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P R E F A C E.

THE mode heretofore followed in publishing the Transactions of the Society having been attended with many inconveniences, arising partially or wholly from restrictions on the subjects to be introduced, as well as from the quarto form of the impression, and from the uncertain, but widely extended periods at which the editions were made, the Council has considered it advisable to sanction a regular quarterly publication in octavo, and less limited as to the nature of the materials of which it is to be composed. This arrangement will afford the means of rendering available many valuable contributions, which, notwithstanding their real interest and importance, may not entirely conform to the system on which the quarto publication is founded: and the latter may still be continued whenever the accumulation of matter on subjects more peculiar to its original design shall render any additional volume expedient.

The octavo publication is styled the *JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY*, will be edited at intervals of three months, and we may trust will become a repository for much valuable information, which, consistently with the views of the *SOCIETY*, will thus be communicated to the Public. The researches of the learned into the history and customs of the nations of the

East in ancient times, their investigations into the yet remaining monuments of early and extensive civilization, may here be placed in contrast with the labours of those who prefer the progress of improvement in the present day, or suggest the means by which that improvement may be accelerated and enlarged; the deductions of philosophy may be compared with the results of experience, and the theories of the speculative produce schemes of practical utility.

The COUNCIL, while thus endeavouring to give greater extension to the operations of the Society, and to increase its claims to public approbation and support, feels that its ability to do so may be materially increased by the earnest and effective co-operation of the Members of the Society, and of all others who feel an interest in the manners, literature, and science of Asia, as well as in the welfare of our empire in the East.

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* The attention of the Royal Asiatic Society was particularly called to this and other papers of Mr. E dye, upon subjects connected with the Malabar Coast, by Sir Alexander Johnston, in that part of the Annual Report made by him, as Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence, to the Society at their last Anniversary Meeting (see p. 157), in which, alluding to the communication about to be opened by steam-boats between England and the western coast of India, either through the Gulf of Arabia or that of Persia, he dwelt at considerable length upon the importance of the inquiries instituted by the Committee of Correspondence, relative to the port of Cochin and the back-water of 150 miles long, upon which it stands; the break in the southern part of the great western Ghauts called Paul Ghautcherry, and the practicability of opening a water-communication through this break between the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, by forming a junction between the Paniany River, which flows into the sea on the Malabar Coast, and the Cauvery River, which flows into the sea on the Coromandel Coast.

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