ROYAL SOCIETY.

NOVEMBER, 1866.

The monthly evening meeting of the Fellows was held on Tuesday, the 13th of November, F. Abbott, Esq., in the chair.

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

1. Visitors to Museum 501.
2. Ditto to Gardens 2624.
3. Plants and seeds received at Gardens:—
   a. From G. Salier, Esq., 40 papers of New Zealand seeds, gathered by Mr. A. Begg.
   b. From A. Verschaffelt, Ghent, Belguim, 100 named varieties of Ranunculus, in good condition.
4. Times of leafing, flowering, and fruiting of a few standard plants in Botanic Gardens.
5. Books and periodicals received.

Meteorological Returns:—

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.
   a. Table for October.
   b. Summary of observations for ditto.
2. Port Arthur, from J. Boyd, Esq.
   a. Table for September.
   b. Reading of Government schooner's barometer for ditto.
3. Westbury, from F. Belstead, Esq.
   a. Table for October.

The Secretary read the usual monthly analysis of the observatory records, together with those of births, deaths, &c., by E. Swarbreck Hall, Esq.

The Presentations to the Museum and Library were as follows:—

1. From G. Barnard, Esq., six prepared bird skins, and four packets seeds from Queensland.
2. From Dr. Officer, specimen of black-cheeked Falcon *(Falco melanogenys.)*
3. From C. A. Glover, Esq., Sorell, a collection of land and freshwater shells procured at Sorell.
4. From Sergeant Eccleston, R.A., a black snake and a whip ditto.
5. From Miss Stone, a collection of fossil shells *(Tertiary)* from Western Point, Victoria.
6. A young black snake and a lizard from Huon Road.
7.
8. From H. Hinsby, a young Echidna.
9. From Justin Browne, Esq., a collection of pamphlets by the late Rev. Wm. Day, chiefly in the Samoan language.

The following Memorandum from the Superintendent of the Botanic Gardens was read:—

Memo.

It would be desirable to draw the attention of agriculturists to the large collection of grasses &c., at present growing in the Royal Society's

Gardens, many of which it would be desirable to bring more extensively into cultivation. There are about 300 varieties of grasses, clover &c.; 100 of wheat, oats, and barley; 200 peas and beans. 100 maize, and between 30 and 40 varities of tobacco. The greater portion of the above have been introduced during the present year, and it remains to be determined which will be best suited to the climate of Tasmania.

F. ABBOTT, JUNR.

MR F. ABBOTT, SENR., read some notes on Atmospheric Meteors. Discussion ensued, and after passing the usual vote of thanks to the donors of presentations the meeting broke up.

NOTES ON ATMOSPHERIC METEORS. By F. Abbott, F.R.A.S.

It may be well to remind the present meeting of the great amount of interest which is just now attached to Meteoric Astronomy. The period of speculation on the little understood objects, Meteors, dates from the time of Aristotle (330 B.C.), and, although observations upon them have been carried on ever since that time, little has been known, until recently, respecting their height, velocity, and composition.

That they are atmospheric will appear from their height, which ranges from 35 to 75 miles, or a mean of about 60 miles, their speed, light, and detonating properties being about equal to that of an electric spark.

That they are astronomical will appear from their annual appearance in unusual numbers on the 9th and 11th of August, and again on the 12th and 14th of November. These known dates have led to periods of prediction, from which it is ascertained that the November meteors return in their greatest magnificence every 33 years, so that their central conjunction with the earth has been estimated by Professor Newton, of Yale College, U.S., to occur as to-night or to-morrow night, 13th or 14th November, 1866, when may be expected a prodigious flight of meteors, the most imposing of its kind, and which may not occur again during the present century.

As these fertile periods of meteors have not, to my knowledge, ever been observed in Tasmania, it will be interesting to know if this prediction is verified. They are observed usually to diverge from Leo, which constellation will rise about 3 o'clock, a.m., at Hobart Town, but it will be well to look for them about midnight and sunrise.

For those who like to take part in this curious enquiry, I have brought some blank forms which may be filled up at the time of observation, according to the precept at the head of the columns.