

SEPTEMBER, 1873.

The monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, the 9th September, M. Allport, Esq., V.P., 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.

1. Dr. John Agardh, of Lund, Sweden, (corresponding member).

2. Josh. J. Clarke, Esq., of Tremayne, Hobart Town.

The following returns for the past month were brought under notice, viz. :—

1. Visitors to Museum, 1,331.

2. Ditto to Gardens, 3,503.

3. Plants and seeds received at Gardens—From Mr. G. Brunning, Melbourne, 60 plants. From C. Huber, France, 13 packets seeds. From the Botanic Gardens, Adelaide, 60 varieties of ornamental trees and shrubs.

4. Plants, &c., sent from Gardens—To the Acclimatisation Society, Canterbury, New Zealand, 80 packets seeds. For the Church of England Grounds, Richmond, 136 plants. For ditto ditto at Green Ponds, 101 plants. For St. David's Burial Ground, 48 plants.

5. Time of leafing, &c., of a few standard plants during the month.

6. Books and Periodicals received.

7. Presentations to Museum.

8. Specimens sent to Dr. Haast for the Museum, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Meteorological Tables.

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.—Table for August.

2. Westbury, from F. Belstead, Esq.—Ditto.

3. Port Arthur, from A. H. Boyd, Esq.—Ditto.

4. Sydney, New South Wales, from the Government Astronomer—Printed tables for May.

5. From the Hobart Town Marine Board—Monthly tables from January to July, inclusive, from the following stations in Tasmania—Mount Nelson, Bruny Island Lighthouse, Swan Island ditto, Goose Island ditto, and Kent's Group ditto.

The presentations were as follows :—

1. From R. Gatenby, Esq., Macquarie River—A very large specimen of the Wombat (*Phascodomys wombat.*)

2. From J. Swan, Esq.—Two Fish.

3. From Mr. Iles, Sorell—A very large egg of the domestic goose, weighing $11\frac{1}{2}$ ounces.

4. From Mr. Baynton, a fossil (cast of *Euomphalus*) from Brown's River.

5. From Mr. Cartwright—A Hen's egg curiously malformed.

6. From C. M.-S. Chichester, Esq.—A specimen of Elliott's Volute (*Voluta Elliotti.*)

[This beautiful shell was pointed out as being a very acceptable presentation, both for its rarity and because it completed a pair with one already in the possession of the Society.]

7. From Mr. B. O'Neil Wilson—A volume of Faulkner's *Dublin Journal*, 1738.

8. From the Hon. Charles Meredith—5 Leases by the early Governors of Tasmania, 1810 to 1818.

9. From Captain Dart, of the Sapphire—Part of Skeleton of a large Turtle, head of Tunny, two birds (one a Curlew) caught four hundred miles at sea.

10. From H. Bilton, Esq.—A Lizard (*Omolepida casuarinæ*), from Glenorchy.
11. From the Zoological and Acclimatisation Society of Victoria—Proceedings for 1872, Vol. 2.
12. From Dr. Agnew—Lindley's "System of Botany," and "Introduction to Botany" (2 vols).

Of these No. 7 was brought under special notice as a very valuable presentation, affording as it does a contemporaneous record of events of a past and eventful period, and thus presenting many points of interest to the reader of history.

The papers referred to as presentation No. 8 were examined with curiosity by several of the Fellows, many of them, as legal documents, by their brevity and vagueness of diction affording remarkable contrast to similar instruments of the present times of the colony.

The CHAIRMAN read the following note from Professor McCoy, relative to the Tasmanian Kingfish, referred to at the last meeting of the Society:—

"Note of *Thyrsites micropus* (McCoy).—In reply to the remark of Mr. Allport I beg to say that the *Thyrsites solanderi* differs so much from *Thyrsites micropus* that I did not think it necessary to point the differences out. The latter is much shorter and deeper, has fewer fin rays in dorsal and anal fins; has more than double the number of dorsal and anal finules, and has the lateral line forked."

After the explanation thus given by the learned Professor, the CHAIRMAN said he could only come to the conclusion that we had on our coasts besides the Barracouta (*Thyrsites atun*) two other species of *Thyrsites* both known as "King-fish;" and this might also account for the marked difference in the quality of these fish.

The following extract from the *Government Gazette* of the 31st March, 1827, kindly forwarded by Mr. Calder, was read:—

"King's Island.—This island, of which Mr. Barnard has completed a laborious and interesting survey, is about 30 miles long from north to south, and 12 or 15 from east to west, and with the exception of the hills near the shore, is low and flat. Mr. Barnard crossed it by six different routes, and found the soil and its products, generally speaking, inferior to those in this island. It is well watered near the coast, but except a rivulet to the north of Sea Elephant Bay on the East Coast, possesses no stream of any magnitude. The tide was found to rise some feet higher on the east than on the west coast, a phenomenon which confirms the theory of the general progressive motion of the sea, influenced by the sun in that direction. It scarcely possesses one good harbour, the best being at New Year's Island. Gum trees prevail, besides which, the black and light woods, the celery leafed pine, and the sassafras abound in perfection. There is a shrub that the sealers use in the place of tea, and which affords an acrid, stimulating drink, and also a viscous strong smelling plant which they smoke as tobacco. Kangaroo are not very numerous, but the small species called wallaby, on the western coast, are almost like rabbits in a warren. Mr. Barnard makes no mention of the small white wombat, which affords such delicate eating, and we fear the dogs left on the island by the sealers have nearly destroyed the species. The sea elephant and seals, with the bones of which the beach is strewed, are, we regret to say, also become very scarce. Swans, ducks, teal, snipe, quail, pigeons, a peculiar species of cockatoo, and a sort of widgeon, also common at Macquarie Island, in size between the quail and partridge, a very pretty bird and very delicate eating, are all found in abundance," &c.

Several members expressed doubts as to the existence at any time of a "white" wombat as a distinct species. If one occasionally had

been noticed, it was probably an albino, and therefore an exceptional case, as is frequently seen in the kangaroo, &c.

The following letters addressed to the Secretary by Baron von Mueller, were read :—

“Melbourne,

“9th August, 1873.

“It affords me much gratification to send you a third supplementary contribution towards the phytography of Tasmania, although it is with regret that I saw almost four years pass since my last communication to the Royal Society, and since my visit to your island, without being able to continue my collateral researches on Tasmanian plants either here or there. But during these three or four years my quiet unostentatious work was so much disturbed, by intrusions on my position, by harassing misrepresentations, and by the reductions of my means of working, that even my special publications here, during that, to me, sad period, did but little proceed. Even now I am quite uncertain whether I shall be able to effect any future progress in my literary labours, as I have no longer the means of a well-organised department, such as I formed many years ago in the botanic garden, at my command; and as I have hardly any other resources left than my modest salary, for scientific operations or writings of any kind. I state this at some length in order that I may free myself of the reproach of having done so little for the Society in late years.

“The writings now conveyed to you refer to more than 100 Cotyledonar plants and ferns, on which I have given notes, either concerning new localities of the species, or other remarks supplemental to Dr. Hooker's great work. Then about 60 Algæ are recorded in these pages, either from new spots of growth, or being in other respects worthy of remark. Among the Cotyledonar plants and ferns, 21 are not contained in the “Flora Tasmaniae.” Several, however, are immigrated plants. But *Imperata* and *Cyathea* are additional genera for Tasmania beyond the introduced *Cryptostemma*, *Sanguisorba*, and other genera. The Algæ have given five new genera to Tasmania—*Curdiaea*, *Gloioderma*, *Dumontia*, *Bryopsis*, and *Valonia*. Not less than 35 species are added to those of the list furnished for Dr. Hooker's work by the lamented Dr. Harvey. Five of the species are absolutely new to science. The additions to the chapter of Algæ were obtained (beyond some few furnished by myself) partly from Dr. Harvey's *Phycologia Australica*, partly from notes of Dr. Sonder, but for the greater part from recent investigations of Dr. John Agardh, of Lund, who thought it worthy of his precious hours to devote many of them to the study of collections sent him from your island. For the labour thus bestowed, it would be a graceful recognition if the Royal Society of Tasmania would call this illustrious man into the ranks of its honorary members.

“During the next few months, I hope to add notes to the records of *Glumaceæ* of your island, as I am engaged on the elaboration of these orders for the 7th volume of the universal work on Australian plants. I have reason to believe that these kinds of plants have not attracted full attention of all Tasmanian collectors. Thus, for instance, I refer in the pages now transmitted to a *Lepyrodia*, altogether new for your island, and there, as yet, only gathered on one single spot. If, therefore, the members of the Society would aid me by sending sedges, rushes, and such like plants from as many localities as circumstances will permit, much interesting novelty and much of utilitarian importance also might come to light. Indeed, I would encourage collecting of any kinds of plants, by amateurs, anywhere, and would willingly examine such collections, which latter again would be formed in twofold series of specimens, so that the names, for instruction of the sender, might be

communicated. I venture to draw the attention of the Society also to the remarkable fact that the fruit of the *Donatia*—a genus which I first proved many years ago to exist also in Tasmania—remained unknown up to the present day, although the original species was discovered in Fuegia fully a century ago, and then named and described by the two Forsters, who went with Captain Cook in his second expedition. Perhaps it is within the means of the Society to procure the needful material for a record of the *Donatia* fruit in its journal, as the plant occurs near the survey station on Mount Field, East, and would ripen its fruit in the winter months.

“Could your Royal Society not kindly take it upon itself to procure the *Donatia* fruit ?

“Could the residents of Flinders Island be asked to send flower and fruit specimens of the various *Casuarinæ* from thence, so that the new *C. bicuspidata* might be further studied ?

“Water plants of any kind are also yet much wanted from your territory.”

“Melbourne,

“24th August, 1873.

“I beg to send you a few supplementary notes to the essay forwarded last week ; also a few specimens of the elegant *Imperata arundinacea*, which R. Brown already, in 1810, recorded as Tasmanian, without giving the precise locality, but which no one ever collected again except Dr. Story.

“I imagine that so conspicuous and remarkable a plant might easily be recognised by the members of your Society, and that thus, when once their attention is directed to it, they will trace out new localities of this grass. Dr. Story’s place of finding is clearly a different one to that on which R. Brown got his specimens.”

The SECRETARY, after referring to the deep obligation under which the Society felt themselves to the distinguished savant whose letters had just been read, for his great and valuable contributions to the literature of the Flora of Tasmania, proceeded to read the paper already alluded to, entitled “Contributions to the Phytography of Tasmania.”—By Baron Ferd. von Mueller, C.M.G., M.D., F.R.S., &c.

Mr. ABBOTT read “Notes on Ancient Symbolisms, Naked-eye Observations, and Modern Astronomy.”

The usual vote of thanks having been passed, with special reference to Baron von Mueller, the proceedings terminated.