# AUGUST.

The monthly meeting of this Society was held on Monday evening, August 17. The President, His Excellency Sir R. G. C. Hamilton, K.C.B., presided, there was a large attendance of Fellows, also a number of ladies.

#### NEW MEMBERS.

Dr. O. Burchard, of Hamburg, was elected a corresponding member, and the following to be members:—Walter Spencer, M.D., Launceston; W. F. M. Shells, M.R.C.S.E.; George Henry Gibson, M.B. and C.M., Edioburgh; Wm. Earle, Mount Zeehan; Ernest Milton Law, and Wm. Dubrelle Weston.

## MACQUARIE ISLAND.

The Secretary read the following letter from Captain Fairchild, of the New Zealand Government steamer Hinemoa.—" Wellington, June 3, 1891:—I see your Government has prohibited sealing on the Macquarie Island. It is a wise step, because if it had gone on a few years longer there would not have been a seal or a sea elephant left on the island. I think the penguins (the king penguin Aptenodytes longirostris) should be protected for, say, five years on Macquarie Island, or else they will soon be all gone—that beautiful bird is only found on the Macquarie Island. There are none on any of the islands belonging to New Zealand, and as they are such a helpless bird and so easily caught, there will not be one left in five years if they go on killing as they have the last year or two. So I hope soon to hear that the king penguin are not allowed to be killed on Macquarie Island for the sake of their oil. The man on the island told me he killed 15,000 last year for their oil, from which he got 15 tuns of oil."

Sir Lambert Dobson suggested that as the subject was a new one it should be considered by the Council and afterwards by the Society, so that it could go before the Government after mature consideration. He moved,—"That the letter be referred to the Council of the Society,"

which was agreed to.

# SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION.

In the absence of the author, Mr. A. J. Ogilvy (the Secretary) Mr. Morton read an abstract of the paper prepared by that gentleman, entitled "Suggestions as to the best means for collecting scientific information." The writer suggested that the Royal Society should obtain the services of some resident in each district of the colony, if possible, to act as its non representative in that district. He should commence as soon as he conveniently could to collect specimens illustrating the geological teatures and useful products of his district as, generally, of the granite or other chief rocks, especially of the coal, limestone, fireclay, or other useful products, for comparison with similar specimens from other dis-Also any striking examples of petrifaction, crystallisation, etc., in short anything likely to be of scientific interest. On hearing of any interesting discovery in his district, he would put himself in communication with the discoverer and report to the Society. He would be the recognised agent of the Society in the district to whom discoverers and inquirers would voluntarily apply to give or receive information; to whom also the Society could refer for any special local information it might require. Such an appointment would not only serve many direct practical ends but would also arouse increased interest among these co-operators in scientific subjects and in the affairs of the Society; would stimulate them to closer attention to their surroundings, and would help to propagate an interest in scientific progress throughout the colony.

#### AUSTRALASIAN SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

His EXCELLENCY asked if there was any progress report re the meeting of the Australasian Scientific Association for the Advancement of Science in January next.

Mr. Morton said that so far everything was progressing very favourably. Some 200 members had already signified their intention of being present, and a number of papers had been promised. He had also pleasure in intimating that ladies would be admitted to the meetings and have the privilege of taking part in the discussions and reading papers on payment of a small fee.

## PAPERS.

#### TASMANIAN INSECTS.

The SECRETARY read an interesting extract from a letter written by Mr. J. J. Walker, R.N., Chief Engineer of H.M.S. Penguin, in which he stated that the collection of insects made by him during his visit to Hobart had turned out well. He had sent to the British Museum 1,122 mounted specimens. They consisted of 586 species of coleoptera from Hobart, and 1,871 specimens of 798 species from all Tasmania, being perhaps one-fourth of the varieties of insects in the island.

#### HYPNOTISM AND ALLIED PHENOMENA.

Dr. Walter Spencer, Launceston, read a paper on the above subject. The paper was a lengthy and elaborate one, and in it Dr. Spencer dealt with the established facts in regard to Hypnotism, and described the sensation which it caused among members of the medical profession when introduced as a means of painless operations. Although its use in the alleviation of pain among the medical profession in England gave place to chloroform and ether it was taken up in France where two different schools prosecuted its study. He gave illustrations of the rival methods employed by practitioners of this new power, and pointed out the dangers of its practice, which caused the British Medical Association to pass a special resolution on the subject. He described how he had practically studied the subject in London 15 years ago, and at the end of a series of 12 lessons was able to relieve small pains by its use. He showed the identity of hypnotism with mesmerism, and gave a most interesting account of the history of such phenomena illustrated by numerous examples. A discussion followed, in course of which Messrs. A. J. Taylor, R. M. Johnston, Justice Adams, and Sir Lambert Dobson took part, after which a vote of thanks was awarded to Dr. Spencer.

His Excellency retired to fulfil another engagement, and His Honor Sir Lambert Dobson took the chair.

#### TASMANIAN PLANTS.

The Secretary read some brief remarks by Baron von Müeller. bringing under notice some rare Tasmanian plants lately found by Mr. T. B. Moore on the highlands east of Mount Tyndall. Baron Müeller considered the plants to be a new species of Coprosma, its characteristics being a very depressed, matted growth, very small leaves, and terminal small-sized fruit. The leaves were pointed, and the fruit beautifully blue outside. He recommended that if the plant proved a peculiar species it be distinguished under the finder's name.

Baron Müeller also acknowledged indebtedness to Mr. Moore for providing him with specimens of the *Panax Gunnii*, a rare shrub, found in deep shady gorges at Mount Lyell on the Canyon River, the Franklin River, and on a tributary of the Pieman River. From the highlands of Mount Read and Mount Tyndall, Mr. Moore sent specimens of the *Pentachondra verticillata*, a species of *Styphelia*, which until now was only known from Dr. Milligan's collection.

## MOUNT LYELL.

The SECRETARY, in the absence of the author, read notes on the Mount Lyell district by Mr. F. Danvers-Power, F.G.S., being a rejoinder to criticisms by members of the Society on the paper recently written by him on that subject. The writer expressed surprise that his critics credited him with being the author of new theories. It was possible that he was the first to apply the views expressed in his paper to Tasmanian geology, but he did not pretend to be the originator of what Mr. Stephens termed the "water pressure and wave theory," or of the anti-true-fissure-lode theory, although he was prepared to uphold them until disproved, or more suitable substitutes were brought forward, His paper was intended to give but a sketch of the geology of the Mount Lyell district. He was aware from Tasmanian literature, as also by personal conversation, that his views were in opposition to those generally accepted in the island, but by bringing the results of modern research to bear on local conditions, he had hoped to direct thought out of the groove into which it had fallen. Of course he did not expect to win those who had strong views on the subject over to his side at once, but he did expect them either to give valid arguments for their side of the question, or to prove his incorrect, especially when those sentiments were due to misconceptions on their part. He then dealt at length with the points on which his critics differed from him-(1) the main cause of mountain ranges; (2) the nature of most so-called true fissure lodes.

Discussion on Mr. Power's paper was postponed to a future meeting. This concluded the meeting.

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