

WELLINGTON PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

FIRST MEETING. 26th June, 1880.

Mr. Martin Chapman, President, in the chair.

New Members.—Messrs Rouband, Macdermott, Gerse, and Mrs. John Kebbell.

The President delivered an opening address:

ABSTRACT.

He reviewed the proceedings of the Society during the past year, the results of which appear in Vol. XII. of the Transactions, and on the whole considered that good work had been done. He particularly referred to many valuable papers under sections Ethnology, Zoology, and Botany, and the annual report of the New Zealand Institute, which is a yearly *resumé* of all scientific work done in the colony; also, to the valuable paper on the Meteorology of New Zealand in the appendix, which contains the results, in a condensed form, of all the observations taken throughout the colony during the year by the Meteorological Department under Dr. Hector. He also called attention to a number of additions to the library on the table, including reports and catalogues lately issued by the Geological Survey and Colonial Museum Departments.

PAPERS.

1. "Notice of a new fish, *Hypolycodes haastii*," by Dr. Hector. (*Transactions*, p. 194). (Specimen exhibited.)

2. "Notice of the Capture of a Large Stingaree," by Mr. Seymour George, M.H.R.

The following is a note of a large *Stingaree* (*Trygon thalassia*), which I harpooned to-day and captured, it being an unusually large one, the length from snout to tip of the tail being 9 feet 11 inches; length of tail, 6 feet; breadth, 4 feet 7 inches; depth, about 1 foot 6 inches. It must have weighed at least 2 cwt. The tail was covered with spines, also a row nearly the whole length of back, and part of two other rows of spines running parallel with the main row of spines on the back. I happened to haul it on the beach on its back, so that the whole of the under part of the fish was fully exposed. While thus lying a young ray was born, which measured from snout to tip of tail 3 feet 3 inches; length of tail, 2 feet 2 inches, with a spine 2 inches long; breadth, 1 foot 4 inches. Another young ray, evidently just born, followed its mother on shore, which I also captured; it was the same size as the one which I saw born. I opened the ray to see if there were any more young inside her, but found none, but seemed to have a number of what I supposed to be eggs; they were about the size of a pigeon's egg, and full of a thick yellow fluid.

Kawau, 5th March, 1880. (Specimens exhibited.)

3. "Notes on Mr. Frankland's Paper on 'The Simplest Continuous

Manifoldness of two Dimensions and of Finite Extent,''' by W. Skey. (*Transactions*, p. 100).

Mr. Frankland replied to Mr. Skey's objections, and said that he was glad this paper had been written, as it would afford him an opportunity of bringing forward his views on the subject more fully.

Dr. Hector exhibited recent additions to the Museum, comprising a series of fishes from Japan, presented by the Hon Mr. Waterhouse; a series of the fishes sold in the Melbourne markets; birds and seals from the Auckland Islands; collection of tapa cloth, showing the process of manufacture; and sugar grown in Fiji, presented by the Commissioner for Fiji at the Sydney Exhibition; a specimen of *Molock horridus*, the horned lizard of Australia, presented by Dr. Ralph, of Melbourne. Dr. Hector explained that this lizard is probably the living representative of a gigantic extinct dragon, lately found in Queensland, the bones of which he had seen, and recognised their affinity, before they were sent to Professor Owen by Dr. Bennett, in October last. He had just received a copy of Professor Owen's paper containing the description read before the Royal Society, which confirmed this identification. Lastly, attention was directed to the large geological collection made during last year—in the South by Mr. McKay, and in the North by Mr. Cox, among which occurred new and valuable minerals which may prove of great economic importance.

SECOND MEETING. 20th July, 1880.

Mr. Martin Chapman, President, in the chair.

New Members.—Mr. Daniel Maunsell, and Mr. E. H. Williams.

PAPERS.

1. "On introduced trees and plants of economic value to New Zealand," by Dr. Curl, F.L.S., of Rangitikei.

ABSTRACT.

The author gave the result of his experimental culture of a large number of different fruit trees and other plants, the introduction of which he considered of value to New Zealand. He showed that a much greater variety were suitable to the soil and climate than was generally supposed, and that if the settlers devoted attention to such cultivation they would add greatly to the resources of the country, and to the profitable employment of their industry. He has found that a great many kinds of the vine can be cultivated with success, and that even if wine could not be successfully made, the crop of grapes would yield a large profit if converted into raisins by the artificial drying process adopted in California. He has succeeded in growing twelve kinds of fruit trees from Japan, which promise good results. In illustration of the importance of the subject, he quoted the enormous sums of money obtained in other countries by the systematic cultivation of fruits.

Dr. Hector thought the paper valuable and suggestive, and pointed out that in the North Island the settlers coming from Great Britain would have to rely upon many kinds of produce with which they were unfamiliar in the old country, if the best resources of the country were to be developed.

Mr. Lee was glad to know that the cultivation of fruit was attracting some attention at last, as it was a valuable source of income, peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of small settlers.