ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS, MAY, 1905.

The monthly meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania was held at the Museum on Tuesday, May 16. The president, His Excellency Sir Gerald Strickland, G.C.M.G., occupied the chair, and was accompanied by Lady Edeline Strickland and suite. There was a good attendance, including Right Reverend Dr. Mercer, Bishop of Tasmania, the Bishop of Laranda, Sir Adye Douglas, Sir Elliott Lewis, and several visitors, who were introduced.

Election.

The following gentlemen were elected Fellows of the society:—Captain de Hoghton, R.N., Alderman George Kerr (Mayor of Hobart), Mr. W. S. Dawson, A.M.I.C.E. (Engineer-in-Chief Metropolitan Drainage Board), Dr. Kendall, Messrs. John Dowbiggan Foster, Henry Marcellus Nicholls, Lomas Smith, and L. H. Macleod.

Notes on Tasmanian Minerals.

In the absence of the author, Mr. W. F. Petterd, Mr. A. Morton read his paper on "Tasmanian Minerals." In his introductory observations, Mr. Petterd wrote:—"The present contribution to the mineralogy of this State is of somewhat unusual interest, inasmuch as it describes for the first time an apparently new compound, which, although of no commercial value, is of some scientific interest. It is, in its way, a humble congener of the more imposing crocoicite, for the occurrence of which in such magnificent developments this island has obtained a great repute among mineralogists in all parts of the world, but, like it, is simply of scientific importance. The Lefroy meteorite, now mentioned for the first time, is, although of such remarkably small size, worthy of special note, and its detection in the prospector's dish adds another to the romantic discoveries of such objects from unknown space. The already long list of the different minerals recorded from time to time as being found in this State is still further augmented by the addition of no less than eighteen not heretofore published. Respecting these concise notes were given. Several of these, said the author, were of some scientific interest, and two or three would be of industrial importance if they could be discovered in sufficient quantity. Notes on additional localities for a few others which are already on record were given, with some remarks on the peculiar features presented by some few others. He had to record his obligation to Mr. J. D. Millen, A.S.T.C., M.S.C.I., London, metallurgical chemist, for undertaking the analysis of Bellite and Hercynite. The following is the list of minerals of which particulars were given:—Barnandite, Bellite, Cloanthite, Enargite, Echerite, Genthite, Gibbsite, Heliophyllite, Hercynite, Hydromanganocalcite, Lefroy meteorite, Leucophanite, Manganite, Minium, Niccolite, Pilotite, Plinthite, Pimelite, Proustite, Pyrargyrite, Pyrostilpinite, Quartz, Scorodite, Sicilliophite, Smertite, Steargillite, Stephanite, Stibiconite, Touramline, and Wurtzite.

His Excellency said he felt that it was one of the charms and enjoyments in being present to listen to the arguments and the thrusts and parries of discussion. Even that paper, short as it was, might give scope to some remarks. He was impressed himself with the principle which drew to their attention the presence of rare or unknown minerals in Tasmania.

Mr. Morton eulogised the work of Mr. Petterd in elaborating a list of the minerals found in Tasmania, and said his work was recognised not only in Australasia, but throughout the world.

Postponed.

The reading of a paper by Mr. J. R. McClyment, M.A., on "Birds Observed by Crozet on his voyage" was postponed until next meeting.

Paper by Mr. R. M. Johnston, I.S.O., F.S.S.

Mr. R. M. Johnston read a paper on "A Proposed Psychometer Index Designed as an aid to the Better Determination of Common Fungoid Illusions, and of the Comparative Value of Mental Concepts."

The author said he was aware that his paper would probably give rise to great differences of opinion, and perhaps very virulent opposition to the view he had taken up. He, however, had come forward rather to show how to convey, with a simple diagram, an eye-picture which disclosed in a natural way the order of the diminishing value of judgment which was dependent upon the nature and condition of the person's stage of observation. Closely condensed, Mr. Johnston's argument was that the order and equilibrium of the mind are intimately connected with the vigour, fulness, and health of the organs of sense. Many persons, he said, committed mental suicide for the sensual delight of a useless momentary wonder. The insane, by disease, were forced to live always within a world of wonders such as those sought after, at times, by the ignorant. He had prepared a classified "Psychometer Index"

which to some might be useful in showing the treacherous nature of the apparent value of judgments based upon observations of the crippled senses. He showed by this classified "psychometer index" that we may only hope for orderly concepts, free from illusion, within narrow limits. Beyond this limit orderly conception diminished or lessened in value. It would seem, he said, that passion distorts or gains ascendency over sane judgment in proportion to the degree of the diminishing power of the senses, until, approaching the zero of the understanding, the state coincides exactly with insanity. The insane state consisted of all kinds of unreasoning beliefs; but, unlike sane concepts, they were marked by a real pitiful intensity of conviction to which the sane mind could never hope or ever wish for within the logical order of the higher states of consciousness. Better be a dull, pulsating mass of protoplasm than to be adrift upon a stormy ocean of disordered concepts, when the rudder and helm of the senses had been rendered nugatory, or had been for ever destroyed. Let them beware, therefore, of the intensity of a conviction which was, in that way, related. Notwithstanding what had been stated in opposition to illusions of a fungoid character, he was far from being convinced that all illusions, as such, were harmful. He was inclined to think that a beneficial purpose was served by many of them, especially of such as were born of the extraordinary strength of love, affection, sympathy, and the higher poetic fancy. The mother, for example, saw favourable qualities in her child which no other eye regarded, and, frequently, had no real existence. Who, therefore, would wholly banish the mist of the affections? He, for one, would not if he could. A large group of illusions might fairly be classed under this order. All illusion, or partial illusion, which for the moment may be necessary to our comfort and well-being, spiritually, and not liable to introduce more remotely great evil consequences, he would be sorry to see wholly dispelled. He did not regard or class such as "fungoid illusions." Illusions which were harmful were regarded as "fungoid" in his estimation. They had seen that it might be possible to reach the zero of valuable concepts, and, indeed, of all consciousness, in two widely different directions. On the one hand, it might be gradually approached through varying stages of fictitious wonder, imagination, dream-illusion, insanity, and by the destruction of one after the other of those wonderful organs of sense, which, though of feeble range, are yet in the highest sense, God - given, Heaven - born. On the other hand, by humble mien and fearless confidence, they might, through all the channels of widening sense, advance to still greater heights, wider horizons, which might be ordained that they should yet conquer. There were still almost infinite circles within the legitimate domain of natural science, but beyond the limits of our present knowledge and range of powers. Yet, even now, from a thousand heights of sense, we could perceive that, however we might increase in subjective knowledge — i.e., natural knowledge — the objective mystery which surrounded us, which we feel we can never penetrate, was but increased by every advancing step in natural knowledge. We feel that though new chords should continue to be struck on "the harp of a thousand strings," the "everlasting arm" which was the cause of their harmonious vibrations could, itself, never be revealed to us save through that veil of the sensible in which "we live, move, and have our being." Do not, therefore, said Mr. Johnston, foolishly tremble under the illusion that all mystery shall be dissipated, or that the veil may be pierced, if we but open wider our dim eyes, or stretch out a little further our feeble hands. Their limits — not determined by us — not written on tables of stone, and soon enough reached — were the truest and best guides. The created mysteries of distorted imagination and the crippled senses were but a poor "mess of pottage" as compared with our glorious birthright of orderly natural knowledge and feeling. If still — like wilful children — we will have a deeper mystery, let us, with the fullest possible equipment, attempt to penetrate from every portal of sense the cause of which they are themselves wondrous symbols. The effort to do so will convey an impression which cannot be effaced. Thereafter the appalled and humbled mind will gratefully shrink back within its own protecting luminous mist of the higher poetic ideal, and, with the chastened submission of a child cry—"It is enough." "Thy will be done." "Nor swords of angels could reveal what they conceal."

Observations on the paper were offered by Bishop Mercer, the Bishop of Larandа, Dr. Gerard Smith, Professor Ritz, Mr. Russell Young, and finally by His Excellency.

On the motion of Mr. A. G. Webster, a vote of thanks was accorded His Excellency for presiding.