

AUGUST, 1873.

The monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, the 12th August, the Right Rev. Bishop Bromby, D.D., in the chair.

The following gentlemen, who had previously been nominated by the Council, were balloted for and declared duly elected as Fellows of the Society, viz., Messrs. J. A. Turner and G. H. Latham, of Hobart Town; and Mr. R. M. Johnston, of Launceston.

The SECRETARY (Dr. Agnew), submitted the following returns for the past month :—

1. Visitors to Museum, 1,166.
2. Ditto to Gardens, 2,434.
3. Plants, &c., sent from Gardens :—
 - a. To Mr. G. Brunning, Melbourne—100 packets of seeds.
 - b. To Mr. W. Bull, London—60 packets of seeds of indigenous plants.
 - c. For Church of England grounds, New Norfolk—50 plants.
 - d. For St. David's burial ground—12 plants.
 - e. For Friends' ditto—36 plants.
4. Plants, &c., received at Gardens :—
 - a. From Mr. Brunning, Melbourne—74 plants, 11 varieties of Scions.
 - b. From Royal Gardens, Kew, seeds of *Cedrus deodara*.
5. Books and periodicals received.
6. Presentations to Museum.
7. *Meteorological Returns*.
 - a. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.—Table, &c., for July.
 - b. Westbury, from F. Belstead, Esq.—Ditto for June.
 - c. Port Arthur, from A. H. Boyd, Esq.—Ditto for July.
 - d. Swansea, from Dr. Story—Ditto for June.
 - e. Report of Meteorological Office, Dominion of Canada.

The presentations were as follows :—

1. From Mr. J. Watson, Muddy Plains—A Musk Duck (*Biziura lobata*).
2. From Mr. Aldred—A Nankeen Night Heron (*Nycticorax caldonicus*).
3. From Dr. Huston—A "Native Companion," or Australian Crane (*Grus australasianus*).
4. From Mr. Hissey—Two Shells (*Haliotis sp.*). A Silver Pheasant, prepared and mounted.
5. From Mr. T. Askill, Brighton—A Swamp Parakeet (*Pezoporus formosus*).
6. From Mr. Gregory—Four young Native Cats (*Dasyurus viverrinus*) from the pouch.
7. From Miss Castray—Algæ and corallines, from Port Arthur, dried and pressed.
8. From Mr. D. Girdwood—Fossil *Ostrea* (?) and *Terebratula*, from Greymouth, New Zealand.
9. From Mr. F. H. Eckford—Copper Ore, from Yamba, Queensland.
10. From Mr. Nevin—A piece of Turf, or peat, used for fuel in Ireland.
11. From Mr. Mason—A Fish, from Shipwright's Point, Huon.
12. From Messrs. Cawthorn Bros., Macquarie Plains—A Lamb with eight legs. Two Mountain Thrushes (*Oreocincla lunulata*).
13. From Mr. R. M. Johnston. A collection of Fossils, from near Launceston.
14. From Mr. S. H. Wintle. A number of Mineralogical Specimens from various parts of the colony. Accompanying them was an "Analysis of a specimen of mineral incrustation from the inside

of a boiler supplied by well-water during a period of three years”
—from the estate of J. Todd, Esq., Blue Hills.

A specimen of coal of a peculiar character from Rostrevor, Spring Bay, was exhibited by the Ven. the Archdeacon. On testing, it was found to be incombustible. In appearance it resembled lignite, and contained no trace of bitumen.

The Bishop brought forward some specimens of iron ore, from Mount Pleasant, Swansea; and Mr. Allport exhibited a collection of tin ore from Mount Bischoff.

A letter from Dr. G. F. Story was read, giving, from information he had received, some account of certain habits of the aborigines. As to the implements used by them, the information was very similar to that already laid before the Society.

The following statement from Mr. Robert Thirkell was read, and possesses some interest as coming direct from the actual observer and eye-witness of the subjects referred to:—“Mr. Robert Thirkell, of Woodstock, near Longford, arrived in Tasmania in the year 1820, and was constantly amongst the natives. He found them a peaceable and inoffensive race of people, and in no case had he to resort to force to prevent mischief. On the first occasion the natives visited his place of residence on the Macquarie River, about 20 men and the same number of women and children came, after which various numbers came at intervals. When he was engaged building a house the men came and curiously inspected the work, and would use gimlets and other tools. At other times, Mr. Thirkell states that he met them in the bush, and in no case had he any cause for fear. Their mode of climbing trees was to get a grass band twisted, put it round the tree and hold the two ends in one hand, and then with a sharp flint stone they would chip the bark downwards and make a notch for the big toe, then change hands and do the same on the other side. They had no handle to the stone, merely an indent for the thumb, and the edge ground (? chipped) as sharp as they could against another stone. When the opossum was got out of a hole in the tree, they would knock its head against the tree and throw it down. Those below would catch it if not dead. Their spears were made of wood entirely, and jagged at the sharp end. They used a shield made of a piece of flat wood, and waddie about 2 feet 6 inches long. They had merely a piece of kangaroo skin round their loins, or rather hanging in front, no other covering, and no rugs or bedding. Each family had a fire separate from the others at night. They would not move about after dark, in fact not until sunrise. Mr. Thirkell never considered it necessary to carry firearms to protect himself against them. He has met the Chief, who would walk up and put his hand on the horse’s neck, talk as well as he could, and be quite friendly. Mr. Thirkell considered any injury sustained by the white people was entirely occasioned by their own ill-usage of the females. They used to half-cook the opossums whole, and were much pleased to get potatoes from the white people.”

The Hon. C. MEREDITH did not agree with the idea that the enmity of the aborigines was due to the ill-treatment of their females by the whites. Among the blacks there was no such feeling as jealousy, and it was notorious to the early settlers that the blacks were in the habit of forcing their gins to visit the whites in order to obtain what they could from them. In the eastern districts, with which Mr. Meredith was familiar, the blacks never jagged their spears, nor did they make use of a shield. The jagged spears and shields would therefore appear to have been used more particularly by the northern tribes, which were specially referred to by Mr. Thirkell.

The SECRETARY read a paper by Mr. R. M. Johnston, of the Railway

Department, "Regarding the composition and extent of certain tertiary beds in the neighbourhood of Launceston."

The paper, which was well illustrated by drawings of sections and fossils, was very elaborate, and betrayed a great amount of care, zeal, and ability on the part of the author.

Several of the Fellows—the Chairman, Mr. Gould, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Allport—expressed their high sense of Mr. Johnston's researches, and thought several of the points brought forward were worthy of careful consideration and discussion. To give time for this purpose, it was agreed that the subject should be resumed at next meeting, on which occasion a general hope was expressed that Mr. Johnston would find it convenient to be present, in order that he might have an opportunity of affording, from his intimate knowledge of the locality, &c., any information which might be required during the discussion.

A special vote of thanks to Mr. Johnston, and the usual recognition to the donors of presentations, terminated the proceedings.