

NOVEMBER, 1888.

The monthly meeting of the Royal Society was held in the new wing of the Tasmanian Museum on November 13. The chair was occupied by His Excellency Sir Robert George Crookshank Hamilton, K.C.B., President of the Society.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY.

List of additions to the library during the month of October :—

Annual Report of the Secretary for Mines and Water Supply, Victoria, "On the working of the Regulation and Inspection of Mines and Mining Machinery Act during the year 1887."—From the Department.

Annals and Magazines of Natural History.

Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana, Serie III., Vol. I., Fascicolo VIII., Agosto 1888.—From the Society.

Classified Index of the Second Supplement to the Indigenous and Naturalised Plants of Queensland, with alphabetical index of Genera by F. Manson Bailey, F.L.S.—From the Author.

Die Internationale Polarforschung 1882-83, Beobachtungs-Ergebnisse der Norwegischen Polarstation Bossekop in Alten.—From the Department.

Geological Magazine, current numbers.

Iconography of Australian species of Acacia and Cognate genera, by Baron F. Von Mülller, K.C.M.G. (Twelfth decade.)—From the Government.

Journal and proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales, Vol. XXII, pt. 1.—From the Society.

Meteorological Service, Dominion of Canada. Monthly Weather Review, June, 1888.—From the Department.

Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland, 1888, Vol. V., pt. II.—From the Society.

Prodromus of the Zoology of Victoria, decade XVI., by Frederick McCoy, C.M.G.—From the Government.

Report on the Geological Features of the Mackay District by R. L. Jack, Government Geologist.—From the Department.

Scottish Geographical Magazine, Vol. IV., No. 9.—From the Society.

Scientific Proceedings of the Royal Dublin Society, vol. V., VI., parts 7, 8, N.S. parts 1, 2.—From the Society.

Scientific Transactions of the Royal Dublin Society, vol. III., series II. XV.—The Echinoderm Fauna of the Island of Ceylon, by F. Jeffrey Bell, M.A. Vol. IV., series II.—On Fossil-Fish Remains from the Tertiary and Cretaceous Formations of New Zealand, by J. W. Davis, F.G.S.—From the Society.

Summary and Review of International Meteorological Observations for the month of July, 1887, United States.—From the War Department.

Synopsis of the Queensland Flora, containing both the Phænogamous and Cryptogamous Plants, by F. M. Bailey (bound).—From the Author.

Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Victorian Branch), Pt. 1, Vol. VI.—From the Society.

Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria, Vol. XXIV., Pt. II.—From the Society.

Transactions of the Geological Society of Australasia, Vol. I., Pt. III.—From the Society.

Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. VII., Pts. 1 and 2.—From the Society.

Victorian Year Book for 1887-8, Vol. 1.—From the Government Statist.

THE FRENCH IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

Mr. J. B. WALKER read a paper on "The French in Van Diemen's Land and the first settlement at the Derwent." The paper had been written at the request of the Premier (Hon. P. O. Fysh), and was founded principally on documents relating to the early history of Tasmania, preserved in the English Record Office, and copied by Mr. James Bonwick (the well-known writer on the Tasmanian aborigines), under instructions from the Tasmanian Government. The paper began by a reference to Professor Seeley's statement in his work on "The Expansion of England," that the wars of last century between England and France had been a duel for the possession of the new world. The writer proceeded to trace the influence of that rivalry on the colonisation of Australia. At the end of the last century France had lost nearly all her colonial possessions, and England had lost her North American colonies by revolt. This loss was probably one potent moving cause in the settlement of Australia. When it was found necessary to provide a new method of disposing of the criminal population, English statesmen naturally turned to the new land in the south just made known by Captain Cook. French writers many years before had advocated the settlement by convicts and foundlings of some land in the South Sea, and England in 1788 carried out the idea by the settlement of New South Wales. There had long been a keen rivalry between the two nations in discovery in the South Seas. France did not relinquish her designs on Australia because of the English colony, and the Derwent had always been a favoured spot for her navigators. After Tasman's discovery of Tasmania in 1642, the first visitor to our shores was the Frenchman Marion in 1772, and although Cook and others had touched at Adventure Bay, the French Admiral Bruny D'Entrecasteaux in 1792 was the first to discover and explore the channel which bears his name and the magnificent harbour of the Derwent. The expedition remained some weeks in the channel, and made surveys indicating an intention to colonise. The French expedition of Baudin was sent out expressly to further explore Tasmania and the coast of Australia, probably with a view of forming a settlement. The French ships spent weeks in the Derwent, and then visited Sydney, where they were received with great hospitality, though France and England were then at war, in striking contrast to the French treatment of Captain Flinders, who less than a year afterwards had his ship seized at Mauritius, and was imprisoned for six years, while his discoveries were claimed by the French as having been made by Baudin's expedition. The settlement of the Derwent in 1803 was made by Governor King, in consequence of a report which reached him that Baudin had orders to plant a colony at the Derwent. King sent a little vessel after Baudin, to inform him that he would resist by force any attempt on the part of the French to occupy any portion of Tasmania. This vessel—the Cumberland, 29 tons—was commanded by Captain Robbins, who examined King's Island, then proceeded to Port Phillip, made the first survey of that port, and returned to Sydney. The Governor then determined to be on the safe side, and anticipate any action by the French, by sending Captain John Bowen with a small establishment to Risdon on the Derwent to form a settlement. Bowen sailed from Sydney in June, 1803, but was driven back by stress of weather. On August 31, 1803, he sailed again in the Albion whaler, with the Lady Nelson in company carrying the bulk of his people. The Lady Nelson arrived at Risdon on September 7, and Bowen himself in the Albion on the 12th of the same month. Bowen's civil establishment consisted of three persons, himself, a doctor, and a storekeeper; his military establishment of a corporal and seven privates. He took 21 male and three female convicts, and four free settlers. Altogether 49 persons, of whom 13 were women and children. They

had six months' provisions, 10 head of cattle, and about 50 sheep. This was the first settlement in Tasmania. Risdon was abandoned in the following year when Lieutenant-Governor David Collins founded Hobart.

His EXCELLENCY said he was only expressing the feelings of every one present at the satisfactory account which Mr. Walker had given of the early history of the colony. He invited any person present to speak upon it.

The Hon. P. O. FYSH said he confessed that he had been at a loss what to do with the historical papers which had been left as a legacy by his predecessors in office, and he had cast about him to see how that could best be dealt with. There was a mass of manuscripts comprising 600 pages, and he thought that in Mr. Walker there was a friend to whom he could refer them. That gentleman had made the study of Tasmanian history a speciality, and for that reason he was pleased to hand them over to him. The documents came down to him early in the present year and when looking over them with Mr. Walker, they noticed a very curious coincidence that whilst England at the end of last century was engaged in a difficulty with the French in regard to the settlements in Tasmania, at the time the papers reached them there were also difficulties with the French in regard to the New Hebrides. The papers dealt with brought them down to 1805, but there were some 700 pages more which brought them down to 1807, and unless he could get Mr. Walker to undertake to deal with them he did not know how the historical facts would obtain publicity. Mr. Bonwick was still going on searching the archives of the War Office in Paris, and various places in England, and he proposed to bring this batch down to 1824, the time of Governor Sorell. It could not, however, be expected that Parliament would undertake the publication of the whole of the facts which were thus obtained, and he was in hopes that after the reading of Mr. Walker's paper, the Society would assist the Government by appointing a committee which would advise Mr. Bonwick as to the matters which should have special attention. He had had very much pleasure in listening to the paper read by Mr. Walker, and trusted that he would have his help in future.

Bishop SANDFORD said with regard to Antarctic exploration, he thought that if for meteorological purposes only they were bound to explore the lands near the South Pole. He thought they might very largely increase the knowledge of the earth by further Antarctic explorations.

Mr. J. B. WALKER briefly acknowledged the kind terms in which His Excellency and other Fellows had spoken of the paper. With respect to the State documents copied by Mr. Bonwick, he suggested that the Government or the Royal Society should have them abstracted or calendared for public information. He wished also to take the opportunity of calling the Premier's attention to the fact that no official papers before 1821 were to be found in the Chief Secretary's office. On enquiring for these earlier records of the colony, he had been informed that they were supposed to be lying hidden away in the cellars of the Houses of Parliament. He trusted that the Premier would take steps to rescue from destruction by damp and neglect papers of so much value for the future historian of Tasmania.

THE TASMANIAN UNIO.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON, F.L.S., said as the hour was late, he would not read the paper he had prepared on "Observations on the variability of the Tasmanian Unio," but would simply give an abstract of it. He gave a description of the variability of the freshwater Unio which inhabited and was restricted to the northern rivers of the colony, and

especially the South Esk. He gave drawings of seven stages of growth, and showed how that if the variability of these stages be taken into consideration it would indicate that many of the Australian forms, regarded as distinct species, may be due to the accidental selection of different stages of growth of one widely distributed form. He urged that before the perfect classification of the *Unionidae* of Australia, a similar study of variability of widely-scattered habitats must be made before satisfactory classification could be established. For these reasons he felt disinclined to accept another synonym for our local form at the present time.

TIPPAGORY COAL.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON also made some observations upon a specimen of coaly shale obtained by Mr. Hackett whilst exploring on the Tippagory Range, near Mount George, in the vicinity of George Town. He said it was a coaly shale containing abundant impressions of *Gangamopteris spatulata*, McCoy, and therefore allied to the coal measures of the Mersey, rather than to those of the south-eastern portions of Tasmania, and would, therefore, be much older than the latter.

REVIEW OF THE SESSION.

The PRESIDENT said:—

Gentlemen,—We have now come to the last of our meetings in the year 1888, and following the precedent of 1887, I propose to sum up briefly the results of the session. The number of our Fellows is somewhat in excess of last year. The additions to our library have been very satisfactory, and the number of societies with which we exchange our publications has been increased by the important additions of the Royal Dublin Society, and the Royal Geographical Society of Edinburgh. In referring to the additions to our library, I would call special attention to Mr. Johnston's great work, "A Systematic Account of the Geology of Tasmania," published by the Tasmanian Government, who are highly to be commended for the handsome contribution to the cause of science which the cost of the production of this elaborate work must have involved. We opened the present session with a conversazione held in the new rooms recently added to the Museum, which was largely attended, and at which some very interesting mechanical processes were exhibited. We have held five meetings, and have had submitted to us the following papers, viz., in "Ichthyology," from Sir Thomas Brady, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Seager. In "Ornithology" from Mr. Petterd and Colonel Legge; in "Conchology" from Messrs. Johnston (2), and from Mr. Petterd; in "Mineralogy" from Mr. Toplis; in "Geology" from Mr. Davies; in "Exploration" from Mr. Andrew; in "Topography" from Mr. Walker; and in "Statistics" from Mr. Johnston. We have no reason to be ashamed of the quality of the work of the session, but the quantity is not so great as usual. A glance at the list of contributors shows how much we owe to one or two of our members, notably Mr. Johnston. If, through any misfortune the Society were deprived of the work of some half-dozen members, as we have already, I am sorry to say, been deprived of Mr. Bastow's work though he has become a corresponding member, I fear the record would be very meagre. Now, is it not possible to remedy this? I find on looking at the reports of the other Australasian Societies that they include many more subjects than we do, such, for instance, as engineering, agriculture, use of timbers, etc. I feel pretty sure that some of our members might usefully contribute on some of these subjects. Then, again, we have no papers this year on health matters—drainage and sewage. Considering that we have among us so many medical men—men of science capable of dealing with these subjects—I think this is matter for regret, and I

hope it will be remedied next session. It cannot be held that our position in respect of sanitary matters is such, notwithstanding our great natural advantages, as to make them subjects of indifference to us. It is satisfactory to find that the attention given by this society to the necessity for preventing the wholesale slaughter of the mutton bird and the opossum has borne fruit, and that Acts have been passed by Parliament this year which afford them some protection. It may be remembered that at the closing meeting of last session a very interesting paper was read by Mr. Laurie, showing the necessity of scientific and technical education. Since then two technical schools have been established, the one in Launceston, and the other in Hobart, which are attended by about 150 pupils, and are doing good work. In the matter of art, we are endeavouring to secure an exhibition in Hobart of a collection of pictures from the British Artists' Society about to be exhibited in Sydney. The subject was brought under our notice by the Hon. W. H. Burgess on his return from England, and a committee has been appointed to communicate with that society on the subject. There is almost no limit to the useful work which a society like this, having for its object the advancement of science and investigations of a physical character, can undertake, and I hope that next session we may have papers on some of the subjects to which I have referred, respecting which we have had no contributions this year. In a small community like ours, the minute subdivision of subjects which properly exists in large centres like London would be out of place and practically impossible. There you have separate societies for every important branch of investigation. Here we combine all, and we do more, for we endeavour, as far as possible, to make our meetings attractive by a judicious mixture of subjects so that they are not all merely food for scientists but are of general interest as well. Such papers for instance as those read by Sir Thomas Brady, Mr. Seager, and Mr. Johnston, on the acclimatisation of the salmonidæ in Tasmanian waters were not alone of interest and value to the scientist and naturalist. The subject of acclimatisation is of great interest to us all, an interest not confined to Tasmania, for numerous articles have appeared in the English press commenting upon the good work done in this direction by Tasmania. We have still much to learn, not only as regards the effects of acclimatisation on the salmonidæ, but also on the trees and shrubs, and flower and vegetable life which has been transplanted here. This opens a wide and interesting field for observers, and I trust we may have the results of their observations submitted to this Society in its future sessions. In such matters, too, as a native shrub like the wattle tree there is room for interesting observation. The wattle tree bark is now so important an article of commerce that it would be very desirable to know whether it is necessary in Tasmania, as is done in some of the other colonies, to re-plant trees to take the place of those stripped of their bark, or whether they reproduce themselves sufficiently without planting. This year has witnessed the establishment of an Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science based on the same lines as the British Association. It does not interfere with the ground occupied by any of the existing scientific societies in the various colonies, although its objects are somewhat similar. Its objects are to give a stronger impulse, and a more systematic direction to scientific inquiry, to promote the intercourse of those who cultivate science in different parts of the British Empire with one another and with foreign philosophers; to obtain more general attention to the objects of science, and a removal of any disadvantages of a public kind which may impede its progress. This is a direction in which no difficulties ought to stand in the way of federation, and we have given this association our warmest support. It will no doubt have the effect of attracting more attention to the scientific work turned out in the colonies than I fear it has hitherto

received at the hands of scientists at home, and may lead to the proceedings of this and kindred societies in the other colonies being more studied. It is true that our publications go home now, but people live at such high pressure that they have little time to unearth the many gems these contain unless they are directly brought to their notice. But an association of this sort, by directing attention to what is being done in the cause of the advancement of science generally, cannot fail to secure greater attention being paid to the work in these colonies, much of which is on a level with similar work produced at home. Our society was worthily represented at the first meeting of the association which was held in Sydney in August last by our senior vice-president, Mr. Barnard, who did his utmost to secure that the next annual-gathering of the association should be held at Hobart. In this, I am sorry to say, he was not successful; but when the meeting does take place here we shall accord the representatives from the other colonies a most hearty welcome. Our Society naturally takes great interest in the Centennial Exhibition now being held at Melbourne, and we are particularly pleased at the completeness of the Natural History collection in the Tasmanian Court. The exhibits also from the technical schools of Tasmania are very creditable, considering how short a time the schools have been in operation. In conclusion, our best thanks are due to those of our members who have submitted papers and taken part in the discussions upon them, and to our secretary, Mr. Morton, who is as indefatigable as ever. To the Press also we are much indebted for their accounts of the proceedings at our meetings. We hope that from a business point of view it suits their purpose to give the full reports they do of our proceedings, but nevertheless we are under obligations to them for the space which they always ungrudgingly allot to the operations of the Society. In bidding you farewell till next year, I would again impress upon you, as I did last year, the importance of more members doing work for the Society, and especially I would ask our medical friends, who are experts in matters relating to health and sanitation, not to let another session pass without contributing to the Society some papers on these all-important subjects. I know how valuable the time of medical men is, but I know also how much science owes to them, and I dare hope that the medical men of Hobart will not be behind their fellows elsewhere in that devotion to the cause of science for which the profession is so worthily distinguished. I hope also that a suggestion I made last year, although it has not been acted upon this session, may be acted upon in future sessions, and it is this. As you know, we receive from other scientific societies copies of their proceedings in exchange for ours, and I would again suggest to some of our members how advantageous it would be to us if they would, in the shape of papers which could be read at our Society, tell us something of the work those other societies are turning out on kindred subjects to our own. This would not only be very interesting and instructive, but I believe that it would both directly and indirectly tend to improve our original work, and thus still further increase the usefulness of this society, whose interests we all have so much at heart. I regret that this is the last occasion on which we shall be favoured at this Society with the genial presence of His Lordship the Bishop, and I assure him that the best wishes of the Society will follow him into his new sphere of labour. (Loud applause.)

Sir LAMBERT DOBSON said their president had summed up the work of the session so compactly that it was almost presumptive for him to say anything after it. They owed a great deal to His Excellency for the great interest he took in their Society. He had at times trembled for the Society when he had seen men like Mr. Spicer, Father Julian Woods, and others going from them, and he hoped yet to see something done to enlarge the scope of the Society as suggested by His Excellency. The Society was started by Sir John Franklin as a recording society, and

they were gradually running down that line ever since. It was true that there were only a few who worked in the Society, but there were many difficulties in the way. It was a question, however, whether they might not enlarge their work by having lectures on such subjects as light and heat, etc. He was glad to see that technical education had been introduced, and he would like to see it extended much further, as he believed that to keep pace with the world they must go in for education. With regard to art, a subject on which His Excellency had touched, he believed there was a brighter time coming in this direction after the lull which had been experienced. They suffered by the superior attractions of the other colonies, and as soon as they got good men amongst them they lost them again. He was reminded whilst speaking of this that one of the exhibits of drawing which had been forwarded by the Technical School to the Centennial Exhibition had been sent for by Victorians, and lost to the colony simply because their friends over the water had noticed the lad's ability. However, he did not think they should be discouraged, but go on and do their best in educating the youth of the colony.

Mr. BARNARD made the following remarks : As Your Excellency has been pleased to make mention, in your interesting address, of my recent visit to Sydney, to attend the meeting of the Australian Association for the Promotion of Science, I may be permitted to give some particulars of that visit. Up to the last moment I had no intention of being present, until I learnt that our highly esteemed Honorary Secretary and Vice-President, the Hon. Dr. Agnew, had excused himself on the score of illness from giving attendance at the meeting, where he was to have read a Presidential address on the science of Anthropology. As I had been appointed, in conjunction with His Lordship the Bishop, to represent our Royal Society at this meeting of the Association, I determined, although at the eleventh hour (not liking our Society to be unrepresented), to attend the meeting, knowing that the Bishop could not possibly leave the more important work of his diocese. The proceedings of the Association commenced on the 28th of August; but owing to untoward circumstances I was unable to leave Tasmania before that very day, arriving in Sydney on the 30th, so that all the bloom was, as it were, taken off, as the various Presidential addresses had been delivered before my arrival. However, I at once set to work to make the best of the fragment of time remaining; and I accordingly devoted myself to two subjects which I conceived would be of especial interest to our Royal Society. The first of these was the fixing by the general body of members of the places of meeting of the Association for 1889 and 1890. In the discussion I urged the claims of Hobart for the distinction of being chosen upon several grounds which appeared to me sufficiently cogent. The first ground was the priority over other scientific bodies in Australia of our Royal Society, which was founded in 1843, and of its predecessor, the Tasmanian Society, established in 1840. The second ground was, that it must prove agreeable to the members of the Association to escape from the sultry heats of Australia to enjoy the cool breezes of Tasmania. The third ground was that Hobart was a city when Victoria was in the cradle. The fourth and last ground was, that Victoria owed its parentage to Tasmania its first settlers having come from our island; and then I was guilty of the pedantry of quoting from an ode of Horace which came into my mind—

“O matre pulchrâ filia pulchrior!”

Although my motion was seconded by Professor Ellery, who spoke strongly in its favour, we were outnumbered in the voting, and it was lost in favour of Melbourne for 1889, and of New Zealand for 1890. However, there is little doubt that in 1891 Hobart would be chosen in preference to Adelaide, which had much fewer supporters in the divisions which took place. On the second question, relative to the contemplated Antarctic Expedition, I met with greater success. An excellent paper was read before the

Geographical section by Mr. G. S. Griffiths, F.G.S., of Melbourne, pointing out the scientific and commercial advantages which might be expected to result ; and the proposition received general support. Knowing the strong feeling which had been manifested in its favour by our Royal Society, drawn forth by the admirable and exhaustive paper of the late deeply lamented Mr. Sprent, and having taken a peculiar interest from my recollections of the previous expedition under Captains Ross and Crozier on its return to our waters in 1842, I entered into the discussion at some length ; and concluded by moving that the whole subject should be referred to a general meeting of the members, with a view to take further action. Accordingly this was done, as will be seen by the following report of the proceedings of that meeting, quoted from the *Sydney Morning Herald* of September 11, with which I will conclude :—

“ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION.

“Mr. J. BARNARD called attention to a motion passed at the last meeting of the Geographical Section of the Association recommending the appointment of a committee to consider the question of Antarctic Exploration. It had been thought that they should seek the assistance of the Imperial Government, and make the question one of Imperial policy in conjunction with Australasia. It was also thought that it would be best for the movement to emanate from Australasia, with the co-operation of England ; but, as the ships and officers that would take part in the expedition would very likely come from England, the matter had better be viewed as an Imperial question. He moved that a committee be appointed to carry out the objects in view.

“The motion was seconded and carried.

“On the motion of the Hon. J. FORREST the following were appointed a committee, with power to add to their number : Professor Stephens, Mr. Ellery, Mr. G. S. Griffiths, Professor Baldwin Spencer, Mr. J. Barnard and Hon. J. Forrest.

“The meeting then terminated.”