

ROYAL SOCIETY.

SEPTEMBER, 1865.

The monthly evening meeting of the Fellows was held at the Museum, Macquarie-street, on Tuesday, 12th September. The chair was taken by his Excellency, the President, at half-past seven o'clock.

Among the Fellows present were the Ven. Archdeacon Davies, Captain Steward, Dr. Agnew, (hon. sec.), Lieut.-Colonel Chesney, Messrs. F. Abbott, J. Doughty, W. Stone, G. R. Napier, G. P. Adams, W. Pitt, W. Johnston, T. Stephens, F. Abbott, jun., &c. The Rev. M. Lalley,¹ of New Zealand, Capt. Armstrong, H. M. 14th Regiment, and Capt. Cox, of the Indian Army, were also present as visitors.

The Secretary laid on the table the following returns, viz:—

1. Visitors to the Museum during August, 591.
2. Ditto to Gardens ditto, 1,418.
3. Plants received per Grasmere from Messrs. Backhouse & Sons, York, England, fruit trees, 58, of which 41 were dead on arrival. From Mr. M. Allport, seeds of *Sapindus Indicus*, and *Cynodon Dactylon*.
4. Plants, &c., supplied for decoration of the Franklin Square, Public Buildings, Hobart Town and Launceston, &c., &c., 1067, and 65 dozen bulbs. For decoration of grounds at salmon ponds, River Plenty, 135. To Mr. Marwedel, 50 papers mixed seeds.
6. Books and Periodicals received.

Meteorological Returns.

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.
 - (a) Table for August.
 - (b) Summary of observations for ditto.
2. Port Arthur, from J. Boyd, Esq.
 - (a) Table for July.
 - (b) Reading of schooner's barometer for ditto.
3. Swansea, from Dr. Story.
 - (a) Table for July.
4. Tamar Heads, from R. Henry, Esq.
 - (a) Table for July.
 - (b) Ditto for August.
5. Ross, from M. Duncanson, Esq:
 - (a) Table for July.
 - (b) Ditto for August.

A communication from E. Swarbreck Hall, Esq., was read, to the effect that owing to accidental circumstances he had not been able to prepare, in time for the meeting, the usual "Analysis of the Hobart Town Meteorological Records," but "that the month (August) was characterised by mild, dry, sunny, and agreeable weather, with enough of wind movement and electricity to produce a high state of ærial purity, and consequently the community at large enjoyed a better state of health than is usual in August, and the deaths were below the average of the previous eight years. Children and adults up to 50 years of age, furnished an unusually small proportion of the deaths, more than two-thirds of the total mortality being from 50 to 85 years old."

The following presentations to the Museum during the past month were brought under the notice of the meeting:—

1. Four skulls, with horns, of Indian buffalo, and two ditto of deer. From F. J. Cockburn, Esq., of Calcutta.
2. Two skulls, (male and female), of Tasmanian Aborigines. From the Colonial Government.
3. Four copper coins. From R. Hallam.
4. Specimen of *Teredo navalis*, and wood bored by the same, taken from a pile removed from Franklin Wharf. From A. Nicholas, Esq.
5. A stuffed specimen of rabbit. From W. Kermodé, Esq.

Also the undermentioned books :—

1. History of the Discovery and Exploration of Australia, 2 vols. bound. By the Rev. J. E. T. Woods, Penola, South Australia.

Geological Observations in South Australia, 1 vol. bound. By the same.

Three pamphlets, "Physical Geography, &c., of North Australia," "Geology of Portland," and "Not quite as old as the hills." By the same. Presented by the author.

2. Builder, the, Jany. to June, 1861, complete for 1862 and 1864, Jan. March, April, and May, 1865. From Dr. Agnew.

3. Bound volume of maps and (13) sections of Geological Survey of Tasmania. From M. Allport, Esq.

The SECRETARY, after intimating that he had had the great pleasure within the last few days of receiving a communication from Dr. G. Bennett, of Sydney, who is a corresponding member of the Society, proceeded to lay it before the meeting. It was entitled "Observations on the Rice Paper Tree (*Tetrapanax papyrifera*) now naturalised in Sydney, New South Wales. By George Bennett, M.D, F.L.S., &c."

In the discussion which followed, Archdeacon Davies observed that one of these trees had been growing for some time in front of the Telegraph office, a fact which confirmed Dr. Bennett's opinion as to its hardy character. The height of this plant was about five feet. Mr. Abbott, Junior, remarked that the tree also grew well in the Society's Gardens where there was a specimen about six feet in height. Its age was five years.

Lieut. Colonel CHESNEY read a paper "On the future home of the Waikato settlers." In the words of the writer the paper contained "a brief account of the interior of the North Island of New Zealand—a review of the causes that led to the campaign in the valley of Waikato and Bay of Plenty—a glance at the proposed scheme of military occupation, and a description of the future homes of the Waikato settlers."

Conversation having ensued, the PRESIDENT remarked in reference to the sulphur springs of New Zealand, that the deposit of sulphur on the East Coast of the North Island was most extensive. Unlimited quantities of it could be obtained, but not without extreme risk to the shipping required for the service, owing to the exposed and inhospitable character of the Coast. Another fact which His Excellency thought worthy of notice was the singular circumstance that of the entire territory of New Zealand only one solitary spot, the Province of Canterbury, was subject to the visitation of hot winds. It was a phenomenon of which he had never heard any satisfactory explanation. He had also been informed that the northern seaboard of Tasmania was scarcely ever touched by these winds, whilst here on southern shores, we were all well aware, they were occasionally felt, though in a far less degree than on the neighbouring continent.

The Rev. M. LALLEY corroborated the President's statement as to the Province of Canterbury being alone subject to these winds.

Mr. STEPHENS believed Strzelecki's idea was that the hot winds progressed in a wave like, or undulatory manner, and, therefore only impinged upon the earth's surface at distant and isolated spots. He (Mr. Stephens) thought it just possible that the wind might pass across Bass's Straits at such an elevation in the atmosphere as not to touch the surface till, passing over the Northern Districts of the Island, they struck the high midland ridge about Oatlands, whence they were precipitated, as it were, towards the lower levels between this and the Southern Ocean.

[The cause, origin, and progress of these winds are still mysteries. No explanation hitherto given is quite satisfactory, and the entire subject presents a most interesting field for further investigation.]

The SECRETARY reported that for some time past the English sky-lark had been heard singing every morning in the Society's Gardens.

A vote of thanks having been passed to Dr. Bennett, Lieut.-Colonel Chesney, and the donors of presentations, His Excellency left the chair,