INTRODUCTION.

It having been suggested to us by Mr. Sotheran, the proprietor of the late Mr. Gould's Ornithological Works, that some few introductory remarks on the completion of the 'Birds of Asia' (one of the works left unfinished at the death of the late Mr. Gould) would be acceptable to the Subscribers, we have attempted to give a brief outline of the history of Asiatic ornithology during the past thirty years. It is difficult for us, whose path has been smoothed by the labours of the excellent ornithologists who have devoted themselves to the study of oriental birds, to carry our minds back to the year 1850, when Mr. Gould commenced to write the present work on the Birds of Asia, at a time when such names as those of Hume, Blanford, Davison, David, Prjewalsky, Severtzoff, and Swinhoe were unknown to fame. In 1850 the golden age of ornithology was but commencing, 'The Ibis' was not yet published, and such an idea as the calling into existence of a journal entirely devoted to Indian ornithology was undreamt of. Only one year previously had Gray completed his great work on the Genera of Birds, which tabulated and placed in order all the then known genera and species; and this was closely followed by the 'Conspectus Avium' of Prince Bonaparte and the 'Catalogue of the Museum Heineanum' of Dr. Cabanis. But although the three last mentioned works will always be celebrated for the order which they introduced into the Class *Aves*, their work did not affect Asiatic ornithology in particular, and the credit of first setting in order the ornithology of India rests with two naturalists—Jerdon and Blyth. Before Mr. Gould's work commenced, the former had finished his 'Catalogue of the Birds of the Peninsula of India,' while for many years Mr. Blyth had been engaged in publishing those important notes and synopses of Indian birds, in the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,' which even at the present day are studied with advantage by the ornithologist. Then,