

Trusting that these proposals will meet with the approval of your council,

I am, dear sir,
Yours faithfully and obediently,
(Signed) P. L. SCLATER,
Secretary.

January 21, 1893

(COPY.)

From the Geological Society, Burlington House, W.

DEAR SIR.—Your communication, dated January 21, 1893, was this day submitted to the council of the Geological Society, and I was asked by the council to inform you that they regretted that they were unable, in the present state of the Society's income, to recommend to the Fellows of the Geological Society an increase of expenditure such as would be necessitated by acceding to your request that a grant of one hundred pounds should be made to aid the publication of the *Zoological Record*.

Whilst regretting their inability to comply with your request, the council thank you for the conditional offer which accompanied it.

I am, dear sir,
Yours faithfully and obediently,
(Signed) JOHN E. MARR,
Secretary.

February 22, 1893.

The Proposed Continuous Polar Exploration.

YOUR excellent summary of the proposed continuous Polar exploration (November 2, p. 18) conveys a wrong impression in its closing sentence. The system may in the future assume large proportions; but the *beginning*, to be made next year, *will be very small*. It will consist merely in the establishment of the principal station at the south-east angle of Ellesmere Land, and 80 days' exploration along the west coast of that land. At most, an advanced depôt, erected some 100 miles farther west, may be so fitted out as to serve at once as a secondary station. It is not easy to see why this work should be postponed till Peary and Nansen have returned. Their fields are far from ours, and their results can shed no light on the area west of Ellesmere Land. As well might you say that the exploration of the Mediterranean should not be begun until that of the Baltic was completed.

As you say, the possibility of continuous Polar exploration is not demonstrated. There can be no doubt, however, of the value of a permanent station at the entrance of Jones Sound, nor of the practicability of its maintenance, so long as the whalers continue to visit that region. How far exploration may be carried with that station as a base, it is impossible to foretell, but at any rate the existence of a secure base will be an advantage possessed by no previous expedition in that direction, and, in the words of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," will "make disaster on a large scale, humanly speaking, impossible."

U.S. Geological Survey.

ROBERT STEIN.

On the Classification of the Tracheate Arthropoda.— A Correction.

IN No. 423 of the *Zoologische Anzeiger* (1893) I ventured to propose a new classification of the Tracheata, including under this heading those Arthropoda that are usually known as myriopods and insects. The principal changes suggested were the abolition of the name Myriopoda as indicating an unnatural assemblage of beings and the union of the *Chilopoda*, *Symphyla*, and *Hexapoda* in a division (Opisthogoneata), which was based upon the situation of the generative apertures at the hinder end of the body. But in referring the *Symphyla* to this category by adopting the assertions of Menge and Latzel respecting the position of the orifices in question, it appears that I fell into error; for Dr. Erich Haase has kindly written to me from Bangkok, with the information that by means of a series of transverse sections he was able, although with considerable difficulty, to confirm Grassi's statement to the effect that the generative apertures in *Scolopendrella* are situated upon the fourth body-segment. This genus is therefore progoneate, like the *Diplopoda* and *Pauropoda*; but whether it should be ranged with these two classes, or occupy an independent position between the Progoneata and Opisthogoneata, is a question for future discussion.

R. I. POCKOCK.

THE LOSS OF H.M.S. "VICTORIA."¹

II.

WE dealt last week with the circumstances relating to the loss of H.M.S. *Victoria*, and the causes of her sinking with such startling rapidity after she was rammed. The facts, so far as they are known, are fully and, in our opinion, fairly summarised by Mr. W. H. White, in No. 3 of the Admiralty Minutes, just issued; and Mr. White demonstrates clearly, from the results of calculations made in the Construction Department of the Admiralty, that the movements and behaviour of the ship after the accident, and the observed effects upon her line of flotation and her stability, are precisely what would be caused by the entry of water into the compartments at the fore end of the ship, which are known, or believed, to have been filled before she foundered. These calculations serve, therefore, the useful purpose of showing that the water known to have entered those forward compartments that were proved, by evidence given before the Court Martial, to be filled, was quite sufficient to account for the subsequent capsizing and sinking of the ship; and for the capsizing and sinking to happen exactly in the manner that was observed. This is so, as already stated, whether Mr. White be absolutely right or not with regard to the precise state of each separate compartment after the damage; as the evidence is sufficiently conclusive, upon the whole, respecting the various compartments, to reduce the probability of error to a very small amount, such as would not materially affect the practical results of the demonstration.

The Admiralty calculations thus remove all reasonable doubt as to whether the compartments known to have been filled were sufficient in themselves to account for the final disaster; and they make it unnecessary, in order to explain what happened, to speculate as to the probability of the collision having been more far-reaching in its effects upon the structure, or internal arrangements, of the ship than the evidence indicates. The evidence, as it stands, is shown to completely account for the facts; and to furnish a solid basis for investigation, or argument, as to the lessons that may now be learned from the loss of the *Victoria*.

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, in the first of the three Minutes lately issued, dated October 28 last, on the finding of the Court Martial, stated that the question of closing the water-tight doors of the *Victoria*, and the construction and stability of the ship, would be dealt with separately. Their lordships accordingly issued the second Minute, dated October 30. This Minute states that, in consequence of the Court Martial finding "that it does not feel itself called upon, nor does it feel itself competent, to express an opinion as to the causes of the capsizing of the *Victoria*," their lordships instructed the Director of Naval Construction to make a thorough examination and analysis of those parts of the evidence which throw light on these points. The report prepared by Mr. White, in accordance with these instructions—No. 3 of the present Minutes—was dealt with in our article of last week; but we then left over for subsequent consideration the references made in the Minutes to the lessons taught by the various circumstances of the case.

These points being dealt with authoritatively in the second Admiralty Minute, dated October 30, we shall deal principally with that Minute in the following remarks. It commences by adopting the figures and the conclusions stated in Mr. White's report with regard to the nature of the blow received by the *Victoria*, the after movements and behaviour of the ship, the extent to which water found access into her, and the effect of such water upon her flotation and stability. We have nothing

¹ Continued from p. 103.