

STATED MEETING.

21st MARCH, 1855.

The following donations were announced from T. D. Harington:—
Guizot's Life of Cromwell.

Mackintosh's Military Tour through the Seat of War, Crimea, &c.
 Slavery on African Coast.

Huc's Travels in Tartary, Thibet, &c.

Scientific Annual, 1852 and 1853 (United States).

Year Book of Facts, 1852 and 1853.

From G. B. Faribault:

Public Accounts of the Province of Canada for 1853.

Annual Report of the Postmaster General, for the year ended 31st March, 1854.

Return from the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, showing the number of Votes polled in each County.

Documents submitted by the Bureau of Agriculture to the Legislature.

Report of the Superintendent of Education, Lower Canada, for 1853.

The Seigniorial Tenure of Canada, and Plan of Commutation, by J. C. Taché.

Tables of the Trade and Navigation of the Province of Canada, for 1853.

Census of Canada for 1851 and 1852, vol. 2.

The thanks of the Society were ordered to be given to T. D. Harington and G. B. Faribault.

The following gentlemen were proposed as Associate Members.

Walter Serocold, late Captain, 66th Regiment.

William Chessell.

A Paper was read by F. N. Boxer, submitting certain suggestions for the better conducting the affairs of the Society.

Resolved that F. N. Boxer's paper be referred for the consideration of the Council of the Society.

A Paper was read by A. R. Roche, entitled, "A Proposal for extending the Trade of the Province."

HENRY E. STEELE,
Recording Secretary.

Chair of Natural History, Edinburgh University.

Some difficulty appears to be found in selecting a fitting successor to Professor Edward Forbes; and we have referred, on another page, to a discussion this has given rise to. According to the latest accounts, we learn that the idea is gaining ground of subdividing the Chair into two Professorships. One of Geology, for which it is understood the Duke of Argyll—who takes a lively interest in the question—destines Hugh Miller; the other of Natural History, in its several distinct branches, exclusive of Botany, which already constitutes a separate Chair. For this Mr. Allman, of Trinity College, Dublin, is favourably spoken. Though there are various other candidates—Mr. Huxley, of the London Museum of Practical Sciences, and recently one of the candidates for the new Chair in University College, Toronto; Professor Nichol, formerly of Cork, and now of Aberdeen; and Dr. Fleming, of New College, Edinburgh. The revenues of the Chair are estimated at upwards of £1000 stg.; so that it is a rare prize in the scientific lottery, and may be expected to excite abundant emulation. The great difficulty in finding a fit successor to Edward Forbes is no slight testimony to the profound and singularly varied range of acquirements of the late Professor of Natural History at Edinburgh.

The Hurricane of the 18th April, 1855.

The progress of the remarkable storm which swept over a large portion of Western Canada during the 18th of last month, has been recorded by the local Press of many localities where its destructive effects

were visible, or the various phenomena which accompanied it particularly manifest. We propose to condense the various accounts which have reached us, and present them in a connected form in the June number of this *Journal*. We shall feel indebted to our readers and correspondents for any exact information or description they may have in their power to communicate.

Miscellaneous Intelligence.

ELEVATION OF THE LAND IN HUMAN PERIOD.—General De la Marmora, who has been employed twenty-four years on a geographical and geological survey of Sardinia, presented an outline of his researches in the latter department to the Geological Society of France on 6th November last. In this paper he states that near Cagliari he found a raised beach containing shells mixed with works of human art (pottery), at an elevation of 197 feet (60 metres) above the sea. It seems to be slightly inclined; and he speaks of another deposit, probably a newer one, a little farther on, which is horizontal and almost at the level of the sea. He estimates that at Alghero, 100 miles NNW., the rise produced by the same upheaval has been 328 feet, not attested, however, by human remains, but by the position of a "quaternary sandstone." The extreme rarity of raised beaches containing such remains renders these facts interesting. Mr. Lyell refers only to three—one which I have seen, at Putzuoli, 20 feet above the present sea level; another near Stockholm, 60 feet above it, and a third in Peru, seen by Mr. Darwin, 85 feet. It now appears that some parts of Sardinia have been upheaved 197 feet since the island was occupied by man.

VELOCITY OF THE ELECTRIC CURRENT.—At the meeting of the Belgian Royal Academy on 2nd December, M. Quetelet described Mr. Airey's experiments with the electric telegraph to determine the difference of longitude between Greenwich and Brussels. The time spent by the electric current in passing from the one observatory to the other was found to be 0s.109, or rather less than the ninth part of a second and this determination rests on 2,616 observations. The distance between the towns being 270 miles, the velocity of the current, supposing it to be uniform, must rather exceed 2,500 miles per second, or about one-seventh greater than that obtained by the American observers, a speed which would "girdle the globe" in ten seconds. The difference of longitude from two series of observations, and by two methods, was found to be 17m. 28s.9. Observations made by an eclipse of the sun in May 1836, gave precisely the same results which may be considered the most correct; an eclipse of the sun in 1842, gave four-tenths of a second less; lunar occultations gave nine-tenths of a second less; and observations by chronometers gave 1 second and three-tenths less. A second in this case represents a distance of 455 yards, and a tenth of a second 45½ yards. Assuming the first-mentioned time to be correct, the error in the chronometrical determination is equivalent to 591 yards, or the ninth part of a mile, which, after all, is only the 2430th part of the whole distance.

EGG OF THE EPOYNIS.—At the meeting of the Academy of Sciences on 5th March, M. I. G. Saint Hilaire presented two eggs of this gigantic bird. The volume of one of them exceeded nine cubic decimetres, and must therefore have been equal to a sphere 10.4 inches in diameter, or to an egg-shaped body (an oblong spheroid) measuring 9 inches by 12. In a later number of the journal from which this notice is taken, we find the dimensions of three eggs of the Epyornis, of which the largest is as follows:—Longest axis 12.15 inches, shortest axis 9.37 inches; elliptical circumference 36.4 inches. The Epyornis is an extinct Madagascar bird, supposed to have been nearly fourteen feet in height.

NEW GIGANTIC FOSSIL BIRD.—Professor Constant Prevost submitted to the Academy of Sciences on 12th March, the fossil bone of a bird found in the Paris basin, near Meudon. It was a *tibia* or leg bone; its length 17½ inches its breadth at the lower end fully 3 inches; at the upper 3½; at the middle 1½. A difference of opinion existed among the naturalists as to whether it belonged to an Echasier (a long-legged bird) or a Palmipede. If the former, M. Prevost thought that it must have had twenty times the bulk of the swan. M. Valenciennes regarded it as more allied in form to the albatross, and in this case its dimensions will not be so great as M. Prevost conjectured. It has been named *Palaeornis Parisiensis*, and was found at the bottom of the tertiary beds, resting on the chalk. It was therefore much older than the huge birds of New Zealand and Madagascar, which are found in alluvial deposits.—C. M., *Scotsman*.