

ROYAL SOCIETY, 1877.

MARCH, 1877.

The monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, 13th March, James Barnard, Esq., in the chair.

The following gentlemen, who had previously been nominated by the Council, were balloted for and declared duly elected as Fellows of the Society, viz., the Revd. John Gray, Messrs. R. R. Rex and William Belbin, M.H.A. Professor Ulrich, of Melbourne; and Alexander Wallis, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, Victoria, were elected as corresponding members.

The HON. SECRETARY (Dr. Agnew) brought under notice the following returns :—

1. Number of Visitors to Museum during January, 1536; February, 1402.
2. Ditto to Gardens, January, 4279; February, 3939.
3. Plants received at Gardens during February 7th.
4. Time of leafing, etc., of a few standard plants in Botanic Gardens during February.
5. Presentations to Museum.
6. Books and periodicals purchased and presented.

America as usual has been the most liberal donor to the library, the present contribution comprising no less than ten quarto volumes—an "Atlas of Mining Industry"—Geological Explorations, with numerous pamphlets, and proceedings of various learned Societies.

Meteorological Returns.

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq., tables for January and February.
2. New Norfolk, from W. E. Shoobridge, Esq., ditto, ditto.
3. Port Arthur, from Dr. Coverdale, ditto, ditto.
4. Mount Nelson, tables for January and February; South Bruni Lighthouse, ditto; King's Island Lighthouse, ditto for October, November, and December, 1876, and January 1877. From the Marine Board.

The presentations to the Museum were as follows :—

1. From G. Bennett, Esq., M.D., F.L.S., F.Z.S.—A collection of Fossils, from Darling Downs, Queensland, viz.: Portion of Humerus, second vertebra (axis), and lower jaw of *Diprotodon Australis*. Tusks or Incisors of ditto. Portion of jaw of Kangaroo (*Procoptodon Goliah*, Owen). Molar teeth and portion of Jaw of *Diprotodon*. Jaws of different species of Kangaroo (*Macropus*.) (With note).
2. From Mrs. S. Parsons.—Models of a Rice boat, and Passenger boat, from Ceylon.
3. From Mr. Tabor, Huon Road.—Specimen of *Gordius* sp.
4. From Mr. E. Oldfield, Launceston.—An Egg, probably of a species of Petrel imbedded in hardened guano, from Bird Island.
5. From Mr. Josh. Gates.—Portion of human Skull from Kaipara, New Zealand.
6. From Mr. Thos. Dury.—One pound note of Faversham Bank, 1813.
7. From Mr. W. C. Blyth.—Three specimens of *Unio mortonicus* from Campbell Town.
8. From Mr. Graves.—Cast skin of Snake.
9. From Mr. Ferguson, Tinder-box Bay.—Skull of Seal (*Stenorhynchus leptonyx*).

10. From Capt. Dillner, brig Prairie.—Specimens of Copper Ore, Nickel, Limestone, Beche-de-Mer, etc. from New Caledonia. Shells from Browse, and other Islands. A living specimen of the Frilled Lizard (*Chlamydosaurus kingii*) from Port Darwin.
 11. From the Rev. James Thomas.—Six very beautiful specimens of Coral from the Friendly Islands.
 12. From Mr. W. J. Watchorn.—A Mexican Saddle, Bridle, Spurs, etc., etc.
 13. From R. C. Kermode, Esq.—A named collection of English and Tasmanian Insects, and Eggs of Tasmanian Birds, mounted in a handsome cabinet. [The collection comprises 1339 specimens of Tasmanian, 205 of New South Wales, and 35 of English Insects; with 171 eggs].
 14. From J. K. Clark, Esq.—Three Pheasants, beautifully prepared and mounted in glass case.
 15. From Mr. T. Bates, Adelaide.—A silver Penny of James II., 1688.
 16. From H. M. Hull, Esq.—A Treasury Bill dated 1827, with autographs of Commissaries A. Moodie, G. Boyes, and G. Hull.
 17. From J. Scott, Esq., M.H.A.—Specimens of the small green Beetle which proved so destructive to vegetation in various districts of the colony during the early part of the summer.
 18. From J. E. Calder, Esq.—Similar specimens.
 19. From Mrs. Robert Gatenby, Isis River.—Seventeen silver and two copper Coins.
 20. From Mr. J. Whitehouse.—A large Mussel from the Derwent.
 21. From Mr. Eddington, Sorell.—Specimen of the sooty Crow-shrike (*Strepera fuliginosa*) of an unusually light colour.
 22. From Mr. Brent.—A Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) shot at Glenorchy.
 23. From Mr. Weaver.—A spine-tailed Swift (*Chaetura caudacuta*).
 24. From Mrs. C. O. Parsons.—A specimen of one of the "Walking-stick Insects" (*Phasmidae*), probably *Acrophylla Chronus*, from Kurrijong, North Richmond, New South Wales. (See British Museum Cat. of Orthopterous Insects, p. 114, pl. 5 supplement.)
 25. From Mr. Armstrong, Christchurch, New Zealand.—A Human Skull, labelled "Head of Moa Hunter," with fragments of jade, etc., from Canterbury Plains, N.Z.
 26. From Mr. Collis.—Skin of an Australian Coot (*Fulica Australis*).—A Spanish Dollar found on Cape Barren Island, near supposed site of the wreck of the barque Britomart, about the year 1838.
 27. From Mr. John Gillon.—A collection of Cornelians from the Public Cemetery, Cornelian Bay.
 28. From Mrs. R. Pybus.—An ornamental Basket composed of shells collected at Bruni Island.
 29. From Professor R. Tate, Adelaide.—Specimens of *Belemnites senescens* and *Salenia tertiaria* from the middle tertiaries Aldinga, South Australia. Six specimens of South Australian Polyzoa, with a paper.
- [The special attention of the meeting was called to presentation No. 13, which was examined with the greatest interest by all present. The collection was made by the donor himself. When recently in England, Mr. Kermode had the entire collection properly displayed, classified, and named by Janson, and thus for all time a trustworthy and authoritative standard of reference will be afforded to the entomologists of Tasmania [by means of this truly valuable and liberal donation.]

In reference to presentation No. 1, the following letter from the donor, Dr. G. Bennett, was read :—

"Sydney, Decr. 23rd, 1876.

"MY DEAR DR. AGNEW,—Mrs. C. Moore, visiting Hobart Town, has

kindly taken charge of a few fossils from Darling Downs, Queensland, which I present to the Royal Society if they are worthy of acceptance. (*Here follows a description of the fossils as detailed in the list of donations.*)

"In a letter from Professor Owen, dated Oct. 25th, 1876, he says his large and expensive work on the Australian fossils will soon be published, and adds, 'I have now got to p. 520, and plate 131!'

"Yours, etc., etc.,

"GEORGE BENNETT, M.D."

The SECRETARY informed the meeting that the microscope then on the table was presented to the Society by Mr. P. T. Smith prior to his departure for England. The instrument was a first-class one, by Ross, and was furnished with very many accessories, a vast number of mounted objects, etc. It was a very great acquisition for the Society, as its value (with its numerous appliances) could not be far short of £200. It had recently belonged to the late Dr. Valentine of Campbell Town.

The SECRETARY reported that the committee appointed at the late general meeting of the Society, for the purpose of urging upon Government the claims of the Public Gardens for an increase of the grant-in-aid, had waited on the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, and had expressed the views of the Society on the subject. In reply, the Colonial Secretary admitted he was fully convinced as to the claims of the Gardens to increased support, and expressed himself as being most desirous to do anything which might be in his power in the matter. As his colleagues, however, were not in town, he suggested that the committee should address to him a letter containing a full statement of the case. This he would submit without loss of time to the other members of Government for their consideration, and, although of course they had no power to give immediate effect to the views of the deputation, the subject would be brought by means of the estimates under the consideration of Parliament at its next meeting.

Subsequent to this interview the committee had agreed upon the following letter, which was accordingly forwarded to the Honorable the Colonial Secretary :—

"Royal Society of Tasmania,

"24th February, 1877.

"SIR,—Agreeably to your request to the committee which was appointed at a general meeting of this Society, to wait on you in order to advocate the claims of the Public Gardens to increased assistance from Government, I beg, on behalf of the committee, to submit the following statement, which may be considered supplementary to former communications addressed to Government on the 20th May, 1875; 8th September, 1875; and 5th April, 1876 :—

"The grant-in-aid is now only £400, and if we add to this £120 as the extreme money value of the prison labour, the total assistance from Government will not exceed £520 per annum, but may be less. Thirty-seven years ago the assistance rendered by Government was equal to £1,200 at the present time; although at the former period the Gardens were little more than half their present size, they contained probably little more than one-tenth of the number of plants now in cultivation, and labour and provisions, as calculated by Mr. Abbott, were about one-third of their present value. The labour afforded by the prison gang, too, is not satisfactory in character, as the men are naturally idle and indifferent, and, from ignorance of the work, they cannot be employed in any operations requiring skill or care; and their supervision also requires the attention of one of the few skilled gardeners, whose loss is consequently severely felt elsewhere.

"It is to be recollected that the Government grant only supplies labour to the value of £250, as the very inadequate salary of the superintendent absorbs the remainder, and is must therefore be self-evident that, for such

a sum, at the present rate of wages, not one-third part of the ground could be properly cultivated. Were £300 a year added, the Gardens might be kept in a tolerably creditable condition, yet even this would be a mere fraction in comparison with the sums granted for similar purposes in the neighbouring colonies. In Victoria, for Gardens about twice as large as ours, £7,220 were voted for the year 1876-7. In New South Wales the Gardens received £4,469; in South Australia, £6,700; and in Queensland, £2,485.

"Very recently the free labourers in the Gardens forwarded a respectful petition for a small increase to their pay, which is only four shillings per day, without rations! This very fair petition could not be complied with for want of funds, and although the men, from long habit and interest in their work, have remained much longer than could have been expected, it is now known they will not continue to do so, and it would be quite impossible to replace them. The urgency, therefore, for an increased grant is most pressing.

"It has been said if an increased grant were given to these Gardens that similar assistance would be asked for other places. But this objection has no real weight, as no colony could fairly be expected to support duplicate National Institutions. Even a wealthy nation like England does not support more than one British Museum, one Royal Observatory, or one great Botanical Garden (Kew). It must, indeed, be evident that, in an economic and educational point of view, it must be more to our advantage to have one well appointed and scientifically conducted Garden, than to fritter away our means on several, all of which would necessarily be inferior in quality, discreditable to the colony, and valueless for educational purposes.

"It may be added that in making this application for a grant of £700 a year to these National Gardens the Royal Society is acting solely on behalf of the public. It is not, perhaps, generally understood that the Society receives nothing whatever from Government, and has never asked anything for itself. It is in fact self-supporting, and at its own expense issues its publications; maintains its continually increasing library; and keeps up friendly relations with kindred institutions in various parts of the world. On many occasions it has even afforded considerable pecuniary assistance to both Gardens and Museum. As to the grants to the Museum and Gardens the Society acts strictly as an agent for Government, by receiving and distributing them in a correct and careful manner.

"I have the honour, etc., etc.,

"J. W. AGNEW, M.D.,

"Hon. Sec.

"The Hon. the Colonial Secretary."

The feeling of the meeting, as expressed by several of the members, appeared to be that the Committee had done all that was possible in the matter for which it was appointed, and that the future of the Gardens must rest in the hands of the Ministry and of Parliament.

The Rev. W. W. SPICER mentioned that during the interview with the Hon. the Colonial Secretary he had recommended the interchange of certain books between the Public, the Parliamentary, and the Royal Society's Libraries. Each library, in fact, contained some works which would find a more fitting place on the shelves of another, and the interchange would be a benefit to all. The Colonial Secretary had entertained the idea favorably, and he (the speaker) felt certain that good would result were it acted on.

It was agreed that the Librarians of the several libraries should be requested to compare their catalogues, and determine if satisfactory interchanges might be made, it being understood that no such exchanges could be effected without the sanction of Parliament.

The SECRETARY laid on the table two copies of the *Santa Barbara*

(California) *Weekly Press*, with many cuttings from American papers on the subject of Angora wool, together with a sample of the wool itself. [The sample, which can be seen at the Museum, is a pure white, with a beautiful silky lustre, and $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length.] The following letter was read :—

“*Santa Barbara Press*,

“Santa Barbara, Cal., U.S.,

“14th January, 1877.

“To the Hon. Secretary, Royal Society of Tasmania.

“DEAR SIR,—I have read in the *Bulletin* of our National Association of Wool Manufacturers, interesting extracts from the proceedings of your Society relative to the culture of the Angora Goat in Tasmania, and have re-published portions of the same, which I will mail to you in the *Press*.

“I write to ask you to favour me with a complete printed copy of your proceedings containing the able paper of Mr. John Swan, M.H.A., on this topic, together with any other facts in your possession relative to the introduction, culture, and breeding of the Angora in your country. It is an object of great interest to me and to California, and I wish the facts for preservation and dissemination. In return for the courtesy I will be glad to mail to your address some publications on this industry in this country, which I hope will be found of interest. I will of course pay, besides, any charges there may be on the papers you may send, when the same shall have been ascertained.

“I have written Mr. Swan, in your care, to the same effect.

“I am, etc., etc.,

“H. G. OTIS,

“Editor.”

The SECRETARY read a paper “On some South Australian Polyzoa,” by F. W. Hutton, Esq., F.G.S., Director of the Museum, Dunedin; and in connection with it the following note from Professor R. Tate, of Adelaide, was also read :—

“4 Buxton-street, Adelaide,

“17th Novr., 1876.

“DEAR SIR,—Herewith I send you M.S. ‘On some South Australian Polyzoa’ by my correspondent Mr. F. Hutton, as a communication to the Royal Society of Tasmania; also specimens of the new species therein described.

“I beg to communicate that I have discovered species of *Belemnites* and *Salenia* in the Middle Tertiaries (? Miocene) of South Australia; they were obtained by myself in the sea cliffs of Aldinga Bay, about 26 miles south from here, and are associated with the characteristic fossils of the Murray and Mount Gambier beds. The technical descriptions of the new species have been communicated to the Geological Society of London, and the species named *Belemnites senescens* and *Salenia tertiaria*.

“Hitherto the genus *Belemnites* has been represented in Tertiary strata only by one species, from the Eocene of Germany.

“The present species of *Salenia* is the first recorded from Cainozoic strata, and it happily fills the gap which was made by the discovery of the genus in a living state during the voyage of the Challenger. I send you examples of the new species.

“Truly yours,

“RALPH TATE.

“Dr. Agnew, Secretary Royal Society of Tasmania.”

A “Census, with brief description of the Marine Shells of Tasmania and the adjacent Islands,” by the Rev. J. E. Tenison-Woods, F.L.S., F.G.S., F.R.G.S., Corresponding Member of the Royal Societies of New South Wales and Tasmania, etc., etc., was laid on the table.

The Rev. W. W. SPICER after commenting on the great value to all

future Tasmanian entomologists of the large cabinet presented by Mr. R. Kermode, proposed a special vote of thanks to the donor. A similar vote was also due to Mr. P. T. Smith for the Microscope, a presentation for which any Society would feel indebted, and he had much pleasure in including in his motion Dr. G. Bennett, the learned naturalist of Sydney, for his most interesting presentation. The motion having been carried, the thanks of the meeting were accorded to the authors of papers and to the donors of presentations, when the proceedings terminated.