

ROYAL SOCIETY.

JUNE, 1867.

The monthly evening meeting of Fellows was held on Tuesday, the 11th June, His Excellency Colonel T. Gore Browne, President, in the chair.

The Secretary, Dr. Agnew, laid on the table the following returns:—

1. Visitors to Museum, 439.
2. Ditto to Botanic Gardens, 1,102.
3. Plants and seeds received at gardens.—From Mr. R. Henderson, Sydney, 1 case containing 22 plants. From Messrs. Grant and McMillan, Melbourne, 63 papers of flower seeds.
4. Plants, &c., sent from gardens.—To Mr. R. Henderson, 1 case containing 20 plants, 32 chrysanthemums, and 30 papers seeds.
5. Tench supplied. Mr. G. Wilson, 10; Mr. Propsting, 6.
6. Time of leafing, flowering, and fruiting of a few standard plants in Botanic Gardens.
7. Books and periodicals received.
8. Presentations to Museum.

Meteorological Returns.

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.—Table for May, with summary of observations.
2. Port Arthur, from J. Boyd, Esq.—Table for April.
3. Westbury, from F. Belstead, Esq.—Table for May.

The Secretary read an analysis of the meteorological records, with a health report for May, by E. S. Hall, Esq.

The presentations to the museum were as follows:—

1. From Mr. J. Kelly, an Indian spinning wheel.
2. From J. E. Calder, Esq., specimens of the small fish (closely allied to the Pilchard) referred to at last meeting as being driven ashore in vast numbers at Barnes' Bay.
3. From Mr. R. Aitkin a large number of bones of the Moa (*Dinornis sp.*) from Southland, New Zealand.

In drawing attention to this valuable donation, the Secretary remarked that, although many of the bones were duplicates of those already in the Museum, he thought, from information he had received, it was very probable by furnishing the donor with a list of those we still required we should obtain many new ones. We might then in time hope to be enabled to build up an entire skeleton of this gigantic bird.

4. From Colonel Chesney, specimen of Native Bear, or Kaola (*Phascolarctos cinereus*), from Victoria.
5. From Mr. S. H. Wintle, a collection of bones from a cave in the Glenorchy district, with a descriptive letter addressed to the Secretary, which was read to the meeting.

With regard to the bones, Mr. Allport mentioned that he had carefully examined the whole collection (kindly submitted to him by Mr. Wintle),

and found them to consist of various portions of the skeletons of Brush Kangaroos and Vulpine Opossums. At the first glance Mr. Allport had concluded that some of the bones, from their size, belonged to Forester Kangaroos, but from subsequent comparisons with the skull and bones of recent specimens he was now convinced that they all belonged to the Brush Kangaroo (*Halmaturus Bennetti*). Without seeing the spot it was of course impossible to judge of the geological age of these bones, but, from Mr. Wintle's description, Mr. Allport thought there could be little doubt that the cavern had, at some not very remote period, formed the residence of a native tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*). Many of the bones still contained some trace of animal matter, and all exhibited the appearance of having had the the flesh torn from them by beasts of prey—the skull and smaller bones being almost invariably broken, as though to clear out the brains, &c. That tigers were at one time to be found near Hobart Town there is little doubt, as he (Mr. Allport) once saw one within three miles of the city—close to the present site of the reservoir, on the Sandy Bay Rivulet. Whatever the age of these bones might be great credit was due to Mr. Wintle for perseveringly unearthing them, and it was an example which he (Mr. Allport) would like to see more generally followed, as by such means interesting fossils would sooner or later be certainly brought to light.

6. From Mr. Bolter—Governor Davey's proclamation (pictorial) to the Aborigines of Tasmania.
7. From J. Barnard, Esq.—A small box turned from the wood of the Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), showing in a striking manner the beauty of the grain of one of our most common woods.
8. From Mrs. McLean—A wax model (by Mrs. Jhonson) of an enormous pear, of the Uvedale St. Germain variety, grown at New Town.

The pear from which this model was taken was also exhibited. It was the largest of four, grown on a single shoot from the stump of a large tree, which had been cut down to within about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet of the ground. There were originally six pears on the same shoot, but two of them were removed to make room for the others. The weight of the present specimen when first cut was 5lb. 9oz.; of the four together $16\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

Mr. M. Allport read the following extract from a letter from Professor Owen, relative to the collection of fossil bones from near Risdon, sent to him for examination some time since, and which formed the subject of a paper read by Mr. Allport at a meeting of the society in August last:—“After careful inspection of these specimens I note impressions of leaves resembling those of a *Fagus*: *Abies* (?); casts of land snails, including a species of *Helix*. Fragments of bones, some teeth, and unguis phalanges of a small kind of *Hypsiprymnus*, with probably also *Perameles* and *Phalangista*. No. 3 on a slip of paper, under portions of travertine, in a paper tray contains no tooth; nor can I determine in any part of the present collection the tooth of any animal other than those above noted. There are fragments of bone much decomposed, the nature of which is indeterminable.”

Mr. Allport also exhibited a cast of the seed vessel of an extinct plant, which had lately been found in the quarry from which the fossils above referred to were procured.

Colonel Chesney exhibited several products, both in the crude and refined state, obtained by the distillation of our shales and bituminous deposits. The illuminating power of the refined, as shown in a lamp, was apparently equal to that of kerosene. Colonel Chesney observed that for some time past he had been engaged in experiments for the purpose of discovering the best mode of obtaining useful products from these shales,

and his success was such that he had recently taken out a patent for his process. At present he had only brought the subject in a very cursory manner before the Fellows, but he hoped to enter fully into it at their next meeting as he thought it one of considerable importance to the future interests of Tasmania.

The Secretary directed attention to a donation of books received from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, United States, comprising several very valuable and interesting publications.

The thanks of the meeting were then given to the donors of presentations, especially to the Smithsonian Institution, Mr. Wintle, and Mr. Atkin, when the proceedings terminated.