

cedence of all others; and where several are in other respects (or are assumed to be) of equal importance, priority of incorporation is a reasonable ground of distinction.' Furthermore, 'it must not be supposed that a society is less entitled to the designation "learned" because the researches of its members are occasionally or permanently connected with professional or semi-professional subjects.'<sup>1</sup>

With regard to Fellows or members, the official title depends on the designation in the Charter: thus the original members of the Geological Society were transformed into Fellows, and the title F.G.S. came to be used. In the case of the Royal Irish Academy the term members was retained, with the title M.R.I.A.

The ingenious inventor of the calculating machine made some elaborate researches on the custom of attaching certain letters to the names of those who belong to different societies, and concluded :

Thus those who are ambitious of scientific distinction may, according to their fancy, render their name a kind of comet, carrying with it a tail of upwards of forty letters, at the average cost of 10*l.* 9*s.* 9½*d.* per letter.<sup>2</sup>

Of those more immediately associated with the Charter, it should be mentioned that

Joseph Fitzwilliam Vandercom (of Bush Lane, Cannon Street), whose death was recorded by Wm. Hopkins in 1852, was one whose legal ability and experience were generously placed at the disposal of the Society; and 'it was through his instrumentality that we were enabled to obtain from the Crown a charter of incorporation less complex in its details and more liberal in its provisions than had previously been granted to any other scientific institution.'

John Bostock, M.D. (1773-1846), was educated at Edinburgh, where he graduated M.D. in 1798; he settled as a medical man in his native city, Liverpool, for some years, and came to London in 1817. He then gave up

<sup>1</sup> 'The Learned Societies and Printing Clubs of the United Kingdom,' by the Rev. Dr. Abraham Hume, 1847, with Supp. 1853.

<sup>2</sup> C. Babbage, 'Reflections on the Decline of Science in England,' 1830, p. 43.