

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public **DEPARTMENT.**

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,

10th June 1868.

No. 53. Read the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, (Public), to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Simla, 26th May 1869, No. 2413.

With reference to the accompanying copy of the correspondence noted in the margin, I am directed to request

1. Despatch from Secretary of State, No. 103, dated 9th August 1867, and enclosure.
2. Letter from Antonio Smith, No. 743, dated 18th November 1867.
3. Letter from Officiating Superintendent of the Geological Survey, No. 734, dated 9th October 1867.
4. Letter from Indian Museum, No. 80, dated 16th December 1867, and enclosure.
5. Letter to the Honorary Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the Indian Museum, No. 157, dated 11th January 1868, and enclosures thereon, to the Secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, Nos. 155-56.
6. Despatch to Secretary of State, No. 10, dated 11th January 1868.
7. Extracts of a communication from the Superintendent of the Geological Survey, No. 613, dated 24th December 1867.
8. Despatch to Secretary of State, No. 13, dated 17th January 1868.
9. Despatch from Secretary of State, No. 83, dated 7th May 1868, and enclosure, and enclosures thereon, to the Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and to the Honorary Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the Indian Museum, Nos. 2706-4, dated 23rd June 1868.

that all Indian meteorites may, in future, be transmitted to the Trustees of the Indian Museum, in preference to sending them direct to England.

Despatch from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor General of India in Council; dated India Office, London, 9th August 1867, No. 103, (Public).

With reference to Sir Charles Wood's despatch of the 9th of February 1863, No. 14,

* Dated 17th July 1867.

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I forward herewith a copy of a letter* from the Principal Librarian of the British Museum, together with a report† by the Keeper of the Department of Mineralogy in that institution,

respecting the presentation to the Museum of aerolites of importance obtainable in British India.

2 I have to request that your Excellency in Council will take into early consideration the report by Mr. Maskelyne, with a view to meeting, as far as may be practicable, the wishes of the Trustees of the British Museum, as expressed in the enclosures to Sir Charles Wood's above-mentioned despatch, and now communicated in Mr. Winter Jones' present letter and Mr. Maskelyne's report. You will acquaint me with the result of your consideration of this subject for the information of the Trustees of the Museum.

From J. W. JONES, Esq., Principal Librarian of the British Museum, to the Secretary of State for India; dated British Museum, 17th July 1867.

I am directed by the Trustees of the British Museum to forward to you the accompanying copy of a report which has been submitted to them by Mr. Maskelyne, the Keeper of the Department of Mineralogy in this institution.

I also beg leave to draw your attention to a letter addressed to the Secretary of State for India, by desire of the Trustees, on the 23rd of January 1863, asking the favour of the intervention of the Secretary of State with His Excellency the Governor General of India that he would be pleased to take such steps as he should think fit to secure for the British Museum any aerolites of importance that might be obtainable in Her Majesty's dominions in India.

Looking to the scientific interest and importance of the subject in question, I am to express the hope of the Trustees that the views set forth in Mr. Maskelyne's report may be considered deserving your favourable consideration, and that the request which, as appears from Mr. Horner Mervale's letter of the 28th of January 1863, was made by the Secretary of State for India to the several local Governments in India, in accordance with the suggestions of the Trustees of the British Museum, contained in their letter of the 23rd of January 1863, may not be withdrawn.

REPORT.

Mr. Maskelyne has the honour to report the presentation to the Museum by the Trustees of the Indian Museum at Calcutta of specimens taken from two aerolites, those, namely, of Gopalpur (that fell in May 1865) and of Shorghotty (that fell in August 1865).

Also by Dr. Oldham, as Director of the Geological Survey in India, of specimens of the Pehlra (that fell in May 1867) and Muddoor (that fell in September 1865) falls.

Letters from Dr. Oldham announcing these presentations have been referred by the Principal Librarian to Mr. Maskelyne to be reported on.

In them Dr. Oldham speaks of these fragmentary specimens as having been sent to the British Museum "in accordance with a wish expressed by the Government of India that the British collection should be enriched by specimens of all meteorites found in India."

Mr. Maskelyne had understood that what Dr. Oldham terms a "wish" was, in fact, an order from the Home Government not that fragments taken from meteorites should be selected and sent by Dr. Oldham or any one else at Calcutta, but that after the date of the order the meteorites themselves should be sent to London.

Dr. Oldham acknowledged that this was so in a conversation with Mr. Maskelyne on Saturday last; but he added that "the original order had been so far modified as to make the Trustees of the Indian Museum" (at Calcutta) "the medium through which all meteorites sent in officially should pass." That gentleman further informed Mr. Maskelyne that the Pehlra Meteorite was "stopped in India" while on its way to London, and being sent in obedience to the general order of the Home Government.

Mr. Maskelyne thinks it very important, in the interests of this Imperial Museum, for the whole empire no less than in those of European science generally, that the original order of the Secretary of State for India in Council relatively to these meteorites should not be superseded, still more that it should not be "modified" by a local authority professing to act in the name of the Government, whether it be a Museum or the Geologist at the head of the Indian Survey.

It is true that Dr. Oldham has caused the purchase for the Calcutta Museum of the collection of Mr. Grog of Manchester—a collection remarkable rather for the numbers of the meteoric falls it contained than for their magnitude or capacity for illustrating the different kinds of meteorite.

That collection, when united with specimens previously at Calcutta or more acquired in the manner above described, will form a fine series of meteorites. But it will be comparatively lost in Calcutta, where there are extremely few persons to study it to advantage. In London, on the other hand, the meteorites of India as of other places (and meteorites have no nationality) are constantly being studied by men of science, English, Foreign, and American, and the recent progress of science has given them a redoubled interest. It is in London that the great masses of these bodies would confer the most advantage upon science, while fragments properly cut from them (not as at present destructively broken off with hammers), could be sent as presents to Calcutta, and others again could be made the means of enhancing this collection by exchange with foreign Museums.

Meteorites are unlike fossils in this, that henceforward it will be impossible to procure collections of the former representing the falls that have been studied so laboriously during the past fifty years, except by minute and unsatisfactory specimens. It is, therefore, very important to keep up the collection here, which is the finest in the world, in the most perfect and complete condition.

Mr. Maskelyne would, therefore, respectfully suggest to the Trustees that they should exercise their important influence in averting the evil that would befall this collection if the order of the Secretary of State for India were to be superseded here or neglected at Calcutta.

MINING DEPARTMENT,
10th June 1869.

(Signed) N. S. MASKELYNE.

Professor Owen is of opinion that the remarks in the foregoing report are just and to the point, and that it is of great moment in the elucidation of one of the most interesting and obscure problems in Meteorology and Mineralogy that Professor Maskelyne's suggestion should receive the favourable consideration of the Trustees.

(Signed) R. OWEN.

From H. F. BLANFORD, Esq., Secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department; dated 18th November 1867, No. 745.

I have the honour to inform you that your letter, No. 5267, dated 9th October, with its enclosures, and the previous correspondence relating to the same subject, has received the careful consideration of the Council of the Asiatic Society, and I am instructed to submit the expression of their opinion thereon for the consideration of Government.

2. The Council do not think it necessary to offer any comment on that part of Mr. Maskelyne's report which discusses the proper interpretation of the Secretary of State's despatch of the 8th February 1863. They understand that the view taken by Government of that despatch does not coincide with that of Mr. Maskelyne, and it remains, therefore, to submit the views of the Council on that part only of Mr. Maskelyne's report in which the writer bases the exclusive claims of the British Museum on what he conceives to be grounds of general advantage.

3. It is as a question of public or general scientific advantage that the Council have considered the claim set up by Mr. Maskelyne. It is almost a truism that any rivalry between Museums that should lead the Officers or Trustees of the one to seek its advantage through the impoverishment of another and similar institution would be, not only most unworthy of any body professing to seek the interest of science, but also suicidal in its results both to the Museum that it is sought to benefit, and to the true interests of science at large.

4. Accepting this view, and admitting with Mr. Maskelyne that a larger number of scientific investigators visit and work in the British Museum than can be expected in the Indian Museum, the question appears to resolve itself into this:—What advantage would be offered to such persons by larger specimens of meteorites which are not equally afforded by the smaller, but still considerable, specimens of all Indian meteorites which have been, or will, the Council believe, on all future occasions, be presented by the Indian Museum to the collection under Mr. Maskelyne's charge? Mr. Maskelyne does not specify any such advantage, and the Council are unable to see that any can be urged. The structure and composition of the stone can be as well studied on the small as on the larger specimens. The beautiful models prepared in the Calcutta School of Art give all that can be required of the form and appearance. The weights are carefully recorded in Calcutta before breaking or dividing the stone, and every exertion is made to collect information respecting the falls.

5. The Council are unable to see, then, that any advantage would accrue to science by adopting the course urged by Mr. Maskelyne, while the Indian Museum supported by Government at a heavy expense would lose some of its greatest treasures, and, what is not the less important, the means of acquiring other specimens by the exchange of its own duplicates. These advantages would be transferred to a more richly endowed Museum having no special claim on India that can compete with those of the Indian Museum.

6. But a more injurious result of admitting Mr. Maskelyne's claim would be that it would tend most materially to counteract and damp the efforts of those who are now exerting themselves to make the Indian Museum worthy of the Capital of India, and a centre from which a knowledge of the natural sciences, and interest in their pursuit, may radiate throughout the land. From the terms in which Mr. Maskelyne speaks of the Indian Museum, it must be inferred he is unaware of the measures recently taken by Government, and warmly seconded by the Asiatic Society, to render the Indian Museum as capable as its Trustees and Officers are desirous of making it, of furnishing to European science aid which no individual and sporadic effort can give. The Indian Museum, as a flourishing institution, can and will do far more for European Museums (that of London included) than can be effected by any such course as that advocated by Mr. Maskelyne. The reasons urged by Mr. Maskelyne would be far more valid in the case of unique specimens of

specimens, animals, &c., for these cannot be divided or studied to equal purpose in unskilled institutions. But if it be made a general rule that all unique specimens obtained in India are to be presented to the British Museum, it will be long, indeed, before natives and residents can be induced to exert themselves in behalf of a Museum supported, indeed, by the taxes of their own country, but uniformly denuded of its greatest treasures in the interest of a collection on the other side of the globe.

7. For these reasons, then, the Council would submit their strong protest against the admission of Mr. Maskelyne's claims. Such an admission, they feel assured, would be most injurious to the Indian Museum, and to the best interests of science, without having a single counterbalancing advantage.

From H. B. MEDLICOTT, Esq., Officiating Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, dated 21st October 1897, No. 754.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter, No. 5286, of 9th October 1897, forwarding copy of a despatch from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State, No. 103, dated 9th August last, and calling for opinion upon a proposal of the Trustees of the British Museum respecting the presentation of aerolites.

2. The question is a most important one, more so, perhaps, as a precedent than on account of the special object now in view. If the demand of Mr. Maskelyne and the authorities of the British Museum be acceded to in this matter, it will be a fatal blow to the development of rising institutions in India. If, as Mr. Maskelyne would advocate, an order from London, in the interest of a purely British (albeit an imperial) institution is to set aside all authority in India with regard to like institutions in this country, it will be impossible for men in India to keep up any zeal or interest in connection with such institutions. The principal argument advanced by Mr. Maskelyne might, for some time to come, and with more or less of plausibility, be brought to bear upon the disposal of any unique specimens within the whole range of Natural History. It may be feared, too, that, if the report of Mr. Maskelyne is to be taken as a type of official communications from the British Museum, the apathy I apprehend might be roused into an injurious opposition.

3. The transactions commented on in Mr. Maskelyne's report were strictly in accordance with the orders of the Supreme Government in India regarding the disposal of meteorites, as conveyed in your office circular, No. 3030, of 11th August 1896. I can certify that the specimens taken by Dr. Oldham for the British Museum were ample for purposes of experiment and permanent illustration. They were no doubt "fragments," as any portion less than half might strictly be called, and the portion that will remain for exhibition will, no doubt, be less shabby than if the whole had been sent, or it may afford some means of effecting exchanges by being further divided, but for all purposes of scientific examination and record the British Museum has been fully provided. The specimens, it must be regretted, were not artistically cut. Appliances are, however, now being provided by which this objection will be avoided for the future. As for the secondary considerations urged by Mr. Maskelyne, he cannot seriously claim for the institution to which he is attached the monopoly of legitimate pride in the completion of any special collection, or of the advantages to be gained by means of exchange with other Museums. The collection of meteorites in Calcutta is already but little inferior to that in the British Museum, and, having recently seen the latter, I can state that the collection in Calcutta is fully as well exhibited as that in London. The facts expressed in the 10th paragraph of Mr. Maskelyne's report may be alleged by the assurance that the care that has been heretofore bestowed upon our collection will be rigorously continued.

4. There are three main elements of investigation with regard to the existence of meteorites—their external form and appearance, their mineralogical and chemical constitution, and their microscopical structure. The first is of least importance, and it can easily and effectively be aided by any one unacquainted with such observations. For pictures of the form can, moreover, be reproduced in any number. Yet this only is the entire specimen needed. To determine the

chemical composition and the microscopical structure, much skill and patience are called for; but for these elements of the question, and for the final exhibition of the specimen, a piece of very moderate dimensions is in most cases sufficient. As far as the British Museum and its efforts are concerned, the rules now in force here regarding the distribution of meteorites make ample provision for the investigation of the really important features. Any demand for more cannot be made purely on the score of science.

5. Looking at the question from a general (commercial) point of view, it is matter of surprise that the Trustees of the British Museum should countenance the very injudicious proceedings of Mr. Maskelyne in attempting to dominate over independent institutions in this country. A dispassionate consideration of the question would surely show, if experience had not already taught, that the interest of a great central institution would be favoured by giving encouragement to distant and more local institutions, rather than by opposing them. I have not the smallest doubt that, in the long run, the British Museum would be greatly the gainer by being able to depend upon the co-operation of a body in this country directly interested in the collection of aerolites. Mr. Maskelyne's method would certainly secure some entire aerolites, and, for a short time, might even secure a fair proportion of those that fall; but orders of Government in matters of this kind are very soon lost sight of, even where the right is not denied and disregarded, as it has been in several cases within my own knowledge in this very case of aerolites. Without the constant active attention on the part of the same person or institution in this country to look out for, and courteously to seek possession of such things, the great majority would be lost for ever to science. A well-supported Museum in the country itself is the only efficient agency for such work. The Trustees of the British Museum can scarcely be aware of the great advance made by Government towards the establishment in Calcutta of a Museum worthy of this country.

It would seem that the despatch of 9th February 1893, No. 14, may have been written without information of how the question would be regarded in India, and it is reassuring that, in the despatch of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State now forwarded, there seems no disposition to adopt any measure contrary to the interest of working institutions in this country.

6. I may briefly re-state that, having full regard to the claims of the great National Institution in London and to the superior power and means existing there for carrying on scientific investigations, the Right Honourable the Secretary of State may be assured that the rules issued by the Supreme Government in India for the disposal of meteorites fulfil all that is just and reasonable; and, further, that the demands now made by the British Museum are contrary to all usage in such matters, and would certainly prove mischievous to the permanent interests of all parties.

From H. F. BLANFORD, Esq., Honorary Secretary to the Trustees of the Indian Museum, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department; dated 10th December 1897, No. 89.

I have the honour to inform you that your letter, No. 3030, dated 11th August 1896, addressed to the Curator of the Indian Museum, and requesting an expression of his views on an enclosed correspondence on the subject of forwarding meteorites to the British Museum, has been laid before the Board of Trustees, whose opinion thereon I have now the honour to submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor General in Council.

2. The Trustees would first point out that Mr. Maskelyne has misconceived the nature of the authority conferred by the Trustees, as well as their action in the case which has occasioned his report, in speaking of them as "a local authority professing to act in the name of Government," and implying that the Trustees have proprio motu superseded or modified an order proceeding from the Secretary of State for India in Council. They would further express their regret that views so erroneous, expressed with so little courtesy, should have been recommended, without further comment, to the favourable consideration of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State, by a body so important and responsible as the Trustees of the British Museum.

3. The accompanying copy of correspondence, for which the Trustees are indebted to the courtesy of the Asiatic Society, will show by what authority certain aerolites have passed into

the hands of the Asiatic Society, through whom they have come to form part of the Indian Museum collections. It will be seen that, in reply to an address on the part of the Asiatic Society, the late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, while expressing an opinion to the effect that the first duty of Government is towards the local Scientific Society, informed the Society's Council that they were in error in supposing that orders had been issued to send all aerolites to the British Museum. Accordingly, on two occasions, aerolites which had been forwarded to the Government of Bengal were presented by the Lieutenant-Governor to the Asiatic Society.

4. It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. Maskelyne is in error in supposing that the Trustees, or their predecessors in the direction of the Museum—the Council of the Asiatic Society—have modified or superseded any order whether of the Secretary of State for India in Council or of the Supreme or other Government of India.

5. With regard to the future disposal of meteoric stones, the Trustees are of opinion that the reasons urged by Mr. Maskelyne for transmitting the entire stones to London have but little weight. It is doubtless greatly to the advantage of a Museum to obtain the entire stones, as, apart from the competition which naturally exists among the Curators of different Museums to obtain the finest and most valuable specimens each for his own collection—a desire in itself perfectly laudable and natural—a real advantage attaches to the possession of such unique objects as meteoric stones, in the power such possession gives of obtaining valuable specimens in exchange for fragments of them from other collections. Mr. Maskelyne urges no reasons why this advantage should be enjoyed by his own collection rather than by that under the direction of the Trustees, in the case of Indian meteorites; and the Trustees cannot but coincide in the opinion expressed by Sir Cecil Beadon that a local Scientific Society, and, *a fortiori*, a local Government Museum has the strongest claim on the assistance of the local Government to enjoy such advantages as the possession of unique specimens found in the country, provided there exist no stronger grounds of general expediency for otherwise disposing of them.

6. Mr. Maskelyne does indeed state, as his opinion, that it is in London that the great mass of meteoric stones would confer the most advantage upon science; but he has obtained from urging reasons for this view, and, as stated, no one point in which major portions could be studied to more advantage than those of considerable size already presented to the British Museum. The Trustees—as well as their predecessors, the Asiatic Society,—have endeavoured to deal most liberally towards the national collections in London, believing that, by giving the fullest support to these collections whenever it can be done without detriment to the interests of the collections of their trust, they are furthering the best interest of science. Further, they are at all times prepared to give their best consideration to the opinions urged by the students of science on the best mode of treating objects of Natural History, and Mr. Maskelyne's opinion on the best method of dividing meteoric stones for distribution will certainly receive that consideration to which it is entitled. Their desire is generally to afford the utmost aid to the national collections of London and other European Capitals; but they cannot recognize the wisdom of the course advocated by Mr. Maskelyne, nor do they think that such claims, as urged, are likely to benefit the British Museum and science in general, to a degree at all equal to that obtained by the course of action already adopted by the Trustees.

From the Dilecting Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, dated 14th November 1865, No. 615A.

I am directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 531, dated the 21st ultimo, and, in reply, to explain that the Council of your Society are in error in supposing that orders have been issued to send all aerolites to the British Museum.

2. His Honor has always been of opinion that the first duty of the Government is towards the local Scientific Society, in this case the Asiatic, and has accordingly on two occasions sent aerolites which have fallen within his jurisdiction to be presented to their Museum.

3. In accordance, however, with the request of the Trustees of the British Museum, information on a number of points regarding the fall of aerolites is collected for transmission to England on each occasion, and your Society will doubtless comply with the Lieutenant Governor's request to communicate all interesting information that may be available, and, if possible, a model or section of the aerolite itself to the British Museum.

4. The Lieutenant-Governor does not see that anything is to be gained by departing from this course, which, while it will, he trusts, satisfy the requirements of your Society, is at the same time not inconsistent with the wish of the Secretary of State that every assistance should be given to the Trustees of the British Museum in their endeavour to collect as much information as possible regarding the aerolites that fall in this country.

From H. F. BLANFORD, Esq., Secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal; dated 20th October 1865.

Information having reached me to the effect that a meteoric stone, which fell lately in Behar, has been forwarded to Government for transmission to the British Museum in accordance with the instructions received from the Secretary of State, I am desired by the Council of the Asiatic Society to solicit that the stone be lent for a short time to the Asiatic Society for exhibition at one of its meetings, and in order that models of it may be prepared previous to its being forwarded to England.

2. I am further desired, with reference to the despatch of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for India (No. 14, dated London, the 9th February 1863 and enclosure, to represent respectfully, for the consideration of Government, that the Asiatic Society for many years past has exerted itself to collect and preserve the aerolites which have fallen in India, and, having thus formed a valuable collection, in 1861 they placed the whole in the hands of Professor Maskelyne, Curator of the Mineralogical Collections of the British Museum, for the purpose of examination, and also that the specimens might be cut, and portions preserved for the national collection. This was done by Professor Maskelyne, and the remaining portions returned to India now form part of the collection shortly to be transferred to Government as the collections of the Indian Museum. The Society understand that, in consequence of the instructions of the Right Honourable the Secretary of State, all meteoric stones which may hereafter be obtained in India by any officer of Government will be transmitted intact to England; and as nearly all such specimens are obtained, directly or indirectly, through the agency of Government officials, the Society now, and eventually the Trustees of the Indian Museum, will be virtually precluded from making any addition of importance to the collections of Indian meteorites, or, indeed, of meteoric stones generally, except by purchase,—since collectors of such objects are rarely willing to part with specimens in exchange, except for objects of a similar character.

3. The Society do not doubt that the Trustees of the British Museum will desire to co-operate cordially with the Trustees of a Museum so able to assist in the furthering of Natural Science as that which will be formed shortly on the basis of the Asiatic Society's collections, and they are not less confident that the Trustees of the Indian Museum will equally appreciate the advantage of a close connexion and co-operation with so important a scientific centre as the British Museum, with its highly accomplished staff of scientific men. They would suggest, therefore, that it will be to the advantage of both Museums that meteoric stones which may hereafter be obtained in Northern India, be forwarded, in the first case, to the Asiatic Society's Museum, or to the Trustees of the Indian Museum; that they be there modelled and cut, and that one or more models, together with one-half of the stone, be forwarded to the Trustees of the British Museum, together with such information as the Society or Curators of the Indian Museum may be able to collect respecting the circumstances of the fall. Thus, both Museums will be benefited, and every object of science fulfilled to the utmost, while, in case of the loss of the specimen in transit, a portion will be reserved in India, which may be again divided for the British Museum. Such losses would be irreparable unless provided for in the manner suggested; and the loss of a fine collection of meteorites despatched by the Vienna Museum for the Asiatic

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Society, and of more than one collection of unique specimens by the Geological Survey, amply prove that the possibility of such accidents is by no means a baseless assumption.

From the Under Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to the Honorary Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the Indian Museum, dated 11th January 1869, No. 157.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 80, dated the 10th ultimo, and, in reply, to state that the Governor General in Council entirely concurs with the Trustees in the reasons assigned for not admitting the claim of the British Museum to the possession of Indian meteorites. A communication to this effect will be made to Her Majesty's Secretary of State, but I am to request that the present practice of forwarding to the British Museum a fragment of each fall, together with a model of the entire meteorite and full particulars as to the date and circumstances of the fall, may be continued.

No. 159

Copy forwarded to the Secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, with reference to Mr. Blanford's letter, No. 743, dated the 12th October last.

No. 159.

Copy forwarded to the Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, with reference to Mr. Medlicott's letter, No. 743, dated the 21st October last.

From the Government of India, to the Secretary of State for India; dated Fort William, 11th January 1869, No. 10.

We have received your despatch of the 9th August last, No. 103, with which you have forwarded, for our consideration, a communication from the British Museum respecting the transmission to that institution of Indian aerolites.

2. In considering your despatch and the letter of Mr. Maskelyne therewith forwarded, we have referred to the previous correspondence on this subject, originating in the application of the Trustees of the British Museum enclosed in Sir Charles Wood's despatch, No. 14, dated the 9th February 1863. We were requested on that occasion to render such assistance as would enable the Trustees to realize their wishes, which were—

(1). —To increase, and to render, as complete as possible, the fine collection of aerolites in the possession of the Museum; and

(2). —To procure information as to the circumstances and facts relating to the fall of meteoric masses in India.

3. It was not stated that the intention of the Trustees was to secure for the British Museum entire specimens of every meteoric fall, nor was their request so understood. The correspondence received with Sir Charles Wood's despatch was circulated to the local Governments and Administrations in the Bengal Presidency on the 31st March 1863, and subsequently, on a question being raised as to the exact intention of the despatch and correspondence referred to, it was decided that all aerolites, together with the papers relating to them, should, in the first instance, be forwarded to the Government Geological

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Museum at Calcutta, the Director of which would transmit without delay to the British Museum specimens or fragments, with full particulars as to date, &c. In this way it was believed that the objects of the Trustees of the British Museum would be fully attained, while the interests of the Museum in Calcutta, which would retain the mass specimens, would not be disregarded.

4. Since the issue of these orders, as you are aware, an Imperial Museum has been established in Calcutta at a heavy expense to Government, and the fine collections of the Asiatic Society and of the Geological Museum have been incorporated in it. Some very important additions have also been made by purchase, and together the Indian collection is now one of

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the finest public collections in the world, being hardly inferior to the collections in London and Vienna. The Indian Museum, moreover, has established with European Museums a system of mutual exchange, and, while this system must necessarily further increase the value of the Indian collection, it will also promote the interests of the institutions (the British Museum included) with which the Indian Museum is in communication.

5. We now understand from the letter of Mr. Maskelyne, which accompanied your despatch under acknowledgment, that the Trustees of the British Museum object to the construction that has been placed on the orders of 1863, and claim to have possession, not of fragments of falls, but of entire meteorites, from which they offer to supply the Calcutta Museum with properly-cut specimens.

6. We have consulted the Superintendent of the Geological Survey, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and the Trustees of the Indian Museum, on this application; and we enclose for your information the replies we have received from these authorities. They are unanimous in their opposition to the claim made by the Trustees of the British Museum, and we are of opinion that the grounds on which they base their opposition are unavailable.

7. As explained in these papers, every scientific and useful object will be attained if the British Museum possesses a specimen of each considerable meteorite which comes into the possession of Government and its officers, together with an exact model of the original, and full particulars as to the date and circumstances of the fall. These will continue to be supplied as heretofore. The Indian Museum, however, is, we consider, the fittest repository for Indian meteorites, and we believe that the interests of science generally, and of the British Museum itself, will be best met by the maintenance of the existing system. And we object to the claim of the British Museum to the possession of greater privileges in this respect than it already enjoys.

8. As explained in these papers, every scientific and useful object will be attained if the British Museum possesses a specimen of each considerable meteorite which comes into the possession of Government and its officers, together with an exact model of the original, and full particulars as to the date and circumstances of the fall. These will continue to be supplied as heretofore. The Indian Museum, however, is, we consider, the fittest repository for Indian meteorites, and we believe that the interests of science generally, and of the British Museum itself, will be best met by the maintenance of the existing system. And we object to the claim of the British Museum to the possession of greater privileges in this respect than it already enjoys.

Extracts of a communication from Dr. Oldham, Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department; dated Calcutta, 23rd December 1867, No. 813.

Para 1. On resuming charge of this office after a temporary absence, my attention was directed to your letter, No. 5284, dated 8th October 1867, giving cover to a despatch from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State, (No. 103, Public, 1867, 9th August,) regarding the disposal of specimens of aerolites obtainable in British India.

2. Mr H. B. Medlicott, who acted for me during my absence, has already (this office letter, No. 743, dated 21st October 1867) fully and satisfactorily met the request for an expression of the views of this department on the matter, and I should have been quite content to leave the question as it stands, but that the statements in the papers submitted with your letter, affecting myself personally, call for further remark.

3. I have, in the first place, to submit that a reference to the original despatch (No. 14 of 9th February 1863) will show that the Principal Librarian, as well as the Keeper of the Mineralogical Department of the British Museum, are both in error in stating that any "order" was ever issued for the transmission of aerolites to the British Museum. That despatch simply requests that "the Government of India will render any assistance that may be practicable to enable the Trustees of the British Museum to carry out their intention," namely, to "increase and render, as complete as possible, the fine collection of aerolites now in the Museum." This request, which was justly left the entire arrangements completely in the hands of the Government in India, has since then—as it had already been long before this despatch was received—been most fully, most unhesitatingly, and most effectively complied with.

4. I have also to state that the Keeper of the Minerals in the British Museum had his attention specially directed to these facts by myself before he penned the report now submitted.

7. But seeing that there might be some question as to the retention of the despatch of February 9th, 1863, I myself brought the matter to the consideration of the Governor General in Council by my letter, No. 484, July 3rd, 1866, and, in consequence, after full consideration of the matter, the Governor General in Council stated that "he considered the course suggested in Dr. Oldham's 7th paragraph should be generally adopted." This was that all falls of acrolites, together with the papers relating to them, should, in the first instance, be forwarded to the Museum, Calcutta, and at the same time that orders should be given to the Director of that Museum that specimens of all such falls should be forwarded, without unnecessary delay, to the British Museum, with all particulars as to date of fall, &c. The "Trustees of the Indian Museum" having meanwhile been appointed, were most properly substituted for the Director of the Geological Museum, but, in all other respects, the order was as I had suggested.

8. This statement of facts will show that no orders of the kind supposed had ever been issued, and that these orders have, therefore, never been "superadded" at home or "neglected at Calcutta." It will also show how utterly unlikely it is that I would, or could, have acknowledged to Mr. Maskelyne that there ever had been any orders to the effect he states, and I can only repeat that I never, directly or indirectly, acknowledged anything of the kind. Mr. Maskelyne's memory is equally treacherous as to other points. I have proved what the so-called "modification" of the arrangements had been, viz., the substitution of a scientific body for the ordinary office routine as the medium of transmission, and that this was (and Mr. Maskelyne was fully informed of this by myself in the plainest terms) the public and official act of the Governor General in India in Council, and not, as is flippantly said, of "any local authority professing to act in the name of the Government, whether it be a Museum or the Geologist at the head of the Indian Survey." The Trustees of the British Museum may rest assured that it is not the habit of either the Trustees of the Indian Museum or of the Superintendent of the Geological Survey in India, to assume to themselves authority which they do not possess, nor to profess to act in the name of Government, or of any one, without full sanction.

9. I have also to add that I did state to Mr. Maskelyne that the Pokhra meteorite had been "stopped in India," not permanently, as he would lead the reader to infer, but until it could be photographed, drawn, and cut. The British Museum was, at the time Mr. Maskelyne wrote, in possession of a specimen of this very fall so "stopped in India."

10. I have also still further to state that, up to date of last transmission of specimens, (beginning of the present year), the British Museum have received good and sufficient specimens of every fall of an acrolite which had in any way come into the hands either of the Indian Museum or of the Geological Survey. (Some more lately received are in preparation for despatch.) That these specimens were sufficient I can state from my own knowledge of such objects, and the truth is incontestably proved by the fact that several of these specimens have afforded Mr. Maskelyne means of distributing portions of them, in exchange to other collections, so far as any scientific purposes are concerned, they have been in every case ample.

11. On the other hand, neither the Indian Museum, Calcutta, nor the Geological Survey, nor the Madras Museum, nor the Bombay Museum, has received from the Keeper of the Mineralogical Department of the British Museum one single fragment of the falls alluded to above, many of which have been sent from India to the British Museum, and of all of which specimens have been promised by Mr. Maskelyne in several correspondence. These falls were—

Akshapat, 1838	3	lbs	7	oz.
Bastar, (two specimens), 1852	3		9	
Kollur, Madras, 1852	24		12	
Parvathur, Madras, 1855	134		0	
Sidwara, (two specimens), 1855	7		14	
Jambhor, (Bombay), 1866	0		0	426 grs.

12. With the exception of this last it will be seen that all these are very large masses, and it will be impossible to maintain that good and even large representations of any and all of

them could not have been given to the Indian Museum without in the slightest degree interfering practically with the value of the specimens. That this was the case is again proved by the fact that, of several of these, specimens may be seen in most of the larger collections of meteorites in Europe, &c., while India, from which the originals were derived, has been left with out any. Besides these falls many others have been given to the British Museum for which the donors in India have received nothing in return, although the advantages of exchange have been constantly urged as an inducement to sending these acrolites.

13. The natural pride which an Englishman feels in promoting the interests of the great national collections in London would itself have led to placing the British Museum first (as it has always been) on the list of those institutions to which specimens should be sent, and in every case that Museum have received (where two or more have been given) a better specimen than has been given to any other collection. I have, therefore, to submit that all the just and equitable claims of the Trustees of the British Museum have been promptly, liberally, and effectively met from India.

14. But I would venture to suggest to the Trustees to consider how long such liberality is likely to be continued if it be not reciprocated.

15. It is proper at the same time to solicit the consideration of Government to the wide, and, indeed, unlimitedly wide application of such a principle as Mr. Maskelyne endeavours to establish. If there be any good grounds for depriving Indian collections and Indian students of those rarities, especially interesting in India, because Indian, the same grounds would exist for the Government ordering the despatch to the British Museum of all or any other specimens which any of the keepers of that institution might desire, which orders would be simply tantamount to ordering the cessation of all study or intellectual progress in this country. However, as the same principle of demanding the despatch of such things would equally, or rather more forcibly apply to all the collections now held in Government institutions in other parts of the United Kingdom, (Scotland, Ireland, &c.,) it might be well to test its applicability, in the first instance, to those collections nearer home.

16. With reference to Professor Owen's endorsement of the report of his subordinate, I have to state that, subsequently to that date, I had the opportunity of making Professor Owen acquainted with the facts of the case; and I would also state that conversations on this matter with some of the Trustees of the British Museum convinced me that, had they been aware of the real bearing of the question, the matter would not have received their sanction, at least without much fuller consideration. In reality, the claim now set up is so entirely opposed to the sound spirit in which Professor Owen himself has frequently sought for aid from Foreign or Colonial Governments or public bodies in matters connected with his own immediate pursuits, and so utterly subversive of the true freedom of scientific inquiry which has generally characterized the acts of the distinguished body of Trustees of the British Museum, that I feel fully persuaded such acts, had it been clearly explained at the time, would never have received the sanction of a claim, had it been clearly explained at the time, would never have received the sanction of either the Director of the Natural History Department nor of the Trustees of the British Museum. They may be quite assured that any "evil which may befall" the glorious collections under their charge will not arise from their fellow-workers in India.

17. I most entirely support Mr. Maskelyne's views as to the importance of maintaining and adding to the collection of the British Museum. On every occasion on which I had personally the opportunity of doing so, I have contributed to that series. I gave to Mr. Maskelyne a specimen of a fall, which (with the exception of about two grains, which I have here, scarcely worth exhibiting, as I believe, entirely unique, (Kumali, Kumoon), and for which I could readily have obtained valuable exchange elsewhere. But for the same reason which Mr. Maskelyne urges for improving the collection in London, I believe that, as standard, a series of such objects as can be procured ought to be maintained in each great centre of mineralogical collections. Nor is it, where it is possible to avoid it, in

any way desirable that such specimens should be contained only in one collection, by no means free from accidents or fire, which may result in the destruction or loss of each single specimen.

21. I have in the preceding observations replied to the papers sent to me. I would add a few words on the question in the abstract.

22. I have to submit, then, that no such order as is sought could be issued with justice; and, if issued, it could not be enforced. The specimens referred to are not Government property; there is no law of "treasure-trove" in aerolites; they become the property of the finder, or of the person on whose ground they fall; and although Government influence may be, and has been, most properly and justly used to procure for safe keeping such specimens, there is, so far as I know, no law and no principle of justice which could compel their being given up. Further, even if issued, the experience of centuries in similar cases shows how easily such an order is evaded or neglected, and how essential it has been, if desirous of securing such objects, to purchase them at their full value, even though they were, by law, "treasure-trove." Even in this country already experience has shown that individuals have kept, and will keep, such specimens, regardless of any supposed order which they well know cannot be enforced.

23. But, independently of the uselessness of such "orders" if issued, they would be most impolitic, and would certainly defeat their own end. Mr. Medhurst, in his letter already referred to, has very clearly pointed out this, and shows that the common object of all being to secure the best and fullest series of these interesting bodies, this can only be satisfactorily effected by eliciting the interest and exciting the attention of the public through some local but influential body, themselves interested in such inquiries, while any attempt to force such collections, and ~~also~~ especially for a Museum in another country, has had, and must continue to have, the effect of preventing them. To give practical evidence of this, I have twice in this country had specimens of meteorites given to me, with an express stipulation that no part of them should leave India. I have on both occasions urged on the donors the high importance of extending the knowledge of such bodies by the distribution of specimens, and in both cases I succeeded in getting permission to have this done. But unless I had done this, both these specimens would probably have been lost to science, but would most certainly have never reached the British Museum; nor were these the only instances in which a very natural jealousy as to allowing Indian specimens to be sent out of India has been shown.

25. In conclusion, I have to express my regret that I have been compelled to write as I have done in the interest of truth. More recent transactions have, I should hope, convinced Professor Owen as well as the Trustees of the British Museum, that, so far from having any desire to impede their anxious and most praiseworthy exertions to improve the national collections, I have willingly, and even at what I know to have been a considerable sacrifice, done much to aid them, and have placed with them most valuable and unique fossils, because those fossils were classical in the history of European geology and I believed that the national collection of England was the fitting depository of such things. I hope also they will be fully satisfied that their best interests in the matter of aerolites have been consulted in India. They may be assured that the desire to aid the British Museum is based on a far deeper and sounder foundation than any orders or demands of individuals, and this desire is, therefore, not likely, so long as that Museum is conducted for the benefits of science, to be diminished, or even affected, by any unintentional in the manner of urging such demands by their officers. The Trustees must be aware that the most valuable contribution which their collection of aerolites ever received was sent from India long before their application to the Secretary of State in 1868, and that this contribution was sent, not in accordance with any supposed orders, which would have been regarded as an unjust interference with private and individual rights, but from a disinterested wish to improve the national collection, a feeling much more likely to be strengthened than weakened by the progress of knowledge here. I trust also that they will see that the true aim of their collections will be infinitely better advanced by eliciting the cordial co-operation of fellow-countrymen in this country by that all-powerful bond of mutual interest, rather than by any attempt of

impracticable orders of domineering demands. I would also hope that they will see that the simplest justice would require that, before any further or larger contributions were sought from India, the promises (now of many years' standing in some cases) of return of specimens of Indian aerolites now in their possession should be fully filled. ●

From the Government of India, to the Secretary of State for India; dated Fort William, 17th January 1869, No. 18.

In continuation of our despatch, No. 10, dated the 11th instant, we transmit herewith extracts of a communication* from Dr. Oldham, Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, on the subject of the claim of the British Museum to the possession of Indian aerolites.

* L. M. S. dated the 22nd December 1867.

From the Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor General of India in Council; dated India Office, London, 7th May 1868, No. 15.

I have had under my consideration in Council the despatches of your Excellency in Council, Nos. 10 and 15 of the present year, dated respectively the 11th and 17th of January last, regarding the supply to the British Museum of aerolites obtainable in India.

2. I forwarded these despatches and their respective enclosures for the information of the Trustees of the Museum, together with the expression of my approval of the arrangements proposed to be sanctioned by your Government in this matter. I now transmit, for the information of your Excellency in Council and for communication to the authorities concerned, a copy of the reply addressed to this office on the 9th ultimo by desire of the Trustees.

3. With reference to the delays in the transmission of specimens to India stated by Mr. Maskelyne to be in great part caused by the difficulty of finding opportunities for sending them out, I have informed the Trustees that, whenever they may desire to forward any such through the medium of this department, every facility will be afforded for their safe custody and transit out the Cape.

From J. W. JONES, Esq., to the Secretary of State for India; dated 9th April 1868.

I have had the honour of laying before the Trustees of the British Museum the letter which, by your direction, Lord Clinton addressed to me on the 13th ultimo, together with the copies which accompanied it of two despatches from the Government of India, with enclosures, on the subject of aerolites obtainable in Her Majesty's dominions in India. Lord Clinton states that you concur in the views expressed in the despatches from the Government of India, and that you approve the arrangements which it is proposed to make for supplying specimens and models of considerable Indian meteorites to the British Museum.

In tendering to you the thanks of the Trustees for this communication, and for the efforts made by the Government to carry out the wishes of the Trustees, I am to acquaint you that specimens of meteorites in the possession of the Trustees will be transmitted to the Indian Museum as agreed upon, and to express the hope of the Trustees that the authorities in India will reciprocate their efforts to act in this matter in such a way as shall best promote the interests of both Museums and the objects for which the Museums exist.

The Trustees feel assured that whatever differences of opinion may have arisen between Dr. Oldham and Mr. Maskelyne, both these gentlemen are actuated solely by a desire to advance the interests of science, and that any change which may have taken place in the arrangements originally contemplated has been produced by a change of circumstances. There are points, however, on which Mr. Maskelyne's explanations ought, in justice to that gentleman, to be given, namely, the delay in the transmission of specimens to India, and the interruption of arrangements between Dr. Oldham and Mr. Maskelyne. Dr. Oldham complains that due return has not been made to the Indian Museum for the specimens which have been sent to the British Museum, and he refers especially to certain falls. Mr. Maskelyne replies, in reply, that though it may be easy for Dr. Oldham, who is a resident in Calcutta, to send over small parcels to London,

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
10th June 1869.*

as he is sure to know many persons coming to England, yet it is very difficult for the Keeper of Minerals in the British Museum to do likewise, as he knows very few persons indeed who are proceeding to Calcutta, and that consequently he has waited until he should be able to send by hand several specimens at one time; but, with reference to the particular cases alluded to by Dr Oldham, Mr. Maskelyne says that "the delay was prolonged by two other causes,—first, in the year 1843, Dr. Oldham purchased the collection of meteorites formed in England by Mr. Greg; and second, in the year 1866, Dr. Oldham told Mr. Maskelyne he had succeeded in getting the two Museums at Calcutta merged in one. The collection of Mr. Greg consisted chiefly of small hand specimens, but was remarkable for the number of falls it represented. The greater number of specimens had passed through Mr. Maskelyne's hands while he was aiding Mr. Greg to form it, and in turn the Museum received a number of valuable additions from Mr. Greg. The possession of this collection by Calcutta was calculated to derange Mr. Maskelyne's previous arrangements for exchange by its adding to their series Indian meteorites that before they had not, while it also contained some specimens wanting in the British Museum, and for which Mr. Maskelyne was in treaty with Mr. Greg at the time of the transaction." Mr. Maskelyne further states that, in consideration of the changes in the collection under Dr. Oldham's charge, consequent upon the acquisition of the Greg collection and the merging of the two Calcutta Museums into one, he had prepared a list of desiderata for the British Museum from the Indian collection, and also a list of the specimens in the British Museum collection which he intended to recommend to the Trustees for transmission to Calcutta, and which he believed the Calcutta Museum would, under its altered circumstances, find more satisfactory than any list previously could have been; that he sent this list to Dr. Oldham, but received no answer to this new proposal. Mr. Maskelyne, however, proceeds to say that, excepting Dr. Oldham in England, he "had not attached any importance to the affair not being concluded, as he looked forward to an opportunity of carrying out the transaction on a complete and liberal scale, satisfactory to all, and he always held that language to Dr. Oldham. He furthermore kept in reserve the most rare and valuable of the duplicates here for this very purpose."

Mr. Maskelyne concludes his remarks by observing that "Dr. Oldham had never acted otherwise than in accordance with the spirit of the instructions issued by the Secretary of State for India."

No. 2703.

Copy of this despatch, and of its enclosure, forwarded to the Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, in continuation of this department communication, No. 159, dated the 11th January 1868.

No. 2704.3.

Copy of the despatch, and of its enclosure, forwarded to the Asiatic Society of Bengal and to the Honorary Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the Indian Museum, in continuation of endorsement letter, No. 158-159, dated 11th January 1868.

(By Order of the Governor General in Council)

HOME DEPARTMENT,

SEALS,

23 June 1868

(Signed) J. GREGGHEGAN,
Under Secy to the Govt of India

No. 54

ORDER THEREON, 10th June 1869, No. 782

These instructions will be kept in view

(True Extract).

To the Board of Revenue,
Sd/- A. S. Budge.

Acty Secy to Govt.

GOVT. OF MISSOURI

PUBLIC.

June 1904.

U. S. 1044 Jan. 1899, No. 782

JUNE.

No. 63-54.

Printing that the instructions of the Governor
of Illinois that all public monies should
be paid by check to the Treasurer of the
State. More is a reference to reading it as
to being and kept in view

Court of 11-6-63 Madras.

Public.

Date: *June 10*

Read.

O. O. P. Chinn

1-6-63 782

No. 57. 26

Directing that the instructions of the
Govt of India, that all Indian
documents should, in future, be
transmitted to the Trustees of the
Indian Museum, in preference
to sending them direct to England,
be kept in view.