

JUNE, 1876.

The usual monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, 13th June, M. Allport, Esq., V.P., in the chair.

Ralph Tate, Esq., F.G.S., Professor of Natural History, University of Adelaide, was elected a Corresponding Member of the Society.

The HON. SECRETARY brought forward the following returns for the past month :—

1. Number of visitors to Museum during May, 1348.
2. Ditto to Gardens ditto, 3506.
3. Seeds, etc., received at Gardens—From His Excellency F. A. Weld, Esq., 20 packets seeds (various). From Dr. G. Webster, New Zealand, 3 Tree Ferns. From Dr. Carl, New Zealand, 2 packets seeds.
4. Plants and seeds sent from Gardens—To Jules Cock et Cie, France, 1 packet seeds. To C. H. Huber et Cie, Hyeres, France, 1 ditto. To Villmorin, Andrieux, et Cie, Paris, 1 ditto. To Mr. S. Purchase, Parramatta, Sydney, 1 case seedling plants. To Messrs. Shepherd and Co., Sydney, 1 box plants. For the Hospital grounds, Launceston 30 Coniferæ. For the Church of England grounds, Bothwell, 130 plants.
5. Time of leafing, flowering, etc., of a few standard plants during the month.
6. Books and periodicals received.
7. Presentations to Museum.

Meteorological Tables.

1. Hobart Town—From F. Abbott, Esq., table for May.
2. New Norfolk—From W. E. Shoobridge, Esq., ditto.
3. Port Arthur—From Dr. Coverdale, ditto.
4. From Marine Board—King's Island tables for February, March, and April; Mount Nelson ditto for May.
5. From Government Observer, Melbourne—Printed tables for January and February.

The presentations to the Museum were as follows :—

1. From F. Groom, Esq., St. Mary's—A Brown Quail (*Synoicus australis*), partially albino.
2. From A. Simson, Esq.—Skin and Skeleton of small Brown Rat (*Mus fuscipes* ?); Skin and Skeleton of a White-footed Rat (*Mus tasmaniensis* Krefft ?); Skin and Skeleton of *Antechinus swainsonii*, from Gould's Country.
3. From Mr. Stephenson—A Rail (*Rallus brachipus*), shot at Jericho.
4. From Mr. J. Young, Wellington, New Zealand—A portion of the Submarine Telegraph across Cook's Straits, broken nine and a half years after submersion. In a note accompanying this presentation, the donor states that he "was informed by Dr. Pollon (Inspector-General of Telegraphs, N.Z.) that the breakage was not the result of friction, but was probably caused by some corrosive agency in the immediate locality of the fracture."
5. From Mr. A. Wilkins—Specimens of Copper Ore, Antimony, Ruby Tin, etc., etc., from Cudgegong, near Mudgee, N.S. Wales.
6. From Mr. L. Petersen—Tin specimens from Ringarooma.
7. From Mr. W. C. Blyth, Honeywood—Specimens of Cicada, etc., from the crown of a stringy bark tree.
8. From Mr. Lukin Boyes—A peculiar Caterpillar, from Gould's Country.
9. From Mr. Weeding, Oatlands—Two masses of a peculiar punk-like substance from a cavity in the heart of a tree.
10. From S. P. H. Wright, Esq., Glenorchy—A sheet of fungoid substance from a decayed tree.

11. From Mr. Guesdon—A slab of mudstone from Bruni Island, with numerous casts of fossils.

The SECRETARY mentioned that, owing to the extreme inclemency of the weather, the Rev. Julian Woods had kindly consented to postpone the reading of his paper till the next meeting, in order to afford to a probably much larger number of Fellows the opportunity of discussing it.

Mr. M. ALLPORT exhibited a plan, carefully prepared by Mr. T. Stephens, for the purpose of showing the general geological features of a portion of the North Coast of Tasmania, and defined the position of the two different forms of trap rock occurring there; and in the absence of any other business, Mr. Allport said, "I desire to record the alteration in my views as to the geological age of the more recent basalts on the south side of the island. The Fellows of the Society will remember that some years ago a large number of fossil bones, in a comminuted condition, were discovered in the Travertin, worked for lime at Geilston Bay, on the other side of the Derwent, below Risdon. Upon examination, these bones all proved to belong to existing species, viz., *Phalangista fuliginosa*, *Hypsiprimni*, etc., and the conclusion was then come to that the Travertin must be of recent tertiary or post-tertiary age. For many years previous to the discovery of the bones abundant vegetable remains had been observed in this Travertin; these consisted of leaf impressions and fossil wood. A considerable number of land shells of at least four species, *Helix* (two species), *Vitrina*, and *Bulimus*, were also frequently found. Many of the leaf impressions bore a superficial resemblance to the leaves of plants now existing; but well knowing the difficulty of determining species by the examination of such slight remains, I always preferred waiting the discovery of a larger series of specimens before coming to hasty, and probably erroneous, conclusions. Upon the discovery of the bones, however, Mr. Gould and myself both assumed that the Travertin was very recent; and this was the more important, geologically, from the fact recorded in our transactions that the bed of Travertin had been displaced by a dyke of basalt, clearly proving that, however recent the Travertin, the basalt was still more recent. Shortly after the discovery of the bones, however, I came upon some fossils in solid portions of the Travertin, that went far to shake my preconceived notions of its recent age. These fossils consisted of three seeds, all differing from any now existing, the most remarkable being about the size of a walnut, but divided by fine lines in to five equal segments. These seeds I forwarded to Baron Von Müeller, with many of the leaf impressions. As to the smaller seeds, he desired to have more specimens before coming to any conclusion; but as to the specimen above described, he at once founded a genus upon it, and pointed out its affinities to extinct types in the Tertiaries of Victoria. I still felt some hesitation in concluding from this one specimen that the age of the Travertin must be put back to an earlier geological epoch, because some of the excrescences caused by insects on our existing trees bear considerable resemblance to the fossil referred to. Now, however, I am happy to say, two other specimens, showing not only the external markings of the first, but also the divisions of the septa in which the seeds had lain, have been discovered, proving the learned Baron to have been quite correct in his conclusion as to the nature of the first fossil. At the same time as the last mentioned specimens, two other well-marked seeds were also found, one about the size of a hazel nut, but divided longitudinally into equal valves; and the other a very interesting form when taken in connection with some of the impressions abounding in the vicinity. It consists of a well-marked cast of a cone, from which the seeds have dropped out, about an inch in diameter, of a somewhat circular form, and quite dissimilar to any now existing in Tasmania. The discovery of these fresh and unmistakable proofs of the earlier age of the Travertin caused me to inquire a little more fully into the history of the bones

before mentioned, as it is very difficult to reconcile the presence in the same geological matrix of an existing fauna and an extinct flora; the bones were quite unaltered chemically, and no bone was whole except the teeth and minute phalanges, every long bone being ground up in to small pieces. They were all found in one limited area beneath, and amongst blocks of Travertin, not in solid Travertin, as the impressions and seeds are, but in an arenaceous and slightly calcareous matrix. Much of the fossil wood found in the Travertin is more or less silicified, the rest being converted to carbonate of lime, and if the bones had been subjected throughout the same period to the same chemical conditions as this fossil wood, I cannot doubt that they would have been silicified, or at any rate bedded in solid carbonate of lime. Taking all the circumstances into account, it seems probable that when the basalt dyke displaced the bed of Travertin, it caused the mass to be broken and rent in various ways, especially near the points of contact between the molten basalt and the Travertin, and that long after the cooling of the mass some of the fissures thus made were occupied by some of the carnivorous marsupials, and in the course of time these fissures, with the layers of comminuted bones—the remains of the prey devoured by the early inhabitants—have been choked up with the constantly accumulating diluvium, consisting of washed sand and particles of the Travertin weathered off the adjacent rocks. If this conclusion is correct, we must of course regard the basalt referred to as an earlier formation than the diluvium from which the bones referred to were obtained, but still as of later date than the Travertin. Mr. R. M. Johnston, who is so indefatigably working out the tertiary deposits on the North side, will doubtless throw much light on the subject of these recent basalts, and I therefore look forward with considerable interest to the reading of his paper, postponed from to-night, under the impression that we should get no meeting.

The SECRETARY reported that, in reply to the letter addressed by the Royal Society to the Municipal Council in reference to the destruction of the trees and ferns on Mount Wellington, he had received, from the Town Clerk, a copy of the correspondence which had taken place on the subject. Several extracts from this correspondence were then read from which it was evident that the powers of the Town Council in the matter were very limited. Discussion (in which Mr. P. T. Smith, Mr. Grant, Mr. Shoobridge, Dr. E. Crowther, the Chairman and Secretary took part) ensued, when the feeling of the meeting appeared to be that as the various Fern-tree Valleys were of little value to their possessors, enquiries might be made if they could be purchased back at a reasonable rate for the purpose of being secured to the public for ever.

The SECRETARY, in connection with a matter which he desired to introduce, observed it might, perhaps, be necessary to inform some of the junior Fellows that Sir John Franklin was the founder of this Society. To assist it in its infancy, he very kindly placed at its disposal a room at Government House for the monthly meetings, and in addition to this, at the close of the proceedings, the members generally found a liberal banquet provided for them. Perhaps, indeed, for the latter they were indebted to the kindness of Lady Franklin, whose zeal and enthusiasm in all matters connected with the scientific interests of the colony were known to all. Not long ago a marble tablet bearing an inscription from the pen of the poet Laureate, had been placed in Westminster Abbey to the memory of Sir John, and recently he (the speaker) had observed in *The Mercury* a note signed "Jack Tar," in which it was suggested that this inscription might very appropriately be engraved on the granite pedestal of the bronze statue to Sir John in Franklin Square. The suggestion appeared to him to be a very good one, and considering how much we owed to Sir John he thought the Society would gladly entertain the motion he now begged to propose, which was to the effect that a communication should be addressed to

Government with a request that the inscription should be placed as suggested on the pedestal. He might perhaps be excused if he added, although it was but a private matter, that he had some personal feeling in making this proposition as in times long past he had received much kindness from Sir John Franklin, and indeed it was the offer of appointment as his Private Secretary which first induced him (Dr. Agnew) to leave Victoria in order to settle in Tasmania. The inscription, as perhaps all present would recollect, was

“ *Not here ; the white North has thy bones, and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thy happier voyage now,
Toward no earthly pole.* ”

Mr. C. H. GRANT had much pleasure in seconding the motion, which was cordially adopted.

Mr. P. T. SMITH, referring to the severe storm with which we were visited on the previous evening observed it was a dead calm in the city in the early part of the day. During this calm his attention had been directed to the loud roaring noises proceeding, without any visible cause, from the mountain. They were very remarkable, although not so loud as those he had formerly heard on the Western Tiers. He would be glad to know if they had been heard by others. No one present had noticed them, but

Mr. W. E. SHOOBRIDGE stated he had no doubt they were due entirely to the action of high winds on the trees. He would not be surprised to learn that a storm raged on Mount Wellington when it was calm in Hobart Town, as he had observed that these storms were frequently very local in their action. At New Norfolk there were two ranges of hills with but a moderate sized valley between, yet he had himself noticed a loud storm raging on one of the ranges whilst it was quite calm on the other. He fancied the direction of the wind had a very considerable influence (at least at New Norfolk) on the noises, as they appeared to be much louder when it blew from the N.W. than from any other quarter.

The proceedings then terminated.

[The following paragraph was accidentally omitted from the report of the May meeting.]

Mr. Justice DOBSON exhibited a curious case in which the underground stem of couchgrass had pierced through the bulb of a hyacinth. The growing point of the stem, on meeting the bulb, instead of being deflected and passing around it, had pursued its direct horizontal course and forced its way through the obstacle. Mr. Dobson had noticed many instances of this, and occasionally the same stem was found to have even gone through several bulbs.