

Proceedings of the SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTION.

June 27th, 1829.—The Members of the Institution proceeded to the election of a Council and Officers for the year ensuing. The following was found to be the state of the ballot:

President, The Honorable Lieut.-Colonel BELL, C. B.;—*Vice Presidents*, Rev. F. FALLOWS, F. R. S.; J. A. JOUBERT, Esq. LL.D.; A. OLIPHANT, Esq.; The Hon. J. W. STOLL.—*Treasurer*, F. S. WATERMEYER, Esq. — *Secretaries*, ANDREW SMITH, M. D.; Rev. J. ADAMSON, D. D.—*Council*, The Office-bearers, and Major MITCHELL, F. HERTZOG, M. VAN BREDA, CHARLES LUDWIG, Esqrs.; R. DYCE, M. D.; CLERK BURTON, Esq.; J. MURRAY, M. D.; Major CLOETE; J. MAKRILL, Esq.

August 11.—The following are subjects of Essays or Communications for which Medals will be awarded by the Institution at the next General Annual Meeting:—

1. For the best Account of the Character, History, and Geographical distribution of the Hottentot Race.
2. For the best Mechanical Invention for facilitating the Transport of Goods of any sort, applicable to the circumstances of the Colony, with a description thereof by the Inventor.
3. For the best Communication on the Effects arising from the Bites of the different poisonous Snakes of South Africa, and on the remedies generally adopted,
4. For the best Communication describing the most approved and economical methods of forming Dams and Tanks for holding Water, suited to the circumstances of the Colony.

Competition for these Honorary Medals is open to the Public in general. All such communications must be given in, directed to the Secretaries, on or before the First Day of May, 1830. Each must be accompanied by a sealed Letter, containing the Name of the Author, and inscribed with a Mark or Motto, which must also be attached to the communication; of which letters, those alone will be opened which accompany the communications approved of, and the others will be returned when applied for.

August 31.—After a communication from His Excellency the Governor, informing the Members, that, agreeable to their request, he would have much pleasure in becoming Patron of the Institution, was heard, the following papers were read:—

Remarks on the advantages of having a Botanic Garden near Cape Town. By Mr. BOWIE.—The author in this communication pointed out the occurrence of frequent failures and much uncertainty in the transport of living plants to Europe, whether transmitted from the interior of this Colony, or from countries to the eastward of it, in consequence of their being no such repository here, to afford them a temporary resting-place, when circumstances might be unfavorable to their farther progress. He then noticed the existence of peculiarities in certain classes of Cape Plants, which rendered such an establishment particularly to be desired in regard to them; and having illustrated the general advantages of thus collecting and arranging plants, to afford the means of elucidating their character and affinities, he concluded by remarking the benefits likely to arise from such investigation to science, commerce, and domestic economy.

Sketches of the Botany of the Cape District, No. 1. By Mr. BOWIE.—Containing a catalogue of the indigenous plants which may be expected to flower in the month of September: with remarks on their peculiarities, uses, &c.

Observations on the Origin and History of the Bushmen. By Dr. SMITH.—In this paper the writer adduces reasons for believing that Bushmen existed even long before Europeans visited South Africa, and that they had possibly been coeval with the Hottentots themselves. He mentioned, that communities or families, of a character similar to what we understand by the term “Bushmen,” inhabit all the barren wastes of Great Namaqualand, and conduct themselves towards the Hottentots and Damaras in their vicinity, exactly as those immediately in advance of our Frontier do towards the Colonists. It was then stated, that the majority of them are decidedly of the genuine Hottentot race; and, after some details in regard to their mental character, external physiology, and modes of living, hunting, conducting their depredations, &c. the paper concluded with “an earnest recommendation to such members as may have been in the habit of observing our savage tribes, to embody their remarks for occasions like the present,” as tending to personal and general benefit.

Sept. 30.—*Sketches of the Botany of South Africa, No. 2.* By Mr. BOWIE.—The author stated, that the number of plants indigenous to South Africa was unknown, but, to his practical knowledge, the Cape colony contained more species of

Phænogomous Plants than have been allotted to the whole of Africa, by the most complete, though conjectural calculations on record. He continued by observing, that however careful the Botanist might be in his researches, he would find by visiting the same grounds in the corresponding seasons of different years, many plants which had hitherto escaped his notice altogether; and, in conclusion, furnished a list of 244 plants belonging to 99 genera, which might be expected to flower in the Cape District during the months of October and November.

Notes on the Earthquakes which occurred at the Cape of Good Hope during the month of December, 1809, &c. By Mr. VON BUCHENRODER.—In this communication the author gave a full detail of the effects of the various shocks, more particularly at Cape Town, Jan Beesjie's Kraal, and Blaauweberg Valley; and also furnished a minute register of the Barometer, Thermometer, and Winds, between the 4th and 27th of the month, in which the phenomena in question took place.—Printed in our present Number.

Notes on the Earthquakes of 1809. By Mr. LAING.—This paper contained several remarks corroborative of the statements of Mr. VON BUCHENRODER, as well as details tending to establish the activity of Electricity during the time the earthquakes were experienced:

October 28.—Dr. SMITH, Corresponding Secretary, produced specimens of Minerals presented by Mr. BOWIE and Mr. GRISBROOK; and also a specimen of *Caretta Imbricata*, presented by Dr. MURRAY, and a specimen of *Ornithorinchus Paradoxus*, presented by Mr. CHIAPPINI. In presenting these objects, Dr. SMITH accompanied them with details of their characters and habits.

The Rev. Dr. ADAMSON, Private Secretary, produced a large specimen of transparent Calcareous Spar, presented by Mr. REID, Collector of Curiosities; and in allusion to an Analysis of a Calcareous Conglomerate, transmitted by Mr. TREDGOLD, Chemist, he proceeded to illustrate, by details and specimens, the appearance and structure of certain masses of that substance occurring along the shore to the northward of Cape Town.

A paper was read, entitled, *Remarks on the Phocæ or Seals met with on the coasts of South Africa, with other observations.* By Mr. JARDINE.—The writer pointed out the importance of the Seal Fishery to the commercial interest of the Colony, and the causes of its present unproductiveness. He then described the circumstances attending their capture, as witnessed by him; and particularly illustrated the influence and proportionate power of their different organs of perception; the

remarkable tenacity of life observed in them; and the modifications of this principle produced by the common mode of killing them.

November 25.—JOHN REED, Esq. was elected a Member of the Institution; and the following papers were read:—

Sketches of the Botany of South Africa, No. 3. By Mr. BOWIE.—The author, after a variety of general remarks, concluded with a list of the plants that might be expected to flower in the Cape District during the months of December, January, February, and March.

A Visit to some of the Caffre Tribes beyond the Colony. By Mr. GILL.—The hordes of Pato, Zambé, Henza, and Vosanie, came under review; and the author described at some length a variety of the manners and customs of those savages, as well as furnished a detailed account of the character of the country over which he travelled. The latter he illustrated by a plan, shewing the directions and positions of the mountains, rivers, &c.

December 30.—The Rev. Mr. FAURE was elected a Member of the Institution.

A paper was read, entitled, *Experiments on Candle-Wicks, and on the Effects of Chlorine upon the combustible properties of the Wax of the Candle Berry Myrtle.** By Mr. REED.—The author, after making some remarks on the nature of combustion, passed on to notice the different circumstances connected with the wicks, which tended to increase or diminish the light, and gave a statement of the comparative quantities of light afforded by common tallow candles, and ones of impure and bleached myrtle-berry wax. He proved the great superiority of a candle with two wicks over a candle with only one, and shewed that when either are placed with a certain inclination, that the carbonized portion of the wick gradually falls off, and do not require snuffing.

A paper *On the Exotic Plants which have been introduced into South Africa, with remarks on their Cultivation and Uses.* By Mr. BOWIE.—In this communication the writer detailed the different *Exotics* which have yet been cultivated in the South of Africa, and described the best methods of rearing them, as well as stated the uses to which they might be applied.

A description of two supposed undescribed species of Fishes. By Mr. WEBSTER.—Printed in the present number of the Journal.—Vide page 26.

A description of the Birds inhabiting the South of Africa, &c. By Dr. SMITH.—A portion of this paper is printed in the present Number.

* *Myrica, æthiopica, serrata, laciniata, quercifolia, and cordifolia.*