

THE PALÆONTOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

SIR,—By the publication of the Council's Report in your last Number, the attention of your readers is once more drawn to the Palæontographical Society, and its need of a larger number of members in order to find the necessary funds for carrying on its excellent work.

I think I shall be doing the Society a service if I briefly point out some facts which may partly account for the falling off in the number of its members. The Council regret that "geologists in general" do not more readily enroll themselves as members, and they remark that since the formation of the Society, many free libraries, local geological societies, and field clubs have been established, "but that the number of these institutions that have joined the Society is very small."

I venture to think that one reason of this backwardness may be a feeling that the subjects of the Monographs issued by the Society are not always of general geological interest, and that many of them are not such as would be practically useful to the members of local societies.

It is said that a guinea a year is very little to pay for such a splendid series of books, and so it is; but if the intending subscriber feels that half the contents of the volumes are not likely to be of use to him (or to the society he represents), he is apt to think that the money could be more usefully spent in other ways, or perhaps he purchases second-hand copies of those monographs which he does find are frequently wanted, such as Davidson's *Brachiopoda*, Wright's *Echinoderms and Ammonites*, Wood's *Crag Mollusca*, etc., etc.

I feel a difficulty in expressing my meaning more plainly without appearing to depreciate the value of many excellent and valuable monographs which have been published by the Society; but every one admits that there are certain classes of fossils which are of great practical use to the geologist, and that there are others which are of much less geological importance, though biologically they may be equally interesting. In the first category we place the *Mollusca*, *Brachiopoda*, *Echinodermata*, *Corals*, and certain orders of *Crustacea*; among the less useful we must class *Plants*, *Sponges*, *Cirripeds*, *Entomostraca*, *Polyzoa*, *Insects*, *Fishes*, *Reptiles*, *Birds*, and *Mammals*. This being so, it is surely desirable that prominence should be given to the more important groups, and until these have been fully described and figured, very little space should be given to those of less general value; particularly should the delineation of large Vertebrate remains be postponed in favour of the Invertebrate fossils, which occupy so much less space, and a knowledge of which is so much more generally useful.

I know that there are difficulties in the way of applying these principles, and probably the Council would not consider themselves justified in refusing an offered monograph because it deals with one of the less geologically important classes, but I think they should have regard to the effect which the publication of such monographs may have on intending subscribers. Let us consider the monographs

in the recently issued volume for 1886. I imagine there are very few *general geologists* who desire to possess 15 plates of one species of plant, however curious and interesting that plant may be. Again, the appearance of seven plates devoted to the horns of Deer is not likely to be welcomed by any but a few experts. These 22 plates would have illustrated 50 or 100 species of Mollusca, and there are many hundreds of such fossils awaiting illustration.

Why are the Mollusca so neglected? It is true that in this volume we have the first parts of two memoirs on Jurassic Mollusca, but one of these parts is wholly taken up with stratigraphical details which, though unquestionably useful, might perhaps have been condensed or printed elsewhere; this, however is a minor point, and every one will welcome Mr. Hudleston's Monograph. Cannot the Council induce other palæontologists to prepare similar monographs on the *Cephalopoda*, *Gasteropoda*, and *Pelecypoda* of the Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian, Carboniferous, Cretaceous, Eocene, and Oligocene formations?

I can testify that the synonymy of some of the commonest Chalk fossils is in the utmost confusion; and that Monographs of the Cretaceous Mollusca would be welcomed by many amateur and professional geologists. When will Mr. Wiltshire give us his promised contribution? I feel sure that if this and other Molluscan Monographs were produced, and if those relating to fossil plants and bones were deferred, the publications of the Society would be used by a much larger number of persons, and consequently that many more geologists and local institutions would decide to become subscribers.

HARWELL, BERKS, August 5.

A. J. JUKES-BROWNE.

THE GLACIAL DEPOSITS OF SUDBURY, SUFFOLK.

SIR,—I owe an apology to Mr. Jukes-Browne for having omitted any reference to the action of coast-ice in my paper upon the Glacial Deposits of Sudbury in the June Number of the *MAGAZINE* (pp. 262-270). In considering the suggestions made to account for the contortion of drift deposits, I should have mentioned the grounding of true or false icebergs, or of *coast-ice*. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the arguments I brought forward against the contortion having been produced by icebergs apply equally to the case of coast-ice.

Unless we are prepared to admit that the drifts were actually frozen into the coast-ice at the time that the contortion was produced in them (and I fail to see how such could be the case, considering the uniformity of succession and characters of the drift over a considerable area), we must suppose that they were deposited on the sea-floor before the exertion of pressure by this ice. If so, it is difficult to see why the drifts were not frozen as well as the underlying Tertiary rocks, for these drifts are of some thickness, and considerable time must have elapsed during their formation. If they were so frozen, the Tertiary beds ought to be affected in the same manner as the drifts, which is not the case.