

The Honorary Secretary then read a Paper, of which the following is an abstract.

FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE SOCIETY.

The second paragraph of the Annual Report, contains two suggestions, both of which are important. The following remarks apply to only one of them.

It must be obvious to the most superficial observer, that the payments which have to be made on behalf of a Society like this are of two kinds, namely— I. *Annual Expenses*, such as printing, working, refreshments, rents, postages; and II. *Occasional Expenses*, for furniture, fittings, repairs, books, objects, &c. In like manner the receipts of the society consist of I. *Annual Subscriptions* (guineas or half-guineas as the case may be,) and II. *Single payments* made by members as entrance fees, compositions for life-membership, and payments for volumes sold.

It will also be apparent on reflection that there is an intimate relation between the two classes of items on the one side, and the two on the other. The *Annual Subscriptions*, for example, stand opposite to the *Annual Expenses*, and those payments, which are made once only, should cover occasional outlay for purposes of a more permanent kind. It is impossible to ascertain the true condition of a society without keeping these classes of items distinct, either on paper or in the mind. On the one hand, a society which is retrograding may appear to progress, by using life compositions and other occasional receipts as if they were annual subscriptions, or by postponing the payment of accounts; and on the other, a society which is progressing may appear to retrograde, by making a large outlay on its permanent collection, or by investing a portion of the funds in a way which will make a certain but slow return. In general, when the ordinary annual receipts meet the ordinary annual expenditure the society is self-supporting; for if the occasional receipts be small, the outlay in furniture, books, and objects can be diminished accordingly. Of course the scale of public usefulness may be high or low, or may be elevated or depressed; I am now merely assuming that it is uniform. If the sessional income exceed the sessional expenditure there is an annual gain, which may be either applied to the increase of the stock, or reserved for future contingencies; and if at the same time the single payments are in excess of the occasional outlay, the society is flourishing financially, in both of its great departments.

Let us now apply these general principles to our own society, and see what is our actual condition. The annual subscriptions merely, during the past year, have amounted to £311 16s. 6d., and the annual expenses to £286 15s. 0d., leaving a balance to the credit of the society under that head. The single payments to the society have amounted to £71 17s. 2d., and the occasional expenses on property and stock to £57 7s. 8d., so that there is a balance to the credit of the Society under this head also. It is evident, therefore, that the Historic Society is at this moment thoroughly self-supporting; and we have a reasonable hope that the future will increase largely its means of usefulness both to the public and to its own members.

It should be borne in mind that this Society is bound by its Laws to print annually; and that it furnishes at present a respectable volume, illustrated, to each of its members. The Society is also bound to make other Annual payments, some of which may be diminished in future sessions, or entirely removed. The Volume for the past session has cost the Society £154, independent of donations of Plates; and the general expenses have amounted to £131. Hence, to accomplish the same results annually, without calculating on extraneous aid, will require an expenditure of about 300 guineas a year. This of course does not include casual payments for permanent purposes, or for contingencies.

The Society has risen regularly from 217 Members in October, 1848, to 430 in October, 1857. The sessional loss from various causes, amounts to about five per cent. [some Societies have changed to the extent of eleven or twelve per cent. *annum*,] so that to maintain that number undiminished, at least 22 should* be enrolled each session. Any larger number will tend to increase the Society.

* The actual number enrolled in Session 1855-56 was twenty-nine, and in 1856-57, sixty-three.—Ed.

It has often been said that a Learned Society in so large a town as Liverpool, if even moderately well worked, should never allow its members to fall below 500. If the proportions of the various classes of members were nearly the same as at present this would give an annual income* of nearly £450, or almost fifty per cent. above the sum at present necessary for the successful working of the Society. In 1844, the principal Learned Society of the town had only 90 members, and an annual income of about £50.

But it may be asked, how has the Society reached its present position if it be impossible to conduct it on less than an income of £300 a-year? So recently as the close of the sixth session its receipts did not reach that sum, even with the appropriation of life compositions. The reply to this inquiry is very simple. The Society, though continuous in existence, has occupied two distinct positions before the public. At first it gave attention to archæology, and to a limited extent to literature. It supplied the absence of one sectional subject in the town, and trusted to existing societies to supply the rest. It now undertakes to supply all, on a scale not hitherto attempted. It is in these latter circumstances that this enlarged expenditure becomes indispensable. In its earlier years, it was made self-supporting by peculiar management. Its meetings were few in number, and the working expenses were small, both in their entire amount and their relation to the income. The life subscriptions were not numerous, and they were used with the annual income, which might be regarded either as borrowing from the future, or as an equivalent for the additional volumes in stock, for sale to future members. But, besides all this, the working of the Society was gratuitous, and we received annually liberal donations in money, and professional services, for the illustration of our volumes. To adopt the language of business life, a few gentlemen gave the society a bonus annually, which, with economical working, kept the shares always up. The necessity for these sacrifices has now passed away, and the Society, even with its large undertaking, is able to settle every claim liberally and promptly. Yet we have strong reason to believe that, from the kindness of friends and the interest which individual members are likely to feel in particular subjects, such donations will not cease, but on the contrary, be frequent, and be highly appreciated as before.

Let us view the working of the Society a little more in detail. It may be stated broadly that each of our members pays the original smaller subscription for the reduction of the annual volume, but that our resident members pay another such sum to cover working expenses. Now, it is curious to see the relation which the two sums bear to each other in point of fact. We have 240 resident annual members, who on his principle contribute 120 guineas, or £126 a-year, for working expenses. If we deduct from the present balance sheet one or two petty items not necessarily sessional, his sum exactly meets the whole of the charges under the head of "sessional expenses." If the Society had reached 500 members, the sum available would be £144 7s. 6d.; and it is very improbable that under any circumstances, so large a sum would be required.

At the present moment, we have 36 Life Members on the roll, so that we ought to be able to show property purchased and cash to the extent of £189. All this and more can be done; yet I am one of those who wish to see the whole of the life compositions

* 35 Life Members at.....	£5	5 =	£183	15	0	
5 " "	10	10 =	52	10	0	
			£236	5	0	
			Interest	£9	10	0
275 Resident Annual Members			288	15	0	
177 Non-Resident Annual Members			93	1	0	
3 Ex-officio Members			0	0	0	
5 Lady Associates.....			2	12	6	
500 Annual Receipts			393	18	6	
Casual Receipts:—						
Entrance Fees, say.....	£31	10	0			
Books sold, say	20	0	0			
			51	10	0	
			£445	8	6	

bearing interest, and the permanent charges met from some of the other sources of income. It should be borne in mind that life compositions are available eventually, but not immediately; as they drop in at the termination of the lives. With a little economy and effort on the part of the council, a sum equivalent to the payments of all the surviving life members might be invested in two or three sessions, the other sums being appropriated to distinct objects. This would fully meet the suggestion in the report with which I set out, and would greatly simplify the duties of every succeeding treasurer, secretary, or member of council. The property which we have created would then exhibit an independent existence, and be attributable to individual generosity and good working alone.

It will easily be gathered from this that our society has now reached a point financially which it never reached before; and that its promise of future usefulness is greater than on any previous occasion. We have prospered and progressed when we had but few advantages to offer: it is not reasonable to suppose that our prosperity will cease when we have more to offer. The heavy up-hill strain which has continued without one moment's intermission for eight years is at an end, and the Society now requires only judicious guidance on a level road. Its intellectual resources have more than kept pace with its pecuniary ones; for as a scientific Society it knew no infancy, but sprang to maturity in a single session.

One of the destinies of the Society has not yet been accomplished, or only partially and indirectly. It is obvious that in creating an intellectual community in the midst of a more material one we ought to benefit not only our own members, but also, as far as possible, the public at large. With a pressure nearer at home, we have hitherto rarely looked outward; but it is surely time to do so. Everywhere around us, and especially in this town, we see those who yearn after the good and the beautiful, continually thwarting their own noble purposes by the incompetency which characterises them through life. And if it be so with them, what must it be with others still lower in mental elevation, however they may sit in high places; who regard man only as an animal machine, and the supply of his bodily wants as the sole business of life? I believe that it is not only allowable, but requisite, to instruct and guide our local public from time to time on subjects with which we possess unusual familiarity and thus to multiply the means of doing good. And I am not without a conviction that such services as we could thus render would be gratefully received.

It was moved by the Rev. T. MOORE, seconded by WILLIAM BURKE, Esq., and resolved:—

That the thanks of the Society be given to Dr. HUME for his interesting paper.

It was moved by G. M. BROWNE, Esq., seconded by J. HUGHES, Esq., and resolved,—

That the thanks of the Society be given to the officers and sectional members of Council, for their services during the past Session.

It was moved by Dr. HUME, seconded by T. SANSOM, Esq., and resolved,—

That the thanks of the Society be given to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, to John F. Marsh, Esq., and to the Rev. John James Moss, for their valuable contributions of illustrations to vol. viii. of the Society's Proceedings.

A ballot having been taken for the Officers and Sectional Members of Council, the following was the result as announced from the chair. (See page vi.)

Thanks were then conveyed to the chairman by acclamation, for his services during the evening, on the motion of Dr. HUME, seconded by JOHN POOLE, Esq.