HISTORY OF THE

CALCULUS OF VARIATIONS.

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A HISTORY OF THE PROGRESS

OF THE

CALCULUS OF VARIATIONS

DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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PREFACE.

In 1810 a work was published in Cambridge under the following title—*A Treatise on Isoperimetrical Problems and the Calculus of Variations. By Robert Woodhouse, A.M., F.R.S., Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge.* This work details the history of the Calculus of Variations from its origin until the close of the eighteenth century, and has obtained a high reputation for accuracy and clearness. During the present century some of the most eminent mathematicians have endeavoured to enlarge the boundaries of the subject, and it seemed probable that a survey of what had been accomplished would not be destitute of interest and value. Accordingly the present work has been undertaken, and a short account will now be given of its plan.

As the early history of the Calculus of Variations had been already so ably written, it was unnecessary to go over it again; but it seemed convenient to commence with a short account of two works of Lagrange and a work of Lacroix, because they