

ROYAL SOCIETY.

SEPTEMBER, 1870.

The monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, September 13th, Morton Allport, Esq., in the chair.

The Secretary, Dr. Agnew, brought under notice the following returns for the past month:—

1. Visitors to Museum, 957.
2. Ditto to Gardens, 1199.
3. Plants and seeds received at, and sent from gardens.
4. Tench supplied.
5. Time of leafing, &c., of a few standard plants in Botanic Gardens.
6. Books and Periodicals received.
7. Presentations to Museum.

Meteorological Returns:—

1. Hobart Town, from Mr. F. Abbott, Esq., table and summary for August.
2. Westbury, from C. Belstead, Esq., ditto, ditto.
3. Sydney, from the Government Observatory, ditto for June.
4. Melbourne, from ditto, ditto, for July.
5. New Zealand, from ditto, ditto for May.

The presentations to the Museum were as follow:—

1. From Mr. Moir, junr., specimen of Alum from a cave near Mr. Moir's house, Brown's River Road.
2. From Mr. C. A. Gresley, 5 Rock specimens from River Mersey.
3. From Mr. Gibbons, chicken with three legs.
4. From J. Forster, Esq., part of Human Skeleton dug up at Hamilton.
5. From Mr. M. Allport, specimen of Schorl from Flinders Island. A lump of resin washed on shore at the same place. [This resin is probably the produce of the Oyster Bay pine, *Callitris Australis*.]
6. From James Scott, Esq., M.H.A., the cast skin of a Snake from Ringarooma.
7. From Captain Lloyd, per Mr. O. H. Hedberg, a shingle of Macquarie Harbour pine, from the gaol at Macquarie Harbour, built in 1826. [This specimen shows in a very striking manner the great durability of the wood. Although it has been exposed to the weather for a period of 44 years it presents no appearance of decay—the saw marks even being plainly visible—and on removing the surface with a knife the wood is seen to be perfectly fresh beneath.]
8. From the Gore Browne Testimonial Committee, two photographs of the testimonial presented by the colonists of Tasmania to Colonel (now Sir Thomas) Gore Browne, C.B., on his retirement from the Government of this Island.
9. From Mr. Philip, Franklin, part of Vertebra of Whale.
10. From Mr. S. H. Wintle, 20 geological specimens from New South Wales and Victoria, collected by himself; with a descriptive catalogue.
11. From Mr. M. Allport, two fish caught in the Derwent, off Sandy Bay. [These fish were unknown to the fishermen who caught them, but closely agree with one figured and described under the name of *Emmelichthys nitidus*, by Dr. Richardson, in the "Zoology of the

Erebus and Terror," page 47, plate 29. This fish was first discovered in Western Australia by Sir G. Grey.]

12. Two fish caught off the South East Coast of Tasmania. [These are also unknown to the fishermen.]

The Secretary requested special attention to the very liberal and valuable presentation of books before the meeting, from the American Government, the Smithsonian, and other scientific institutions in the United States, comprising the following publications :—

Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, vol. 15, 1867.
 Ditto Reports for 1866-67.
 American Patent Office Reports, 1863, vols. 1 and 2.
 Ditto ditto, 1864, vols. 1 and 2.
 Ditto ditto, 1865, vols. 1, 2, and 3.
 Ditto ditto, 1866, vols. 1, 2, and 3.
 Department of Agriculture, Washington, Report of, for 1866.
 Ditto, ditto, monthly ditto, 1866-67.
 Boston Society of Natural History, Memoirs of, vol. 1, part 3.
 Ditto, ditto, Proceedings of, vol. 11, 1866-68
 Ditto, ditto, Conditions and Doings of, 1866-8.
 Portland Society of Natural History, Proceedings of, vol. 1, part 2, 1869.
 Ditto, ditto, 6th Annual Report of Secretary of Maine Board of Agriculture, and Reports on Scientific Survey, 1863.
 Ditto, ditto, 2nd Annual Report on Natural History and Geology, State of Maine, 1861.
 Ditto, ditto, Reports of Commissioners of Fisheries State of Maine, 1867-8.
 Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts, Proceedings of, vol. 5, Nos. 5 to 8.
 Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass.
 Ditto, ditto, Annual Report, 1868.
 Ditto, ditto, Bulletin of, Nos. 6 and 7.
 Ditto, ditto, Contributions to Fauna of Gulf Stream, by F. de Pourtales, 1867-8.
 American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Philadelphia, Proceedings of, Vol. 10, Nos. 78 and 79, 1867-8.
 Ditto ditto, "General Connotations of Magnetism," and "Some Remarks on the Fall of Rain as affected by the Moon," by Pliny Earle Chase.
 National Academy of Sciences, Washington, Report of, 1866-67.
 Cincinnati Astronomical Society, Annual Address.
 Ditto ditto, Oration on laying corner stone of Observatory.
 Columbia Institution for Deaf and Dumb, 10th Annual Report of.
 Public Schools, Washington, 22nd Annual Report.

The Secretary, after reminding the Fellows that at the last meeting of the Society the subject of the Ramie plant (*Baehmeria Nivea*), from which the grass cloth of China is manufactured, had been discussed, read the following observations on it by Mr. F. Abbott, the Superintendent of the Gardens :—

"In reference to the China grass, (*Baehmeria Nivea*), seeds of which have been forwarded to the Society, through Dr. Milligan, it may be interesting to the Fellows to learn that the plant has already been in the garden 10 or 12 years, but no attempt has yet been made to extend its cultivation.

"It is very doubtful whether the climate of Tasmania will be found suitable for the successful cultivation of this fibre. The plant which is indigenous to China, India, Sumatra, &c., requires a rich porous soil, and warm moist climate; under these conditions it grows rapidly and affords from two to three cuttings during the season.

"In Queensland, where the plant succeeds well, great difficulty has been experienced in extracting the fibre; this difficulty appears to have been generally experienced, as the English Government, through the Indian Office, are at present offering an award of £5000 for the invention of a machine capable of

extracting the fibre, the cost of separation not to exceed £15 per ton, and the value of the separated fibre to be not less than £50 per ton.

"In China where the plant is extensively cultivated, the fibre is separated by hand, but this mode of separation, a tedious one, is only suited to labor of the cheapest description, and could not be adopted in the colonies.

"I have planted a small bed in the gardens with this plant, with the view of proving how far it is adapted for culture in Tasmania.

"F. ABBOTT, JUN.,
"R. S. Gardens.

"12th September, 1870."

A paper, entitled "Notes of an Excursion to Cummings's Head and the Falls of the Meander, on the Western Mountains, Tasmania," by W. Archer, Esq., F.L.S., was then read by the Secretary.

Special votes of thanks having been accorded to Mr. Archer, and to the Smithsonian and other institutions in America, the meeting closed with the usual thanks to donors of presentations.