

ROYAL SOCIETY.

MARCH, 1871.

A monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday the 14th March; Morton Allport, Esq., in the chair.

The following gentlemen, who had been previously nominated by the Council, were, after a ballot, declared to be duly elected as Fellows of the Society:—Mr. P. Irvine, Hobart Town; Mr. Jamieson, Hobart Town; Mr. J. Rule, Bellerive, Kangaroo Point; Mr. J. Milward, Hobart Town; Mr. John Macfarlane, Hobart Town; Mr. James Macfarlane, Hobart Town.

The SECRETARY laid on the table the following returns:—

1. Visitors to Museum during January and February, 1788.
2. Ditto Gardens ditto, 4366.
3. Plants, &c., sent from Gardens.
4. Tench ditto.
5. Books and periodicals received.
6. Presentations to Museum.

Meteorological Returns:—

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq., tables for January and February.
2. Port Arthur, from J. Boyd, Esq., ditto.
3. Swansea, from Dr. Story, ditto.
4. Westbury, from C. Belstead, Esq., ditto.
5. New Zealand, from the Government, ditto for 1869, and October, November, and December, 1870.
6. Sydney, from H. C. Russell, Esq., Government astronomer, table for December.
7. Melbourne, from R. Ellery, Esq., tables for December, 1870, and January, 1871.

“Notes on the Meteorology and Mortality of the Hobart Town registration district for March, 1871,” by Dr. E. Swarbreck Hall.

The presentations to the Museum were as follow:—

1. From L. S. Travers, Esq., Collection of specimens illustrative of the Carboniferous system of New South Wales, with notes by W. Keene, Esq., F.G.S.
2. From Captain Williams, of the American whaler *Osmanli*, a collection of Shells from Fiji, also a War Club from the same place.
3. From Mr. W. E. Baynton, Land Shells from Brown's River.
4. From Mr. J. Buckland, Skin of Monitor Lizard.
5. From Master Hull, Nest and eggs of Honey Eater.
6. From Jas. Scott, Esq., M.H.A., nine stone implements made by aborigines of Tasmania, from Macquarie River (with a note).
7. From Mr. T. B. Handley, a Harpoon, much twisted, found in a nine tun whale captured off Macquarie Harbour by Captain Smith, of the *Maid of Erin*.
8. From Mr. Rowntree, polished specimen of Native Myrtle (*Fagus Cunninghamii*).

9. From the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works, a sample of Stone Alum from Brooks' Creek, Black Boy.

[The SECRETARY observed that no information was forwarded with the specimen as to the quantity which could be obtained, or the expenses which would be incurred in purifying it on the spot, or in forwarding it to a shipping port for exportation to Melbourne or England, for the purpose of preparing it for the market. He had been informed by Mr. Justin Browne that purified alum was worth about 10s. 6d. per cwt. in the English market. On the whole, however, he feared from what he had occasionally learned that our supplies of alum, which occurred in various localities in the island, were not so accessible or in sufficient quantities to be of any economic value.]

Mr. Justin BROWNE said the common alum was worth from 9s. to 10s. per cwt., and the refined about 56s. There were only two localities in Britain where it was prepared, Whitby and Hurllett, which furnished upwards of 4,000 tons annually. About 7,000 tons were also exported annually from China. [Full information on the subject of alum can be obtained on reference to Ure's Dictionary of Manufactures, and Muspratt's Chemistry.]

10. From Mr. Nash, Kangaroo Point, a German Lottery Ticket.
11. From R. C. Read, Esq., New Norfolk, specimen of black marble from the Florentine Valley, River Gordon.
12. From Mrs. W. Giblin, two specimens, male and female, of the Sydney Parrot, or King Lory (*Aprosmictus scapulatus*.)
13. From Mr. W. M. Campbell, Port Cygnet, a White Hawk (*Leucospiza Novae Hollandiae*.)
14. From Frederick T. Walker, Esq., Rhodes, a bow, 6 arrows, and a branch of coral used as a club, from Tanna, New Hebrides. Two clubs, 2 pieces of Tappa cloth, 3 mats, a pillow, 3 pieces of sponge, a sample of sugar cane, a piece of Angora root (from which the drink called Kava is made), and 2 beetles, from Fiji.
15. From the United Happy Valley Company, per M. Seal, Esq., a specimen of auriferous quartz from Christmas Reef (very rich); ditto from New Reef, Ovens, Victoria.
16. From Mr. Gates, Jerusalem, a Diving Petrel (*Puffinaria urinatrix*) caught in a corn-field at a considerable distance inland. [These birds have occasionally been found in similar situations, having probably been driven in from the coast by stress of weather.]
17. From Mr. W. Smith, Port Davey, portions of skull of Sperm Whale, 1 pelvic bone of ditto, ear bone of whale, curiously twisted saplings from Port Davey, nest and eggs of White-shafted Fantail, (*Rhipidura albiscapa*.)
18. From Captain Fisher, of the Wild Wave, portion of tusk of Mastodon, from Siberia. [This specimen was found underground in lat. 65 N., long., 167 E.; the length of the whole tusk was about 15 feet.]
19. From G. Stokell, Esq., perfect skeleton of a Sandwich Island native.
20. From Mr. J. Clark, a common rat caught by a mussel on a pile of the fish market wharf. [The mussel had closed its shell with one toe of the rat between the valves, and so held it firmly until it was observed and destroyed. The mussel retained its hold for two days after removal from the pile, and then the valves had to be prized open with the point of a knife.]
21. From Mr. Oscar Hedberg, tanned skin of a Jaquar (?)
22. From Mr. J. Tapp, ship Figaro, a Danish coin, 1 mark.
23. From Mr. F. Abbott, jun., a Blue Mountain Parrot (*Trichoglossus Swainsonii*.)

24. From A. Allison, Esq., Macquarie River, an eel of a bright golden yellow colour.
25. From Mr. M. Seal, fossil seeds from a recent tertiary formation at Haddon, near Ballarat, Victoria, found 120 feet from the surface, and about 5 feet above the sandstone or bed rock. [These specimens are of great geological interest; many of them are extremely perfect.]
26. From Mr. R. Thorne, Pittwater, two specimens of Spine-tailed Swift (*Acanthylis caudacuta*.)
26. From Mr. R. Wright, Glenorchy, one ditto.

The SECRETARY called the attention of the meeting to some packets of silk worm ova, silk cocoons, and documents containing recent information on the subject of sericulture. These were presented to the Society by His Excellency the President. Dr. Agnew having intimated that they would lie on the table for some time, for the inspection of visitors, read the following letter, addressed to His Excellency by Dr. Wallace, of Colchester:—

“ October 27th, 1870.

“ His Excellency, C. Du Cane, Esq.

“ SIR,—I have had the honor to write to you on former occasions in regard to sericulture. I again take the liberty to direct your attention to the progress that industry is making in many of our colonies. Owing to the efforts of the Silk Supply Association most of our colonies have been stimulated to experiment and fresh exertions. The Cape of Good Hope, New Zealand, and part of Australia, are commencing to take up this industry on a secure basis, and I trust to hear that Tasmania will not lag behind. I expect to hear in a few days that my friend Mr. Charles Brady, of Curl Curl, Sydney, N.S.W., has received a grant from Government for his efforts during the last ten years in introducing silk culture successfully—as also that a similar grant has been made in New Zealand to the promoter there of that valuable industry—so valuable that in 1869 £300 clear profit was made off one acre in California.

“ I have the honor to enclose my friend and colleague M. Teutschel's cards and circulars by this mail. He takes off my shoulders much of the active work, leaving me the foreign correspondence, experiments, &c. You will note that he offers to supply all that is wanting to intending experimenters, on receipt of draft or good reference. He also receives and disposes of, on commission, produce, such as cocoons and eggs, the latter if of good races proving most remunerative—as much as 15s. to 25s. for good eggs being paid in the Continental market.

“ M. Teutschel has received, for sale, eggs from Japan, Australia, and expects others from New Zealand and the Cape. If eggs are sent, empty cocoons should be sent with them as samples to show the character of the parent stock, and the eggs guaranteed to come true to sample. He supplies reeling and mulberry-leaf cutting machines—the latter brought out by me this year is a great economiser of labour, very valuable in a colony. Sample cocoons of the races sent out by M. Teutschel this season shall be sent either *via* Brindisi, or by next mail. Supplies of eggs and seed may be had either direct from M. Teutschel, or, if small, on application to Mr. Charles Brady, of Curl Curl, Manly, Sydney, N.S.W., by mentioning my name, we supplying him.

“ M. Teutschel has had eggs from Japan and Australia for sale in the Continental markets, and expects more in 1871, with supplies from New Zealand and the Cape.

“ I trust to hear shortly of silk culture being undertaken in Tasmania, and M. Teutschel will be glad to assist by all in his power to develop the rich resources of the country as regards sericulture.

“Will you kindly distribute his cards and circulars among those most interested in the new pursuit?”

“Believe me to remain,

“Faithfully yours,

“ALEX. WALLACE, M.D.”

Mr. Justin BROWNE said that, having read various papers that had been published on the propagation of the silk-worm with a view to the production of silk, he was able to state that the early numbers of the papers issued by the Silk Supply Association were now on the table of the Hobart Town Chamber of Commerce, where they could be examined by any person interested in the subject. The association was established by gentlemen in London largely interested in the silk trade, as well as by wealthy men who had retired from business. The enormous importations of silk-worms egg from Japan had supplied the Italian and French growers with grubs, but for which the culture of silk in France and Italy would have utterly failed, notwithstanding the researches of M. Pasteur, who had applied himself to the study of the cause of disease in the silkworm, and had perhaps found a remedy. A letter had lately appeared in the London *Times* directing attention to the restrictions placed upon the transmission of silkworms eggs through the post, and pointing out the injury that the silk culture of Europe would sustain if these restrictions were maintained, the Post Office having hitherto afforded a rapid and safe mode of conveyance from the East to Europe. A series of articles, written by Mr Cobb in *Morgan's Trade Circular* of July and August last, were especially worthy of notice. The writer quoting his experience in Italy stated that when the worms no longer needed mulberry leaves for food, the remaining produce of the trees was gathered and used for sheep and cattle food, the flavour of meat produced from mulberry leaf fed sheep being superior to that fed in the ordinary manner. The fruit, with some rice, formed almost the only food of the inhabitants while it was in season, and the tree grew successfully in hedge rows. The speaker went on to say that the late Mr. Stutzer had shown much more foresight than had been attributed to him, in advocating the growth of the mulberry tree, and the propagation of the silkworm, and had he remained in Tasmania, and lived to superintend the plantation made by him at the Orphan School, there would now, probably, have been some small export of silk or cocoons (for the latter are now preferred by English manufacturers) from this colony, as the product of a branch of industry carried on by inmates of that institution. The individual parcels of silk hitherto produced here were rather the result of amusement than of any attempt to open a new branch of trade.

The SECRETARY read a letter from Dr. Story, Swansea, on the desirability of introducing the cork oak, and the medicinal squill into the colony, for both of which he thought the climate very suitable.

Mr. ABBOTT remarked that a cork oak (*Quercus suber*), about 14 ft. high, now in the Society's Gardens, flowered for the first time this year. From this a small supply of acorns will be obtainable by any one willing to plant them; but a large supply of the oak has been raised in Melbourne Botanic Gardens by Baron Von Mueller, from whom last year the Government received some young trees, which are now growing on Tasman's Peninsula. In addition to these, a few remain at the Society's Gardens for distribution. There is little doubt that Baron Von Mueller would furnish plants to any one who would bestow a sufficient amount of care on this valuable tree, as he thinks it will flourish in Tasmania.

[The medicinal squill (*Urginea scilla*) well thrives in the Gardens. Six

bulbs were planted out last year, three of which have divided into two or three bulbs each.]

Mr. M. ALLPORT read a paper entitled "Observations on the progress of the Salmon experiment."

Discussion followed, during which several of the Fellows expressed their gratification at the tangible success which had been achieved by the acclimatisation of the salmon trout (*Salmo trutta*). As so few ova of this fish were received from England in comparison with the numbers of those of the *S. salar*, no doubt could be reasonably entertained that the introduction of the latter has been equally successful, although a specimen has not yet been caught; a circumstance at which no practical fisher, at all acquainted with the Derwent, can be astonished.

Mr. BARNARD moved, that the thanks of the meeting were due to Mr. Allport for his highly interesting paper; and to Mr. Justin Browne, to whose remarks, particularly those on the subject of sericulture, he was happy to listen. Although Mr. Stutzer was by some deemed a visionary for his efforts to establish silk culture at the Queen's Asylum, he had little doubt these efforts would have been crowned with complete success had their author been spared to conduct them to their issue. It was still worthy of serious consideration, if the large amount of juvenile labor at the command of Government could not be very profitably exercised in establishing an industry which was so likely to be of advantage to the colony, both by absorbing a large amount of, at present, almost useless labour, and by furnishing a new and important article of export.

The motion having been carried, and a vote of thanks accorded to the various donors of presentations, the meeting terminated.