

OCTOBER, 1899.

The monthly evening meeting of the society was held on Monday evening, October 16th, the acting president, His Excellency the Administrator (the Hon. J. S. Dodds, C.M.G., C.J.) presiding,

APOLOGIES.

The SECRETARY (Mr. Alex. Morton) read apologies from the senior vice-president (the Hon. Sir James Agnew, K.C.M.G., M.D.), the Bishop of Tasmania, Right Rev. H. H. Montgomery, D.D., R. M. Johnston, F.L.S., vice-presidents; the Hons. N. J. Brown, C. H. Grant, M.S.E.C.; Messrs. A. G. Webster, and R. S. Bright, M.R.C.S.E.

PAPERS.

BOTANICAL NOTES.—BY L. RODWAY.

The writer said he should be sorry to let the current year close without recording original information that has been gleaned about Tasmanian plants meagre though it is. Amongst the flowering plants he obtained a specimen of *Hakea rostrata* F. v. M. from the neighbourhood of George's Bay. This plant has hitherto only been found in Victoria and South Australia. It is worthy of note that *H. nodosce* R. Br., which has a similar distribution on the Australian continent, is also only found in Tasmania at George's Bay. *Hakea rostrata* is very similar to the more common Tasmanian *Hakea epiglottis* Lab, which, however, is purely Tasmanian. Except to a man well acquainted with the genus *H. rostrata* would pass for *H. epiglottis* with rather large fruit. *Atriplex cinerea* var. *semiglabrata*. This form which he treated as a distinct variety, grows in swampy land at Muddy Plains, and thought it right to be considered a distinct variety to be somewhat shady. Only its appearance is so different and it grows in the immediate locality of the type form showing the difference to be due not merely to environment. This form differs from the type in being more slender, ascending to suberect, and the members generally more slender. But the most marked peculiarity is that on the upper surface of the leaves there is a complete absence of scales, this being glabrous, shining, and green. *Cylindrocapsa involuta* Rein.—This common filamentous alga, which has not, that I am aware, yet been recorded from Tasmania, occurs in quantity on the wet surface of rocks at Port Davey, forming quite a slimy coat. Among the fungi, Mr. Rodway said he would record first *Barlæa Archeri* Saccé, which he left out of the systematic list that he recently published, owing to the statement of Cooke in his "Handbook of Australian Fungi" that he had found

Berkeley's specimen to be only a collapsed myxogaster. He would note also that Cooke's habitat, "On dead leaves of a succulent plant," is quite erroneous, as this fungus grows on the ground, and preferably burnt soil. Also the names of fungi new to Tasmania, and some new to science. The latter, which he had the honour to be associated with Geo. Massee, will be described in due course in the *Kew Bulletin*.

The following is a list of the plants referred to:—*Hygrophorus ceraceus*, Pries.; *Polyporus nanus*, Mass. et Rod.; *Hydnum coralloides*, Scop.; *Hymenochæte fuliginosa*, Cooke; *Hymenogaster albicus*, Mass. et Rod.; *Rhizina atra*, Mass et Rod.; *Rhizina feruginea*, Phil.; *Humaria omphalodes*, Mass.; *Barlæa Archeri*, Sacc.; *Bulgariella pulla*, Harst.; *Hypocrea, lenta*, Berk.; *Pleospora liniperda*, Phem.; *Ustilago microspora*, Mass. et Rod.; *Uromyces caryophyllus*, Schr.; *Macrosporium atriplices*, Mass. et Rod.

LIST OF THE DESCRIBED TASMANIAN COLEOPTERA, BY ARTHUR M. LEA (GOVERNMENT ENTOMOLOGIST).

The coleoptera of Tasmania have never been considered as a whole since the time of Erichson, and no list or catalogue of the species has ever been compiled. About 10,000 have now been recorded from Australia and Tasmania, of which scarcely 400 have been expressly described from Tasmania. A very imperfect knowledge of what species are confined to the island as species supposed only to occur there are constantly turning up in Victoria and New South Wales, and even sometimes in West Australia and Queensland. I have thought it advisable, therefore, to prepare a list of the species hitherto recorded from Tasmania, adding to the list such species as I personally know to occur, or which various friends have taken or received from there. No attempt has been made to compare the Tasmanian with the Australian fauna, as such a comparison could scarcely be of any use in the present state of our knowledge, and especially without a much better knowledge of the species occurring on Mount Kosciusko and other mountains of the Australian Alps, and which (noticeable also amongst the plants) show a very close affinity with Tasmania.

TASMANIAN ABORIGINES.

Mr. J. B. WALKER, F.R.G.S., read a most interesting paper entitled, "Tasmanian Aborigines, their Customs and Habits," illustrated with some specially prepared lantern slides.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. MORTON said at the British Association that met last year on September 8, Professor Tylor discussed the survival of palæolithic conditions in Tasmania and Australia with especial reference to the modern use of unground stone implements in West Australia, pointing out that the stone implements from Tasmania, the making and use of which by the natives came under the observation of the colonists during the first half of the century, have a character which may be called quasi palæolithic. They were fragments or flakes of stone, in no case ground, but edged by chipping on one face only, and trimmed so as to afford a grasp to the hand, no haft of any kind being used. These instruments, Professor Tylor says, correspond to some extent with scrapers etc., belonging to the Drift and Cave periods in Europe, but their general rudeness, and the absence among them of symmetrical double-edged and pointed implements like the flint picks of Old World Palæolithic times, places (says Professor Tylor) the modern Tasmanians at a distinctly lower stage than the European of the Mammoth period. The stone implements found in Tasmania, indicate (says Tylor) a state of the Stone Age in past times, not essentially different from that found in actual existence before the disappearance of the native population. Professor Tylor is of opinion that these quasi-Palæolithic implements not having yet been dispossessed in the West Australian district by the ground stone hatchets, which were apparently introduced from the Torrens Straits region, would go to prove that the Neolithic Age was of no remote date, and that the vast area, including Australia as well as Tasmania, may have been till then peopled by tribes surviving at a level of the Stone Age, which had not yet risen to that of the remotely ancient European tribes of the drift gravels and limestone caves.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LIGHTNING FLASHES

Through the kindness of Mr. Aikenhead, M.H.A. of Devonport, an enthusiastic photographer and a member of the society, Mr. Morton said he had been enabled to show five lantern slides of some lightn-

ing flashes taken by Mr. Aikenhead at his residence on Friday, the 19th November 1897. At the June meeting a short interesting letter from Mr. Aikenhead was read, giving a description of how he succeeded in taking photographs of the flashes. The subject of triple lightning flashes appears to be creating some interest in England. In the October number of *Nature*, 1898, page 579, Mr. C. E. Stromeyer, of Lancefield, West Didsbury, in writing to the editor of *Nature*, says:—"At the suggestion of Lord Kelvin, I send you the enclosed photograph of a triplet lightning flash which was taken during a recent thunderstorm at Whitby, and under the following conditions. The flash must have been about two miles distant (out at sea). The focus of the camera lens was 5in.; the aperture, f.64; the plate, Ilford Empress. The camera was not stationary, but was purposely oscillated by the hand. It was intended that its axis should describe a circular cone, but from the photograph the path appears to have been rather elliptical. Each revolution occupied about 1/80min. Mr. Stromeyer then gives a description of the three flashes, which is also figured in this number of *Nature*, and suggests that in view of the importance of obtaining more definite information about lightning he would suggest that in the presence of a thunderstorm photographs should be taken, and concludes an interesting letter with a description of the camera to be used. Mr. Morton said the letter by Mr. Aikenhead, read at the June meeting, accompanied with photographs, he had forwarded to the editor of *Nature*, who he hoped might consider them of sufficient scientific importance to reproduce in that journal.

BURMESE NATIVES.

Some interesting lantern slides, kindly loaned by Mr. Aikenhead, illustrating the natives of Burmah, houses, etc., were exhibited.

VOTE OF THANKS.

HIS EXCELLENCY, at the conclusion, moved a hearty vote of thanks to the authors of the various papers. Mr. Nat Oldham officiated at the lantern, the views being greatly appreciated.