

interesting and instructive evening. As regarded Mr. Woollnough's paper, he had listened to it himself with the greatest interest, for his home, the place where he was born, was only two day's sail from Iceland—the Shetland Islands. He had been accustomed to hear of Iceland in all his early days. Vessels going to Iceland very often called at the Shetland's on their way, and one from there came with a cargo of Iceland ponies, one of which was purchased for him and ridden by him when a boy. To him, therefore, it had been truly interesting to listen to Mr. Woollnough's paper, for although he had never been to Iceland himself, the members of his family used to go there constantly, and he became very familiar with what might be called the social matters as opposed to the historical affairs of that place. As far as his judgment went it entirely accorded with all Mr. Woollnough had said. To the other gentlemen—Messrs. Saville-Kent, Johnston, and Bastow—he thought they would certainly have great pleasure in giving them their hearty thanks for the papers they had read. (Cheers.)

The meeting then terminated, and the microscopes on an adjoining table were visited.

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### JULY, 1887.

The usual monthly meeting of the Royal Society was held on Monday, July 11th, when there was a good attendance of Fellows and visitors.

Mr. JAMES BARNARD said the President (His Excellency Sir Robert Hamilton, K.C.B.) would not be able to be present, as he was detained elsewhere by important business, so it devolved upon him as the senior vice-president to take the chair.

List of additions to the library during the month :—

American Museum of Natural History, Annual report of the Trustees, and list of members for the year 1886-7. From the Department.

Annual Report, Vol. I., 1885, Geological and Natural History, Survey of Canada, and maps to accompany report. From the Department.

Bollettino della Società Geographica Italiana, Serie II., Vol. XII. Fasc. 5. From the Society.

Bulletin de la Société Imperiale des Naturalistes de Moscow, No. 3. Moscow 1886. From the Society.

Catalogue of the Lizards in the British Museum, 2nd Edition, by Albert Boulenger, Vol. III.; Lacertidæ, Gerrhosauridæ, Scincidæ, Anelytropidæ, Dibamidæ, Chamælonidæ Catalogue of the Fossil Mammalia in the British Museum, Part IV., containing the order Ungulata sub-order Proboscidæ, by R. Lydekker, B.A., F.G.S. From the Trustees.

Den Norske Nordhav—Expedition 1876-8, XVII., Zoologi, Alcyonida, ved. D.C. Danielssen. From the Department.

Guide to the Galleries of Reptiles and Fishes of the Department of Zoology of the British Museum, General Guide to the British Museum. From the Trustees.

Monthly notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, Vol. XLV., No. 6, April 1887, from the Society.

Monthly weather review, M.S. of America, January and February, 1887. From the Department.

Proceedings and transactions of the Queensland branch of the Geographical Society of Australasia, second session, 1886-7. From the Society.

Photograph of nest and eggs of the mountain thrush of Victoria. From Mr. E. D. Swan.

Records of the Geographical Survey of India, Vol. XX., Part II., 1887. From the Society.

Results of a Census of the colony of New Zealand taken for the night of March 20, 1886. Education. From the Department.

Statistics of the colony of New Zealand for the year 1887, Part III. Trade and Interchange.

Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft Für Erdkunde Zu Berlin, Band XIX., No. 1, 1887. From the Society.

Victorian Naturalist. July. From the Society.

#### THE PROPOSED ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION.

The secretary (Mr. A. Morton), stated that during the past two or three months the council had corresponded with the Royal Society of Victoria in regard to the Antarctic exploration. A meeting of this Society had appointed a deputation to wait upon the Premier, and since that deputation had waited upon the Premier, the following telegram had been received :—"Admiral Sir Erasmus Ommaney, secretary to the Antarctic Committee of the British Association, writes, urging all learned and scientific societies throughout Australia, to send a united appeal to promote Antarctic exploration. Is your Society willing to join in such an appeal? Please reply without delay. Probably you will not find it necessary to call a special meeting to justify you in replying generally. (Signed), A. C. MACDONALD, hon. secretary Antarctic Committee, Melbourne." His Excellency the President then called a special meeting of the Council, and a reply was forwarded, stating that the Council had decided to follow up the action already taken, and to join in the appeal, and enclosing papers to show what had already been done.

#### SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS AT ADELAIDE.

The secretary read the following letter from the secretary of Royal Society of South Australia :—

"Parkside, South Australia :—To the Hon. Sec. Royal Society, Tasmania.—Sir,—An effort is being made by the council of the Royal Society of South Australia to arrange for special meetings of scientific men, and for excursions in which would be of special interest to naturalists and geologists, partly in conjunction with, and partly in addition to the meetings of the Studical Congress, which are to take place in Adelaide at the end of August of this year. These meetings are not intended to in any way anticipate the proposed Australasian Association for the advancement of science, but are to be informal. The council think that the meetings of the congress and the Jubilee Exhibition will afford specially good opportunities for such meetings. As an additional attraction the council have arranged with the South Australian Government to permit members of your society to travel over the South Australian railways at that time at half rates on production of a member's ticket. Negotiations are in progress with the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania, with the view of obtaining a similar concession, and my council have very little doubt but that they will be granted. Although the arrangements have not yet been completed, it has been thought advisable to draw your attention to what has been done, with a view to bringing the proposal before your members at as early a date as possible. I shall be glad to hear from you whether any of your members are likely to avail themselves of the opportunity. On receipt of your reply, stating, if possible, the probable number, I will forward to you blank cards

to be filled up for presentation at the railway stations when booking for the journey.—Yours truly, W. L. CLELAND, M.B., Hon. Sec.”

A reply was sent, stating that the letter had been laid before the Council, and would be laid before the next meeting of the Society.

#### SCIENTIFIC FEDERATION.

A letter was read from the Premier, forwarding a letter from the Agent-General, covering a communication received by him from the High Commissioner for Canada, forwarding a letter written by Sir Wm. Dawson, of Montreal, to Professor G. G. Stokes, President of the Royal Society. The last document contained a proposal for a union of British and English speaking geologists to lay a broad foundation of geological fact, classification, nomenclature, and representation, which would ultimately be adopted by other countries as far as local diversities and differences of language might permit.

Mr. T. STEPHENS looked upon the communication as one of special interest directly to geological investigation, and, indirectly, to all interested in scientific matters. An International Congress on the subject had been held two or three years ago at Bologna, under the presidency of the King of Italy, and an endeavour was made to arrive at a common basis upon which geological maps and geological terms might in future be employed. At present almost every country had its own way of distinguishing different periods and different geological formations on maps, a bright carmine in some countries representing granitic formation, while in other countries it might represent some sedimentary formation. The object of the proposal he imagined was to establish some common agreement among geologists all over the world to distinguish different formations. Tasmania could not expect to contribute any important help or advice in such a matter; but he thought it desirable to assure Professor Dawson of the hearty sympathy of Tasmania.

THE BISHOP of Tasmania said he thought some tangible resolution should be placed on the records, as he agreed with Mr. Stephens that it was a very important communication. He looked upon it as tending towards the millennium, for geology in the past had been the science of choosing the best stones to throw at one another, and disputed theories had been contended for with marked animosity.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON was very glad to find the importance of the communication so readily recognised, seeing how very desirable it was that some common plan should be adopted if it did not interfere with practical work in regions where the systematic sub-divisions of one country did not exactly agree with those of the other. Some parts of the world had gone into details with such elaboration that it was practically impossible for other parts to follow. In the greater divisions a common plan of colouring might be advantageously adopted, but he felt that as with Professors Hutton and Tait, Mr. Jack and others, difficulty and confusion would arise if Australasia adopted the colours of other parts of the world, so far as the minor divisions of systems were concerned. Those who learned geology from books would not know of the difficulty in the field if Australian geologists followed too closely the sub-divisions of Europe. Still they might present their difficulties and ask guidance and assistance how to come into greater harmony with them, and in that respect effect a great deal of good. He did not agree with those who said “Do away with colours,” simply because they could not particularise; for pioneer work must at first be content with generic groupings, and finer lines of demarcation would come afterwards.

Mr. T. STEPHENS moved,—“That the Royal Society of Tasmania cordially welcomes the proposal embodied in Sir Wm. Dawson’s letter, and requests the council to communicate to the proper quarter the

desire of the Society to further the important object of the federation of British and American geologists.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

A RARE MOSS.

Mr. BASTOW submitted a specimen of *Dawsonia superba*, one of the most magnificent of known mosses, collected by Miss S. Gerard, near Ulverstone, on the North-West Coast of Tasmania, and gave a few descriptive particulars of the plant, only one species of which had yet been discovered and that only once by Mr. Gunn in Tasmania. The genus was confined to Australasia.

TASMANIAN HEPATICÆ.

Mr. R. A. BASTOW, read a paper giving a full list and description of the Tasmanian *Hepaticæ*. Accompanying the paper were 35 plates illustrating about 140 species. This very valuable paper will be a great acquisition to the Journal of the Society, covering, as it does, 228 pages of manuscript. Mr. Bastow said as much of his paper was of a technical character he would merely read a part of the introduction thereto, stating that in popularly-written botanical hand books the *Hepaticæ* are usually not described, the authors chiefly confining their attention to plants of larger growth; the phanerogamous plants receive full notice the ferns and lycopods may also be described, but here the line is usually drawn. The *Mosses*, *Hepaticæ*, *Lichens*, and *Fungi*, are dismissed with some such remark as, "that they are distributed throughout the world, and are of no economical importance," "or that they form beautiful transition from low to high organisation," and "that they are evascular." Few persons ever dreamed that earthworms were of any importance until Darwin observed and described their habits; and probably quite as few are aware of the aid lent by the *Mosses* and *Hepaticæ* to the economy of nature in the formation of peat; it is not at all unlikely that the *Hepaticæ* cushioned the swampy ground ages ago, and contributed their share in the structure of coal for the use of man at the present day. It may, therefore, not be wasted time if we bestow a little attention to the Natural Orders of Australasian Cryptogams containing as they do, the more minute forms of plant life. He essayed during the last session of this Society to describe to the best of his ability the Tasmanian *Mosses*, and now ventured upon a description of the *Hepaticæ*. Doubtless many errors may be found that a more experienced and abler pen would have avoided, but as the reference to descriptions is the first necessity in the study of *Hepaticæ*, even if that reference be but a poor one, and as the subject has not yet been taken in hand since the publication of "Hooker's Flora Tasmaniae," with the exception of the valuable supplement in Vol. XI. of Baron von Mueller's "Fragmenta Phytographiæ Australiæ," and as those who reside far away from the city, and are desirous to know something about the *Hepaticæ* that grow in such profusion in the moist gullies and by the banks of streams, and yet have no hand-book on the subject that they can consult, he ventures to hope that the following compilation may to some extent be useful, its many shortcomings notwithstanding. The entire structure of some of the *Hepaticæ* so resemble the *Mosses* as to render them popularly regarded as identical, but they may be distinguished therefrom by their soft, spongy lax texture; by their leaves being destitute of nerves; by their frequently less vivid colours; and by their affecting moister situations. They vary in size as do the *Mosses*, from 6in. long or more, and remarkable for their beauty as well as their size, to very minute capillary forms scarcely distinguishable as plants without the aid of the microscope. The fruiting specimens are not so easily detected as they are in *Moss* plants, but that apparent deficiency is more than counter-balanced by the numerous and exquisite

forms of leaves affording excellent characteristic points for the determination of genera and species. Perhaps the *Hepaticæ* grow in greater profusion and variety, and attain greater size and beauty in the densely ferned and matted dingles on the moist slopes of the mountains of Tasmania than in any other part of the world. A little rough scrambling through the tangled masses of vegetation, and a little climbing over fallen forest giants, yet keeping near to the stream, and we are certain soon to discover the old decaying logs completely covered with *Hepaticæ*, so much so as to effectually conceal the decaying wood that supports them. Some of the cavities in the logs are matted with an abundance of long, stringy, whitish plants; these are soft and yielding *Lepidozia*, and charming objects for the stage of the microscope, the leaves being scarcely visible to the naked eye. Other logs will be found covered with that giant amongst *Hepaticæ*, *Gottschea Lehmanniana*; it is of light green colour, and is suspended in masses over the stream. The large size of this plant, 6in. or more, makes it a prominent object, yet its leaves are so curiously laminated and folded that it is very difficult to dissect for the purpose of absolute certainty in determination of species. Some of the rocks are covered with a dark green moss-like coating, rough-velvety both in appearance and touch, the genus *Lejeunia*. Although the leaves are minute, each leaf is furnished with a sac, the water in the sac swarming with moving bodies, probably *antherozoids*. Others are covered with a light brown and beautifully pinnate plant, *Polyotus Magellanicus*, each leaf bearing a club-shaped lobule, so curious an appendage that when once observed it will not be readily forgotten. All the foregoing belong to that section of *Hepaticæ* known as *Foliosæ*. They are plants with distinct stems, bearing distinct leaves. But there are other *Hepaticæ* that bear no distinct stems or leaves, these organs being fused into one flat leaf-like frond, hence the name of the section *Frondosæ*. To this section belong the *Blyttia*, *Metzgeria*, and other genera. The latter may be observed forming a perfectly flat net-work around the bark of the living trees. It is almost impossible to secure a perfect specimen without taking the bark as well, but the collector will be amply repaid when he settles down to its examination with the microscope. The under side of the frond is particularly interesting. The third section of the order is called *Carnosæ*. In this the fronds are broad and fleshy, of a vivid green colour, having oblique scales on their under sides. They cover moist rocks or stumps, and sometimes grow on earth. By the aid of a pocket lens small receptacles will be observed on the upper surfaces, surrounded by a beautiful pellucid fringe, the receptacles contain *gemmæ*. Seen for the first time they are sure to remind the observer of a miniature bird's nest with eggs inside. The remaining section is *Anthocerotæ*. These also have fleshy fronds, but differ from the preceding section in being without scales on the under sides, and in the manner of fruiting. The plants of this Natural Order are nearly always procumbent, the *dorsal* side of the stem being the upper side as it grows, and the under side the *ventral*. For the purposes of identification botanists have divided the *Foliaceous Hepaticæ* according to the manner in which the leaves are set on the stem; they are either *succubous*, *vertical*, or *incubous*, and it is not easy for beginners in the study to determine in which manner the leaves are actually set; it is, therefore, important to make the differences very clear. If the lowest part of the base of the leaf is on the *dorsal* side of the stem, the leaf is *succubous*. If the base of the leaf crosses the stem *transversely*, it is *vertical*. If the lowest part of the base of the leaf is on the *ventral* side of the stem, it is then *incubous*. The *stipules* are the third rank of leaves, and are generally comparatively small; they are, however, of great use in identifying the genus and species of the plant. The fruit, as in mosses, is generally

terminal or lateral. If terminal, the pedicel of the capsule will proceed from the apex of the stem; if lateral, the pedicel will proceed from the side of the stem. In some of the genera the fruit is embedded in the frond. Usually the fruit of *Hepaticæ* may be known by the pellucid cellular fruit-stalk, with four brown radiating arms at the tip of the stalk. It generally consists of an *involute*, a *perianth*, a *calyptra*, and a *capsule*. The *involute* is a few elongated and sometimes lobed leaves, and in most cases the *perianth* may be observed within these. The *perianth* is an erect, tubular, or inflated sheath; is sometimes compressed, and is frequently angled or keeled. The mouth of the *perianth* may be contracted, dilated, entire, or lobed, these distinctions being in many cases specific characters. Within the *perianth* the transparent oblong or globose *calyptra* will be seen if the fruiting is sufficiently advanced, and here at the base of the fruit stalk it remains, not ascending with the capsule as in *Mosses*. Of all the fruiting organs in *Hepaticæ*, this alone is never absent. As the *capsule* ripens, it bursts the *calyptra*, and is carried through it and upwards as a small blackish ball at the tip of the pellucid stem, and when ripe it bursts into four valves in most species. The *capsule* then appears as a small brown cross. The capsule contains innumerable spores, mixed up with long spiral threads called *elaters*; when the capsule bursts, these *elaters* twist about and throw the spores to some distance. *Elaters* are never found in the fruit of *Mosses*. The female inflorescence or *archegonia* consist of minute and slender flagon shaped bodies with long tubular necks, within each there is one solitary loose cell. One of these becoming fertilised, it eventually ripens into the *calyptra* above described, the loose cell becoming the *capsule*. The male inflorescence or *antheridia* are very minute pedicelled sacs on the same or on different plants from those containing the *archegonia* they are usually solitary on the axils of modified (*perigonal*) leaves, which sometimes occupy proper branchlets. The fruit of the *Frondose Hepaticæ* is somewhat different. In the *Marchantia* for instance, the *involute*, *perianth*, and *capsule* are contained on the surface. These will be familiar to most persons as small green stalked knobs growing from leafy expansions on wet rocks or stumps. The *gemme* contained in the frondose expansions, and before alluded to, are themselves reproductive.

Mr. A. J. TAYLOR thought Mr. Bastow had followed up his valuable work on Tasmanian Mosses very well indeed in the paper just read, which would also be of great assistance to students. The drawings accompanying the paper were a credit both to Mr. Bastow and *The Mercury* office.

Mr. JOHNSTON considered the paper a very valuable continuation of the work Mr. Bastow placed before the Society last session. Those who knew nothing whatever of Hepatics must have gained something from the reading of such a valuable paper. With the plates and key a simple way was furnished by which even children could be led forward to understand and converse pleasantly upon that singular group of plants. Papers such as those written by Mr. Bastow would have been of great value to him when first he came to the colony, as he had, in a measure, to construct his own handbook as he went along.

Mr. A. MAULT praised the paper for its completeness and elaboration, and thanked the writer for the insight he had given to a very interesting branch of natural science. In these days, when the population of the country was constantly drawn to the town forming the danger of our cultivation, nothing would counterbalance it so much as the encouragement of such interesting studies as Mr. Bastow had undertaken.

Mr. A. MORTON placed a high value upon such papers, and thought

it was due to Dr. Agnew that three or four very practical papers had been published by the Government in the proceedings of the Society during the present session, thus scattering the fact broadcast that the Royal Society of Tasmania was doing its best to encourage the development of natural science. He thought a handbook should be prepared on the Mosses and Hepaticæ of Tasmania for the use of its schools, and he hoped a sum of money would be voted, and Mr. Bastow asked to prepare such a work. It was not only in Tasmania that this work was appreciated, for he had heard people in Sydney and Melbourne speak very highly of the former paper, and when he told them that a paper on Hepaticæ was being prepared by Mr. Bastow, which would eclipse those on Tasmanian mosses, it was said that the Royal Society would be doing good work if the former paper could be eclipsed.

The CHAIRMAN thoroughly appreciated the liberality of Dr. Agnew, but thought the present Premier would be found doing the same work. He considered handbooks of the natural history of the colony would be valuable aids in education, and far better than the obsolete knowledge frequently taught.

#### KING'S ISLAND, MOUNT CYGNET, AND FINGAL.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSON read some notes with respect to the fishes, and the land and fresh-water molluscs of King's Island. He stated that he was indebted for the specimens on the table to the commendable interest taken by Mr. John Brown, surveyor, in the natural history of Tasmania. The collections embraced four species of fishes, and nine of molluscs. The fishes were common to the rivers of Tasmania, and the shells were also common to Tasmania, with the exception of *Helix Brunonia*, which though closely approaching *H. bisulcata* and *H. lamproides*, was easily distinguished by the partly closed perforation, very convex base, and peculiar shagreen surface-ornamentation. It had a closer alliance with *H. atramentaria* of Victoria from which, however, it differed in many points.

Mr. JOHNSTON also read an interesting paper on the lower coal measures of Mount Cygnet, as an addenda to a preceding paper, giving sections characteristic of the formation, and adding some remarks upon the beautiful feldspar-porphyrries found at Port Cygnet. Alluding to the alluvial gold discovered at Lymington in the same locality, and worked with more or less success in the valleys associated with the porphyritic rock, he said it was a question of much interest to ascertain by careful experiment whether the pyrites of the metamorphic rocks associated with the porphyry might not also be auriferous. Apparently no other rocks of an auriferous character were to be found in the vicinity. He had submitted some of the pyrites to Mr. Ward, who would shortly be able to give a report.

Mr. JOHNSTON also read some notes on the Fingal Basin from the operations of a trial bore, by means of a diamond-drill, sunk recently at Harefield, under the direction of Mr. Bateman, to a depth of 723ft. The paper gave an abstract of the principal rocks passed through in the bore, which the writer regarded as of the greatest interest, forming one of the best evidences yet obtained regarding the stratigraphical relation of the rocks of the Fingal Basin. Beneath the Upper Palæozoic Marine Beds, carbonaceous shales and a very thin seam of coal was found. The fossils contained in them though meagre and imperfect, indicate that these lower beds belong to the lower coal measures, and are probably identical with those of the Mersey.

Mr. WARD said he had examined the rock mentioned by Mr. Johnston in the paper on Mount Cygnet, and found no gold in the small quantity of pyrites placed at his disposal, but had very little doubt that if a

sufficiently large quantity were treated gold would be found, as it almost always had been in pyrites.

Mr. STEPHENS said that the three papers just read would each furnish materials for an interesting discussion, but it was not possible now to do more than touch upon one or two of the subjects mentioned.

The Mt. Cygnet coal beds, like nearly all similar formations in Tasmania, had been extensively affected by intrusive igneous rocks, and a noticeable feature was the common occurrence of a form of *slickensides*, as a polished and sometimes striated lining of joints, resulting from the slow and long continued friction of two surfaces in contact with each other. The movements of which this evidence remained were probably caused by the slow contraction of the huge dykes of trap in the vicinity during the process of cooling, rather than by the original intrusive action.

The felspar porphyry of Port Cygnet and the neighbourhood he (Mr. Stephens) had frequently brought under the notice of the Royal Society. He agreed with Mr. Johnston in connecting it with the occurrence of gold in many of the neighbouring gullies, and saw no reason to modify the opinions which he had expressed in a paper on the subject read before the Society as far back as 1869, except as to the age of certain rocks which he then suggested might be silurian. In 1869 or 1870 he had sent to Sydney for examination a quantity of pyrites from Port Cygnet, but on being very carefully tested at the Mint it was not found to contain any gold. The most probable source is to be looked for in the quartzose veinstones which occasionally traverse the porphyry both at Port Cygnet, and in the ranges lying west of Oyster Cove, where traces of gold are also met with under precisely similar conditions.

Dr. SANDFORD suggested that the Marine Board should carry out some dredging improvements off King's Island, when, he had no doubt, interesting collections could be made.

Mr. MORTON was glad the Bishop had referred to this matter. In Sydney, when supplies were sent to the lighthouses, notice was generally given to the Museum staff, so that they might send an officer if they wished. Though they had no Government steamer here, he hoped the Marine Board would assist the Museum in obtaining specimens, as Mr. Brown had told him many specimens were to be obtained at the different islands, and he intended to ask the trustees of the Museum to send supplies of spirits of wine to those in charge of the lighthouses for the purpose of preserving any specimens they may capture.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. SWAN submitted a photograph of the nest of the mountain thrush of Australia, taken by Mr. A. J. Campbell.

Mr. PERRIN submitted several specimens of Eucalypts and other plants, including the deciduous Tasmanian Beech, the flower of which had not been seen, but he managed to obtain a specimen at La Perouse last December, and also a specimen in fruit at Mount Arrowsmith.

Mr. A. J. TAYLOR submitted a form of codlin moth trap from the garden of Mr. Maning, Sandy Bay, giving evidence of its successful working. Also the skins of a Tasmanian devil, rabbit, and house rat tanned and preserved by the following method:—Two quarts of bran in six quarts of boiling water, cooled and strained, and then mixed with an equal quantity of saturated salt solution. To each gallon of this mixture add 1oz. of sulphuric acid. Scrape all flesh and fat from the skin after thoroughly damping, and place it in the last mentioned mixture. Let it remain for 20 minutes if a small skin; 30 minutes for medium (such as wallaby), and 60 minutes for large skin (as kangaroo).



Wash immediately on taking out in clear water and well work it with the hands occasionally when drying.

Mr. F. ABBOTT read a short paper on a specimen of *Sporobolus virginicus*, forwarded to Baron von Müeller, for the purpose of recording the fact of its being indigenous to Tasmania.

THE LATE MR. C. P. SPRENT.

The CHAIRMAN alluded to the fact that since last meeting a vacancy had been caused in the ranks of the Society, which had lost a very distinguished member in the late Mr. C. P. Sprent, Deputy Surveyor-General, who had been struck down by the prevailing epidemic. Testimony had been borne to his valuable services as a public officer in the *Gazette*, but Mr. Sprent had been a prominent member of the Society, and they would all retain in their minds the admirable paper read by him very recently on the subject of the proposed Antarctic expedition, which had already borne fruit in the steps being taken to give effect to it. He was sure they all sympathised deeply with the lamented gentleman's widow and her family, while the society had lost a valuable member, not only in the fact of the valued contributions he had made to its proceedings, but in the hopes given of future contributions had he been spared.

The Hon. N. J. BROWN said he was not aware until a few minutes previously that the matter which had just been so feelingly alluded to by the chairman would come before the meeting; but having been in a position to know the late Mr. Sprent thoroughly well, and to appreciate his high character in the public position he held, he did not think he would be right in missing the opportunity afforded him by the chairman of saying a few words such as had been indicated might be said on such an occasion. The occasions were rare when subjects other than those upon which their cold reasoning faculties were brought to bear came before the Society, and when subjects such as this came up in which emotions were stirred it was difficult to find expression in fitting terms. He might be permitted to say it had always been a matter of pride and satisfaction to him that he had been the means of placing the late Mr. Sprent in the important office he held at the time of his death. During his tenure of that office he (Mr. Brown had got to know and value him, and almost to regard him as a brother. Mr. Sprent's large and wide knowledge; his high scientific acquirements—acquirements which were won by unflagging industry; his kindly heart, high honourable character, and thorough honesty and integrity, formed a combination of excellence rarely met with. The name of the late Mr. C. P. Sprent was indelibly fixed in the records of this Society, whilst that of his honoured father was placed on the records of the colony, and his loss to this Society was very great indeed. His loss to his family and friends, and he thought he could say, to the country, would be well nigh irreparable, if not quite so. He thought he should meet the views of those present, and many who were not present, if he concluded his brief and imperfect remarks by moving, "That a letter of condolence be forwarded from the President and Council of this Society, to the late Mr. Sprent's widow and mother."

Mr. R. M. JOHNSTON, who rose to support the motion, said he could not trust himself to speak upon the matter, as he had lost one of his dearest friends.

Mr. FERRIN also supported the motion, to enable him to state that Baron Müeller had desired him to convey to the Fellows of this Society his condolence at the loss they had sustained.

The motion was carried, and the meeting then terminated.

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