

The Gambier or Mangareva Islands consist of a small group situated within the Paumotu Archipelago, in the Eastern Pacific. They are generally known as Mangareva, that being the native name of the principal island (Peard Island); but on their discovery by Captain Wilson, of the "Duff," on the 25th May, 1797, he named them after Admiral Lord Gambier.

Mangareva Island is about four miles in length, and rises in two peaks in the form of wedges, the greatest height being 1,315 ft. The large village on the east side of Mangareva is in latitude 23° 7' 34" S., longitude 135° 0' 20" W. The other chief islands are Akamaru, Aukena, and Taravai. The inhabitants of the group number about a thousand. The whole of the islands are within an encircling coral reef. They form part of the French possessions in Oceania.

The interesting matter to the linguist and anthropologist in the following dictionary is that the language is pure Polynesian. Generally the inhabitants of the Paumotu Archipelago speak a dialect containing some element foreign to the Polynesian tongue; but in Mangareva the speech is nearly identical with the Maori of New Zealand, thousands of miles distant to the westward.

I trust that many a riddle of Maori scholars may be solved by this dictionary of Mangareva.

A second edition of the catalogue of the library of the Colonial Museum has been published. This is a work of 160 pages, and the supplement, which will contain the recent additions, is well advanced for press, and also an alphabetical index of authors' names. This library contains books belonging to the New Zealand Institute, the Geological Survey Department, the Colonial Museum (acquired either as donations or deposits), and the Wellington Philosophical Society. Books belonging to the Wellington Philosophical Society are marked with S. after date of publication. As some delay has occurred in the printing of this the second edition of the Museum catalogue, a very considerable number of additions have been made to the library since the manuscript was sent to press. These additions will be published in a supplementary catalogue as soon as possible after the rearrangement of the books has been completed. Owing to the occupation of the shelves by the large Patent Library (which has now been removed), it was impossible until the present time to arrange this very valuable scientific library in a proper manner for reference. The Manager wishes to express his cordial thanks to the friends in many parts of the world who have aided in its collection, and which when properly arranged should prove of immense value to the colony as a means of reference.

The library is now undergoing complete rearrangement in accordance with the new catalogue. The room, which is also the lecture-hall, has ample accommodation for readers who desire to study the works of reference.

MUSEUM.

Since last report 107 entries have been made in the register of collections added to the Museum, comprising about five hundred specimens, a full list of which will be published in the usual form in due course. The whole of the collections, and especially the birds and fishes, which are most liable to suffer from damp, have been thoroughly cleaned and fresh preservatives applied. The work of renaming and relabelling in a more distinct manner is also in progress. The large relief model illustrating the geological structure of New Zealand has been cleaned and recoloured, and is now enclosed in a glass frame. On the whole, the Museum is now in good order, and has been made as accessible to the public as the cramped space provided for such extensive collections will permit.

It has been arranged that the Lecturer on Geology for the Victoria College shall have temporary use of the herbarium-room for his class-work, and that he may also have free access to any geological and mineral specimens he may require for illustration of his lectures on condition that they are not to be removed from the Museum building.

METEOROLOGICAL.

The results of the meteorological observations taken at the principal stations for 1899 have been forwarded to the Registrar-General for incorporation with his annual report. The complete monthly returns for Wellington, and the monthly rainfall from 165 stations in New Zealand, have been published regularly in the *Gazette*. The monthly return for the vital statistics has also been furnished. The weather exchange, by telegraph, is carried on as usual between this colony and Australia.

COLONIAL TIME-BALL OBSERVATORY.

Mr. Thomas King, the officer in charge, reports as follows: The time service has been carried out as in former years. New Zealand mean time has been distributed daily by telegraph throughout the colony; whilst special signals for the use of navigators in rating their chronometers have been sent weekly to the chief seaports on the mornings after meridian observations have been taken. Hourly clock signals have, as heretofore, been automatically given from the Observatory to the Wellington Telegraph-office (operating-room and public office), to the Colonial Museum, and to the business premises of those watchmakers in Wellington who are on the galvanometer circuit. The time-ball is now dropped on every day of the week except Sunday; and for the guidance of shipmasters a flag is displayed on the ball tower on those days on which, as the result of transit observations, the time may be employed for close-rating purposes. Acknowledgments are due to the Wellington Harbour Board for the readiness it has shown to make the necessary arrangements for carrying out this plan. I should like to be allowed to record my thanks to Mr. William Ferguson, Secretary of the Board, and to Mr. G. F. Smith, the Assistant Secretary, for their courteous co-operation with the department in the matter. The telegraph authorities have been at all times obliging in promptly taking any steps which were required for insuring the proper working of the electric circuit which controls the time-ball and the galvanometers. The clocks have, on the whole, maintained satisfactory rates and have not called for more than the customary amount of regulating. The adjustments of the transit instrument have been regularly tested.

Approved.

JAMES HECTOR, Manager.

THOMAS MASON, Chairman.

Wellington, 4th September, 1900.