

AUGUST, 1878.

The monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Monday, the 12th August, T. Stephens, Esq., M.A., in the chair.

The Hon. W. McLEAY, F.L.S., of Sydney, who had previously been nominated by the Council, was balloted for and declared duly elected as a corresponding Member.

The Hon. Secretary, Dr. AGNEW, submitted the usual returns, etc., for the month of July, viz. :—

1. Number of visitors to Museum, 2,623.
2. Ditto to Gardens, 4,473.
3. Plants and seeds received at Gardens from Baron F. von Müller, Melbourne :—450 packets seeds, chiefly of European herbaceous plants, from Mr. J. F. Duthie, Superintendent of Botanic Gardens, Saharunpore, India ; a collection of seeds, principally N. W. Himalayan, from Mr. H. J. King, superintendent, Royal Botanic Gardens, Howrah, Calcutta, two pounds weight of *Cedrus deodar* seed.—From Messrs. Shepherd and Co., Sydney, 60 plants. From Dr. Hector, Wellington, New Zealand, 9 packets seeds.
4. Plants and seeds sent from Gardens :—To Messrs. Shepherd and Co., Sydney, one bundle plants and seeds.
5. Plants supplied for decoration of public places :—For St. Mary's Cathedral grounds, 50 plants. For Horton College, Ross, 50 do. For Railway Reserve, Domain, 20 do. For Church grounds, Prosser's Plains, 50 do. For General Hospital, Hobart Town, 106 varieties of plants. For Cascades Invalid Depôt, 40 trees and shrubs. For Church of England, Hamilton, 50 plants.
6. Books and Periodicals received.
7. Presentation to Library.
8. Ditto to Museum.
9. *Meteorological Returns*—
 - (a) Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.—Table for July.
 - (b) New Norfolk, from W. E. Shoobridge, Esq.—Abstract for do.
 - (c) From the Hobart Town Marine Board.—Tables from Mount Nelson for July ; Kent's Group for May, June, and July ; Swan Island for June ; and Goose Island for May, June, and July.
 - (d) Melbourne from R. J. L. Ellery, Esq., F.R.S.—Printed tables for March and April, 1878.

The presentations to the Museum were as follows :

1. From F. Bowden, Esq., per Justin Browne, Esq.—A Silver Coin (Rix Dollar) of the Empress Marie Therese of Austria and Hungary. 1780. The date of the coin is that of the death of the great Empress. Stated to be the only European coin used in Abyssinia.
2. From Mr. J. Chambers, Bransholme, a Pebble of Transparent Quartz, with black grains imbedded in its substance.
3. From Mr. Kellaway, Glenorchy.—Specimen of Flax used by natives of the Lower Herbert, Western Queensland, for making fishing lines, etc. A sample of *Pitcherry*, or *Pituri*, a native plant from the same locality, chewed by the aborigines for the purpose of producing intoxication.
4. From Mr. H. Gill, Rheban, East Coast.—Two Fishes, viz., a species of *Clonus*, and a specimen of the "sharp-nosed" Eel.
5. From Miss Cracroft (niece of Sir John Franklin)—Portraits of Sir John and Lady Franklin, and photograph of the Franklin Monument in Westminster Abbey.

In noticing the presentations to the Library the Secretary called special attention to the very large number of valuable publications received from

various learned bodies and institutions, in England and America. In reference to presentation No. 3 to Museum, Mr. E. D. Swan pointed out that this plant had been proved by Baron von Müeller to be the *Duboisia hopwoodii*. "The active principle seems to be almost identical with Atropine, both as regards its action and its strength, and it is used in Sydney and Brisbane in place of that alkaloid." (*Nature*, 18th April, 1878.) Mr. Abbott mentioned we had in the Botanic Gardens an allied species, received from Baron von Müeller. As to presentation No. 5 the Secretary read the following extract from a note by the donor:—"You may possibly know too, that I lived with my dearest aunts and her daughter, to the end of her life here. Having ascertained that there is no portrait of either my uncle or my aunt in the building belonging to the Royal Society, which owes its origin to their united interest in its objects, I send to your care, for the Society, a copy of each. The one of my uncle you must have seen. It is engraved from the latest taken of him. That of my aunt is a fac-simile of the only one existing, and which, together with the original of the other, belongs to me. There was one portrait of her, taken by Negelen at the same time with that of my uncle, but he carried it away with him, and she never could be induced to sit again under any circumstances. I feel sure that both will have especial interest with those who recollect Sir John and Lady Franklin."

A letter from Professor Haast, of the Canterbury Museum, New Zealand, was read, from which the following extract is given in the hope it may attract the attention of some member of the Society who may be in a position to obtain specimens of the Native Tiger and Devil—the former especially being very much wanted for Museums in New Zealand and elsewhere. "I am in the midst of re-arranging our collections, and have already come across several duplicates which might be useful to you. Amongst them are skeleton and skin of Giraffe, middle size; skeleton of a Lioness, not full grown; and a *Rhea* skeleton beautifully mounted. These specimens are at your service. In return I should like some skins of the Tasmanian Tiger and Devil, and any other quadrupeds' skins and skeletons you can spare." Also "some of the implements and tools of the Natives," etc.

Mr. F. Abbott, junr., read "Notes on *Carduus arvensis* (*Cnicus arvensis* of some authors), or common creeping thistle; with a short reference to *Cnicus lanceolatus*, the Spear or Plume Thistle."

The paper was illustrated by reference to plates of the Creeping Thistle, very truthfully executed in a work "Theater of Plants," by John Parkinson, published in 1640; drawings of the plant by writers of recent date, were also laid before the meeting.

In the discussion which ensued, and in which several members took part, Mr. Swan remarked that attempts had been made to destroy the growth of the thistle by covering it with seaweed, but the result was a failure. It might, however, be advisable to give this experiment a further trial when practicable.

Mr. STEPHENS called attention to the somewhat singular circumstance that although the thistle was in the first instance carried from place to place by seed, yet when it became established in any particular locality, its extension took place principally by root growth, and only to a slight extent by seed. It was, therefore, of great importance to isolate the plant thoroughly, so that its seed should not be allowed to mix with that of the neighbouring crops, and thus disseminate the evil. Mr. Stephens also showed a sketch of the long-handled pliers made use of in England for the purpose of extracting the stems of the thistle before the seed formation took place.

Seeing that the word "Californian" as applied to this thistle was shown by Mr. Abbott to be a misnomer, the general opinion of the meet-

ing was that the old English term of "creeping" should be restored as being peculiarly appropriate and characteristic of the habits of the plant.

Mr. SWAN, after referring to the thoughtful kindness of Miss Cracroft in forwarding to the Society the valued present which had been laid before the meeting, observed he was sure every member who was aware of the deep obligation the Society was under to her uncle, would heartily sympathise with her in the respect and veneration in which she held the memory of Sir John and Lady Franklin, and he therefore proposed that a special vote of thanks be given to her for the presentation.

The motion, having been seconded by Dr. Perkins, was carried, and a special vote having also been accorded to Mr. Abbott for his valuable and timely paper, the proceedings terminated.

SEPTEMBER, 1878.

In consequence of the death of Mr. Morton Allport, no meeting was held this month.