

members.—Dr. Hector called attention to a live katipo or poisonous native spider, with nest and young ones, on the table, and read a short notice by Mr. Duigan, of Wanganui, of an extraordinary flight of beetles that passed over that district in December last.—A paper was then read by Mr. Travers from Mr. Shand, of the Chatham Islands, describing the different kinds of Mokihi or flax stalk canoes that the natives used in former times, a model of one of which is in the Museum.—Dr. Hector gave an interesting account of the reports he had received from more than thirty stations respecting the magnificent meteor that passed over New Zealand on the 1st instant, at 8.30 P.M., which, he stated, had a general course from about a point west of north through the zenith of Picton, over which place it passed at less than thirty miles altitude above the surface of the earth, travelling with an apparent velocity of 12 miles per second. Its form was that of a ball intensely luminous, of a reddish hue, with a long very brilliant tapering tail, the light of which resembled burning magnesium wire, but giving off red sparks. It completely eclipsed the light of the moon which was shining brightly. The area over which it had been seen has a length of 700 miles, and width of 300, from lat. 36° S., long. 122° E., to lat. 46° S., long. 175° E. The apparent diameter of the head was 10', and the length of the tail tapering about 1°. Some of the observations appear to indicate that its course must have descended towards the earth's surface, but this depends on mere estimates of angular altitude, which cannot be depended on. The prolonged detonation which followed the passage of the meteor does not appear to have been heard at all the stations, but chiefly at those in the vicinity of Cook Strait, where the path of the meteor intersected New Zealand, all the observers in the North Island having seen it to the west, and those in the South Island to the east. When nearest to Wellington it must have been at a distance in a direct line of fifty-five miles, which agrees with the time, five minutes, which elapsed before the report was heard. This shows that the report did not proceed from the final bursting of the meteor, but proceeded from it at the time it was nearest to the observer. Indeed, from the length of the path in which the meteor was seen, its sudden disappearance, as if by bursting, must have been an optical illusion in the case of all the northerly observers. Mr. Marchant stated that he had witnessed another meteor, almost equal in brilliancy to the above, on the previous evening (27th inst.), passing from east to west. Mr. Floyd of the Telegraph Department, stated that this meteor was reported at several stations in the North Island, and appeared to have passed over Napier on the east, to Patea on the west coast. Its colour was blue.—After some further discussion two important papers on the electromotive and conductive power of mineral sulphides, were read by Mr. Skey, in which he claims to have made some discoveries.

PARIS

Academie des Sciences, April 21.—Eighteen members present. The sitting was not devoid of interest, although the communications were far from numerous. M. Egger, professor of Greek at the Sorbonne and member of the Academie des Belles Lettres, availed himself of the privilege granted to the members of different academies. He read a very long dissertation on a papyrus found in 1866, which gave a great deal of information on the state of ancient Egyptian civilisation. It related chiefly to the prices of different articles used in those times. The bursting of the shells and the thunder of French artillery was distinctly heard. It was an impressive scene to see these learned men discussing a civilisation which was swept from the earth so many centuries ago at a time when their own country was threatened by ruin not less awful and perhaps more disgraceful. The *Comptes Rendus* of the 7th April had gone through the press as usual. Its most important article was a communication from Prof. Simon Newcomb on the new method invented by him for discussing the inequalities of the moon's motion. The extract, four pages in length, is an abstract from the original communication, which was left by the American astronomer in the hands of the Committee instructed to report upon it. These *Comptes Rendus* are printed by Gauthier-Villars, printer to the Academy, at a great expense, and with the greatest difficulty. The continuation of the publication is highly creditable to that firm, of which the head, M. Gauthier-Villars, is a former pupil of the Polytechnic School. To show how difficult the business must be to manage, we must say, moreover, that the publisher of the *Connaissance des Temps* for 1872 is stopped merely because it is impossible to find working men for the printing of the last four

sheets, which are ready to go through the press. If things continue for some time, French navigators sailing for distant Pacific Ocean expeditions will be obliged to resort to the Nautical Almanack.

DIARY

THURSDAY, MAY 11.

ROYAL SOCIETY, at 8.30.—An Experimental Inquiry into the Constitution of Blood, and the Nutrition of Muscular Tissue: Dr. Marcet, F.R.S.—On Non-Spontaneous Generation. On the Influence of Heat on Protoplasmic Life. On the Preparation of Nitrogen: Prof. Crace-Calvert, F.R.S.
SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES, at 8.30.—Sepulchral Remains at Rouen: The Abbé Cochet, Hon. F.S.A.—Letter to Mr. John Stanhope, from Sir Geo. Buck: Earl Stanhope, President S.A.—Sir James Tyrrell cleared (A.D. 1483): Rev. W. H. Sewell.
MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY, at 8.—On the Singularities of the Envelope of a non-Unicursal Series of Curves: Prof. Hencic.—On the Resultant of a large number of Vibrations of Irregular Phase, as applied to the Explanation of the Coronas: Hon. J. W. Strutt.—A Question in the Mathematical Theory of Vibrating Strings: W. Spottiswoode, F.R.S.—On the Problem of Finding the Circle which cuts Three given Circles at given angles (communicated by Prof. Cayley, F.R.S.): J. Griffiths, M.A.
ROYAL INSTITUTION, at 3.—On Sound: Prof. Tyndall.
LONDON INSTITUTION, at 7.30.—On Economic Botany: Prof. Bentley.

FRIDAY, MAY 12.

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, at 8.
QUEKETT MICROSCOPICAL CLUB, at 8.
ROYAL INSTITUTION, at 9.—On the Defence of the United Kingdom: Col. Jervo's, R.E.

SATURDAY, MAY 13.

ROYAL SCHOOL OF MINES, at 8.—Geology: Dr. Cobbold.
ROYAL INSTITUTION, at 3.—On the Instruments Used in Modern Astronomy: J. N. Lockyer, F.R.S.

MONDAY, MAY 15.

LONDON INSTITUTION, at 4.—On Astronomy: R. A. Proctor, F.R.A.S.
ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, at 8.—On Dreams, Sympathy, Presentiment, and on Divination and Analogous Phenomena among the Natives of Natal: Dr. H. Callaway.—Notes on a Cairn at Khangaum, and on a Kist in Argyshire: Dr. A. Campbell.

TUESDAY, MAY 16.

STATISTICAL SOCIETY, at 7.45.—On the Influence of a High Bank Rate of Discount on Monetary Crises: R. H. Patterson.
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY, at 9.—A Description of the Madreporaria dredged up during the Expedition of H.M.S. *Porcupine* in 1869-70: Dr. P. Martin Duncan.—On Speke's Antelope and the allied species of the genus *Tragelaphus*: Sir V. Brooke, Bart.—On a new Humming-bird, discovered by Mr. Whiteley, in Peru: Mr. J. Gould.
ROYAL INSTITUTION, at 3.—On Force and Energy: Charles Brooke, F.R.S.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17.

SOCIETY OF ARTS, at 8.—On the Utilisation of Prison Labour: Captain E. F. Du Cane, R.E.
ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE, at 8.30.—On Shakespeare's Birthday: C. M. Ingleby, LL.D.

THURSDAY, MAY 18.

ROYAL SOCIETY, at 8.30.
SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES, at 8.30.
CHEMICAL SOCIETY, at 8.
ROYAL INSTITUTION, at 3.—On Sound: Prof. Tyndall.

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ERRATUM.—In vol. IV. p. 20, 2nd column, line 7, for "N. Hartog" read "M. Hartog."