

XXXIII.—*Observations on "Prof. Sedgwick's Reply to some Statements reflecting on the University of Cambridge."* By J. S. BOWERBANK, F.R.S., Hon. Sec. Palæontographical Society.

To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.

GENTLEMEN,

IN Prof. Sedgwick's "Reply to some statements reflecting on the University of Cambridge," there is a passage which I cannot allow to pass without a few observations. At page 283, line 1, in the number of the Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist. for April 1854, Prof. Sedgwick writes, "I affirm, that *no application*, direct or indirect, was ever made to me, either by MM. Edwards and Haime, or by any member of the Palæontographical Society, for a loan of any part of the Cambridge Palæozoic Fossils." The best reply to this passage will be a short detail of the circumstances connected with the production of Prof. M.-Edwards and M. Jules Haime's work on the 'Fossil Corals of Great Britain.'

Previously to the publication of any portion of the work, it was felt necessary by Prof. M.-Edwards to visit London to collect materials for the proposed monographs, and immediately after his arrival we had several interviews, in the course of which I pointed out to him the various sources whence he might obtain the specimens to be figured and described in the series of Monographs to be produced; and from the first communication I had with him, I fully understood that his work was intended to embrace, not a part only, but the whole of the Fossil Corals of Great Britain.

Our supply of Tertiary and Oolitic Corals from the London collections was so complete and abundant as to render us very easy regarding that part of the subject; but our principal anxiety was on account of the Carboniferous, Silurian and Cambrian Corals. Fortunately I have preserved the rough notes made during the last conference we had on these subjects, and among these notes are the following:—

"P. M.-E. Letters to Pengelley and Battersby,—Coral from Museum, Dublin. Write Ball, E. W. Fletcher of Dudley, Gray of Dudley, and Sedgwick." The whole of these names, with which Prof. Sedgwick's is associated, are notorious as collectors of Palæozoic fossils. It is true that I have not the slightest recollection of the act of writing to any of these gentlemen, but it is equally true that every one of them, excepting Prof. Sedgwick, kindly and liberally forwarded considerable packages of Palæozoic fossils to Prof. M.-Edwards, at Paris, to aid him in the production of that portion of his work; and I therefore feel morally certain that, in accordance with my duty as Secretary of the

Society, I did make written application to the parties whose names are mentioned in the note quoted above, and among them to Prof. Sedgwick, but receiving no letter from him in reply, I recollect well solacing myself with the idea that I should very shortly see him at the Anniversary Meeting of the Members of the Ipswich Museum.

In the earlier part of my recent correspondence with Prof. Sedgwick, he expresses a total oblivion regarding the receipt of such a letter from me touching the loan of Corals, but subsequently the existence of such a letter, although entirely forgotten by the worthy Professor, is rendered apparent by a quotation from one of Prof. Sedgwick's notes to Prof. M'Coy, in which he deposes the latter gentleman to reply to my communication. What that letter may have contained, I cannot pretend to say with precision, but Prof. Sedgwick says it has reference only to Secondary Corals, and it is not improbable that I may have used that term in its oldest and most extended sense; but, let that be as it may, I am certain regarding my personal application at Ipswich to the Professor, and which application it appears he has forgotten as completely as he did the letter above alluded to, which it ultimately appears from his own evidence he received.

As I expected, I met Prof. Sedgwick at the house of a mutual friend, at Ipswich, on the evening preceding the Anniversary of the Ipswich Museum, but I had no opportunity during the evening of conversing with him; but on the following morning, shortly after breakfast, I applied to Prof. Sedgwick, in the name of the Council of the Palæontographical Society, for the loan of such Mountain Limestone and Silurian fossils as Prof. M.-Edwards might require from the Cambridge Museum, for the completion of his Monograph; and I recollect well the purport of his reply was, "That he could not himself do it—that such things were not permitted to leave the University—and that the proper course would be to make a formal application to the governing body of the University (I forget the term used), and that he did not think they would then grant the request."

I wrote to M. Edwards the result of my application, and afterwards told him personally what had occurred, and he agreed with me in considering it as a refusal. At the next meeting of the Council there was a general expression of regret at the result of the application, and a strong conviction that, had the Professor thought fit to have assisted us in the affair, there would have been but few difficulties to surmount.

In corroboration of the above statement, I may mention that in a note recently received from Prof. Milne-Edwards, he writes, "If I remember right, it was either you, Sir H. de la Beche or
Ann. & Mag. N. Hist. Ser. 2. Vol. xiii.

Prof. Forbes that were so obliging as to ask M. S. to lend me the Cambridge specimens; at the same time that you presented a similar demand on behalf of the Palæontographical Society to Messrs. Fletcher, Battersby, the British Museum, Geological Society, &c. &c." The liberal supply that we received from other sources, if I recollect correctly, rendered an application to the British Museum unnecessary. In every other respect the recollection of Prof. M.-Edwards regarding the application to Prof. Sedgwick for Mountain Limestone and Silurian corals, is in perfect accordance with my own.

I cannot account for the impression made on Prof. Sedgwick's mind, that the Palæozoic corals were not intended to be published by Prof. M.-Edwards and M. Jules Haime, as in the Report made to the Annual Meeting, held on the 23rd of March, 1850, and subsequently printed and distributed to the Members, the following passage occurs:—"The Council have also the pleasure to announce, that the first work for 1850, Part I. of Prof. Milne-Edwards's Monograph of the '*Fossil Corals of Great Britain*,' containing twelve plates, is in the binder's hands, and will be delivered with the works for 1848 and 1849." The title of the work thus advertised before the issue of the first part distinctly embraces the whole of the fossil corals. In the Report of the following year, the work is again designated by the same comprehensive title. Nor is there any discrepancy in the statement made by Prof. M.-Edwards to Prof. M'Coy, quoted in his letter, p. 287, Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist. April 1854, who writes, "They were highly complimentary on all the work that had been done, and stated that they were about preparing a monograph on the Tertiary, and subsequently one on the Oolitic corals for the Palæontographical Society, but had no *immediate* intention of touching the Palæozoic corals." Had the word *immediate* been left out, I could have perfectly comprehended the misapprehension that appears to have arisen in Prof. M'Coy's mind regarding the limitation of the work; but the introduction of that word appears to me distinctly to imply that the Palæozoic corals were not excluded, but simply deferred until their turn for publication should arrive.

Of the two modes of application, I am more surprised that the written one should have been so completely forgotten until recalled by Prof. M'Coy's extract from Prof. Sedgwick's letter to him; while the personal one, made a very short time previously to a public meeting in which the learned Professor took a deep interest, and at which he delivered one of those eloquent and brilliant addresses which it is his habit to pour forth on such occasions, may naturally be supposed, under the excitement of the period, to have been totally obliterated by passing events.



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