ROYAL SOCIETY.

MARCH, 1873.

The monthly meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, the 11th March, M. Allport, Esq., V. P., in the chair.

The Hon. Secretary (Dr. Agnew) brought under notice the following monthly returns :—

1. Visitors to Museum during February, 1,358.
2. Ditto to Gardens ditto, 3,844.
3. Plants, &c., received at Gardens—From Messrs. Low, London, 46 varieties of fruit and ornamental tree scions, of which 37 were alive on arrival. From Mons. Ch. Huber, Hyeres, France—One box containing seeds of Quercus suber, Quercus virens, Quercus, ægilops, and twelve packets of flower seeds.
4. Plants sent from Gardens—To Mons. A. Verschaffelt, Ghent, Belgium, 23 Tree Ferns.
5. Time of leafing, flowering, &c., of a few standard plants during February.
6. Books and periodicals received.
7. Presentations to Museum.

Meteorological Returns.

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq., tables for January and February.
2. Port Arthur, from A. H. Boyd, Esq., ditto for January.
3. Westbury, from F. Belstead, Esq., ditto, ditto.
4. Swansea, from Dr. G. Story, ditto November and December, 1872.
5. Melbourne, from R. J. L. Ellery, Esq. Printed ditto for November and December, 1872.
6. New South Wales, from H. C. Russell, Esq., B.A.—Tables from Sydney and other stations for October, November, and December, 1872.

The presentations to the Museum were as follow :—

1. From H. S. Lewes, Esq., Geelong, 3 shields, 3 boomerangs, 2 throwing sticks, 3 clubs, 3 waddies, and 13 spears of Aborigines of Lower Murray, Victoria. A net made by Aboriginal women at Protector's Camp.

[These weapons were procured by Mr. Lewes at considerable trouble and expense expressly for this Museum.]

2. From Lieut. W. V. Legge, R.A.—Five bottles containing a collection of Ceylon Reptiles (named.)
3. From Master J. Colvin—A Bomb Lance, as used for killing whales.
4. From Captain McArthur—Fragments of a Bomb Lance after explosion.
5. From Mr. Arthur Clarke, Malahide—Stone Axe of Tasmanian Aborigines.

[A very fine and exceptionally large specimen of these instruments, measuring 9 inches in length by 5½ inches in breadth.]

6. From E. A. Walpole, Esq.—A hollow spherical mass of Iron Ore from Hope Island, Port Esperance.

[In a note accompanying this presentation Mr. Walpole remarks,

that before being broken into it was "without fissure or pore, still on penetration to our surprise the cavity was full of water," &c.*]

7. From Mr. Hissey—12 Specimens of *Helix sydneyensis.*
8. From Mr. F. L. Wilson—Samples of Epsom Salts and Common Salt from rocks and caves at Mount Nassau, Bridgewater.
9. From Mr. C. Eady, Elizabeth-street—A Parrot, said to be from Fiji.
10. From the Rev. J. Hutchison—Nine specimens of Pottery manufactured by the Fijian women.

[In reference to this interesting series the Rev. J. Hutchison remarks :—"They are chiefly drinking vessels and cooking pots made by a very simple process which I had the good hap to witness on one of the remote Islands of the Group. They are manufactured by the women from a reddish clay tempered with sand. The only implements employed are a light mallet, a round smooth stone, and a small cushion, and yet you will notice that the outlines are nearly as true as if made with European appliances. The figures on the surface are traced with a shell while the vessels are still plastic, and after being exposed for a few days to the sun, the articles are baked by surrounding them with some light combustible, such as dried grass, which is set on fire and renewed till they are sufficiently hardened. While yet hot they are rubbed over with the resin of a species of pine, which makes, as you will see, a very good enamel.]

11. From Mr. W. Barclay—16 old Promissory Notes of the early days of the colony (1823, &c.)
12. From Mr. T. Priest—A Promissory Note for 50 guineas, London, 1809.
13. From H. M. Hull, Esq.—A sample of Queensland grown Sugar.
14. From J. W. Brown, Esq., Mining Surveyor—Specimen of Serpentine with veins of Asbestos, from Ilfracombe.
15. From T. Giblin, Esq.—Sample of Tin Ore from Mount Bischoff, Tasmania.
16. From Tasmanian Mineral Exploration Company—A sample of Tin Ore from Cape Barren Island.
17. From Mrs. Maclaine, Clarke's Island—A collection of Algæ and Corallines.
18. From Captain J. Macarthur—Figure Head of a New Zealand Canoe.
19. From Lieutenant Festing, H.M.S.S. Blanche—Two eggs of *Megapodium brazieri,* from New Britain—Six Shells (2 *Cyprea mappa,* 2 *Voluta ruckeri,* 1 *Conus betulina,* 2 *Cyprea testudinaria.)*
20. From C. Belstead, Esq.—A Land Rail *(Hypotœnidia phillipensis)* prepared and mounted.

[The Chairman remarked that this bird was our representative of the *Corncrake* of Europe, but was far superior to its European congener in beauty of plumage, as could be seen by the very fine specimen before the meeting.]

21. From Mr. O. H. Hedberg—A Twopenny piece, George III, 1797.
22. From Master Elliott Lewis—A Pouched Lamprey.
23. From R. Gatenby Esq., Macquarie River—Two tanned skins of Native Tigers, *(Thylacinus cynocephalus.)* Skin of Owl *(Strix delicatulus.)*

*A note from Mr. T. Stephens stated that this hollow nodule of iron appeared to have been formed, after the usual manner of concretionary deposits, from the local decomposition of a trap rock, which contains in places a large percentage of iron, and is in other respects very unlike the rocks of a similar class in the Port Esperance District.

24. From Captain Williams—Samples of Iron ore from East Coast, Tasmania.
25-26. From C. Coxen, Esq., Brisbane—28 specimens, comprising 20 named varieties of Land Shells from Queensland. 60 specimens comprising 20 named species Land Shells from Solomon's Islands, S. Pacific ; and 62 specimens Marine Shells from same place.

[The Secretary requested special attention to the long array of objects in the following valuable and interesting presentation by Mr. Gould on his departure from the Colony.]

27. From C. Gould, Esq., F.G.S.—Lithographic portrait of Sir Roderick Murchison, framed and glazed.
28. Ditto 33 specimens of Fossils from Table Cape, Tasmania.
29. Ditto Coal from Jerusalem, Tasmania.
30. Ditto, ditto from Native Corners, ditto.
31. Ditto specimens of Copper Pyrites, Zinc Blende, Calc Spar, and Sparry Iron, from Lode S, Tasmania.
32. Ditto Trilobite, from Redwater Creek, Mersey District, Tasmania.
33. Ditto Iron Ore from near Cataract Hill, Launceston.
34. Ditto Quartz from Goodall's Reef, Fingal, Tasmania.
35. Ditto, ditto from Pioneer ditto.
36. Ditto 19 Samples of Tin Ore, from various mining claims in Queensland (named).
37. Ditto Tin Ore in matrix from Stanthorpe, Queensland.
38-39. Ditto from New Banca Tin Mine, ditto.
40. Ditto Crystals of Oxide of Tin from borders of New South Wales, and Queensland.
41. Ditto Antimony Ore, from ditto.
42. Ditto Wolfram, from Greenups Lode, Severn River, Queensland.
43. Ditto Rutile, from Queensland.
44. Ditto Garnets in matrix from ditto.
45. Ditto Coal from Allora, Queensland.
46. Ditto 7 specimens supposed to be Pink Tourmaline from Barnet River, Queensland.
47. Ditto 4 samples of Tin Ore, and a block of Tin smelted from the same, from Victoria.
48. Ditto a collection of Marine Shells from Flinders Island—31 Land shells (*Helix and Bulimus*) from ditto.
49. From H. Button, Esq., Launceston, pro S. B. Emmett, Esq., specimen of Spiriferous Rock from near the Hellyer river. Specimen of Kaolin (?) from same locality, and 2 specimens of Mica slate from Campbell's Ranges.
50. From Messrs. Walch and Sons—4 specimens of Slate from Piper's River, Tasmania.

[These slates were pronounced by the Members to be superior to any which have hitherto been produced by the Colony. Mr. C. H. Grant said although they were not equal to the best English or Welsh slate, they were very good in quality, and would in all probability still further improve as the quarry was opened out. If furnished at moderate rates they would, he had no doubt, command a very ready sale, especially in the Melbourne market.]

51. From Mr. G. Crane, Upper Goulburn-street, a model of a "Salmon trap," as made by American Indians.

[Mr. C. H. Grant remarked he had seen these traps made use of in Canada. They were only suitable for still, shallow waters and would be entirely useless on such a rapid river as the Derwent.]

52. From A. G. Webster, Esq., specimen of carbonate of manganese and lime, from Beechworth, Victoria.
53. From Miss Ellen Shrimpton, Hamilton, 4 plover's eggs.

[The SECRETARY read the following letter he had received from Mr. James Wilson, of Oatlands, but before doing so remarked that he had much pleasure in bringing it before the meeting. It showed how the plague of rabbits, in a part of the country, too, peculiarly affected by it, was so far abated as to be no longer a nuisance. And it also shewed what astonishing results could be effected by skill and energy when properly directed, even under such an adverse and apparently fatal condition as the want of capital. Under the circumstances described, and the same would no doubt apply to many a district in Tasmania, it appeared very possible for the farmer, even without capital, not only to pay rent from the beginning, but also to make such profits subsequently as would enable him to live comfortably, and add continuously to the value and extent of his property. He (Dr. Agnew), however, should not say that no capital was necessary, for skill, energy and perseverance were capital in themselves and were essential to success.

"Ashgrove,

"February 25th, 1873.

"Dear Sir,—Some time ago I promised to let you know how far Mr. Burbury and myself had succeeded in destroying the rabbits on the Estate at Lowe's Park. Of course you are aware of the state many of the best properties were in from the number of rabbits on them, and among the number was the estate we rented. It was so overrun that many looked upon us with pity, to think that we should waste our time and energy on such a place. As to capital we could not lose, having started with nothing. The idea of growing grain was laughed at. Now Sir, the result? Why you may ride through the worst place for rabbits and not see one. I seldom see more than two or three in a couple of hours' ride, and that where two years ago you could see one on every square yard. In fact the shepherd cannot get enough to keep his dogs, and he told me the other day that he would have to part with some, as they could not get enough for them. You will want to know how we got rid of them. In the first place we poisoned great numbers with strychnine, but when grass got green they did not care for baits, then we netted great quantities where they were thick, and snared also. Lastly we opened the runs to persons willing to hunt, and who were not likely to do any damage. These were the means we used, and persevered in till we succeeded in so reducing their numbers that they do us no hurt.

"I must also tell you that they have not eaten all the grain crops as some persons were expecting.

"This year about 600 acres are reaped, and about 8,000 to 9,000 bushels of wheat threshed, and when all is finished, I believe it will yield about 13,000 bushels of grain, chiefly wheat. A part of the 600 acres has been cut for hay, so you see that the rabbits have not ruined us. We were left entirely to ourselves, and have succeeded far beyond our expectations. The cultivation land we let to two energetic persons who were to give us a certain portion for rent and they will do well by it, and so will we. The 600 acres will yield us nearly £600 for the season, and we have a good percentage of superior lambs, and a large quantity of fat stock. I consider that it only wants intelligence and energy to place the country in a healthy and prosperous state. I do not say merely by cultivation and sheep-farming, for there are many other things which might pay well, such as the cultivation of flax and manufacturing it into bagging, which would employ a good number of men. It grows well in this part of the country, and only requires some person who understands its cultivation. I hope before long to see something done about its cultivation. Green crops, such as mangolds and turnips, are more largely grown now than they were some years ago,

—I have had about 200 acres of new land broken up this last 2 years, and shall sow it with artificial grasses this year, and will clear a quantity more. If others would do likewise, instead of importing meat we might be exporting. We have this year sold a quantity of stock to be exported to Sydney—so much good the Scab Act has done—but I am afraid I am trespassing on your valuable time, and wish you good-bye.

"Yours truly,
"James Wilson."

The Bishop of Tasmania then read an opening address (this being the first meeting of the session) on "Natural Science in connection with Dr. Carpenter's inaugural address at the late meeting of the British Association." His Lordship began by describing his impressions of Dr. Carpenter's personal appearance when he saw him at the British Association, when he was himself secretary in the Statistical Section under the presidency of Lord Stanley—"a spare, bald man with keen features and bald head." The object of the paper was to commend Dr. Carpenter for rebutting certain physicists, who not content to establish the ordinary sequence of Nature, "set up their own conception of such sequence as if they were fixed and determinate laws by which those phenomena not only are, but ever must be invariably governed." Man's interpretation of Nature by the medium of science was as like to be influenced by the mind of men as art and poetry. All our experience is affected by our intuitions, and this is true of centuries as well as of individuals. While we are accepting the conclusions of a previous age we are elaborating new experience which will become "primary beliefs" for the next. The paper instanced the illustrations of the debt due to modern science, enforcing the unity of design, viz., gravitation and the spectrum analysis. It combated the efforts of some writers to get rid of the notion of *force* as being only *matter in motion*; for the very fact that to arrest motion involving the necessity of resistance, implies force to overcome another force which originally set the object in motion. Nature, after all, was not absolutely uniform, as is seen in the fact that between 40° and freezing point the law of expansion by heat became reversed, but for which departure from an otherwise uniform law the earth would be uninhabitable. Such a deviation favoured the inference that not only matter was subject to force, but force had been impressed by a forecasting Personal Intelligence. "To set up laws as self-acting, excluding the power which could give them effect, was arrogant and unphilosophical. It was equally unphilosophical to propose to test the efficacy of prayer by the quantitative analysis of the chemist, or the tables of the actuary. When science enters into the domain of the spiritual and moral, she must be warned off as a trespasser. There are boundaries to her enquiries beyond which is eternal silence, which can only be broken by the intuitions of some inner light, and the voice of an indwelling spirit. Science is not worthy its name which would bring the domain of mind and conscience under the bondage of physical law. The law must fulfil the will of Him who inhabited Eternity, foresaw every result of His own law, and has promised to hear our prayers.

Mr. Barnard had great pleasure in proposing a special vote of thanks to his Lordship for his admirable address. He was glad to see the session opened by an address of this character, and hoped the example now set would be followed on similar occasions in future. He thought that the letter from Mr. J. Wilson was of great interest, and hoped they should occasionally receive other communications of a similar character. Mr. Gould's parting gift deserved special notice; and the best thanks of the Society were also due to all the other donors of presentations.

The vote having been carried unanimously, the proceedings terminated.