

## Foreword to the New Series Vol. I (51st Volume)

THE completion of its first half-century of publication may be said to mark a noteworthy epoch in the life of a scientific (and perhaps of any other) periodical, and as one who was more or less closely in contact with the chief promoters of *The Annals of Botany* during that somewhat remote period of its inception, it has been suggested that I should write this foreword on the occasion of its jubilee and the beginning of a New Series.

Although only an undergraduate at Oxford at that time, I enjoyed the intimate friendship of Professor Isaac Bayley Balfour, to whose vigour and vitalizing energy the inception of the enterprise was so largely due.

A strong committee was formed, of whom Balfour, Vines, and Marshall Ward were prominent members. On January 20, 1887, a letter signed by the two first-named botanists was dispatched to the secretary of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, Oxford, with the view of opening negotiations and exploring the conditions on which it would be possible to inaugurate the enterprise. In this letter the title proposed for the new venture was 'The Journal of Botanical Science'. The Clarendon Press was sympathetic, but not unnaturally stipulated for a guarantee against loss should the venture prove unsuccessful.

This condition was agreed to, and a sum regarded as adequate was easily forthcoming.

At some stage in the course of this incubation period the name was changed to that of 'The Annals of Botany', but on whose suggestion this excellent alteration was made I have been unable to discover.

The first number of *The Annals* appeared in August, 1887, and the three editors responsible for its production were Balfour (Oxford), Vines (Cambridge), and Farlow (Harvard, U.S.A.) and this happy association with the United States has been perpetuated throughout the half century of its existence.

The financial success of *The Annals* was naturally a matter of some anxiety to its original promoters, and it is very satisfactory to know that by 1895 it had become clear that the new journal was to pay its way. Three years later the Clarendon Press returned the whole of the guarantee fund which had been deposited with them.

The only material change in the character of *The Annals* since its first appearance has consisted in the disappearance of the 'Record of Current Literature' from the fifth and all subsequent volumes, and its replacement by additional original papers. Probably most, if not all, subscribers would agree that the exchange has been fully justified.

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