

ROYAL SOCIETY.

APRIL, 1893.

The first monthly meeting of the 1893 session of the Royal Society of Tasmania was held on Monday, April 10. The Acting-President (Sir Lambert Dobson) took the chair. There was a moderate attendance of ladies and members. Mr. E. D. Peters, M.D., M.E.C., was elected a corresponding member, and Messrs. A. MacAulay, M.A., W. Jethro Brown, M.A., LL.D., and W. H. Williams, M.A., were elected Fellows.

WELCOME TO THE ACTING PRESIDENT.

Mr. JAMES BARNARD, a Vice-President, said that before commencing proceedings he thought it was only becoming to acknowledge and welcome the presence of Sir Lambert Dobson in his changed position. On behalf of the Council and Fellows he offered the Administrator hearty congratulations on his assumption of the Presidential chair officially as Governor of the colony for the time being.

Sir LAMBERT DOBSON thanked Mr. Barnard for the very kind way in which he had welcomed him there officially. He was not unknown unofficially within those walls—(hear, hear)—but certainly he had never presided there at a meeting of the Royal Society in the capacity of Administrator of the colony. It was a very great privilege to be there as president for the time being. On the occasion of the opening of the first meeting of a new session he knew it had been usual to deliver a presidential opening address. But Sir Robert Hamilton, previous to his departure, prepared so excellent an address, that almost everything he could say in an inaugural address had been exhausted. Still, there were one or two words he would like to utter. The Royal Society had no doubt done a great deal of good work, and he hoped would do good work in the future. (Hear, hear.) He took it that science was really divided into two parts; metaphysical and physical. The metaphysical drew largely from speculation. In the present century we liked results, and he thought, therefore, that the physical branch was that which really became popular, and likely to monopolise a very large proportion of the attention of the members of the Society. In the metaphysical we knew that we probed a theory, had large speculations, found that they had been speculated on before and abandoned for some other theory, and then came back to the starting point. But in physical science every particle of knowledge gained was pure knowledge. Everything gained by observation or calculation was matter added to the general knowledge of men, and could never be lost. It was in this branch of science that he believed their work really lay. Heretofore, there was no doubt, both with respect to our fauna and flora, we had had a large amount of work to do to discover the peculiarities and principal features of these of our natural products. But naturally that field must become exhausted, and we must look further afield. Here we had one very grand field, which really, he thought, could never be exhausted—the geology of the colony. (Hear, hear.) We had its great history written on the rocks, and as it had taken ages to compile that history, so he believed it would take ages to decipher and read it aright. This line offered a large amount of work for the Society to undertake, and from what he noticed of the papers for that meeting it was one to which attention was being largely directed. The advantage of the little know-

ledge gained at the Society's meetings might be small, but in all scientific observation it was not individual discovery that was so valuable, but the accumulation of discoveries put together, and individual inferences then to be drawn from those discoveries. In this way science went on increasing at a marvellous speed. Certainly, the march of science during the last century, in the last decade of which we now were, had been something beyond the conception of any individual born at the end of the previous century. And what it would be in the next century Heaven only knew. In this century we had seen steam come up as a motive power; and it had had its use and triumph; and the question now was whether it was not giving way before a power of almost unknown capacity—electricity. We had seen gas rise for lighting; now the question was whether we might not see it almost die out as an illuminant. We had, within the last 25 years, seen the world girdled with the electric telegraph, and what other wonders were now going on could hardly be told. When we came to carry ourselves back to the end of the last century, and the fleet with which Nelson fought at Trafalgar, remembering that one of our modern warships with its few guns could annihilate the whole of that fleet, or that the armies of Napoleon would fall like wheat before the sickle in front of our modern machine weapons, it might well startle us into wondering what the world was coming to. With such an advance of science as many had seen in the present century what might not be expected to be its advance in the future? Every little society like this helped on the advance of science. By careful registration of observations, its members were able to assist to the best of their power the advancement of science in the ensuing century. (Applause.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

A circular letter from Mr. F. M. Bailey, Government Botanist, Queensland, asking for information for a supplementary volume to the "Flora Australiensis," was ordered to stand over, pending inquiries.

Another circular was read from the Royal Society of New South Wales, giving details and conditions under which its medal and £25 are offered for three series of original researches.

GLACIATION IN TASMANIA.

The Secretary (Mr. A. Morton) read an interesting paper contributed by Mr. T. B. Moore, F.R.G.S., Strahan, entitled "Discovery of Glaciation in Tasmania."

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON, in some complimentary remarks on the paper, observed that its title was rather unfortunate, inasmuch that one of the main facts known for 30 years in connection with the Western highlands was the abundant evidence of glaciation. With that exception he regarded the paper as a very valuable contribution, and thanked the writer accordingly.

Mr. T. STEPHENS concurred in the general tenor of the previous speaker's criticism, and hoped the paper might be regarded as the precursor of several others in what was really a very extensive and important field.

FOSSIL FLORA.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON, F.L.S., read some "Further contributions to the fossil flora of Tasmania."

A CATALOGUE OF TASMANIAN MINERALS.

The SECRETARY presented "A catalogue of the minerals known to exist in Tasmania, with Notes on their distribution," by Mr. W. F. Petter, C.M.Z.S., and read the preface, in which the writer stated

that the catalogue was prepared from specimens in his own collection, and whose identification he had verified in the majority of instances by careful analysis.

Mr. JOHNSTON regarded the paper as one of the most important yet given on the subject, and in complimenting the writer, said the Royal Society and everyone else interested in minerals should feel indebted to Mr. Petterd for devoting so much time in affording valuable information on such an important subject.

TESTING MINERAL SPRINGS.

Major-General TOTTENHAM made some remarks on "The rough testing of mineral springs," in which he said that in a country so rich in minerals as Tasmania there must be mineral springs, wells, and creeks in unusual numbers. He suggested that yachtsmen and explorers might well invest a few shillings in a tiny case of tests, systematic search, collection of information, and chemical investigation of their medicinal and other commercial values. This was extremely desirable in furtherance of the Premier's idea of placing Tasmania more prominently before the world.

The general business having been transacted, the usual vote of thanks to writers of papers terminated the meeting.