

MAY, 1871.

The monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, the 9th May, M. Allport, Esq., F.L.S., F.Z.S., in the chair.

The following returns were brought under notice, viz. :—

1. Visitors to Museum during April, 817.
2. Visitors to Gardens during April, 2,050.
3. Time of leafing, flowering, &c., of a few standard plants in Botanic Gardens during April.
4. Books and periodicals received during April.
5. Presentations to Museum during April.

Meteorological Returns.

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq., table for April, with summary of observations.
 2. Westbury, from F. Belstead, Esq., tables for March and April.
 3. Swansea, from Dr. Story, table for March.
 4. Port Arthur, from J. Boyd, Esq., table for April.
 5. Sydney, from the Government Observatory, printed tables for February. Abstract of Meteorological Observations made in New South Wales, to end of 1869, by H. C. Russell, Esq., B.A., Government Astronomer.
 6. Melbourne, from R. J. Ellery, Esq., table for March.
- “Notes on the Meteorology and Mortality of the Hobart Town registration district for May, 1871,” by Dr. E. Swarbreck Hall.

The presentations to the Museum were as follow :—

1. From Rev. Mr. Whitmee, two Mats as worn on festive occasions by women of Samoa.
2. From Mr. Barwick, Tea Tree, a specimen of Eyton's Duck (*Leptotarsis Eytoni*, Gould) found dead near Richmond.

[The occurrence of this bird in Tasmania is remarkable, and difficult to be accounted for, it being an inhabitant of the north-west coast of Australia. Gould states that “the farthest south it was afterwards met with was on the Albert River, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, in latitude 18° S.”]

3. From Mr. W. Holmes, Jerusalem, a Parrot unusually marked.
4. From Mr. G. Whitcomb, a fine specimen of Kauri gum, from New Zealand.
5. From Mr. W. B. Watchorn, a Spider Crab.
6. From Mr. Lukin Boyes, a pair of Musk Ducks (*Biziura lobata*) shot at Austin's Ferry; a small Bat.
7. From Master A. Haywood, a Portuguese copper Coin, 1814.
8. From Sir R. Officer, a Land Rail (*Rallus pectoralis*) shot at New Norfolk.
9. From Mr. Robert Gatenby, Macquarie River, a male specimen of the Native Tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*.)

The SECRETARY read the following letter from Mr. Ellery, President of the Royal Society of Victoria, and Government Astronomer :—

Royal Society of Victoria,
Victoria-street, Melbourne, 22nd April, 1871.

SIR,—A proposition has been brought before this Society for a joint expedition from the several Australian colonies to Cape Yorke Peninsula, to observe the total eclipse of the sun, which will take place on the 12th December next.

The scientific interest of this phenomenon is very great, and the points to be determined are important. As far as is known there will be no further

total eclipse of the sun readily accessible from Australia during the remainder of the present century.

The proposal is that a steamer should be chartered to start from Melbourne about the 20th November, and touching at intermediate ports, to convey such persons as may desire to witness the eclipse.

It is expected that the total cost will not exceed £25 per head of those who form the party.

It is proposed that the expedition should be under the charge of the Government Astronomer, so far as the control of the steamer is necessary to prevent undue delay.

A committee of this Society has been appointed to make preliminary enquiries, and I have to request that you will have the goodness to make the proposal known, and to inform me how many gentlemen from Hobart Town are likely to join it.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ROBERT L. J. ELLERY,

President of the Royal Society of Victoria.

To the President of the Royal Society,
Hobart Town.

Mr. M. ALLPORT, in reference to the question of carnivorous marsupials on South Bruni, mooted at last meeting, begged to say he had recently been informed by Mr. Bennett (of Sandy Bay toll bar), that he had not only seen the native devil on Bruni, but had actually shot one when residing there some ten years ago. At that time, at least, they were pretty numerous, and appeared to haunt a portion of the shore where they could obtain portions of seal and whale flesh, left after the process of "trying out" the oil.

Mr. GRAVES had never actually obtained a carnivorous animal from South Bruni, but about 18 months ago he had seen from a boat a number of small animals like black rabbits on the shore there. He was puzzled at their appearance, and soon afterwards visited the spot again to make further examination. He could find no traces whatever of rabbits, but afterwards meeting with Mr. Bennett, he was informed by him that the animals were native devils, which was proved by the fact of his having shot one.

Mr. ALLPORT had himself seen one small carnivorous marsupial on South Bruni, the *Antechinus leucopus*, which also occurs in considerable numbers on Partridge Island. This too was an animal which must have been indigenous, and not introduced by the natives.

Mr. F. ABBOTT read a long and interesting astronomical paper, the subject being that of η Argus and its surrounding nebula, which was listened to with great attention.

Discussion of conversational character having taken place, a vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Abbott for his paper, and to the donors of presentations, after which the meeting broke up.