

IX.—*Information respecting Botanical Travellers.*

UNIO ITINERARIA.

The following appeal to the friends of natural history, and of botany in particular, has recently been published and circulated by the Directors of that highly useful Society the "Unio Itineraria," and we trust it will not be made in vain. This Society affords an inestimable opportunity for botanists to enrich their herbaria with plants of great rarity from various parts of the world, collected at much expense, at great risk, preserved with the greatest care, and named by naturalists who are competent to this task, and we do trust that some of our readers will be induced by the following statement to come forward and encourage so useful and scientific an institution. Our friend, John Hunneman, Esq., 9 Queen Street, Soho, London, will forward the names and subscriptions to the Directors, and will receive and distribute the different collections, so that those who may wish to possess these plants will be put to no trouble on this account.—SIR W. J. HOOKER.

Particulars respecting M. Schimper's Abyssinian Journey.

The important results of the journey to Egypt and Arabia encouraged us to extend the original plan, so as, if possible, to embrace Abyssinia, according to our notice of December, 1836. This country is so interesting, whether as regards its geographical situation or physical structure, the latter having procured it the name of the African Switzerland, and has hitherto been so superficially examined, that we hoped it would excite the curiosity of scientific individuals in general, as well as of the members of this Society; and trusting to receive the needful participation and support, we provided the traveller with such a sum of money as appeared requisite. But although our hopes were tolerably well fulfilled, so far as regarded the members of the *Unio*, and we received sufficient subscriptions to cover the first outlay, as originally calculated, yet it shortly proved that the expedition was attended with far heavier cost than had been anticipated. Circumstances of detention arose:—the traveller found it needful to provide himself with presents, wherewith he might propitiate favour and obtain leave to proceed. Sometimes indeed the offering of these is no matter of choice, but of compulsion. Thus, even before entering the country which he was to explore, our traveller was obliged to have recourse to an English Consular Agent, who kindly assisted him in his present necessities with money upon our credit. Schimper is now in the interior of the country, at Adowa in Abyssinia. He has conciliated the favour of one of the

native princes, and, except as regards the important want of money, he is in a most favourable situation for exploring the whole territory. There is nothing to endanger his safety, and we confidently anticipate that the expectations of the subscribers will be amply realized, as this naturalist possesses a happy union of the mental and bodily properties requisite for his object, if he is furnished with the means of prolonging his stay and making excursions in the country.

We subjoin a short extract from Schimper's account of his progress. He took shipping in the middle of November, 1836, at Suez, for Djedda, whence, on the 19th of the following month, he pursued his course by water, and early in January reached Massava, which is a small island in the Red Sea, close by the coast of Abyssinia. There, unfortunately, a whole month's detention took place, owing to a quarrel which had just arisen between two Frenchmen, who resided in the neighbourhood, and some of the natives, which ended in one of the Abyssinians being shot. The Frenchmen fled, but the minds of the people were so much exasperated against all foreigners that the attempt to penetrate into the country would have been highly dangerous at that juncture. It was not till the 8th of February that Schimper could venture to enter the territory of Akiko, which he effected by purchasing the permission at considerable cost from the Naib there, a Bedouin prince, who appears to have shown himself a great extortioner. Thence his route lay to Haley, 60 miles further, but this being the very place where the murder was committed, our poor naturalist was exposed to such perils that he quitted the town as soon as he could *buy* leave to do so, leaving behind six camels' loads of his property: "these," he says, "were afterwards returned to me through the favour of King Ubie, governor of Tigre and king of Abyssinia, who received me in his tent and showed me much kindness, thanks to the very high recommendations which I carried from the Austrian General Consulate at Cairo." Schimper found it necessary to give presents to king Ubie, in order to ensure his continued protection: he also dined twice with him in his tent, accompanied by the Missionary Blumhardt, of Stuttgart, who is likewise settled at Adowa, with his companion in religious labour Isenberg. The latest accounts from our botanist state, that his labours, after he had succeeded in obtaining some money on our credit from Mr. Dumreicher, of Alexandria, have been attended with considerable success. It was his intention to commence in autumn a journey to the highest mountain of the Semen range, whose snowy peaks were in sight from Adowa, and to explore the country in all directions, as the season and climate permitted. Among the plants

which particularly struck him he mentions an arborescent *Euphorbia*, 12—20 feet high, which the inhabitants call *Koll-Quall*; it is probably *E. officinarum*, Linn. He had also noticed five different species of *Mimosa*, and thought by the aspect of the plants which he had already collected, to the number of about 12,000 specimens, that one-third of them might prove new. His hopes of performing much for the cause of science are high, provided they are not baffled by the want of pecuniary means, of which he sorrowfully complains, as likely to hasten him home. As matters now stand, our readers must perceive that it will either be necessary to aid the traveller liberally with such supplies as the cordial co-operation of the members of this Union can easily raise, without any considerable risk to their own interests, or else the enterprise must be abandoned. For our own parts, we take the liberty of reminding our friends that at the very outset we ran the chance of pecuniary loss for the benefit of the Society, and have at this very time afresh aided M. Schimper with a considerable sum for immediate use, which is not yet covered by the subscriptions of the Members, and of which, in strict justice, the burden ought not to lie upon us. During the course of the present year there has certainly been granted by the Governments of Wurtemberg and of the Grand Duchy of Baden no inconsiderable aid towards the expenses of this expedition; but the sums in question fall far short of covering the outlay already made, much more of enabling him to proceed with his investigations and his labours; and the liberality of the Grand Duke's royal Danish Consul at Alexandria, M. Dumreicher, who thrice, through the English Consular Agent at Djedda, advanced money to assist Schimper, while it argues the most obliging confidence in the members of the *Unio* to meet these engagements, and in Schimper to exert his best abilities in their service, still more powerfully binds the individuals whom he has obliged to come forward and relieve M. Dumreicher from this risk of loss.

The undersigned will on no account disown in any degree the debt which the *Unio* has thus incurred; they, on the contrary, would urge on the Members the advantages which they will severally derive from coming forward early to clear these engagements, inasmuch as they will have the first selection of the rarest and best plants, and will obtain them about one-third cheaper than any purchasers who present themselves at a future period. We would therefore again invite all the Members of this Society and every friend of botany to become contributors towards this expedition, and that, not only from motives of justice to the undersigned, but also for their own exclusive advantage. As it is calculated that M. Schimper will in these tro-

pical districts collect at least 2000 species (Mr. Ecklon collected thrice that number in the three years he spent in South Africa), it will be seen that a treble subscription of 60 florins will not meet the value of an entire collection made during the two or three years' absence of M. Schimper. But to those who subscribe 120 florins we will ensure to them the future collections at the same rate of subscription.

We think that the subscribers may rest assured, that whereas the century of species will cost them 15 florins (33 francs), those individuals who may apply afterwards will have to pay 20 florins (42 francs). Up to the present time we admit of contributors coming forward to the smaller amount of 50—60 florins: these, however, can only claim three or four centuries at the subscription price. We again venture to express our hope that such botanical friends as possess the means, particularly public cabinets of natural history and those individuals who have hitherto been members of the *Unio*, will not forsake us in this important undertaking; and especially that they will consider this journey as a national enterprise, which for the honour alike of country and of science they will do their best to promote.

As our traveller also collects zoological objects, especially bird-skins, fish, and shells, the amateurs of these respective departments of natural history may secure a proportion of them, according to their subscriptions, observing, however, that the contributions towards this journey have some analogy to stock, whose value rises and falls according to circumstances. The greater, however, be the assistance afforded to the traveller, to enable him to prolong his stay and in safety to prosecute his researches, the richer may the proceeds be expected to prove.

To those members who take an interest in the productions of the Georgian Caucasus, we beg to intimate that fresh packets have just arrived from M. Hohenacker, containing 200 species, most of which had not been previously sent, and of the rest only individual specimens. Particulars are mentioned in the Appendix.

Of the North American plants of the deceased Dr. Frank, there remain collections of 100 and of 200 specimens. These will be sold at 12 florins and 24 florins, after the period during which the subscription of 11 florins was admissible shall have closed.

Lastly, we are enabled to offer to the respected Members of the *Unio* and to other botanists, dried plants from New Holland, which the Royal Botanic Society of Ratisbon has transmitted to us for valuation and sale. They were collected by Dr. Lhotsky, at Sydney and Port Jackson, and are described by us and consigned to us on

commission. The collections of 100 and 200 species are respectively prized at 15 florins and 30 florins; and we beg to observe, that to those who do not already possess the collections of Sieber, they are highly interesting, and the more so as the specimens are incomparably more beautiful and complete than the relics which are still on sale of Sieber's plants.

PROFESSOR HOCHSTETTER,
DR. STEUDEL.

Esslingen by Stuttgart, Jan. 1838.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Icones Fungorum hucusque cognitorum. Auctore A. C. J. Corda.
Pragæ, 1837.

Though the present work is not wholly destitute of the faults which are chargeable against the other mycologic labours of the author, it is one of very great importance. If his matter is not always correct, nor his views judicious, we find much that is at least original; and there are many observations and discoveries which throw quite a new light on several obscure branches of mycology. It would indeed be difficult to point out any work of the same size which contains so much of interest. The price too is extremely moderate; and as the specific and generic characters and references to the dissections are in Latin, though the remarks are in German, it is generally accessible to botanists. It is much to be desired that the author will meet with sufficient encouragement to enable him to continue a work which, from the style in which it is got up, must necessarily involve a considerably outlay, and even more brilliant discoveries may be confidently expected in other branches of the science. At present there are few good figures of the fruit-bearing organs of fungi; and, from our own experience, we can bear witness that much remains to be done. Mycologists have till lately been in possession of instruments which can show only a part of the structure, and many of the more minute species have been very imperfectly investigated, nor have the differences, which exist at different periods of growth, received sufficient attention. Indeed the fructification of the typical group of fungi has been altogether misunderstood.

Among the points of most interest, we shall note the following, taken in the order in which they occur.

The author asserts that *Trichothecium roseum* is a parasite on hyphomycetous fungi, or *Mycelia*. *Trichothecium domesticum* is said to occur on the hyphasma of *Mucor Mucedo*. This hint is well worth



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