

# ROYAL SOCIETY.

MARCH, 1878.

The monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, March 12, the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Tasmania in the chair.

The Rev. Charles Rogers, LL.D., etc., etc., etc., Secretary Royal Historical Society, London, who had previously been nominated by the Council, was balloted for, and declared duly elected as a Corresponding Member.

The Secretary (Dr. AGNEW), brought under notice the usual monthly returns, viz. :—

1. Number of visitors to Museum, January. Total, 2,920.
2. Ditto, ditto, ditto, February. Total, 3,881.
3. Ditto, ditto, ditto, Gardens, January. Total, 5,391.
4. Plants and seeds received at Gardens during January and February :—From J. King, Esq., Superintendent Royal Botanic Gardens, Calcutta, seeds of *Cedrus deodar* and *Picea pindrow*. From Baron Ferd. von Mueller, seeds of two species of Palms. From the Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, 24 species Ferns. From Mr. Sparling, Forest Department, India, seeds of *Cedrus deodar*. From the Department of Agriculture, Washington, U.S., 40 species of seeds.
5. Plants sent from Gardens :—To Royal Gardens, Kew, 75 plants indigenous to Tasmania. To Mons. J. Verschaffelt, Ghent, Belgium, two large Tree Ferns. To Mons. A. van Geert, five Tree Ferns.
6. Time of leaving, etc., of a few standard plants in the Botanic Gardens, during January and February.
7. Books and Periodicals received.
8. Presentations to Museum.

## Meteorological Returns :—

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.—Tables, for January and February.
2. Swan Island, from the Marine Board.—Ditto for January.
3. Mount Nelson, from ditto.—Ditto for January and February.
4. Sydney, from H. C. Russell, Esq.—Printed Monthly Tables, from October, 1876, to June, 1877.
5. Melbourne, from R. J. Ellery, Esq.—Printed Tables from June to October, 1877.

The presentations to the Museum were as follows :—

1. From H. Lamb, Esq., M.H.A.—A Young Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*), aged about seven weeks. Taken from the nest.
2. From Captain Boon, barque Southern Cross.—Three Sea Snakes (probably *Platurus scutatus*), and a Star Fish from Coast of New Caledonia.
3. From Mr. J. M. Murray.—Specimens of Galena and Copper Ore from the Champion Bay District, Western Australia.
4. From Mr. N. Turner.—Two samples of dressed Tin Ore, from Mount Bischoff; and two ditto of Bismuth Ore, from Mount Ramsey.

5. From A. Simson, Esq.—Specimens of Crystals of Tin, Sapphire, Zircon, etc., from Gould's Country.
6. From Mr. T. J. Exton.—A Grey Flying Squirrel (*Belideus sciurus*) from Oatlands.
7. From the Rev. W. W. Spicer.—A young Brush Kangaroo (*Halmaturus Bennetii*).
8. From Mr. Jno. Withrington.—A Halfpenny George II., 1753.
9. From Mr. S. J. Baynton.—Specimens of the native Truffle, from Kingston.
10. From Mr. P. Oldham.—A peculiar Fish, caught in 13 fathoms of water off Drouthy Point.
11. From Mr. C. Sutton, Tunbridge.—A sample of Mineral Water from that locality.
12. From Dr. Beccari, director of the Museum, Florence.—Eight prepared Skins of New Guinea Birds (named).
13. From Dr. James Cox, Sydney.—A stone-headed Spear, from a tribe of Aborigines on North coast of Australia.
14. From the Rev. W. W. Spicer.—A collection of Plants—49 species named by donor—from Kent's Group and Swan Island.
15. From Dr. James Hector, Wellington, New Zealand.—Skeleton of a Blackfish (*Globiocephalus macrorhynchus*).

**Presentations to Library :—**

1. From the author.—Copy of a Handbook of the Plants of Tasmania, by the Rev. W. W. Spicer, M.A., etc.
2. From the Royal Historical Society, London.—Vol. 6, of the Transactions of the Society.
3. From the Office of Mines, Sydney —Geological Map of the Hartley District, New South Wales.

**The following papers were read :—**

1. "Contributions to the Phytography of Tasmania," No. 5; by Baron Ferd. von Mueller, C.M.G., M.D., F.R.S., etc., etc.
2. "Further Notes on the Freshwater Shells of Tasmania, with a Description of New Species"; by Robt. M. Johnston.
3. "Notes on the Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*); by Morton Allport, F.L.S., F.Z.S. etc.

In reference to the subject of the latter paper, the Rev. W. W. SPICER read the following extract from a letter which he had lately received from Professor Rolleston, M.D., of Oxford :—"I have read with attention your Royal Society Paper (Proc. Royal Soc. Tasmania 1876, p. 162) on the poison gland of *Ornithorhynchus*. I should incline to think it analogous to the multifarious weapons which help males in the battle of sexual selection. The teeth and claws in which males so often differ from females do not differentiate the sexes in *Platypus*, and this claw may be supposed, with its appended gland, to have given a pre-eminence to males in which it was pre-eminently developed. I apprehend that in the cases where a lion's claw has been proved to have been venom-carrying, it had been smeared with animal matter from some previous meal. Any albuminoid matter, such as 'Woorara,' or putridity of any kind, if not too far gone in decomposition, will poison the lymphatics, or worse. Our present epidemic of hydrophobia brings the thing home to one."

Mr. Justice DOBSON, in moving a vote of thanks to the authors of papers and donors of presentations referred in terms of regret to the great loss the Society was about to experience by the return of the Rev. W. W. Spicer to England. The Bishop cordially agreed with all that was said by Mr. Dobson as to the serious loss they were about to sustain by the absence of Mr. Spicer, to whom the special thanks of the Society were abundantly due, not only for his exertions on behalf of the Society, but

also for the work which he had just, as its author, presented to the library. He hoped, however, that the return of Mr. Spicer to his native country would not altogether sever those relations which had for some time existed between him and the Society.

The vote having passed, Mr. SPICER, in thanking the meeting for the very cordial and appreciative manner in which anything he had done had always been received at their monthly gatherings, expressed a hope that on his return to England he might still be able to do something for a society which would ever have his best wishes for its welfare. (Applause.)

The proceedings then terminated.