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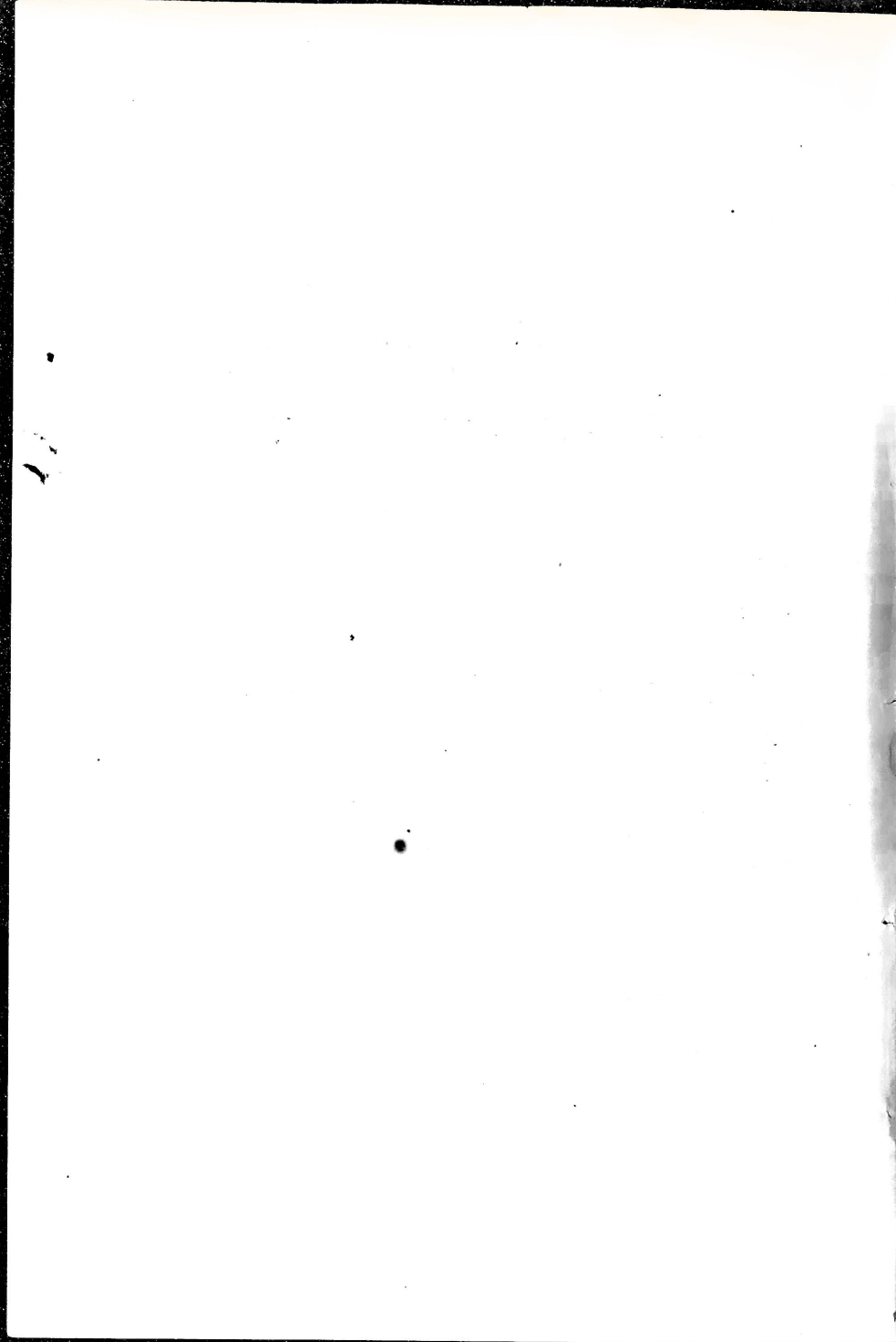
LONDON
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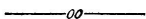
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1866—67.



PROSPECTUS.



THAT Truth is of all things the most to be desired, and that it is best elicited by the conflict of opposing opinions, are propositions on which all philosophers are agreed, and which need only be enunciated to command universal assent.

Influenced by these considerations, and actuated by the desire of giving them effect, several gentlemen of various tastes, literary, scientific, and philosophical, thought that a Society instituted for the purpose of interchange of opinion on all subjects of interest, would be to a certain extent a novelty, and would meet with favorable support.

They were aware that there already existed numerous Debating Societies, where mere surface-questions were argued, (chiefly for the purpose of obtaining practice in speaking,) and where subjects held to be of the highest importance were prohibited from being discussed at all; but there did not appear to be a Society for the philosophical

treatment of *all* questions, especially those which lie at the root of the differences of opinion which divide mankind,—such questions, for instance, as are comprised in the domain of Ethics, Metaphysics, and Theology.

It was designed, therefore, to establish not a mere Debating Society, or Discussion Class, but an Association with higher and more philosophical aims.

It appeared to the Founders, that for a Society of this kind to be successful, Sectarianism of every description must be rigidly excluded,—all distinction founded upon social condition, occupation, and the like, disregarded—and the only recognised qualifications for Membership be an unstained character, and a genuine desire for the promotion of the objects of the Society.

It was manifest, too, as an essential condition of success—being, indeed, the fundamental principle of the Society, that the most absolute freedom of debate should be permitted ;—that no subject whatever should be excluded on any ground save that of its triviality, and that the restrictions and reservations which obtain in ordinary Debating Societies should have no place here.

A meeting of the Founders was subsequently held, at which, after due deliberation, the following Resolution was unanimously carried :—“ That
 “ in the opinion of this meeting, it is desirable that
 “ a Philosophical Association be formed for the
 “ discovery and elucidation of truth, upon all sub-
 “ jects, by means of argument and discussion.”

The first question to be considered was the name by which the Society should be known ; and with reference to the title adopted, the following remarks by Professor Bain, in his essay on Early Philosophy, may not be out of place :—

“ The essence of the Dialectic Method is to place
 “ side by side, with every doctrine and its reasons,
 “ all opposing doctrines and their reasons, allow-
 “ ing these to be stated in full by the persons
 “ holding them. No doctrine is to be held as ex-
 “ pounded, far less proved, unless it stands in
 “ parallel array to every other counter-theory, with
 “ all that can be said for each. For a short time
 “ this system was actually, maintained and prac-
 “ tised ; but the execution of Sokrates gave it its
 “ first check, and the natural intolerance of man-
 “ kind rendered its continuance impossible. Since
 “ the Reformation, struggles have been made to

“ regain for the discussion of questions generally,
 “ —philosophical, political, moral, and religious,
 “ the two-sided procedure of the law-courts, and
 “ perhaps never more strenuously than now.”

Let the London Dialectical Society, then, encourage and practise the method of teaching implied by its title : let us remember that

“ Through mutual intercourse and mutual aid,
 “ Great deeds are done, and great discoveries made,
 “ The wise new wisdom on the wise bestow,
 “ Whilst the lone thinker’s thoughts come slight and slow.”

Let us emulate the example of the great Athenian philosopher of antiquity, the aim of whose existence was the demonstration of Reasoned Truth, and the exposure of the errors and fallacies of his age,—who, absolutely regardless of all consequences, passed his life in the bold enunciation of the truth, and voluntarily and cheerfully forfeited it in its defence,—whose virtue, courage, and wisdom have earned for him the veneration of posterity.

The Founders of the Society are aware of the difficulties to be encountered. They know that a Society of individuals proposing to discuss every subject, without the slightest reserve, will necessarily incur considerable obloquy, and be the ob-

ject of much depreciatory remark and prophetic denunciation. It will rest with the Members to prove by their conduct in debate, that these unfavorable comments and gloomy forebodings were based upon an erroneous conception of the principles upon which the proceedings of the Association are to be conducted.

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It is hardly necessary to express a hope that Members will not consume the time of both themselves and others by the consideration of questions of frivolous import or vexatious triviality. It was proposed, indeed, to meet the difficulty by a Law, empowering the Council to exercise some kind of censorship ; but it was thought better to leave the

matter to the good sense of the whole body of Members, in the full confidence that any attempt at trifling would be promptly and efficiently checked.

To conclude : the London Dialectical Society will have effected much good, if, by its means, persons are made to feel that to profess a belief on a disputed question with regard to which they refuse to examine the evidence, is an act altogether unworthy of a rational being ; and that the only method of arriving at truth is by submitting one's opinions to the test of unsparing and adverse criticism. Freedom of speech and thought are, not less than personal freedom, the natural birthright of all mankind. To refrain from uttering opinions because they are unpopular, betokens a certain amount of moral cowardice, — engendered by long-continued persecution. To state fearlessly the truth, or what we believe to be the truth, even though it be held only by a few, is the act of all who consider the exercise of private judgment a right, and the extension of human knowledge a duty. But society generally has not yet reached such a stage of progress, as to allow individuals to give expression to their honest and deliberate convictions, without inflicting upon them penalties more or less

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“ They are Slaves who will not choose
 “ Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
 “ Rather than in silence shrink
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 “ In the right with two or three.”

Let us be mindful of the fact, that throughout the whole history of the world, the voice of Authority has constantly opposed new truths ; and, with an earnest desire both to learn and teach, let us zealously follow the practice of Dialectics, unaffected by the praises of some, undeterred by the denunciations of others, but conscious of honesty and purity of motive, and desirous for the wisdom and happiness of Man.

RULES.

— oo —

I.—That the Society be called “THE LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY.”

II.—That the object of the Society be the philosophical consideration of all subjects, with a view to the discovery and elucidation of truth.

III.—That the Society consist of a President, Vice-Presidents, and Members.

IV.—That the government of the Society be vested in a council of nine, consisting of the Secretary, the Treasurer, and seven other Members; three to be a quorum.

V.—That the Council be elected by Ballot annually.

VI.—That vacancies occurring in the Council be provisionally filled up by the remaining Members of the Council.

VII.—That the President and Vice-Presidents be elected by the Council, and that they enjoy all the privileges of ordinary Members.

VIII.—That on and after the 1st of January, 1867, persons desirous of becoming Members of the Society, having filled up a form of application, to be obtained of the Secretary (of which the annexed is a copy,) be proposed and seconded at an ordinary Meeting, and balloted for at the following Meeting, one black ball in six to exclude; and that any one thus excluded be not again proposed for a period of three months.

FORM OF APPLICATION.

Having read the Prospectus and Rules of the LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY, I beg to express my cordial approval of its object and the principles on which it is founded, as therein set forth; and being desirous of becoming a Member, request that my name be placed on the List of Candidates for admission.

Signed _____

Address _____

Date _____

Proposed by _____

Seconded by _____

IX.—That two ordinary Meetings of the Society be held in each month, except the months of August and September ; but that the Council have the power to appoint any additional Meeting, and fix the day for an adjourned ordinary Meeting.

X.—That Members be entitled to introduce personally a friend each at the ordinary Meetings, whose names shall be entered, together with the names of the Members introducing them, in a book kept for that purpose; such Visitors not to take part in the discussion, without permission of the Chairman.

XI.—That on the written requisition of twelve Members, the Council call a Special General Meeting to consider any question with reference to the affairs of the Society, and that at such Meeting no other business but that stated in the requisition be considered.

XII.—That no Rule be made or altered without the consent of three-fourths of the Members present at the Special General Meeting called to consider the proposed alteration.

XIII.—That the Secretary send to each Member of the Council due notice of each Council Meet-

ing ; and to each Member of the Society due notice of the Annual, and of every Special Meeting ; in each case stating the object for which the Meeting has been called.

XIV.—That a Balance-sheet and Report be drawn up by the Council, and presented at the Annual General Meeting.

XV.—That at the ordinary Meetings, no vote be taken with reference to the subject of the Paper read, or discussion which may have taken place.

XVI.—That the Secretary keep Minutes of each Meeting ; such Minutes to consist of a short summary of the Paper read, together with the Debate thereon, and also any other proceedings which may have taken place.

XVII.—That the Papers read before the Society, or a copy of them, be delivered to the Secretary, and become the property of the Society ; but that no Paper be published without the consent of its Author.

XVIII.—That the subjects proposed for discus-

sion be received, and the order in which they are to be taken arranged, by the Council.

XIX.—That if the conduct of any Member be such as to cast discredit on the Society, or to be detrimental to its interests, a Special General Meeting shall be called by the Council, according to the provisions of Rule XI., at which Meeting the expulsion of such Member may be resolved upon, the conditions of Rule XII. being complied with, and the Vote being taken by Ballot.

XX.—That except where otherwise stated, open Voting be practised.

XXI.—That in the absence of the President, each Meeting elect its own Chairman, whose decision on all matters of order shall be final.

XXII.—That the Annual Subscription be ten shillings and sixpence, payable in advance.

XXIII.—That the Council have the power to make such Bye-laws and other Regulations as from time to time they may deem necessary; but that no Bye-law or Regulation be made inconsistent with the constitution of the Society, as set forth in the Prospectus and fundamental Rules.

XXIV.—That the Council have the power to invite persons of celebrity to read papers, or deliver addresses before the Society.

XXV.—That at the conclusion of each Meeting, the subject to be considered at the following Ordinary Meeting be announced, and that the Secretary make known the subjects, if possible, not less than three months in advance.

BYE-LAWS.

—oo—

I.—That the Session commence on the 1st of October, and terminate on the 31st of July.

II.—That the ordinary Meetings be held at the Rooms of the Society, 32A, George Street, Hanover Square, on the evenings of the first and third Wednesday in each month during the session, and that the proceedings commence at eight o'clock precisely.

III.—That any ordinary Meeting held in the first week of any month, may be adjourned to the night of ordinary Meeting in the third week of that month; such adjourned Meeting to take precedence of all ordinary business of that night.

IV.—That no ordinary Meeting held in the third week of any month be adjourned without special leave previously obtained of the Council.

V.—That no adjourned ordinary Meeting be held in the first week of any month.

Papers and Discussions during the Session

1866—67.

- 1867.
- Jan. 29.—Inaugural Meeting.
- Feb. 5.—“On the Causes of Poverty and Low Wages.”
Dr. DRYSDALE.
- 19.—Adjourned Debate on Dr. Drysdale’s paper.
- Mar. 5.—“On the Laws relating to the Tenure of Land.”
Dr. CHAPMAN.
- 13.—“On the Medical Education of Women.”
Dr. EDMUNDS.
- 20.—Adjourned Debate on Dr. Drysdale’s Paper.
- April 3.—“On the Political Philosophy of Thomas Carlyle.”
Mr. SMITH.
- 17.—“On Utilitarianism, as compared with Theological
or Dogmatic Standards of Morality.”
Dr. DRYSDALE.
- May 1.—“On the Influence of the Inquisition upon Spanish
Literature.”
Mr. CHIDLEY.
- 15.—“On Aggressive War : what are the circumstances
(if any) which justify it?”
Mr. SMITH.
- June 5.—“On Utility,—the ultimate Test of Morality.”
Mr. SHIELDS.
- 19.—“On Waste, politico-economically considered.”
Dr. EDMUNDS.
- July 3.—“On Marriage-Contracts.”
Dr. CHAPMAN.
- 17.—“On the Credibility of Miracles.”
Mr. WARINGTON.

MEMBERS.

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- BENTLEY MCLEOD, Esq., 32, Moorgate Street, E.C.
- B. M. MOSS, Esq., 25, Store Street, Bedford Square, W.C.

LONDON DIALECTICAL
SOCIETY.

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PROF. HUXLEY, F.R.S.

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SYDNEY CHIDLEY, Esq.

AUDITORS.

JAMES H. GOUGH, Esq., B.A.
BENTLEY MCLEOD, Esq., (Messrs. Dyte, McLeod and
Leader, 32, Moorgate Street, E.C.)

I N D E X.

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Prospectus and Rules

OF THE

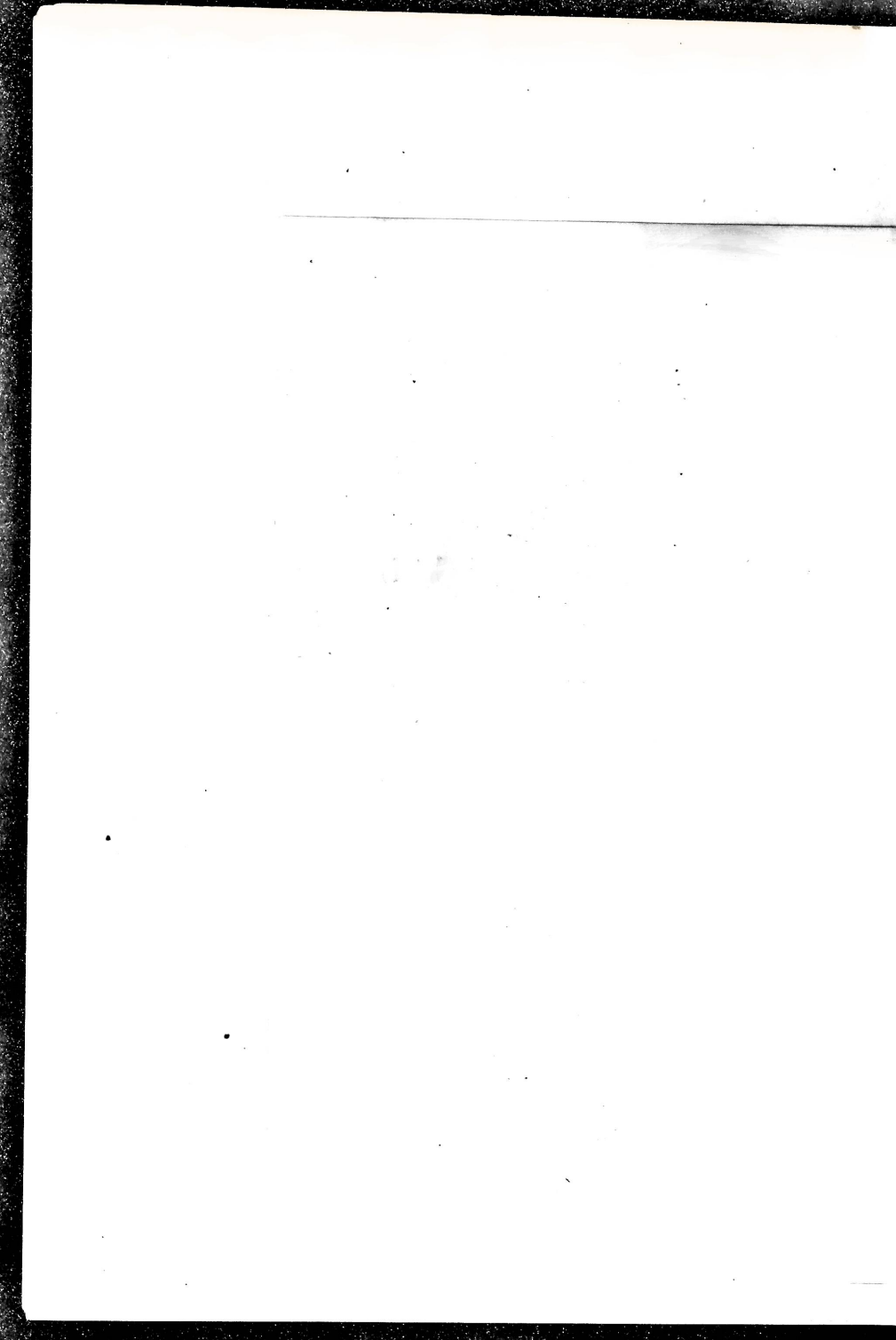
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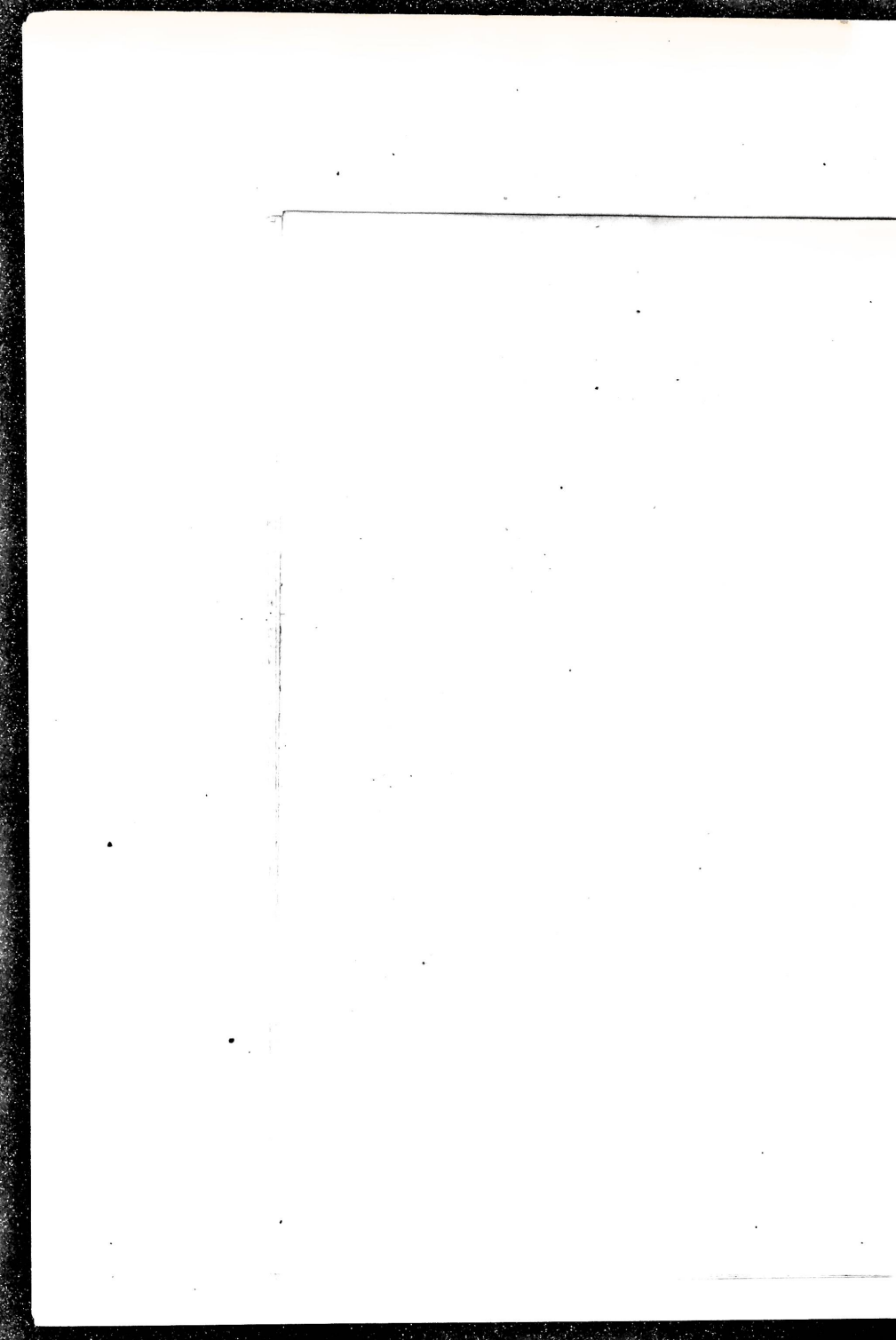
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III.—That the Society consist of a President, Vice-Presidents and Members.

IV.—That the government of the Society be vested in a council of nine, consisting of the Secretary, the Treasurer, and seven other Members; three to be a quorum.

V.—That the Council be elected by Ballot annually.

VI.—That vacancies occurring in the Council be provisionally filled up by the remaining Members of the Council.

VII.—That the President and Vice-Presidents be elected by the Council, and that they enjoy all the privileges of ordinary Members.

VIII.—That on and after the 1st of October 1866, gentlemen desirous of becoming Members of the Society, having filled up a form of application to be obtained of the Secretary (of which the annexed is a copy) be proposed and seconded at an ordinary Meeting, and balloted for at the following Meeting, one black ball in six to exclude; and that a person thus excluded be not again proposed for a period of three months.

FORM OF APPLICATION.

Having read the Prospectus and Rules of the LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY, and cordially approving of its object, I am desirous of becoming a Member, and request that my Name be placed on the List of Candidates for Admission.

Signed _____

Address _____

Date _____

Proposed by _____

Seconded by _____

IX.—That the ordinary Meetings of the Society be held on the evenings of the first and third Tuesday in each month, except the months of August and September; but that the Council have the power to appoint any additional Meeting, and fix the day for an adjourned ordinary meeting.

X.—That each Member be entitled to introduce personally a friend at the ordinary Meetings, whose name shall be announced to the Meeting, and entered, together with the name of the Member introducing him, in a book kept for that purpose; such Visitor not to take part in the discussion.

XI.—That on the written requisition of twelve Members, the Council call a special general Meeting to consider any question with reference to the affairs of the Society, and that at such Meeting no other business but that stated in the requisition be considered.

XII.—That no Rule be made or altered without the consent of three-fourths of the Members present at the special general Meeting called to consider the proposed alteration—at which Meeting not less than one-half of the members of the Society must be present.

XIII.—That the Secretary send to each Member of the Council due notice of each Council Meeting; and to each member of the Society due notice of the Annual, and of every Special Meeting; in each case stating the object for which the Meeting has been called.

XIV.—That a Balance-sheet and Report be drawn up by the Council, and presented at the annual general Meeting.

XV.—That at the ordinary Meetings, no Vote be taken with reference to the subject of the Paper read, or Discussion which may have taken place.

XVI.—That the Secretary keep Minutes of each Meeting; such minutes to consist of a short summary of the Paper read together with the Debate thereon, and also any other proceedings which may have taken place.

XVII.—That the Papers read before the Society, or a copy of them, be delivered to the Secretary, and become the property of the Society; but that no Paper be published without the consent of its Author.

XVIII.—That at a general Meeting specially convened, the subjects proposed for discussion be received; and that if there be more subjects than opportunities for meeting, the subjects for consideration be decided by the Meeting, and the order in which they are to be taken arranged by the Council.

XIX.—That if the conduct of any Member be such as to cast discredit on the Society, or to be detrimental to its interests, a special general Meeting shall be called by the Council, according to the provisions of Rule XI., at which Meeting the expulsion of such Member may be resolved, the conditions of Rule XII. being complied with.

XX.—That except where otherwise stated the Voting be conducted by Ballot.

XXI.—That open Voting be practised at Council Meetings, election of Chairman at ordinary Meetings, and under Rule XVIII.

XXII.—That in the absence of the President, each general Meeting elect its own Chairman, whose decision on all matters of order shall be final.

XXIII.—That the Annual Subscription be ten shillings and sixpence, payable in advance, on or before the first Tuesday in October.

XXIV.—That the Council have the power to make such Bye-laws and other Regulations as from time to time they may deem necessary : but that no Bye-law or Regulation be made inconsistent with the constitution of the Society, as set forth in the Prospectus and fundamental Rules.

XXV.—That the Council have the power to invite persons of celebrity to read papers, or deliver addresses before the Society.

XXVI.—That at the conclusion of each Meeting, the subject to be considered at the following ordinary Meeting be announced, and that the Secretary make known the subjects, if possible, not less than three months in advance.

