

## JUNE, 1873.

The monthly evening meeting was held on Tuesday, the 10th June, M. Allport, Esq., in the chair.

The following gentlemen, who had previously been nominated by the Council, were, after a ballot, declared duly elected as Fellows of the Society, viz. :—R. Brough Smyth, Esq., Secretary for Mines, Melbourne (corresponding member); and C. J. Barclay, Esq., Hobart Town.

The HON. SECRETARY brought under notice the following returns for the past month :—

1. Visitors to Museum, 1,223.
2. Ditto to Gardens, 2,203.
3. Time of leafing, &c., of a few standard plants in Botanic Gardens.
4. Books and Periodicals received.
5. Presentations to Museum, &c.

*Meteorological Returns*—For Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq., and Port Arthur from A. H. Boyd, Esq., tables for May.

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

1. From the Home Government—A suit of steel armour (16th century).
2. From Mr. A. Dowling—A specimen of carbonate of Lime incrustation on Moss, from Tunbridge.
3. From Mr. J. J. Low, Richmond—Specimens of Stream Tin with gold, &c., from El Dorado, Beechworth, Victoria.
4. From the Hon. C. Meredith—A sample of Stream Tin, and two specimens of tin ore from Mount Bischoff.
5. From Mr. F. L. Piquenit—Two butterfly Gurnards.
6. From Mr. Hedberg—A harpoon much twisted, taken from a whale killed by the boats of the Maid of Erin.
7. From Mr. R. Gatenby, Macquarie River—Two snakes, a lizard with double tail, a specimen of *Gordius aquaticus*, and a female native tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*).
8. From Mr. Flexmore—A kingfisher (*Alcyon azurea*).
9. From the Rev. G. Clarke—A copy of Roscoe's *Spectrum Analysis*, 1 vol., bound.
10. From Mr. J. Buckland—A Russian copper coin.
11. From Mr. H. Hull, jun.—Seven coins (6 copper and 1 bronze.)

The SECRETARY directed the special attention of the meeting to the very interesting presentation No. 1. It was a complete suit of the Armour of a Man at Arms, of the date of the 16th century. The fact of its having been presented by the British Government was a sufficient proof that it was genuine, and that its age was correctly determined. A despatch to His Excellency the Governor, from the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in reference to the Armour, was read.

The specimens of Tin Ore (presentation No. 4) having been examined with great attention by the meeting, the Hon. C. Meredith observed that it might be of interest to know he had himself obtained them on the spot when recently on a visit to Mount Bischoff. He had obtained other and much finer specimens, but these he had forwarded to Sydney. There they were regarded with the greatest interest, because their mass and general appearance indicated they were taken from a solid lode, or vein of ore. In this respect they were different from specimens of tin he had seen from New South Wales or Queensland, which were always waterworn and in the form of granules. At Mount Bischoff there had been apparently an upheaval or outburst of the ore, and extraordinary expectations had been formed as to the value of the discovery. He did not think, however, that this would

be the only locality in which large quantities of tin would be found, as from information he had received he fully expected that other discoveries should be made in the very imperfectly explored districts lying to the south and west of Mount Bischoff. He need scarcely say that all the country in the vicinity of the Mount had been applied for, immediately after the discovery of the tin was made public.

Dr. AGNEW informed the meeting that as Hon. Secretary to the Society, he had had some correspondence in reference to the stone implements of our Aborigines, with Mr. Brough Smyth (secretary for mines, Victoria), who was writing on the subject of the Australian Aborigines. On one point the evidence was conflicting. By some he, Dr. Agnew, had been told that in addition to the stone implements of which our Museum has several specimens, the Natives made use of others after the manner of axes, that is, they fastened to them handles in the shape of withes, bound round with the tendons of some animal. Other observers think our Natives did not originally use these handles, but learned how to attach them, from some New South Wales Aborigines who came to this country in the early days of its settlement. On the occasion of his (Dr. Agnew's) recent visit to Melbourne, Mr. Brough Smyth, who was anxious to have all the information possible on the point at issue, suggested to him the following queries, which were now brought forward in order that a wide publicity might be given to them when the official report of the meeting appeared in the newspapers:—

1. Were tomahawks made by striking off flakes until the desired shape was obtained; or were they simply pebbles of suitable form taken from a river bed?
2. Did they grind or polish the cutting edge, and if so what means did they employ?
3. Of what kind of stone were the tomahawks made?
4. Are there any tomahawks to be got in Tasmania?
5. Did they use gum in fastening the wooden handle to the head?

Discussion ensued, from which it appeared the general belief of the Fellows present was, that the stone axe with the handle attached was never used by our Natives until taught by those from the neighbouring continent.

The Secretary read a paper from Lieut. Legge, R.A., F.Z.S., M.R.A.S., a corresponding member of the Society, now stationed in Ceylon, on the *Ploceus baya* (Blyth), the "Weaver Bird" of Ceylon. The paper, which was illustrated by specimens of the Weaver Birds' nests, at different stages of construction, was presented to the Museum by the author.

Sir James M. WILSON, after remarking that he had heard some rumours as to the probability of a party of observation being established at Possession Island on the occasion of the Transit of Venus in 1874, enquired if the Victorian Government was likely to take any action in the matter.

The HON. SECRETARY replied that he had not heard of any such intention on the part of the Victorian Government, and in reference to the question, proceeded to read a letter from Dr. Hooker, which appeared in *Nature* for March 20th, 1873, page 384, in which it was conclusively shown that the station was quite unfit for the purpose of observing the transit.

[For further observations on Possession Island see "Voyage of Erebus and Terror to the Antarctic Regions," vol. 1, page 50. It will be remembered that Dr. Hooker was Botanist to this expedition.]

Some conversational discussion having taken place, a vote of thanks was passed to the donors of presentations, and a special vote to Mr. Legge for his very interesting paper. The proceedings then terminated.