

ROYAL SOCIETY.

NOVEMBER, 1864.

The monthly evening meeting of the Fellows was held on Tuesday, the 8th November, J. Barnard, Esq., in the chair.

W. R. Giblin, Esq., who had been previously nominated by the Council, was after a ballot declared to be duly elected a Fellow of the Society.

The following returns were laid on the table :—

1. Visitors to Museum during October, 437.
2. Ditto to Gardens during October, 2,961.
3. Periodicals &c., received (the usual).
4. Plants &c., received at Gardens :—From Messrs. Handyside and McMillan, Melbourne, 30 papers of flower seeds. From Dr. Moore, New Norfolk, 12 varieties of potatoes imported from Scotland. From His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne, 100 seedling olives, and truncheons of three varieties of ditto, from Adelaide.

In reference to the olive plants, the Secretary (Dr. Agnew) remarked that His Excellency, from his knowledge of the soil and climate required by the olive, had formed the opinion that it should grow and mature its fruit well in this locality. He had consequently written to the Governor of South Australia, Sir Dominick Daly, to request him to obtain for us such cuttings, &c., as might be required to enable us to test its growth. Sir Dominick in the kindest manner promptly complied with the request, and in sending the plants, forwarded also the following letter from the gentleman who had furnished them.

“ Rundle-street,
“ July 23th, 1864.

“ DEAR SIR DOMINICK,—I feel quite at a loss to offer any observations upon the culture of the olive, which could present anything new to so learned a body as the Royal Society of Tasmania. The only thing which it strikes me that they are desirous of knowing is the mode which is adopted here in the propagation of the plants, and perhaps they would likewise wish to ascertain the kinds, or varieties of olives at present cultivated or introduced into this province.

“ As to the first I believe it is generally admitted that seedlings, or wild plants are the best when worked with approved varieties, and it is with the view of establishing in Tasmania well grown trees, that I have the honor of placing at your disposal the few seedlings which you intend for the Royal Society of Tasmania. Of course it will be understood that when these are established, grafts will be supplied. The mode of grafting most recommended here, is underground grafting, with two-year old wood—and the time selected for the operation is in September.

“ Another mode of propagating the olive in this province, is by planting truncheons horizontally in the ground at a depth of 11 or 16 inches, at the end of the summer; these are to be attended to so as to ensure single stalks from the cuttings, as in this mode of culture many are apt to stool.

“ The varieties of olive known to be cultivated here are at least five, viz. :—Saliven, Blanquet, Verdale, Gros Redonnaou, Olivier d'Espagne.

“ I regret that I cannot obtain plants of these varieties at present, but I shall make arrangements to have some seedlings worked for the Royal Society of Tasmania, and when they are fit I shall have much pleasure in placing them at your Excellency's disposal for transmission to them.

“ In this or any other matter in which anything can be done for the benefit of Tasmania, I think I may freely state that the Acclimatisation Society here will only be too glad to have the opportunity of being of service to their fellow-subjects in that lovely island.

“ I remain,

“ My dear Sir Dominick,
“ Yours faithfully,
“ B. W. MOORE.”

The SECRETARY further observed that the introduction of the olive (if our climate proved suitable) would be a matter of importance to the colony. The oil could be extracted at a very trifling expense, it would furnish a most valuable export, and the market for it was illimitable.

Mr. ABBOTT (Superintendent of the Botanic Gardens) was certain the tree would grow, but doubted if its fruit would ever arrive at sufficient maturity to furnish the oil. In the mean time the trees and truncheons had all been planted,

and although many of them from being packed in wet grass had become much heated on the voyage from Adelaide, he hoped the greater portion of them would live. The new varieties of potatoes lately received from Scotland by Dr. Moore had also been planted in the Society's Gardens.

Meteorological Returns,—

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.
 - (a) Table for October.
 - (b) Summary and Analysis of Observations for ditto.
2. Swansea, from Dr. Story.
 - (a) Table for September.
3. Tamar Heads, from R. Henry Esq.
 - (a) Table for August.
 - (b) Ditto for September.
4. Port Arthur, from J. Boyd, Esq.
 - (a) Table for October.
 - (b) Reading of Government Schooner's Barometer for ditto.

The SECRETARY read the usual monthly analysis of the Hobart Town Meteorological Table, with a Health Report by E. S. Hall, Esq.

Mr. ABBOTT read some "notes on the half-yearly abstract of the Meteorological Registers kept at Hobart Town, and at the Coast stations."

Dr. HALL observed that the longer these returns were made, the more apparent would their value become. He might adduce a simple example from the abstract just read. It has been generally supposed that the climate on our eastern seaboard was drier than elsewhere, but it was evident from the documents laid before them that there were few localities in the colony where the rain fall was so heavy. It was not safe, however, to draw conclusions from a few half-yearly returns, it would be necessary to have careful observations carried out for a very considerable period before trustworthy averages could be deduced from them.

The presentations were as follows:—

1. Two large Maps of Tasmania. From the Colonial Secretary on the part of the Government.
2. Stuffed skin of Guinea Pig (*Cavia Cobaya*). From Mr. Hissey.
3. Stuffed skin of a Mouse of a remarkably elongated form, and light brown colour, although not a true Albino. From the Rev. Mr. Simpson, O'Brien's Bridge.
4. Fish (*Clinus Sp.?*) From T. Giblin, Esq. A well executed water colour drawing by Mrs. Allport of a fish of the same genus (*Clinus*) was exhibited.
5. Acts of Council, and of Parliament of Tasmania, from 7th George IV. to 26th Victoria, 4 volumes, bound. Also index. From J. Barnard, Esq., the part of the government.
6. An excellent and very accurate water colour drawing by Mrs. Meredith, of the fish presented by Mr. Owen Meredith at last meeting.
7. A halfpenny and farthing of George II. From Mrs. Boardman.

Mr. W. JOHNSTONE laid on the table a leaf of cabbage presenting a somewhat singular formation. Its free margin had so far grown together that the leaf assumed the form of a hollow cone, similar to the flower of the trumpet plant.

Mr. F. ABBOTT read a report from the Physical Section on the cause of the twist in the trunks of our trees, and of the very eccentric arrangement which is so frequently observed in their rings of woody fibre, as shewn in several transverse sections of timber which were exhibited. Letters from several correspondents on the subject (Dr. Vallentine, Mr. Watson, Mr. Weber, &c.) were laid before the meeting.

The enquiry was originated by a correspondent in London, who had written to ask did our trees twist in a manner differing from that which obtained in England, where it took place in a direction from *left to right*. After careful and repeated observations by some members of the Society, and others practically acquainted with the growth of timber, it was found that our trees do not keep to any particular twist, and that as far as could be determined they are not influenced by any general laws having reference to the sun, wind, slope of ground, &c. The subject is, therefore, still open for further investigation.

After discussion on various points raised by the correspondence, the usual vote of thanks to the authors of papers, and donors of presentations, closed the proceedings.