

SEPTEMBER, 1877.

The monthly evening meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, 11th September, His Excellency the Governor in the chair.

The following gentlemen, who had been previously nominated by the Council, were balloted for and declared duly elected as corresponding Members of the Society, viz.: Professor F. McCoy, F.G.S., Melbourne University; R. L. J. Ellery, Esq., F.R.S., F.R.A.S., Government Astronomer, Victoria; and Mons. J. N. Verschaffelt, Ghent, Belgium. E. J. Crouch, Esq., of Hobart Town, and — Woodgate, Esq., of Launceston, were also elected Fellows of the Society.

The HON. SECRETARY (Dr. Agnew) brought under notice the usual returns for the past month, viz.:-

1. Number of visitors to Museum, 1727.
2. Ditto ditto to Gardens, 5894.
3. Plants received at Gardens.—From the Sydney Botanic Gardens, plants of the North American *Nymphaea lutea* and *N. odorata*. From Mr. G. Brunning, Melbourne, 41 plants and 23 varieties of fruit scions. From Messrs. Shepherd and Co., Sydney, 21 fruit trees.
4. Plants, etc., sent from Gardens.—To Messrs. Shepherd and Co., Sydney, one case plants and seeds. To Mr. G. Brunning, Melbourne, one ditto. For decoration of Public School grounds, Outlands, 55 plants.
5. Time of leafing, flowering, and fruiting of a few standard plants in the Botanic Gardens during August.
6. Books and Periodicals received.
7. Presentations to Museum.

Meteorological Returns.

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq. Table for August.
2. Mount Nelson, from the Marine Board. Ditto.
3. Melbourne, from the Government Observer. Printed tables for December, 1876, and Results of Observations for 1875.
4. From the Chief Signal Office, Washington, U.S. Bulletins of International Observations from 13th to 22nd October, 1876.

The presentations to the Museum were as follows :-

1. From E. D. Swan, Esq. Nine specimens of Unio from Lakes Champlain and Ontario. One specimen of "Clam" shell from America. Land shells from Alexandria.
2. From Mr. J. R. Rollins, Longley. A fine specimen of silicified wood from the Sandfly Rivulet.
3. From R. C. Kermode, Esq. A Tartar hat, from the Crimea. A pair of Tartar lady's shoes. A pair of child's ditto.—A pair wooden shoes (sabots), from Copenhagen. A Norwegian peasant's cap.
4. From the Rev. W. W. Spicer. Forty-seven species of plants collected by Mr. E. N. Spong.
5. From Mr. R. R. Rex. A jar containing specimens of the leaves and fruit of the nutmeg tree, from Penang. Two plates of "Baleen," from the whale lately found near East Bay Neck.
6. From Mr. P. Tanner. A sample of Coal from the Greta mines, New South Wales.
7. From Mr. Soby, Hobart Town. A Half-Farthing, William IV. A small Swedish Silver Coin (10 ore), 1864. A small Chilian Silver Coin.

Referring to the whale recently cast ashore at East Bay Neck, the SECRETARY reported that it had been purchased for the Museum by means chiefly of an appeal to the Fellows of the Society, which had been very generally responded to. A considerable sum would be necessary for setting up the skeleton, but as the purchase did not exhaust the sum already

received the extra amount required would be small. The whale was of the variety called "sulphur bottom," and about sixty-five feet in length.

In the absence of the author, the SECRETARY read the concluding portion of "Notes on the Hobart Town Reservoir," by T. Stephens, Esq., F.G.S.

The Rev. W. W. SPICER, M.A., F.R.M.S., read a paper entitled "Notes on the Flora of Tasmania." The author gave a most graphic and masterly sketch of the distribution of the flora throughout the island, with descriptions of many of its peculiar forms, and of their effect on the scenery, contrasting them with the vegetation at home and elsewhere. The paper throughout betrayed a perfect and practical acquaintance with all the known flora of Tasmania, and was listened to with the greatest interest and attention.

In reference to a subject which was brought forward at a late meeting of the society, to wit, the difference in the time of the leafing of trees here and in England, His Excellency mentioned he had recently noticed in the Gardens at Government House that the Oak came into leaf earlier than the Sycamore, whilst the reverse was the case in England. This he thought was very remarkable, but more extended observations were desirable. His Excellency also presented a parcel of the pods of *prosopis juliflora* obtained from the Royal Gardens, Kew. On the parcel being opened it was found that almost every pod had been attacked by a sort of weevil, the vitality of the seed being probably destroyed in consequence. (By the advice of the Superintendent of the Public Gardens these pods have been steeped in water in order to destroy the insect, and with a hope that is some the power of germination may not be lost.)

The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the donors of presentations, and a special vote to Mr. Spicer for his most interesting paper on the "Flora of Tasmania."

After the meeting, Mr. Lewald, who has had experience in chemical analysis under the "Adulteration of Food Commission," in England, showed, by means of the Society's microscope, how, by polarised light, various animal and vegetable fats may be distinguished from each other; and how, therefore, in the case of mixture of any of these substances for the purpose of fraud, the adulteration may be detected. The substances subjected to the polariscope were sperm oil, paraffin, beef fat, mutton fat, and cocoa butter.