

MRS. SLADEN
AND
THE PERCY SLADEN MEMORIAL FUND.
By HENRY BURY, M.A., F.L.S.

CONSTANCE SLADEN, daughter of the late William Charles Anderson, Surgeon, and sometime Sheriff of York, was born in 1818. A woman of cultivated tastes, she devoted much attention to art, in the study of which she paid frequent visits to Spain and Italy, while several of her pictures were exhibited at different times in various London and provincial Galleries. She had also an extensive and accurate acquaintance with the archæology of her native county, and wrote the article on York Minster in Cassell's 'Cathedral Churches of England,' then edited by Prof. Bonney, F.R.S., as well as descriptions of Selby Abbey and Castle Howard. In 1904, when the alteration of the Charter and Bye-Laws of the Linnean Society permitted the admission of women, Mrs. Sladen was one of the first to avail herself of the opportunity, and was elected a Fellow of the Society on December 15th, 1904.

Her acquaintance with Percy Sladen, in the early eighties, led immediately to a warm attachment, and their union, though delayed for nearly twenty years, was one of unclouded happiness during the short period that it lasted. After her husband's death in 1900 she was anxious to find a means of perpetuating his memory and his devotion to the cause of Science; but though several schemes were proposed and discussed with her friends, it was not until 1904 that it was finally decided to set aside the sum of £20,000 as the endowment of a trust for the furtherance of Scientific Research, more particularly in Biology, Geology, and Anthropology. The following were appointed Trustees:—Dr. Tempest Anderson, Mr. Henry Bury, Prof. William Abbott Herdman, Prof. George Bond Howes*, Mr. Thomas Bailey Saunders, and Dr. Henry Woodward, and their first meeting was held in Mrs. Sladen's house, 13 Hyde Park Gate, on June 29th, 1904.

Up to that time she had been a woman of exceptional health and energy, and, indeed, seemed to be possessed of a remarkably strong constitution; but early in the following year, after, if not as the result of, a severe attack of influenza, she fell a victim to an obscure disease; and, after many months of acute suffering, passed away at Exeter on Jan. 17th, 1906, in the 58th year of her age.

The Trustees of the "Percy Sladen Memorial Fund," thus endowed by Mrs. Sladen, are allowed wide discretionary powers in its administration †, but their policy has been to devote the greater part of the income at their disposal to the maintenance or assistance of important exploring expeditions. At their meeting on February 3rd, 1905,

* The death of Prof. Howes, who had been prevented by ill-health from attending any of the meetings of the Trustees, occurred on February 4th, 1905, to the deep regret of all his colleagues.

† Applications to the Trustees should be made through their Secretary, c/o The Linnean Society of London.

when applications for grants were first considered, it was decided to support Mr. Stanley Gardiner's scheme for the exploration of the Indian Ocean; and the peculiar fitness of this decision will be readily acknowledged by those who remember the keen interest taken by Percy Sladen in all investigations of the deep-sea fauna. Besides establishing this as the first "Percy Sladen Trust Expedition," the Trustees are sharing with the Linnean Society the expenses connected with the publication of the results.

A second expedition, under the leadership of Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, is now studying Anthropology in Melanesia; while a third has been arranged, under Prof. Henry Harold Welch Pearson, to investigate the Botany of West Africa (with special reference to the structure and affinities of the Gnetaceæ) during the coming winter.

By supporting expeditions of such practical importance as these, the Trustees believe that they best fulfil their double function of advancing science and honouring the memory of their friend WALTER PERCY SLADEN.

The Frontispiece to this volume is a reproduction, by kind permission of the Council of the Linnean Society, of a portrait of the late W. PERCY SLADEN, Esq., F.L.S., in the Society's possession.