ſociety on the moſt extended plan, ſor the improvement of all arts and ſciences ; a work which, though written in the language, and tinctured with the colouring oſ romance, is full of the nobleſt philoſophic views. The plan of Lord Bacon, which met with little attention from the age in which he lived, was deſtined to produce its, effect in a period not very diſtant. The ſcheme of a philoſophical college by Cowley is acknowledged to have had a powerful influence in procuring the eſtabliſhment of the Royal Society of London by charter from Charles II. @@§ ; and Cowley’s plan is manifeſtly copied in almoſt all its parts from that in the New Atlantis. The inſtitution of the Roval Society of London was ſoon followed by the eſtabliſhment of the Royal Aca­demy of Sciences at Paris ; and theſe two have ſerved as models to the philoſophical academies of higheſt re­putation in the other kingdoms of Europe.

The experience oſ ages has ſhown, that improvements of a public nature are best carried on by ſocieties of li­beral and ingenious men, uniting their labours without regard to nation, ſect, or party, in one grand purſuit alike intereſting to all, whereby mutual prejudices are worn off, and a humane philoſophical ſpirit is cheriſhed. Men united together, and frequently meeting for the purpoſe of advancing the ſciences, the arts, agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, may oftentimes ſuggeſt ſuch hints, to one another as may be improved to important ends : and ſuch ſocieties, by being the repoſitories of the obſervations and diſcoveries of the learned and ingenious, may from time to time furniſh the world with uſeful publications which might otherwiſe be loſt: for men of ingenuity and modeſty may not chooſe to riſk their reputation, by ſending abroad unpatronized what a learned ſociety might judge richly worthy the public eye ; or perhaps their circumſtances being ſtraitened, they may not be able to defray the expence of publication. Societies inſtituted for promoting know­ledge may alſo be of eminent ſervice, by exciting a ſpirit of emulation, and by enkindling thoſe sparks of genius which otherwiſe might for ever have been concealed ; and if, when poſſeſſed of funds ſufficient for the pur­poſe, they reward the exertions of the induſtrious and enterprising with pecuniary premiums or honorary me­dals, many important experiments and uſeful diſcoveries will be made, from which the public may reap the high­eſt advantages.

Eminent inſtances of the beneficial effects of ſuch inſtitutions we have in the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, the Royal Society, and the Society inſtituted for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Com­merce, in London, and many others of a ſimilar kind. Hereby a ſpirit of diſcovery and improvement has been excited among the ingenious in almoſt every nation ; knowledge of various kinds, and greatly uſeful to man­kind, has taken place of the dry and unintereſting ſpeculations of ſchoolmen ; and bold and erroneous hypotheſis has been obliged to give way to demonſtrative experiment. In ſhort, since the eſtabliſhment of theſe ſocieties, solid learning and philoſophy have more in­creaſed than they had done for many centuries before.

As to thoſe ſocieties eſtabliſhed for promoting induſtry, religion and morality, and relieving diſtreſs, the deſign is laudable and excellent, and preſents a beautiful picture of the philanthropy of modern times. We are happy to find, from the minutes of ſome of theſe ſo­

cieties, that their beneficial effects are already conſpicuous.

We will now give ſome account oſ the moſt eminent ſocieties ; arranging them under the three claſſes into which we have divided them : I. *Religious and Humane Societies.* II. *Societies for Promoting Science and Literature.* III. *Societies for Encouraging Arts, Manufactures,* &c.

I. Religious and Humane Societies.

1. *Society for the Propagation of the Goſpel in Foreign Parts,* was inſtituted by King William III. in 1701, in order to ſecure a maintenance for an orthodox cler­gy, and to make other proviſions for propagating the goſpel in the plantations, colonies, and factories beyond the ſeas. To that end he incorporated the archbishops, ſeveral of the biſhops, and others of the nobility, gentry, and clergy, to the number of 90, into one body, which, by the name of T*he Society ſor the Propagation of the Goſpel in Foreign Parts,* was to plead and be impleaded; to have perpetual ſucceſſion, with privilege to purchaſe L. 2000 a-year inheritance, and eſtates ſor lives or years, with other goods and chattels to any value. By its charter the ſociety is authoriſed to uſe a common ſeal ; and to meet annually on the third Friday in Fe­bruary for the purpoſe of chooſing a preſident, vice- preſident, and officers for the year enſuing ; and on the third Friday in every month, or oftener if there ſhould be occaſion, to tranſact buſineſs, and to depute perſons to take ſubscriptions, and collect money contributed for the purpoſes aforesaid ; and of all moneys received and laid out, it is obliged to give account yearly to the lord-chancellor or keeper, the lord chief-juſtice of the King’s-bench, the lord-chief-juſtice of the Common- pleas, or to any two of theſe magiſtrates. Of this ſo­ciety there is a ſtanding committee at St Paul’s chapter-houſe, to prepare matters for the monthly meeting, which is held at St Martin’s library.

Before the incorporation of the ſociety for the pro­pagation of the goſpel in foreign parts, there had been formed, for the promoting of Christian knowledge both at home and in the colonies, a voluntary aſſociation of perſons of rank and respectability, who in March 1699 began to hold ſtated meetings in London for that pur­poſe, regulating themſelves by the laws of the land and the canons of the church ; and when the new ſociety was formed, they had already tranſmitted to America and the West Indies L. 800 worth of Bibles, Books of Common Prayer, and treatiſes of practical religion, be­ſides ſecuring a tolerable maintenance to ſeveral clergy­man on that continent. This aſſociation ſtill ſubſiſts un­der the denomination of *The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,* and has been productive of much good in the cities of London and Weſtminſter ; but upon the formation of the new ſociety, into which all its original members were incorporated by name, the care which the voluntary aſſociation had taken of the colonies de­volved of courſe upon the incorporated ſociety ; of which incorporation we believe the object has been ſometimes miſtaken, and the labours of its miſſionaries groſsly miſrepresented. It has by many been suppoſed that the ſociety was incorporated for the *ſole* purpoſe of converting the ſavage Americans ; and it has been much blamed for ſending miſſionaries into provinces where, in the deſpicable cant of the complainers, a *gospel-ministry* was already eſtabliſhed, But an impartial view of the

@@@§ Sprat's History of the Royal Society, 2d edit.