soon as the necessary facilities can be obtained."

"Report to the Socotra Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science of the Proceedings of the Expedition to the Island of Socotra. By Bayley Balfour, Sc.D., M.B., Regius Professor of Botany, University of Glasgow, in charge of the Expedition.

"Having undertaken at the request of the Committee the work of an expedition to the Island of Socotra, for the purpose of investigating its Natural History, I left England on January 9, and joining the French mail steamer 'Ava' at Marseilles, reached Aden on the 24th of that month. I was accompanied by Alexander Scott, a gardener from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

"On arrival at Aden, I met my friend Dr Hay, the Port Surgeon, to whose kindness I am much indebted, and with his aid I was enabled to make a fair collection of the plants of Aden. Captain F. M. Hunter, Junior Assistant Political Resident, a member of your Committee, was not at Aden at this time, having gone to the interior a few days previously, and as he had no prospect of returning to Aden before the expedition left for Socotra, he had left for me a letter of instruction, giving valuable information and hints, the outcome of his personal experiences on the island. In his absence Major Goodfellow, Senior Assistant Political Resident, gave me every assistance, and the attainment of the object of the expedition is in great part due to him.

"The official letters of recommendation to the authorities at Aden from the Home Government, for which the Committee applied, had not reached Aden at the date of our arrival, but having a private letter of introduction from General Strachey to Brigadier-General Loch, C.B., Political Resident, I presented it. General Loch very cordially sympathised with the object of the expedition, and promoted most materially the carrying out of the work of the expedition. In default of instructions from the Home Government he telegraphed to the Bombay Council asking for authority to aid the expedition, and received a very gratifying affirmative reply. He then at once placed the despatch boat 'Dagmar,' of the Bombay Marine, at our disposal to convey us to Socotra, and we were enabled to obtain from the arsenal tents and camp implements. He also very kindly granted leave to Lieutenant Cockburn, 6th Royal Regiment, that he might go with us to Socotra. Lieutenant Cockburn then joined the expedition, and apart from the advantage and pleasure I derived from having him as a companion, the excellent sketches he made will enable the Committee to judge of how great an acquisition he was to the staff of the expedition and of the valuable services he rendered.

"The P. & O. mail steamer arriving on January 26, brought the promised official letters, one from the India Office to the Resident, and another from the Admiralty to the Senior Naval Officer at Aden. As a result of the latter letter, Captain Heron, of H.M.S. 'Seagull,' called upon me on the 27th, and offered to take the expedition to Socotra in his ship. It was

subsequently arranged, therefore, that we should go in the 'Seagull' instead of the 'Dagmar,' and the date of sailing was fixed for February 2.

"The intervening days were occupied in obtaining stores and servants; the latter not easy to procure, especially a good interpreter, on account of the very high rate of pay demanded.

"All our gear was shipped on the 'Seagull' by noon on February 2, and our party—composed of Europeans,—Lieutenant Cockburn, Alexander Scott, and myself; and natives,—interpreter, cook, tent Lascar, general servant, and two coolies—went on board later. Captain Heron purposed to sail that day, but the monsoon blowing strongly up the harbour a start was delayed until next morning. On the morning of the 3rd, though the wind had not much lulled, anchor was weighed and the 'Seagull' steamed out of Aden harbour in the teeth of a stiff breeze. By the afternoon we had made so little way against the wind and current, and were pitching and rolling so greatly, that Captain Heron determined to put back and make for Aden again. The expedition at the outset thus encountered annoying delay, for we remained in Aden harbour until the morning of February 6, when again the 'Seagull' left for Socotra. Heavy weather kept us back, on this our second attempt, and it was not until the morning of the 11th that we sighted Socotra.

"I desired to land at Hadibu, the chief village of the island, where the Sultan has his Court; but as much coal had been expended on the voyage, and the anchorage at Hadibu being reported unsafe, Captain Heron deemed it advisable to anchor in Gollonsir Bay, a bay considered the safest round the island, and at its north-west end.

"From the village sheikh we learned that the Sultan was living at his hill residence, some miles from Hadibu. We therefore sent by messengers the letter of recommendation furnished to us by the Aden Government. But it was not until February 16 that an answer arrived at Gollonsir—an answer of a very satisfactory kind, allowing us to go where we pleased, and charging the village sheikh and the people of the neighbourhood to aid us if possible. Whilst waiting for news from the Sultan, our tents, stores, and baggage were landed from the 'Seagull,' and our first camp was formed on the slope of a hill N.E. of the Gollonsir village, and we entered on our work.

"The 'Seagull' left on February 16.

"Making in the first instance Gollonsir our headquarters, we explored the adjacent country to the S. and S.W., until the 25th inst., when we struck tents, and sending our heavy baggage and stores by sea, started to march to Hadibu. We took four days to accomplish it, reaching Hadibu late on the night of the 28th inst.

"Having communicated to the Sultan the fact of our arrival, he came to Hadibu on March 1, when we had an interview.

"Establishing our dépôt now on the Hadibu plain, about a mile from the town, we spent the time until the 7th inst. investigating the magnificent Haggier range of hills shutting in on the south the Hadibu plain.

"On March 6, leaving a tent Lascar in charge of the dépôt at Hadibu, we started upon a trip to the eastern end of the island, going eastward along the northern side and returning westward by the southern side of the island. During this trip we reached Ras Momé, the extreme eastern headland. Camp at Hadibu was again entered on March 18.

"As yet we had not seen much of the southern parts of the island, so on March 22 we left Hadibu on our last excursion. Crossing the Haggier range we emerged upon the southern shore at Nogad, traversed the coast line for some distance, and then recrossed the island, so as to come down upon Kadhab village on the north side. We regained Hadibu on the 27th.

"March 28.—The 'Dagmar' arrived this morning, having been sent specially for us by the Resident. We were not sorry to see her, as our camp was now very sickly—Scott was down with fever, one coolie had had sunstroke, and the other servants were all suffering badly from

fever—so much so that for some time previously hardly one of them could work, and we had been compelled to hire some of the Sultan's men.

"Having shipped our collections and gone on board the 'Dagmar,' she left Socotra on March 30, and after a smooth but tediously slow passage reached Aden on April 3.

"Here on our return we experienced as much kindness as before. General and Mrs Loch extended to me their hospitality at the Residency. Our collections were overhauled and finally packed for transmission to Britain by the P. & O. steamer 'Deccan,' which reached Aden early on April 10. By this steamer I also took passage, and travelling to Brindisi, arrived in London on the 21st. Alexander Scott went by the 'Deccan' to Southampton, which brought him to England with the collections early in May. Lieutenant Cockburn rejoined his regiment at Aden.

"Collections of specimens in all branches of Natural History were made. As may be supposed, I devoted particular attention to the Botany of the island, and there are dried specimens of between 500 and 600 species of flowering plants in the collection, besides some Cryptogams. A certain number of specimens were brought to England alive, amongst them being such interesting plants as the Dragon's-blood tree and the true *Aloe*. A misfortune deprived me of a number of living plants, and on this wise:—Having selected the majority of the more delicate living plants I purposed to bring them with me to London, as thereby they would arrive a fortnight earlier than by going to Southampton. At Brindisi, however, the Custom House officer seized the plants and insisted on their being taken back to the ship, not allowing me even to book them by another steamer which would have taken them more directly to England. Consequently the plants had to travel up to Venice and thence back to Suez before they could be forwarded to Britain.

"Specimens of the gums produced on the island and used in commerce have been brought home. In the zoological collections there are a few snakes and lizards, some birds, freshwater fish, Mollusca, Crustacea, and Insecta of various kinds.

"Some of the land Mollusca have come to this country alive. Two living civet cats I was bringing for the Zoological Gardens died on the way home.

"Illustrative of the geology of the island are about 500 specimens of rocks and minerals from various localities on the island. Igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks are all represented.

"I regret that I was unable for some time after my return to turn my attention to the distribution of the collections for examination. I have recently, however, done so, and the following gentlemen have kindly consented to examine certain groups:—

Zoological.	{	Birds,	Mr Selater and Dr Hartlaub.
		Land shells,	Col. Godwin-Austen.
		Crustacea,	Prof. Huxley.
		Remaining Zoological collections,	Dr Günther and Zoological staff of British Museum.
Geological.	{	Igneous and metamorphic rocks,	Professor Bonney.
		Sedimentary,	* * *
		Algae,	Dr Dickie.
Botanical.	{	Fungi,	Dr M. C. Cooke.
		Mosses and allies,	* * *
		Phanerogamic and Vascular .	} Dr Bayley Balfour.
		Cryptogamic plants,	

"The agreement made with the Committee as to the final disposition of the specimens will be carried out, viz., the first set of specimens, zoological, to go to the British Museum; the

first set of specimens, botanical, to go to the collection at Kew; a set of botanical to go to the British Museum. The remainder will be distributed variously. The publication of results is a matter for consideration by the Committee.

"In the foregoing report I have confined myself to a narrative of the proceedings of the expedition. It is as yet too early to speak definitely of what the total results will be. But I think I may safely say, from what I have learnt regarding the birds from Mr Sclater, and regarding the land shells from Col. Godwin-Austen, as well as from what I know of the plant collections, that the results promise to be of exceptional interest. What has been done by the expedition is but a fragment of what there is to be accomplished. In exploring the island, I deemed it better, considering the short time of our sojourn, rather to attempt to cover as much ground as possible, with the view of obtaining a representative collection, than to examine in detail a limited tract of country. By doing this, much barren land was travelled over, and many rich and fertile spots were necessarily only superficially looked at. Especially amongst the hills of the Haggier range are there valleys which would well repay a careful and extended investigation. The expedition just completed ought to be considered only preliminary; I am assured a rich harvest awaits any collector who may visit the island.

"If at any future time an expedition should be sent to the island, it would be well if the date of its arrival were timed so that it should have the last months of one and the first months of the following year upon the island. Our expedition reached the island too late in the year, so that before we left the heat was so intense as to prevent our doing so much work as we desired. Again, the inaccuracy of our knowledge of the geography of the island is a point to which the attention of future expeditions should be directed. The chart based on Wellsted's observations is the only available one, and that is so incomplete and incorrect as to be almost useless to any one moving about the island.

"In conclusion, I desire to express my hearty thanks, and those of the other members of the expedition, to the Committee for their aid. Also to General Loch, C.B.; Major Goodfellow; Dr Hay; Capt. Heron, R.N., and officers of H.M.S. 'Seagull,' and to the officers of the despatch-boat 'Dagmar,' for the very kind way they one and all co-operated to make the expedition successful."

I must take this opportunity of further saying how entirely the expedition depended upon the assistance readily and willingly given by the India Office. By the kind intervention of Mr Thiselton-Dyer and Sir George Birdwood, I was enabled to have an interview with Sir Louis Mallet, who cordially interested himself in the objects of the expedition, and at once promised that everything should be done that could contribute to the attainment of them. His promise was amply fulfilled.

Our collections were distributed in accordance with the statement in the Report above quoted, and I may add to what is mentioned there, that the geological specimens were sent to the British Museum, and the surplus botanical collections distributed amongst the chief herbaria on the Continent.

The list of those who have kindly examined and described our collections from Socotra, so far as these have been published, is—

Zoological.	{	Birds,	Mr Slater and Dr Hartlaub.
		Amphisbænians and Ophidians, . . .	Dr Günther.
		Lizards,	Mr Blandford.
		Land Mollusca,	Lieut.-Col. Godwin-Austen.
Geological,	{	Lepidoptera,	Mr A. G. Butler.
		Professor Bonney.
Botanical.	{	Diatomaceæ,	Mr F. Kitton.
		Algæ,	Dr Dickie,
		Lichens,	Dr Jean Müller.
		Other Fungi,	Dr M. C. Cooke.
		Muscineæ,	Mr Mitten.
		Phanerogams and Vascular Cryptogams; I am myself responsible for these, but in several groups I have availed myself of the special knowledge of other Botanists, and their help is acknowledged under the respective groups.	

My gratitude is due to the above-mentioned gentlemen for their kind and valuable assistance. The examination of the botanical collections is completed, but I have not yet had reports upon all the zoological ones.

Our 48 days' stay on Socotra and first scientific exploration of the island was soon followed up by a second exploration. In the spring of 1881, Dr Riebeck, accompanied by Drs Schweinfurth, Mantay, and Rosset, arrived at Aden with the intention of proceeding to Socotra. At Aden they received first intimation of our raid of the preceding spring. After a stormy passage of 27 days from Aden in a buggalow, beating up against the north-east monsoon, during which they made landings at three different places, Schugra, Bolhaf, and El-Hami, upon the south coast of Arabia, the German expedition landed at Tamarida on 16th April, and formed a camp at a place Keregnigi, about 800 feet up the Haghier slopes. Thence during the succeeding six weeks excursions were made to different parts of the island, and the expedition left on 18th May. Thus, after an interval of nearly fifty years, Socotra was visited in two successive years by scientific expeditions.

The members of the German expedition devoted themselves largely to the study of the people and language, at the same time that they collected in various branches of natural history. Their zoological collections have been worked up by various authorities. Dr Hartlaub has examined the birds, Prof. Peters has taken the lizards, the Crustacea fell to Prof. Hilgendorf, and Dr Taschenberg* took the insects, while upon Prof. Von Martens devolved the work of determining the land-mollusca. The collection of crania, from which most interesting information may be expected, was placed in the hands of

* Prof. Taschenberg has published, I am informed by Dr Schweinfurth, under the title "Beiträge zur Fauna der Insel Socotra," an account of the zoological results obtained by the German expedition, but I have not been able to find the paper. Dr Hartlaub's and Von Marten's results are referred to on pages xxxi and xxxiii of the Introductory Chapter.

Prof. Welcker. Dr Schweinfurth investigated the botany of the island. On learning that he was on his way to Socotra, I sent him a catalogue of our plant-gatherings, and he was thereby, he states, enabled to give particular attention to filling up gaps in and adding to what we had collected. With a generosity which is pleasing as it is rare, he subsequently sent his collections to me in England, in order that the whole flora might be worked out in one. I have already had opportunity to express publicly my lively appreciation of this act of friendship and self-abnegation, and I wish here to put the fact again on record, and to say how much Dr Schweinfurth's specimens have contributed to the satisfactory working out of the details of the flora. The value of his collection must not be measured either by the number of the species or by the species he found which we had not gathered. In the excellence of his specimens and their completeness, and in the way in which they so frequently supplemented, in flower and fruit characters, deficiencies in ours,—therein lay the value of Schweinfurth's plants, and I cannot appraise it too highly.

The following pages are intended to give a description of the Flora of Socotra as it is known now—the knowledge being derived from the explorations and collections made by Dr Schweinfurth and by the members of our expedition. Specimens from the former source are indicated by "Schweinf." with his collecting number; those from the latter by "B.C.S."—Balfour, Cockburn, and Scott—with our collecting number. Before our expedition no plants were known with certainty from the island save the *Aloe Perryi*, which Mr Baker had described from fragmentary specimens brought by Commander Wykeham Perry and Mr Collins; but in course of working up our collections I have discovered several specimens which had been previously brought from the island, and in the descriptive portion of the flora I have noted the collector's or sender's name. In almost every case such plants have been also found by the later expeditions. I may tell here the history of these former collections.

We have identified all the plants mentioned by Wellsted in his Memoir on the Island (see page xxi), and I have referred to his description under the several species. One plant only, *Romulea purpurascens*, var. *edulis*, which he does not mention in his Memoir, is recorded in Kew Herbarium as having been brought by him from the island.

A number of plants are marked as collected by "Nimmo." These belong to a set in the Kew Herbarium, marked in Sir William Hooker's writing, "Shores of the Red Sea." By the kind assistance of Sir Joseph Hooker, I have found, in Sir William Hooker's correspondence preserved at Kew, that these plants were sent home by Mr Nimmo* from Bombay. Many of the specimens in the

* Of Mr Nimmo I have not been able to find out many particulars. He, as Prof. Oliver points out, completed, from the 200th page, Graham's "Catalogue of Bombay Plants."

collection were obtained from Socotra during the period of its occupation by Indian troops (1834-39). Whenever a plant of this collection is identical with a Socotran one known from no other locality, I have had no hesitation in assuming that the specimen was brought from Socotra; in this way several species are taken out of the tropical African flora.

A few plants have the name 'Boivin' attached. Louis Hyacinthe Boivin was botanist on board the 'Duconadec,' under Captain Guillain, during the exploration of the east coast of Africa (1846-52), and in 1847 the ship was at Socotra for a few days, and Boivin obtained some plants. I have only seen three plants of his collecting, but one of them, *Lagarosiphon Roxburghii*, has been brought from Socotra by no other collector. Possibly in the herbarium at Paris there may be more specimens of Boivin's collection.

Some of the species have the name 'Hunter' attached. These are species which occur in a small collection made by Captain (now Major) Hunter, Assistant Political Resident at Aden, who visited the island in his official capacity in 1876, and presented to the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, in 1878, by Dr George Hay, Port-Surgeon at Aden.

'Perry' is attached to some species, and refers to plants brought by Commander Wykeham Perry from Socotra in 1876; the chief one being the aloe which is named after him.

'Collins' refers to Mr James Collins, who was Curator of the Museum of the Pharmaceutical Society, and went out many years ago, as Mr Baker informs me, to Singapore to superintend india-rubber plantations. On his way home he obtained the Socotran aloe.

In the introductory chapter, which is in its greater part the address I delivered to the Society, at the invitation of the Council, on 4th July 1881, I have briefly summarised what we know of the history, people, geology, and zoology of the island, giving references to literature where further information may be obtained. Upon the botanical features of the island I have dwelt at greater length. But after all that is said what we know is but a small portion of what there is to know. Besides the many interesting points in the botanical, zoological, and geological features that still await investigation, there is the fascinating problem of race and language yet to solve. Our expedition was, as I have elsewhere said, merely a raid, during which as much information and as large collections as possible were accumulated. My want of knowledge of Arabic and kindred tongues made it difficult for me in the time, and with the means at my disposal, to make satisfactory inquiries into questions which might conduce to the clearing up of the mystery that at present surrounds the origin of the people and their speech. In the case of the German expedition, which was fortunate in being accompanied by so competent an explorer as Dr Schweinfurth, the sojourn on the island was so short that researches

could not be carried out to the satisfactory conclusion they might otherwise have reached.

Thus it happens that at present in this island, over which Great Britain has now openly declared a protectorate, and within but three weeks' journey from England, there dwells a people whose origin is still involved in myth, and of whose speech the true relations are undetermined, who, according to received records, having attained to some degree of civilisation and embraced Christianity, have gone back from their advanced position to the lower state in which we now find them, and thus present to us a feature of exceptional interest in the history of mankind. We must probably wait for materials for a full knowledge of the origin of the Socotrans, until exploration has revealed to us something definite of the people who inhabit the inner and hill-regions of southern Arabia opposite, and then too it will probably be found that the natural-history features of Socotra possess many more points in common with the Arabian mainland than is at present evident. But there is now on Socotra alone a wealth of material for exploration and investigation which would amply reward the work of another expedition; and the island can be visited in any year and at no great expense. When the exploration of south Arabia will be made must depend upon a variety of circumstances. It is difficult to get into the country, but such difficulty as there is should not be insurmountable to a gifted Arabic scholar, and to no one else is an exploration of the region possible. The region contains the key to so many of the problems that puzzle us in connection with the history of the progress of mankind, that one may hope that ere very long it will be added to the realms which are known to us.

I must not end this Preface without expressing the great obligation I am under to Sir Joseph Hooker and Mr Thiselton-Dyer for the privilege of working up the Socotran collections at Kew. Without this the flora could not have been written, and I have made full use of it. I have besides to thank Professor Oliver and his colleagues in the herbarium for the steady help and uniform kindness with which all my applications for assistance have been met. Dealing with a flora presenting so many peculiarities, the advantage of consulting with them and benefiting by their experience has been fully appreciated. To the late Mr Bentham, as well as to Sir Joseph Hooker, I am indebted for opinions upon the new genera. Finally, to Mrs Thiselton-Dyer, Miss Smith, and the Messrs Fitch my thanks are due for the trouble they have taken with the drawings of what were often fragmentary specimens.

The map accompanying this flora is little more than an outline sketch showing the line of our traverses. Haines and Wellsted's chart of the island is very inaccurate, and of no value to any one moving about the island, so that one of the first desiderata in connection with Socotra is an accurate survey.

The Index to the volume has been made by Dr Selmar Schönland, Sub-curator of the Fielding Herbarium, Oxford.

It is now seven years since I returned from Socotra, and some apology to the Fellows of the Society would appear to be needed for the tardy production of this chief result of our expedition. The examination and description of specimens was completed so long ago as 1883, and in the spring of that year my account of the phanerogamic vegetation of Socotra was submitted to and accepted by the University of Edinburgh as a thesis for the degree of M.D. By the end of 1883, as the Council of the Society is aware, the descriptive part of the flora dealing with Dicotyledones was printed, and the remainder was in type shortly afterwards; but delays in connection with the production of the plates, which I need not here further particularise, have prevented the issue, until now, of the volume in its completed form. Late as it is, I hope its pages will be received by the Society as not an altogether unsatisfactory record of a brief botanical investigation of the island of Socotra.

ISAAC BAYLEY BALFOUR.

OXFORD, 1887.